Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LATINO PARENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

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by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation study to my parents, husband, and dear friends who have supported me through this journey to obtain this degree.

I dedicate this to my mother and father for raising me in a loving home. To my mother for instilling in me strong moral values and for encouraging me to stay in school. For wanting me to be somebody and make a difference in this world. To my father for instilling in me the ethics of hard work and dedication, and for helping with my school projects when I was a child. To my parents who came to the United States from Guatemala seeking opportunities for a better life. Thank you for making it possible for my sister and me to obtain an education and pursue our aspirations.

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

From 2007-2012 at Hubble Elementary School, located in Southern California, there has been a consistent population of approximately 50% English Language Learners (ELLs). Parents of the ELL students present a challenge because schools have a hard time engaging them in school activities and in the decision-making processes.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was twofold: (a) to explore the perception of Latino parents of ELLs regarding the concept of parent engagement and (b) to examine the best practices related to parent engagement and major barriers that prevented them from being active participants in school activities and decision making processes at Hubble Elementary School. The research focused on 3 core questions:

1. How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?
2. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the most meaningful and encouraging best practices to elicit comprehensive parental engagement?
3. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the barriers that prevent them from becoming engaged in the total school environment?

This study used a phenomenological research design to collect and analyze data through the use of focus group interviews. This data allowed the researcher to identify Latino parent experiences. Finally, the researcher also collected and analyzed school artifacts such as newsletters and announcements from the school to examine the ways in which the school communicated with parents.

Parents defined parent engagement as the act of being present in the classroom, in the school, and at parent meetings. Parents of ELLs viewed best practices for engagement as

stemming from strong relationships among the principal, the teachers, and the parents. Parents in this study wanted the school community to be *like a family,* and expressed the need to feel connected with the school. Parents perceived lack of information, communication, and parent activities as barriers that prevented them from being engaged in their children's school. This study revealed that parent engagement for parents of ELLs does happen when the school establishes the infrastructure needed to initiate and nurture parent engagement.

Chapter 1: The Problem

Background

Hubble Elementary School (pseudonym) became a California Distinguished School in 2001. Secretary of Education Rod Paige under President George W. Bush presided over the award ceremony. The school administration, teachers and parents worked extensively on meeting the requirements and completing the application process. One of the requirements to become a California Distinguished School is a high percentage of parent engagement, which means that schools are keeping the needs of the parents at the forefront with a genuine trusted relationship of respect (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004). Parent engagement consists of reciprocal communication between the school and parents.

Substantial parent engagement was visible at Hubble Elementary School because parents were engaged on committees such as PTA (Parent Teacher Association), SSC (School Site Council), SAC (School Advisory Committee), and ELAC (English Learners Advisory Council). Parents were proactive and were part of the decision-making processes at the school. They were eager to communicate and their voices were heard. Additionally, there were monthly Principal Parent Forums in which the principal met with parents and addressed any questions or concerns that parents had. The school offered parent workshops that explained to parents how to read their children's California Standards Test (CST) as well as the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) score report. Other parent workshops included informing parents on the California content standards on different grade levels to tips on how to help their children get ready for the CST. Furthermore, CBET (Community Based English Tutoring) was offered to parents at the school site.

Parents felt connected to the school because they felt valued and informed, and informed parents are naturally drawn to take active roles and make their presence known at their school. In 2001 there was a visible presence of parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) at Hubble Elementary School. However, today the visible presence of parents of ELLs is limited. The PTA, SSC, SAC, and ELAC do not have many parents in attendance. There has been a shift in administration from 2007-2013 including three different principals. Monthly Principal Parent forums, parent workshops informing parents about how to read their children's CST and CELDT score report, and CBET classes no longer exist. Opportunities for parent engagement have dwindled from 2007-2013.

Parent engagement consists of schools focusing on parent needs with honest respectful interactions (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004). When they are engaged, parents actively take the initiative to create their own plans to further and enhance their children's education. Parents can do so by creating action plans with the goal of improving student achievement or improving student safety at their children's school (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012).

In contrast to parent engagement, parent involvement (PI) consists of schools having their own agendas when interacting with parents. However, many positive outcomes can still come from PI. PI is linked to high grade point averages and increased academic achievement in language arts and mathematics. Additionally, PI is associated with decreased dropout rates, students not repeating a grade, and reduced special education placement (Anderson & Minke, 2007). All of these positive results originate from school parental involvement. Other non-academic positive outcomes of school parental involvement consist of student self-regulated behavior and enhanced social skills when interacting with peers at school. Students of involved parents have greater self-esteem and partake in extracurricular activities. Additionally, parents

who participate in school activities have children with fewer school discipline problems, and parents and students have positive relationships with their teachers (Wong & Hughes, 2006). However, this is not always the case for Latino PI.

Current literature often shows minimal levels of Latino school PI, teachers' perceptions that Latino parents lack interest in their children's education, or that parent feel intimidated by their children's teachers (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba (1991) asserted that Latino parents are interested in their children's education, but there is a contrast between their expectations and the schools their children attend. Immigrant parents maintain their values and expectations according to their school experiences of their native country. For instance, Latino parents' perception of their responsibility in education is to provide their children with basic necessities such as food, clothing, and a roof over their heads. Also, parents typically perceive that their primary focus involvement is ensuring their children obtain a "buena educación" (Valdés, 1996, p. 125), which signifies teaching them about good manners and moral values. U.S. schools and teachers do not understand these suppositions, even though the Latino population is rapidly becoming one of the most prominent ethnic groups in the U.S. In contrast, the view held by U.S. schools is that it is the parents' responsibility to have an active role in helping their children with academics.

Hispanics or Latinos are people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or another Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are used interchangeably; for the purpose of this study, Latino was the choice terminology to refer to people of Latino/Hispanic American heritage (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). According to the 2010 Census, Latinos accounted for more than half of the United States growth in the previous 10 years. The nation's Latino population in 2000 was 35.3 million and grew by

43% in the following decade. The 2010 Census counted 50.5 million Latinos in the United States, which illustrates that from 2000 to 2010, Latinos accounted for 56% of the United States' population growth. The number of Latino children grew by 39% from 2000-2010. Additionally, there were 12.3 million Latino children under the age of 17 in 2000, and by the year 2010, the number had increased to 17.1 million (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011).

The 2010 census reported that 37.6 million (75%) Latinos live in the following eight states: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, and Colorado. Of these eight states, over half of Latinos live in California, Texas, and Florida. For example, in 2010 the Latino population in California was 14.0 million, Texas 9.5 million, and Florida 4.2 million (Ennis et al., 2011). With 14 million Latinos, California is the state with the highest Latino population in the United States. Nine of the 58 counties in California have high populations of Latinos; some of the counties with the highest percentages of Latinos include Imperial, Monterey, San Benito, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare, and Colusa. Furthermore, Latinos comprised the majority of 17 cities in California such as Santa Ana (78.2%), Oxnard (73.5%), and Inglewood (51%). However, in 2010, the California city with the highest population of Latinos was East Los Angeles (97.1%; Lin, 2011).

As mentioned previously, the largest population increase has been among Latino children, which grew by 39% from 2000-2010 (Passel et al., 2011). In regard to students' language, current statistics show there are 4.7 million students who are learning English as a second language (ESL) and learning academic content subject matter at the same time in the U.S. (Carrier, 2005). In California alone, 1.5 million students are enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade education in 2000. Other states with a high percentage of ELLs include Texas with

500,000, Florida with about 300,000, and New York with an estimated 250,000 (Lessow-Hurley, 2003).

U.S. schools reflect an increase in linguistic diversity because the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, also known as ELLs, has increased by 95% from 1992-2002. The fact that United States schools have a high percentage of ELLs in their classrooms has made it a challenge for schools to meet these students' educational needs. Research has demonstrated that in order to meet the needs of ELLs, schools need to understand how these students learn content (Carrier, 2005). Additionally, schools need to understand how to engage parents of ELLs effectively.

Regardless of good intentions from schools, numerous parent-school based barriers prevent parents from participating fully in their children's education. One such barrier is that schools may have a deficit perception of ELL families because of language and cultural differences. Another significant barrier is the lack of English language proficiency by parents, which can result in communication problems with school staff as well as not being able to assist their children with schoolwork. Parents who have a limited formal schooling or have experienced frustration in their own schooling experience may find further roadblocks (Arias & Morillo-Campell, 2008).

Additionally, parents may not be familiar with the U.S. school system and may feel that their children are being deprived a quality education. For example, parents may misunderstand the purpose of bilingual education and question why their children are being taught in Spanish and English as opposed to English only. Parents might be under the impression that their children are being delayed from reaching English proficiency. Finally, limited parental involvement in

their ELL children's schooling may be due to the long work shifts or number of jobs needed to make ends meet (Arias & Morillo-Campell, 2008).

A fundamental issue is that school staff members misunderstand how Latino families are involved in their children's education because they are not "standard or typical middle class famil[ies]" (Valdés, 1996, p. 121). Latino parents have different values and priorities than the school staff may expect, but they still instill the core values of respect, hard work and responsibility in their children, viewing these as key determinants of life success.

In contrast to Latino parents' expectations of education, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers want to change the way Latino parents educate their children. They believe that improving PI consists of providing programs that remediate the way parents educate their children. Instead of remediation programs to educate parents, schools need to respect and accept the diverse cultural backgrounds of Latino ELL children and their parents while effectively engaging parents in their children's education. Latino parent engagement happens when parents are provided the opportunity to obtain "culturally valued knowledge and form networks with other families" (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2006, p. 14) throughout the school community. For example, schools can offer parent-led workshops about how the U.S. school system works. When parent programs are culturally sensitive, greater opportunities exist for engagement of parents of ELLs.

Setting

The school district of Woodbend Unified School District (WUSD, pseudonym) is located in Los Angeles County. As of 2010, its city population is more than 100,000, and it has a district enrollment of under 15,000 kindergarten through 12th grade students. The district has K-6 elementary schools, a K-5 school, K-8 schools, middle schools, high schools, a continuation

school, and an adult school. Hubble Elementary School is located in the west side section of the city of Woodbend, and it has 426 students, 17 teachers, and one school administrator. The teachers are highly qualified; 16 have Cultural Language Acquisition Development (CLAD) and one has a Bilingual Cultural Language Acquisition Development (BCLAD) teaching certification[1].

Of the 426 students, 175 (41%) are ELLs; 171 speak Spanish as their primary language, two speak Arabic, one speaks Hindi and one speaks other non-English languages. Also, 77% of Hubble Elementary School students are socioeconomically disadvantaged and 3% are students with disabilities. The ethnic background of the school is 73% Hispanic, 24% African American, 0.70% White not Hispanic, 0.23% Asian, and 0.23% two or more races not Hispanic. The school is Title I school wide and earned an Academic Performance Index (API) of 765 for the 2011-2012 academic school year[2].

The school offers SSC, SAC, and ELAC parent meetings. These councils and committees are the governing boards that advise the school principal in matters relating to the school's instructional program or needs. For example, the SSC can provide feedback on how categorical funds should be spent in order to improve student achievement. The committees elect parent officers who are trained in their responsibilities and how to facilitate parent meetings. However, the SSC, SAC, and ELAC parent meetings result in one-way communication because the school keeps parents abreast of the school's budget, instructional program, and district issues. Few opportunities exist to engage parents of ELLs in the meetings and allow them to actively provide input into the school's decision-making process.

[1] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.
[2] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

Statement of the Problem

From 2007 to 2012 there has been a consistent population of approximately 50% ELLs at Hubble Elementary School in Woodbend, California. However, a limited visible representation of parents of ELLs has been involved in school activities and offered input into the school's decision-making process. Although the number of ELL students continues to grow, the presence of parents of ELLs at school functions and their voices in school decision-making processes have been limited. Research indicates that Latino parents are limited in their ability to participate in school activities because the schools manage and coordinate parent activities (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Parents would be encouraged to take an active role by schools implementing non-traditional PI activities created by parents and teachers to truly engage and sustain parent participation (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004). For example, parents might facilitate bilingual workshops on "strengthening the parental role in their children's education" (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004, p. 19) in order to help their children with school. At the identified research site, there have been few opportunities to explore parent perceptions of best practices as well as barriers that prevent them from participating in the total school environment. If a program is going to work, parents need to be part of that process.

Parent engagement consists of reciprocal communication between the school and parents. Parents are not bystanders, but instead take on the active role of being leaders and soliciting input from other parents to reach a common purpose. Parent engagement happens when schools support parents coordinating and mobilizing "families independently to establish an active partnership with the goals of supporting student achievement through an improved dialogue with school personnel, enhancing student safety and participation and promoting cultural pride" (Jasis

& Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012, p. 69). Engaged parents are activists that create their own agendas to make a positive impact in their children's education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore Latino parents of ELLs' perception of best practices for parent engagement as well as identifying major barriers that prevent them from being active participants in school activities and the decision making processes in Hubble Elementary School's environment.

Research Questions

1. How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?
2. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the most meaningful and encouraging best practices to elicit comprehensive parental engagement?
3. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the barriers that prevent them from becoming engaged in the total school environment?

Theoretical Framework

Schools that offer programs that engage Latino parents focus on the true needs of the parents. Latino parents are engaged when their views and opinions are respected by the school. This leads to the active participation of Latino parents of underserved students. However, what often happens are parent meetings with preset school agendas, lack of parent feedback, and no childcare or translation made available (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). This illustrates parents' voices being muffled and ignored. The opportunity for establishing positive relationships with parents is then lost. Parent engagement is keeping the needs of the parents in the forefront with a

genuine trusted relationship of respect (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004). On the other hand, there is the traditional model of PI.

Traditional models of PI are characterized as parents being visible at parent conferences, attending back-to-school nights, volunteering in the classroom or school, assisting the school with fundraising events, and supervising their children to finish their homework. Other traditional models of PI, such as Joyce Epstein's (2009) overlapping spheres of influence, specify six different areas that schools can help families and the school community become informed and learn how to participate in school activities to assist their children in school. However, Epstein's traditional model of PI would not meet the needs of the parents of ELLs since it does not integrate parents of ELLs' cultures.

A non-traditional approach to increasing parents of ELLs' involvement is Luis Moll's construct model that embraces the cultural norms and cultural capital ELL students and parents possess, defined as "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133) because it is information students discover by interacting with their family. Although Moll's construct model includes the funds of knowledge ELL students and parents bring with them, this model is geared towards the classroom setting. When teachers integrate the funds of knowledge into the classroom curriculum, ELL students learn because they relate to the content subject matter. Opportunities for parent involvement of parents of ELLs are available, but could be limited depending on the classroom teacher and curriculum.

However, several promising best practices for parent engagement of parents of ELLs examine the connection between PI and parent engagement. Schools need to implement parent programs such as Project INSPIRE (Innovation that Nurtures Student Success and Parent Involvement to Reach Excellence) and PIQE (Parent Institute for Quality Education). These

programs involve parents and move them towards positive outcomes by engaging them in their children's education. The curriculum is modified to be culturally proficient, applicable, and responsive to the cultural background of every parent (Ramirez, 2010). These programs have triumphed not only in engaging parents in their children's education, but also in increasing students' academic achievement and test scores. Furthermore, Project INSPIRE and PIQE provide ample opportunities for the voices of parents of ELLs to be heard, which often times become muffled by *prescriptive* parent programs that do not respect parents' beliefs and values (Martin & Espinosa, 2008; Valdés, 1996). Prescriptive programs are programs where parents are not an essential part, and parents lack opportunities to fully utilize their own social groups, resources, and customs (Valdés, 1996).

Definition of Terms

Conventional Parent Involvement: Conventional Parent Involvement consists of parents attending parent conferences, attending back-to-school night, volunteering in the classroom and the school, and helping with fundraising events (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004; Jasis & Marriott, 2010).

Nonconventional Parental Involvement: Nonconventional Parent Involvement is a process, a context, and set of activities designed to support students in school and socialize them to the school environment and culture through systematic connection between the home and the school (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004, p. 21).

Parent Engagement: Parent engagement is engaging parents in the school by establishing three principles for interacting: authentic interest, trust, and respect (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004)

Hispanics/Latinos: Hispanic or Latino refers to people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (Ennis

et al., 2011). Latino is the word of choice for this study and accurately describes participants in this study.

English Language Learner (ELL): A term favored over *Limited English Proficient*, because it conveys that the student is in the process of learning English, without having the connotation that the student is in some way defective until full English proficiency is attained (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003).

Limited English Proficient (LEP): LEP is a controversial term used to describe children with limited English language skills due to their native language background. The term has been criticized for its negative connotations. It has been said that it defines children in terms of what they lack rather than what they already possess, such as valuable skills in a language other than English (Ovando et al., 2003).

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): CALP is "context-reduced" or "decontextualized" language (Ovando et al., 2003, p. 129). This dimension of language proficiency is an extension of social language. Academic language extends into more and more cognitively demanding use of language, with fewer contextual clues to meaning provided other than language itself as students move into more academically demanding work with each succeeding grade level.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS): BICS refers to social language, or "context-embedded" or "conversational" or "contextualized language" (Ovando et al., 2003, p. 127). In social language, meaning is negotiated through a wide range of contextual cues, such as nonverbal messages in face-to-face interaction or written feedback in a letter from a friend or an e-mail message

California English Language Development Test (CELDT): The CELDT is a required state test for English language proficiency that must be given to students whose primary language is other than English (California Department of Education, n.d.b).

California State Test (CST): The CSTs for English language arts, mathematics, science, and history-social science are administered only to students in California public schools. Except for a writing component that is administered as part of the grade four and grade seven English language arts tests, all questions are multiple-choice. These tests were developed specifically to assess students' knowledge of the California content standards (California Department of Education, n.d.a).

Funds of knowledge: Funds of knowledge are historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll et al., 1992).

Cultural capital: Cultural capital refers to the cultural experiences in the home that can facilitate children's adjustment and success in schools, thereby transforming cultural resources into cultural capital (Lareau, 1987).

Nature of the Study

This study used a phenomenological research design to collect and analyze data. The fundamental aspect of phenomenological research illustrates the meaning created by a group of people of their "lived experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). It explains what individuals have in common as they live through a phenomenon. The phenomenological researcher creates a synthesized description of "what" (p. 58) the participants experience.

Phenomenological research differs from other forms of qualitative research because it focuses on the creation of descriptions of lived experiences of a group of people who

experienced the same phenomenon. Phenomenology is helpful as a qualitative methodology because it provides in depth understanding of the lived experiences of a group of people that experienced similar events (Creswell, 2007). The data for this phenomenological study came from (a) focus group interviews with parents that meet eligibility criteria, and (b) an examination of school communication and documents sent home to parents (artifacts).

There were a total of 13 adults who are parents of ELLs who participated in focus group interviews at the research site. A total of 3 focus groups session were conducted with no more than six parents present at each session, and each session lasted no more than 120 minutes. Sessions consisted of open-ended questions regarding parent engagement, parents' perceptions of how they can get involved in their children's education, and the barriers they believe stop them from being meaningful participants in their children's school. The researcher used a recording device and was cautious that doing so would not negatively impact the focus group parent interview sessions and disrupt the dialogue. Before the start of focus group interviews, the researcher tested the recording device to make sure that it was working appropriately (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). The researcher conducted focus group interviews in order to gain an understanding of the experience of others.

Additionally, data collection involved an inspection of the school artifacts and methods of school-parent connections. School artifacts are public documents that the researcher can examine to study the communication between the schools and parents. The artifacts can be used to support this research and substantiate results produced from other avenues (McNeill, 1990). The artifacts are a running record of current practices and included newsletters and district communication that went home with students at the end of a school day.

Importance of the Study

The study is needed because U.S. schools are experiencing an increase of ELL students and immigrant parents who have limited literacy skills in their native language and speak or read little or no English at all. With an increase of ELL students there is a heightened concern on how to engage parents in school activities and decision-making processes effectively in order to help their children in school. Most ELLs are of Latino descent, and national tests, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which measures reading and writing, show that ELL in grades 4, 8, and 12 scored below-basic than Caucasian and Asian/Pacific Islander students (Echevarría, Short, & Powers, 2006). The concern is that these students will continue to fall behind because their parents do not have the cultural capital to facilitate their children's education. Many of these challenges occur because the parents have limited English or do not speak English due to language and culture (Nieto, 1999).

Immigrant parents want to help their children despite the language barrier, but often times do not know where to find instructional resources or strategies on how to help their children. Additionally, the type of programs offered at schools to parents are typically prescriptive and do not consider the culture and values of immigrant parents. As a result, the purpose of this study is to explore how to engage parents of ELLs at Hubble Elementary School effectively.

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations apply to this study:

- The study is limited to doing research as one school site, as opposed to all the elementary schools in WUSD.

- The study had a low participation rate of parents for focus group interviews. The participation goal was to have no fewer than 20 and no more than 30 parents from the ELL parent population.
- Each focus group interview had to be conducted with no more than six parents present in each session.
- A limitation to this study was low parental involvement, which limited the number of participants during focus group interviews.
- The study is limited to interviewing Latino parents of ELLs.

The following assumptions apply to this study:

- Parents will participate in this study because the researcher is bilingual.
- Parent participants would respond honestly and to the best of their abilities in the focus group sessions.
- Given opportunity, parents will provide suggestions for parent engagement practices.

Introduction to Subsequent Chapter

The next chapter consists of the literature review, which first focuses on parent engagement. Secondly, it focuses on the theoretical framework of school PI for parents, beginning with the traditional model. Joyce Epstein's (2009) overlapping spheres of influence are described, which focus on the school, the parents, and the community forming partnerships to promote PI. This study will also examine Moll's (Moll et al., 1992) construct of *funds of knowledge* that described how to engage parents of ELLs' through non-traditional models of parent involvement. It then focuses on Latinos and ELL students in the United States. Next, best practices that support parents of ELLs are described, followed by barriers parents of ELLs face in helping their children with school.

Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore parent perceptions of best practices as well as identify major barriers that prevent parents from being participants in school activities and decision making processes at Hubble Elementary school environment. This chapter explores the surrounding literature to produce a theoretical context for this study.

The literature review in this chapter is organized around five sections. The sections are as follows: (a) parent engagement practices and the research related to this area; (b) an overview of the research on PI that includes an examination of traditional model of PI for elementary school settings. In this section Joyce Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence will be described; (c) the Latino presence in schools as parents will also be examined through Moll's (Moll et al., 1992) construct of funds of knowledge; (d) research on parents of ELLs' involvement in schools as well as the demographic changes that make this a relevant topic; and (e) an exploration of best practices that support parents of ELLs is described, followed by an examination of research that attest to barriers these same parents face with school.

Today's schools are experiencing an increase of enrollment of LEP students, also known as ELLs. In the school years from 1992-1993 to 2002-2003, the number of ELL students soared to 84%, and in 18 states during this time span, ELL enrollment grew by more 200% (Echevarría et al., 2006). Today's classrooms include students from diverse cultures and backgrounds whose primary language is not English. The 2000 United States census indicated there were three million foreign-born children in the United States, and one-fifth of pre-kindergarten to 12^{th} grade students were children of immigrant parents (Betts, Bolt, Decker, Muyskens, & Martson, 2009). According to Coltrane (2003), students learning English in 2000-2001 "represent 9.6% of all

students enrolled in public pre-kindergarten through grade 12 classes in the United States; 67% of these students are enrolled at the elementary school level" (p. 1). The increasing numbers of ELLs with diverse cultures whose primary language is not English creates a challenge in schools. ELLs must show they are making academic yearly growth on state standards without yet being proficient in English. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) holds schools responsible for ensuring that ELLs are showing academic growth each year (Betts et al., 2009).

Statement of the Problem

From 2007-2012 at Hubble Elementary School, located in Woodbend, California, there has been a consistent population of approximately 50% ELLs. The large population of ELLs presents a challenge because schools have a hard time engaging parents in school activities and in decision-making processes. Schools with high percentages of ELLs have a tough time communicating with parents of ELLs. Many parents of ELLs have low literacy skills in their native language and speak or read little English or no English at all. Some have not had a formal education in their native countries. This makes it difficult for them to participate actively in their child's academics and school related functions. According to the 2000 census, half of the parents of ELLs did not graduate from high school, and a quarter of them obtained an education below the ninth grade (Arias & Morillo-Campell, 2008).

Parent Engagement

PI is associated with positive outcomes, but ultimately it still focuses on the school's own agenda and interests (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). In contrast, parent engagement, where the school focuses on the true needs of the parents, is necessary for the active participation of Latino parents of underserved students. Parent engagement consists of schools keeping the needs of the parents at the forefront with a genuine trusted relationship of respect (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004).

When parents are engaged, there is reciprocal communication between the school and parents. Parents take on active leadership roles and solicit feedback from other parents to reach a common goal. When they are engaged, parents take the initiative to create their own plans to further and enhance their children's education. For example, families can organize and mobilize themselves with the intention of improving student achievement or student safety and participation (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012).

