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# Junior High Latino Parents' Perceived Roles in Home and School Partnerships

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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MA Ed., Dominican University, 2005

MAT, Columbia College Chicago, 2002

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

A rural K-12 district in the Midwest evidenced a rise in the Latino population from 2002 to 2013, yet parental participation amongst Latino parents at the junior high was low. Low parental involvement has been linked to lowered self-efficacy, which impacts student learning. Although there is a plethora of research on the positive aspects of parental involvement, there is little research on Latino parent involvement in small rural communities. Within this instrumental case study, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parent involvement was used to explore Latino parents' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities of communication strategies within the junior high and of available resources related to parental role construction and self-efficacy. Ten Latino parents with children in Grades 7 and 8 were individually interviewed. Document analysis of school documents and researcher notes were used to bolster the trustworthiness of interpretations. Typological analysis was incorporated to look at transcribed and coded notes where 4 main findings emerged: lack of communication, helping the adolescent child, understanding school structure/governance, and learning the English language. A curriculum design plan was developed in 3 areas supporting parent self-efficacy and role construction: understanding adolescents, understanding school structure/governance, and English as a second language (ESL) approach. This study may promote social change within a rural community because the implemented curriculum design plan established Latino parental engagement by incorporating a series of workshops in Spanish and an ESL format to meet the 4 categories which help to meet state and federal education guidelines within the area of parent and family engagement.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my family. First to my loving parents,
Hernan and Meche, who have throughout this process given me inspiration, pushed me to
reach for the very best in me, prayed for me, and provided me with the resources to keep
going. They were my first glimpse at what parent involvement entailed as they modeled
the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model before I knew of its existence. To my
wonderful sister, Milly, whose blind faith in me has given me the strength to continue
and whom I will continue to encourage as she begins her doctoral process. For my boys,
Nathan and Matthew, who have patiently waited for me to be finished so we can enjoy
life fully and a little bit more. For my husband who treaded the unfamiliar road before
me and kept me moving forward, understanding what it takes to finish in the good times
and the bad. To all those persons whose faith in me gave me the inspiration to fuel those
endless nights working toward completing my goal. Finally, to the Creator who through
it all has placed the right people in my path to fuel my spirit so it may continue no matter
the challenges that were placed during my journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

**Introduction**

Parental participation is the crux of student success.  Parents' involvement in their

child's education produces positive academic outcomes (Epstein, 2001; Epstein &

Salinas, 2004; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).  Yet,

research for junior high grades has not been conclusive (Tekin, 2011).  However, parental

involvement at the junior high grades must include parents in different activities than

those of the elementary grades (Agronik, Clark, O'Donnell, & Stueve, 2009; Tekin,

2011).  Furthermore, research on Latino parental perception of involvement at the junior

high is scant or inconclusive (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2011).  State and federal

education policy stresses the importance of student academic achievement on academic

assessments, which must be aligned with challenging state academic standards (Every

Student Succeeds Act, 2015).  Additionally, with the introduction of new national state-

led standards known as the Common Core (National Governors Association Center for

Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), differentiated training

will be needed for Latino parents to help their children be successful so they do not fail to

graduate (Baum & Flores, 2011).  Therefore, research on how Latino parents perceive

involvement is of great importance, especially if this research is to impact student

learning.

**Definition of the Problem**

Throughout 30-plus years of research, individuals such as Epstein (2001) and

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) commented on the importance of

partnerships between parents and schools, which may have resulted in overall student academic achievement.  In a framework for parental involvement, Epstein delineated six different ways that parents are involved and indicated how schools can foster this involvement (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).  In their theoretical model of parental involvement, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, applied more of a sequential 5-level model and illustrated the motivators at each level (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).  Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's first two levels were important when looking at Latino parent perception as they encompassed the motivators that made parents more willing to participate in the home-to-school connection.  These two levels are as follows: the influences and the manner in which they choose to become involved based on their knowledge and how this involvement can impact their child's schooling (Walker et al., 2005).  The areas of role construction and self-efficacy within the first level encompass the two motivators that ultimately influenced student achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005).  This means that parents need to understand what their role is within a school setting in order to feel empowered to act in supporting their children academically.

Many times parents do not feel empowered and others perceive their lack of participation or their role as lacking.  The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and the National Education Association (NEA) indicated the following nine barriers that prevent parents from fully participating in schools: failure from both parents and schools to build a relationship with each other, not trusting the school personnel, fear and mistrust of the institution, a lack of cultural competency, not

having the funds or knowing how to administer the resources, failure to prioritize, a lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities, failure to adjust to the role of parent involvement in the 21st century, and lacking an understanding of the key challenges of the different subgroups (MALDEF & NEA, 2010). By understanding Latino parental perception within District RW, these barriers, if present, can be addressed accordingly.

District RW is a rural K-12 district that has evidenced a rise in the Latino population from 2002 to 2013 (Nebraska Department of Education, 2013). Parental participation amongst Latino parents at the only junior high in District RW is low (Principal, personal communication, September 20, 2013). A district personnel member indicated that test scores among Latino students continued to be lower than their peers (Teacher, personal communication, October 15, 2013). The staff would like to determine how to best aid Latino families in helping their children become academically successful by increasing parental involvement (Building Administrator, personal communication, March 26, 2013). Parental involvement for this small, rural school district is currently not measured; yet, parental involvement is encouraged and informally measured by school administrators through their observations at school events to be able to meet state and federal policy surrounding parental and family engagement (Building Administrator, personal communication, October 31, 2013). One of the main goals highlighted by the District RW's parent-teacher handbook and their board policy is to have a strong parent-school partnership (District RW, 2008, 2013). By building a richer data driven procedure, the school district can gauge and build stronger parent and school partnerships.

Teachers within District RW speculated that the reason Latino parents were not engaged was due to language barriers, low socioeconomic factors, and a lack of schooling. Other teachers and administrators speculated that parents were distrustful of school settings, while others believed that language differences were to blame. Based on what teachers and administrators perceived from Latino parent interactions, they wanted to know whether their perceptions of Latino parent involvement were correct (Lead Teacher, personal communication, November 1, 2013). Therefore, finding out how Latino parents of junior high students perceived their roles and responsibilities in the home and school partnership helped guide the school personnel to respond better to Latino parents' needs.

Examining how Latino parents perceived their roles and responsibilities, as well as discovering the definition of what it means for parents to be involved within District RW, helped the district make necessary adjustments and improve understanding of Latino parent involvement. Furthermore, additional opportunities to work specifically with Latino parents were uncovered. In this study, I sought to understand how parents perceived their roles and responsibilities in the home and school partnership within District RW and to determine which barriers described by MALDEF and NEA (2010) prevented them from empowering themselves to work with their children in a way that enhanced their child's educational experience. The nine barriers were looked at more fully using Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) theoretical 5-level model of parental motivation that leads to student success.

**Rationale**

**Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

District RW is a small rural district centrally located in the Midwest. The school district comprised of 865 students during the 2012-2013 school year, contained one middle school. The student demographic population was categorized as African American (2%), Asian American (0.4%), European American (85%), Hispanic American (11%), and Native American (1%, Nebraska Department of Education, 2013). The limited English population (LEP) at the district level was 3.3% in 2013 or 28 total students (Nebraska Department of Education, 2013). Since the year 2000, although there has been minimal growth in the number of students who are LEP district-wide, unlike the state's 200% growth in urban cities, the rise has been significant enough to influence the district (Maxwell, 2009). During the 2012-13 school year, out of 142 students in Grades 7 and 8, 10.7% consisted of students categorized as Hispanic American. There were not enough students within the Hispanic American or LEP categories to determine academic progress on the district's school report cards; yet, some staff blamed English language learners when discussing reasons why schools did not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP; Parent, personal communication, July 21, 2013). Furthermore, speculations by a teacher for low parental involvement included Latino parents' immigration status, low socioeconomic status, and language differences (Classroom Teacher, personal communication, September 21, 2013). The junior high principal was aware that there may have been a positive correlation between student academic successes and parents' involvement; therefore, he understood the need to increase Latino parental involvement

(Principal, personal communication, March 30, 2013). In order to find solutions to increase AYP parental and family engagement should increase. This will help to reduce the blame placed on the LEP group.

The district increased its efforts to improve communication between administrators, teachers, and parents. One method was the use of parent surveys to compile information about concerns, suggestions, or questions on district programs and services (Principal, personal communication, October 31, 2013). Parent survey response rates were low, yet the response rate met the state required quota of 25% participation (Principal, personal communication, November 4, 2013). Very few responses were by Latino parents. One reason might have been that the survey was only given in English (Principal, personal communication, November 4, 2013). Although the response rate met state requirements, district administrators continued to express urgency in improving survey response rates district-wide, especially among Latino parents.

Another method to improve communication was through *booster* meetings. Booster meetings are similar to parent teacher organization (PTO) meetings. The purpose of booster meetings was to increase volunteerism of parents, encourage teachers and students, involve the community, and promote the welfare of students and families within the district. During the 2013-2014 school year, parental attendance was minimal, and no Latino parents attended any of the meetings despite a personalized invitation to each parent in the English language (Booster President, personal communication, September 21, 2013). While it was not clear as to why parents did not feel comfortable

attending parent groups even though invitations were sent, Witt and Sheridan (2011) attribute this to qualities of families in rural settings.

Communication with parents is important to the school personnel, and parents are responsive to communication sent home for the most part (Principal, personal communication, November 4, 2013). The district took an additional new initiative and hired me as the district interpreter during the 2013-2014 school year to assist with the language difference. This demonstrated the use of one of Epstein's (2001) study recommendations and showed positive progression toward putting into place a resource that helped parents communicate better with the school district. Yet, Delgado-Gaitan (2004) mentioned that it is not the language barrier that prevents parents from participating; but, it is rather the lack of trust. This is one of the barriers that the MALDEF and the NEA (2010) indicated in their study. In addition, Johnson (2006) argued that marginalized groups are given negative messages that destroy self-efficacy and that may add to the level of distrust. These messages may be evident in the way that District RW's standard achievement test scores were announced publicly. If the presence of the family in a child's life provides a strong sense of efficacy (Bandura, 2001; Jeynes, 2011), a closer examination of the nine barriers mentioned by the MALDEF and NEA (2010) may be used to determine if they were preventing Latino parents at District RW from becoming more involved.

**Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

There is little conclusive research on Latino parental involvement at the junior high level (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2011). Cheeseman (2012) reported that by the

year 2025, the Hispanic-origin population in the United States is projected to grow from 11% to 23%.  In addition, the pressure schools face to comply with meeting state and federal education policy is high (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).  Therefore, research on Latino parental involvement was of great importance, especially if it was to impact student learning and create positive social change.

Epstein (2001) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) have shown the importance of partnerships between parents and schools, which resulted in overall student academic achievement.  While Epstein's framework is the model of choice when examining parental involvement within districts, the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model is the only one statistically analyzed and measured within the Latino environment that helps develop the steps necessary for parental involvement (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Closson et al., 2004; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011; Walker et al., 2005).  Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler highlighted the importance of partnership between parents and schools using five levels of involvement; in addition, the first three levels contain three main categories that include the following: personal psychological beliefs, contextual motivators of involvement, and perceptions of life context (Walker et al., 2011).  Within Bandura's social cognitive theory, the relationship mentioned is applicable in the field of education as well.  While most schools have focused on research by Epstein (2001), Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model (1995, 1997, 2005) provided an understanding as to why parents may perceive their roles from the social cognitive theory of role construction.  Moreover, the first level encompassed the two motivators,

role construction and self- efficacy, that were evident for success, not only for the parents, but also for student achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005).

Barriers are still evident even though theory indicates that it is a parent's notion of role and their idea of empowerment that lead to more involvement. MALDEF and the NEA (2010) highlighted nine barriers that prevent parents from fully participating in schools. These barriers, also prevalent in other research (Gandara, 2010; Snyer & Dillow, 2010), adhere to aspects present within role construction theory, and are discussed within Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model (1995, 1997, 2005). Walker et al. (2011) identified three patterns that appear with the following role constructions of parental involvement: parent-focused, partnership-focused, and school-focused. These patterns are also seen in studies done throughout the United States that have successful stories of parents and school working together to minimize or dissipate the barriers mentioned above (Varela, 2008). These patterns of involvement helped guide the questions of this study to determine the perspectives, roles, and responsibilities that Latino parents had of their involvement at school.

Throughout the United States, many schools have been successful in creating atmospheres where Latino parents have worked together with schools to make sure their children are successful. Using the perspectives within Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model (1995, 1997, 2005), these districts have more of a partnership-focused pattern between Latino parents and school personnel. For example, within a rural town in Texas, Latino parents have enjoyed participating annually in a family science night alongside teachers, where the parents present to elementary school-aged children on different

science-related themes (McCullough, 2011). In another nationally recognized study, Paredes (2011), showed how teachers could work with Latino parents using a nontraditional parent-teacher conference. This helps to create richer communication between school staff and Latino parents and in the process, it helps to improve the child's academic performance.

In this study, I examined current policy within District RW in the area of parental involvement while exploring the barriers found within MALDEF and NEA's (2010) report. The main purpose of this study was threefold as described by the following points: (a) I examined Latino parents' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities using Hoover Dempsey's model of parental involvement; (b) I analyzed Latino parents perceptions as they relate to District RW's understanding of parent involvement in the 21$^{st}$ century and key challenges specific to Latinos; and, (c) I provided suggestions on how both Latino parents and the junior high personnel can create a home-school partnership through better communication.

## Definitions

The following are words I chose to define for my study. In particular, I am not using the words Latino and Hispanic interchangeably as each has its own distinct definition. Within school systems, the word Hispanic describes the U.S. Census definition as highlighted below and is used for demographic determinations for those individuals using the Spanish language. The word Latino describes individuals from geographical regions where the Spanish language may not be predominant (i.e., Mayan languages in Guatemala). I used both terms within my study as they appropriately

describe both demographics and the cultural background of the populations that I worked with.

*Hispanic:* Pan ethnic term enacted into law by the United States in 1976 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).  This term is mostly associated with the language of peoples of origins where Spanish is spoken (Flores-Hughes, 2006).  Persons along the Eastern coast use the term.  The term is also favored by individuals of Caribbean and South American descent (Valdeón, 2013).

*Home-school partnership:* Where both the school and home have a mutual understanding of respect and an understanding that both share equal responsibility for the child's education in the academic, social, and emotional development (Jones-Smith, 2011; Price-Mitchell, 2009).

*Latino:* A reference that aligns more to the geographical location of where people or individuals who speak the romance languages come from (Valdeón, 2013).  According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), the term Latino encompasses those individuals who come from the Caribbean, South America, and Central America.  People west of the Mississippi River mostly use the word (Flores-Hughes, 2006; Valdeón 2013).

*Limited English proficient:* Individuals learning to become fluent speakers and communicators in the English language (Office of Civil Rights, 2013, para. 2).

*Junior high:* Within this study, the term refers to Grades 7 and eight.

*Role construction:* One of the personal motivators involving the belief of what is supposed to be done by a person not necessarily what actually occurs (Hoover Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005).

*Self-efficacy:* Another personal motivator in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) model, which involves parents' beliefs about whether they are able to help their child succeed in school.

*Social cognitive theory:* Composed of the following four interrelated processes that impact goal realization: self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 2011).

## Significance

Positive social change is rendered to diverse communities when the challenges and opportunities for education can be inspired, and or influenced (Walden University, 2013). There is little research on Latino parent involvement within the junior high grades (Tekin, 2011) or the research is based on a deficit model (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Therefore, research on Latino parental involvement was of great importance, especially if it was to impact student learning in the junior high grades. This study contributed to positive social change by helping Latino parents meet the demands found within state and federal education policy regarding parent and family engagement at the district and may help to improve parental and family involvement policies of other rural school districts within the state of Nebraska. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS)--while having been adopted in the 44 states--were not looked at within this study because the State of Nebraska has chosen not to adopt the CCSS (Dejka, 2013; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Yet, providing differentiated training on the Nebraska state standards is an important step to take with all parents and should be considered.

In this study, I highlighted a few areas of training for teachers and administrators, but the research was mostly conducted on parent data. Walker et al. (2011) provided an argument for supporting the role of parents and their sense of efficacy for increasing parental involvement. While Tekin (2011) suggested that junior high parents were not as involved at Grades 7 and 8, Paredes (2011) showed that detailed support and training for parents is crucial for sustaining parental involvement. Combining research on parental involvement was beneficial for all parental engagement in a way that was productive, beneficial to the social arena, and provided district changes that were necessary to achieve state and federal policy expectations (Gandara, 2010). Students at the junior high level tend to be more involved and satisfied when their parents are involved in helping them make academic decisions (Duchesne & Ratelle, 2010; Gould, 2011). Therefore, not only are test scores of importance, but the creation of responsible caring and productive citizens who can function in the 21st century in the small town where they reside supersede the test scores. Helping to gauge the needs of Latino parents and how they perceived parental involvement rendered the beginning of conversations about creating school policy that is more inviting for Latino parents (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010). This led to creating an atmosphere where parents felt more comfortable attending school events and being more participatory in asking for help.

Leaders can use this study to help look at Latino parent involvement from a different point of view. There is little research done on Latino students at the junior high level, and support in the area of parental and family engagement in the State of Nebraska should be looked at (Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, 2013). Acquiring

information on Latino parent perceptions is important so that growth is made from a more

global perspective within the State of Nebraska; this may not only help Latino parents

become more involved and engaged, but also it may also help students reach their full

academic potential.

## Guiding/Research Question

The struggle that many rural schools face to determine getting parents of junior

high students to become involved so that their children can be more academically

successful is evident within District RW.  This rural K-12 district has evidenced a rise in

the Latino population from 2002 to 2013 (Nebraska Department of Education, 2013).

Parental participation amongst Latino parents at the only junior high in District RW is

low, and parent perceptions of their roles in the home and school partnership needs to be

highlighted so that practices can be changed or modified by the school district to better

guide parents (Principal, personal communication, September 20, 2013).  The following

questions drove the investigation:

1.  How do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at the

    junior high level?

2.  What are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used

    by the school?

3.  What are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at the

    school?

This instrumental case study contributed to positive social change by helping

Latino parents meet the demands of state and federal education policy at District RW's

junior high school. While it is not evident whether this study has helped to improve parental and family engagement policies of other rural school districts, it can add to the research so others can examine similar situations elsewhere in northeast Nebraska, especially since there is a need according to Witte and Sheridan (2011). Finding out the causal attributes that prevented parents from being more actively engaged within the school setting of 145 students helped to increase Latino family involvement and led to the creation of a curriculum design plan for parents of junior high children, encompassing diversity. It has yet to lead to the following: examining board and school policy and suggesting changes and targeting professional development practices for both parents and teachers.

## Review of the Literature

At a rural K-12 district in Northeast Nebraska, there was a rise in the Latino population, and low parental participation amongst Latino parents warranted an investigation at the only junior high school within this district. A search of literature was conducted in order to gather information that would help to answer the following questions: (a) how do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at the junior high level?; (b) what are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used by the school?; and, (c) what are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at the school? The intent of having a literature review was to reach saturation on the available research on the perceptions that Latino parents have of their roles for involvement within the junior high grades.

Examination of the literature was done by looking at the following major databases: EBSCOhost database, PsycINFO Database, ERIC database, Chronicle of Higher Education, SocINDEX, SAGE, Education Search Complete, Academic Search Complete, and Questia.  The main areas that were examined involved theories within Bandura's social cognitive and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement, the history of parental involvement, Latino perception of involvement, teacher perception of Latino parent involvement, and barriers that Latino families have within a school setting.  The information garnered from journals, books, as well as other non peer-reviewed scholarly sources was retrieved through electronic databases and hand-searched journals, books, and magazines.  Articles from the various sources cited within the literature review were primarily based on peer-reviewed journal articles.

Additionally, examination of available research was conducted on non-electronic databases such as Phi Delta Kappan and other books on student achievement, parental involvement, leadership strategies, and professional development for teachers.  Research from applicable governmental documents provided information important to the topic under investigation as well.  The literature that was selected served to address the intricacies of the definition of parental involvement, the depth of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model and why it was more compatible with looking at Latino parent involvement, the perceptions of parent involvement by both parents and teachers, and the barriers that Latino parents faced in terms of parental involvement.

The search terms used were as follows: *Latino parent involvement and student achievement; parent involvement and teacher perception; achievement of junior high*

*students and parent involvement; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler and Parent model; criticisms of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler vs. Epstein's model; history of Latino parent involvement; history of parent involvement in the United States; Latino parent perceptions of school; Bandura's social cognitive theory; Bandura and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler;* and *Bandura and parent involvement.* Searches were also done using Spanish phrases, in particular for parental involvement in Mexico.

I also looked at Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental participation as it related to Bandura's social cognitive theory. Specifically, I highlighted how role construction theory found within Hoover-Dempsey's model of parental involvement connected to Bandura's aspect of self-efficacy and how these theories related to Latino parents motivation to become involved at Grades 7 and eight. Moreover, the history of parental involvement, Latino parent involvement, teacher perception, and parent perception of parent involvement was looked at from within the social cognitive theory, self-efficacy, and role construction.

**Self-Efficacy Theory and Parental Involvement**

The social cognitive theory as it pertains to self-efficacy and role construction was used to explain the perceptions of parental involvement in Latino parents. Bandura's (2001) research on the different motivators of social cognition provided a background into understanding parents' manner of comprehending their value (self-efficacy) and how this value affected how they saw the world around them (role construction), especially when it came to the expectations for parent involvement. In order to understand how this

theory pertains to the current study, the historical perspective must be examined within the relationship to the Latino culture as well as how this theory is evident in Hoover-Dempsey's model of parental involvement.  Bandura's social cognitive theory was used to help explain the perceptions that parents have of parental involvement at the junior high level.  Yet the study was grounded in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) research on self-efficacy and role construction and the parts they play in Latino parents' perception of parental involvement.

Three different areas affect individuals' perception of their ability to accomplish tasks.  Within a school system when parents, students and staff work together varous perceptions of task completion may either hinder or impact change.  Jeynes (2011) claimed that the staff's desire to help students succeed (staff-efficacy) rather than students' socioeconomic and/or ethnic backgrounds predicted school achievement. Furthermore, Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) suggest that when people doubt themselves, they fail to move forward with a project even though they understand what the expected outcomes are and how to proceed.  Zimmerman et. al. (1992) argued, "the self-efficacy belief system is the foundation of human motivation and action…which is due to …in large part to its triadic behavioral and contextual qualities (p. 667)".  It is not one global aspect that makes up self-efficacy but three areas of how people learn about themselves, which includes looking within themselves, looking at others, and looking at how they function within the environment.  Bandura and Zimbardo (2000) mentioned that there is no one general idea of self-concept that people have of themselves, rather people's judgments of their performance capabilities in different areas

at different times, which is the idea of social cognition. Within the area of education, Zimmerman et al. (1992) suggested that "[t]he belief systems of the staff also create an organizational culture that can have vitalizing or demoralizing effects on the perceived efficacy of its members" (p. 668). When teachers and parents work together within a positive culture of shared accountability, it creates positive outcomes for student achievement. For example, Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, and Many (2010) created professional learning communities (PLCs)--another name for school-home partnerships-that can only exist when both schools and parents achieve high trust. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997 2005) drew upon Bandura's social cognitive theory and concentrated on the aspect of role construction and self-efficacy. Walker et al. (2011) found that role construction affected the amount of Latino parents' efficacy when trying to motivate them to help within a school setting. Research on parents' view of themselves suggests that it affects student learning and student achievement, therefore it is necessary for schools to help guide parents in this area if they are to impact student learning.

**Hoover Dempsey's Model of Parental Involvement**

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parental involvement provides a sequential manner in which to understand why and how parents affect their children's success in school. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model has been analyzed, revisited, and statistically measured within the Latino environment in order to help develop the steps necessary for examining parental involvement (Walker et al., 2007; Walker et al., 2011). The psychology of involvement stemmed from Bandura's social

cognitive theory (Walker et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2011). The two main constructs for the reason parents become involved are role construction and self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, & Sandler, 2005). These two simple areas impact the other variables within the HDS model and clarify the reasons parents become involved or do not get involved in school settings.

Five tiers delineate how parents' self-efficacy is tied to their perceptions of self and others. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) theoretical model of parental involvement has a sequential 5-level tier that illustrates the motivators at each. The first two levels within the revised model were important when looking at Latino parent perceptions as they encompassed the motivators that made parents more willing to participate in the home-to-school connections (Walker et al., 2005). The first level included three aspects of self-efficacy: (a) the influences that make parents want to become involved; (b) the perceptions of invitations for involvement by others; and, (c) the life contexts that are perceived by parents. The second level pertains to the factors that shape parents' role construction in terms of involvement within the home and the school setting and which begin to affect the students' self-efficacy (Walker et al., 2005). These factors are nurtured by the school personnel through encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The subsequent three tiers look at student efficacy as it pertains to parents' involvement within the school and home setting (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2005). When schools have an understanding of how much self-efficacy is tied to performance, in this case parents' participation of school functions, then they can begin to develop a plan for improvement.

Due to the scarcity of research on Latino parent involvement at the junior high level in rural settings, it became paramount to examine Latino parents' personal motivators such as role construction and self-efficacy for helping Latino students succeed academically. Because role construction played a key role in the research of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005), I found that certain situations made parents want to be more involved in their child's schooling. Researchers who studied Latino parent efficacy at the junior high level indicated that parents tended to stay in the background as they perceived schools to be more knowledgeable then they were, which led to school personnel's perception that parents were uninterested in their child's schooling (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). Yet, other scholars highlighted role construction and showed that Latino parents tended to stay more involved after they were given training on how schools functioned and what they expected of them, which impacted their understanding of how to parent better (Cattanach, 2013; Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004; Paredes, 2011). When parents are provided with the cultural competence of the school culture and setting, they can help their children to be academically successful.

As Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler have continued to revise their model, the perception of parental roles is important in the process of becoming involved and in staying involved. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) delineated the importance of the parents' perceptions of their roles in explaining the social and psychological aspects that make parents want to become involved. When this aspect of involvement is understood, the other levels of involvement for helping parents understand

involvement becomes easier to do, as theorized by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler.

Therefore, importance should be placed on not only understanding how parents perceive

their roles within a school setting, but also on understanding Latino parents' self-efficacy

and role construction for involvement.

An understanding of both role construction and self-efficacy of parental

involvement found within the first level of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of

parent involvement can provide a framework for schools or school districts to help

parents reach their full potential.  This initial process can get schools to reach the fifth

level of the model where students' self-efficacy impacts their student learning (Hoover-

Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).  Using the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995, 1997,

2005) to assess Latino parents' perception of involvement helped me to determine what

can be done to empower Latino parents and understand their role construction within the

school setting.

**History of Parental Involvement in the United States**

Parents' role in the education of their children throughout the United States

history has been paramount for student success (Henderson & Berla, 1997).  Since the

founding of the United States, some parents have sought to make sure that their

children's education came first (Tekin, 2011; Watson, Sanders & McNeal, 2012).  The

growth of cities due to population booms gave rise to the bureaucratic structures and

parent organizations that are seen today (i.e., board of education, superintendent,

principals, etc.; Kaestle, 2001; Tekin, 2011).

In 1897, a group of women joined forces to reclaim parental control of the school system because they perceived that it was taking away their parental control, which gave rise to the parent teacher association (Hiatt-Michael, 1994). Since its creation, the parent teacher association (PTA) has been paramount in bringing about change in school systems by contesting policies and laws that schools and school boards have incorporated in schools. Yet, PTAs were not the only ones that brought changes to state and federal guidelines. Researchers began to make correlations between parent involvement and academic achievement. This, in turn, influenced educational legislation which then exacerbated the needs for lawmakers to mandate parental involvement through laws (i.e., Head Start, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, parent advisory boards, H.R. 6 Improving America's Schools Act, No Child Left Behind, etc.). Many organizations have been created that work with parents and different parent groups. The nonprofit group National ParentNet sponsors a website that provides a plethora of resources for parents, schools, educators, and other parent organizations.

More recently, a consortium of state governors, school officials, and prominent business leaders have created national standards known as the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The creation of these standards arose from a concern regarding the disparity found within each state's educational standards. While some state standards were rigorous, others appeared to be more lax. Most states have freely adopted both the English language arts and the math standards and more currently are set to adopt the science standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State

School Officers, 2010).  Minnesota only adopted the math standard, but not the English language art standard (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).  This is a national initiative, yet the federal government does not mandate it and, therefore, the state of Nebraska is one of five states that have not adopted the CCSS, although they are incorporating the language into their conversations (Best & Cohen, 2013).  Additionally, while parents need to be informed of these standards, there are no regulations or policies, unlike current state and federal policy, which indicate how parents are to be involved.  Rather, a webpage on the CCSS website with suggestions recommends what is already known about the research on parent involvement (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010).  Schools need to work with parents in a way that helps parents understand these changes better, which help, create a better parent-to-school partnership.

Many definitions of what parental involvement is in both the school and the home are evidenced in the research.  Conflicting definitions may cause misunderstandings in how parents perceive their role at school (Graham-Clay, 2005).  The definition used within most public schools is found within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or NCLB (2002), and it goes as follows: "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including but not limited to helping their child learn, active involvement at school; full partner and being a decision maker within a committee setting" (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002).  The U.S. Department of Education (2013) provides information on how parents can become more involved in the lives of their adolescent students.  With

the passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, the definition changes to include

families and it changes the definition to engagement instead of involvement (ESSA,

2015).  Additionally, the PTA has national standards for family-school partnerships that

were modeled after Epstein's six types of parent involvement that were created in 2009.

Although scholars have indicated the benefits of parental involvement, there is limited

research on Latino parent involvement in the junior high (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Walker et

al., 2011; Zarate, 2007).  While there are many definitions by different organizations, all

show that there has to be communication from both parents and school in order to

influence student learning.

**Latino Parent Perceptions of Parental Involvement**

There has been little research on Latino parent involvement within the middle

grades.  When looking at parent involvement of Latino parents, it is important to not only

look at the motivators that make parents become more engaged with the school, but also

at the culture from which they come from in order to understand the views and

background they bring (De Gaetano, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 2012; Zarate, 2007).

Because the majority of Latino students in District RW are from Mexican heritage,

research from that country in regards to parental involvement is being provided.

The history of parental involvement in Mexico is similar to that of the history

parent involvement in the United States.  A parent group was also established early on in

Mexico's history as a nation.  Mexico's parental involvement history stems back to the

1920s and is dotted with injustices toward students, parents, and teachers alike (Johnson

& Hernandez-Rodriguez, 2005).  Unlike the PTA, the struggles that parents in Mexico

have faced until recently overshadow the struggles that the PTA has undergone (Watson, Sanders-Lawson & McNeal, 2012). For example, prior to 2009, parents were fined for not participating in school functions, yet they had no say in their child's education (Johnson & Hernandez-Rodriguez, 2005). This explains why parents of Mexican descent living in the United States might perceive involvement differently than their American counterparts. While, historically U.S. parents are removed from the struggles faced in the 1920's between parents and schools, for Latino parents this struggle is more current.

Presently, in Mexico, parents are asked to participate in social aspects; yet, law prohibits them from associating and intervening in the pedagogical and curricular decisions from said institutions (Huerta-Velasquez, 2010). In the last few years, the Mexican government has focused on increasing parental involvement within the school setting; yet, parental participation is often viewed by parents as helping out at parties, attending meetings, and fundraising (Gottlieb, 2004; Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2014). Parent organizations work closely with the schools in order to be informed of their child's progress as well as to help with supplies, materials, and school maintenance (Johnson & Hernandez-Rodriguez, 2005; Secretaría de Educación Publica, 2014). Additionally, *Oportunidades* (formerly known as PROGRESA) provides funds through cash grants so that low-income families can send their children to school and provide appropriate health service (Altengeral & Henao, 2011). Even though the Mexican government is trying to improve how parents participate within a school setting, parents' perceptions of involvement are limited to their views of only helping in ways that are not academic.

Latino parents who immigrate to the United States, in order to provide a better future for their children, often struggle to understand an education system that they find different from their own (Gandara, 2011; Gottlieb, 2004). Many times parents do not feel comfortable questioning authority figures at the school level (Smith, Stern, & Shratova, 2008; Stein, 2004). This leads to parents' feelings of incompetence to function in a U.S. school setting as they see the hardships that their children face in learning to navigate in a new environment (Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011). Some parents, like a group of vocal Latino parents in Denver, Colorado, believe that schools in the United States are not challenging their students as much as the schools in Mexico (MALDEF & NEA, 2011). Bronfenbrenner's (1976) environmental theory states that children learn from their social environment (i.e., church, home, friends, etc.) as much as they learn from their academic environment, and parents should place importance on understanding how schools function in order to properly help their children do better. It is these conflicting ideologies that parents hold which dictate how they may perceive schools here in the United States.

Hoover Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005) explain that self-efficacy and role-construction can be attributed to why parents feel compelled to be involved and why many times the parents' lack of self-confidence prevents them from volunteering. Parents want their children to do well and they have high expectations of achievement for them, yet they may lack knowledge on where the expected benchmark for excellence lies (MALDEF & NEA, 2011; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011). According to some parents, their participation in school functions is sufficient and seen as parental

involvement. Their understanding of engagement may be different from the teachers' definition of engagement. Therefore, because parents perceive schools to be the ones who influence their children's education, it is important for schools to invite them in ways that make them feel appreciated (Delgado-Gaitan, 2012; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey, Wilkins, & Sandler, 2004; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011; Paredes, 2011). Professional development within school districts should not only strive to develop staff on cultural competence, but also, on finding out about parents expectations for their children and of the school.

**Teacher Perception Latino Parent Involvement**

While it is important to understand parents' perceptions, it is as important to understand teacher perception as well. Teacher perceptions should be taken seriously as studies have shown that these perceptions may enrich or hinder parent-teacher relationships (Arias, Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Stormont, Herman, Reinke, David, & Goel, 2013; Zarate, 2007). Perception is defined by Merriam-Webster as "the way you think about or understand someone or something" (2013). When looking at various qualitative studies, empirical studies, and dissertations, it becomes evident that teacher perceptions of Latino parents have not changed in the last 20 years. For example, the notion that parents' language barrier, low socioeconomic status, low education levels, or indifference about their children's education are persistent and evident within articles and dissertations alike since the late 1980's and early 1990's (Christianakis, 2011; Zarate, 2007).

Teachers' limited knowledge of families' diverse backgrounds can create challenges and negative effects on their perceptions of parental involvement (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011; Stormont, Herman, Reinke, David, & Goel, 2013). For example, an early study regarding teacher perception of Latino parents found that in order to help bilingual students who had exceptionalities, parental involvement was of importance (Rueda, Rodriguez, & Prieto, 1981). Yet, in this study, teachers left the following competencies for last: "Familiarity with language, defining the bi-lingual/multicultural exceptional child, and examining the cultural background" (Rueda, Rodriguez, & Prieto, 1981, p. 269). Today, the same concern is evident of teachers.

As we look at the studies, it is evident that advocacy for cultural training is highlighted, yet it is evident that there is also a lack of cultural training. Teacher-training programs while well-intentioned may present information from a cultural deficit model (de Boehr, Bosker, & van der Werf, 2010). That is why many times well-intentioned teachers who have not lived in the same area as their students find that they clash with the culture, social, emotional, and socioeconomic backgrounds of their students. Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory emphasizes that efficacy is what drives people's motivations. Lack of efficacy as indicated in Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie's (1987) study may lead to factors that influence teacher's impact on promoting or not promoting parental involvement. Parents are more likely to respond when teachers create opportunities for involvement to exist (Becerra, 2012; Olmstead, 2013). Therefore, providing teachers with appropriate professional development in working with Latino

parents will help them understand their students' cultural background better. This helps support and enhance the teachers' self-efficacy within their own classroom as well.

Epstein's (2001) model of parental involvement is intended for understanding the manner in which involvement should occur within school districts, while Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) model is intended to provide the reasons parents become involved. More recently, Paredes (2011) has shown the manner in which schools can involve parents. Yet, without truly understanding the cultural norms and accepting the different cultures that are present, teachers and parents will continually have issues with the trust factor (Arias & Morillo-Campos, 2008; Becerra, 2012; Gordon & Nocon, 2008). When parents feel as if they can trust the school, when they can feel they can work with the school, and when the school shows them that they are welcomed, parents begin to show an interest in approaching the school building (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Powel, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010). While I focus on parent involvement and perceptions, it is evident that teacher expectation is also a factor in parent involvement.

If parents sense that there are low expectations of their involvement then they will not come to the events (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Fan & Williams, 2010; Powel et al., 2010). When schools stress the importance of parents attending the events, are given the challenge and motivated to come to school functions to learn, and are provided evaluation tools where they can assess schools, and their voices can be heard, parents feel more comfortable participating as partners (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Walker et al., 2011). When teachers and parents form a partnership, the outcome for

successful academic progress is evident (De Gaetano, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Zarate, 2007).  Having teachers understand the students they teach is a process that many times does not come naturally to them.  For example, teachers' perceptions or beliefs about their students and of their students' parents are evident in the expectations that they set each year.  When teachers have low expectations of their students, a self-fulfilled prophecy is evident (de Boer, Bosker, & van der Werf, 2010; Jussim & Harber, 2005; Zarate, 2007).  Therefore, a teacher's role is as vital as a parent's role.

**Barriers to Latino Parent Involvement**

While there have been many studies written about factors that impact parental involvement, how to engage parents, and how parent involvement helps students perform better, there is not enough research that specifically delineates how Latino parents can feel more empowered to participate within a junior high setting (Griffin & Galasi, 2010). More than 30 years of research has been dedicated to finding out how to better involve parents and how to best meet the needs that families may have in the education of their child.  Yet it has been found that there are certain barriers that prevent parents from attending school functions or from becoming more participatory at any level (i.e., elementary, junior high, high school; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Hope-King & Goodwin, 2002; Houvrouras, 2001; Patel & Stevens, 2010).  Finding the manner in which to involve Latino parents will need to follow research on the why parents become involved as seen within this study.

MALDEF and NEA (2010) have indicated nine barriers that prevent parents from fully participating in schools and the works of researchers support these. Gregg, Rugg, and Stoneman (2012) have found that parents have difficulty communicating with teachers due to the language differences. Additionally, Smith, Stern, and Shratova (2008) attributed these barriers to logistical issues such as time, socioeconomics, lack of schooling, and teachers not understanding the language and culture of the parents. Aggregating this information shows that while schools may perceive parents as non-participatory, there are barriers that are placed by school personnel that impact said participation from occurring. Providing a venue where both parties can communicate allows a reduction of the barriers and improves communication.

Communication and trust are not the only variables that prevent a trusting relationship between parents and schools. Many times cultural norms by the parents or by the schools impede a mutual understanding. The dynamic and unique backgrounds that parents bring to schools are sometimes contrary to the cultural norms present within schools (Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011; Zarate, 2007). These differences may interfere with the reality of the school culture and to a small extent the schools expectations (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Houvras, 2011; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 2011). The expectations have become more stringent and the demands more evident in the last ten to twelve years, in particular since state and federal laws and policies are set in place for academic achievement. Yet, trying to study an issue that faults parents hinders the school district from finding a resolution to understanding how to use Latino parents as a rich resource for what they can bring to school (Crespo-Jimenez, 2010).

When both parties understand each other's cultures then progress can be made to help

students be more successful.

**Implications**

A combination of the three different parent models that are widely used within the

United States today such as Epstein's (2001) framework for parental involvement,

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) theoretical model of parental involvement,

and Paredes' (2011) parental model of involvement, helped me to create a curriculum

design plan within District RW.  The curriculum design plan was created to adhere to

both parental and school district needs.  I was able to create a curriculum plan model

which adhered to a home-to-school partnership unique to District RW, yet which can be

used as a model for other rural districts in the state of Nebraska. The *Talleres de*

*Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes* (TAPA) works with three different

organizations at the local and state level by using the resources found from four different

grant opportunities.  The curriculum design plan included the use of the Migrant grant,

Title III grant, Local College grant, as well as sponsorship from a local church.

Within the research of Hill and Tyson's (2009) meta-analysis on parental

involvement, it is evident that Latino parent involvement varied widely in different

contexts.  Dr. Paredes' model was used to enhance this curriculum design plan for

promoting student success because it helped to connect the needs of this rural community

by harnessing the different types of parent communication styles that parents possess and

creating a series of workshops with their input.  The information provided by the parents

allowed me to incorporate the cultural norms from the parent's perspective while

implementing the use of different community support systems to the curriculum design plan.

The systematic process found within the curriculum design plan incorporated an educational tool, which helped parents feel comfortable in their learning environment. The curriculum design plan not only served as a means to promote better communication through the use of their native Spanish, but it also served as grounds for providing training that was needed by the parents in learning English. .

**Summary**

The purpose of this section was to help me highlight the main issue of rural schools' struggle to engage Latino parents of junior high students in a school setting. The literature review that was acquired helped me to discover how parent perceptions of their roles in the home-school partnerships might highlight practices that need to change or be modified by the school district to better guide them in helping guide their children achieve academic success. A plethora of researchers have shown that parental participation is the crux of student success, therefore research within my study may help to specifically understand how Latino parents at the junior high grades perceive their roles in home-school partnerships. Furthermore, information is highlighted in this study that districts can use to provide a richer understanding to help parents engage more in the everyday lives of their students in light of the demands of national and local education standards.

Providing parents the opportunities to engage in the education system in their own language provides them with the support they need to understand the function of U.S.

schools. This in turn helps create an atmosphere of trust between the parents and the school. Using the perspectives within Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theoretical model of parental involvement (1995, 1997, 2005), rural districts can consider having more of a partnership with the parents. By using the theoretical foundations found within Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parent involvement, the following questions were asked: (a) How do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at the junior high level? (b) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used by the school? and, (c) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at the school?

Within section two I have provided information that shows how this qualitative research was conducted using an instrumental case study approach. Individual parent interviews were used with parents having children in Grades 7 or eight. Each interview was transcribed and these transcriptions were coded, whereby a deep, rich, and descriptive analysis resulted via a finely detailed protocol. The information procured through the interviews delineated parents' perception of their involvement at school, so that a project was created to help change practices within a school setting helping to engage parents at District RW. This study may contribute to positive social change by not only helping Latino parents meet the demands of federal and state policy within District RW, but also highlight the needs found in other rural school districts helping to improve upon the processes of promoting both Latino parent and family engagement at all levels.

Section 2: The Methodology

**Introduction**

In this section, I explain how qualitative research was conducted using an instrumental case study approach to measure Latino parent perceptions of their involvement at the junior high level and what resources were available to them. According to Stake (2010), an instrumental case study researcher gains insight from explicit data or phenomenon to create generalizations with predetermined information, such as questions, to guide the case study. Yin (2014) described case study research in two parts that encompassed the overall scope of the case study and the technical definitions, such as the data collection and the analysis. Purposeful sampling was used to choose Latino parents from the junior high within District RW. Prior to the interview, an interview protocol was set up with the participants where the setting, times, open-ended questions, and template were discussed briefly in preparation for the actual interview events (Appendix A). Data collection and analysis included a triangulation method to examine the interviews, school documents, and researcher notes to prevent researcher bias and to gather themes related to participants' perceptions adding to the validity of the study following the directions of Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) and Yin.

I organized the data and found trends related to a lack of Latino parent involvement at the seventh and eighth grades. These data were housed within a software program, which facilitated storage and organization of the transcribed qualitative notes from the interviews (Buchanan & Jones, 2010; Yin, 2014). Member checking was done in order to increase the credibility of the study. The following provides a more detailed

explanation of the research design, the participants, as well as data collection and analyses methods that were used.

## Research Design and Approach

This research was conducted using a case study approach that helped shed information in order to highlight the various variables within a phenomenon, providing richer amount of information on the overall perception (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014).  In this case, the single units were the Latino parents who helped shed information on their involvement within the junior high and what can be done to increase parental involvement.

### Instrumental Case Study Approach

I conducted an instrumental case study due to the limitation of a small number of Latino parents at the seventh and eighth grade levels within a small rural town in Nebraska.  Therefore, the purpose of the data collection process was to collect information through multiple formats, such as interviews, document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent handbook, district policy, and researcher notes in order to investigate the perceptions that Latino parents had of their role in parent involvement at the seventh and eighth grade levels.  The use of these formats resulted in the triangulation of data according to Yin (2014), allowing me to acquire the insight I needed into the specific issues within the case study (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).  The junior high is a bounded system because it is the only junior high within this small rural town, and the amount of time that was spent was fixed and provided a clear timeframe for analysis (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014).  Prior to the start of the data collection,

the interview questions, which were based on the main research questions, were examined by three volunteers from the community who have worked closely with the Latino population in order to check for clarity and to see if revisions needed to be made. These volunteers were not a part of the study and had signed a confidentiality form similar to the parents' form. In addition, the form included a clause that limited the volunteers from disseminating any information to others in the community. The main purpose of checking for clarity of the questions was to be able to increase the validity of the study (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

The Latino parents were recruited through the help of the building principal and building staff because this was the first year that I was working in this school district. While this sample size did not provide information for the greater society due to its size, the number chosen was representative of the number of Latino students currently attending District RW. An invitational letter asking for consent in English and Spanish was mailed to the parents identified through the school personnel mentioned (See Appendix B). This consent letter ensured confidentiality and protection from harm. After approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted on September 30, 2014 (IRB approval #: 09-30-14-0133863), I began collecting data for the case study, which included a series of interviews conducted throughout 4 months due to parent availability.

I looked at various types of instruments for data collection. Yin (2014) mentioned that there are the following six main sources of data collection, which are as follows: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and

physical artifacts. The primary source of information collection was via individual interviews during a 1 to 1 1/2 period; yet, the use of documents (i.e., school surveys, parent sign-in sheets) and researcher reflective notes were also used in order to help with the triangulation of the analyzed data to increase the credibility of the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Glesne 2011; Merriam, 2009; Yin 2014). These data collection methods as described below provided rich information for case study research (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014).