Numerous examples demonstrate the power associated with true engagement of parents in schools. Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012) examined three parent engagement projects: La Familia Initiative, Charter School Parent Initiative, and Project Avanzando. La Familia Initiative was created by a group of Latina immigrant mothers at a middle school in Northern California in order to help the growing number of Latino students in the school over a period of 2 years. La Familia Initiative formed a partnership with the school to improve student achievement through better communication. La Familia Initiative transformed the school by drastically improving the school culture, increasing the presence of Latino families, and advocating for academic success. The Charter School Parent Initiative was started by a group of 12 parents with the help of three teachers and two former school district employees to create a community based charter school. The parents had an active voice in establishing a school vision, educational policies, and how the charter school should operate. Project Avanzando is a parent alternative program providing parents the opportunity to improve their educational level to equip them with skills to help their children in school. The end result is a joint model in which migrant parents and Project Avanzando staff hold each other accountable for students' learning.

History of Parent Involvement

During America's colonial period, it was the parents' responsibility to educate their child. According to Hiatt-Michael (2008), parents taught their children "discipline, basic skills, work skills, ethics, and value inculcation" (p. 90). The first schools were created by religious leaders that were later under the governance of town citizens. Since people were immigrating to America in order to have religious freedom, many of the schools taught the religious beliefs of the governing board. The American elementary education was controlled by parents who decided the curriculum to be taught and which teachers to hire.

During the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s and 1900s, child labor laws were enacted and children attended factory model schools (Hiatt-Michael, 2008). Local parent control over public education vanished, and was replaced by bureaucratic public school districts. Then, during the late 1900s the media revealed students who were "at risk" because they did not graduate from high school (Hiatt-Michael, 2008, p. 104). This shifted the attention back to reopening public schools to parental involvement in order to assist their children academically.

Research shows that "parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home, and parental participation in the schools and classrooms positively influence achievement" (Simich-Dudgeon, 1986, p. 3). Despite parents of ELLs' educational background, school PI of parents of ELLs plays a crucial role in their children's success in school. Schools can support parents, including parents with limited formal education, by providing strategies and programs that promote their involvement (Valdés, 1996). PI is connected to high point grade averages as well as increased achievement in language arts and math, to lower dropout rates, students not repeating grades, and lower special education placement (Anderson & Minke, 2007). All of these positive academic outcomes stem from school PI. Other non-academic positive outcomes of

school PI include student self-regulated behavior, improved social skills when interacting with peers at school, greater self-esteem, and participation in extracurricular activities. Also, students whose parents participate in school have lower behavior problems, and parents and students have better relationships with their teachers (Wong & Hughes, 2006).

However, parents of ELLs who are not proficient in English have a difficult time participating in school activities and helping their children with schoolwork. For an immigrant family, the language barrier and the lack of parent education skill makes it difficult for migrant parents to help their older children (Martinez & Velasquez, 2000). Additionally, family intervention programs at schools seldom provide the opportunity for parent engagement or for parents to express a problem**.** The intervention programs are predominantly "prescribed" one-way communication where the school is providing information to the parents (Martinez & Velasquez, 2000, p. 3).

According to Carmen Simich-Dudgeon (1986), parents are willing to assist their children with their academics when the teacher prescribes instructional strategies on how parents can help their children. Simich-Dudgeon further contended that:

> Schools that have newly-established parent involvement programs have noted that parents are willing to become involved, but that they do not know how to help their children with academic tasks at home, and in general, are fearful of doing more harm than good. To counteract this, the teacher must maintain contact with the parents, giving specific assistance with materials and tutoring techniques that will successfully reinforce the work being done in school. (p. 2)

Traditional model of parent involvement at the elementary level. According to Jasis and Marriot (2010), traditional models of PI can be defined as parents attending parent

conferences, participating in back-to-school night, volunteering in the classroom and the school, holding bake sales to fundraise, or helping their children with homework. Parent volunteering happens when teachers see the presence of parents in school functions. Menard-Warwick (2007) viewed parents who do all of the aforementioned as helping with their children's success, and many teachers believe parental involvement consist of schools training parents to help in the classroom and at home. Wong and Hughes (2006) described PI as the attempts made by parents or guardians that strictly assist with the academic success or the administrative needs of their child's school. PI can also include the quality of school to home and home to school communication. PI interactions can be initiated by teachers and parents, and can occur at home or in the school setting.

Other traditional models of PI offer recommendations on how parents can help students with their academics in different circumstances. Epstein's (2009) overlapping spheres of influence indicate six different areas that schools can target to help families and neighborhoods become educated and participate in educational activities to help their children in school. The six areas are: (a) helping parents with child rearing skills, (b) two-way communicating with parents about school functions and student academic progress, (c) recruiting parent volunteers in the classroom and school wide, (d) involving parents in learning activities that take place at home, (e) involving parents in school councils for school decision making, and (f) forming partnerships with community businesses and agencies in order to strengthen school programs. Epstein stated that an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) consisting of parents, teachers, and community members is needed to "plan, implement, and evaluate" (Epstein, 2009, p. 2) the six types of involvement. An ATP oversees the six types of involvement.

One type of PI in the elementary grades includes parent-child storybook reading that is connected to a child's language development. One study included first grade students whose parents read books to them while the students where in preschool. In the first grade, these children scored higher in an assessment that measured their receptive language skills that tested vocabulary and reading comprehension. In contrast, preschool children whose parents focused on teaching them letter recognition and decoding scored higher on an emergent literacy skills test. The studies are important because they are predictors of emergent literacy skills of reading achievement in the first grade and receptive language skills in reading comprehension in the third grade. Furthermore, the studies recommended that schools can guide parents on literacy activities that play a crucial role in the development of emergent and receptive language skills that will prepare their children to learn to read (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Additionally, Wasik (1998) researched empirical studies on the effects of adult volunteers in improving students' literacy skills, discovering that most elementary schools did not use parent volunteers, but instead used community volunteers as reading tutors. Wasik (1998) pointed out four common characteristics of the volunteer tutor programs: (a) a coordinator who is an expert in reading instruction, (b) structured reading activities for the reading tutors, (c) professional development for the volunteer tutors, and (d) no connection between the school curriculum and the structured reading activities. Wasik (1998) concluded that only a limited number of reading tutor volunteers programs have been evaluated as to what impact these programs have on improving students' reading achievement. However, the programs may still have the possibility of enhancing students' reading skills.

In order to discover whether or not the reading tutor volunteer programs had an impact in students' reading achievement, Baker, Gersten, and Keating (2000) did a longitudinal study on

first grade students in a low-cost community volunteer program. First grade students were either assigned to a control group or randomly paired with a one-to-one volunteer tutor for 2 years. Baker et al. (2000) evaluated the scores at the end of first and second grade and discovered students who were paired with a one-to-one tutor had made significant growth. The students showed growth in their reading fluency and comprehension by the end of second grade compared to the control group students who did not participate in the tutoring program.

Epstein's spheres of influence. Another theoretical consideration that provides context for the literature in PI is Joyce Epstein's (2009) "overlapping spheres of influence" (p. 7), which include the home, school, and the community sharing responsibilities in educating students. Epstein and Sheldon (2006) asserted that, for children to succeed, the school, parents, and the community must form *partnerships* rather than solely advocate parental involvement. Likewise, Heath and McLaughlin (1987) agreed that the community cannot be separated from the school and the parents because any troubles or triumphs in educational achievement "demand resources beyond the scope of the school and of most families" (p. 597) when educating a child. The community cannot be separated from the school because the school is part of the community.

The creation of partnerships among the school, parents, and the community acknowledges that all three are connected and accountable for students' success in school. For students to succeed, the whole responsibility does not lie solely with the school. Clear lines of communication among the school, parents, and communities need to be in place, and everyone is expected to be accountable for children's learning. If there is a breakdown in the lines of communication, vital information or resources for students may never reach them, which can negatively impact their learning. This is a systemic problem that requires a systemic solution.

Parents play a vital role in their children's learning, and therefore must be part of this partnership.

Specifically, Epstein (2009) described six types of parental and community involvement that provide structure for schools to create programs that include parents in their children' education in a variety of ways. The six types of involvement that help educators create family and school partnerships are: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community. Parenting involvement is helping parents create households that sustain children as students. For instance, Highland and College Park Elementary Schools' *Time-4-Learning* kindergarten program created a calendar for parents to boost their confidence in speaking with their children about school. The calendar contained parenting information, resources, and family activities to help students develop their social and behavioral skills (Brownstein, Maushard, Robinson, Greenfeld, & Hutchins, 2006).

In communication involvement, schools create successful forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school activities and students' academic achievement. This can be done by having student-led conferences in which the students meet with their parents and teacher. Students present a portfolio with their schoolwork to their parents. The teacher is there to guide students through the student-led conference and answer any questions parents might have (Epstein, 2009).

Volunteering consists of recruiting and coordinating parent assistance and support in the classrooms and school-wide. Balletine Elementary School accomplished this by having a miniature stuffed bear version of their mascot travel to different parents' jobs. The school sent out a letter recruiting the parents to volunteer to take the bear to their jobs. Every week the school would select a parent volunteer that said they wanted to participate. The school provided

the parent's son or daughter a bag with a stuffed bear, camera and a t-shirt. The student whose family was participating that week wore the t-shirt. The parent's job was to photograph the stuffed bear posing, for example, as a news anchor, firefighter, or whatever the parent's job was. Then, the parent would write a summary imagining what the bear experienced on the job (Epstein, 2009).

School learning at home involvement entails providing parents with vital information and suggestions for how they can support their children at home with homework or curriculum-based activities. For example, a school can hold a literacy night to teach parents about the different elements of literacy, such as reading comprehension and reading fluency. To attract as many parents as possible, the school could conduct the event during the week of Dr. Seuss's birthday (Epstein, 2009). Dr. Seuss's birthday is celebrated annually on March 2nd and schools have made this a community event that attracts parents and school partners to celebrate literacy in nationwide reading celebrations (National Education Association [NEA], n.d.).

Parents in school decisions. Decision making involvement comprises of parents' feedback in school decisions and developing parent leadership at the school. This includes involving all the parents from the SSC, SAC, and ELAC providing feedback on how categorical funds should be spent to improve student achievement. Others forms of decision making involvement, include parents on a school committee focusing on improving scores on classroom tests and assessments (Epstein, 2009).

Collaborating with the community requires the school finding and using resources and services from the community to strengthen school activities, family customs, and student learning. One way to accomplish this is by holding a cultural fair that includes visual and performing arts representative of the makeup of students' cultural background. Different artists,

musicians, and dancers from the community would be invited to share their talents and resources with students. Students would learn about the elements of art, music theory, and the fundamentals of dance. Students would then have the background knowledge to create their own student-led cultural affair at the school, and thus take their own initiative. Parents and teachers would be there to support the students and assist with any problems that arise in order to have a fruitful cultural festival.

Latino Parents

The U.S. Latino population grew 56% from 2000 to 2010, yet there exist limited studies on school PI of Latino parents (Ennis et al., 2011; Lopez & Dockterman, 2011; Moreno & Lopez, 1999). School PI contributes to student success by improving academic achievement, increasing parents' awareness of their children's education, and creating family social systems at school and in the community (Levine & Trickett, 2000). The existing literature regarding Latino PI often indicates low levels of school PI, teachers' perceptions that Latino parents are not interested in their children's education, or parents feeling intimidated by their children's teachers (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba (1991) stated that Latino immigrant parents do care about their children's education, but there is a difference between their expectations and those held by the schools their children attend. Immigrant parents hold on to their beliefs and expectations based on to their own schooling experiences from their native countries. For example, Latino parents' perception of their role in education is to provide their children with basic needs such as food, clothing, and a roof over their heads. For them, PI meant making sure their children obtained a "buena educación" (Valdés, 1996, p. 125), which means teaching them about good manners and moral values. U.S. schools and teachers do not understand these assumptions.

Also, Valdés (1996) found Latino parents attended open houses and parent-teacher conferences depending on how they perceived the invitation. Parents attended open houses because it was an event that their children enjoyed. Parents focused their attention on visiting their children's classrooms and looking at their schoolwork. They did not see it as an opportunity to talk to the teacher about their children's progress or learn about the school's instructional program; rather, they saw it as a social event that was meaningful to their children. Latino parents are willing to attend social functions such as festivals and fundraising events that engage their children. However, Latino parents do not see it as their role to initiate communication and engagement with teachers or to volunteer in the classroom. Valdés (1996) found:

> Even when asked to come [to school], however, it was often the case that parents did not respond… In many families neither of the two parents felt competent enough to deal with school personnel. They were embarrassed, and found almost any excuse not to go to the school and "ponerse en evidencia" (show how ignorant or incapable they were). Even when some parents were deeply committed to their children doing well in school, they hesitated to speak to the teacher herself. (p. 162)

Valdés' (1996) ethnographic study of 10 Mexican immigrant families illustrated that parents are involved in their children's education, but they are not "standard or typical middle class famil[ies]" (p. 191) where mothers are gathered around the dinner table teaching their children the alphabet and colors.

Valdés (1996) spoke about how to value what parents are already doing to prepare their children to become respectful, hardworking, and responsible children in school. In contrast, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers believe the solution to helping parents become involved in their children's education is to teach them to become *good parents* by providing the

family with remediation. The parents can learn how to teach their children to thrive in American schools through parent programs. A first type of parent program focuses on educating parents about healthy meals for their children, discipline, and preschool readiness. A second type of parent program is PI that strives to involve parents in their children's academic schoolwork. This is done by schools providing math and literacy night workshops, offering instructional activities for parents to enable them to help their children with schoolwork. A final type of parent program is parent empowerment programs that provide parents information on how the United States school system works, how they can be advocates for their children, and who are the key contact people that can help them navigate the U.S. school system.

Moll's funds of knowledge. Luis Moll's construct model includes the cultural norms and cultural capital ELL students and parents possess, which Moll defined as "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133) because it describes information that students learn at home through the interaction of family members. These funds of knowledge that students inherit from their household are valuable when teachers integrate them into the classroom curriculum. When teachers integrate students' funds of knowledge, ELLs learn because they connect with the content subject matter in a way that differs from a traditional white middle class view (Araujo, 2009). When schools use students' cultural knowledge in the classroom, it leads to PI because it helps encourage parents to use their own skills and knowledge. This is crucial in attempting to engage students in a meaningful manner that will have a long lasting impact on their education.

For example, Moll et al. (1992) conducted a qualitative study of ELL households and classrooms in Tucson, Arizona that focused on working class Mexican neighborhoods. Tucson is a city that borders the country of Mexico. The objective of the study was to develop creative ways of teaching ELLs based upon household knowledge and job expertise found in Tucson's

Mexican communities. Household knowledge can include various fields of occupation including but not limited to agriculture, farming, and construction (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). By teachers incorporating the household funds of knowledge into the classroom, ELLs have access to the curriculum and have other options beyond simply "sit[ting] through teacher-centric lectures about topics that do not take into consideration these students' language, culture or experience" (Araujo, 2009, p. 119). These teacher-centric lectures end up being ineffectual and not in the best interest of students.

To prevent this from happening, a teacher and an anthropologist visited the households of ELL students, made observations, and interviewed them and their families in order to learn about the lives and experiences of ELLs and their families. The funds of knowledge they discovered in the community were used to create better pedagogical practices for ELLs. Through their observations and interviews of Mexican working class families, the teacher incorporated what was learned from the households into thematic units focusing on construction and candy making (Moll et al., 1992).

The creation of the candy thematic unit did not consist solely of the teacher creating the curriculum. It was a group effort that consisted of consultants, teachers, and a parent whose expertise was in making candy. One of the reasons the parent was actively engaged was because he had experience with the process of making candy and the topic was culturally relevant. Not only did the school take the lead in creating learning opportunities for ELLs, but also opportunities were fostered for parents of ELLs to share their own funds of knowledge that consisted of sharing their home culture and labor skills (Panferov, 2010).

This group effort of consultants, teachers, and parents led to the creation of classroom activities for ELLs that included: inquiry, mathematics, making candy, advertising, and selling

the candy. First, the teacher tapped into students' prior knowledge by asking them to define the word *candy* and categorizing their responses. A three-column KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) chart was used to organize the unit of study. In the first column the teacher recorded information the children already *knew* about candy, and in the second column the teacher wrote questions the students *wanted* to know. The final column was labeled *what I learned* because students' responses regarding what they learned from studying the unit on candy would be recorded in that column (Moll et al., 1992).

Next, students were taught a lesson on data analysis and graphs, beginning by taking a survey on their favorite types of candy. Students examined the data and graphed the information into a visual representation. Finally, the teacher integrated the scientific method into the unit by having the students narrow their topic and create their own research questions. In order for students to create their own research questions, they used all the resources that were available to them, which included the expertise of the candy-making parent (Moll et al., 1992).

However, the parent volunteer was not there to file or prepare instructional materials for the teacher. Instead, he served as a valuable academic resource to the teacher and ELLs. The parent stimulated the cognitive development of ELLs to formulate research questions such as what ingredients are used in making candy (Moll et al., 1992). Then ELLs created a procedure for answering their research questions and hypothesized about the ingredients contained in different candy labels they would bring to class. Frequency of ingredients on the candy labels was graphed, and then students were guided to create two lists; one list consisted of Mexican candy ingredients and the other one included U.S. candy ingredients. ELLs discovered from their inquiry that Mexican candy had fewer ingredients as opposed to the U.S.-made candy, which had more ingredients such as artificial flavor and coloring. For the classroom culminating

activity, a parent of an ELL student came and taught the class how to make "pipitoria" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 138), a Mexican candy.

Additionally, the parent taught ELLs a lesson on economics by illustrating the differences between American and Mexican food supply and demand. According to Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008), when the school integrated the "community into the school curriculum" (p. 11), there was an increase in parental involvement that contributed to the school's success. Teachers, parents, and students were motivated and engaged because everyone in the school community was involved in, learning from, and growing from the shared experience.

Parents of English Language Learners

Traditional models of PI such as Epstein's (2009) that include six types of PI do not address the needs of parents of ELLs. The traditional models of PI do not include creating reciprocal comprehension of families and schools (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Traditional models of PI lack the integration of parents of ELLs' culture. As a result, Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) proposed what they refer to as a non-traditional model of ELL PI that states the following:

> Non-traditional models of ELL parent involvement are based on developing a reciprocal understanding of schools and families. These relationships situate cultural strengths of family and community within the school curriculum, parental education, and parent advocacy. Non-traditional models of involvement include parental empowerment as well as integration of community into school curriculum. (p. 11)

Paratore, Hindin, Krol-Sinclair, and Duran (1999) provided an example of non-traditional ELL PI that helped teachers involve parents from different economic and linguistic backgrounds in the classrooms and with their children's reading experiences. Economically disadvantaged

immigrant parents who came to the United States were trained to watch and participate in their children's primary literacy education at home. The parents were taught how to make portfolios of their children's reading assignments in order to bring them to school for parent-teacher conferences. Also, teachers were trained to comprehend family literacy and how to effectively use a family literacy portfolio to converse with students' parents during parent-teacher conferences. The outcome of the program made a positive impact by increasing the two-way communication between parents and teachers at parent-teacher conferences. Parents who participated in the program spoke more to the teacher and provided greater details about their children's literacy assignments at home.

To further engage ELL parental involvement as part of an action research project to recruit the funds of knowledge from multicultural and multilingual families, Chow and Cummins (2003) implemented a dual language books project. The goal of the dual language books project was for students to maintain their native first language (L1) while developing second language (L2) English literacy. Chow, a first grade teacher, sent parent language surveys home and discovered that students' families spoke 40 different languages. Additionally, many parents communicated to the school that they were available to read and narrate stories in students' first languages at school. Chow and Cummins (2003) implemented their dual language books projects throughout the school year in which students were reading books at home and at school in their L1 and L2. However, the number of children's books available in their first language was limited.

To solve this dilemma, Chow and Cummins (2003) motivated students to create their own dual-language or English-only books. Parents of ELLs were actively involved in their children's literacy activities; this was illustrated when an Arabic word processor expert came to

the school to help publish children's books for display. Other parents of ELLs were involved by storytelling in different classrooms in children's L1 or L2. The dual-language books project illustrates a non-traditional model of ELL PI because parents' home languages were promoted in order to develop their children's English literacy skills. Additionally, the teacher integrated members of the school community, such as an Arabic word processing expert, to help with the translation of books to showcase them to the entire school. Table 1 shows a comparison between traditional and non-traditional views of ELL parental involvement according to the work of Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008).

Table 1

Traditional and Non-Traditional Approaches to ELL Parental Involvement

Traditional	Non-Traditional
Assists families with parenting and childrearing skills, and with creating home conditions to support learning.	Develops reciprocal understanding of schools and families.
Communicates with families about school programs and student progress with two-way communications.	Situates cultural strengths of family and community within the school curriculum.
Includes recruiting effort to involve families as volunteers and audiences.	Provides parental education that includes family literacy and understanding school community.
Involves families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular-linked activities.	Promotes parental advocacy that informs and teaches parents how to advocate for their children.
Includes families as participants in school decisions, governance and advocacy through councils and organizations.	Instills parental empowerment through parent-initiated efforts at the school and community level.
Collaborates and coordinates with the work and community-based agencies, colleges and other groups to strengthen school programs.	Implements culturally and linguistically appropriate practices in all aspects of communication.

Note. From *Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times* (p. 13), by M. B. Arias and M. Morillo-Campbell, 2008, retrieved from Retrieved from http://greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy_Briefs /Arias_ELL.pdf. Copyright 2008 by the authors. Reprinted with permission.

There are two schools of thoughts on how to involve parents in their ELL children's education. Epstein (2009), Menard-Warwick (2007), and Wong and Hughes (2006) advocated for the traditional model, which consists of six ways in which parents can involve themselves in their children's education. In contrast, Moll et al. (1992) and Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) asserted that the traditional model is ineffective for ELL PI because the traditional model does not incorporate parents of ELLs' culture, which the non-traditional model does.

Latino Presence

According to the 2010 U.S. Census (as cited in Ennis et al., 2011), Hispanic or Latino refers to people of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. Latino is the term that will be used throughout this study. The 2010 Census (as cited in Lopez & Dockterman, 2011) indicated that 308.7 million people lived in the United States, of which 50.5 million were of Latino origin. In 2000 the Latino population was 35.3 million, which indicates that the population grew by 43% over the previous 10 years. Latinos accounted for more than half of the growth in total population of the United States (56%) from 2000 to 2010 (Ennis et al., 2011; Lopez & Dockterman, 2011). The 2010 U.S. Census (as cited in Ennis et al., 2011) indicated that the 50.5 million Latinos residing in the U.S., 31.8 million were of Mexican origin, followed by 4.6 million Puerto Rican origin Latinos, 1.8 million Cubans, 1.6 million Salvadorans, 1.4 million Dominicans, and 1 million Guatemalans. Latino-origin groups consisting of more than 1 million people comprise 90.7% of the U.S. Latino population (Lopez & Dockterman, 2011).

Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban origin Latinos in 2010 accounted for about three-quarters of the Latino people in the nation. The 2010 U.S. Census (as cited in Ennis et al., 2011) indicated that between 2000 and 2010 the population of Mexican origin Latinos grew by 54%,

Puerto Ricans grew by 36%, and Cubans grew by 44%. Other origin Latinos populations such as Central Americans, South Americans, and Dominicans grew as well. For example, between the years 2000 and 2010 Salvadorans grew by 152%, Guatemalans grew by 180%, South Americans grew by 105%, and Dominicans grew by 85% .

In 2010 more than three-quarters of the Latino population resided in the West and South part of the United States. Specifically, 41% Latinos lived in the West and 36% lived in the South. The Northeast part of the country housed 14% of the Latino population and the Midwest housed 9% of the Latino population. The Latino population grew in every region from 2000 to 2010, especially in the South and Midwest. The South underwent a 57% growth of its Latino population, resulting in four times the growth of the total population in the South (14%). The Midwest increased its Latino population by 49%, which was more than 12 times the growth of the total population in the Midwest (4%; Ennis et al., 2011).

The three main states in which over half of the Latino population live are California, Texas, and Florida. California Latinos make up 28% of the total Latino population, Texas Latinos make up 19% of the total Latino population, and Florida Latinos make up 8% of the total Latino population. Geographically, most U.S. Latinos reside in the nine following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. In 2000, 81% of U.S. Latinos lived in these nine states compared to the year 2010, when 76% of Latinos lived in these nine states. States in the South showed an increase in Latino population during this time frame. In South Carolina, the Latino population grew from 95,000 in 2000 to 236,000 in 2010. Alabama displayed the second fastest growth rate of U.S. Latinos during this time, increasing from 76,000 to 186,000 (Ennis et al., 2011). Figure 1 shows the percent distribution of the Hispanic population by state in 2010.

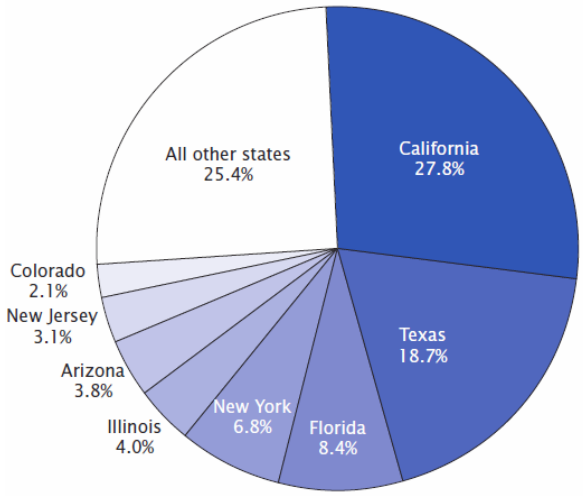

Figure 1. Percent distribution of the Hispanic population by state: 2010. Reprinted from *The Hispanic Population: 2010*, by S. R. Ennis, M. Ríos-Vargas, and N. G. Albert, 2011, retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf. Copyright 2011 by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Close to two thirds of all the Latinos in the United States are of Mexican origin, yet they are not the largest Latino origin group in the nation's metropolitan areas. For instance, Puerto Ricans are the majority in the New York area, and in the Miami area Cubans are the majority. Salvadorans are the largest Latino group in the Washington, D.C. area, comprising 33.7% of Washington, D.C.'s more than 700,000 Latinos. In Chicago, 79.2% of the area Latinos are of Mexican origin, and in San Antonio, 91.3% of all Latinos are of Mexican origin. In Atlanta, 58.1% are Latinos of Mexican origin (Lopez & Dockterman, 2011).

In California, the Latino population grew at a slower pace from 2000-2010 than the rest of the nation according to the 2010 U.S. Census (as cited in Lin, 2011). During that time frame, California increased by 3 million Latinos, which represents a 28% growth. The 2010 census indicated there were 14 million Latinos in California, which makes it the state with the largest population of Latinos in the United States. California was home to 11.4 million Mexicans as of 2010. Furthermore, more Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and other Latino groups live in California than any other state.

Of the 58 counties in California, nine of them included a high population of Latinos in 2010: Imperial, Monterey, San Benito, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Kings, Tulare, and Colusa. Latinos were also the majority of the population of 17 cities in California. Examples of cities with high population of Latinos included: Santa Ana (78.2%), Oxnard (73.5%), and Inglewood (51%). However, the city with the highest population of Latino residents in 2010 was East Los Angeles (97.1%; Lin, 2011).

In 2000 the total population of Woodbend, the city in which the school under investigation is located, was 112,580 and decreased by 3% to 109,673 in 2010.The greatest declines were seen among young people ages 0-19 years old (7,000) and African Americans (5,000). In terms of diversity, Latinos became the majority between 2000 and 2010 with a population increase of 46% to 51%. African-Americans, who equaled Latinos in 2000, decreased to 43% of the population in 2010[3].

English Language Learners

A 2008 Edsource report defined a student in the K-12 public school as an *English learner* in California if the student's primary home language was other than English and his/her school district had not reclassified him/her as a *fluent English proficient* according to state test scores and other measures. California Department of Education (n.d.c) data from 2006-2007 specified that California had 6.3 million students in grades K-12. Of those students, 1.6 million (25%) were English learners who spoke more than 50 different non-English languages. Spanish was the primary language for 85% of California's English learners (ELs), followed by Vietnamese, spoken by 2.2% of ELs. Top languages spoken by ELs included: Filipino (consisting of Pilipino or Tagalog, spoken in the Philippines), Cantonese (a Chinese dialect), and Hmong (a group of

[3] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

dialects among an ethnic minority population in China and Southeast Asia). Figure 2 shows the primary languages of English learners in 2006-2007 in California.

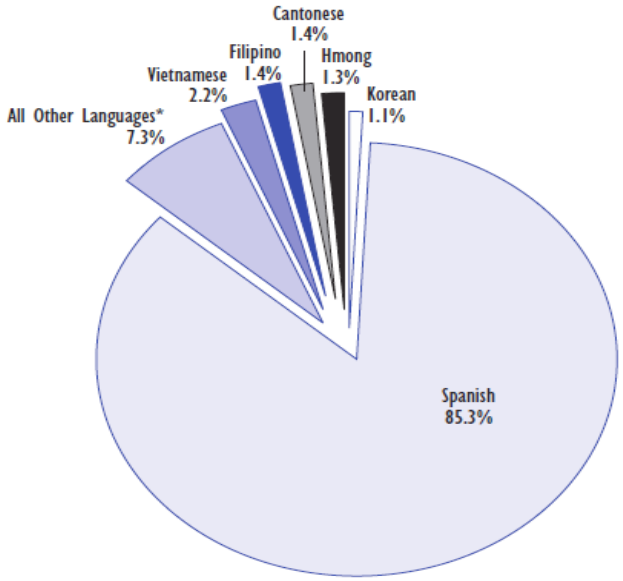

Figure 2. Primary languages of English learners in 2006-07. Reprinted from *English learners in California: What the numbers say,* by Edsource, 2008, retrieved from http://edsource.org/wp-content/publications/ELStats0308.pdf. Reprinted with permission.

A student is identified as an EL through the home language survey a parent completes as part of a new student registration process. There are four questions on the home language survey, which asks a parent what was the first language that his/her child learned to speak and the language that is used predominantly at home (see Appendix A). If any one of these questions is answered with a response of a language other than English, the student is considered to have a non-English primary language (Edsource, 2008). Because of NCLB, school districts since 2001-2002, have been mandated to assess the English proficiency of students who have a non-English primary language. Students' English proficiency skills are assessed using the CELDT and performance on California Content Standards. The CELDT assess four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, listening is assessed by presenting four pictures to students, and they are instructed to circle the picture of a turtle. Speaking consists of students narrating a story from several pictures. The area of reading measures students' reading

comprehension. The writing domain tests for grammar, syntax, capitalization, and punctuation. The CELDT measures English proficiency as opposed to performance on California Content Standards (Edsource, 2008).

Historical review. Historically, ELLs were provided ample time to learn English before they were mainstreamed into their academic subject classes. They were not mandated to take state standardized tests in language arts and mathematics because "state and local policies typically exempted limited-English-proficient students from standardized tests for up to 3 years" (Echevarría et al., 2006, p. 198). Schools had ESL and bilingual programs with certified teachers for ELL students (Echevarría et al., 2006). However, these certified teachers and their ELL students were often isolated from regular educational programs.

Federal legislation such as the reauthorization of NCLB holds schools accountable for ELLs' learning. Schools must show that ELLs are making academic progress each year (Betts et al., 2009). To help schools make sure ELLs are meeting academic proficiency, Title III Part A (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act) of NCLB was created. This federal law provides schools with funds in order for them to provide the following: after school tutoring in English language arts and mathematics, the purchase of supplementary instructional materials, research-based professional development for teachers, and resources to increase parental school involvement of ELLs. The goal of NCLB's Title III Part A is:

> To help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student

> academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet. (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, para. 3)

Current research indicates that in spite of federal policy, such as NCLB, ELLs are being left behind because they are not scoring proficient on state standards test. According to Echevarría, Vogt, and Short (2008), only 4% of eighth grade language learners and 20% of students who were "formally considered" (p. 4) ELLs scored in the proficient or advanced level on the reading section of the 2005 National Assessment for Educational Progress.

Another variable contributing to why ELLs are not excelling academically is due to ELLs learning English and also learning content subject matter at the same time (Carrier, 2005). Because they are doing two tasks, they "need more support than the average native English-speaking student who has an age appropriate command of the English Language" (p. 6). The lack of English language proficiency while learning new subject matter makes it difficult for ELLs to score high on district formative and benchmark assessments. Complicating this situation, teachers who are not trained on how ELLs learn often retain or refer them to special education. Huennekens and Xu (2010) stated that "because of their low scores on a variety of academic tasks and developmental assessments, ELL students often are misdiagnosed and misrepresented in Special Education programs" (p. 19). With the change in demographics from 2000-2010 indicating that the number of ELLs has increased, teachers need to be trained effectively to accommodate this rapidly growing population's unique needs.

Theoretical review. ELLs are students who are learning or are limited in their ability to speak, read, and write English (Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Not all ELL students are the same; each comes with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, economic status, and academic skills that play an integral part in how they learn (Araujo, 2009). Time is a crucial factor in terms of

how ELL students develop their language skills, as these students are learning two language skills. The first language developed is "social" or "playground" (Betts et al., 2009, p. 146) language, referred to as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). ELL students acquire BICS in 2-3 years (Haynes, 2007). The other type of language skill is Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); this is the academic language skill ELL students need to learn content subject matter. It can take up to 5-7 years for ELL students to develop CALP (Betts et al., 2009). CALP is less context-embedded, so it is more cognitively challenging for ELLs to learn (Cummins, 1980).

Another way ELL students learn English is if academic subject matter is taught in their native language (Haynes, 2007). Jim Cummins' (as cited in Haynes, 2007) Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) theory of second language acquisition indicates that "concepts are most readily developed in the first language and, once developed, are accessible through the second language" (p. 22). In other words, there is a direct relationship between a native language and the acquisition of a second language when learning content subject matter. An ELL who is taught academic concepts in his/her native language would be able to transfer the academic concepts in the new language. Another important theory of how students acquire a second language is Stephen Krashen's (1981) Monitor Model. In this model, students acquire a second language in an environment that is non-threatening, the information presented to the students is of interest to them, and they understand the information (Freeman & Freeman, 2001). Therefore, it is important that teachers create welcoming and inviting classrooms where traditional ways of teaching such repetitive drills are a thing of the past; instead, the ELL student learns best in engaging active learning environments.

The ELL student is limited in English skills, but is not limited in learning content subject matter due to a language barrier. According to Ovando et al. (2003), "Children who are not fully proficient in English are going to be more likely to master a mathematics or science lesson presented in English if they are dealing only with partial language barrier and not with a language barrier combined with a cognitive barrier" (p. 253). In other words, ELL students can master subject content matter from different areas of the curriculum with proper guidance and instruction from their teachers.

ELL students tend to learn better when teachers use manipulatives in lessons and integrate multiple subjects through thematic units. Having sufficient visuals, realia, and manipulatives is a must when teaching math and science because "students like to smell, touch, see, hear, taste, connect, disconnect, heat, cool, and quantify things. They want to learn why certain things work the way they do and why others work differently" (Ovando et al., 2003, p. 252). Due to mathematics and science dealing with quantifiable subject matter, ELL students are more likely to develop cognitive skills in these areas even though they are being taught in English. Cognitive skill development is made possible by the teacher using an abundance of manipulatives, doing demonstrations, and conducting experiments in order to involve students maximally in the lessons. To foster student involvement, students should be given the opportunity to work in cooperative groups. Ample time must be provided for students to conduct experiments and discuss their findings through the use of charts, realia, and manipulatives (Ovando et al., 2003).

Current research indicates that in order for ELLs to be successful in school, they must learn English vocabulary, grammar, and how English is used in subject matter classes. Academic English consists of the "semantic and syntactic knowledge, along with functional language use"

(Echevarría et al., 2006, p. 19) that ELL students must master in order to be successful in their academic subject classes. For instance, ELLs must be able to comprehend different genres of prose, write persuasive essays, and take notes from teacher lectures.

Teachers need to provide specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) to make content subject matter accessible to ELLs. According to Echevarría et al. (2006), SDAIE is an instructional approach in which the teacher uses "visuals and demonstrations, scaffolded instruction, targeted vocabulary development, connections to student experiences, student-to-student interaction, adaptations of materials, and use of supplementary materials" (p. 199) to make core content accessible to ELLs.

Furthermore, literature reveals ELL students tend to learn better when teachers implement "critical pedagogy" (McLaren, 2003, p. xv) practices in their classrooms. Critical pedagogy, a dialectical method of instruction, asserts that learning takes place when a student's background is connected to the classroom curriculum. According to McLaren (2003), learning starts with student's prior knowledge of their experiences upon which they build to help them "develop a more critical, structural, and scientific understanding of their daily lives in relation to the lives of others and the institutional, cultural, and social mediations that structure this relations (theory)" (p. xv). ELL students learn when their cultural backgrounds are incorporated in the classroom curriculum because then they are able to relate to the curriculum. By making a connection to the curriculum, ELL students will learn new concepts taught in the classroom.

Best Practices that Support Parents of ELLs

National policy NCLB Act of 2001 promotes PI as a key factor of students' success. Title I federal funds provide support to schools' PI initiatives for poor, disabled, limited English proficiency, and limited literacy minority background parents. Federal funds are available for

schools to create and implement PI programs to support parents of ELLs. However, often times these programs are unsuccessful because they lack three major conditions needed for Latino PI: connecting with Latino parents, sharing information, and staying involved (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004).

The principal, the leader of the school, must provide explicit support for PI of parents of ELLs. From the beginning the leader has to set the tone that he/she cares about and is an advocate for parent-school collaboration via school policies, staff decisions, and actions (Borba, 2009; Waterman & Harry, 2008). For example, the principal has the authority to hire staff for his/her school. To support PI of parents of ELLs, the principal needs to hire a school parent liaison and front office personnel that speak parents of ELLs' native language. Another strategy to support PI of parents of ELLs is for the principal to convey to his/her teachers that the school supports parents of ELLs. The principal makes himself/herself visible and available to answer parents' questions during parent-school functions.

It is not enough for the principal to take the initiative to answer parents of ELLs' questions; rather, the school as a whole needs to initiate effective communication with parents. Letters sent home need to be in the parents' native language, and, if possible, allow a parent to read the translation to give any input on how to make it clearer for parents to comprehend. Teacher communication with parents of ELLs is essential in order for those parents to support their children's learning at home. If possible, teachers need to provide information on a regular or weekly basis on how parents can support their children's academics. Teachers need to understand that parents of ELLs might not have access to email or Internet services at their homes. For this reason, it is important that the school maintains bilingual community liaisons and secretaries to assist parents with any questions they have for teachers.

To support parents of ELLs, schools need to offer skills-based workshops and information meetings. Skills-based workshops can focus on literacy and math strategies that parents of ELLs can use to help their children in reading, writing, and math. Examples would include teaching parents about the writing process, graphic organizers, and strategies to help their children comprehend literature and books they want to read. The informational meetings would entail disseminating grade level standards, showing how to read their child's report card, and explaining the special education process (Waterman & Harry 2008).

Also, because many parents of ELLs did not obtain a formal education in the United States, they are unaware of how the United States school systems and policies work. For example, parents of ELLs do not know that in high school, their children have the opportunity to select their coursework. Because parents are unaware of college requirements, they are unable to properly guide their children in selecting their high school coursework (Waterman & Harry, 2008).

Furthermore, because parents of ELLs speak little to no English, school site decision councils may lack representation of parents of ELLs. In order to promote their involvement, schools need to select a school staff member like a parent liaison whose job would be to recruit and involve parents of ELLs to be part of these school decision councils. In this manner, concerns of parents of ELLs could be voiced and addressed by the school administration. Another responsibility for the parent liaison would be to work specifically on parent-school collaboration.

For parent-school collaboration to happen, it is vital that the parent liaison speaks the native language of the vast majority of parents of ELLs and is competent in building relationships between the school and the parents. To have a profound impact on building school-

parent relationships, the community liaison must be provided with opportunities to implement and develop school wide programs that include all parents in the school community. However, what happens most often is that principals and school supervisors bombard community liaisons with requests for translation, leaving the parent liaison little time to develop and implement parental involvement programs.

To further promote PI of parents of ELLs in their children's schools, family literacy and ESL programs need to be provided at school sites. According to Waterman and Harry (2008), having ESL classes and literacy programs is crucial in developing increased parent-school collaboration. Having ESL classes on school sites increases parent visibility and can enable parents to foster relationships with their children's teachers. Family literacy programs provide opportunities for children and their parents to spend time together. ELL children feel inspired and become immersed in reading when they see their parents at school taking ESL classes and showing an interest in their learning.

Therefore, it is important for schools to create and support a school-based parent volunteer program, which requires proper planning and involvement of teachers with the principal to assess how parents of ELLs can volunteer in school. Parents could volunteer in the classroom or school wide. Parents that are willing to volunteer and the teachers that are going to work with them need to be trained. School staff members need to provide training to parents and teachers consistently. Additionally, the school staff needs to be available to parents and teachers in case problems arise that can dismantle the parent-school collaboration the school is trying to achieve. Parent volunteer programs need to be organized and structured because if they are not, "efforts to involve parents as volunteers could fail and cause further problems between parents and school staff" (Waterman & Harry, 2008, p. 14), which can lead to teachers and parents

becoming discouraged. Likewise, parents of ELLs can start doubting their abilities and questioning whether they are assets to the school.

Moreover, through parent volunteer programs, opportunities to create and support parental leadership development could emerge. Schools need to nurture parent leadership that can serve as a foundation for developing strong school-parent collaboration. Parents of ELLs, when supported by the school, will begin to realize their own growing influence and ability to affect their children's education. Additionally, they will realize they have the ability to support their children's teachers as well as other parents who have recently migrated to the United States. Parent leaders recruit other parents to become familiar with school policies and how the American school system works.

Project INSPIRE (Innovation that Nurtures Student Success and Parent Involvement to Reach Excellence). Project INSPIRE, a program that was federally grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement as a PIRC (Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), received funding from 2003-2011 (California Association of Bilingual Educators [CABE], n.d.; Quezada, 2011; Ramirez, 2010). As the leading organization that promotes bilingual education, the California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) received funding to create and implement a parent leadership program that engaged parents in their children's education in order to improve their children's academics. The California State PIRC-1 is a joint association among CABE, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools in Southern California, and Alameda County Office of Education in Northern California (Ramirez, 2010).

CABE's Project INSPIRE had four main objectives: (a) diminishing the academic gap for at-risk students; (b) creating parent awareness, leadership skills, and school engagement to

increase children's academic levels; (c) capacity building of schools and districts to maintain strong parent engagement and leaderships programs centered on student success; and (d) developing parent leadership skills by training other parents on how to support their children's education. Project INSPIRE accomplishes these objectives by conducting workshops, each consisting of specific modules that target a specific topic, such as understanding the U.S. system of education or the basic components of NCLB (California Association of Bilingual Educators [CABE], n.d.; Quezada, 2011; Ramirez, 2010).

The outcome of Project INSPIRE has had a positive impact on the achievement of the students of the parents that participated. As stated previously, the Alameda County Office of Education PIRC received funding from 2006-2011. Research indicates that for the first 4 years of Project INSPIRE, those students whose parents were involved improved their CST math scores by 18.5 points in 2009 and 26.5 points in 2010. Furthermore, students increased their CST English language arts scores by 12.8 points in 2005 and 13.5 points in 2010 (Ramirez, 2010). The data indicate that schools that have programs with clear organizational goals and objectives have greater success in increasing parental involvement, which, in return leads to greater student success (Zarate, 2007).

Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). Another parent program that showed promising results of parent engagement in their children's education is the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). PIQE is a 501(c) non-profit organization that was created in San Diego County in 1987 by retired Baptist minister Reverend Vahac Mardirosian and Dr. Alberto Ochoa. Reverend Mardirosian was concerned about the high dropout rates and low academic success for Latino students in the San Diego area. His goal was to create a collaborative partnership between parents and schools in order to reduce dropout rates. The driving force

guiding PIQE is that parents who are economically disadvantaged or are recent immigrants to America need to be informed about: (a) the U.S. educational system, (b) how to communicate with the schools and teachers, and (c) how to assist their children at home with schoolwork (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). PIQE's mission is to engage parents in their children's educational process in order to reduce dropout rates and increase college participation for economically disadvantaged students.

PIQE builds upon Joyce Epstein's (2009) six types of PI practices, adding *advocacy* and placing it second on the list because it serves as the backbone for the remaining types of PI: (a) parenting, (b) advocating, (c) communicating, (d) volunteering, (e) learning at home, (f) decision making, and (g) collaborating with the community (Martin & Espinosa, 2008). PIQE equips parents to act as advocates for their children's education by offering 9-week PI training classes. Program topics include the following: (a) home-school collaboration; (b) the home, motivation, and self-esteem; (c) communication and discipline; (d) academic standards, (e) how the school system functions; and (f) and the road to university (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

PIQE creates a curriculum that is culturally proficient, applicable, and responsive to the cultural background of every parent. Because PIQE's curriculum is personalized to guarantee that "it is culturally competent, relevant, and sensitive to the cultural background of all parents" (Vidano & Sahafi, 2004, p. 2), it has demonstrated positive parent engagement. A 2004 performance evaluation of PIQE services in San Diego revealed the following:

> Since the program started in Sherman Elementary School, October 1987, over 330,000 parents have graduated from PIQE's (9 week) parent involvement training classes from 1,200 elementary, middle and high schools in districts within San Diego, Los Angeles,

Fresno, San Jose, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Monterey, Sacramento, Stanislaus, Alameda, San Francisco, and Shasta Counties. (Vidano & Sahafi, 2004, p. 2)

PIQE's 9-week PI training classes have led to greater parent engagement of Latino parents with their children and school. Parents were provided with advocacy skills by becoming aware of what their children need to succeed in school and be accepted to a university. Not only has PIQE increased PI in school, but it has also positively influenced student achievement. Martin and Espinosa (2008) conducted a study to examine differences in student achievement between students of parents who did and did not graduate from the PIQE Program. A random sampling of 598 students from a Title I elementary school in southern California was examined. Students' CST in English Language Arts (ELA) 2006, CST Math 2006, fall math trimester 2006, and Average Daily Attendance (ADA) 2006 scores were used to measure student success. Study results revealed that students of PIQE graduates scored higher on the CST ELA 2006 and CST math 2006 than to students of non-PIQE graduates. The mean CST ELA 2006 score of students whose parents participated in PIQE was 339.53 as opposed to a mean score of 325.12 for those students whose parents were not PIQE graduates. The mean CST math 2006 score for students whose parents were PIQE graduates was 401.20, and 355.76 was the mean score for students whose parents were not PIQE graduates. Table 2 summarizes the components of Project INSPIRE and PIQE parent involvement programs.

Table 2

Parent Involvement Programs: Project INSPIRE and PIQE

Factor	Project INSPIRE	PIQE
What	Diminish the academic gap for at-risk students, create parent engagement, capacity building of schools and districts to maintain strong parent engagement programs, and develop parent leaders for student success	Guides economically disadvantaged or recent immigrants in the educational process and trains parents to act as advocates for their children's education

(continued)

Factor	Project INSPIRE	PIQE
Who	Schools conduct workshops, each consisting of specific modules targeting a specific topic Federally grant funded program by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement as a PIRC (Parent Information Resource Center PIRC)	Schools offer 9 week PI training classes equipping parents to advocate for their children's education 501(c) non profit organization that receives grants and contracts from federal, state and local educational agencies
Outcome	Project INSPIRE has clear organization goals resulting in greater parental involvement thus leading to greater student achievement	Greater Latino parent engagement and student achievement leading to reduced drop out rates and higher college participation

Project INSPIRE and PIQE are two PI programs that have been successful in engaging parents in their children's education. Project INSPIRE is a federally grant funded program, as opposed to PIQE, which is a non-profit organization. Both programs have been successful not only in engaging parents in their children's education, but also in increasing students' academic achievement and test scores.

Parents of ELLs' School Based Barriers

School based barriers of parents of ELLs consist of schools having a deficit-based perception of families of ELLs. Educators often view culturally and linguistically diverse families as being a problem in schools. Part of the reason they are viewed in this way is teachers' lack of training to work with culturally and linguistically diverse parents (Waterman & Harry, 2008). Parents of ELLs are looked upon as having no experience and education to assist their children with school related activities.

As a result of the deficiency in educators' perspectives on families of ELLs, "fault and responsibility lie with the ELL population rather than with the school" (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008, p. 8), and it is the school's responsibility to alter school/family interaction. This happens when teachers advocate for parents of ELLs to speak only English to their children at home. The result is that their children's cognitive development is disrupted, which delays their learning at school. Likewise, telling parents who are not proficient in English to speak English at home can lead to their children's development of poor language skills (Borba, 2009).

Additionally, parents' lack of English language proficiency is a prevalent barrier to their involvement in schools. Parents of ELLs who speak, read, and write little or no English have a hard time helping their children with homework. Similarly, parents of ELLs' concerns cannot be communicated to school staff unless school staff is available to translate. If no one is available to translate, this results in a breakdown in communication, comprehension, and relationship building between parents of ELLs and schools (Waterman & Harry, 2008). The breakdown in communication results in losing vital information such as teachers informing parents of ELLs of content standards, classroom and school expectations, and ways in which parents of ELLs can help their children with their learning (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

The education level of a parent of ELLs or their negative personal experiences with their own schooling can be a barrier in helping their children with learning. In 2003 for families of ELLs, at least one-third of the heads-of-household did not graduate from high school (Ferlazzo, 2009), largely due to economic reasons. As teenagers or children, many had to drop out of school and find a job in order to help their parents financially because of the collectivistic value of helping to take care of the family unit. When they become parents themselves, their lack of a formal academic education makes it difficult for them to help their children with school assignments. Martinez and Velazquez (2000) portrayed the challenge a migrant mother encounters when helping her children with schoolwork:

> With two of my children, I do very little because they go to higher grades…I can't participate with them because I don't have the education. What I do is…take them to the library so they can find information in books…the one I do a little more with is the youngest, she is in fifth grade, so I sit with her and help her and I go over her homework. (pp. 2-3)

Migrant parents who often speak, read, or write little or no English find it difficult to help their children beyond their elementary education. The aforementioned migrant mother shared how she has two other children that are older than her fifth grade daughter, but was unable to assist them with schoolwork. However, she found other ways to help them, such as taking the children to the library to find information they need to complete their school assignments.