During the process of data collection trustworthiness occurred through the triangulation of data that was coded and analyzed. The documents used included interview responses from each parent, school sign-in forms, parent teacher conference sign-in forms from the school, and researcher reflective notes. Additionally, parents had continued access to their information by being allowed to review and confirm the information in the documents. Triangulation was achieved by using the following data collection tools: 1) the one-on-one interview responses, 2) document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent handbook, district policy and researcher notes, and 3) researcher reflective notes. Data were organized electronically and housed at my place of residence. The computer and software program used to store the data are password protected.

There are different approaches to qualitative research and designs. When looking at other approaches, such as ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenological approaches, a closer look at what was studied (perceptions of parent involvement) and the

subjects (10 parents in seventh and eighth grade) revealed more complexity within the nature of the study than what ethnographic, grounded theory, or a phenomenological approach  provided.  For example, ethnographies bind the researcher to spending a substantial amount of time, and I was the only researcher working with parents within the two grade levels in the current year (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Phenomenological studies determine the individual experiences within the world or a particular phenomenon (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010), whereas the approach taken in grounded theory centers around the participants points of views as a grounds for creating a theory (Creswell, 2009).  Within the phenomenological and grounded theory approaches, this study would have been limited to only the perceptions of individuals. Therefore, a case study approach helped to shed important information on how a phenomenon gathers various variables instead of only focusing on one, and providing richer amount of information on the overall perception (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014).  In this case, the single units were the Latino parents who helped shed information on their involvement within the junior high and what was done to ameliorate the situation.

The use of quantitative research in this type of study would have limited me to statistical analysis and was unsuitable for the type of study being conducted (Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010).  As Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) pointed out, quantitative research does not allow for immersion in the field and may limit the understanding of the research problem or phenomenon.  Yin (2014) mentioned that case studies are ideal when studying complex social phenomenon when the context and the boundaries of the focused study are not evident.  Because parent perceptions were sought,

the ability to form relationships with the parents being interviewed provided responses that surveys were unable to provide within quantitative research (Glesne, 2011).

It is important to delve deeper into understanding a case study as a bounded system. A case study is deeply rooted in rich description of a bounded system, per Creswell (2012) and Yin (2014). A bounded system viewed from a theoretical perspective has limits (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Swanborn, 2010). Mann (2006) mentioned that "case study research is by and large situational and not generalizable to other situations" (p. 71). Additionally, there are various approaches to case study research such as instrumental, intrinsic, and collective case study depending on the goals of the researchers. According to Glesne (2011), an instrumental case study approach is used when it is believed that the case may relate to a particular issue as well as to further examine generalizations. For example, Woodside-Jiron and Gehsmann (2009) used an instrumental case study approach to study the issue of school change within a high-poverty school setting.

As researcher, I decided to use an instrumental case study approach to study the types of perceptions Latino parents have of parental involvement at the junior high level because intrinsic and collective case study approaches do not align with the focus of this study. Intrinsic case studies focus on unique situations whereas this study was focused on the issue of lack of Latino parent participation at the junior high that is prevalent in different schools throughout the United States. Likewise, using a collective case studies approach would not have been beneficial as there were not enough instrumental cases to create a collection of cases examining Latino parent participation within the middle

grades.  Of the thirteen families from whom responses were solicited, only 10 parents consented to participate.

<center>**Setting and Sample**</center>

An expert panel of community members familiar with the Latino population in this small rural setting in Nebraska was asked to review the preliminary interview questions in order to determine bias.  This process was done in their places of employment during their own time.  The following three individuals from the community examined these questions:  school principal, director of health and human services, and human resource professor at the town's College.  They provided input and positive feedback on the questions' unbiased content.

The field portion of the research was conducted at a private meeting room at the school after hours. The interviews were scheduled at any time that was convenient for the parents in the language of their choice, English or Spanish.  Permission from the principal was requested in order to work at the junior high.  The interviews took place in a place already familiar to the parents without any interruptions (i.e., phone calls, children, etc.). According to Glesne (2011), a nice, quiet location helps with meeting the needs of the person being interviewed.

**Community Member Characteristics and Role of the Researcher**

My professional role besides being the study researcher includes having been a district level administrator for eight years in the area of bilingual education.  As the English language learner administrator, I led two different departments at two school districts in Illinois where one of my primary roles was to work with the Latino parent

population and the bilingual parent advisory committees. I relocated to northeast

Nebraska in July of 2013 due to my husband's new position as assistant professor. I

worked as the District RW's district interpreter where I was in close contact with Spanish

speaking parents at the K-12 levels. In my current role as a lecturer at the college, I am

called to interpret at the school district from time to time. I am also in close contact with

administrators, support staff, and teachers from grades pre-K through 12.

My interest as researcher to look into Latino parent involvement in the middle

grades stems from observations at the five districts I have worked in during the last 17

years, most recently District RW in rural northeast Nebraska. Having worked with

assessment data closely for AYP purposes, I noticed that teacher and administrator's

perspectives of Latino parent involvement suggested that Latino students' scores were

blamed on parents not being as involved as other parents are. In addition, having worked

with parents in the bilingual parent advisory committee in Illinois districts and more

recently as district interpreter in Nebraska, I noticed that Latino parents do attend

meetings, yet tended to *hide* or intentionally be unseen at the meetings. Because there is

a lot more research on teacher and administrator perception than on Latino parents'

perception, especially in the middle grades, I questioned how Latino parents perceive

their roles in the home-school connection and whether having this understanding might

help improve barriers that might hinder Latino parents from becoming more visible at the

junior high.

**Population and Sample**

At the time of the study there were 89 students enrolled in seventh and eighth grade. Of these, only 13 were of Latino background. The students were predominantly from Mexican background (Latino). After approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted on September 30, 2014 (IRB approval #: 09-30-14-0133863), purposeful sampling was used to "discover, understand, and gain insight… [to] select a sample [of parents] from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77).

Due to the small rural town setting and small number of both Latino and LEP students at the seventh and eighth grade levels, only ten Latino parents consented to participate from the only junior high in the district. In a bound system, due to the small number of participants, the clarifications that follow distinguish this group of parents from parents outside of the system (Yin, 2014). Following the purposeful or purposive requirements of specificity and importance, the three requirements for parent participants were as follows: (a) they must have been in District RW community for at least 2 years (b) they must have a student in either seventh or eighth grade and, (c) they should be of Latino or Hispanic descent. The Latino parents who participated had students who were in mainstream classes or received additional language support.

Some parents have been in the United States for over 7 years, and at least one parent from each household can speak broken English (building secretary, personal communication, November 1, 2013). Most parents are from Mexico and represent various socioeconomic strata. In several instances only the father works while the mother stays at home (building principal, personal communication, November 1, 2013.)

Additional demographic information was obtained from the schools data system when looking for students who met the above criteria. The information is represented in the table below.

Table 1

*Interview Participants' Profiles*

| Participant # | Country of Origin | Number of Years in District | Child's Grade in School |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parent 1 | Mexico | 5 | 8 |
| Parent 2 | Guatemala | 8 | 8 |
| Parent 3 | Mexico | 4 | 7 |
| Parent 4 | Guatemala | 3 | 7 |
| Parent 5 | Mexico | 5 | 7 |
| Parent 6 | Mexico | 3 | 7 |
| Parent 7 | Guatemala | 5 | 8 |
| Parent 8 | Mexico | 5 | 7 |
| Parent 9 | Mexico | 2 | 7 |
| Parent 10 | Mexico | 3 | 7 |

The Latino parents were recruited through the help of the building principal and building staff since I have been in the community for a little over a year at the time of this study. An invitational letter in English and Spanish asking for consent was mailed to the parents identified through the school personnel mentioned on October 3, 2014 (Appendix B.). The parents were given a couple of weeks to respond. This consent letter discussed confidentiality and protection from harm in both English and Spanish. Additionally, permission to audiotape was also presented within the consent letter because having an audio recording of the interview facilitated transaction of what was said by the

participants. Finally, follow-up phone calls were placed to all those who received a letter and for those who did not respond right away. This information was also provided within the letter to ensure that individuals with questions were given an opportunity to ask questions. Sometimes Latino parents in this community tend to move to different residences throughout the school year (secretary, personal communication, November 1, 2013). Due to this information, I was not able to reach three families. Glesne (2011) mentioned that waiting until after the first contact or session to record is helpful. Therefore, after a brief encounter explaining the study, participants who consented to participate in the study were interviewed and audio recorded.

Additionally, all participants were given a code number to protect their confidentiality during the research project. Their information is being kept in a secure in my house with a password-protected file.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior approved this project to any research conducted 2014 (IRB approval #: 09-30-14-0133863). Participation by parents within this study was strictly voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to starting. The possible subjects had the purposes, methods, and aims of the study explained to them prior to their consent. Participants were assured that confidentiality/privacy would be preserved throughout the study. Numbers identified the interviews and documents. I used a computer software program in order to help with the management of transcribed notes, typological analysis

information, and participant subject numbers.  This data were securely stored using a

password protected flash drive and stored in my place of residence.

**Ethical Considerations**

In conducting a literature review on educational research, I found that emphasis

on key ethical considerations should be taken.  In this case study, it was important to look

carefully at how this research being conducted within a junior high setting would affect

the students.  It was determined that no student data would be gathered.  Because I was

working with a group of Latino parents, it was important to research any research on

working with minority parents.  Per Quinn and Thomas (2013), when researching

minorities, it is important to protect them from harm.  Additionally, there is also a need to

make sure that all populations are treated respectfully so that exclusion does not happen.

This study was primarily on parental participation within a school setting and aimed at

discovering what perceptions they had on barriers, if any, as well as their

recommendations on improving the home to school connection.  As with any research all

data obtained was kept in a secure location and encrypted during the research process.

Only I had access to the data and my aim was to maintain the confidentiality of all the

parents who participated.

Working with human beings is a delicate matter, but one that is necessary in order

to improve certain situations.  As Yin (2014) mentions that all case studies "are about

human affairs," it was important for me to minimize questions that could produce

unwanted feelings of discomfort (p. 78).  Therefore, through a careful analysis for ethical

considerations that included having three individuals from the community look at the

questions prior to starting, it was assessed and concluded that I provided the participants with an ethically viable research study that guaranteed them confidentiality.

There was minimal risk presented to participants within this study because a number was assigned to each parent's name to protect anonymity. Ethical protection of the participants was essential and therefore, no participant experienced discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation (Lodico et al., 2010; District RW handbook, 2013). The consent form that was signed highlights the purpose of the research study with the minimal risks involved. Evaluations of data were done in an objective manner. This enabled treatment of participants in a fair manner and helped to prevent researcher bias (Buchanan & Jones, 2010; Glesne, 2011). The consent form also informed the participants that the study would take place in a secure environment familiar to the participants in the language of their choice, English or Spanish, at the junior high school building in northeast Nebraska. Finally, the letter also allowed participants to withdraw from the study at any time. Permission from the principal was requested in order to work at the junior high. The interviews tool place in an already familiar place to the parents without any interruptions (i.e., phone calls, children, etc.). According to Glesne (2011), nice quiet location helps with meeting the needs of the person being interviewed.

**Data Collection**

The type of case study that was done was instrumental in nature due to the limitation of a small number of Latino parents at the seventh and eighth grade levels within a small rural town in Nebraska. Therefore, the purpose of the data collection

process was to collect information through multiple formats, such as interviews, document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent handbook, district policy and researcher notes, in order to investigate the perceptions that Latino parents have of their role in parent involvement at the seventh and eighth grade levels.  The use of these formats resulted in triangulation of data according to Yin (2014).  This allowed for insight into specific problems within the bounded system (Lodico et al., 2010).  The junior high is a bounded system because it is the only junior high within this small rural town, and the amount of time that was spent is fixed and provides a clear timeframe for analysis (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014).  Prior to the start of the data collection, the interview questions, which derived from the main research questions, were examined by three volunteers from the community who have worked closely with the Latino population in order to check for clarity and to see if revisions needed to be made.  These volunteers were not part of the study and signed a confidentiality form similar to the parents' form. In addition, the form included a clause that limited the volunteers from disseminating any information to others in the community.  The main purpose of checking for clarity of the questions was to be able to increase the validity of the study (Lodico et al., 2010; Yin, 2014).  All three verified that the questions were clear and would be welcomed by the participants in the study.

The Latino parents were recruited through the help of the building principal and building staff since this was the first year that I worked in this school district.  While this sample size did not provide information for the greater society due to its size, the number chosen was representative of the number of Latino students attending District RW.  An

invitational letter asking for consent in English and Spanish was mailed to the parents

identified through the school personnel mentioned found in Appendix B.  This consent

letter ensured confidentiality and protection from harm.  After approval from the IRB was

granted on September 30, 2014 (approval #: 09-30-14-0133863) the data collected for the

case study included a series of interviews conducted throughout 4 months due to parent

availability.

Yin (2014) mentioned that there are six main sources in data collection, they are

as follows: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant

observation, and physical artifacts.  The primary source of information collection was via

individual interviews during a 1 to 1 ½  hour period; yet, the use of documents (i.e.,

school surveys, parent sign-in sheets), and researcher reflective notes were also used in

order to help with triangulation of the data to increase credibility for such research

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Glesne 2011; Yin 2014). These data collection methods as

described below provided rich information for case study research (Creswell, 2009;

Glesne, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2014).

During the data collection process, coding, typological analysis, triangulation, and

continued access for parents through member checking with me as the researcher, was

used to confirm trustworthiness.  Triangulation was achieved by varying the data

collection tools, which included the following: (a) the one-on-one interview responses (b)

document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent handbook, district

policy, and researcher notes and, (c) researcher reflective notes.  A password-protected

software program housed the transcribed data, which I later organized into codes and themes.

**Instrumentation and Materials**

Unlike quantitative research where the researcher uses survey instruments for the collection of numerical data, within this study I was the primary research instrument (Yin, 2014). The other instrument included the use of interviews. A well-developed interview protocol was used to collect information on Latino parent perceptions of involvement. Interviews, documentation from school surveys, and sign-in sheets, as well as member checking, allowed both the interviewers and myself to portray the Latino parent perspectives on parent involvement at the junior high. Member checking, according to Harper and Cole (2013), helps to validate the subject's feelings by "normalizing the phenomenon being experienced" (p. 1). Each participant was sent a summary of what they had said during the interview, and their confirmation was returned via a phone call.

**Interviews**

As with any research tool, interviews have advantages and disadvantages. When observations are not feasible, it is good to interview individuals; yet, a disadvantage might be that the person being interviewed may say what he or she thinks the interviewer wants him or her to hear (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014). The use of finely developed open-ended questions allowed me to collect insightful information for the project study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Harland & Holey, 2011). Therefore, the interviews were semi structured, and the questions asked were "predetermined but flexibly worded" and

included "follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply issues of interest to interviewees" within a 1 to 1 ½ and a half hour session (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40).  The series of formulated open-ended questions found in Appendix C revolved around the fundamental questions found in Appendix D.  The following three individuals from the community examined these questions: school principal, director of health and human services, and a human resource professor at Wayne State College.  They provided input and positive feedback on my content.  The questions that were examined were as follows: (a) how do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at the junior high level?; (b) what are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used by the school?; and, (c) what are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at the school?

The participants responded to a topical interview protocol that helped to elicit their perceptions of parental involvement.  These included the following information: what they thought their roles and responsibilities were within a school setting, what barriers prevented them from participating more readily within a school setting, and if they had noticed programs or resources that made it easier to participate within the school setting.  Technical or research language was not used.  Instead, using language that resembled how the parents spoke, in particular how it was spoken in Spanish, helped to elicit more information from the parents (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).  The responses were transcribed, the data were coded and categorized within the framework of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler theoretical model of parental involvement, and the creation of relevant themes was acquired.  Sub-questions or probes were used in order to get more

information from the participants (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014). These are highlighted in the transcribed notes (Appendix C). Assurances were made to stay focused on the questions on the paper, and the probes and/or sub-questions were not leading questions. In addition, questions such as *why* questions, which can lead to guessing or hypothesizing, were avoided (Merriam, 2009). The use of an interview template was helpful as the information the parents gave was typed on one side of the column, and additional notes were placed on the column to the right.

Interviewing is an art and a science that has to be done carefully. Merriam (2009) mentioned that a "skilled interviewer can do much to bring about positive interaction" (p. 107). Furthermore, in order to ensure that participants answered questions candidly, confidentiality was assured by explaining the scope of the research, asking their permission to participate in writing, providing an opportunity to give feedback after the project study has been finished, and making sure that the observation protocol was set in place. Researcher-participant rapport was established via an initial informal meeting or conversation over the phone and sometimes in person. This provided the scope of the study without jeopardizing the dependability or the internal validity of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2013; Glesne, 2011). I spoke primarily in Spanish to allow parents to have freer expression in their native language. Sometimes the parents would say a few words in English (i.e., they would code-switch, using both English and Spanish to form a sentence).

To confirm the thoroughness of the study, parents were interviewed individually during the fall of 2014. Authenticities of data were gained by having Latino parents

freely participate in a study where their culture and their roles within a school system were respected. For this reason, focus groups were not set up to prevent compromising confidentiality amongst participants who lived and worked in a small community.

**Systematic Procedures**

**Step 1.** After IRB approval was given, Latino parents were recruited through the help of the building principal and building staff because this was the first year that I was working in this school district.

**Step 2.** An invitation letter along with a letter of consent in English and Spanish asking was mailed to the parents identified through the school personnel mentioned (See Appendix B). Both the invitation letter and the consent letter discussed confidentiality and protection from harm in both English and Spanish.

**Step 3.** A follow-up phone call was placed to all those who received a letter. This information was also provided within the letter to ensure that individuals with questions were given an opportunity to ask questions if needed. This study presented minimal risk to participants because a number was assigned to each parent's name to protect his or her confidentiality. The type of case study that was done was instrumental in nature due to the limitation of a small number of Latino parents at the seventh and eighth grade levels within a small rural town in Nebraska being interviewed.

Ten parents volunteered to participate in the study. The interview protocol was discussed after they were contacted via phone to set up an interview time.

**Step 4.** Prior to the start of the data collection, the interview questions, which were derived from the main research questions, were given to the three volunteers from

the communities who had worked closely with the Latino population.  These volunteers

were a not part of the study.  The questions they were asked were to verify the questions'

construction were clear.  The information was not analyzed or included in the study.  The

purpose of providing the interview questions to the volunteers was to check for clarity

and to see if revisions needed to be made, thus increasing the validity of the study

(Lodico et al., 2010; Yin, 2014).

**Step 5.** This step entailed the data collection process**.**  The purpose of the data

collection process was to collect information through multiple formats, such as

interviews, document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent handbook,

district policy and researcher notes, and researcher notes in order to investigate the

perceptions that Latino parents had of their role in parent involvement at the seventh and

eighth grade levels.

Setting up the interviews is an important process.  The interviews with the Latino

parents were semi structured, where the questions asked were "predetermined but flexibly

worded" which included "follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply issues of

interest to interviewees" within a 30 to 45 minute session (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006,

p. 40).  There were a series of formulated open-ended questions found in Appendix C that

revolving around the fundamental questions found in Appendix D.  To ensure the

thoroughness of the study, the parents were interviewed individually when IRB approval

was granted.  Authenticities of data were gained from having Latino parents freely

participate in a study where their culture and their roles within a school system were

respected.  For this reason, focus groups were not set up in this situation in order to

prevent compromising confidentiality amongst participants who lived and work in a small community. Parents were directed to a conference room where parents normally had meetings for all occasions. This should not have raised any discomfort, as parents were familiar with this comfortable setting. The meetings were held after school hours when teachers, office staff, and administrators were not present. Administrators were made aware of when the interviews were taking place and asked if they not be present around that area during the specified time and day. This also ensured that the principal let me know of when school activities were taking place so as to not schedule an interview when big groups were present. While the door was closed, the door was left unlocked in case parents had a desire to leave. A sign was also posted outside of the door indicating to not disturb and that a private conference that was taking place was in progress. Documents such as sign-in sheets, parent handbook, and the district policy were collected from the principal once IRB approval was granted. Researcher notes were continually written. The collection of data through various means, including my researcher journal was used as a reflective tool and to prevent unwarranted bias to imbed itself into the results

**Step 6.** Data analysis was ongoing throughout the four-month period due to parent availability, and a formulation of themes emerged. Data were looked at in an objective manner, which enabled treatment of participants in a fair manner preventing researcher bias (Buchanan & Jones, 2010; Glesne, 2011). Triangulation of data between parent interviews, documents (sign-in sheets), and researcher notes helped in providing validity. Although the sample size does not provide information for the greater society

due to the small number of parents available to represent District RW, it provides enough information to make it a valid and reliable study.

**Step 7.** Member checking, a tool used by qualitative researchers in order to stress the credibility of the study, was implemented (Carlson, 2010; Hankcock et al., 2006). Transcript review were also important, and parents were asked to help in providing feedback of the transcript of the recorded interview in order to make sure parents were satisfied with their answers. In this case, parents were asked to do the following:

- Answer a set of twelve (12) questions during an audio-recorded interview lasting approximately 45 minutes.

- Review transcript of the transcribed or recorded interview (25 to 30 minutes, approximately).

- Provide feedback of my interpretation of their provided responses (15 to 30 minutes approximately on another day).

**Collecting the Data**

Data collection commenced once approval was given by the IRB (approval #: 09-30-14-0133863) and the principal of the junior high school. Families who met the selection criteria were sent introduction letters and consent forms. The letters that were sent out were both in English and Spanish. A phone call was placed to the families using the phone protocol found on Appendix A. A meeting was set up in order to collect the consent forms prior to starting the interview. The principal and secretaries' role in this process was to provide me with a list of potential parent names, addresses, and phone numbers. After I was provided with a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers, I

contacted the parents via an invitational letter. A follow up phone call helped me to

verify whether the parents received the letter and asked them if they had any questions,

verbally inviting them to participate in the study of their perceptions of parent

involvement. Furthermore, the invitational letter let the Latino parents know that this

was a confidential study, and that although I was the school district interpreter, that none

of this information would be given to others within the school district. My role in this

study was as researcher and not as the district interpreter. I followed up the phone call

with the consent form sent via mail. I also mentioned that I would give them a call in

about a week to ask them whether they had received the consent form. They were free to

contact me at any time throughout the process either to provide me with consent or not

provide me with consent in participating in the study and to ask me any further questions.

**Collecting Data through Interviews**

The process of interview began in early fall. The interviews with the Latino

parents were semi-structured, where the questions asked were "predetermined but

flexibly worded" which included "follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply

issues of interest to interviewees" within a 30 to 45 minute session (Hancock &

Algozzine, 2006, p. 40). A series of formulated open-ended questions found in Appendix

C revolved around the fundamental questions found in Appendix D. To ensure

thoroughness of the study, parents were interviewed individually as soon as IRB approval

was granted. Authenticity of data were gained from having Latino parents freely

participate in a study where their culture and their roles within a school system were

respected. For this reason, focus groups were not set up in this situation to prevent

compromising confidentiality amongst participants who live and work in a small community. Parents were directed to a conference room where parents normally have meetings for all occasions. This raised minimal concern with one parent who preferred not to be interviewed at the school. The parent was assured that all precautions would take place and the venue for the interview was moved to my house.