Another barrier parents of ELLs face in participating in their children's schools is a lack of comprehension of how the U.S. school system works. For instance, some parents might not be familiar with bilingual education, and might feel their children are being deprived of learning English. Also, school staff members who have limited exposure to families of ELLs' cultural background or experiences create a barrier for ELL parental involvement in schools (Waterman & Harry, 2008). Therefore, one way to prevent misperceptions is to provide professional development to school employees regarding the competences families of ELLs bring with them. Teachers frequently report they lack the time to involve parents, or they need formal training on how to involve parents in the school setting effectively. They acknowledge that parental involvement is important, but their focus is on teaching their students and not the parents (Chen, Kyle, & McIntyre, 2008).

Logistical issues such as parents of ELLs working long hours and holding more than one job to meet their economic needs pose further barriers to parental involvement. Some parents of ELLs hold more than one job, which is attributed to their lack of obtaining a formal education. They have to hold more than one job to meet their economic needs. They finish their morning shift only to start their evening job. Their labor intense work schedules often prevent them from attending parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, or open houses. For example, Martinez and Velazquez (2000) offered the example of a migrant worker who must work from

dawn to dusk. She has no time to participate in school related functions. In the morning, the parent dresses her children and takes them to the babysitter, and there are many days when she picks them up in the evening and her children are already asleep. Sometimes she is so tired from being on the fields that she arrives home in a bad mood. There are other days when she is able to pick the children up earlier, but then she must attend to household chores, such as cooking for her children, doing laundry, and cleaning, which further limits her time to be involved in her children's school related activities.

Summary

The 2010 U.S. Census (as cited in Ennis et al., 2011) indicated that Latinos accounted for 56% of the total growth in population of the United States. California Department of Education data from 2006-2007 reveals 1.6 million ELLs living in California. The Latino population is growing, yet the literature reveals that schools still struggle to meet the challenge of engaging Latino parents in their children's education (California Department of Education, n.d.c).

The literature revealed two contrasting schools of thought regarding how to involve parents of ELLs in their children's school. The first one is a traditional model that is supported by Epstein (2009), Menard-Warwick (2007), and Wong and Hughes (2006). These researchers proposed that to involve parents, there are six ways for parents to participate in their child's education: (a) assisting parents with parenting, (b) two-way communication, (c) recruiting parent volunteers, (d) involving parents with homework, (e) including families in school councils, and (f) collaboration with the community. In contrast, Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) and Moll et al. (1992) asserted that the traditional model of ELL PI is ineffective at promoting ELL PI because it lacks the integration of parents of ELLs' culture, as well as a mutual understanding between the parents of ELLs and the schools due to cultural and linguistic differences.

Much of the literature contained gaps by not addressing the difference in parents' and schools' perception of what it means to obtain an education. For Latino immigrant parents, obtaining a good education means parents instilling manners and good moral values in their children. In contrast, schools expect Latino immigrant parents to help their children with academics. In essence, what results are misperceptions that immigrant parents are not involved in their children's education.

For this reason, the purpose of this study is to further this field to understand how to effectively engage parents of ELLs. Parent programs like Project INSPIRE and PIQE have been successful in engaging PI in their children's education and in improving student achievement in spite of school based barriers that parents of ELLs sometimes face. Therefore, where different models of parent engagement exist, the research examined how to engage parents by accepting them as they are. Just as a teacher opens her classroom to students who come with a range of experiences, behaviors, and attitudes, she must also be prepared to interact with parents with varying past histories and cultural backgrounds. Thus, this study explored effective, culturally sensitive parent engagement for parents of ELLs.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures

Overview

This chapter describes the methodology that was conducted as part of this dissertation research study. This chapter restates the research questions and then describes why a phenomenological approach best meets the needs of this study. The aim of this phenomenological study was to explore the parent perceptions of best practices for parent engagement as well as to identify major barriers that prevent them from being participants in school activities and the decision-making processes at Hubble Elementary School. The study described the current practices of PI and engagement practices that currently exist at Hubble Elementary School using focus group parent interviews and artifact review.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore Latino parents of ELLs' perceptions of best practices for parent engagement as well as to identify major barriers that prevent them from being active participants in school activities and the decision-making processes at Hubble Elementary School environment. The following are the research questions that guide this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were explored in this study:

1. How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?
2. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the most meaningful and encouraging best practices to elicit comprehensive parental engagement?

3. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the barriers that prevent them from becoming engaged in the total school environment?

Research Approach and Design

This study used a phenomenological research design to collect and analyze data. The principal aspect of phenomenological research allows the researcher to describe rather than to explain (Lester, 1999). Phenomenological research allows for the development of a descriptive analysis of what currently exists in the field. Thus this study seeks to use this approach to understand current practices in place at Hubble Elementary School. The second reason a phenomenological approach was warranted in this study is because this methodology allows for the research to present the meaning manifested by a group of people and their "lived experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). It explains the commonalities that people share as they proceed through some event. The phenomenological researcher produces a synthesized description of "what" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58) the participants experience. This form of research differs from other kinds of qualitative research primarily in that it focuses on the detailed narratives of experiences of some group of people who have lived through the same event(s). Phenomenology is useful as a qualitative methodology because it offers a valuable way to understand the lived experiences of a group of people that underwent comparable events.

Phenomenology is a research approach that originates from the work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and its roots stem from philosophy (Moustakas, 1994). This research approach is "good at surfacing deep issues and making [the] voices heard" (Lester, 1999, p. 4) of marginalized participants such as parents of ELLs. Their life stories were captured through interviews. A core goal is to find the essence of what the specific experiences mean to the participants and how they affect them. Immersing in and focusing on the subjective perspective

of the participants allows for the enhanced comprehension of their point of view and the breaking of rigid assumptions that may prevent researchers from reaching a deeper understanding (Lester, 1999).

Research Site

Pseudonyms were used throughout the study for the school site, district, and city in order to protect the participants' confidentiality. Hubble Elementary School is located in the city of Woodbend, California. In 2012 it had 426 students, 17 teachers, and one school administrator. The teachers are highly qualified; 16 have CLAD teaching certifications and one has a BCLAD teaching certification. Of the 426 students, approximately 50% are ELLs. The ethnic background of the school in 2012 was 73% Hispanic, 24% African American, 0.70% White not Hispanic, 0.23% Asian, and 0.23% two or more races not Hispanic[4].

Hubble Elementary School became a California Distinguished School in 2001. Secretary of Education Rod Paige under President George W. Bush presided over the award ceremony. The school administration, teachers, and parents worked extensively on meeting the requirements for the honor and completing the application process. In 2002, Hubble Elementary School became a visual and performing arts magnet school. Under the leadership of a fifth grade teacher, 20 fifth graders performed a musical production for the community. The Woodbend Recreation and Community Services sponsored the musical production, which received rave reviews from a local city newspaper.

In 2000 the total population of the city of Woodbend was 112,580, decreasing by 3% to 109,673 in 2010.The greatest decline was among young people ages 0-19 years (7,000 residents) and African Americans (5,000 residents). These demographics were manifested in the shift in the

[4] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

city's diversity. Latinos became the majority of the population, with an increase from 46% to 51% between 2000 and 2010. African-Americans, who equaled Latinos in 2000, decreased by 43% in the same time frame[5]. Figure 3 displays the ten-year change in population by age and race/ethnicity between 2000-2010 in the city of Woodbend.

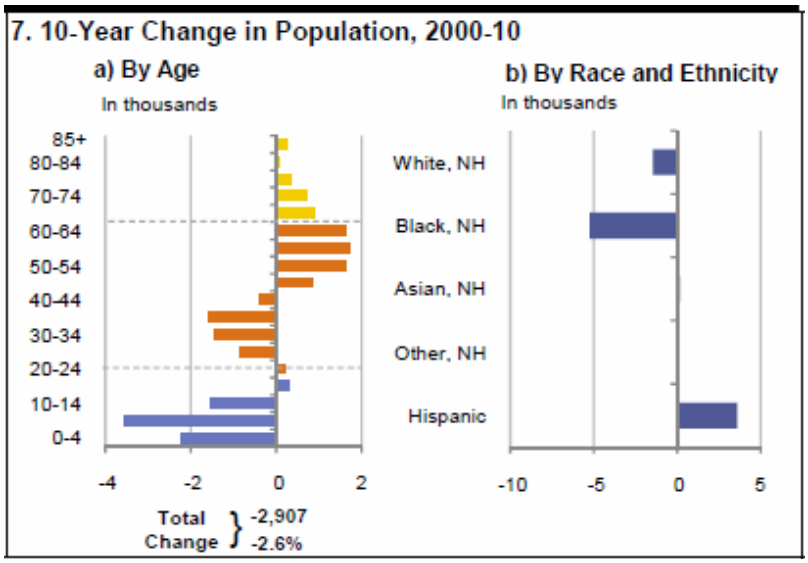

Figure 3. Ten-year change in population by age and race/ethnicity, 2000-10.[6]

Many factors make up the socioeconomic status of Woodbend parents. Some parents are low to middle-income class. In 2009, the median household income was $44,249. A few residents owned their own home, but most (73%) rented apartments, with a median gross rent of $1,002. The population below the poverty line was 21%[7].

There are some avenues for PI such as SSC, SAC, and ELAC parent meetings that meet once a month at Hubble Elementary School. These councils and committees act like a board of trustees in advising the school principal in matters related to the school's instructional program or needs. For example, the SSC can provide feedback on how school, federal and state funds

[5] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.
[6] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.
[7] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

should be spent in order to improve student achievement. Parent officers are elected and trained on how to facilitate the parent meetings. However, these parent meetings result in one-way communication, merely updating the parents of the school's categorical budget, instructional program, and district issues. For the most part, the school asks the committee's permission to spend the funds and obtains parent signatures on the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) to present to the district board for approval. The SPSA is a road map to improve the academic performance of all students (California Department of Education, 2014). Few opportunities exist to engage parents of ELLs in these activities and/or provide input into the school's decision-making process.

Additionally, the school used to have a ritual of having Friday morning assemblies from 8:15 -8:30 a.m., which parents attended. In previous years, Students of the Week, reading, math, and Caught You Being Good awards were presented to students on a weekly basis. In addition, these events were used to make announcements such as principal, teacher, and PTA news to students, teachers, staff, and parents. Currently, there is a Student of the Month awards assembly once a month at Hubble Elementary School and parents are invited.

The researcher, who was also an instructor at Hubble Elementary School, has seen a decline in the number and visibility of Latino parents from 2007-2013. There is a lack of Latino parent participation in the SSC, SAC, ELAC, and PTA. Although Latino parents participate in events like Back to School Night, Winter Program, and Open House, this study hopes to understand why some functions attract Latino parents and others do not generate the kinds of participation needed.

Participants

The participants in this study were Latino parents who had children attending Hubble Elementary School and have been designated as parents of ELLs. They could be either fluent English speakers or parents who are beginning English speakers. Focus group interviews were conducted with no more than six parents present at each session. The parents of ELLs were the chosen participants because "they must be individuals who have all experienced the phenomena being explored, and can articulate their lived experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 119) and their children consistently attended Hubble Elementary School for 3 or more years. The focus group parent interviews were conducted to develop a profile of Latino parent experiences.

Procedures Consent

Upon the commencement of the study, an announcement flash (flyer) was sent to all students informing parents about the researcher's background and the rationale for the study (see Appendices B-C). The announcement flash requested that parents indicate whether or not they want to participate in a focus group interview. Once the researcher established the parents who want to participate, an envelope was sent home with students that includes a parent cover letter, a consent form, and a return envelope (see Appendices D-G). The parent cover letter explained to parents that if they were interested in participating, they needed to sign the consent form and return it in the enclosed envelope in a specified time frame.

Focus group parent interviews at the research site included 13 adults who are current parents of ELLs at Hubble Elementary School. Each session was conducted with no more than six parents present at each session. The researcher was prepared to conduct the focus group interviews in Spanish, English, or a combination of both in order to facilitate parents' communication. The focus group interviews were conducted in sessions of no longer than 120

minutes that were audio-recorded. The researcher also took written notes during the focus group interviews.

Human Subjects Considerations

An application was submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) because the research entails collecting data from parents of ELLs via parent focus group interviews (see Appendix H). Once permission was granted from IRB, any data collected from the participants were secured. A digital folder was created on a computer with a digital file labeled with a coded number that corresponded to each participant. The names of the participants and the data remained secured in a password-protected computer.

Instrumentation

In this study, an interview protocol was the instrument used to collect data (National Center for Postsecondary Improvement, 2003). The purpose of the protocol was to gain an in-depth narrative of parents' perceptions of engagement practices at the school. The interview protocol was used to conduct focus group interviews in order to gain a general understanding of the whole-school context regarding parent engagement (see Appendices I-J).

An interview protocol was conducted with parents who met the following criteria: (a) are of Latino decent or immigrants from Latino American countries, (b) are parents of an ELL child or children at Hubble Elementary School, and (c) have signed a consent form for participation in this study. The interview protocol was created by examining the problem statement and research questions. Then, the interview questions were formulated using the research questions as a guide. The interview protocol was the roadmap to be followed in order to conduct in-depth phenomenological based interviews. The purpose of the in-depth phenomenological based interviews was for parents of ELLs to reconstruct their lived experiences and perceptions of

parent engagement (Seidman, 2006). Using the interview protocol provided structure during the interview because it contained the open-ended questions the researcher asked parents. The interviews were conducted during the month of May 2014 (see Appendices K-L).

Expert Review and Pilot Study

The researcher arranged for an expert review of the interview protocol instrument for reliability and validity by engaging in the following practices. First, the researcher shared the instrument with an expert on parent engagement in schools. It was the task of this expert to review and provide feedback on the protocol's reliability to serve its purpose for data collection. In addition, the expert examined the protocol for clarity of the instrument for Latino parents. Finally, to ensure the accuracy of the protocol with the targeted population, it was administered in a pilot format with a parent that met two of the three criteria for inclusion in the study. The pilot version of the instrument was administered as soon as human subjects clearance was attained. It was administered once, followed by an open discussion with a pilot participant regarding whether or not the questions and the intention of the instrument were clear.

Data Collection and Management Procedures

This data set included transcribed focus group interviews. The research questions guided the researcher in deciding what type of interview to use and the manner in which to conduct the interviews (Richards & Morse, 2007). The researcher has some background knowledge about the topic because she has worked closely with ELLs and their parents as a program coordinator and assistant principal. The background knowledge provided the researcher the opportunity to create questions and "frame the needed discussion in advance" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 114) in order to achieve organized interviews.

The data for the phenomenological study were acquired from focus group interviewing and school communication documents (see Appendices M-O) sent home to parents (artifacts). Focus group interviews consisted of sessions of no longer than 120 minutes and were audio recorded. The researcher designed and used an interview protocol with questions that answered the study's research questions. Interviews were conducted in a quiet location conducive to recording information accurately. During the interview, it was important that the researcher followed the questions and upheld the 120 minute time limit.

Data collected through the use of audio recording were transcribed into hard-copy text. The transcriptions were saved to a hard drive on a computer, and backed up to a secondary hard drive. Additionally, the transcribed interviews were saved to CDs and a flash drive. To make it easier to analyze the data, each transcript had page numbers and line-of-text numbers per page. Copies of data transcripts were filed in a locked file cabinet as backup. All data were stored securely throughout the study. The timeline for data collection and management procedures was as follows:

- May: Interviews
- June: Artifact Collection
- July: Transcribing of interviews in Spanish and English
- September-October: Data Coding and Analysis
- November 2014: Final Results

Data Analysis and Plans for Presentation of Findings

After transcriptions were generated, the next step involved an analysis of the data. First, a list of important statements in the interview was created. Then the researcher drew conclusions about current practices of PI and engagement practices that currently exist at Hubble Elementary

School. According to Creswell (2007), this is called "horizonalization of the data" because each statement is treated as "having equal worth" (p. 159), and the goal is to prevent duplication of statements. Secondly, the important statements were grouped into themes, and a description of what the participants in the study experienced was created. Next, the researcher wrote a structural description, or categories, of how the experience happened and reflected on the location and conditions in which the phenomenon was experienced. Finally, an amalgamated description of the phenomenon, including narratives and the structural descriptions, was written. This amalgamated description captured the essence of the lived experiences of ELLs' parents.

The second part of the data analysis examined trends, concepts, and themes that surfaced from the focus group interviews: the in-depth narratives of parents' perceptions. These trends, concepts, and themes led to structural descriptions of parental perceptions in relation to parent engagement. These descriptions are the foundation for insightful examination of the fundamental nature of the experience under investigation. The researcher then arranged these structures into categorical experiences based on reflection and interpretation of the participants' responses. The aim was to find what the experience represents for the participants who went through it (Moustakas, 1994).

The other data set was derived from school communication and documents sent home to parents (artifacts). An examination of the school artifacts were parent and teacher newsletters as well as district letter communications in order to determine ways in which the school connects with parents. School artifacts were public documents that the researcher could examine to observe the communication between the school and parents. The artifacts, which reflected a running record of current practices, could be used to support this research and substantiate results produced from other avenues (McNeill, 1990).

The researcher recruited an experienced coder for the data analysis in order to contribute to the trustworthiness of the study. Consulting with a graduate student whose research is phenomenological in nature also added to the reliability of the study. The consultant read the data, examined the reports, provided feedback, and finally gave recommendations.

Limitations

A limitation to this study was doing research at one school site, as opposed to all the elementary schools in WUSD. Furthermore, another limitation to the study was a low participation rate of parents for focus group interviews. The participation goal was to have no fewer than 20 and no more than 30 parents from the ELL parent population, but this depended on parent participation. Each focus group interview was conducted with no more than six parents present in each session. Also, the study was limited to interviewing Latino parents of ELLs as opposed to other ethnicities.

Positionality-Role of the Researcher

I was blessed to be raised by two loving parents who worked very hard to provide for my sister and me. They emigrated from Guatemala to California, and my father went to night school in order to learn English. I witnessed how my parents struggled to comprehend and understand documents written in English. Slowly, they learned the language and worked hard to provide me with a college education.

I spoke only Spanish for the first 5 years of my life. Then I started kindergarten at Hubble Elementary School in WUSD. My first day of school I remember instruction being provided in Spanish; I remember learning the colors in Spanish. Then, on my second day of instruction, I had a new teacher who taught me only in English because my father wanted me to learn the English language and chose not to enroll me in the Spanish-only program.

The following school year, my first grade teacher told my father that she was going to retain me if I did not start speaking English. My father questioned her as to why she was thinking of retaining me when on my report card I had As and Bs. The teacher acknowledged that I had above average grades. I was promoted to the second grade, and ultimately I obtained my K-12 education from WUSD. In high school, I was mentored by my history/drama teacher who took me under her wing and guided me away from gangs and drugs. I decided to become a teacher because of her and give back to the community where I grew up. I became a fifth grade teacher at the elementary school that I attended as a child, Hubble Elementary School.

Growing up in the community enabled me to have strong working relationships with parents. I was at the school site for 15 years as a teacher and program coordinator. As a program coordinator, I worked with federal and state programs that provided me the opportunity to work directly with parents of ELLs. Parent advisory groups of which I was a part because I was a program coordinator included SSC, SAC, and ELAC. These parent groups advised the school principal on matters pertaining to their children's education such as curriculum, school culture, and expenditures. By being part of these parent councils, I became aware of parents' frustrations, concerns, and aspirations for their children's education. For this reason, my study used a phenomenological approach that focuses on practices that promote parent engagement of Latino parents of ELLs.

I chose to focus my study on parents of ELLs because I was an ELL student myself. I saw myself in some of the children that I taught. Research indicates that a vast majority of ELLs are not scoring proficient on state standards test, are dropping out of high school, or are being placed in special education. As a teacher, I have seen how parents of ELLs struggle to assist their children in school due to limited English proficient skills, or speaking no English at all. At

Hubble Elementary School there is a limited visual presence of parents of ELLs involved in school activities and providing input in the school's decision making-process. For these reasons, I chose to conduct a phenomenological study that explores parent perceptions of best practices for parent engagement as well as barriers that prevent them from participating in the total school environment in order to help their children with school.

Summary

This research study utilized a phenomenological approach to examine parents of ELLs' perceptions on parent engagement and any obstacles that prevented them from being participants in their children's school. Data were collected using a focus group interview protocol, as well as via artifacts. The interview protocol was used to collect thorough descriptions of parents' perceptions of engagement practices at Hubble Elementary School. The following chapter presents the results of the data collected.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings resulting from a review of school artifacts and focus group interviews with Latino parents who currently have a child or children that and ELL that attend Hubble Elementary School. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore Latino parents of ELLs' perception of best practices as well as to identify major barriers that prevented them from being active participants in school activities and the decision making processes at Hubble Elementary School. The following research questions guided this phenomenological study:

1. How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?
2. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the most meaningful and encouraging best practices to elicit comprehensive parental engagement?
3. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the barriers that prevent them from becoming engaged in the total school environment?

This study used a phenomenological research design because it allowed for the development of a descriptive analysis of what current practices exist at Hubble Elementary School. Furthermore, a phenomenological methodology allowed the research to present the meaning manifested by a group of people and their "lived experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57).

Thirteen Latino parents of ELLs were interviewed about their perceptions of best practices and barriers that prevented them from engaging themselves in the school environment. Specific descriptions of participant selection and interview procedures were discussed in Chapter 3 and will be reviewed in this chapter. To protect confidentiality of all participants, the city, the school site, and all parents have been given pseudonyms.

The following topics will be discussed in this chapter: (a) demographic background information related to WUSD and Hubble Elementary School, (b) data collection procedures, (c) data coding and analysis procedures, (e) review of the research and interview questions, (f) presentation of findings, and (g) summary of key findings.

Background Information

This section presents comprehensive demographic information about WUSD and Hubble Elementary School. Specifically, it contains information pertaining to students' race, language most often spoken, and parent socioeconomic status.

Los Angeles County is the home of WUSD. As of 2010, the population of Woodbend city was more than 100,000. As of 2012, WUSD had under 15,000 kindergarten through 12th grade students enrolled. The race population of WUSD was composed of the following: Hispanic or Latino of Any Race (59.39%); American Indian or Alaska Native, not Hispanic (0.35%); Asian, not Hispanic (0.38%); Pacific Islander, not Hispanic (0.39%); Filipino, not Hispanic (0.31%); African American, not Hispanic (39.28%); White, not Hispanic (0.46%); two or More Races, not Hispanic (0.13%),; and not Reported (0.32%). WUSD has K-6 elementary schools, a K-5 school, K-8 schools, middle schools, high schools, a continuation school, and an adult school[8]. Table 3 presents the demographics of students attending WUSD.

Table 3

Demographics of Woodbend Unified School District

Race	*n*	Percentage
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	8,335	58.39%
American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Hispanic	50	0.35%
Asian, Not Hispanic	54	0.38%
Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic	55	0.39%
Filipino, Not Hispanic	44	0.31%

(continued)

[8] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

Race	*n*	Percentage
African American, Not Hispanic	5607	39.28%
White, not Hispanic	66	0.46%
Two or More Races, Not Hispanic	18	0.13%
Not Reported	46	0.32%
Total	14,275	100.00%

Note. Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

Hubble Elementary School is situated on the west side of the city of Woodbend. As of 2012, it included 426 students, 17 teachers, and one school administrator. Certifications of the teachers entailed the following: 16 have CLAD certifications and one has a BCLAD teaching certification. The demographic makeup of the school was 73% Hispanic, 24% African American, 0.70% White not Hispanic, 0.23% Asian, and 0.23% two or more races not Hispanic. Table 4 provides specific demographic race data for Hubble Elementary School. Within the school, the 426 students spoke various languages. Out of the total student population, 175 (41%) were ELLs with 171 speaking Spanish as their primary language, 2 spoke Arabic, 1 spoke Hindi, and 1 reported another non-English language. Table 5 provides detailed primary languages spoken at Hubble Elementary School in WUSD. Additionally, Hubble Elementary School had 77% of students who were socioeconomically disadvantaged. Students with disabilities made up 3% of the school population. The school is a Title I school and earned an Academic Performance Index (API) of 765 for the 2011-2012 academic school year[9].

Table 4

Demographics of Hubble Elementary School

Race	Percentage
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	73%
African American, Not Hispanic	24%
White, not Hispanic	0.70%

(continued)

[9] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

Race	Percentage
Asian	0.23%
Two or More Races, Not Hispanic	0.23%
Other	2%

Note. Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

Table 5

Primary Languages of Hubble Elementary School

Language	*n*	Percentage
English	251	58.92%
Spanish	171	40.14%
Arabic	2	0.47%
Hindi	1	0.23%
Other	1	0.23%
Total	426	100.00%

Note. Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

The socioeconomic status of Woodbend parents consisted of many factors. Some parents were low to middle-income class. In 2009, the median household income was $44,249. A few residents owned their own home, but most (73%) rented apartments with a median gross rent of $1,002. The population below the poverty line was 21%[10].