**Collecting Data through Document Analysis**

Document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent handbook, district policy, researcher notes, and parent individual interviews were used in order to investigate the perceptions that Latino parents had of their role in parent involvement at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Sign-in sheets for both school visits and parent/teacher conferences were collected from the principal after IRB approval was granted. No other sign-in documents were available at the junior high level except the daily parent sign-in forms. Parents do not sign-in for other events such as concerts or sport events.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the four-month period due to parent availability and a formulation of themes emerged. Typological analysis was used in order to create what Creswell (2009) called case-based themes. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) suggested the use of themes in order to provide organization within the document. The information gathered reduced the information into different categories, helping to determine the different perceptions that Latino parents had of their roles in parent involvement, perceptions of different programs available to them, and perceptions of

barriers at the junior high. The information was read several times over in order to first achieve a generalized sense of the information and then two to three times after wards in order to achieve accuracy. The use of a thematic approach helped to break down information into relevant categories that produced four major themes, which provided answers to the questions on Latino parent perceptions of parental involvement.

Prior to data analysis of interviews, documents, and reflective researcher notes, the data were placed into a software program within no more than 2 days of the interview process. This assisted me in transcribing the information in a more timely fashion. I also reviewed my personal notes within the same period to ensure accuracy of data. As I am the researcher and I am bilingual, I was capable of providing translation as needed. Document analysis as mentioned by Hancock and Algozinne (2006) is beneficial when attempting to support other data such as from interviews or researcher notes. The manner in which information was organized is evident in the following sections.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

This phase of the analysis used a typological analysis approach whereby the interview data were visually broken down after coding took place. According to Ayres and Knafl (2008), typological analysis seeks to develop "related but distinct categories within a phenomenon" (p. 900), in this case Latino parent perception of parent involvement within the junior high, from the collected data using semi-structured interviews. Additionally, Hatch (2002) mentioned that it is part of a continuum of five different types of analysis. By comparing each question and answer within the question to the typologies found within Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (HDS) model it became

evident of the connections between the parent responses in both the interviews and the documents as to where they fell within the levels of the HDS model. The themes from each parent's responses were compared to create a general theme.

Analysis of data takes great patience, as a lot of time is spent listening, coding, and transcribing the material. Several researchers such as those mentioned above as well as Yin (2014) and Patton (2002) mention the complexity and length of time it takes to analyze data. Each step of the analysis from coding each transcribed interview and document information to the analysis, took a great deal of time and scrutiny. In this situation, there were about 225 hours of transcribing, listening, and coding for the data presented.

Coding and categorization were created using a systematic process that involved typological analysis. The use of typological analysis helped to organize the data into established codes, categories, and subcategories. Using the different typographies found within the first two levels of HDS model, connections were made to the parent responses within each question of the face-to-face individual interviews, as well as the sign-in sheets. Coding for the researcher reflective notes was also done using the above software program. Typological analyses helped to create the four refined themes that are evident in Table 3 below. The four major themes that arose were closely related to the work that has been done by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler at Vanderbilt University. Time constraints, home-based support, communication (in Spanish), and a need for a program to support parents were the barriers most stressed by parents.

The first step in coding, was transcribing the notes verbatim from the tape recordings. I listened to the recorded information several times and then themes began to emerge. From these themes, categories and sub-categories emerged. These sub-categories matched with the typologies found within each construct of the HDS model. It was also evident that some of these sub-categories also aligned with the MALDEF and NEA report on barriers that Latino parents faced when becoming involved within a school system. They also alluded to some of the administrator and teachers' perceptions as to why parents were not involved.

By matching the themes and sub-categories to the typologies, it allowed me to remain unbiased in my analysis. As the sub-categories were placed into the typologies it became evident that parents were functioning more at a level two within the HDS model of parental involvement. Yet, they lacked the last construct on the HDS model, which involved the learning mechanism of instruction--helping your child to have the qualities found within the other constructs of encouragement, modeling, and reinforcement. While parents modeled and exemplified how to act in a school system, they did not feel comfortable instructing their child to do the same.

Analysis of the documents supported the areas mentioned above. As more connections were made, themes began to become more evident and allowed me as researcher to make conclusions for the questions on Latino parents' perceptions of parent involvement at the junior high level. Moreover, the findings emphasized possible strategies that could be employed in the future.

This project study used a different approach to coding that involved typological analysis. This manner of analysis allowed me to use the information from the case study in order to connect Latino parent perception of parent involvement at the junior high level to the following three research inquiries: (a) Latino parents' perception of their roles and responsibilities (b) Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies within the junior high and, (c) Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available as they relate to role construction and self-efficacy. In this case, the themes that arose were closely related to the work that has been done by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler.

**Document Analysis**

The use of existing survey data from the beginning of the year, along with sign-in sheets from school events or daily visits from parents to the school found at the main school office, were reviewed to see parent participation within a school setting. Additionally, the parent handbook and the school board policy were also reviewed to gather evidence of how parents are invited within a school context. There were not very many documents or artifacts that according to what Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins, (2010) referred to as data that cannot be interpreted by interviews or focus groups. Yet, these few documents allowed for deeper knowledge into the case study and provided an etic approach because of their historical nature. Sign-in sheets from events provided the historical data needed to back up the information from parent interviews. Although the numbers appear to be insignificant, for example of the 174 days in FY 14, 36 parents signed in to the school for events and teacher visits. Many of these parents were repeats. In other words, one parent went more a total of 10 times. In deciphering this data, Latino

parent visits are evident, but mirror the percentage of Latinos in the district. Thus, it may appear that Latino parents do not participate as much as other parents in the district do.

Additionally, the use of District RW's parent student handbook and the school board policy highlighted information in terms of the district's expectations for parental involvement providing a deeper understanding to District RW's culture. The 2013-14 parent-student handbook listed parent responsibilities that include their "support [of] school policy, develop[ment] of a partnership, and support [of] students' activities in school and the community" (p. 6). Furthermore, it describes what parents are expected to do in support of school structure and governance within the areas of their child's attendance, participation at school functions, and meeting with the teachers, and discipline, among the major ones.

School board policy was used to clarify information that may be adding to parent perception. School Board Policy number 5002--comprised of two pages--welcome[s] parental involvement in the education of their children" (n.p). It explains what teachers are expected to do in order to work with parents and garner collaboration with the parents. Additionally, parents who have children who participate in Title I are given the opportunity to meaningfully communicate with the school regularly (n.p). Clause number five under the second paragraph outlines that this communication is to be provided "in the language used in the home" (n.p). This information may influence what parents perceive as parental involvement and what their roles should be like at a school setting.

**Researcher Reflective Notes Analysis**

In order to prevent researcher bias, I took notes as data were being transcribed. The interview questions included a header with the time, place, setting, and participant role (Appendix C). There is a two-column division of paper showing the transcribed interview on one side and the researcher reflections on the other. The reflective piece helped to determine if bias was evident. Questions were flowing and neutral with each question being asked individually one at a time. Time was provided for the interviewee to answer. While this process may appear to have taken longer in acquiring the themes, it helped to prevent bias. Audio recordings were done for seven out of 10 interviews as some parents felt uncomfortable being audio recorded. Reflective notes were taken down on the *T* chart on the right side of the paper after I had transcribed the interviews on the left side of the chart (Appendix C). Information was refined as a theme list was created, analyzed, and reflected upon. Analysis of the researcher reflective notes was on going. Each participant received their own chart with their own information. This facilitated the coding process during data analysis.

As researcher, I have worked closely with parent groups in the past and worked closely with teachers and building principals in various settings; yet, I have not recently worked in an administrative role, and my contact this past school year has been limited to a district interpreter role due to relocation from one state to another. I thought my role as district interpreter would affect the type of data I collected due to parents' perceptions of me being part of the school staff. My own bias includes my own perceptions of how I think school board policy should exist in regards to parent involvement and how parental

involvement programs were run in the other districts I worked within the past.

Additionally, I am also a Latina parent at the school district I work, having children at the

elementary grades.  By taking notes down in a field journal, I was made aware to biases

that I encountered as I interviewed parents, looked at documents, and transcribed the

interviews from audio recordings.

## Validity and Reliability

I triangulated the data using the triangulation approach within this project study in

order to improve validity and reliability.  The evidence that was converged included the

use of the parent face-to-face interviews, sign-in sheets, and researcher reflective notes.

Yin (2014) stated that the use of triangulation strengthens construct validity and provides

for the phenomenon, in this case Latino parent perception of parent involvement at the

junior high, to be measured differently.  The common themes that arose were compared

against the data collected from face-to-face parent interviews, sign-in sheets, and

researcher reflective notes.  Additionally, preservation of validity was ensured by

allowing each participant to confirm his or her interview transcript (member checking).

Finally, researcher reflective notes allowed me to address biases that might have

crept into the study.  Patton (2002) mentioned that detailed note taking is crucial when

doing qualitative research.  Examples of the type of reflective notes I compiled are

provided in Appendix C.

### Member Checking

I made sure to let all the participants read what I had written.  Member checking

is a tool used by qualitative researchers in order to stress the credibility of the study

(Carlson, 2010; Hankcock et al., 2006). Ensuring accurate notes is important within any study. There were no discrepancies that required additional interviews be conducted and tape-recorded transcribed notes were looked at again to determine whether bias had crept into the picture in any way and possible explanations given (Harper & Cole, 2012). Carlson (2010) recommends a few ways to avoid pitfalls when conducting member checks among one is having the participants look at a summary of the portions that will be used for analysis in order to avoid embarrassment or distraction when reading their words. Within this study member checking occurred by providing each interviewee a summary of their interview so that they could verify that what was interpreted is what they said, thus increasing the probability of it being valid.

The information gathered from this study is being portrayed and reported through the use of rich narrative to create a vivid picture of the study. Rich narrative was essential to providing the voices of the participants to be heard (Yin, 2014). The data were displayed using the following: tables that portray the population, analyzed categories from the various themes, and quick narratives from the parents' input. A discussion of the themes collected and analyzed as well as the implications of these findings helped determine whether the perception of Latino parents toward parental involvement matched information found within the review of literature. The triangulation of interview notes from individual parents, documents (such as school parent surveys conducted at the beginning of the year by the school, board policy on parental involvement, the parent-student handbook), and reflective notes helped establish credibility, which Yin (2014) mentions as a way to increase accuracy in the inference

process.  Providing detail to the study helps me paint a richer picture that will help future researchers.

## Findings

The purpose of this study was threefold as described by the following points: (a) It examined Latino parents' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities using Hoover Dempsey's model of parental involvement, (b) It analyzed Latino parents perceptions as they relate to District RW's understanding of parent involvement in the 21st century and key challenges specific to Latinos and, (c) It provided suggestions on how both Latino parents and the junior high personnel can create a better home-school partnership through better communication.

### Discussion of the Research Findings

I highlighted the four major themes that arose from the detailed typological analysis in the following section.  This notion aligns with how Stake (1995) "recommends portraying the information of describing how a researcher's understanding of the case leads to descriptions of such a case within a chronological or biographical development of such (p. 127)."  The four major themes that emerged were: (a) time constraints (b) home-base support (c) communication in Spanish and, (d) need for parent support group.

A summary of the specific codes, categories, and themes that surfaced and how they were connected to the research questions are highlighted in Table two.  The constructs evident from the HDS model are highlighted in the three categories.

*Table 2: Themes/Codes and Categories Derived from Parent Responses*

| Research Questions | Categories/Codes | Major Themes |
|---|---|---|
| 1) How do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at the junior high level? | Lack of Communication<br>Collaboration<br>Helping with Homework<br>Work interferes | Time constraint<br>Home-based support |
| 2) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used by the school? | Electronic<br>Paper<br>Word of Mouth<br>No Communication | Communication<br>(Spanish) |
| 3) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at the school? | No workshops for how to help adolescents/ESL<br>Uncomfortable attending<br>Extracurricular cost too much money<br>Free and Reduced Lunch<br>Special Education | Need for Parent support programs |

The participants' responses were placed verbatim under the appropriate themes that emerged in the following paragraphs after validity and credibility were emphasized. I selected the responses by the interviewees as being representative of the significant themes according to the participants' perceptions with respect to each research question.

While there were some discrepancies with some of the parent interviews, these were also included in the research findings so that various perspectives show the diversity in viewpoints. Creswell (2012) mentions that allowing multiple perspectives to be included allows showing how complex qualitative research can be. The four major themes are illustrated in Table three show how they were identified following the use of typological analysis and coding.

*Table 3: Typological Analysis: identification of themes*

**Major Themes inTypological Analysis**

| Theme 1 | Theme 2 | Theme 3 | Theme 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Time Constraints | Home-based support | Communication (in Spanish) | Need for Parent Support Group |

**Theme 1: Time constraints.** All parents, no matter what the background, have to attend to the issues of time and the constraints. There is a multitude of literature that suggests that time is one of the biggest factors for any parental involvement in school functions or volunteerism (Abrego & Gonzoles, 2010; Auerbach, 2011; Bryk & Schneider; Gonzalez et. al., 2013; MALDEF & NEA, 2010). This is the first theme that emerged within data analysis. For example when asked, what are ways you participate in your child's school? Parent 2 said, "*Yo participo cuando me voy a los conciertos o cuando hay eventos, y para las juntas donde hablamos con los maestros.*" "I participate when there are concerts, or events, for the meetings where we talk with the teachers [parent-teacher conferences]." She had a big grin on her face. On the other hand, three of the 10 parents mentioned that the only time they participated was for parent-teacher conferences. Moreover, two of the parents--Parent 5 and Parent 7, respectively-- said, "*No puedo ir porque tengo que trabajar.*" "I can't go because I have to work."

Additionally, Latino children may also have parents who are migrant or undocumented immigrants and the amount of time that they put into working during the workday in order to make a living is much higher than other students within this rural community. Parents working more than 40 to 60 hours a week may not be able to attend events or volunteer opportunities at the junior high during the week, due to work, or catching up on sleep after work--especially if they work during the second and/or third shift. This is evident in the responses from the following parents through recommendations on programs that adhere to their time schedules.

When asked, what kinds of programs are available for parents?, Parent 6 recommended, *"Mas programas que yo pueda entender…programas para padres de cómo entender a los adolescentes, y también clases de Inglés adaptadas un poco para nosotros que tenemos que trabajar."* "More programs that I can understand….programs for parents on how to understand your adolescent and also English classes, but adapted a little for those of us that have to work." Her inability to understand English prevented her from going to the events. Additionally, while her response did not specify the programs available for parents that she knew of, the response indicated a need for programs where she could be an active participant in her language and that adhered to her working schedule.

When the school district respects a parents time schedule it creates a feeling of trust with the parents (Bryk & Schneider, 2004; Gonzalez, et. al., 2013). While the program TAPA was held during the summer months, there are plans to expand it this fall. Additionally, expanding the program would require the stakeholders, such as the parents, to provide suggestions and recommendations on what their needs are during the fall, winter, and spring months.

**Theme 2: Home-base support.** Theme 2 emerged from the parents being asked questions in the areas of how they perceive their roles and responsibilities as helpers, the type of communication strategies that the school employs, and their perceptions on the resources available to them. These questions focus on both role construction and self-efficacy. When looking at how to better assist parents, Mirr's (2009) adaptation of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler parent model (1995, 1997, 2005) provides guiding

questions for the school and teachers on how to best help parents engage in the school setting. Parents need to be explicitly shown how to interpret and utilize school documents using a hands-on approach (Habermehl, 2006; Paredes, 2011). Mirr's (2009) question that ties into the first level of the HDS model of parent involvement asks, "How does your school help reinforce parents' confidence that they as parents can effectively help their children? (p 3)" By providing Latino parents' with knowledge of the U.S. educational school system, schools allow for parents to feel secure when approaching teachers, administrators, and other individuals within the school system. This creates a better home-to-school connection as well as a home-based support.

In terms of self-efficacy and role construction, when parents were asked, how do you help your child be successful at school?, all 10 parents mentioned homework. Parent 2 said, "*Mientras yo estoy cocinando la cena, hago que se siente en la mesa de la cocina pa' que haga su tarea.*" "While I am making dinner, I have her sit down at the kitchen table and do her homework." Parent 5 mentioned, "*Primero hago que se relaje, coma su almuerzo, y después nos sentamos juntos hacer la tarea…cuando no entiendo pido ayuda de los vecinos…hablan Español*" "First I make sure he relaxes, eats his lunch, and then we sit down to do his homework…when I don't understand, I ask for help from my neighbors…they speak Spanish." Three of the 10 parents said that they ask their children if they are doing or have done their homework. Two parents also mentioned, "*le pregunto si se está portando bien…y ponerle atención a su maestra.*" "I ask if he or she is behaving….and to listen to your teacher." These responses show that parents want to

help their children be successful at school and that homework may be the only way they know how to help.

The next question generated the most diverse answers from the parents under this same idea.  When asked, how do you help the middle school staff/teachers to help your child be successful at school?, Parent 4 mentioned, *"En [name of town] de donde vivíamos hace 3 años atrás me dejaban saber qué tipo de comida necesitaban para los juegos…hacia tamales para recaudar fondos… aquí no me involucrado porque no sé si hay o no [eventos]."*  "In [name of town] where I lived 3 years ago they would let me know what type of food they needed for the games…I would make tamales in order to help raise funds [for fundraisers]…here I have not gotten involved because I don't know whether there is or isn't [an event]."  Parent 5 said, *"Las maestras están trabajando, pero a veces dejan mucho del trabajo para que los padres les ayudemos a nuestros hijos."*  "The teachers are working, but sometimes they leave a lot of work for the parents to help our children."  This parent, while not appearing annoyed, seemed to show a bit of helplessness at knowing how to help their children.

Finally when asked, what information/documents/resources do you use to help your child be more successful at school?, 60% of the responses involved the use of a computer/internet, while 20% of the parents mentioned that, *"no he visto nada"* or *"nada."*  "I have not seen anything" or "nothing."  Parent 2 mentioned that, *"El paquete de papel que nos llega cuando comienza la escuela donde tenemos que firmar la página del final….no lo entiendo, pero mi hijo mayor me ayuda."*  "The packet of paper that arrives when school starts, where we have to sign the last page…I don't understand it, but

my oldest son helps me." This parent is illiterate, and Spanish is her second language. She speaks Mayan. Parent 3 stated, "*Le pido a mi esposo cuando el viene de trabajar cuando se trata de matemáticas. Yo no le puedo ayudar con las matemáticas porque no soy muy buena con ellas.*" "I ask my husband when he comes home from work when it has to do with mathematics. I can't help him with mathematics because I am not so good with them." Of all the parents that mentioned the use of the computer, Parent 4 mentioned, "*No tenemos mucho, como puede ver, pero tenemos una computadora laptop en la casa...tenemos Internet.*" "We don't have much, as you can see, but we have a laptop computer at home...we have Internet." She said it proudly. Parent 4 also mentioned that, "*Nos vamos a la biblioteca si tenemos que usar la computadora o libros...*" "We go to the library if we need to use computers or books..." They know where to get assistance when needed and thus model this self-efficacy for their children.

When asked, are there any recommendations about improving communication (if applicable) with the school? Parent 10 requested "*Deberían cambiar la mascota. El diablo va contra nuestra religión. Quisiera comprarle algunas camisetas, pero no me gusta la mascot.*" "They should change the mascot. The devil goes against our religion. I would like to buy the shirts they have, but I don't like the mascot." She used an example of code switching when she used the word mascot. This parent appears conflicted and may not be trusting of the school setting due to an image, in this case the school mascot.

The curriculum instruction plan calls for incorporating knowledge for the parents on how to navigate through the U. S. school system. The type of classes that were

available to the parents within this venue focused on the student handbook, the board of

education policies, and other language, including acronyms that were used within the

school to describe their child's education, assessments that were given, and anything that

may have been extracurricular in nature.

Based on parents' responses the appropriate classes were created.  The following

responses indicate a need for such programs.  The responses were based on the parents'

perceptions of the resources available to them.

When asked, do you participate in any parent groups at the school?  Parent 6

mentioned, "*No sé de ninguna junta de padres…en la escuela cuando [hijo] estaba en*

*tercer año invitaban al WEB, pero nunca fui."*  "I don't know of any parent meetings…at

the school when he was in third grade they would invite us to be part of the WEB, but I

never went."

The responses that were provided using the following question also indicated that

parents were not sure of the types of programs available and reinforced a need for

programs that can be beneficial for them.  For example, when asked, how does the school

help you understand the processes and procedures of how the school functions?  Six out

of 10 parents did not know.  Parent 2 said, *"No tengo idea*."  "I don't have any idea."

Although parent 6 answered, *"No sé."*  "I don't know."  Parent 6 also mentioned that,

*"Uso el paquete de papeles que mandan al comienzo del año*."  *"*I use the packet of

papers that they send at the beginning of the year [handbook]."  Parent 9 asked in a

surprised voice, *"¿La escuela nos puede ayudar?"*  "The school can help?"  Parents want

to be strong partners in the school setting, they are not quite sure how and when to help.

When asked, what kinds of programs are available for parents?, Parent 4 recalled, *"Si, como las clases de padres que habían en [other district]....quisiera ver clases de padres como hablar con los hijos cuando pasan por una etapa de rebeldía...quisiera otras clases también de cómo ayudar a nuestros adolescentes...y clases de Inglés."* "Yes, like the parent classes that the [other district] had….I would like to see classes for parents on how to speak to your children when they are going through that rebellious state….I would like other classes also, like how to help our teenagers….and English classes." Parent 6 recommended, *"Mas programas que yo pueda entender...programas para padres de cómo entender a los adolescentes, y también clases de Inglés adaptadas un poco para nosotros que tenemos que trabajar."* "More programs that I can understand….programs for parents on how to understand your adolescent and also English classes, but adapted a little for those of us that have to work."

Schools can help to increase the parents' level of trust by providing the knowledge of how people and events function at the school system, therefore, helping them to become strong knowledgeable allies who understand how to use and interpret the data through the provision of the classes within the curriculum design plan (Behnke & Kelly, 2011; Breiseth, Robertson & Lafond, 2011). Additionally, understanding the language that is used by individuals in a school system helps them navigate in a manner that provides easier communication between the staff and parents although a language barrier may exist.

**Theme 3: Communication in Spanish.** Communication is key when helping to ameliorate issues in any setting. Dunn-Shiffman (2011) mentioned that participating in a

training program strengthens parent's self-efficacy to support their children's education. This in turn is what makes them take on leadership roles given the confidence of learning English (Auerbach, 2011; Hong, 2011; Walker et. al., 2014; Wessels & Trainin, 2014; Whetsel & Green, 2004). By asking the parents the three main questions on self-efficacy and role construction, their perceptions of communication strategies they were aware of, and their perceptions of the resources available, shed information that helped with creation of a content based ESL program. Many researchers argue that parents who have a higher level of education tend to be more proactive and engaged within their child's schooling (Auerbach, 2004; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Sticht, 2015). Sticht (2015) specifically argued that it behooves all nations to "train intergenerationally". This means that there should be both an emphasis on educating parents along with the children so that there are less gaps, specifically in the literacy rates. By helping Latino parents learn English, it not only supports their learning, but it also helps them support their children at home. While there should be support by the school system to provide for someone who speaks the parents' language that is not necessarily possible due to budgetary restraints. Providing parents with the means to learn English helps them better communicate with the school, which helps to tackle theme three.