The following site description, based on the perspective of the parent participants, exemplifies life at Hubble Elementary School. On an average school day, the office manager and school plant manager arrive at 7:00 am and the school principal arrives at 7:30am, followed by the teachers at 7:45am, which is their reporting time. The school is a closed campus, meaning that all gates are locked up. At 8:00 am the plant manager opens the main gate; only students and kindergarten parents are allowed to enter. If a non-kindergarten parent wishes to enter the school grounds, he/she has to report to the school office, sign in, and get a visitor's pass. The teachers prefer that parents make appointments in order to discuss their children. The first bell rings at

[10] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

8:10am; this is the signal for the students to line up at their designated areas. During this time, one can see numerous student breakfast monitors throughout the campus delivering breakfast to the classrooms. Additionally, students who are part of *the Flash Team*, a group of students who report the morning announcements, arrive at the office to get ready. The teachers pick up their students and walk with them to the classroom. At 8:15am, a second bell rings and breakfast starts for the students in the classrooms. While the students are eating in the classrooms, the Flash Team delivers the morning announcements through the intercom. At 8:25am, students clean up, breakfast monitors return the breakfast containers, and the teachers begin instruction at 8:30am.

Recess and lunch schedules are staggered by grade levels. Kindergarten students have their own recess and lunch. They have their own kindergarten playground area separated from the rest of the playground. The students are grouped according to grade level to go to lunch and recess: first-second grade, third-fourth grade, and fifth-sixth grade. There are only two supervision aides and two parent volunteers to supervise the students. For dismissal, grades K-3 are dismissed at 2:05pm, and grades 4-6 are dismissed at 2:20pm.

Data Collection Procedures

After obtaining formal IRB approval, the researcher conducted a pilot study that engaged expert review of the interview protocol instrument for reliability and validity. The researcher shared the interview protocol instrument with the school's community liaison who works closely with parents of ELLs. The expert reviewed and provided feedback on the protocol's reliability for data collection. The expert examined the protocol for clarity of the instrument for Latino parents of ELLs. The community liaison expressed that the interview protocol instrument had strong, clear questions that encompassed the topic of parent engagement. Specifically, she

approved of the order in which the interview questions would be asked because they were aligned with the research questions.

Then, to ensure the accuracy of the protocol with the parents of ELLs, it was administered in a pilot study with a parent that met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The researcher administered the protocol with a pilot participant and engaged in an open discussion on whether or not the questions and the intention of the instrument were clear. The pilot parent participant said that she liked the interview questions because they started off with basic questions and then moved into questions that required in-depth answers.

An analysis of data collected from 13 parents of ELLs whose children attend Hubble Elementary School was conducted. The data collected for the phenomenological study was acquired from focus group interviews and the collection of school artifacts. The interviews were conducted and digitally audio recorded in Spanish. The researcher transcribed the Spanish interviews into a Word document. Then the researcher translated the Spanish interviews into English. The researcher recruited a BCLAD certified in Spanish teacher to review and verify the translations to ensure cultural and linguistic sensitivity.

A total of three parent focus group interview sessions were audio recorded; none lasted longer than 120 minutes. The first focus group interview session consisted of five parents who were all Spanish speaking. Six parents attended the second focus group interview. This interview included one parent who was bilingual in Spanish and English, but chose to speak in Spanish so the rest of the parents could understand her. During the third parent focus group interview session, only two parents participated. All three focus groups interview sessions were conducted in Spanish.

The focus group interviews included open-ended questions about parent engagement, their perceptions of how they could immerse themselves in their children's education, and the roadblocks they believed inhibited them from being important participants in their children's school. After completing focus group interviews, the researcher garnered a deep understanding of the experience of parents of ELLs.

The researcher obtained informed consent after obtaining formal approval from Pepperdine University IRB on April 17, 2014. Additionally, upon IRB approval the researcher communicated to the principal that part of the data collection also consisted of school communication documents sent home to parents (artifacts). The principal provided the researcher with copies of the school's weekly parent home school communication *the Flash* for the 2013-2014 academic school year. The principal provided copies of the parent and teacher weekly newsletter to the researcher.

To obtain informed consent, the researcher sent an announcement flash (flyer) to all students at Hubble Elementary School asking parents to say whether they wanted to partake in a focus group interview. Once the researcher confirmed which parents wanted to participate, an envelope was sent home with students that included a parent cover letter, a consent form, and a return envelope. The parent cover letter explained to parents that if they wanted to partake, they needed to sign the consent form and return it to the school principal in the enclosed envelope by the printed deadline.

The signed informed consent forms were returned to the principal, and the principal called the researcher to collect the envelopes. Then the researcher contacted by telephone the parents that had agreed to participate in this study. Dates and times were established for the focus group interviews to be conducted. A total of three parent focus group interview sessions were

conducted. The dates were Tuesday, May 27, 2014, Wednesday, May 28, 2014 and Thursday, May 29, 2014. The focus groups interviews were held from 8:30am-10:30am. Parents were provided the opportunity to choose the date that was convenient to them.

Five parents participated in the first parent focus group interview: Maggie Sandoval[11], Octavia Lopez, Iris Hidalgo, Carolina Larios, and Monica Mateos. Six parents participated in the second parent focus group interview: Elisa Santos, Carla Olmo, Bianca Ramirez, Marliz Montes, Matilde Cervantes, and Gladys Fernandez. Two parents participated in the third parent focus group interview: Madeline Nobledo and Melody Santiago.

Participants for focus group 1 included: Octavia Lopez, Iris Hidalgo, Monica Mateos, Carolina Larios, and Maggie Sandoval. This session provided the researcher with the following information: Ms. Octavia Lopez was born in Jalisco, Mexico. She has four children ages 19, 17, 14 and 8. All four of the children are in WUSD. The 19 and 17 year olds are graduating from Woodbend High School. Ms. Lopez has one child at Hubble Elementary School and another child attending Calvary Junior High School. She has been a parent at Hubble Elementary School for the past 3 years. Ms. Iris Hidalgo, a housewife, was born in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Ms. Hidalgo has one child in WUSD, who is attending Hubble Elementary School. This is her first year being a part of Hubble Elementary School because her child just started kindergarten. Ms. Monica Mateos, a housewife, was born in Mexico in the state of Michoacán. Ms. Mateo has a grandson in WUSD: a third grader who attends Hubble Elementary School. Ms. Carolina Larios was born in Juliacan, Mexico. She cleans houses and offices. She has two children in WUSD, both of whom are students at Hubble Elementary School. Ms. Maggie Sandoval, a housewife, was born in Nayarit, Mexico. Ms. Sandoval has one child in WUSD who is a student at Hubble Elementary School.

[11] The names of the parents and children in this study are pseudonyms.

Focus group 2 included Elisa Santos, Carla Olmo, Bianca Ramirez, Marliz Montes, Matilde Cervantes, and Gladys Fernandez. Ms. Elisa Santos, a 35-year-old housewife, was born in Mexico in the state of Veracruz. She has one daughter who is a student at Hubble Elementary School, and has a total of four children in WUSD schools (including the one at Hubble Elementary School). Her primary language is Spanish. Ms. Gladys Fernandez, a cook in a restaurant, was born in Mexico in the state of Durango. She has one daughter who attends WUSD and is a student at Hubble Elementary School. She speaks Spanish and English, but her primary language is Spanish. Her daughter's father speaks English. Ms. Marliz Montes, a housewife, is from the city of Santa Ana in El Salvador. She has one son in WUSD who currently is a third grader at Hubble Elementary School. Her primary language is Spanish. Ms. Bianca Ramirez, a housewife, was born in Mexico in the state of Sonora. She has two children in WUSD, both of whom are students at Hubble Elementary School. Her primary language is Spanish. Ms. Carla Olmo, a housewife, was born in Mexico in the state of Hidalgo. She has two children in WUSD, both of whom are students at Hubble Elementary School. Her primary language is Spanish. Ms. Matilde Cervantes is from the state of Zacatecas in Mexico. She is a housewife, and has a total of three children. Only one is part of WUSD and attends Hubble Elementary School. She is bilingual in Spanish and English. She came to the United States as an elementary student in Texas.

Focus group 3 consisted of Ms. Melody Santiago and Ms. Madeline Nobledo. Ms. Melody Santiago, a housewife, was born in Mexico. She has two sons in WUSD; one attends Woodbend High School and other attends Hubble Elementary School. The high school student was formerly a student at Hubble Elementary School. Her primary language is Spanish. Ms.

Madeline Nobledo, a housewife, was born in Michoacán, Mexico. She has three children in WUSD, two of whom attend Hubble Elementary School. Her primary language is Spanish.

Eight of the 13 participants in this study were parents of former students that the researcher had taught at Hubble Elementary School. Some of the parents had known the researcher for the past 14 years from working at that school. During the parent focus group interviews, the participants were actively engaged and appeared to feel comfortable participating and answering the interview questions. Additionally, the researcher and many of the parents had worked collaboratively in the past planning school wide events with the PTA, SSC, ELAC, and SAC.

The focus group interviews were digitally audio recorded. The researcher transferred the audio MP3 files to the computer. The researcher used Dragon NaturallySpeaking software to transcribe the audio files to Spanish in a Word document. Then the researcher translated the Spanish Word document into an English transcription Word document. The Spanish and English transcriptions were saved to a hard drive on a computer, and also backed up to a secondary hard drive. Additionally, the transcribed interviews were saved to a flash drive. The timeline for data collection and management procedures was as follows:

- May: Interviews
- June: Artifact Collection
- July: Transcribing of interviews in Spanish and English
- September-October: Data Coding and Analysis
- November 2014: Final Results

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures

This section presents information about the methods used to analyze the data. The analysis followed the order of the interview questions (see Appendix E) and addressed the three research questions:

1. How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?
2. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the most meaningful and encouraging best practices to elicit comprehensive parental engagement?
3. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the barriers that prevent them from becoming engaged in the total school environment?

Upon the researcher transcribing the focus group interviews, the researcher printed hard copies of all the focus group transcribed interviews. Transcriptions were read as a whole, and the researcher selected terms, words, and phrases that resurfaced continually and frequently in the data. Then, the researcher color coded the selected terms, words, and phrases based on the different categories that began to emerge. From there, the researcher reexamined the categories and generated the final set of themes.

The researcher recruited an experienced coder for the data analysis in order to obtain a different perspective on the data and to ensure the reliability of the study. The researcher gave the coder copies of all of the transcripts from all of the parent focus group interviews. The coder examined the transcripts and independently coded and identified an array of themes. The consultant read the data, examined the reports, provided feedback, and finally gave recommendations. The researcher and the coder then met on several occasions to compare and contrast the data.

A final step in this process was analyzing data and the feedback from experienced coder. To that end, the researcher examined the themes that surfaced, which led to structural descriptions of parental beliefs in regard to parent engagement. For each of the themes, the researcher classified them according to the appropriate research question with which they were associated. Then supporting quotes were gathered for each of the chosen themes. The quotes represented the parents' perceptions in regard to answering the research questions.

The second set of data analysis involved an examination of school artifacts, which were separated into three different groups: parent newsletters, staff newsletters, and district communication. The researcher distilled the core communications within each artifact and listed them in table form (see Appendices L-N) in order to investigate the ways in which the school connected and communicated with parents. The artifacts demonstrated the current way in which the school interacted with the school community.

Presentation of Findings

The following section will present the findings from the focus group interviews and then present the findings from the school artifacts. This section will only present data results and analysis. This section is subsequently followed by a review of key findings as the end of this chapter.

After the interviews were transcribed into Spanish and then into English. Transcriptions were read as a whole, and the researcher selected terms, words, and phrases that resurfaced continually. Then, the researcher color coded the selected terms, words, and phrases based on the different categories that started to emerge. Next, the researcher reexamined the categories and generated the final set of themes. Table 6 illustrates the overall final 13 themes that emerged

from all focus interviews in the left column, with the accompanying recurring terms, words, and phrases appearing in the right column.

Table 6

Overall Study Themes

Themes	Terms/words/phrases
Assist in the classroom	• Be with the teachers in the classroom • Engage myself there, inside the classroom • Help the teachers • Parent to participate in the classroom
Participate in school	• Help in the programs • Donating time • Participate in whatever I can • To help any child that needs it.
Parent visible presence	• Attend the meetings • Be in the meetings • One is present...in the meetings • Come to the meetings
Connect with the school	• Interaction with the principal, the teachers • Engaged with the children, ...school,...teachers, the principal • Don't know the teachers
Supervision	• In the playground • Recess or things like that • Behave in classroom • Watching the children • Help in the cafeteria
Principal-parent interaction	• Principal to have more communication • Communicate with her what is missing • More physical presence • Talk to the parents outside
Teacher-parent interaction	• Should all be like a family • Teacher not accessible • Teachers don't lend themselves to be engaged • Teachers don't have time
Parent-student interaction	• Mommy I'm going to be student of the month • My mommy helped the teacher • Help the children with their homework • Being on top of their grades
Information	• Have recent information • What was the meeting about • What is happening in the school • Know what's happening with the teachers • Inform the parents
Lack of communication from the school	• Don't explain all of this • Explaining how things in the school work • Just send the notes for use to sign • Explaining in detail for example the English learner

(continued)

Themes	Terms/words/phrases
School barriers	• Don't acknowledge us • Don't listen to you • Shouldn't be so many rules • Is the language
Student education (manners)	• Behave well • It's the education • Please respect
Lack of parent activities	• Activities to bring the parents to help • There's no type of parent engagement • Something that motivates the parents • Activities for the parents

The 13 themes represented all the participants' responses from all of the focus group interviews and are a way to begin to explain how parent engagements is perceived by the participants. It is the above responses that are used to then address the research questions of this study. On Table 8 the themes will be aligned with each of the original research questions.

Table 7 presents a theme tally, illustrating the frequency of responses for each theme and the number of times it surfaced in the transcriptions. Once the themes were solidified, the researcher examined the number of frequency responses related to each theme throughout all the transcriptions. The researcher then tallied the total number of times each theme occurred within the transcriptions. Table 7 clearly identifies *school barriers* as the most frequently mentioned theme, with 100 occurrences, and *parent-student interaction* as the least frequently mentioned theme, with 5 occurrences.

Table 7

Theme Tallies

Themes	Number of Responses
Assist in the classroom	38
Participate in school	35
Parent visible presence	37
Connect with the school	27
Supervision	25
Principal-parent interaction	18
Teacher-parent interaction	20

(continued)

Themes	Number of Responses
Parent-student interaction	5
Information	50
Lack of communication from the school	47
School barriers	100
Student education (manners)	8
Lack of parent activities	45

For Tables 8-10, the researcher aligned the themes according to what research question they addressed. The researcher examined all 13 themes and grouped them according to the specific research question they addressed (displayed in the left column of Tables 8-10). The researcher then examined the transcription interviews from all three parent focus groups and selected significant quotes from each focus group. Finally, the researcher narrowed down the quotes to the four or five that exemplified the average responses for each theme (displayed in the right column of Tables 8-10).

Table 8 displays evidence supporting research question 1, presenting the themes that address the research question and the supporting quotes that exemplify the theme. Research question 1 asked, How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement? The themes for research question 1 were *assist in the classroom*, *participate in school*, *parent visible presence*, *supervision*, and *parent-student interaction*.

Table 8

Evidence Supporting Themes Related to Research Question 1

Theme	Evidence that Supports Theme
Assist in the classroom	• "To be with the teachers in the classroom, being engaged inside with what happens and how to help the school. What happens and how to help inside with them" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "I think also that the teachers sometimes have to at least once a week engage a parent in their classroom so that we can see our children how are they behaving" (Mateos, Focus Group 1). • "I come for a little while to help. With the passing out breakfast and lunch to the children, and I ask her about my daughter" (Fernandez, Focus Group 2). • "To discuss, yes, you can stay and help, and if you do not want to stay the teacher can give you work to take home" (Olmo, Focus Group 2).

(continued)

Theme	Evidence that Supports Theme
Participate in school	• "I think that it signifies like I said, to be helping the school. Help in the programs that there are." (Santiago, Focus Group 3). • "And yes to continue being engaged by donating time to come here to the school and help." (Nobledo, Focus Group 3). • "When there are events, whatever thing happens, I like to help. Also, for my daughter, but I help everyone else. I just don't go with my daughter. And I participate in whatever I can in the field trips." (Lopez, Focus Group 1). • "They need to tell us, 'Parents, does anyone know how to play an instrument? Guitar? Something? Please donate 1 hour to the children that would like to enroll'" (Olmo, Focus Group 2).
Parent visible presence	• "That to be engaged we need to attend the meetings, to know what is it that we need to be engaged" (Mateos, Focus Group 1). • "To be more in the meetings, to be there, to know what they say. What was the meeting about, and the themes that were talked about in the meeting every week." (Hidalgo, Focus Group 1). • "Be 1 hour or 1/2 an hour in the meetings to be able to know what is happening and give your opinion" (Ramirez, Focus Group 2). • "For me, I think it's to be present in the school. Meet with the teachers to talk about the children" (Nobledo, Focus Group 3).
Supervision	• "There are sometimes some jobs that one can do to help them and also to help outside on the playground to take care of the children" (Santiago, Focus Group 3). • "Like her, she comes and helps in the cafeteria and with the children. She says that it is engagement or participation" (Lopez, Focus Group 1). • "The truth is that we need more people to take care of the children during recess time because there are many that bully others. I have come during recess time and the truth, that is chaos" (Fernandez, Focus Group 26). • "I observed how she behaved, and what was the teacher teaching her. I went directly, instead of the teacher telling me this or that. I want to see it for myself how she acted" (Cervantes, Focus Group 2).
Parent-student interaction	• "Do you remember that every time they did the Student of the Month certificates and Perfect Attendance? A child would get motivated and said, 'Mommy, I'm going to be Student of the Month or mommy this'" (Fernandez, Focus Group 2). • "And the children are very happy that we are watching them. They like it. 'My mommy helped the teacher. My mommy did this for me'" (Olmo, Focus Group 2). • "For me also, it could be talking about engagement. Also, with the children to support them in their homework and if they leave them projects, to do them with the family" (Nobledo, Focus Group 3). • "I defined it as being on top of their grades. Why they are low? To come to the meetings and to talk to the teachers even though you don't have an established conference" (Ramirez, Focus Group 2).

Table 9 displays evidence supporting research question 2, presenting the themes that address the research question and the supporting quotes that exemplify the theme. Research question 2 asked, What do you perceive to be the best practices that are most meaningful and encouraging to elicit comprehensive parental engagement, as a parent of an ELL? The themes for research question 2 were *connect with the school*, *principal-parent interaction*, *teacher-parent interaction*, and *student education (manners).*

Table 10 displays evidence supporting research question 3, presenting the themes that address the research question, and the supporting quotes that exemplify the theme. Research question 3 asked, What do you perceive to be the barriers that prevent you from becoming engaged in the total school environment as a parent of an ELL child at Hubble Elementary School*?* The themes for research question 3 were *information*, *lack of communication from the school*, *school barriers*, and *lack of parent activities*.

Table 9

Evidence Supporting Themes Related to Research Question 2

Theme	Evidence that Supports Theme
Connect with the school	• "For me, it is to have interaction with the principal, the teachers, and to be in communication with them and be engaged with them in whatever we can. Also, it is to have access to them" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "That's why it's called engagement. So that a parent could be engaged with the children, with the school, with the teachers, the principal" (Sandoval, Focus Group 1). • "We have to engage ourselves also, and the teachers have to engage with us. Because there are teachers that in reality never talk to us. They just go and drop off the children there" (Fernandez, Focus Group 2). • "Before there used to be a carnival. Funds would be raised. There also the parents would socialize with the teachers because the teachers would be very much engaged in the carnival" (Santiago, Focus Group 3). • "I would like for them to have more meetings, but also for the principal to be more accessible towards the parents, for them to listen to us. Sometimes in the meetings, they just leave the parents talking. And sometimes, they leave. That doesn't motivate us" (Santiago, Focus Group 3).
Principal-parent interaction	• "And what I think the school needs is for the principal to have more communication. To focus in getting closer to the parents in trying for them to become engaged and for them to participate together with her and the teachers so that it could be like a union" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "I prefer for the principal to be accessible, to talk to the parents if we have a problem, how can the principal help us in order to attract the parents" (Santiago, Focus Group 3). • "For the principal to make presence in whatever activity, even if it is small. Whatever it is, but for her to come. And for her to stand and say, I am the principal, and I am wishing you a good morning, good afternoon, whatever it is, and excuse me, I came to welcome you" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "For the principal to have a conference with all the family parents. Similar to the conference that we're having right now which is small, for her to talk to us and for her to tell us that she wants to talk to us. For all of us to listen to each other is one recommendation" (Mateos, Focus Group 1). • "In my opinion, I don't think so in general. Before they used to focus on the meetings in committees. We used to give our opinion. We gave our opinion, and we never saw that they did anything. That's the reason I started to distance myself and focus more in the classroom than to be inside the meetings. I distanced myself. Sometimes I gave my opinion and 'Now what, Ms. Cervantes? What do you want to say now?' That sort of thing discouraged me. Okay, I am coming, I am interested, because of my son, and when they act like that especially now, then what am I doing here. I feel bad because my son tells me 'Mommy, why don't you go

(continued)

Theme	Evidence that Supports Theme
Principal-parent interaction	anymore? You used to go before.' Also, the teachers, tell me, 'I haven't seen you. What is happening?' To speak the truth on how one feels, I feel they throw you to the side. In my opinion, no" (Cervantes, Focus Group 2). • "Yes, that's it. Before when my son was starting, me too, I used to come to the meetings. I would give my opinion... I would give my opinion in the meetings, and they would say, 'Uh huh, yes.' But at the end, one would see how they would respond and that they wouldn't do anything. There was a meeting in which the principal left the meeting and left us there! All the parents in the auditorium. And one feels bad, then no more. Exactly one starts to distance oneself and says no, now I only focus on the teacher" (Olmo, Focus Group 2).
Teacher-parent interaction	• "Because like how I see it, here our children are here half the day and we should all be like a family. We need to know what's happening with the teachers" (Nobledo, Focus Group 3). • "Many times the teachers don't lend themselves to be engaged with them. In order for us to be up to date at what's happening in the classroom or simply the whole entire school" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "Yes, sometimes the barriers are put here by the school, the teachers. For example, last Thursday I had a question for the teacher downstairs, Ms. Sherri, the special education class of Mario. So I had a question, and I went to go ask her. The speech teacher told me, 'Go with Ms. Sherri.' I went, and she told me, 'No! No! No! No! No! Right now I don't have time! I don't have time today!' ... But she dismissed me very rudely from down there. And I told the speech teacher, 'See how she comes now. When she treated me bad that time that I went and you told me to go.' Those are barriers that they put on us. Sometimes we don't want to talk because we don't know how to talk. And when you are motivated, they slam you. I felt very bad there [crying]" (Mateos, Focus Group 1). • "In my opinion, it is the communication. The communication for the parents and information from the beginning when we enroll our children. Like the lady said, and during every day. We only receive a report at the end of the year. During that time for there to be more information, communication, global student communication. For the teacher to say, he needs this to reclassify and to focus on this. The majority of it is communication and information" (Cervantes, Focus Group 2).
Student education (manners)	• "'Values, Joseph. Please respect, you have to respect.' He said, 'Mommy, but this boy said and that he told the teacher...' and I told him, 'Do you think that that's respecting the teacher?'" (Olmo, Focus Group 2). • "And it's more important to us that our child is well educated. For him to behave well. Well educated and with good grades. If they tell us he didn't do his work, we don't put too much attention in general" (Ramirez, Focus Group 2). • "My Mom used to tell us every time we used to go to school, 'You say good morning. And if they don't answer you, you keep on walking.' But you gave the first step. You have your education, and this is what I say. I think that the principal is the letter of representation of the school. She is the letter of recommendation" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "Look, right there they don't respect the volunteers. They respect more the ones that are paid, the workers. The ones that have the yellow papers. Those are the ones that the children respect. But as a volunteer, they don't respect. Then that is something that is important for the principal, that she has to demand from the children" (Mateos, Focus Group 1).

Table 10

Evidence Supporting Themes Related to Research Question 3

Theme	Evidence That Supports Theme
Information	• "For me, it's to be informed and to be engaged in the committees that the schools have. And be in the loop or up to date with the teachers. And have recent information of the changes that there are" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "We need to know what's happening with the teachers. I have known of teachers that

(continued)

Theme	Evidence That Supports Theme
Information	have left or that are not here but we have never known the reason" (Nobledo, Focus Group 3). • "Me, to start, I did not even know what was parents of English Learners. I didn't even know it existed" (Olmo, Focus Group 2). • "I say they don't engage. The only thing they do are the meetings that they used to do more often. And today there are very few ELAC (English Learners Advisory Committee) meetings. It is the only thing. It is when they give information, but only very briefly. They don't speak concretely. They don't say how this information is for this, no engagement. Simply, few meetings and today no" (Cervantes, Focus Group 2).
Lack of communication from the school	• "I feel they do not engage the parents because they just sent the notes for us to sign. That the child has taken the test, and that the child has been low, he has passed a level and they are going to change his English learner level" (Larios, Focus Group 1). • "Like Carolina said, maybe the principal has to do meetings with the parents explaining in detail for example the English Learner" (Lopez, Focus Group 1). • "To engage oneself here, for it not to be a barrier. But like they say, if they don't listen to you, if they don't pay attention to you, one is going to be stalled. You stay in the same way. More communication, more communication, more communication be it a good thing, be it a bad thing, whatever it is, more communication to the parent, to the parent, to the parents and the parents" (Fernandez, Focus Group 2). • "Me too, my opinion is primary the language. That's why I say I repeat what I thought. That we need to learn English. The parents in order to be able to communicate more with the teachers. And the other barrier is the lack of communication. Lack of communication from the two. The same, like I told you. If the teachers or the school or the principal don't do anything, and at the same time, the parents are doing the same thing. We are not doing anything also for the schools where are children are or where are next children are going to come. In that part I refer to the lack of communication on both sides" (Nobledo, Focus Group 3).
School barriers	• "No good morning. How are you going to feel that the principal of your school that is educating your child ignores you. And all the parents they get surprised. We like to be acknowledged" (Lopez, Focus Group 1). • "For them not to put so many rules. Like that they say of the fingerprints, and this and this. Besides, they charge too much. It's 80 dollars, 90 dollars for the fingerprints" (Fernandez, Focus Group 2). • "Also, in my opinion I think that there should be first also classes for the parents that don't speak English. This would help us to help our children. I think because it has to do when the parents don't speak English. We don't permit for our children to speak English in the house. Sometimes because of culture, we say speak English in the school. You can speak English but here Spanish. That's what I think if the parents were a little more educated or knew a little bit more, we would practice with the children."(Nobledo, Focus Group 3). • "Sometimes it is us because sometimes we work. And if you have to go in early, then we do not come. Sometimes we do not have time to come to the school because sometimes we get out late from work. We cannot get engaged in the school because we are working. Sometimes we do not come to the school and when we are off also we do not come. We say, 'Instead I am going to do what needs to be done in the house than to come and engage myself in the school'" (Hidalgo, Focus Group 1). • "Me either, I haven't had any barriers, because here I participate. I have 3 years participating as a volunteer but outside to the parents that I talk to, some parents do not volunteer because they don't have *papeles*. And their afraid because the school sends them to take fingerprints" (Mateos, Focus Group 1).
Lack of parent activities	• "Before, there used to be more parents engaged. It's not the same. I also think that it depends on the principal because I think that the principal needs to set the example to get to know the parents, get along with the teachers, and to do more activities to bring the parents to help" (Santiago, Focus Group 3).

(continued)

Theme	Evidence That Supports Theme
Lack of parent activities	• "I think the school needs lots of things to be done here inside here. The schools needs a lot of organization of many things inside the classrooms as well as activities in the school. I want to see more organized activities for the parents" (Hidalgo, Focus Group 1). • "Only one thing occurs to me that I would like to have. For years it's for the parents to unite ourselves and that we can establish the parent center. That has many years. We have 6 years waiting. And two years ago, they said, 'Yes, we're cleaning a classroom, we're going to condition it. We took everything out, we're going to get rid of things that are not good anymore to make space. And we're going to do something nice. They were just words. They didn't do anything.' And I say all the schools have a place where the parents go and where do they give their classes with different things. But here, there is none, and I have years wishing that the parents would unite or that the directors would initiate this project like it should be" (Ramirez, Focus Group 2). • "There is no engagement. Before in the meetings that I used to attend, but right now it doesn't exist this year. I haven't come. In the other ones, there were projects in the meetings that they used to tell us how we can help English Learner children. If no more than one time I came this year and they didn't talk to us about English Learners for the children. There's no events" (Santiago, Focus Group 3).

The second set of data collected was the school artifacts consisting of school communication documents sent home to parents, school communication documents sent to school staff, and finally district communication documents. After visiting Hubble Elementary School and requesting access, the researcher was provided with a total of 15 issues of *the Flash* (Parent edition), 13 issues of *the Flash* (Staff edition), and two district communication documents: one from the state trustee and the other a parent survey. These artifacts provided insight into how the school connects with the parents and the school staff.

Table 11 details the information about *the Flash* (Parent Edition), such as what it is, what it includes, and how often it is sent. Furthermore, it details in what languages *the Flash* (Parent Edition) is written, its primary purpose, and how many *the Flash* (Parent Edition) newsletters were collected by the researcher for the 2013-2014 academic school year.

Table 11

The Flash Parent Edition Artifact

Attribute	Description
Name	*The Flash*
What is it?	A weekly newsletter to parents
What does it include?	School calendar, events, testing information, parent announcements

(continued)

Attribute	Description
How often sent home?	Weekly
What language?	English and Spanish
What purpose?	To communicate with parents, students and the community
How many?	Total of 15 *the Flash* newsletters from 9/2013-6/2014

Table 12 details the information about *the Flash* (Staff Edition), such as what it is, what it includes, and how often it is sent. Furthermore, it details in what languages *the Flash* (Staff Edition) is written, its primary purpose, and how many *The Flash* (Staff Edition), newsletters were collected by the researcher for the 2013-2014 academic school year.

Table 12

The Flash Staff Edition Artifact

Attribute	Description
Name	*The Flash* (Staff Edition)
What is it?	A weekly newsletter to staff
What does it include?	School calendar, events, testing information, professional development for teachers, teacher deadlines
How often sent home?	Weekly
What language?	English
What purpose?	To inform the teachers and school staff of vital school information
How many?	Total of 13 *the Flash* newsletters from 9/2013-6/2014

Table 13 details information about the district communication artifact, such as what it is, what it includes, and how often it is sent. Furthermore, it details in what languages the district communication is written, its primary purpose, and how many district communication artifacts were collected by the researcher for the 2013-2014 academic school year.

Table 13

District Communication Artifact

Attribute	Description
Name	District Communication
What is it?	Letter from the State Trustee, and a parent survey about LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) Input Form
What does it include?	District and School Administrators Common Core training and LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) input form

(continued)

Attribute	Description
How often sent home?	Sporadically as needed
What language?	English, Spanish
What purpose?	To communicate with the school community
How many?	Total of two from 9/2013-6/2014

Summary of Key Findings

Chapter 4 discussed the results related to the three research questions that guided this study. Thirteen respondents participated in this study and key findings were established from their responses. Research question 1 asked parents to define what parent engagement is. A variety of themes surfaced with respect to this research question, including: (a) assist in the classroom, (b) participate in the school, (c) parent visible presence, (d) supervision, and (e) parent-student interaction. The most frequent themes were (a) assist in the classroom, (b) participate in the school, and (c) parent visible presence.

Research question 2 asked parents what they perceived to be the best practices that are most meaningful and encouraging to elicit comprehensive parental engagement as a parent of an ELL. A variety of themes surfaced with respect to this research question, including: (a) connect with the school, (b) principal-parent interaction, (c) teacher-parent interaction and (d) student education (manners). The most frequent theme was connect with the school, closely followed by teacher-parent interaction and principal-parent interaction.

Research question 3 asked what parents perceived to be the barriers that prevented them from becoming engaged in the total school environment as a parent of an ELL child at Hubble Elementary School. A variety of themes surfaced with respect to this research question, including: (a) information, (b) lack of communication from the school, (c) school barriers, and (d) lack of parent activities. The most frequent theme by a large margin was school barriers, but

the remaining themes of information, lack of communication from the school, and lack of parent activities were also mentioned prominently.

The school artifacts (*the Flash* for parents, *the Flash* for staff, and district communication) were the means of communicating vital information to parents, students, staff and the school community. The school principal included information on a newsletter such as *the Flash* based on information she felt was important and information received from the district office, assistant superintendents, and directors. Key findings in *the Flash* newsletter for parents were reminders of upcoming events, volunteer training, and parent workshops being offered at the district office. Key findings in *the Flash* newsletter for staff were professional development for teachers, information regarding operation and maintenance of the school, student activities, teacher deadlines, and state testing information. Finally, key findings in the district communication were an explanation of poor judgment in the use of school expenditures for professional development for Common Core for district and school administrators, and also a request for parent feedback on how to improve schools in WUSD through the LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan Input) Form. *The Flash* for parents, *the Flash* for staff, and district communication were the means of communicating vital information to parents, students, staff, and the school community. The school artifacts were one-way communications and did not involve reciprocal communication between the participants and the school.

Chapter 4 discussed the findings resulting from focus group interviews and artifacts. It presented background demographic information about the district and the school where the study took place. It detailed how the data were collected and gave further details on the focus groups. The chapter also covered data coding and analysis of the of the focus group interview transcriptions. It reviewed the research questions, and finally presented the findings. The

following chapter presents a deep discussion of the findings, fundamental conclusions, and recommendations regarding this study on parent engagement of parents of ELLs.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study used a phenomenological research design because it allowed for the development of a descriptive analysis of what current practices exist at Hubble Elementary School, a school in a southern California community. Furthermore, a phenomenological methodology allowed the researcher to convey the meaning manifested by a group of people and their "lived experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 57). This form of research differs from other kinds of qualitative research primarily in that it focuses on the detailed narratives of experiences of a group of people who have lived through the same events. This research approach is "good at surfacing deep issues and making [the] voices heard" of marginalized participants such as parents of ELLs (Lester, 1999, p. 4). The stories of their lives were captured through the focus group interviews.

The methods for this phenomenological study consisted of a data analysis of interviews conducted with13 parents of ELLs whose children attend Hubble Elementary School. A total of three parent focus group interview sessions were conducted and audio recorded. Data also included information gathered from school artifacts and examined by the researcher. The researcher obtained school communication documents sent home to parents, including copies of the school's weekly parent home school communication—*the Flash*, a parent and teacher weekly newsletter—for the 2013-2014 academic school year, as well as district communication.

Although the entire school was invited to participate, this study was focused on collecting data from parents of ELLs who may have been English learners themselves. In the end, 13 Latino parents who currently have an ELL child or children that attend Hubble Elementary School met the criteria for participation. Of the 13 parents, one was a fluent English speaker, and the rest were beginning English speakers. The primary language for all parents of ELLs was

Spanish. The study was conducted in the WUSD in Los Angeles County. The study was specifically conducted at Hubble Elementary School, located in the west side section of the city of Woodbend, California. This chapter is organized as follows: (a) discussion and key findings, (b) conclusions, (c) positionality of the researcher, (d) implications for policy and practice, (e) limitations, (f) recommendations for further study, and (g) summary.

From 2007 to 2012 at Hubble Elementary School, there has been a consistent population of approximately 50% ELLs[12]. The 2000 United States census indicated that there were 3 million foreign-born children in the United States, and one-fifth of pre-kindergarten to 12th grade students were children of immigrant parents (Betts et al., 2009). According to Coltrane (2003), students learning English in 2000-2001 "represent 9.6% of all students enrolled in public pre-kindergarten through grade 12 classes in the United States; 67% of these students are enrolled at the elementary school level" (p. 1). Because of an increase in ELLs, this presents a challenge because schools have a hard time engaging parents in school activities and in decision-making processes. Schools with high percentages of ELLs have difficulties communicating with their parents who might also be ELLs (Araujo, 2009).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore perceptions of best practices as well as to identify major barriers faced by Latino parents of ELLs that prevented them from participating actively in school activities and the decision making processes at Hubble Elementary School. Three research questions guided this study:

1. How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?

[12] Information was obtained from a website that would compromise the confidentiality of the participating institution and is therefore confidential.

2. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the most meaningful and encouraging best practices to elicit comprehensive parental engagement?
3. What do parents of ELL students at Hubble Elementary School perceive to be the barriers that prevent them from becoming engaged in the total school environment?

Discussion of Key Findings

Chapter 4 presented the results of findings related to the three research questions that guided this study. Thirteen Latino parents of ELLs responded, and key findings were established from the participants' responses. Research question 1 asked parents to define the concept of parent engagement. Five themes surfaced from the coding of the parent responses, including: (a) assist in the classroom, (b) participate in the school, (c) parent visible presence, (d) supervision, and (e) parent-student interaction. The total number of times that each theme appeared in the coded transcript were tallied, and these total frequency responses ranged from 5 to 38. The most frequent themes were (a) assist in the classroom (38), (b) participate in the school (35), and (c) parent visible presence (37). The least frequent themes were (d) supervision (25), and (e) parent-student interaction (5).

The findings represented parents of ELLs' ways of demonstrating a proactive and visible presence in the classroom and at the school. For their responses *assist in the classroom*, *participate in the school*, *supervision*, and *parent-student interaction*, the parents were present and could see what their children were doing. Likewise, their children were aware that their parents were helping their teacher or the school. It was important for the parents of ELLs that they were able to see their children and that their children were aware that their parents were present. *Parent visible presence* referred to a parent attending a meeting without the presence of

his/her child. It meant that a parent was engaged by being present at a meeting in order to learn vital information about the school and give his/her input.

These results were aligned with the research of Jasis and Marriot (2010) and Simich-Dudgeon (1986) on what they considered *parent volunteering*. According to them, parent volunteering consisted of participating in the school and classroom, and parents also making their visible presence at meetings. Simich-Dudgeon (1986) viewed such participation as strongly supporting student achievement. Furthermore, teachers viewed the presence of parents volunteering as successful parent engagement (Coltrane, 2003).

The theme *assist in the classroom* manifested in a variety of ways, ranging from passing out breakfast and lunch to the children to taking work home, such as grading papers that the teacher had given them. The theme *participate in the school* meant the parents of ELLs participating in school programs or events. The theme *supervision* meant to help with the supervision of students on the playground, which was important for both parents and children. The theme *parent-student interaction* meant a parent helping a child with a school project at home to a parent being present at a school assembly to watch their child receive a Student of the Month or perfect attendance certificate.

Related to research question 1, parents of ELLs perceived five themes with respect to parent engagement. In some respects, the perceived themes were consistent with the work of Valdés (1996), because participating in important school events such as fundraising and an Open Houses were types of parent engagement that were meaningful to the child and the parent. However, the perceived themes also differed from Valdés (1996) because the parents in this study were proactive in asking the teacher how their child was doing in the classroom. Valdés (1996) found that the Latino parents in her study did not see it as an opportunity to ask about

their children's progress because the parents trusted that if their children were having problems, the teacher would get in contact with them. In this study, however, the parents took opportunities to get involved in their children's schooling, such as observing how their children behaved in the classroom and what the teacher was teaching the children. Furthermore, Valdés's (1996) research showed that parents did not see it as their role to initiate communication and engagement with teachers or to volunteer in the classroom, while contradictorily the parents in this study assisted in the classroom actively. A study by Carmen Simich-Dudgeon (1986) claimed that when assisting with academics, "parents [of ELLs] were fearful of doing more harm than good" (p. 2), whereas in this study the parents actively assisted their children with homework and did school projects together as a family at home. Thus, these participants in this study defined engagement as acts of being active and present. One parent defined parent engagement as "to be with the teachers in the classroom, being engaged inside with what happens and how to help the school. What happens and how to help inside with them" at Hubble Elementary School (Larios, Focus Group 1).

Research question 2 sought to examine best practices for engaging parents of ELLs, asking parents what they perceived to be the best practices that were most meaningful and encouraging to elicit comprehensive parental engagement as a parent of an ELL. A variety of themes surfaced from the coding of the parent responses, including: (a) connect with the school, (b) principal-parent interaction, (c) teacher-parent interaction, and (d) student education (manners). The total number of times that each theme appeared in the coded transcript were tallied, and these total frequency responses ranged from 8 to 27. The most frequent theme was connect with the school (27), closely followed by teacher-parent interaction (20) and principal-parent interaction (18).

The findings represented a variety of themes related to interconnectedness. Parents of ELLs wanted to feel that they have a relationship with and are connected to the school. For this to happen, the principal had to foster those relationships, from whom a belief about the importance of having parents connected with the school would trickle down to the teachers. When parents feel connected with the school, they feel motivated and will make their presence visible, assist in the classroom, attend school events, and give their input at meetings.

Additionally, seven parents of ELLs shared that it was important for their children to respect their teachers, even though seven of the participating parents had encountered disrespectful behavior by some teachers and school administration at Hubble Elementary School. Those seven parents shared in emotional detail the trauma they experienced at the hands of school administration and teachers:

> Yes, sometimes the barriers are put here by the school, the teachers. For example, last Thursday I had a question for the teacher downstairs, Ms. Sherri, the special education class of Mario. So I had a question, and I went to go ask her. The speech teacher told me, "Go with Ms. Sherri." I went, and she told me, "No! No! No! No! No! Right now I don't have time! I don't have time today! ... But she dismissed me very rudely from down there. And I told the speech teacher, "See how she comes now. When she treated me bad that time that I went and you told me to go." Those are barriers that they put on us. Sometimes we don't want to talk because we don't know how to talk. And when you are motivated, they slam you. I felt very bad there [crying]. (Mateos, Focus Group 1)

At the second focus group meeting, another parent stated:

> In my opinion, I don't think so in general. Before they used to focus on the meetings in committees. We used to give our opinion. We gave our opinion, and we never saw that

> they did anything. That's the reason I started to distance myself and focus more in the classroom than to be inside the meetings. I distanced myself. Sometimes I gave my opinion and "Now what, Ms. Cervantes? What do you want to say now?" That sort of thing discouraged me. Okay, I am coming, I am interested, because of my son, and when they act like that especially now, then what am I doing here. I feel bad because my son tells me, "Mommy, why don't you go anymore? You used to go before." Also, the teachers, tell me, "I haven't seen you. What is happening?" To speak the truth on how one feels, I feel they throw you to the side. In my opinion, no. (Cervantes, Focus Group 2)

Parents stated that from 2007-2013, parent engagement at the school had diminished. This was partly because of the lack of principal-parent and teacher-parent interaction, and lack of events or programs where everyone could socialize and engage with each other. Currently, there is a lack of parent engagement activities that involve teachers, administration, students, and the school community. Therefore, the parents do not feel connected with the school, and some have distanced themselves by no longer engaging in their children's school.

The findings meant that it was very important for the parents to be able to engage and be in communication with the principal and the teachers. Additionally, the findings indicated that parents perceived having access to the principal and the teachers as opportunities to be able to connect with the school, and they believed that the school should be united like a family. Therefore, the school needs to provide parent engagement activities where students, teachers, and administration can interact and be in communication with one another. Participants expressed the importance of the principal in school functions, and their need for the principal to listen actively to them.

Because the school failed to provide the conditions to engage parents of ELLs, the parents distanced themselves from their children's school and their visible presence at the school diminished. The parents of ELLs in this study did have the desire to partake in and immerse themselves in the school environment, but the school's practices did not provide access for parent engagement of parents of ELLs. This finding was partly consistent with findings by Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) that Latino parents often showed minimal levels of school parent involvement, teachers' perceptions that Latino parents lack interest in their children's education, and parents feeling intimidated by their children's teachers. In this study, as well as Chrispeels and Rivero's, parents felt intimidated not only by teachers, but also by the school principal. Yet, in spite of disrespectful behavior displayed by teachers and the principal, one common theme shared by all the parents in this study was the importance of their children being respectful towards their teachers. This finding was aligned with Valdés's (1996) research because parents perceived their primary focus was ensuring their children obtained a "buena educación" (p. 125), which signified teaching them about good manners and moral values.

Furthermore, the study found that parents of ELLs would engage in the school environment and decision-making processes when working together collaboratively with the teachers to plan parent engagement activities and events for students. This finding was aligned with the literature study of Delgado-Gaitán (2004), which found that parents would be encouraged to take an active role by schools implementing non-traditional parent involvement activities that are created by parents and the school to truly engage and sustain their participation. This finding was also consistent with research by Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008), Chow and Cummins (2003), and Paratore et al. (1999), all of whom indicated that in order for parent engagement to happen, there needed to be reciprocal understanding of the parents' language and

culture between the principal, the teachers, and the parents. Also, the parents' culture needed to be embedded throughout the parent engagement activities.

Research question 3 asked parents what they perceived to be the barriers that prevented them from becoming engaged in the total school environment as a parent of an ELL child at Hubble Elementary School. A variety of themes surfaced from the coding of the parent participants, including: (a) information, (b) lack of communication from the school, (c) school barriers, and (d) lack of parent activities. The total number of times that each theme appeared in the coded transcript were tallied, and these total frequency responses ranged from 45 to 100. The most frequent theme by a large margin was school barriers (100), but the remaining themes of information (50), lack of communication from the school (47), and lack of parent activities (45) also appeared frequently in the interviews.

The findings represented an affirmation that for the years 2007-2013, there have been three different principals. The school has had three principals during this time in which the leadership of the school changed in its response to parents. Overall, the school demonstrated a lack of interest in establishing relationships with parents, which has led to a situation where the parents' needs are no longer a primary concern. This in turn has led to a vicious cycle where parents no longer feel respected and have become even more disengaged. The following quotes attest to this phenomenon:

> Before, there used to be more parents engaged. It's not the same. I also think that it depends on the principal because I think that the principal needs to set the example to get to know the parents, get along with the teachers, and to do more activities to bring the parents to help. (Santiago, Focus Group 3)

A second participant described rude behavior by a school administrator:

> Yes, that's it. Before when my son was starting, me too, I used to come to the meetings. I would give my opinion... I would give my opinion in the meetings, and they would say, "Uh huh, yes." But at the end, one would see how they would respond and that they wouldn't do anything. There was a meeting in which the principal left the meeting and left us there! All the parents in the auditorium. And one feels bad, then no more. Exactly one starts to distance oneself and says no, now I only focus on the teacher. (Olmo, Focus Group 2)

Hubble Elementary School became a California Distinguished School in 2001; part of the criteria for this distinction was to have a high percentage of parent engagement, which was measured by participation of parents in meetings such as SSC, SAC, and ELAC. Additionally, there were Monthly Principal Parent Forums, parent workshops informing parents about topics such as how to read their children's CST and CELDT score reports, and CBET classes. These crucial avenues for parent engagement no longer exist or are heavily cut back. In 2001 there was a high percentage of parent engagement. However, with the shift of school administration, many of the parent informative meetings and the Principal Parent Forums diminished or ceased to exist.

In 2014, parent committees such as SSC, SAC, ELAC, existed because they were mandated by the state and schools had to have them. Additionally, the school offered parent workshops, but they focused on positive family self-esteem and bullying prevention, and not on vital information such as explaining how to read their children's CST and CELDT reports. This was evident from examining the school artifacts collected from Hubble Elementary School for the 2013-2014 academic school year. The artifacts were a running record of current practices of

parent/school communication. Table 14 presents information representative of typical *the Flash* (Parent Edition) newsletters, with parent meetings and workshops italicized:

Table 14

Information from the Flash (Parent Edition) Newsletters

Date	Information Included

September 16, 2013	• Conservation information: Three R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
	• *Elections for parent groups*
	  o *Parent Teacher Association (PTA)*
	  o *School Site Council (SSC)*
	  o *English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)*
	  o *GATE Advisory Committee*
	• Parent homework assignments
	• Reminders to parents
	• Upcoming events
	  o Back to School Night
	  o Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
	  o School holiday schedule

September 23, 2013	• *Elections for parent groups*
	  o *Parent Teacher Association (PTA)*
	  o *School Site Council (SSC)*
	  o *English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)*
	  o *GATE Advisory Committee*
	• Back to School Night
	  o *Title I meeting*
	  o Classroom presentations
	  o Schedule Parent/Teacher
	  o Conference meetings for the first report card
	• Lunch applications due date reminder
	• *School volunteer training* (Location: Woodbend Unified School District, Parent Center)
	  o *Session 1: Volunteer Procedures and Policies*
	  o *Session 2: Volunteer Opportunities*
	• Email collection campaign in an effort to communicate with parents
	• Volunteers wanted
	  o Halloween Parade
	  o Treat March
	  o Halloween Dance
	• Reminders to Parents
	• Upcoming Events
	  o Progress Reports
	  o Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
	• School holiday schedule

November 19, 2013	• *Parent Workshop: Creating a positive family self-esteem* (Location: Woodbend Unified School District) • Candy Fall Fundraiser: Student store • *Parent Workshop: Bullying Prevention: What Parents Need to Know* (Location: Woodbend Unified School District) • Reminders to Parents

(continued)

Date	Information Included

November 19, 2013	• Upcoming Events
	  ○ First Quarter Awards Ceremony
	  ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
	• School holiday schedule

March 10, 2014	• Teacher Workshop: Creating a Flipped Classroom (Location: Calvary Middle School Auditorium) • *School Site Council Meeting* • Congratulations to student district Spelling Bee winners • Congratulations to Classroom Door Decorating Contest winners • Dr. Seuss Student Poster Contest Winners • In Honor of Women's History Month • Student Book Fair • Parent Volunteers needed for assistance with flow of traffic • St. Patrick's Day Dance

An examination of the school artifacts showed that the school did not have parent meetings as often as they did prior to 2007. And when meetings were held, the same five or 10 parents attended the parent committees. Additionally, crucial informative meetings such as parent workshops informing parents such as how to read their children's CST as well as the CELDT score report were non-existent. These informative meetings communicated extremely important information to the parents. Also, there were Principal Parent Forum meetings that were informal with the parents, and parents felt comfortable to voice their opinions and concerns. These meetings made the parents feel knowledgeable and respected, and in these meetings parents of ELLs felt connected to the school because their views and opinions were respected by the principal. The communication in the past was reciprocal between the parents and the school.