The following responses show a high level of self-efficacious questioning on the parents part and indicate that they are sure of their role-construction, but not quite sure as to how to achieve it at the junior high level in terms of communication.

When asked, what are ways you participate in your child's school?, Parent 1 replied, "*El año pasado me llamaban para ir a los paseos de mi hijo. Este año no me*

*han llamado para nada.*"  "Last year they would call me to go on field trips.  This year

they have not called me for anything."  Parent 1 looked a little melancholy as she said

this.  In this situation, the parent is not sure what their role is at the junior high level

compared to that of the elementary level.  This lack of knowledge on what their roles are

at the junior high level prevents them from having a higher self-efficacy.

When asked, how do you help your child be successful at school?, Parent 5

mentioned, "*Primero hago que se relaje, coma su almuerzo, y después nos sentamos*

*juntos hacer la tarea…cuando no entiendo pido ayuda de los vecinos…hablan Español*"

"First I make sure he relaxes, eats his lunch, and then we sit down to do his

homework…when I don't understand, I ask for help from my neighbors…they speak

Spanish."  The parent understands that homework is important, but they also know that

the emotional and physiological needs of their child are as important for their child's

achievement.  In this situation, they have a strong sense of role construction as a parent

and so they are able to guide their child at home.  Their self-efficacy at home is evident.

This question generated the most diverse answers from the parents.  When asked,

how do you help the middle school staff/teachers to help your child be successful at

school?,Parent 7 mentioned, "*Al comienzo del año les digo que me pueden llamar cuando*

*deseen ayuda…nunca me llaman…*"  "At the beginning of the year I tell them they can

call me whenever they need help…they never call me…."  Four of the 10 parents

mentioned a sentiment like, "*No sé, porque no he escuchado de ellos todo el año.*"  "I

don't know why I have not heard from them [staff members/teachers] all year long."

Another parent said, "*Nunca me invitan.*"  "They never invite me."  Their voices sound a

little strained as if they want to be invited, but they do not want to verbalize how they
really feel.

When asked, what information/documents/resources do you use to help your child
be more successful at school?, sixty percent of the responses involved the use of a
computer/internet, while 20% of the parents mentioned that, "*no he visto nada" or
"nada.*" "I have not seen anything" or "nothing." Parent 2 mentioned that, "*El paquete
de papel que nos llega cuando comienza la escuela donde tenemos que firmar la página
del final….no lo entiendo, pero mi hijo mayor me ayuda.*" "The packet of paper that
arrives when school starts, where we have to sign the last page…I don't understand it, but
my oldest son helps me." This parent is illiterate, and Spanish is her second language.
She speaks a Mayan dialect. Parent 3 stated, "*Le pido a mi esposo cuando el viene de
trabajar cuando se trata de matemáticas. Yo no le puedo ayudar con las matemáticas
porque no soy muy buena con ellas.*" "I ask my husband when he comes home from
work when it has to do with mathematics. I can't help him with mathematics because I
am not so good with them." Parent 5 and Parent 9 mentioned that they had not seen any
resources from the school. Communication is crucial for parents to help with homework
for their child. Additionally, this barrier is evident in the responses provided above, but
get emphasized in the following responses.

When asked, do you participate in any parent groups at the school?, all parents
said no. Their responses varied somewhat in length, but the message was the same.
Parent 3 said, "*Me fui una vez, pero fue muy triste porque no vi a mas papas que
hablaban Español.*" "I went once, but it was very sad because I did not see any parents

that spoke Spanish." This aspect might be inhibiting parents from attending more functions. Parent 6 mentioned, *"No sé de ninguna junta de padres…en la escuela cuando [hijo] estaba en tercer año invitaban al WEB, pero nunca fui."* "I don't know of any parent meetings…at the school when he was in third grade they would invite us to be part of the WEB, but I never went." Parents' level of self-efficacy is not evident in this situation due to not feeling comfortable with their surroundings. They understand that their role in attending these functions is important, but that lack of understanding the language prevents them from attending.

When asked, what kinds of programs are available for parents?, Parent 4 recalled, *"Si, como las clases de padres que habían en [other district]….quisiera ver clases de padres como hablar con los hijos cuando pasan por una etapa de rebeldía…quisiera otras clases también de cómo ayudar a nuestros adolescentes…y clases de Inglés."* "Yes, like the parent classes that the [other district] had….I would like to see classes for parents on how to speak to your children when they are going through that rebellious state….I would like other classes also, like how to help our teenagers….and English classes." Parent 6 recommended, *"Mas programas que yo pueda entender…programas para padres de cómo entender a los adolescentes, y también clases de Inglés adaptadas un poco para nosotros que tenemos que trabajar. ¿Usted va a comenzar clases de Ingles?"* "More programs that I can understand….programs for parents on how to understand your adolescent and also English classes, but adapted a little for those of us that have to work. Will you be starting English classes?" Parents are aware of other

programs from other districts based on experiences and sounded a little anxious for me to

start such a program.

How districts communicate is an important part in helping to motivate parents to

become more involved as described in the first level of the HDS model of parent

involvement.  Mirr (2009) mentions that when school personnel ask themselves how they

can be more helpful toward helping parents understand, an emphasis is placed on parents'

self-efficacy and role construction.  The second over-arching question in the project study

emphasizes parents' understanding of how the school communicates with them.

When asked, what kind of communication do you receive from the school?,

Parent 2 shrugged and smiled with a shake of head from left to right, implying there had

been no communication. Parents 3 and 4 had the most to say.  Parent 3 stated, "*Algunas*

*veces me mandan información por correo electrónico.  También recibo papeles que me*

*traen en la mochila."* "Sometimes they send me information through e-mail.  Also, I

have received papers that they [my children] bring me in their backpacks."  Parent 4 had

a similar perspective. *"La información la recibo por correo electrónico.  No existe*

*comunicación escrita que yo haya visto en español, solamente en Ingles.  Tampoco he*

*visto papeles o llamadas por teléfono.*" "I receive information through e-mail.  There is

no written communication that I have seen in Spanish, only in English.  I also have not

seen papers or [received] phone calls."  Parent 6 related that, *"La comunicación que*

*recibo es cuando me dicen que le está yendo bien en la escuela."* "The communication

that I have received is when they tell me that she is doing well at school."  Parents 7, 8,

and 9 mentioned, *"los report cards*." "The report cards."  Parent 7 added, "…*el*

*calendario y lo que mi hijo me dice." "...*the calendar and what my son tells me." The

type of communication indicated by the parents appears to be common at the junior high

level, limits the information to facts about the student, and does not provide additional

support on how to help their child be more successful.

When asked, how do staff/teachers/students communicate with you about events,

functions, activities? Parent 1 mentioned, "*Yo me entero de otros papás que me dicen en*

*Español. La escuela no manda papeles en Español así que no les entiendo."* "I find out

from other parents that tell me in Spanish." The school does not send me any papers in

Spanish, so I don't understand them." Parent seven mentioned that, "*He recibido*

*llamadas cuando hay problemas con mi hija, cuando llega tarde, o no va a la escuela."*

"I have received calls when there are problems with my daughter, when she arrives late,

or when she does not go to school." Parent 9 said that, "*recibo llamadas, pero el mensaje*

*esta en Ingles. A veces capto lo que están diciendo."* "I receive phone calls, but the

message is in English. Sometimes I can make out what they are saying." Moreover,

Parent 10 similarly expressed her sentiment as, *"Yo espero que me diga mi vecino, ve que*

*no hablo Ingles muy bien, o muy poquito."* "I wait for my neighbors to tell me, you see I

don't speak English very well, or very little." This indicates that they are using other

means in order to get the information they need from school in the language that they

most understand.

Parents' perception of when they can get information about their child is evident

in the following responses. When asked, what type of communication do you receive

about your student?, parents responded with these sentiments: *"Solamente durante la*

*conferencia de maestros y padres, cuando dan los grados de nuestros hijos."* "Only during parent-teacher conferences when they give us our student's grades;" *"Durante conferencias de padres y maestros."* "during parent-teacher conferences;" *"...más cuando hay conferencias..."* "...more when there are conferences...;" *"conferencia de padres con los maestros en octubre."* "parent-teacher conferences in October." Parent 9 mentioned that, *"Nunca he recibido ningún tipo de comunicación en Español."* "I have never received any type of communication in Spanish." The focus of their responses here are that the only type of communication they receive is in English and it pertains to either behavior issues or grades. Additionally, it appears that the only type of communication they receive is once a year during parent teacher conferences.

When asked, are there any recommendations about improving communication (if applicable) with the school?, two of the 10 parents mentioned that they had no recommendations. All the parents, while giving other varying answers mentioned that there was a need for someone who spoke Spanish to be at the office. Parent 1 said, *"Debería haber más acceso para que los padres puedan ir a la escuela."* "There should be more access for parents to go to the school." Parent 3 asked for, *"Alguien que hable Español como un director, consejero, alguien que pueda explicarnos las notas en los examines que toman."* "Someone that speaks Spanish, like a principal, counselor, someone who can explain to us the test scores they get." Parent 5 requested for *"Alguien que este fijo en la oficina. Algunas veces se toma todo el día para recibir una respuesta."* "Someone who is permanently at the office. Sometimes it takes all day to get a response back." Parent 6 said, *"Tienen que entender nuestra cultura más para que*

*haya mejor conexiones…que aprendan como decir 'buenos días' o 'como esta'"* "They have to understand our culture more so that there are better connections…they should learn how to say 'Buenos dias'/good morning or 'Como esta'/how are you." Parent 8 mentioned that, "*Yo voy, pero mis vecinos no entienden las cartas así que tengo que ayudarles."* "I go [to the meetings/events], but my neighbors don't understand the letters so I have to help them." Parent 9 mentioned, *"Quisiera ver más clases de Inglés."* "I would like more classes to learn English." While there is currently a district interpreter at the district, she has an office at the elementary setting and she helps with not only translating and interpreting, but also aids the administrative assistant at that level with other issues. Parents would like to feel as if the school is more accessible to them as Parent 1 mentioned above, but they also ask for English classes as parent 9 mentioned. They want to be more connected.

The adult ESL program proposed here incorporates the use of Content Based Instruction, which along with Content and Language Integrated Learning, are both used within K-12 classrooms (Richards, 2013). This methodology anchored on Forward Design by Wiggins and McTighe (2011) focuses on developing both language proficiency and content knowledge. Positive effects and big rewards that can be achieved in a short amount of time as evidenced in data from studies (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004); the area that would be incorporated here is helping parents to navigate through the U.S. educational school system as well as learning how to understand the adolescent developmental stage better.

**Theme 4: Parent support group.** When parents and other adults have a strong understanding of their child during the adolescent years, they know how to talk to their child, how to support their child not only academically but socially as well, and helping them to function using good executive functioning decisions. Oostdam and Hooge (2013) stress the importance of creating and forming partnerships that garner the involvement of all those involved in a school setting. Parents find challenges when they have more than one child.

For some parents, attending functions or events when they have younger children makes parents believe that they are being bothersome to others around them. Such as the following response given by a mother who was asked, what are ways you participate in your child's school? Parent 3 said, "No me gusta ir porque tengo a mi hijo menor, y no quiero malograr la junta para todos cuando comienza a correr." "I don't like to go because I have my younger son, and I don't want to ruin the meeting for everyone with him running around." She looked a little conflicted that her three-year-old son prevented her from attending important events for her older child. This is an example of a mother who understands her role within a school setting, but who needs that extra support from others in order for her to feel more self-efficacious.

Another parent felt that the teachers needed support. The following question, how do you help the middle school staff/teachers to help your child be successful at school?, generated the following responses from Parent 5, "*Las maestras están trabajando, pero a veces dejan mucho del trabajo para que los padres les ayudemos a nuestros hijos.*" "The teachers are working, but sometimes they leave a lot of work for the parents to help our

children." This parent, while not appearing annoyed, seemed to show a bit of helplessness as did the previous parent.

When parents were asked, what information/documents/resources do you use to help your child be more successful at school?, sixty percent of the responses involved the use of a computer/internet, while 20% of the parents mentioned that, *"no he visto nada" or "nada."* "I have not seen anything" or "nothing." Parent 2 mentioned that, *"El paquete de papel que nos llega cuando comienza la escuela donde tenemos que firmar la página del final….no lo entiendo, pero mi hijo mayor me ayuda."* "The packet of paper that arrives when school starts, where we have to sign the last page…I don't understand it, but my oldest son helps me." This parent is illiterate, and Spanish is her second language. She speaks a Mayan dialect. Parent 3 stated, *"Le pido a mi esposo cuando el viene de trabajar cuando se trata de matemáticas. Yo no le puedo ayudar con las matemáticas porque no soy muy buena con ellas."* "I ask my husband when he comes home from work when it has to do with mathematics. I can't help him with mathematics because I am not so good with them." Once again, parents are not sure on how to help their children with homework or what may be expected of them, as there is a language barrier.

Parents' knowledge of information is limited as evidenced by the following responses based on the questions asked on their perceptions of resources available at the school. They indicate that it is through report cards, school calendars, other parents and the once a year parent-teacher conference where they receive information about school or their children. When asked, what kind of communication do you receive from the

school?, Parents 7, 8, and 9 mentioned, *"los report cards."* "The report cards." Parent 7 added, "*…el calendario y lo que mi hijo me dice." "...*the calendar and what my son tells me." Parent 7 mentioned that, "*He recibido llamadas cuando hay problemas con mi hija, cuando llega tarde, o no va a la escuela."* "I have received calls when there are problems with my daughter, when she arrives late, or when she does not go to school."

When asked, how do staff/teachers/students communicate with you about events, functions, activities?, Parent 1 mentioned, "*Yo me entero de otros papás que me dicen en Español. La escuela no manda papeles en Español así que no les entiendo."* "I find out from other parents that tell me in Spanish." The school does not send me any papers in Spanish, so I don't understand them." Parent 10 similarly expressed her sentiment as, *"Yo espero que me diga mi vecino, ve que no hablo Ingles muy bien, o muy poquito."* "I wait for my neighbors to tell me, you see I don't speak English very well, or very little." This indicates that there is a need for community and that the Spanish-speaking parents in town have an informal support group that they go to when they need help.

When asked, what type of communication do you receive about your student?, parents responded with these sentiments: *"Solamente durante la conferencia de maestros y padres, cuando dan los grados de nuestros hijos."* "Only during parent-teacher conferences when they give us our students grades;" *"Durante conferencias de padres y maestros."* "during parent-teacher conferences;" *"...más cuando hay conferencias…"* "…more when there are conferences…;" *"conferencia de padres con los maestros en octubre."* "parent-teacher conferences in October." Parent 9 mentioned that, *"Nunca he recibido ningún tipo de comunicación en Español."* "I have never received any type of

communication in Spanish." Parent 6 related that, *"La comunicación que recibo es cuando me dicen que le está yendo bien en la escuela."* "The communication that I have received is when they tell me that she is doing well at school."

Parents' recommendations for improving communication strongly focused on someone who would be available to speak to them in Spanish. When asked, are there any recommendations about improving communication (if applicable) with the school?, Parent 5 requested for, "*Alguien que este fijo en la oficina. Algunas veces se toma todo el día para recibir una respuesta."* "Someone who is permanently at the office. Sometimes it takes all day to get a response back." Parent 6 said, "*Tienen que entender nuestra cultura más para que haya mejor conexiones…que aprendan como decir 'buenos días' o 'como esta'"* "They have to understand our culture more so that there are better connections…they should learn how to say 'Buenos dias'/good morning or 'Como esta'/how are you."

Asking parents whether they had participated in any program or group event led to the following responses that dealt more with the first level in the HDS model that describes self-efficacy and invitations by school personnel. Additionally, language appeared to be a challenge for the parents' ability to participate in the meetings. When asked, do you participate in any parent groups at the school?, all parents said no. Their responses varied somewhat in length, but the message was the same. Parent 3 said, "*Me fui una vez, pero fue muy triste porque no vi a mas papas que hablaban Español."* "I went once, but it was very sad because I did not see any parents that spoke Spanish."

When asked, what kind of help is available to you or your children at the school?, two of the 10 parents did not respond. Five of the parents said, *"Dan el almuerzo gratis."* "They give free lunch." Five parents also mentioned, *"Educación especial para mi hijo/a."* "Special education for my child." Parent 3 said, *"Ninguno, pero quisiera que hubiera un programa o programas de cómo ayudar a nuestros hijos….no sé si existen. Porque en esta escuela es diferente a cuando estaban chicos."* "None, but I would like there to be a program or programs to help our children…they don't exist. Because in this school it is different to when they were little." These answers indicate that parents are not aware of additional programs within the community that can be of assistance to them. The last response indicates that they would like some sort of support group to assist them with helping their children out more.

Finally, when the parents were asked, what kinds of programs are available for parents?, Parent 6 recommended, *"Mas programas que yo pueda entender…programas para padres de cómo entender a los adolescentes, y también clases de Inglés adaptadas un poco para nosotros que tenemos que trabajar."* "More programs that I can understand….programs for parents on how to understand your adolescent and also English classes, but adapted a little for those of us that have to work." Parent 3 vocalized that, *"Sería una buena idea para la comunidad para poder ayudar a nuestros hijos mejor. Algunas veces tenemos ánimo, pero no sabemos cómo ayudarlos [hijos]."* "It would be a good idea for the community in order to help our children better. Sometimes we are motivated, but we do not know how to help them [children]." Parent 7 said, *"No sé, como que no me siento cómodo yendo a la escuela."* "I don't know, like I do not feel

comfortable going to the school." Three of the parents did not respond to the fourth interview question.

There is a lot of research within literature that reinforces the importance of parents working with their teenagers, but upon searching various journals, documents, and school districts, there is very little information on parent support programs in the area of adolescence. The plethora of literature available to parents can be cumbersome to read and interpret in the English language. For parents who may have a low literacy level in Spanish and/or are learning the English language, providing them with a plethora of handouts and papers to read is counterintuitive to providing them with the support they need.

Helping parents understand their child within a culture that is different from their own allows their self-efficacy to improve. Understanding the adolescent developmental stage can be difficult for any parent (Chapmen & Stein, 2014). When cultural norms come into conflict with both children and parents, it can lead to arguments and feeling of loss for the parents and the child (Fulgini, 2010; Zychinski & Polo, 2012). If parents receive assistance in understanding their children during this difficult growth stage while being provided with cultural support, it will help them enhance the self-efficacy of both parents and children (Mendez, Weterberg, & Thibeault, 2013). This in turn will help the student feel secure in their cultural heritage and background (Olivos & Mendoza, 2010). The workshops that are provided to the parents on various adolescent needs, on how to properly communicate, on providing appropriate disciplining strategies, and etc, will help both parent and the child achieve a higher self-efficacy.

**Summary of Findings**

Looking at the emphasized strategies to enhance parental engagement within a junior high setting in rural Northeast Nebraska was beneficial in helping me assess the nature of the responses by each participant. In each participants response both HDS typologies as well as the 9 barriers indicated by MALDEF and NEA were looked at in order to establish a better understanding of parental perception as compared to the Hoover Dempsey and Sandler model of parental involvement. In particular, the first two levels were looked at with stronger emphasis in the areas of role construction and self-efficacy. What resulted was the creation of a more advanced level of parent involvement that was supported by the parents' responses as well as the typological analysis.

By looking at each individual typology found within each of the constructs in levels one, one point five, and level two of the HDS model it became clear that parents are very involved and know how to help their child. The lack of resources from the point of view of parents' ability to help with homework as well as lack of knowledge about the homework prevented parents from personally helping their child. Yet, parents sought other venues to help their child be successful at school (e.g., seeking help from neighbors; going to the library, etc.).

The four themes that arose were inter-connected to one another. Parents' request for programs or workshops that can help them better assist them in helping their adolescent was prevalent throughout the three fundamental questions found in Appendix D. Their responses aligned with level 1 and 1.5 of the HDS model of parental involvement. These responses helped to generate a curriculum plan that focused on the

parents within this small rural community, but can be adapted to other rural communities in the surrounding areas in Nebraska.  This curriculum design plan will be discussed more in section three.

## Assumptions

It was assumed that both parents of the Latino parents with children in Grades 7 or eight would provide relatively genuine information.  The confidential nature of the study was made clear.  The results were made available to the school, yet I held specific commentary from any particular parent in the closest of confidence.  By providing parents with this level of confidentiality, they were encouraged to provide me with more information.

## Limitations

The results of this project study were generalizable to a small rural district in Northeast Nebraska.  The data were limited to the 10 individuals who volunteered and the extent to which each response accurately reflected Latino parents' perceptions of parental involvement at the Junior High building.  Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants in order to ensure a high rate of return.

Collection of data took 3 ½ months, as several notices had to be sent in order to achieve a reasonable number of participants.  While the original expectation was to interview 13 to 20 participants, a smaller number of participants were achieved.  Some families only had a mother while others had both parents, but either the mother or the father wanted to participate not both.  Another limitation was that there was a mother whom I thought spoke Spanish due to the information from the school as being Latina in

the school computer system, she was from Guatemala, but spoke a Mayan dialect and her Spanish was limited. Some participants misunderstood the sub-questions at times and the response they gave was for the last question and sub-questions (i.e., "as I said in the other response."). This limitation can be seen as a barrier by Abrego and Gonzalez (2010) as it impacts children within U.S. schools in that their parents' limited education can affect participation in District RW. It will be necessary to look into working with parents of other ethnic background in order to enhance this project study in future endeavors.

Ultimately, since the participation of the parents was voluntary, the final findings may not be completely representative and generalizable of all Latino parents at rural junior high settings. Looking at other quantitative and qualitative studies within the areas covered in the project study I found that parents have found ways to overcome barriers and become involved (Golan & Peterson, 2002; Golden & Fortuny, 2010) even though similar answers were provided by the parents in this study.

## Delimitations

This qualitative case study was delimited in that it was centered on Latino parents in the only Junior High setting in Grades 7 and 8 within a small rural town. Parents were interviewed once and a review of the documents took place for member checking. This is the first of its kind study with Latino parents of junior high students at a small rural district in Northeast Nebraska and the findings pertain to this group of Latino parents' perceptions of their involvement. No generalization has been made about other Latino parents in this type of situation in other rural towns in Nebraska. Although this study is

limited in its scope, it adds to the limited research on studies of Latino parent

involvement, in particular of Mexican heritage in rural settings (Hill, & Torres, 2010).

**Summary**

Within this section, an outline of the methodology was highlighted for the

qualitative case study. The manner in which the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of

parental involvement was used within the qualitative research that was conducted

strengthened the instrumental case study approach. The following questions were

answered and supported: (a) How do Latino parents perceive their roles and

responsibilities at the junior high level?, (b) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the

communication strategies used by the school?, and (c) What are Latino parents'

perceptions of the resources available at the school?