Additionally, parents described the following barriers that they perceived prevented them from being engaged in the total school environment: school barriers such as parent regulations in order to volunteer, lack of parent engagement activities at the school, lack of CBET classes, and schools not holding evening meetings to accommodate parents' long work hours. This meant that parents of ELLs in this study faced many obstacles to become engaged at this school: some of which they were able to meet, and others that further challenged parents to be present at the

school. One such practice was the regulations that required all parents to be fingerprinted, and the other one was a lack of parent activities offered by the school. Some parents reiterated that a many parents of ELLs do not engage in the school because they do not have *papeles*, which means that they are undocumented and are afraid of getting fingerprinted. Others were frustrated WUSD mandated that they take a series of three training classes in order to become certified to volunteer in the school. They felt that there were too many regulations, and that they do not have time to be taking classes. Furthermore, another barrier the parents faced was lack of parent engagement programs provided by the school. If the school did not provide opportunities for parent engagement by having events or programs, such as CBET, it was out of the parents' control to force the school to provide English classes for them to learn. Also, working long hours played a crucial role as to why some of them were not engaged in the school. However, a few of the parents indicated that even though sometimes they did have time to engage in the school, they preferred to do chores such as cleaning the house and running errands.

This study's findings relate to the literature of Chrispeels and Gonzalez (2006) and Waterman and Harry (2008) since parent meetings and workshops provide parents with valuable information and clarify any misunderstandings of school policies. In this study specifically, lack of parent meetings revealed that some parents were not aware that their children were ELLs, or that they needed to be reclassified to become fluent English proficient students.

Furthermore, the literature was consistent with the findings of Martinez and Velasquez (2000) that schools need to offer parent activities, but they need to encourage parent engagement and not be prescriptive. Research by Vidano and Sahafi (2004) and Zarate (2007) indicated that successful programs such as INSPIRE (Innovation that Nurtures Student Success and Parent Involvement to Reach Excellence) and PIQE (Parent Institute for Quality Education)

encompassed parent engagement because the content of the programs was culturally proficient, applicable, and responsive to the parents' cultural background. Also, the study coincides with the findings of Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012), in that parents needed to be given independent power to reinforce and nurture the engagement into a virtuous cycle. More engagement can lead to a better school environment that encourages and inspires even more parent engagement.

The literature by Borba (2009), Delgado-Gaitán (2004), and Waterman and Harry (2008) also described the crucial role of administrative leadership and how a leadership void can have drastic consequences for parent engagement of parents of ELLs. Lack of leadership can result in not using mandated funds in an effective manner, and also spending funds ineffectively on ineffective programs. Leadership also needs to support community liaisons in schools in order to support and encourage the kind of needed parent engagement.

This study's findings were in agreement with the findings of Ferlazzo (2009), Martinez and Velasquez (2000), and Waterman and Harry (2008), because there was a lack of many needed resources that would have encouraged parent engagement. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and the availability of translators would resolve communication issues that interfered with parent engagement. Negative personal experiences of parents of ELLs needed to be overcome with positive proactive efforts by the school administration. Long work hours for the parents were a difficult barrier to overcome, but the school must try to accommodate as much as possible by holding parent activities in the evening.

School artifacts (*the Flash* for parents, *the Flash* for staff, and district communication) were the means of communicating vital information to parents, students, staff and the school community. Key findings in *the Flash* newsletter for parents were reminders to parents of upcoming events, volunteer trainings, and parent workshops being offered at the district office.

Key findings in *the Flash* newsletter for staff were professional development for teachers, operation and maintenance of the school, student activities, teacher deadlines, and state testing information. Finally, key findings in the district communication were an explanation of poor judgment in use of school expenditures for professional development for Common Core for district and school administrators, and solicitation of parent feedback on how to improve the schools in WUSD through the LCAP Input Form.

The school principal included material in *the Flash* newsletter based on information received from the district, assistant superintendents, and directors. Additionally, the principal researched important topics of the month such as African-American History month or seasonal holidays events that could be embedded into the school culture such as the Halloween Parade and winter holiday programs. All of these also were included in *the Flash* newsletter. McNeil (1990) indicated that school artifacts could be useful to support the various inquiries of the research, and to look for evidence. The artifacts provided useful records of the current practices at the school. The findings showed the way in which the principal communicated to parents, students and staff about school assemblies, parent SSC meetings, and parent workshops.

Based on this one-way type of communication, one parent of an ELL did not find *the Flash* effective in communicating important information to her. The other parents did not comment explicitly on *the Flash*, but their personal narratives indicated that they felt the school does not communicate with and provide important information to them. Thus, while *the Flash* was the principal's attempt at communicating with the parents of ELLs, it was not sufficient for the intended audience because it was lacking sufficient depth of needed school information. Also, the parents of ELLs strongly desired to have reciprocal communication with the school principal; this was evident when one parent said, "For me, it is to have interaction with the

principal, the teachers, and to be in communication with them and be engaged with them in whatever we can. Also, it is to have access to them" (Larios, Focus Group 1). This finding illustrates that *the Flash* was not meeting the deep communication needs of the parents of ELLs, and was not even an effective form of one-way communication.

Conclusions

Related to the research questions, findings from the study support the following three conclusions.

Conclusion one. Based on this study, parents of ELLs were not passive bystanders, but rather participants that had a strong desire to become engaged in their children's school. Many schools harbor the perception that, because of differences in language and culture, parents of ELLs have no education and cannot help their children with school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Therefore, the schools, rather than embracing their diverse community of families, tend to keep them at a distance. When the parents of ELLs were aware that the school did not offer any parent engagement activities, this led to severe discouragement, and their presence diminished greatly at the school. A participant's comment demonstrates this:

> I think the school needs lots of things to be done here inside here. The schools needs a lot of organization of many things inside the classrooms as well as activities in the school. I want to see more organized activities for the parents. (Hidalgo, Focus Group 1)

The study revealed a clear thirst from multiple participants for the school to offer parent engagement activities in which parents are given resources or tools regarding how to help their children with school in order to improve student achievement (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Furthermore, from 2007-2013, the participants reported wanting the school to offer a parent center and CBET classes to learn English.

Parents are sometimes viewed by administration and teachers as putting the entire onus of educating the child on the school, yet this study revealed that parents of ELLs in this study were actively engaged in the classroom. Additionally, they sought to give their input at meetings and engaged themselves in school events and activities. Thus, research question 1 for this study asked participants to define parent engagement and one participant specifically stated to "be 1 hour or half an hour in the meetings to be able to know what is happening and give your opinion" would give them an opportunity for engagement (Ramirez, Focus Group 2). This study revealed that in the past at Hubble Elementary School, parents of ELLs were engaged in parent meetings and events, but they distanced themselves because they no longer trusted the leadership of the school when they were treated rudely at parent meetings. Parents of ELLs were not being listened to, and the communication was not reciprocal (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004).

This was a great loss not only for the school, but also for the parents and the students that attended the school. Parents have a lot of resources and *funds of knowledge* that can make the school even better, but this requires time and resource investment by the school (Moll et al., 1992). When given access and resources, parents of ELLs will take the initiative to engage themselves in their children's school and in school decision making processes. Even not being fluent in English and being undocumented did not stop them from attempting to engage in and be a part of the school community.

Conclusion two. A promising practice the participants from this study believed would engage them in the school was to have access to the principal and the teachers. Additionally, parents believed that reciprocal communication among all stakeholders would help them connect with the school. This was evident when a participant said, "I prefer for the principal to be accessible, to talk to the parents if we have a problem, how can the principal help us in order to

attract the parents" in order to engage themselves in the decision making processes of the school environment (Santiago, Focus Group 3). The principal and teachers have to create the right conditions for parents to feel welcome and comfortable. They must be proactive in order to forge relationships with parents and be accessible. The type of interaction between the school staff has to be one in which the principal and teachers have a genuine interest in parents becoming engaged in the school. Furthermore, the relationships have to foster trust and cultivate respect for the culture of parents of ELLs (Arias & Morillo-Campell, 2008; Delgado-Gaitán, 2004; Valdés, 1996).

Of vital importance is having a community liaison that parents can trust and can bridge reciprocal communication between parents of ELLs and the principal and teachers. It is crucial that the community liaison have the full support of the principal because if she does not, then her hands are tied, and she cannot move forward with planning parent engagement activities that might entail using school funds or resources (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Once that strong relationship is established between the principal, teachers, and parents of ELLs, the school can set the foundation for parents to mobilize themselves to bring resources that will benefit the school with the guidance of the principal, teachers, and community liaison in order to improve student achievement (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; Simich-Dudgeon, 1986).

Principals are bombarded with-district mandated directives that they must fulfill, but they must also take time to make their presence known and leverage the power of the community liaison to their advantage in order to build strong parent relationships (Borba, 2009; Waterman & Harry, 2008). Thus, research question 2 in this study asked participants about practices they believed would engage them in the school. One participant expressed in the following quote the strong desire of parents of ELLs to bond with the school principal and teachers:

> And what I think the school needs is for the principal to have more communication. To focus in getting closer to the parents in trying for them to become engaged and for them to participate together with her and the teachers so that it could be like a union. (Larios, Focus Group 1)

By being open and receptive, the school can make the parents feel welcome. Parents then become motivated to help the school, which leads to further engagement of more parents. Parents of ELLs will spread the word about parent engagement opportunities that can help support them and their children. The key to parent engagement is for the principal and teachers to be accessible to the parents and for there to be ongoing reciprocal communication between all members of the school. This in turn will lead to parents feeling connected to the school and having a relationship with the principal and teachers.

Conclusion three. A final conclusion of the study indicates that many barriers are put into place by the school itself. Therefore, parent engagement of parents of ELLs would improve drastically if schools planned effectively how they deliver or provide information and communicate with the parents (Valdés, 1996). Thus, research question 3 for this study asked about barriers, and to that end, one participant expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction with the way the school provides information and communicates with the parents:

> I say they don't engage. The only thing they do are the meetings that they used to do more often. And today there are very few ELAC (English Learners Advisory Committee) meetings. It is the only thing. It is when they give information, but only very briefly. They don't speak concretely. They don't say how this information is for this, no engagement. Simply, few meetings and today no. (Cervantes, Focus Group 2)

Parents want to feel acknowledged and not feel ignored by the principal or the teachers that educate their children. Additionally, the study's findings indicated that schools that neglect having parent activities strongly discourage any parent engagement. The valuable resources of parents of ELLs will be wasted if the school-created barriers are left in place (Moll et al., 1992). Barriers create artificial walls between the parents and the principal and teachers. The barriers will continue to remain if there is no accountability on the principal. For example, one participant described a drastic lack of awareness of notification of her son's ELL level:

> I feel they do not engage the parents because they just sent the notes for us to sign. That the child has taken the test, and that the child has been low, he has passed a level and they are going to change his English learner level. (Larios, Focus Group 1)

If appropriate steps are taken, the walls can be knocked down, and the principal, teachers and parents of ELLs will share a common goal, such as improving student achievement. For this to happen, the principal has to be held accountable by district administrators.

If accountability measures from district leadership are not set in place and enforced at the school site, there can be a tremendously significant negative impact on a Title I school. A Title I school receives federal and state funds for the purpose of engaging parents of ELLs in the decision making processes, committees, and total environment of their children's schools (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004). Without appropriate accountability, these funds may not be spent appropriately for their original intention. To ensure that the complex, interconnected needs of the multiple stakeholders are satisfied requires constant oversight and monitoring by district leaders at the school site on regular basis. The leadership must demonstrate its ownership and responsibilities. It is the duty of the district leadership to enforce federal and state mandated laws to be implemented and followed by the principal in order to bring about positive change in the

school culture that includes an approximately 50% population of ELLs. A strong need exists for district and school leadership to be advocates for the marginalized communities whose voices are not being heard (Nieto, 1999).

Positionality

Many changes have occurred since the commencement of this study. I am no longer an instructor in this district, and have moved to another school district. It was a bittersweet moment when I left the district in which I grew up and the schools that served as my K-12 educational experience. For 15 years, I had served as a teacher, program coordinator, and elementary assistant principal at WUSD.

In September of 2013 I moved into a middle school administrative position. The demographics of the new school are similar to those of Hubble Elementary School because the school has many Latino Spanish-speaking parents of ELLs. The principal and the office manager speak English only, and the community liaison and myself are the bilingual staff in the office. It was evident that there was a need for school personnel who spoke the language and could relate to the needs of parents of ELLs. As a school administrator, I became an advocate for students and parents and was able to empower ELAC parent officers to plan monthly ELAC meetings and/or parent workshops that supported parent engagement.

During the summer of 2014, I was transferred to another school where there was a need for a female Spanish speaking bilingual administrator. Having a female bilingual administrator makes a large impact because the parents of ELLs, especially Latina mothers, feel more comfortable seeking assistance from a female Spanish speaking administrator. When a problem arises, whether it be discipline or academics, it is predominately the Latina mothers that come into the school because their husbands are working and are the main breadwinners of the

household. Thus, it is usually the responsibility of the mother to handle the situation and resolve the problem.

Implications for Policy and Practice

A significant implication of the study was that school districts should not put too many roadblocks and regulations for parents to participate in schools. For example, in order for parents to volunteer, the parents in this study had to be fingerprinted, take a TB test, and take three courses provided by the school district. It is crucial that parents be fingerprinted and take a TB test for the safety of students. However, mandating that parents take three training classes on effective volunteering is excessive.

A second major implication is for the principal, the leader of the school, to research parent programs that have engaged parents successfully. It is important to use the mandated funding effectively; this requires wise judgment and the principal making it a priority to invest in research-based programs that have proven to be effective for parent engagement and improving student achievement.

A third implication for policy is to invest in resources that enable parents to independently mobilize themselves to establish parent engagement activities that will benefit them and their children at school. Such activities could include having a parent center where they can hold CBET classes for parents to learn English, or parent-led workshops on various topics.

A final implication for policy is for district leadership who oversee federal and state programs to be aware of how a Title I school that receives federal and state funds are using the funds to engage parents of ELLs in the decision making processes, committees, and total school environment of their children's schools (Delgado-Gaitán, 2004). District leadership needs to visit schools in order to be in the loop of what is happening there. District leadership must engage in

constant oversight and monitoring in order to ensure that principals grow and nurture a school culture that keeps the needs of the marginalized communities at the forefront.

Limitations

The focus groups were held on mornings, since this is when the greatest number of parents of ELLs were available to meet when the researcher contacted them on the phone. Due to the researcher's work schedule, the researcher did not have a great deal of flexibility in terms of what time slots were available. The researcher determined that the focus groups would be held continually for 3 days, Tuesday through Thursday, from 8:30am to 10:30am or from 2:30pm to 4:30pm. However, the participants preferred the morning slots on the 3 consecutive days. The opportunity to capture a greater audience could have happened if the researcher had held evening focus group interviews after 6pm.

A second limitation to the study is that parents of English-only children were excluded from the study because they did not meet the qualifications needed for participation. The researcher distributed an announcement flash to all students at Hubble Elementary School in which parents had to indicate whether they were interested in the study. Once the researcher had collected all the announcements, the researcher separated English only students from the ELL students. Because the English only students did not meet the criteria for the study, their parents were not contacted to be part of the focus group interviews.

A third limitation was the time of day that the focus groups interviews were held. This was a missed opportunity to capture a wider audience of participants for the focus group interviews. The researcher may have had the participation of Latino fathers of ELLs participate in this study if time slots were allocated in the late evening hours such as after 6pm in order to specifically not just have Latina mothers of ELLs.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendation one. Instead of conducting focus groups, the researcher could conduct one-to-one interviews. Even though the 13 parents in this study felt comfortable sharing their perspectives on parent engagement, conducting one-to-one interviews can lead to more intimate in-depth discussions that they may not have been shared in the presence of other parents.

Recommendation two. Instead of focusing on one school in the district, the researcher could conduct the study in all elementary schools in the district. Conducting a study with all elementary schools in the district could shed more insight into current practices that other elementary schools are using that are successful in parent engagement of parents of ELLs.

Recommendation three. Instead of the researcher focusing solely on Latino parents of ELLs, the researcher could include other marginalized groups such as African or Asian parents of ELLs. Interaction with various cultures and languages may not only lead to some common solutions for parent engagement, but also reveal the need for customized approaches to meet the unique needs of multiple cultures.

Recommendation four. The researcher recommends the use of a survey or questionnaire for further study in order to capture a greater audience. The survey would be a way to include parents that could not participate in the focus groups because of the days and time at which the focus interviews were held. Additionally, the use of the survey could capture fathers' perspectives on engagement. In this study, all the participants were Latina mothers of ELLs.

Recommendation five. In order for schools to effectively engage parents of ELLs, principals and teachers need to be trained specifically on how to genuinely meet the needs of parents of ELLs. The need exists for district leadership to train principals and teachers on non-traditional parent engagement that includes parents of ELLs' culture; an excellent example of

such training is described by Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008). Also, Delgado-Gaitán (2004) stated that parents would be encouraged to take an active role by schools implementing non-traditional parent engagement activities that are created by parents and the school in order to truly engage and sustain parent participation. Furthermore, Chow and Cummins (2003) and Paratore et al. (1999) indicated that for parent engagement to happen, the principal, the teachers and the parents need to have a reciprocal understanding of the parents' language and culture, and parents' culture must also be embedded throughout the parent engagement activities. Lastly, the principal must ensure that those practices are in place.

Summary

In this study, parents defined parent engagement as being present in the classroom, in the school and in parent meetings. The parents of ELLs viewed best practices as the principal, the teachers, and the parents establishing a strong relationship with each other. They wanted the school community to be like a family, and to feel connected with the school. They asserted that the principal and the teachers could create parent engagement activities that made the school personnel accessible, and where they could socialize and communicate with each other; however, they emphasized the importance of having translators readily available at all school related activities. The parents felt that the principal and the teachers had to take the first step by initiating the invitation. Even though some parents of ELLs faced barriers such as not being fluent in English, not speaking any English, or working long hours, the study indicated that many barriers originated from the school.

One often hears teachers and administrators complaining that parents of ELLs are not engaged in their children's school. However, the literature was inconsistent in this respect, because some researchers claimed that parents of ELLs were not engaged, and other researchers

indicated that parent engagement occurred when schools were open and receptive, and planned collaboratively with parents of ELLs.

Certain circumstances drive people to immigrate to America, although these immigrants may not speak the language, may not have achieved high education levels, and may even be undocumented. However, none of these factors dampen their significant desire and motivation to help their children obtain the education that they may not have had because they had to work at a young age to help their parents in their home countries. This study revealed that parent engagement for parents of ELLs does happen when the school establishes the infrastructure needed to initiate and nurture parent engagement. Furthermore, the school principal has to ignite the spark for reciprocal communication and set the example through his actions by wanting to establish strong relationships with the parents. If the school is truly interested in making parents of ELLs a part of the school community, if the language and culture of the parents are respected, and if the parents believe in the school leader, then a strong foundation for parent engagement of parents of ELLs is established.

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APPENDIX A

Home Language Survey

HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY
ENGLISH VERSION

Name of Student: _____ _____ _____
Surname / Last Name First Given Name Second Given Name

School: _____ Age: _____ Grade Level: _____ Teacher Name: _____

Directions to Parents and Guardians:

The California *Education Code* contains legal requirements which direct schools to determine the language(s) spoken in the home of each student. This information is essential in order for the school to provide adequate instructional programs and services.

As parents or guardians, your cooperation is requested in complying with this legal requirement. Please respond to each of the four questions listed below as accurately as possible. For each question, write the name(s) of the language(s) that apply in the space provided. Please do not leave any question unanswered.

1. Which language did your child learn when he/she first began to talk? _____
2. Which language does your child most frequently speak at home? _____
3. Which language do you (the parents or guardians) most frequently use when speaking with your child? _____

4. Which language is most often spoken by adults in the home? (parents, guardians, grandparents, or any other adults) _____

Please sign and date this form in the spaces provided below, then return this form to your child's teacher. Thank you for your cooperation.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian Date

Form HLS, Revised October 2005
California Department of Education

APPENDIX B

Participation Announcement

Dear Parents,

This is from the desk of Ms. Maria Morales-Thomas who was one of the 6th grade teachers at *Hubble Elementary School*. I am also a doctoral student in Educational Leadership Administration Policy at Pepperdine University. This school has allowed me to ask you about parent engagement practices. I am soliciting participation from parents for this study entitled: "Practices that promote parent engagement in an urban elementary school: A phenomenological study of Latino parents of English language learners."

If you are willing to participate, please sign the form below and send back with your child to the school principal in the main office. Participation requires your attendance at a focus group interview that will last approximately 120 minutes.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [redacted] or [redacted]. You can contact Dr. Reyna Garcia Ramos at [redacted] or [redacted] with any questions. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ms. Morales-Thomas

□ I am interested in participating

□ I am not interested in participating

□ I want more information.

Parent name: _____

Telephone # _____

Is (are) your child/children classified as an English language learner?

□yes □no

Child's grade:_____

Teacher at Hubble:_____

All participants will be entered in a drawing for $20 gift cards. Five participants will win gift cards from the following merchants: Walmart and Food 4 Less.

APPENDIX C

Anuncio de Participación

Estimados padres,
Esto es desde del escritorio de la Sra. María Morales-Thomas quien fue uno de los maestros de grado 6 en la escuela primaria Hubble. Yo también soy estudiante de doctorado en Liderazgo Educativo Administración Póliza en la Universidad Pepperdine. Esta escuela me ha permitido a preguntarle acerca de las prácticas de participación de padres. Yo estoy solicitando la participación de los padres para el estudio de mi tesis doctoral titulada: "Prácticas que promuevan la participación de padres en una escuela primaria urbana: un estudio fenomenológico de padres latinos de los estudiantes aprendices del idioma inglés."
Si usted está dispuesto a participar, por favor firme el formulario a continuación y enviar con su hijo a la directora en la oficina. La participación requiere su presencia en una entrevista de grupo de enfoque que va a durar aproximadamente 120 minutos.
Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en [redacted] o al [redacted]. Puede contactar a la Dr. Reyna García Ramos en [redacted] o al [redacted] con cualquier pregunta. Gracias por su ayuda.
Atentamente,

Sra. Morales-Thomas

□ Estoy interesado en participar

□ No estoy interesado en participar

□ Quiero más información

Es (son) su/s hijo/s clasificados como un estudiante aprendiz del idioma inglés

□ si □no

Nombre del padre: _____ Grado del niño/a: _____

Número de teléfono: _____ Maestro/a de Hubble: _____

Todos los participantes serán entrados en un sorteo de tarjetas de regalo de $20. Cinco participantes ganarán tarjetas de regalo de los siguientes comerciantes: Walmart y Food 4 Less.

APPENDIX D

Parent Cover Letter for Participation

Parent Cover Letter for Focus Group Interview

Dear Parent,

My name is Maria Morales-Thomas, a former 6th grade teacher at *Hubble Elementary School* and a doctoral student in Educational Leadership Administration Policy at Pepperdine University. *Hubble Elementary School* has allowed me to ask parents about practices on parent engagement. You have indicated you would like to participate in this dissertation study entitled: "Practices that promote parent engagement in an urban elementary school: A phenomenological study of Latino parents of English language learners."

This packet, sent with your child, contains: 1) a parent cover letter, 2) a parent consent form and 3) a standard envelope. Please sign the consent form and seal it in the standard envelope. Please return the sealed envelope to the school principal in the main office. You will be contacted to schedule a focus group interview that will last approximately 120 minutes. I will maintain confidentiality, and all focus group interview information will be treated to maintain anonymity. The parent consent form sealed in the standard envelope is due no later than **March 14, 2014**. There will be no compensation, financial, or otherwise, for participation in this study. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time should you decide to do so. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [redacted] or [redacted]. Thank you for your help. For questions about your rights, please call or write to Dr. Reyna Garcia Ramos at [redacted] or [redacted].

All participants will be entered in a drawing for $20 gift cards. Five participants will win gift cards from Food 4 Less and Walmart.

Sincerely,

Maria Morales-Thomas
former 6th grade teacher

APPENDIX E

Parent Consent Form

Consent Form

I authorize Maria Morales-Thomas, doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Reyna Garcia Ramos in Educational Leadership Administration Policy at Pepperdine University, to include me in the research project entitled "Practices that promote parent engagement in an urban elementary school: A phenomenological study of Latino parents of English Language Learners." I understand my participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

I have been asked to participate in a research project which is designed to study parents' perceptions of best practices as well as identifying major barriers that prevent them from being participants in schools. The study consists of a focus group interview of no more than 120 minutes. I understand that the researcher will be taking written notes during the focus group interview. These notes will be transferred to an electronic document and utilized for research purposes only. The notes will be destroyed; however the electronic document will be securely stored for five years in the researcher's personal computer and then destroyed. I understand that if I participate in the focus group interview portion of this study, that I will be audiotaped. I am also aware that if I chose not to be audiotaped, I can still participate in this study and not be recorded.

There are none to minimal potential risks for participating in this study. Minimal risks may include boredom for the duration of the interview. If this occurs, a break will be provided to me. I understand that there is no direct benefit from participation in this study; however, the benefits may include an understanding of knowledge of Latino parents' perceptions of English language learners of best practices as well as identifying major barriers that prevent them from being active participants in school activities and the decision making processes.

I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I also have the right to refuse to answer any questions I choose not to answer. I also understand that there might be times the researcher may find it necessary to end my study participation.

I understand that no information gathered from this study will be released to others without my permission, or as required by law. If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personal identifying information will be released. I also understand that confidentiality of participants will be maintained to the upmost professional standards. All identifiable information will be assigned pseudonyms and codes to protect participants in all stages of this study. Focus group interview data will be collected and stored in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home.