I used the data from 10 individual parent interviews that were conducted with

parents who had children in Grades 7 or 8 at the only junior high in District RW to

support my findings. The results of this study indicated that while parents are well

intentioned and wanted their children to be successful in school, they lack the knowledge

of how to go about helping their students, especially in the middle grades. This became

evident through the four main categories that arose and that were closely related to the

work that has been done by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler. Time constraints, home-

based support, communication (in Spanish) and a need for a program to support parents,

showed an evidence of parents functioning more at level two within the HDS model of

parental involvement. Yet, they lacked the last construct on the HDS model that involved

the learning mechanism of instruction- helping your child to have the qualities found

within the other constructs of encouragement, modeling, and reinforcement. While parents modeled and exemplified how to act in a school system, they did not feel comfortable instructing their child to do the same. Finally, within the section, I highlighted how each interview was transcribed, coded, and categorized through typological analysis using a finely developed protocol and how the information procured through the interviews delineated parents' perception of their involvement at school in order to change parental engagement practices within the district. I will discuss this more in detail within the next section.

In section three, I will look at the project study more closely as evidenced in Appendix E. Based on Latino parental perceptions of parent involvement within the junior high a thorough analysis of policy, school practice, and perceived barriers indicated a need for a summer parent program that offered nine workshops. Working in a small community, the contributions of other organizations became evident once the program began to take shape. The four major themes addressed within this project study involve the use of a church, the nearby college, the school district, and a state agency. The goals, implementation process, and the evaluative pieces were supported using a rich review of literature. A timetable with implementation deadlines along with the roles and responsibilities of the individuals responsible are provided in Appendix F and highlighted in the following section. This information within this study aims to enrich the literature on Latino parent involvement within Grades 7 and 8 to provide social change and comply with state and federal policy on parental and family engagement. Section four highlighted reflections and conclusions achieved. Recommendations were made for any

limitations that were found within the study, which will lead to how this project can be further developed and evaluated.

Finally, I will analyze myself in the areas of scholarship, practice, and project development to show my learning process.  A thorough description of how this overall study affects social change will demonstrate the direction for future studies in order to add to the already growing body of research on Latino parent involvement and engagement.

Section 3: The Project

**Introduction**

A rise in the Latino population within a rural K-12 district in Northeast Nebraska and low parental participation amongst Latino parents warranted an investigation at the only junior high school within this rural district. There was little research on Latino parent involvement within the junior high grades in a rural community; therefore, it was important to help Latino parents meet the demands of state and federal policy on parental and family engagement at the district within the State of Nebraska, which contributed to positive social change (Tekin, 2011). Therefore, a curriculum design project was created in order to meet the needs of the parents.

In this qualitative study, I used an instrumental case study approach and implemented the theoretical foundations found within Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) theoretical 5-level model of parental motivation. This helped me understand how parents perceived their roles and responsibilities in the home and school partnership within District RW. Moreover, it provided me a way to determine how barriers described by MALDEF and NEA (2010) prevented the parents from empowering themselves to enhance their child's educational experience. Additionally, I examined current policy within District RW while comparing the barriers found within MALDEF and NEA's (2010) report using document analysis of previously mentioned documents, interviews and researcher notes, and individual parent interviews conducted with 10 parents with children in Grades 7 or 8 at District RW's only junior high. These data were coded and categorized using typological analysis to develop a protocol where four themes

were discovered.  Three sources of data were used to establish credibility and information

was compiled and triangulated using the information as follows: individual semi

structured interviews, document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, parent

handbook, district policy, and researcher notes.  The information procured through the

interviews delineated parents' perceptions of their involvement at school in order to

support parental engagement practices contributing to positive social change and aiding

in meeting the requirements of state and federal policies on parental and family

engagement.

The main purpose of this study was threefold: (a) I examined Latino parents'

perceptions of their roles and responsibilities using Hoover Dempsey's model of parental

involvement (b) I analyzed Latino parents' perceptions as they related to District RW's

understanding of parent involvement in the 21st century and key challenges specific to

Latinos, and, (c) I provided suggestions on how both Latino parents and the junior high

personnel can create a better home and school partnership through better communication.

As a result, I found four main themes that revolved around three main barriers

mentioned in MALDEF and NEA's (2010) report as well as 14 out of the 16 typologies

in the first 2 levels of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement.

For example, in the document analysis of sign-ins/ parent teacher sign-in forms, I found

that most parents came to events or to visit teachers during parent-teacher conferences,

which aligned with their responses for the sub-questions under the first question of their

roles and responsibilities as well as the following typologies under the Hoover-Dempsey

and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005, 2010) model of parental involvement: parental role

construction for involvement, parental efficacy for helping student succeed in school, general school invitations, parental time and energy, parent/teacher/school communication, and involvement activities at school.

The typologies of role construction and self-efficacy were looked into primarily, yet it was evident by the parents' responses that they understood their roles and knew how to go about advocating for themselves and their children, indicating that most parents were at the second level of parent involvement. Mena (2011) supports this type of involvement, which is more home-based. Yet, the parents did not show that they communicated many of these ways of advocacy to their children. The issue of trust, time, and language prevented many parents from physically coming to school. Yet, their involvement was indicated by their willingness to help with homework, attend parent-teacher conferences and other events, and ask for assistance from others in the community that spoke Spanish and that they trusted (i.e., other parents). Therefore, I created a curriculum design plan to be implemented during the summer months where parents met during a 9-week time period. This period coincides with the college classes provided to students at the nearby college and the summer migrant program provided by the state of Nebraska. The developed workshops centered around the parents' concerns that parents recommended during their interviews, such as help in understanding the adolescent; how to navigate and understand the policies, procedures of school systems (e.g., occurrences/testing, etc.); as well as support in learning the English language.

The table below shows the three areas and possible topics that were covered during the parent summer program. Each workshop was an 1 ½ hours, provided

childcare with literacy activities, and introduced topics that helped the parents learn

English in a content based ESL style workshop.

Table 4

*Topics and Description of Workshops*

| Topics | Description | Implication from Literature |
|---|---|---|
| Navigating through School Policies and Procedures | Parents will be shown what the policies and procedures from school are; how to understand different parts of the parent/student handbook; how to read report cards/progress reports | Parents need to be explicitly shown how to interpret and utilize school documents. According to Paredes (2011) and Habermehl (2006), a hands-on approach works best.<br><br>Parents can also be strong allies once they know how to use data and are able to interpret the data (Breiseth, Robertson & Lafond, 2011; Behnke & Kelly, 2011). |
| Understanding your Adolescent student | The needs of an adolescent student; how to talk to an adolescent student; how to help your child during this period in their lives; helping them make successful executive functioning decisions | Understanding this developmental stage can be difficult for any parent (Chapmen & Stein, 2014). When cultural norms come into conflict with both children and parents, it can lead to arguments and feeling of loss for the parents (Fulgini, 2012) and the child (Zychinski & Polo, 2012). Helping Latino parents to understand their children during this difficult growth stage and providing that cultural support can enhance the self-efficacy of both parents and children (Mendez, Weterberg, & Thibeault, 2013). |
| ESL classes with content area (TBD based on parent recommendations) | Provide words that will help them communicate clearer with school personnel in regards to topics mentioned above. Classes can also make them feel more confident in helping their children at school. They can eventually lead to parents becoming leaders in their community. | Hong's (2011) ethnographic book describes how parents can become leaders given the opportunity to learn English along with being invited to participate as helpers in a community of learners. Provide the confidence to help their child be more successful at school as well as eventually become leaders of their community (Auerbach, 2011; Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, Whetsel, & Green, 2004; Wessels & Trainin, 2014). |

The results of my study were shared in a condensed report in Appendix F with the school principal.  In order for adjustments to be considered, the length was brief so that it could be compared to the school schedule.  This provides a flexible chart that allows the project to be tailored to the needs of the parents in the community.

Because parents mentioned the following barriers were a factor--trust of school personnel (implied) and lack of time because of work--the workshop benefited several groups at the local and state levels.  The parents acquired the English skills needed that provide content rich lessons on topics related to the adolescent and navigating through school policies and procedures.  The school district achieved compliance with meeting requirements of Title III and implementing a parent group, as indicated by the state and federal policies.  The state agency helped with resources for Latino parents who are labelled under the migrant population category.  The nearby college students provided assistance by supplying the child care/literacy classes and meeting the requirements of their ESL class hours.  Due to budgetary cuts at District RW, this type of program would not require the school to spend a lot of money.  As the college professor, I would continue to provide the classes to the parents in Spanish and an ESL format.  My students who take courses to get their ESL endorsement would provide the child care support in exchange for achieving the hours of practice during summer 2016 as they did during the summer of 2015.  The community church eventually would supply the rooms where I can meet to provide this program.  The school district supplied the funding for the school supplies and snacks for this program to run for 9 weeks during the summer months of

2016. My goals, rationale, implementation plan, project evaluation guide, and implications for this program are described below.

## Description and Goals

The purpose of this curriculum design plan was to assist Latino parents of junior high students understand various aspects of parental involvement and engagement in a small rural Midwest district. This small community saw an increase in Latino families in the past 10 years, and the district wanted to take a proactive approach to helping all families participate more in a school setting. Low Latino parental involvement was addressed within this study in order to find out whether perceived barriers prevented parents from participating more in a school setting. For this reason, a unique program was proposed. This brought together different facets of the education field to help decrease the barriers discussed by the parents.

The design of the program focused on incorporating four different area institutions that partake in the education of students to some degree-- federal state program, a college, District RW, and a local church. The design incorporated theoretical and applied research, along with the findings of the present study. The program, called *Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes* (*TAPA*) or Learning Workshops for Parents of Adolescents, focused on the four categories highlighted from the data analysis and Latino parents' needs as follows: how to navigate the schooling system, how to help adolescents, and provide ESL classes through content within a setting that respects parents' manner of communication. While the self-efficacy of the students was not measured in this study, I found through informal conversations with the parents that their

parents' participation in the program has helped students increase their motivation and improve their schooling experience by increasing their self-efficacy. Parents feel more inspired to continue participating in the classes, and their children report that they are happy that their parents are taking the classes. The following are the four main areas/goals that were covered:

1. Increasing communication between Latino parents of junior high students and school personnel for the benefit of students

2. Empower parents in their roles as participants within the junior high community by providing ESL classes.

3. Help parents serve as role models for their children by providing classes on this developmental stage in their children's lives

4. Helping parents reach a comfort level where they can attend future workshops in a face to face venue by providing them the knowledge of how schools function

The overarching goal within the project was to create a program that entailed a series of workshops in the following areas: how to navigate the schooling system, how to help adolescents, and provide ESL classes through content within a setting that respects parents' time.

## Rationale

A curriculum design plan was chosen due to the findings within this project study. There is low Latino parental involvement within the middle school years, and researchers have indicated that helping parents to become more involved would raise both the

efficacy of parents and their children (Hill & Torres, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Parent

participation and involvement wanes during the junior high years. This may be due to the

how the classes are structured or that teachers specialize in a subject, have more students

to worry about, and may not know how to ask for parental support at school (Tekin,

2011). Many parents complained that they have always been willing to help and let the

teachers know during the required meetings (Parent 7, personal communication,

November 10, 2014); yet, they also mentioned that they did not receive phone calls,

emails, or flyers through their children, or in the mail. Many times, they mentioned that

mail that comes in the mail would be ignored. Teachers and the school, along with

support from WEB (i.e., PTO/PTA), actively reminded the parents of the activities. This

is not evident at the middle school level. While newsletters are placed in the community

paper, many times parents miss this communication, as evidenced in their responses for

Questions 1 and two.

Parents still wanted to be invited by teachers to help with school events (i.e.,

parties, fieldtrips, etc.,), and the lack of invitations is a change from one year to the next

as has been mentioned by all parents in particular echoed by Parent 7, *"Nadie me llama,*

*o me invita aquí en [small town]."* "No one calls me, or invites me here in [small

town]." Parent 7 who moved to this small town from another nearby town mentioned

that she felt more connected with individuals in the other school district because they

would call her and let her know how she could be of help at games or other events

(Parent 4, personal communication, November 12, 2014). She said that in this small

town they do not reach out and that the only communication she receives is when her

children have misbehaved or are not doing well academically. Perceptions of communication differences were provided by this example and indicate what has to be done within the current school district she is a part of.

What does not change in parent participation is how parents assisted their children with homework. While many parents did not have the means or knowledge to help, they elicited help from neighbors or others in order to help their children finish their homework. They also continually reminded their children to make sure to finish their homework, and they did check their agenda books regularly, although they may not have understood what was written. Other ways they helped was by taking them to the library, where their children could look up information on-line or ask someone there for help.

**Curriculum Design Plan Outline**

The curriculum design plan lasted 9 weeks, with the vision to expand it to exist during the whole school year. Feedback from the parents from evaluations after each workshop drove the type of workshops that are currently being offered. Because this program is teaching ESL using content vocabulary that teaches parents about school structure and their adolescent child, it covers the needs indicated above. Appendix A includes all three topics in more detail.

**Workshops to Increase Awareness of the Adolescent**

The adolescent brain has chemical changes that create the physical changes that parents see in their child physical, emotionally, and socially. Therefore, within the following workshops there are two areas highlighted that incorporate suggestions and information from the interviews that help a parent understand their adolescent child and

understanding the school's structure and governance.  All the workshops are delineated as follows:

**Helping Your Adolescent**. There will be four main areas within this big idea. They are as follows:

*Ayudando a su hijo a navegar por la adolescencia*. "Helping your son/daughter navigate through adolescence" is the name of the first two workshops where general discussions about the changes that children undergo, what parents can expect, and how they can help to communicate with their children regarding these changes are discussed. The workshops focused on teenagers' social, emotional, and physical needs that they experience during this age group as well as what parents can do to help them within these areas.

*Entendiendo a mi hijo adolescente*.  "Understanding my adolescent child" is the third workshop where parents are provided with information that helps them to communicate with their child transitioning from childhood to adulthood.  The focus of this workshop is on learning how to communicate with the teenager who may become rebellious, introspective, needy, and not be making correct choices.

*Poniendo límites a mi adolescente: Como poner disciplina*.  "Placing limits on my adolescent: How to discipline my child" is a workshop that focuses on effective discipline strategies that parents can use to effectively retain that level of respect between the parent and the child without making the child rebellious.  Topics included are as follows: the area of respect, looking at boundaries, knowing your adolescents friends, and others. This will be covered in two workshop sessions.

***Más que tarea: Ayudándole a que encuentre éxito.**** "More than homework: Helping them to find success." is a workshop where parents are shown resources outside of school to help their child. The workshop is set-up to help parents understand that aside from homework there are other parts of school that will help their child be successful during the junior high as well as in high school and beyond.

**Understanding the School's Structure and Governance.** Within this workshop topic, there are two big ideas that focus on school culture and what parents can do to understand the processes within a systemic environment.

***Sus derechos dentro de la escuela.*** "Your rights at school" is a workshop that is focused towards learning about how the school structure is set up and what rights parent have within a school. Additionally, parents were shown what they could and could not do, in particular focusing their participation at the junior high level.

***Comunicación entre la casa y la escuela.*** The "Communication between home and school" workshop was set-up to provide parents with the vocabulary that teachers and other educators use. I highlighted vocabulary and their meaning. Three workshops incorporated the use of English words. The goal was to have parents became familiar with these words so they could use them when they attended school events as well as practice these with the teacher in a public setting. Additionally, the purpose of the workshop aimed at providing a gradual increase of language so that when parents met with the teacher they could determine if they had effectively gauge and gather information about their child's performance at school.

Within these workshops, parents learned how to become more self-efficacious by gaining the confidence to articulate in English what their needs where in a safe environment. The parents learned how to navigate through the school system as well as learned to understand their adolescent child. As I worked with the different organizations, parents noticed that there were different resources available to them within this small community. Because this is a curriculum design plan, parents will be able to suggest additional workshops. Their input will be invaluable in supporting the growth and maintenance of this type of parental support in the future. Detailed lesson plans are provided under Appendix E.

## Review of the Literature

### Project Genre

A curriculum design plan was the best project genre for displaying the results of this project study. An analysis of research and theory that highlights the genre of the project's applicability to the problem of Latino parents' perception of parental involvement within a junior high setting is addressed in this section. Using some of the discussion within the first two sections of this paper as well as new research within the rest of this section, I will focus the review of literature on relevant theory that supports and addresses the main goals of the overall curriculum design plan. These are as follows: (a) An examination of Latino parents' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities using the HDS model of parental involvement (b) An analysis of Latino parents perceptions as they relate to District RW's understanding of parent involvement in the 21$^{st}$ century and key challenges specific to Latinos and, (c) A provision of suggestions on how both Latino

parents and the junior high personnel can create a better home-school partnership through better communication.  Discussed within this section is Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) model of parental involvement based on Bandura's social cognitive theory which alludes to parents instilling self-efficacy in their children if they themselves are supported by the school or school district.  The TAPA project, as a curriculum design plan, will help me support parents improve their perception of how they can better assist their children at school.

**Conducting the Literature Review**

Within the first review of literature in section one, I focused on finding the conceptual framework and helped to provide direction in the anticipated research. Different perspectives on the lack of parental involvement were looked at and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's research along with Bandura's Social Cognitive theory were included.

Within this review of literature in this section, saturation was reached using various sources, two examples are as follows: Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), EBSCO HOST, Pro Quest dissertations.  A thoroughly interconnected analysis at both a theoretical and practical research level supported this type of project within a wider range of parental involvement of Latino parents at the junior high level.  The primary keywords that were used included the following: *curriculum design plans for parents, curriculum design and parent involvement, curriculum design plans and school setting, parent workshops and authentic Spanish, Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes (workshops for parents of adolescents),*and *andragogy and curriculum*

*design*. I will discuss a brief overview of the curriculum design approach in the field of education, recommendations on increasing parental involvement and removing barriers based on the findings, and provide an overview of the literature review in the following section.

**Overview of Curriculum Design Approaches in the Field of Education**

There are various definitions and explanations as to what curriculum design entails. In order to understand what curriculum design is, a clear understanding of what curricula involves must first be established (Su, 2012). A study by Kelting-Gibson (2013) analyzed 100 years of curriculum designs, particularly looking at 15 historical and present day designs that inform the field of education. Kelting-Gibson found that prior to the 1900s curriculum design involved only the required content and the amount of time it took to teach the students. After the 1900s, assessment and the use of the scientific method were incorporated into the idea of curriculum design and so began the inclusion of assessment practices using the scientific method (Kelting-Gibson, 2013). Presently, Wiggins and McTighe's (2011) backwards design stresses that those who embark on writing a curriculum begin with the assessment piece and work backwards in creating the activities and teaching methods. Additionally, other researchers recommended that the four main elements, such as--objectives, content, methods, and evaluation, be present prior to undergoing a curriculum design (Kelting-Bison, 2013; Krupa & Confrey, 2012; Lunenburg, 2011; Su, 2012). Finally, Strickland (2012) stressed the use of standards within any curriculum writing project is of high importance. A curriculum can be developed but there are many layers that have to be considered when writing one.

Designing a curriculum for adults differs from that for children. The use of andragogy as a model for adult learners better incorporates the needs of adult learners (Knowles, 2011). Knowles' six principles along with the four big theories of curriculum design will help to strengthen the type of program created for the parents at District RW. When designing curriculum there are four main theories from which to draw from, such as, knowledge theory, social theory, political theory, and learning theory. Knowles six principles include the following: (a) adults are internally motivated and self-directed (b) adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences; (c) adults are goal oriented (d) adults are relevancy oriented (e) adults are practical and, (f) adults like to be respected. By synthesizing research and applying it to fit the needs of adult learners, curriculum writers develop a curriculum that adapts to the needs of the adult learner.

If the curriculum writer understands what the outcome needs to be, he or she will create a stronger and more viable curriculum. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) takes what Su (2012) emphasized as being important, connecting the design of curriculum for practical uses by using synthesized theory. UDL includes a set of principles that incorporates the different theories and frameworks from past and contemporaneous researchers. Curriculums designs can be successful when curriculum writers understand the outcomes and produce a process that facilitates learning.

What follows is a deeper definition of what curriculum design entails, along with different design approaches and the strengths and weaknesses within each of these as it pertains to the curriculum design plan chosen for this project genre.

**Definition of curriculum design.** While there are many definitions, the essence of what curriculum is grounds itself in years of research. Early proponents of education, such as Phenix (1962), defined curriculum as the *what* of teaching. Phenix's articles and papers stressed the need for basic knowledge of content. To this notion, Taba (1962) added the importance of the learning experience or the process that went with getting to know the subject matter. Bloom (1956) adds to both Phenix and Taba's ideas by incorporating a language of learning within a taxonomy that provides levels of student learning from the most basic to the most complex. It is noted that Taba defines the learning of content through knowledge acquisition at the basic level of learning and stresses learning at higher levels. This notion expanded upon by Bloom in his taxonomy where he emphasized the process of learning (Lunenburg, 2012). The above are but a few of the many researchers that have attempted to provide a definition of what curriculum design entails. Further analysis by other researchers begins to pin point additional details. March and Willis (2003), for example, narrowed it down to eight areas which incorporated words such as subjects, planned learnings, learner experience, student-constructed work, which were all tied to someone or something. While there are many disputed definitions, Toombs and Tierney (1993) sum up the definition to include five main concepts and conclude that in designing a curriculum the first step is to come to consensus prior to beginning any such process. This process includes the following: (a) having a plan for learning around an instructional system, (b) considering that it connects to an institution's subsystem, (c) keeping in mind the development of students and (d) orienting itself around a traditional mindset.

Although a strong definition of curriculum has not been established for this paper, the creation of a curriculum design plan focused on the concepts highlighted by Toombs and Tierney (1993).

**Different design approaches: Strengths and weaknesses.** There are different designs and formats for writing curriculum. The following highlight the ones that have influenced the curriculum design plan. The most used model of curriculum development is that developed by Tyler in the 1940s (Tyler, 1949). It incorporates three areas which can be used together or by themselves. Either each of these three areas is centered on the subject or content, the needs of the learner, and/or the needs of society, with particular emphasis being placed on the problems faced (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). The first design includes three main areas as they relate to the subject matter in terms of selection, organization, and approach. For example, one of the areas includes the subject, discipline, broad-fields, correlation, and process designs. While these areas may strengthen the concepts being provided to the learner, they limit the learner to the area they are learning without consideration for the social, emotional, and physical needs of the learner (Kelting-Gibson, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Phenix, 1962; Schwab, Taba, 1962).

Secondly, learner-centered designs areas may be limited. There are four areas, which encompass either one or all of the following: the child, the experience, radical/romantic ideals, and/or humanistic ideals. While all of these envelop the democratic ideals within our society, the overemphasis on the self forgoes the needs of society, in this example. Furthermore, the teacher must have a high level of skill when

dealing with these types of students. This second realm is influenced by the words of Dewey, Kilpatrick, Parker, Rugg, Shumaker, Freire, Habermas, Holt, Illich, Combs, Fantini, Maslow, and Rogers (Lunenberg, 2012). These individuals focused their study in the area of pedagogy, which may diminish from Marx's androgogy theory mentioned earlier.

Finally, the last problem-based design highlights two areas that deal with life-situations and reconstructionism and are influenced by Apple, Brameld, and Spencer. This last design focuses strongly on knowledge about society and the societal needs, emphasizing problem-solving qualities to create a more equitable society (Kelting-Gibson, 2013). Overall, Tyler's model influences the more modern idea of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) which ask the four essential questions,

1) What do we expect our students to learn?

2) How will we know they are learning?

3) How will we respond when they do not learn?, and

4) How will we respond if they already know it?" (Dufour & Dufour, 2010).

Prior to PLC's, Bruner's constructivist theory influenced curriculum design construction in that it focused creation of instruction on other areas. Four general themes focusing on the cognitive abilities of the student, encompassed Bruner's idea of designing curriculum, which are as follows: (a) providing students with how subject is structured (b) providing students with their own starting point (c) making sure they are ready for learning (d) student intuition for learning, and (e) interest for learning (Bruner, 1996; Kelting, 2013; Takaya, 2008 ). This theory is limited by lack of support for its last

theme, which involves motivation for learning due to poor data. Additionally, the constructivist theory mentioned depends highly on student activity and has a higher degree of subjectivity within its assessment (Pagan, 2006).

The last highlighted theory incorporates other theorists within their model. The work of Wiggins and McTighe includes ideas from Bruner, Gardner, Perkins, and Newman and Wehlage (Kelting-Gibson, 2013). This in turn has been influenced by those who came before them. The process of backward design is a conceptual structure that allows educators to look at curriculum design by first identifying the desired results, pointing to which evidence will be acceptable, and then planning for instruction. One critique is that the assessment emphasized in this design, allows teachers and administrators to over use the data instead of focusing on the activities within the lesson (Kelting, 2013; Takaya, 2008). The use of tools from assessments is based on performance, other evidence, and evaluation of self (Kelting-Gibson, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). One drawback to their model is that many believe that assessment becomes the focus of the instruction and leads to the detailed-oriented perspective of looking at standards (Gibbons, Boiling, & Smith, 2013). While there are benefits to this design, it should not be used a prescriptive model, yet as a tool that is accommodated to fit the needs of the learners.

**Recommendations on Increasing Parental Involvement and Removing Barriers**

When the curriculum design plan for this project was developed, the different theories of design were incorporated that combined the four different theories of curriculum design with a stronger emphasis on the social and learning theories that tie in

to Bandura's social cognitive theory. The social cognitive theory is composed of four inter-related processes that impact goal realization, they are as follows: self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction, and self-efficacy. The learner-centered workshops provide parents with activities that allow them to observe their work, evaluate their work, react or respond to their learning, and therefore gain efficacy in the process.

By using the constructivist approach to learning within the workshops, I provided an adult-centered andragogy that allowed the parents to create meaning out of their learning by using their experiences, similar language, and interaction within a safe environment. The TAPA workshops incorporated Bloom's Taxonomy because having an understanding of the level of learning that parents will be taught came from an understanding of their responses during the interview. Wiggins and McTighe (2011) mentioned that curriculum has to be both consistent and pervasive. Therefore, the workshops provided for the parents were held weekly for a total of 9 weeks due to the resources by the three entities mentioned before and the parent availability. They were also evaluated, reassessed, and modified in order to continue throughout the school year. Because the workshops entailed the help of the different local and state aid, the curriculum design plan was said to be pervasive. A firm evaluation plan highlighted the use of Wiggins and McTighe's (2011) understanding by design model. The four different themes that arose provided the 'end in mind' as the assessment piece (McTighe & Wiggins, 2011). The conceptual framework for the curriculum design plan is connected to the HDS model of parent involvement and Bandura's social cognitive theories, which cover the components of curriculum design as, defined above.

Finally, the use of standards, as recommended by Strickland (2012), is employed and evident within the lesson plans under Appendix E. Therefore, the National Standards for Family-School partnerships were used to guide the development of the lessons (PTA, 2015).

**Time constraints.** Time constraints are one of the biggest challenges that parents and schools have when developing any program. There is a multitude of literature that suggests that time is one of the biggest factors for any parental involvement in school functions or volunteerism (Abrego & Gonzoles, 2010; Auerbach, 2011; Bryk & Schneider; Gonzalez et. al., 2013; MALDEF & NEA, 2010). As such, this is the first theme that emerged within the data analysis in section two. Additionally, Latino children may also have parents who are migrant or undocumented immigrants and the amount of time that they put into working during the workday in order to make a living is much higher. Parents working more than 40 to 60 hours a week may not be able to attend events or volunteer opportunities at the junior high during the week, due to work, or catching up on sleep after work--especially if they work during the second and/or third shift.

In order to have parents gain the trust of school personnel, they must feel that their time is valued. When the school district respects a parents time schedule it creates a feeling of trust with the parents (Bryk & Schneider, 2004; Gonzalez, et. al., 2013). While program TAPA was held during the summer months, expanding upon it would require the stakeholders to use other thoughts and ideas as to what day of the week, the times, and other resources they may need in order to be successful in these workshops. This is

accomplished through the evaluations at the end of each workshop as well as their informal feedback through conversations.

**Learning to navigate through the U.S. school system.** A second barrier that parents face is understanding how to specifically help their children at school. The fifth barrier mentioned in the MALDEF and NEA report (2009) indicate that when there is a lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the local school board and the school district itself, it leads to low transparency and misunderstanding between the parents and the school. When parents and school work together and understand what each roles' and responsibilities' are, a clearer home-to-school support is established. For this to happen, parents need to be explicitly shown how to interpret and utilize school documents using a hands-on approach (Habermehl, 2006; Paredes, 2011). Providing Latino parents' with knowledge of the U.S. educational school system, allows for feelings of security in approaching teachers, administrators, and other individuals within the school system for better home to school connections and that home-based support that is emphasized as theme number 2. This in turn increases their level of trust by providing the knowledge of how people and events function at the school system, therefore, helping them to become strong knowledgeable allies who understand how to use and interpret the data (Breiseth, Robertson & Lafond, 2011; Behnke & Kelly, 2011). Additionally, understanding the language that is used by individuals in a school system helps them navigate in a manner that provides easier communication between the staff and parents although a language barrier may exist.

The type of classes that were available to the parents within this venue focused on the Student Handbook, the Board of Education policies, and other language, including acronyms that were used within the school to describe their child's education, assessments that were given, and anything that may have been extracurricular in nature.

**Learning through content-based instruction.** Dunn-Shiffman (2011) mentioned that participating in a training program strengthens parent's self-efficacy to support their children's education. This in turn is what makes them take on leadership roles given the confidence of learning English. (Auerbach, 2011; Hong, 2011; Walker et. al., 2014; Whetsel & Green, 2004; Wessels & Trainin, 2014). Many researchers argue that parents who have a higher level of education tend to be more proactive and engaged within their child's schooling (Auerbach, 2004; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Sticht, 2015). As Sticht (2015) specifically argued, it behooves all nations to "train intergeneration ally." This means that there should be both an emphasis on educating parents along with the children so that there are less gaps, specifically in the literacy rates. By helping Latino parents learn English, this notion not only supports their learning, but it also helps them support their children at home. While there should be support by the school system to provide someone who speaks the parents' language, this is not necessarily possible due to budgetary restraints. Providing parents with the means to learn English it helps them to better communicate with the school which helps to tackle theme three.

The adult ESL program proposed here incorporates the use of Content Based Instruction that along with Content and Language Integrated Learning are both used

within K-12 classrooms (Richards, 2013). This methodology anchored on Forward design by Wiggins and McTighe (2011) focuses on developing both language proficiency and content knowledge. Because, studies have suggested that there are positive effects and big rewards that can be achieved in a short amount of time (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004), the area that would be incorporated here is helping parents to navigate through the U.S. educational school system as well as learning how to understand the adolescent developmental stage better.

**Helping parents understand their adolescent.** Oostdam and Hooge (2013) stress the importance of creating and forming partnerships that garner the involvement of all those involved in a school setting. When parents and other adults have a strong understanding of their child during the adolescent years, they know how to talk to their child, how to support their child in an academic and social manner, and they help them to function using good executive functioning decisions.

Understanding the adolescent developmental stage can be difficult for any parent (Chapmen & Stein, 2014). When cultural norms come into conflict with both children and parents, it can lead to arguments and feeling of loss for the parents and the child (Fulgini, 2010; Zychinski & Polo, 2012). Helping Latino parents to understand their children during this difficult growth stage and providing cultural support enhances the self-efficacy of both parents and children (Mendez, Weterberg, & Thibeault, 2013) while helping the student feel secure in their cultural heritage and background (Olivos & Mendoza, 2010). The workshops provided to the parents on the various adolescent needs within the areas of proper communication, appropriate disciplining strategies and others,

leads to a higher self-efficacy in the child.  This is the last theme that was highlighted through the data analysis.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

Currently many Latino parents do not perceive themselves as being very useful to their children within the school setting.  Phrases like, "*No entiendo Ingles*"  "I don't understand English" by Parent 2 or "*no se matemáticas*"  "I don't know mathematics," by Parent 3, highlight their perception of not being helpful.  As parents are helped to create better self-efficacy for themselves by the school district, they in turn help elicit their child's self- efficacy.  This is what the HDS model of parental involvement highlights as being evident in levels three and four.  While this is not yet evident, it will need to be researched in a future study in order to help support this claim.  Creating workshops where parents learn how to navigate the school system, learn how to understand the developmental stage of their adolescent and learn English, helped increase their confidence and in turn their own perceptions of how to better help at school and at home.  Parents felt comfortable going to school settings more often even if their language was not at a native speaker's level (Hong, 2011).  This helped in overcoming three of the barriers indicated by the MALDEF & NEA (2010) which included the following: time constraint, trust of school personnel (fear of immigration), and language barrier.  Because these are all beyond the scope and sequence of this study, future observations throughout the year can determine if there has been an increase in parental participation in the coming years.

In addition, parents requested more resources that were focused on their need to learn English as well as supporting their child at school. This aligns with what DeBord and de Atiles (1999) have emphasized in their study about request for more skill trainings in a workshop style venue. When parents are given the appropriate training and support, additional support is provided for the student within the home environment.

**Supporting theory.** The focus of this study was on the perceptions of Latino parent involvement and the motives parents have for becoming involved as well as the barriers that prevented them from integrating themselves more within a school setting. The HDS's second level of parental involvement was highlighted and shown to play a role in shaping parents' role construction in terms of involvement within the home and the school setting and which begin to impact the students' self-efficacy (Walker et al., 2005). These factors can be nurtured by the school personnel through encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005; Oostdam and Hagges, 2013; Paredes, 2011). Role construction played a key role in the research of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005), and was very evident within examples found in parent responses in this study. Therefore, the creation of a curriculum design plan made it possible for parents to reach a level of self-efficacy which will help their children be more academically successful and how to be better parents (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villaba, & Henderson, 2013; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). By providing the parents with cultural competence of the school culture and setting, parents were able to provide the help their children need to be academically successful regardless of language

barriers or differences in educational levels between parents and adolescents (Behnke & Kelly, 2011; Breiseth, Robertson & Lafond, 2011; Habermehl, 2006). This aligns with both the critical race theory as well as underlying snippets of Bronfenbrenner's ecological growth theory.

Newer theories have been researched and highlight a need to examine how race influences self-efficacy. Critical race theory suggests that the idea of race is not only a social construct, but also it affects people of color in terms of equity (Subramanian, 2011). This can affect parents' perspectives in terms of their self-efficacy as supported by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Within this theory, human growth and development are emphasized. It takes self-efficacy and incorporates it in how persons grow within five types of environment from the most intimate to the most public (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This may affect parents' views of incompetence when helping their children at home with homework. Even if parents are unable to assist their children with a specific subject area or skill, they still play a vital role by encouraging students' feelings of competence and control and positive attitudes towards academics (Golden & Fortuny, 2010; Gonzalez et. al., 2013; Griffin & Gallassi, 2010; Grolnick, Friendly, & Bellas, 2009). This was evident in the parents' responses for the second question.

This process can get schools to reach the fifth level of the model where students' self-efficacy impacts their student learning preventing them from having the publics' perception of their cultural/socioeconomic/racial background impact their academic success (McGill, Hughes, Alicea, & Way, 2012). Using the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995, 1997, 2005) to assess Latino parents' perception of involvement

helped me determine what can be done to empower Latino parents and understand their role construction within the school setting. Additionally, Mirr's (2009) questions at each of these levels helps to clarify how schools and teachers can be of help to parents' sustained engagement.

**Conclusion.** Through this review of literature it was demonstrated that the project covered the requests by parents as evidenced by the data. The issues of time constraints and lack of communication are addressed through the type of Content based ESL classes provided. Within the area of need for more parental resources, the areas of learning how to navigate through a district policies and procedures as well as learning to better understand your adolescent address these concerns evident in the themes.

The literature review that was provided helped to address more specifically manners in which these areas can be addressed using theoretical support. Highlighting the work done by the HDS parent involvement model helps to pinpoint the specific areas that dealt with both Bandura's social cognitive theory--in particular self-efficacy- and Wiggins and McTighe's UBD. Providing parents the support in a non-threatening venue decreases the three barriers highlighted from the MALDEF/NEA (2010) report.

This type of community program has the propensity to be grown successfully to encompass not only Latino parents but also other parents of junior high students. Given its flexible time slots, the resources by different community and state agencies, this program can continue to thrive and encourage more parents to feel comfortable involving themselves at the junior high setting.

**Implementation**

Benefits were acquired in looking through the literature. Important principles within the literature review helped support the project as well as implementation of the curriculum design plan. The use of information within the project assured success of its completion. The implementation steps emphasized within the *Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes* (TAPA) allowed the program to come to fruition. Areas that were observed are as follows: necessary and potential resources with existing supports potential barriers; proposal for implementation and timetable; roles and responsibilities of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. To conclude this section, a discussion on the success of TAPA. will be evaluated and measured following up with a thorough analysis.

**Needed and Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

Currently there are few to no resources available for families who speak Spanish in this small Midwestern town in Nebraska. The parents due to distrust do not use available resources. Creating a safe place at school and helping parents perceive the school as somewhere they can go where it is safe can help to increase programs. There are currently different church groups that want to help by providing monetary amounts and more importantly creating programs that help both child and parent. Additionally, the local state college, along with the state migrant agency is willing to join in order to create a wraparound support for all Latino parents of adolescent children.

Having examined the data for categories and themes, it became evident that many parents were not aware of the resources available in their community, which parents

mentioned as a lack of parental programs to assist them in understanding their child. The other themes that arose were parents' fear to venture to the school for fear of being discovered as being undocumented (lack of trust), lack of communication between home and school (due to lack of parents knowing the language and lack of school knowing Spanish), and time constraints (Hing, 2009). As Gonzalez et al. (2013) pointed out in their study; facilitating parents by honoring their time demonstrates that schools value them.

**Potential Barriers**

Parents mentioned that work was a barrier for them attending some of the functions and that a flexible schedule for programs to support them was needed (i.e. having ESL classes as mentioned by parent seven).

There are some other available ESL classes, but parents have mentioned that they are difficult. They also alluded to not feeling comfortable with someone that only spoke English. They also mentioned they wanted to work with individuals who spoke Spanish and understood the Latino culture (Parent 8, personal communication, December 14, 2014).

Parents need to have a committee that allows them to meet with people of the similar language and or culture. This was evident by theme two where parents mentioned they were afraid to attend meetings because they did not know people at the events who spoke Spanish and did not feel welcomed. The board of education supports the formation of such a committee and would therefore help in decreasing this barrier (WCS Board Policy, 2015).

**Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The proposal for implementation was summer of 2015. Three of the four

mentioned organizations had all the resources readily available for the program to begin.

The Migrant program began to contact parents in early May of 2015. During that same

month, I started teaching a course where one of the assignments was to use children

literacy skills incorporating English as a Second Language methodology. The local

church has been waiting for people to use their empty classrooms for over a year and as

soon as the Board of directors approves this program, it will be ready to house the

program. In addition, District RW helped with the set-up and operations. Yet, during the

summer of 2015 it was not necessary to ask for the church's support. As the program

grows throughout the school year and through next year, the church will be instrumental

in providing sustainability for the TAPA program. The phases are as follow:

Phase 1: Key stakeholders are contacted for approval and support of program.

Phase 2: Pamphlets are sent to the parents to recruit them for the program.

Phase 3: Parent classes begin.

Phase 4: Evaluation of the curriculum design plan takes place at the end of 9th or

10th week/session. Presentation to stakeholders of success or opportunities

for improvement.

Phase 5: Meet with stakeholders to discuss the viability and expansion of program

during the year.

Working with the community, I set up a parent program where combined

academic assistance for students came from four three. The start of a conjoined program

for parents of adolescent students helped the implementation of support that parents seek

as highlighted by parent three's recommendation on the type of support needed from the

schools.

 The timeline of the project is listed below.  Due to small town politics and the

manner in which business is handled, support is provided when individuals volunteer to

lead the cause.  Therefore, the start time and end time for the project will not require

many meetings as with a bigger district.

 Week 1: Key stakeholders are informed

 Week 2: Parents are recruited

 Week 3-11: Program runs once a week

 Week 12: Assessment of program and report to appropriate stakeholders.

 The *Talleres de Aprendizaje para padres de Adolescentes (TAPA*) was initially

volunteered to be done by me as part of my service learning project for the college I work

for as a lecturer.  The cost to the school would be minimal as the college provides grants

to professors to perform the service learning projects.  This grant amount would help with

the cost of supplies for the paper, and other office supplies needed for the 9 week

sessions along with the creation of booklets for the parents to take home.

 District RW's role in this endeavor was to help advertise the TAPA throughout

the district, so parents had knowledge of the workshops being offered during the summer.

Additionally, this would support the school district's compliance with not only the

revised Nebraska statute 79-532, which mentions helping parents understand the school

system better in terms of policies and academics (National PTA, 2009), but also compliance with incorporating a BPAC for their Title I.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others**

Stakeholders, according to Merriam-Webster (2014), are those individuals who invest and are "affected by a certain course of action" (n.p). In this case, the stakeholders who will work with this project include the director of the migrant program at the state level, the director of special education/ early childhood center, principal at the junior high, lecturer at the college, and the parents participating in the program. The role of each is outlined below:

*Director of migrant program at the state level:* The director will provide the names of parents who would benefit from this program. She would have knowledge of the program no monetary dollars would be provided from this area.

*Director of special education/ early childhood center:* She would be informed of the benefits of the program. She would help with providing a space at the early education center where there is currently a summer program being run.

*Principal at the junior high:* He would be informed of the program running this summer with additional help requested for during the school year given the information from the program that was run this summer.

*I, as the lecturer at the college: The Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes (TAPA)* would initially be volunteered to be done by me as part of my service learning project for the college she works for as a lecturer. The money would come from the service learning monies awarded for this endeavor.

*Parents:* They would be participating in the classes and providing rich information on each class at the end of each class.

*Students of parents*: Would be attending summer enrichment classes while their parents receive the trainings outline above.

*Students at the college*: During the school year, students would have enriched literacy classes provided by college students in my classes earning an ESL endorsement from the college.

## Project Evaluation

The type of evaluation that was done for this project included both formative and summative assessments.  The tool that was used for this type of assessment is provided in Appendix E.  The tool is formative in that each session will have an evaluation form given to the parents for them to provide feedback on the content and delivery and ask them questions on self-efficacy (i.e., Did the session make you more confident in helping your child (if applicable)?  How will you use this information to help others in your community?).  Because the tool is in Spanish it will be a quick and easy format for the parents to understand and for the evaluator to decipher.

Overall goal is to achieve continuous feedback from parents and continue to provide the workshops that they need/ask for. This type of assessment is one of the strategies that Beck (2012) suggests for enhancing parental participation.  Because it does model the HDS model of parent involvement and uses language similar to their surveys given to parents, it provided the information needed to grow and change the program accordingly.  The tool can be found in Appendix E of this document.

**Concluding the Project**

I created a project that attempted to reduce the language barriers and improve communication and the nature of the relationship between the Latino parent and the school providing a time where parents were available to meet. It helped me clarify perceptions that there were no resources available as well as increased parent empowerment with knowledge of the adolescent years, knowledge of school language, and knowledge of how to navigate through both the adolescent years and the school system. The series of workshops helped parents meet state and federal policy expectations on parental and family engagement. Through workshop attendance, parents found ways to support their child. This in turned increased the parents' self-efficacy which will impact the self-efficacy of the student per the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parental involvement. It assumed that 1 to 1 ½ hours a week is a doable time limit for both the parents.

The challenges that may have arisen included the sustainability of the project due to parent participation. In terms of sustainability, the work that was done by the different organizations at the state and local levels provided a means to have this program be around for a while.

The number of parents that came to the workshops and the number of positive evaluations on the evaluation tool in Table 3 measured evaluation of the success of the program. Additionally, parent requests for other TAPA topics also demonstrated a need from a qualitative perspective.

**Implications Including Social Change**

**Local Community**

I was able to render positive social change to a growing diverse community when a challenge presented itself.  As mentioned previously, positive social change is rendered to diverse communities when the challenges and opportunities for education can be inspired, influenced, and or affected (Walden University, 2013).  Positive social change was rendered to this small rural community by helping Latino parents meet the demands of the state and federal policies at the district as there is currently little research on Latino parent involvement within the junior high grades (Tekin, 2011). The problem of low parental involvement within a small rural junior high was analyzed in order to meet their needs as well as increase the home-to-school connection.

Project TAPA provided a venue that was not tied to traditional resources found in larger communities or towns and it helped increase communication in a unique manner that brought both educational and social change.  Rural communities have scarce resources and tapping into all available resources in a fiscally responsible manner, allows all stakeholders to benefit from this project.  By working with all stakeholders at different levels such as the state (Migrant program and Title III), local (District RW), and community (local church, college), resources can be combined in order to make maximum gains in the success of the program.

**Far-Reaching**

In this final section, the importance of affecting a wider educational context is considered.  There are several ways to look at how this educational context affects the

bigger picture. First, the rich amount of literature that has was analyzed is synthesized concisely in both sections one and three. Additionally, supporting literature on the lack of Latino parental involvement at the junior high level is evidenced throughout this paper. The challenges that rural communities face, specific information about Latino parents that focus on the Mexican heritage background and potential solutions to the issue were also covered. This information offers other researchers and educators at the local, national, and international level an opportunity to use the information found here for future studies. Furthermore, the successful completion of this project study will emphasize these types of workshops available not only for Latino parents, but also for other parents of junior high students. This is significant in that it is reproducible in communities that have access to the resources available to this rural community. Sheridan, Holmes, Coutts, Smith, Kunz, and Witte's (2013) report highlights the lack of empirical research on rural communities in terms of school to home connections as well as how to best help. There is a large need to study this area according to Semke and Sheridan (2011) due to its high rate of change within these smaller communities. In addition, the importance of this project to local stakeholders allows for providing the support that they have wanted to provide to Latino parents in past years. Limited resources should not hinder the start of a project. Combining several resources can be done if someone is willing to take those steps. Educating all the community, not only certain facets, provides for a more coherent place that understands the importance of education. It also provides feedback from the population of individuals who may be afraid to come to school settings and it gives them a voice (use of evaluations). This

project can have far-reaching and successful outcomes. Communication and outreach will be key to making it happen.

Therefore, this project study highlights a social change aspect that can help many rural communities within the State of Nebraska with implications to help smaller communities throughout the United States. While it cannot be generalized to the larger population, it can serve as a model to support the needs of Spanish speaking parents in these rural communities. Additionally, this model can also be incorporated with other languages and at all levels if there is a need for supporting the parents' self-efficacy.