I understand I will receive no compensation, financial or otherwise, for my participation in this study. I understand that if I have any questions regarding the study procedures, I may contact the primary investigator, Maria Morales-Thomas at [redacted] at [redacted] or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Reyna Garcia Ramos at [redacted] or at [redacted]

[redacted]. If I have further questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis the Chairperson of GPS Institutional Review Board (IRB), Pepperdine University at [redacted] or at [redacted].
I understand to my satisfaction the information in the consent form regarding my participation in the research project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

_____ _____

Participants' Signature Authorization to audiotape

_____

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

_____

Principal Investigator

_____

Date

APPENDIX F

Carta de Participación de Padres

Carta de padres para la entrevista de grupo de enfoque

Estimados padres,

Mi nombre es Maria Morales-Thomas, una ex maestra de grado 6 en la escuela primaria Hubble y estudiante de doctorado en Liderazgo Educativo Administración Póliza en la Universidad Pepperdine. La Escuela primaria de Hubble ha permitido preguntar a los padres acerca de las prácticas sobre la participación de los padres. Ha indicado que le gustaría participar en este estudio de la disertación titulado: "Prácticas que promuevan la participación de padres en una escuela primaria urbana: un estudio fenomenológico de padres latinos de los estudiantes aprendices del idioma inglés."

Este paquete, enviado con su niño/a, contiene: 1) una carta de padres, 2) un formulario de consentimiento de padres y 3) un sobre estándar. Por favor de firmar el formulario de consentimiento y sellarlo en el sobre estándar. Por favor devuelva el sobre sellado a la directora en la oficina. Será contactado para hacer una cita de entrevista del grupo de enfoque que durará aproximadamente 120 minutos. Permanecerá anónimo, y toda la información de entrevista del grupo de enfoque se tratará confidencialmente. La forma de consentimiento paternal sellada en el sobre estándar es debido no más tarde que el 14 de marzo de 2014.
No habrá ninguna compensación, financiera, o por otra parte, por la participación en este estudio. Es libre de retirar su participación en cualquier momento si así lo desea. Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en [redacted] o al [redacted]. Gracias por su ayuda. Para preguntas sobre sus derechos, por favor llame o escriba a la Dr. Reyna García Ramos en [redacted] o al [redacted].
Todos los participantes serán entrados en un sorteo de tarjetas de regalo de 20$. Cinco participantes ganarán tarjetas de regalo de Food 4 Less y Walmart.

Atentamente,

María Morales-Thomas
Ex-maestra del 6to grado

APPENDIX G

Formulario de Consentimiento de Padres

Formulario de consentimiento

Yo autorizo a María Morales-Thomas, estudiante de doctorado bajo la supervisión del Dr. Reyna García Ramos en Liderazgo Educativo Administración Póliza en la Universidad Pepperdine, que me incluya en el proyecto de investigación titulado: "Prácticas que promuevan la participación de padres en una escuela primaria urbana: un estudio fenomenológico de padres latinos de los estudiantes de aprendices del idioma inglés." Yo entiendo que mi participación en este estudio es estrictamente voluntaria.

Me han pedido participar en un proyecto de investigación destinado estudiar las percepciones de los padres de mejores prácticas, así como identificar los obstáculos principales que les impide ser participantes en las escuelas. El estudio consta de una entrevista de un grupo de enfoque no más de 120 minutos. Entiendo que el investigador tomará notas escritas durante la entrevista de grupo de enfoque. Estas notas serán transferidas a un documento electrónico y utilizado únicamente en la investigación. Las notas serán destruidas; sin embargo, el documento electrónico será almacenado de manera segura durante cinco años en la computadora personal del investigador y luego destruido. Yo entiendo que si participo en la entrevista del grupo de enfoque parte de este estudio, que será ser grabada.

No hay ninguno a un mínimo riesgos potenciales por participar en este estudio. Riesgos mínimos pueden incluir aburrimiento durante la duración de la entrevista. Si esto ocurre, se proporcionará un descanso para mí. Entiendo que no hay ningún beneficio directo de la participación en este estudio; Sin embargo, los beneficios pueden incluir una comprensión de los conocimientos de las percepciones de los padres latinos de estudiantes de aprendices del idioma inglés de mejores prácticas, así como identificar las principales barreras que les impiden ser participantes activos en las actividades escolares y los procesos de toma de decisiones.

Entiendo que tengo el derecho de negarse a participar en, o retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin penalización. También tengo el derecho de negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta que decida no contestar. También entiendo que a veces habrá tiempos que el investigador puede encontrarlo necesario terminar mi participación en el estudio.

Entiendo que ninguna información obtenida de este estudio no se liberará a otros sin mi permiso, o como requerido por la ley. Si las conclusiones del estudio se publican o se presentan a un auditorio profesional, ninguna información de identificación personal será revelada.

Entiendo que no recibiré ninguna compensación, financiera o por otra parte, por mi participación en este estudio. Entiendo que si tengo alguna pregunta en cuanto a los procedimientos de estudio, puedo comunicarme con el investigator principal Maria Morales-Thomas en [redacted] o al [redacted] o mi supervisor de la facultat Dr. Reyna Garcia Ramos en [redacted] o al [redacted]. Si tengo preguntas adicionales sobre mis derechos como un participante de investigación, puedo contactar Dr. Thema Bryant-

Davis presidente de Institutional Review Board (IRB) GPS, Universidad de Pepperdine en [redacted] o al [redacted].

Entiendo a mi satisfacción la información en el formulario de consentimiento con respecto a mi participación en el proyecto de investigación. Todas mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción. He recibido una copia de este formulario de consentimiento informado que he leído y entendido. Por este medio, doy mi consentimiento para participar en la investigación descrita anteriormente.

_____ _____

Firma del participante Autorización de audio

_____

Fecha

He explicado y he definido en detalle el procedimiento de investigación en el cual el sujeto ha consentido participar. Haber explicado esto y contestado cualquier pregunta, estoy firmando esta forma y aceptando el consentimiento de esta persona.

_____

Investigador principal

_____

Date

APPENDIX H

GPS IRB Exemption Notice

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

April 17, 2014

Maria Morales-Thomas
[redacted]

Protocol #: E0114D01
Project Title: Practices that Promote Parent Engagement in an Urban Elementary School: A Phenomenological Study of Latino Parents of English Language Learners

Dear Mrs. Morales-Thomas:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Practices that Promote Parent Engagement in an Urban Elementary School: A Phenomenological Study of Latino Parents of English Language Learners*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Garcia-Reymos, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

> (b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:
>
> **Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the

[redacted]

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [redacted]. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney
Dr. Reyna Garcia-Reymos, Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX I

Parent Interview Protocol and Script

Parent Interview Protocol

Script:

1. Introduce myself and my role in this study:

2. Provide overview of review research and process:

Thank you for your voluntary participation in this research study titled "Practices that promote parent engagement in an urban elementary school: A phenomenological study of Latino parents of English language learners." As communicated, this study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Educational Leadership Administration Policy at Pepperdine University. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the parent perceptions of best practices as well as identifying major barriers that prevent them from being participants in school activities and the decision making processes at *Hubble Elementary School* environment.

I will ask you a series of questions. Please feel free to answer only those questions you are comfortable answering. You do not have to answer all the questions. I will be taking notes and information you provide will remain anonymous and your identity kept confidential. The interview will be approximately 120 minutes. I will be audiotaping the conversations. Remember this is voluntary. Finally, if at any point you want to withdraw you can. Let me know if you need breaks. Any questions before we get started? Let's begin.

3. Ask if any questions before proceeding.

Interview

1.) Ask participants about background information about themselves:

a. Where were you born?

b.) What is your occupation?

c.) How many children do you have in Woodbend School District?

C2. How many children do you have in *Hubble Elementary School*?

C3. How long have you been at *Hubble Elementary School?*

d.) What is the primary language spoken at your home?

Research Questions #1: How do parents at Hubble Elementary School define parent engagement?

1. What does parent engagement mean to you? Can you provide me with some examples of parent engagement?

2. Do you currently feel there is parent engagement at this school, why or why not?

3. Who do you feel has the responsibility at this school to promote parent engagement? Why?

4. Are there other examples of parent engagement you would like to see at this school?

5. How does *Hubble Elementary School* engage parents of English Language Learners?

Research Questions #2: What do you perceive to be the best practices that are most meaningful and encouraging to elicit comprehensive parental engagement, as a parent of an ELL?

1. Why?
2. How can other practices become meaningful?

Research Questions #3: What do you perceive to be the barriers that prevent you from becoming engaged in the total school environment as a parent of an ELL child at *Hubble Elementary School?*

1. What practice is the most meaningful and comprehensive parental engagement at *Hubble Elementary School?*
2. What is a barrier? What do you perceive to be barriers for engagement at *Hubble Elementary School*?
3. How could it cease to be a barrier?
4. If you could give one recommendation to the school about parent engagement, what would it be? Why?

Open Discussion: Has there been anything else that has not been discussed around parent engagement?

APPENDIX J

Protocolo de Entrevista de Padres y Guión

Protocolo de entrevista de padres

Guión:

1. Presentarme a mí mismo y mi papel en este estudio:
2. Proporcione el resumen del informe de investigación y proceso:

Gracias por su participación voluntaria en el estudio de investigación titulado: "Prácticas que promuevan la participación de padres en una escuela primaria urbana: un estudio fenomenológico de padres latinos de los estudiantes de aprendices del idioma inglés." Como he comunicado, este estudio se está llevando a cabo en cumplimiento parcial de los requisitos para obtener el doctorado de Liderazgo Educativo Administración Póliza en la Universidad Pepperdine. El propósito de este estudio fenomenológico es explorar las percepciones de los padres de mejores prácticas así como identificación de barreras principales que les impiden ser participantes en actividades escolares y los procesos de toma de decisiones en el ambiente de la *Escuela Primaria Hubble.*

Le haré una serie de preguntas. Por favor no dude en contestar a sólo aquellas preguntas que Ud. sea cómodo en contestar. No tiene que contestar todas las preguntas. Tomaré notas e información que proporcione permanecerá anónimo y su identidad se quedará confidencial. La entrevista será aproximadamente 120 minutos. Las conversaciones serán grabadas. Recuerde que esto es voluntario. Por último, si en algún momento desea retirar Ud. puede. Déjeme saber si usted necesita descansos. ¿Alguna pregunta antes de empezar? Comencemos.

3. Pregunte si alguna pregunta antes de proceder.

Entrevista

1.) Pregunte a los participantes información de acerca de sí mismos:

a. ¿Dónde nació?

b.) ¿Cuál es su ocupación?

c.) ¿Cuántos hijos tiene en Woodbend Distrito Escolar?

C2. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene/n en la *Escuela Primaria Hubble*?

C3. ¿Cuánto tiempo han estado en la *Escuela Primaria Hubble*?

d.) ¿Cuál es el idioma principal que se habla en su casa?

Preguntas de investigación #1: ¿Cómo definen los padres de esta escuela el involucramiento de padres.

1. ¿Qué significa el involucramiento de padres para usted? ¿Puede proporcionarme algunos ejemplos de involucramiento de padres?

2. ¿Siente actualmente que hay involucramiento de padres en esta escuela, por qué o por qué no?

3. ¿Quién siente Ud. que tiene la responsabilidad en esta escuela para promover el involucramiento de padres? ¿Por qué?

4. ¿Hay otros ejemplos de involucramiento de padres que le gustaría ver en esta escuela?

5. ¿Cómo involucra la *Escuela Primaria Hubble* a los padres de los estudiantes aprendices del idioma inglés?

Preguntas de investigación #2: ¿Qué percibe Ud. que son las mejores prácticas y las más significativas y alentadoras para obtener la participación completa de padres, como un padre de los estudiantes aprendices del idioma inglés?

1. ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Cómo pueden ser otras prácticas significativas?

Preguntas de investigación #3: ¿Qué percibe que son las barreras que le impiden hacerse involucrado en el ambiente escolar total como un padre de estudiantes aprendices del idioma inglés en la *Escuela Primaria Hubble*?

1. ¿Qué práctica es la más significativa y completa de involucramiento de padres en la *Escuela Primaria Hubble*?

2. ¿Qué es una barrera? ¿Qué percibe que son las barreras para el involucramiento de padres en la *Escuela Primaria Hubble*?

3. ¿Cómo podría dejar de ser una barrera?

4. ¿Si pudiera dar una recomendación a la escuela sobre el involucramiento de padres, qué sería? ¿Por qué?

Discusión abierta: ¿Ha habido algo más que no se ha discutido acerca del involucramiento de padres.

APPENDIX K

Schedule for Potential Focus Groups Interviews in library

MAY 2014

WEEK	DAY	TIME	ROOM
1	MONDAY	2:30 P.M.-4:30 P.M.	Library
2	THURSDAY	3:30 P.M.-5:30 P.M.	Library
3	MONDAY	2:30 P.M.-4:30 P.M.	Library
4	THURSDAY	3:30 P.M.-5:30 P.M.	Library

APPENDIX L

Horario de Potenciales Entrevistas de Grupo de Enfoque en la biblioteca

mayo 2014

SEMANA	DIA	HORA	HABITACIÓN
1	LUNES	2:30 P.M.-4:30 P.M.	biblioteca
2	JUEVES	3:30 P.M.-5:30 P.M.	biblioteca
3	LUNES	2:30 P.M.-4:30 P.M.	biblioteca
4	JUEVES	3:30 P.M.-5:30 P.M.	biblioteca

APPENDIX M

The Flash, Parent Edition

Date	Information Included

September 9, 2013	• Principal Introduction message
	• Meet the Staff
	• Breakfast in the Classroom
	• Safe School Zone
	• Parent Homework Assignments
	• Reminders to Parents
	• Upcoming Events
	  o Back to School Night
	  o School holiday schedule

September 16, 2013	• Conservation information: Three R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
	• Elections for parent groups
	  o Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
	  o School Site Council (SSC)
	  o English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)
	  o GATE Advisory Committee
	• Parent Homework Assignments
	• Reminders to Parents
	• Upcoming Events
	  o Back to School Night
	  o Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
	  o School holiday schedule

September 23, 2013	• Elections for parent groups
	  o Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
	  o School Site Council (SSC)
	  o English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)
	  o GATE Advisory Committee
	• Back to School Night
	  o Title I meeting
	  o Classroom presentations
	  o Schedule Parent/Teacher
	  o Conference meetings for the first report card
	• Lunch applications due date reminder
	• School volunteer training
	• Session 1: Volunteer Procedures and Policies
	• Sessions 2: Volunteer Opportunities
	• Location: Woodbend Unified School District, Parent Center
	• Email Collection Campaign in an effort to communicate with parents
	• Volunteers wanted
	  o Halloween Parade
	  o Treat March
	  o Halloween Dance
	• Reminders to Parents
	• Upcoming Events
	  o Progress Reports
	  o Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
	  o School holiday schedule
	  o

September 30, 2014	• Red Ribbon Week: drug prevention campaign

Date	Information Included
	○ Art and Poetry Contest • Hispanic Heritage Month • California English Language Development Test (CELDT) • Halloween Activities ○ Costume Parade ○ Treat March ○ What to bring ○ What we need ○ Halloween school rules ○ Costume rules • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays • School holiday schedule
October 7, 2013	• Candy Fall Fundraiser • Red Ribbon Week ○ Art and Poetry Contest • California English Language Development Test (CELDT) • Halloween Activities ○ Costume Parade ○ Treat March ○ What to bring ○ What we need ○ Halloween school rules ○ Costume rules • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ Progress Reports ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays • School holiday schedule
October 15, 2013	• Candy Fall Fundraiser • Red Ribbon Week ○ Art and Poetry Contest • Saturday School • Halloween Activities ○ Costume Parade ○ Treat March ○ What to bring ○ What we need ○ Halloween school rules ○ Costume rules • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule
October 21, 2013	• Red Ribbon Week ○ Art and Poetry Contest • Candy Fall Fundraiser • Halloween Activities ○ Costume Parade ○ Treat March ○ What to bring ○ What we need

Date	Information Included
	○ Halloween school rules ○ Costume rules • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule
November 4, 2013	• Halloween activities a success! Thank you! • Student activities planning committee • Candy Fall Fundraiser ○ Student store • Veteran's Day ○ Students write letters of encouragement • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule
November 12, 2013	• Parent Teacher conference day • Candy Fall Fundraiser ○ Student store • Parent Workshop: Creating a positive family self-esteem ○ Location: Woodbend Unified School District • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ First Quarter Awards Ceremony ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule
November 19, 2013	• Parent Workshop: Creating a positive family self-esteem ○ Location: Woodbend Unified School District • Candy Fall Fundraiser ○ Student store • Parent Workshop: Bullying Prevention: What Parents Need to Know ○ Location: Woodbend Unified School District • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ First Quarter Awards Ceremony ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule
December 9, 2013	• Parent Workshop: Bullying Prevention: What Parents Need to Know ○ Location: Woodbend Unified School District • City of Woodbend Library ○ Family movie at the library ○ LEGO and Board Game mania at the Library ○ Bingo for Kids and Teens ○ Saturday Family Movie • Holiday Program • Winter Candy Lane Dance ○ Student Council Fundraiser • Student Store • Reminders to Parents • Upcoming Events ○ Progress Reports go home ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule

Date	Information Included

March 10, 2014	• Teacher Workshop: Creating a Flipped Classroom
	  o Location: Calvary Middle School Auditorium
	• School Site Council Meeting
	• Congratulations to student district Spelling Bee winners
	• Congratulations to Classroom Door Decorating Contest winners
	• Dr. Seuss Student Poster Contest Winners
	• In Honor of Women's History Month
	• Student Book Fair
	• Parent Volunteers
	  o Needed for assistance with flow of traffic
	  o St. Patrick's Day Dance

March 17, 2014	• Preschool financed by the state
	  o Enrollment for children 3-4 years old
	  o Documents required
	• Parent Education Workshop
	  o Location: Hubble Elementary School Cafeteria
	• School Book Fair
	• In Honor of Women's History Month: Women Presidents of the World
	• Parent Volunteers
	  o Needed for assistance with flow of traffic before school and after school
	• City of Woodbend Library
	  o Family movie at the library
	  o Bingo for Kids and Teens
	  o Cesar Chavez movie
	• School Calendar
	  o Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
	  o School Holidays

April 28, 2014	• Information about assessment dates
	  o Revised recess and lunch schedule
	  o Call for parent volunteers
	  o Cell phone policy for testing
	• Important parent meeting: control funding formula (LCFF) and local control accountability plan (LCAP) stakeholder input meetings
	• Parent Homework
	• Free Computer and Internet training for parents
	  o Location: Woodbend Unified School District Parent Center
	• Invitation for family sports and fitness night
	• School Calendar
	  o National Principal's Day
	  o Staff Appreciation Week
	  o Science Fair

May 5, 2014	• Information about assessment dates
	  o Revised recess and lunch schedule
	  o Call for parent volunteers
	  o Cell phone policy for testing
	• Staff appreciation week
	• Science Fair
	• Invitation for family sports and fitness night

APPENDIX N

The Flash, Staff Edition

Date	Information Included

September 9, 2013	• Just a Thought, quote from the principal, for teachers to have high expectations for their students
	• Dismissal Procedure
	• Meet the Staff
	• Communication
	  o Phone
	  o Email
	  o Lesson plans
	• Parent Homework Assignments
	• Weekly schedule
	• Assembly, Grades of Green, Recycling
	• Upcoming Events
	  o Back to School Night
	  o School Calendar

September 16, 2013	• Staff Development
	• Dismissal Procedure
	• Hubble/Oasis/Plato (H.O.P): Cohort Meeting Dates
	• Communication
	  o Phone
	  o Email
	  o Lesson plans
	• Professional Development
	• Back to School Night
	  o Schedule Parent/Teacher conferences
	  o Title I meeting
	  o Providing parent information
	  o Needs: prepare classrooms for guests and post student work
	• Upcoming Events
	  o School Calendar

September 23, 2013	• Just a thought, quote from the principal, to be optimistic
	• Staff Development
	• Volunteers Wanted
	  o Halloween Parade
	  o Treat March
	  o Halloween Dance
	• Hubble/Oasis/Plato (H.O.P): Cohort Meeting Dates
	• Communication
	  o Phone
	  o Email
	  o Lesson plans
	• Professional Development
	• Back to School Night
	  o Schedule Parent/Teacher conferences
	  o Title I meeting
	  o Providing parent information
	  o Needs: prepare classrooms for guests and post student work
	• Upcoming Events
	  o Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays

Date	Information Included
	○ School Calendar
September 30, 2014	• Technology Workshops • Communication ○ Phone ○ Email ○ Lesson plans • Professional Development • Volunteers Wanted • Staff Development Schedule ○ CELDT Training • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School Calendar
October 15, 2013	• Candy Fall Fundraiser • Red Ribbon Week ○ Art and Poetry Contest • Communication ○ Phone ○ Email ○ Lesson plans • Halloween Activities ○ Costume Parade ○ Treat March ○ Dance ○ Cost of dance ○ What to bring ○ What we need ○ Halloween school rules ○ Costume rules • Saturday School ○ Parents will be notified by letter if your child is invited to attend • Staff Development Schedule ○ HOP at Hubble • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School Calendar
October 21, 2013	• Candy Fall Fundraiser • Red Ribbon Week ○ Art and Poetry Contest • Communication ○ Phone ○ Email ○ Lesson plans • Halloween Activities ○ Costume Parade ○ Treat March ○ Dance ○ Cost of dance ○ What to bring ○ What we need ○ Halloween school rules ○ Costume rules • Affordable Tuition Master's Programs beginning this spring • Staff Development Schedule

Date	Information Included
	○ Standards Plus: Common Core • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School Calendar
November 4, 2013	• Candy Fall Fundraiser ○ Student Store • Veteran's Day ○ Students will write letters of encouragement to military members • Thank you! Halloween activities were a huge success • Winter is coming: student activity planning committee • Correction: WUSD Testing initiatives have been changed • Grades 3-6: Smarter Balance, ELA or Math • Grade 5: STAR, Science and PE • Staff Development Schedule ○ Mainstreaming • Upcoming Events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School Calendar
December 2, 2013	• Parent Workshop: Bullying Prevention: What Parents Need to Know ○ Location: Woodbend Unified School District • City of Woodbend Library ○ Library class: Introduction to computers ○ Family movie at the library ○ LEGO and Board Game mania at the Library ○ Puppet Show • Holiday Program • Winter Candy Lane Dance ○ Student Council Fundraiser • Student Store ○ We need parent volunteers • Staff Development Schedule ○ Team Counseling session • Upcoming Events ○ First Quarter Awards ceremony ○ Grade book check ○ Progress Report go home ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School holiday schedule
December 9, 2013	• Parent Workshop: Bullying Prevention: What Parents Need to Know ○ Location: Woodbend Unified School District • City of Woodbend Library ○ Family movie at the library ○ LEGO and Board Game mania at the Library ○ Bingo for Kids and Teens ○ Saturday Family Movie • Holiday Program • Winter Candy Lane Dance ○ Student Council Fundraiser • Student Store ○ We need parent volunteers • Staff Development ○ Mandatory meeting: health benefits • Upcoming Events

Date	Information Included
	○ Progress Reports go home ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School calendar
December 16, 2013	• Internet Resource for Parents ○ Common Core Websites ○ Free Typing Games Websites ○ English Language Arts games for kids ○ Math games for kids • Holiday program • Student store • Winter Spirit Week • Holiday Staff Party • Upcoming events ○ Progress reports go home ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School calendar
February 18, 2014	• In honor of African-American History month: African-Americans in Politics • Thank you for supporting the Valentine's Grams and Dance • Reclassification Ceremony • School-wide Spelling Bee • Awards Assembly • Save the Date: Read Across America ○ Volunteers are welcome to participate • Reminders to Parents • Possible retention lists • Retention letters are ready for pickup • Schedule possible retention parent conferences • A copy of the parent conference notes and signed letters are due to the principal • Staff Development (HOP), Hubble classrooms • District Spelling Bee • School Calendar ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays
March 3, 2014	• Hubble celebrates Read Across America • Read Across America student activities • In honor of Women's History Month • Workshop: Creating a Flipped Classroom • Parent workshop: Common Core and the Smarter Balanced Test ○ Taking place at Hubble Multipurpose room • School Site Council meeting • Upcoming events ○ Spirit Wear and Free Dress Fridays ○ School calendar
April 21, 2014	• Hubble Second Graders take over the Woodbend City Council • Updates ○ Report Cards ○ Staff Meeting ○ School Site Council meeting ○ SBAC-State Testing ○ School-Wide homework ○ Hubble Science Fair • Invitation to Family Sports and Fitness Night • Save the Date

Date	Information Included
	• Kindergarten Graduation • Sixth Grade Promotion Ceremony

APPENDIX O

District Communication

Date	Information Included
March 7, 2014	• Common Core retreat held at hotel and spa o Restoring district accountability o Common Core training for principals, administrators and teachers o Costly hotel accommodations and travel reimbursement
April 28, 2014	• Local Control and Accountability Plan Parent Input Form o Conditions of learning o Pupil Outcomes o Engagement