**Conclusion**

In looking at the major problem highlighted of lack of involvement of Latino parents at the junior high it was evident that this is an issue at all levels of a child's schooling and that it is not unique to the United States alone. An overview of the project that was created was provided within this section along with major findings that contributed to the creation of the project, the roles of the key stakeholders, different evaluations, and the impact that this project produced. In doing so, the analysis of a wide array of literature from different genres were synthesized in order to develop the TAPA project that addressed the issues of time constraint, need for ESL classes and understanding both the adolescent child and the school setting. This project aimed to increase communication between the key stakeholders--parents and the school personnel. The review of literature highlighted that for this type of project to work; parents had to be willing to receive instruction that was beneficial to increasing their self-efficacy during

an available period of with individuals who could communicate with them in Spanish. This increased the parents' '*confianza*' 'trust' of towards a school-sponsored event.

Project TAPA focused on content-based ESL approaches that helped parents learn about navigating in a school system as well as understanding their adolescents. As partners, the parents were able to provide information about the types of topics they wanted to develop for future sessions. In order to gauge growth in self-efficacy each session included an evaluation type survey. This determined how the parents' self-confidence and their ability to advocate increased as they moved from class to class. This type of simple assessment measured how to modify and expand the program for future sessions. Looking to expand on the project could have long-term positive consequences that can lead to the creation of more formalized projects that includes all parents within this community.

The major reflections and conclusions from the project are described in more detailed in the next section. The last section is as important as the first three as it enabled me to identify strengths and weaknesses within the project's scope and sequence in addressing the issue of low Latino parental involvement in the junior high setting. In essence, the last section highlights areas where I addressed the main recommendations for how the project was researched, developed, evaluated, through my own perspective.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

**Introduction**

In this project study, I focused on finding a solution to getting more engagement from Latino parents at the junior high level by improving communication between the parents and the school, providing them with information on more resources in the community, and finding a time that allows for parents to learn.  Section 4 provides an overview of the project as well as recommendations for future studies.

**Project Strengths**

Initially, three main barriers that were examined and deemed the cause of the lack of parental involvement at the junior high level.  This problem was targeted by introducing a series of workshops that focused on the Latino parents' needs: improving communication with the school, finding time for the parents to attend school functions, providing resources that helped them to better navigate in the school system, and understanding their adolescent child and showing them how to navigate within the school system.  This allowed the parents to increase their self-efficacy.

Within the HDS (1995, 1997, 2005) model of parental involvement, self-efficacy is highlighted.  When parents progress from the second level of the HDS model of parental involvement, parents will model being self-efficacious to their children, which will eventually impact the student's own self-efficacy (McGill et al., 2012).  This leads them to be more successful academically, especially if an authentic program is used (Paredes, 2011; Walker et al., 2011).  Increasing self-efficacy in the parents produces an increased level of self-efficacy in the children.

The TAPA workshops were designed to reduce the barriers of time, language, and lack of trust and to increase parent knowledge. As the program improves, it will empower parents to become more efficacious and model this behavior for not only their children, but for other parents in the community. This may increase two-way communications with the home-to-school setting, reducing the parents' perception of a one-sided communication style, as well as the negativity associated with it (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010). By increasing communication with the parents, the school will also feel successful in addressing their goals of increasing parental involvement as specified in the district's board policy and by current state and federal policies.

Furthermore, the program was created using authentic material based on research from Spanish speaking countries along with the school district's documents. As the program grows, it will allow for parents to provide input as committee members in focused groups that lead to a refined program that can be grown and expanded upon. This will add to the authenticity of the program. Using their language skills that they learn within the workshops, they will find success in communicating and become participating members with insight on improving not only the program, but also their own child's educational program as parents feel more equipped to voice concerns.

Another strength of this project study is that I established a project in a small, rural town that is not as diverse as other places, which helps to highlight the needs of diversity by empowering the Latino parents within this community. As parents begin to take ownership of this project, they will feel more efficacious in working with individuals

in a school setting.  This will lead them to advocate more for their children and to support

the modeling that will help their children grow in their own efficacy.

## Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

As with any start of the projects, there are limitations that prevent projects from

starting immediately.  Within this study, the project findings were limited to this

particular school in a small rural community, limiting its applicability to a larger school

or urban setting.  In order to recreate this project study, additional phases of research

would have to be conducted on a larger scale using other small rural communities in

order to conclude whether a more noticeable impact would be relevant.

Another limitation that was prevalent was the complexity of the project and the

time needed by only one person.  The collection of data took 3 ½ months.  Having other

people assist with the creation of the project would have increased its effectiveness and

its implementation, yet this may have led to reduced validity and reliability as bias from

others may have crept in.

The last limitation was that not all parents within this community who consider

themselves Latino speak Spanish.  Recalling the definition of Latino in section 1, those

individuals are from a geographical area which may be in central or south America, but

who do not necessarily speak Spanish.  Having a person who can interpret the Mayan

dialects would have provided more insight to the research collected from that one mom

who spoke limited Spanish.

One of the main strengths within the project was that the parents became

empowered as they acquired the English language during the summer months, a time

where they were most available. Because the best availability for parents to meet is during the summer months, it creates a limitation for replicating it during the regular school year, in particular the winter months, where transportation is more difficult for the parents. This may result to regression in parents' learning if they have to wait until the following summer to continue learning. A possible solution would be to look at this type of program and adapt it during the school year.

Another alternative could be introduced to help address the problem of low parental involvement at the junior high level. The school could work with the parents to create a parent university atmosphere where all parents are welcomed to learn about the issues prescribed within this project, along with other suggestions from the parents. This would increase community with the middle school parents who could support one another regardless of diverse background differences.

## Scholarship

There were important lessons learned from conducting this project. The first lessons learned were how to conduct a qualitative study in an informed and critical manner. I did this by searching for studies that supported my claims and aided in the overall design of the project. The more adept at looking at different peer-reviewed articles I became, the better I incorporated theory into practice. By using the information from selected peer-reviewed articles, I was able to synthesize scholarly information and combining it with my own data that I had collected. This allowed me to provide a structure for the results that would enable them to be added to academic literature.

Well-supported data allow for their use in a scholarly manner. This can be done by modeling for other researchers who have begun their work on their own projects for the first time, in particular in the area of parent involvement and perceptions of Latino parents at the junior high area using the HDS model of parental involvement within a rural district.

## Project Development and Evaluation

Being a reflective practitioner is important when assessing the evaluation and usefulness of a project. The creation of the project and its evaluation was the most difficult part of this project study. Aligning the project to the findings took me on a long journey of finding different areas that I would like to study in the future. Alternatively, I found many programs and many independent consultants that provide their services for certain parts of the study, but not for others. Specifically, there was no program that matched the goals found within the project. Assessment, therefore, had to be done in a systematic manner where weekly evaluations were collected and reviewed.

Developing the project prior to its debut meant that a draft copy needed to be created in order to determine if all avenues had been included. Limitations came to the surface, which became the focus of the project. This project was limited by its nature in that the focus was on a small group of Latino parents within a small rural community, yet, through the findings, barriers that affected parents' self-efficacy were reduced.

Finally, tools were used in order to measure the success of the project. Formative and summative assessments were used in order to gauge the program's success. Formative assessment, for example, included observation, end of the workshop

evaluative surveys, and projects and quizzes during the sessions.  Summative assessment included an overall final evaluation done by the parents, as well as administrator feedback.  In order to make the project comprehensible, it had to be straightforward and applied in a simple manner.

## Leadership and Change

As a practitioner and project developer, I learned that I became a better leader by the change affected upon me.  Leaders need to have perseverance through all the change that takes place within the social and personal arena.  As a leader, I know I have grown in the area of problem solving and clearly communicating expectations within a different cultural setting—small rural town in Nebraska versus a small town in Illinois.

Problem solving requires analyzing different perspectives from an objective stance.  Many times leaders let their feelings get in the way of finding solutions.  These feelings can bias and obstruct views of what is best for a population.  The more leaders place their personal feelings aside, the more they realize that problems can be resolved and avoided if data are looked at from an objective perspective and constructive point of view and criticisms are accepted, creating social change.  Additionally, leadership can be evident at any level, regardless of title.  I was able to lead this endeavor without having a district title.  Yet, my leadership was evident in how I carried out this project.

## Analysis of Self as Scholar

The following three parts highlight my role as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer.  To begin, I focused on the lessons learned as a scholar throughout my long process.

I have many times considered myself a scholar. As someone who pursues knowledge daily and wants to model this journey of knowledge to others, I was surprised to see how much I learned through my journey as a scholar. I saw myself acquiring research methods I was unaware of before, and I found myself continually delving deeper into specific research I had not considered before. I continually asked myself why, and my reflective process became more enriched. While I knew I was detailed-oriented, I began to be more purposeful in the topics I researched. Instead of being global about topics, I found that I now could delineate my thought process to focus on a more minute issue.

I learned how to be more of a qualitative researcher, which entailed me to create a project based on the findings and not through a quantitative manner of testing a hypothesis. While I had done qualitative work in my place of employment before as an administrator, I did not have the tools and awareness of how to perform solid qualitative work using the appropriate tools and the context of from which to perform a study with data presented to me. I saw that my inclination to look at my bias more closely helped me with the valid and reliable data that I analyzed. I learned how to read studies and look at not only the conclusion and findings, but also at the methodology, which can also affect how literature is used to support data within a personal study.

In creating a review of literature, I learned how to be more critical of the types of peer-reviewed articles I used. There are many articles within journals and/or books, yet only a few are pertinent to this project study. The fundamental role that literature review plays within a paper provides the basis and support for the project's theory and

practicality. I found myself looking at different studies and research from a different lens and probing into my every day written work in a different manner. I found that citing everything I wrote became second nature. I also discovered that being a discriminate reviewer of data had taken a life of its own and that I find myself being more of an avid editor of y work and that of other's. Finally, I discovered that summarizing data were much less effortless due to becoming an academic scholar of a much higher caliber. While, I have grown, I know that I can and will continue to improve on this craft as I pursue writing peer-reviewed articles in the future.

## Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Although I have considered myself a scholar all my life, there is a great deal I learned through this process as a practitioner. The one word that comes to mind is perseverance. During my time through this long and arduous process, many roadblocks presented themselves. I have changed career positions five times, relocated three times, and dealt with health issues of three family members. As a practitioner during my time in the field of education, I thought I knew how to research and how to apply what I knew. Yet, I knew little as I found out through the classes I took and the feedback I received from my chair and others in this process.

I learned how to present qualitative research through new means. The difference in presenting the data required me to use different practices that I was not used to in order to create a project. Project TAPA is substantiated by current research, which I had to continually update throughout my time creating the project. As an educator in a small rural town, I will continue to take on this active role of practitioner in my current position

as lecturer along with the other roles of scholar and future project developer. All these roles will ultimately make me a better leader who can serve this small town's populace and perhaps make a bigger impact largely in the state of Nebraska.

## Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As an educator who pursues life-long-learning, the act of self-reflection comes naturally in all I do. As I continue to reflect on this project in a critical manner, I realized that everything I knew about project development was challenged as I conducted this project. Additionally, other personal challenges came into play as I relocated from Illinois to Nebraska due to my husband being offered a job as assistant professor within the college in this rural community where the study was conducted. I learned quickly that Nebraska laws are different from Illinois' in the area of education. As a professional who has been in the field of education the last 18 years, it took me more than 3 months to acclimate myself to understanding the new school culture, its policies and procedures, along with how small towns do business.

I have developed many projects, but this one challenged me more in that I had to incorporate a substantial amount of data in a qualitative manner. The realization that this social change project can have far-reaching implications was a little overwhelming at times. I took a new outlook at how I conducted this project study, especially since I am detailed-oriented and I felt responsible for its fruition. I found myself questioning everything that had been second nature to me when implementing a project. In addition, due to incorporating myself in a new administrative culture, I had to learn how to fit into my role as district interpreter. While I was respected as an employee, I was not privy to a

lot of administrator information that I once would have had.  In working on this project, I developed a consultant attitude and role that was new to me.  Ultimately, throughout the process, I learned that I have had much more help than I would have expected as compared to a larger urban setting where I worked before.  Knowing that everyone in my small community wants me to be successful in this endeavor allows me to feel satisfaction as well as produces a deeper drive to make it a successful endeavor

## The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

From looking at the overall project, it was evident that the work created here and the research produced has the potential to effect social change not only at the local level, but also at the regional level.  This project helped to address the needs of the Latino parents within this rural community in the areas of barriers that impeded their participation at the junior high level.  Latino parents' perceptions of their roles and self-efficacy as participants in school functions and events were pointed out within this project study.  By using the HDS model of parental involvement, parents' awareness of how their perceptions of role construction and self-efficacy helps them progress through the five levels and impact student learning became evident.  While the following was not measured, speculations can be made that as students see their parents' self-efficacy increase, their self-efficacy will in turn increase.  Ultimately, this will affect how students perform at school and meet the demands of state and federal guidelines.

Social change can be accomplished by conducting simple actions, such as project TAPA does, in order to place parents and school on even playing grounds.  As parents learn to communication more with school personnel, they will feel empowered to

continue to acquire the English language. This also helps them to become less dependent

on their children–who act as language brokers (Bauer, 2015; Katz, 2014; Weisskirch,

2013). As the children are liberated from their language broker duties, they can be freer

to determine and reach their dreams and not feel confined, responsible, and/or guilty for

not interpreting correctly for their parents (Bauer, 2015; Katz, 2014, Weisskirch, 2010).

Two-way communication can be achieved and a true home-to-school connection can be

fomented outside of the traditional parent-teacher conferences held once a year. Parents

can feel more integrated and part of the community, depending less on their children as

interpreters. In a rural community where school functions and academic achievements

are highly valued, Latino parents can incorporate themselves and not be afraid to show up

to these events.

Finally, as this is a smaller project, it can be expanded and be catered to all

parents in the junior high level not only within this small rural community, but also

within the surrounding communities in northeast Nebraska. As any school is used as an

equalizer, it will help to increase the level of trust between parents and schools,

particularly in the junior high setting where all parents of all ethnicities sometimes

grapple with fitting in.

### Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project study has important implications for future research. There were two

main ideas that surfaced. First, it provided a solution to increasing parent involvement at

the junior high level. Secondly, it also placed aside the barriers that were mentioned in

the MALDEF and NEA report. Even though lack of parental involvement was

highlighted as an issue within this small rural community, the resources available within the community were not lacking and were achieved through simple measures (Place, 2013; Semke & Sheridan, 2011; Sheridan et al., 2013; Snyder, 2012).

Future researchers can look at the theoretical Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parental involvement (1995, 1997, 2005) in order to determine the reasons why parents are not involved by specifically looking at the higher levels within this framework.  Together with other models that have been used to gauge parental involvement such as Epstein's parental involvement model, Bronfenbrenner ecological model, or even perhaps critical race theory, the creation of specific programs to meet the needs of each particular school district can be made attainable using the steps highlighted here.  Many studies provide theory and not application, therefore the information in this study can provide a starting point for others who search for how to apply the HDS model of parental involvement within their own studies.  There are additional genres of projects that can be done too for recreating this project or finding other solutions on different variables to the problem mentioned here, such as applying the Critical race theory as a moderating variable to a policy review genre.  This study specifically looked at areas that have been separately studied, such as parental involvement in rural places, parental involvement at the middle school/junior high, and Latino parent involvement.  By combining, all three factors together the research provided here can guide others in this type of environment for their particular study.

**Conclusion**

I focused this project study on an issue that is found internationally in the education system. The problem of lack of participation was focused around Latino parents' perception of involvement within Grades 7 and eight. While there were many underlying causes, four main themes emerged that focused on the lack of communication, helping the adolescent child, understanding school structure/governance, and learning the English language. The project that was created was designed to increase communication by providing resources during a time that parents would be available as well as providing them with a means to communicate by offering ESL classes through content area instruction. Thus, I was able to target the root causes of the problem within this small Midwestern community.

Upon assessment of the overall project, it was evident that limitations affected its success. These limitations included finding the time for all stakeholders to meet, getting parents to come to the school with fidelity, not having as many students from the college class able to help with the children. However, I felt that if the project were successful it would have a big impact on future opportunities for increasing Latino parents' self-efficacy within small rural districts. This type of reasoning leads me to believe that this project can be a success in the future once it has been established. Because the project TAPA was held during the summer months, it allowed for time constraints on the parents to be less of an issue than during the school year. Additionally, the help of the different organizations was more available due to this same reason.

As a researcher, I learned many lessons from taking on the roles of scholar, practitioner, and project developer. As the project began to be developed, it was important to focus on the root of the problem as well as the findings using rich peer reviewed literature that delved deeper than surface information. As I more deeply inquired about new research, many connections were made that made me want to discover more and eventually led me to find the root causes of lack of Latino parent involvement as well as how much self-efficacy plays a role in their involvement. Moreover, a thorough analysis of my data as well as the literature review allowed me to design a project that targeted the main causes of the problem within my community. Because the people I worked with were located in different educational venues, developing and implementing the project became the hardest part of the process. While the limitations did affect the implementation, I know that the results of this sustainable project can transform the lives of Latino parents with adolescents and for those who will have adolescents in the future. The teachers and administrators at the school will benefit from this type of project because they will eventually see a change in how parents interact with them. This may lead to creating other projects within the school setting for the teachers and other parents at the junior high level. Finally, as I move into a higher position of assistant professor, I will continue to research, teach, and write future articles on this very important topic.

Although a qualitative case study is not generalizable to a greater population, the success of implementing this type of project within another rural community can have important consequences for a wider reaching system. As the numbers of Latino students

increase within a school system the need to reach out to Latino parents, in particular at the junior high level is paramount to the success of future citizens in the United States. Replication of this type of project on a larger scale cannot only have a greater impact within the state of Nebraska, but it can also be replicated by other states and even nationally.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

**<u>Phone Script (English):</u>**

*Good morning/afternoon/evening:*

*My name is Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner and the reason for my phone call is to inquire about the letter that you may have received last week regarding a study that I will be conducting. The study is about Latino parent perceptions of parent involvement in Grades 7 and eight.*

*Please feel free to ask me anything regarding the study. The results of this study will help the school create programs or policies that may increase communication between parents and staff at the school.*

*You are not obligated to participate in the study, but if you do, you may withdraw from the study at any time.*

**<u>Phone script (Spanish):</u>**

*Buenos días/tardes/noches:*

*Mi nombre es Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner y la razón que estoy llamando es para preguntarles si recibieron la carta que les mande la semana pasada sobre un estudio que estaré conduciendo. El estudio es sobre las percepciones que los padres latinos tienen de la involucración de padres en los grados 7 y ocho.*

*Siéntanse libres de hacerme cualquier pregunta que tengan. Los resultados de este estudio ayudaran que la escuela cree programas o pólizas que ayuden la comunicación de ambos padres y facultad de la escuela.*

*No se les obliga que participen en este estudio, pero si deciden participar pueden retirarse en cualquier momento.*

*Espero trabajar con ustedes. Gracias por su tiempo.*

Appendix B: Parent Consent Letter Simple (English)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to take part in a research study on Parental Involvement at the Junior High level. You were chosen for the study because you met the three criteria indicated as follows: 1) You indicated your child was Hispanic/Latino, 2) You are a parent, and, 3) Your child attends the Junior High. Additionally, your support in this study will help to guide the schools in informing them of how to best help meet your needs.

The study is being conducted by Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner who is a doctoral student at Walden University and who used to be the district interpreter at District RW, but she has a different role this year at the College as a lecturer and my role as a researcher is separate from my work role. The information she collect s will in no way impact your status or your participation in any event at the school your child attends and all information will be kept confidential and will not be shared with school officials at the district or at the college level. The information you provide is of outmost importance to me as an educator.

**Background Information:**
The purpose of this study is to better understand the Latino parent perception of their involvement at the Junior High level and how the school and parents can better work together to meet the academic needs of their children.

**Procedure:**
If you agree to be part of this study you will be asked to:
- Answer a set of twelve (12) questions during an audio recorded interview lasting approximately 45 minutes.
- Review transcript of the transcribed or recorded interview (25 to 30 minutes, approximately).
- Provide feedback of the researchers' interpretation of your provided responses (15 to 30 minutes approximately on another day).

Here are some sample questions:
- What are way you participate at your child's school?
- How do you help your child be successful at school?
- How do you help the middle school staff/teachers to help your child be successful at school?

**Archival Records:**
For all volunteer participants, the researcher will ask the school to see records related to parent involvement and teacher conferences.

**Voluntary nature of the study:**
Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at District RW will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. If you feel stressed during the interview process you may stop at any time. You may skip any

questions that make you uncomfortable or feel are too personal.  Furthermore, declining or discontinuing will not negatively impact your relationship with the researcher or (if applicable) the participant's access to services.

**Risks and Benefits of being in the study:**
There are minimal risks for participating in this research project. However, you may experience some discomfort in sharing negative experiences related to describing personal or organizational barriers. Some of the participants may find that answering the questions reveal feelings about themselves that they may not have felt before.  If at any time you feel discomfort you may stop me and you are free to terminate the interview at your own choosing without any explanation.

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than helping to further research on the literature of Latino parent involvement perceptions t the Junior High level.  Furthermore, it will promote positive social change by helping to make recommendations for policies regarding Latino parent engagement at the junior high level.

**Compensation:**
There will be no compensation

**Confidentiality:**
Any information you provide for this research will be kept anonymous and all data will be kept in a secure locked file cabinet and on a computer file accessible only to the research through a computer-generated password.  The researcher will not use your information for any purpose outside of this research project.  Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

**Contacts and Questions**
The researcher conducting this study is Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner.  You may contact me with questions now or later at 847-xxx-xxx3, (4xx) xxx-xxx8, or e-mail me at myemail@mail.com or at mytzy@education.edu.  If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott.  She is the Director of the Research Center at Walden University.  Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210.  Walden University's approval number for this study is **09-30-14-0133863** and it expires on **September 29, 2015.**

The researcher will provide a copy of this form for you to keep.
_____
**Consent:**
I have read the above information.  I have received answers to any questions I have at this time.  I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the study.


_____
Participant's Signature

_____

2014.09.30 18:28:17 -05'00'

Parent Consent Letter Simple (Spanish Version)

Querido Padre/Guardián,

El propósito de esta carta es para invitarlos a que participen en un estudio sobre el involucramiento de los padres en el nivel secundario. Usted fue seleccionado para este estudio porque alcanza a cumplir los tres siguientes criterios: 1) Usted indico que su hijo/a es Hispano/Latino en la encuesta de casa, 2) Usted es padre de familia, 3) Su hijo/a asiste el junior high. Adicionalmente, su apoyo en este estudio ayudara a guiar a las escuelas para informarles de cómo ellos pueden mejor alcanzar en cumplir con las necesidades de los padres en cuestiones de educación de sus hijos.

El estudio será conducido por Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner quien está estudiando su doctorado en la Universidad de Walden y quien trabaja en este momento para la universidad y mi papel como la investigadora principal no influye mi trabajo en ambos sitios de empleo. Anteriormente trabajaba como la intérprete del distrito escolar. La información que la Sra. Rodriguez-Kufner coleccione en ningún momento impactara su estado o participación en cualquier evento en la escuela o escuelas que su hijo (s) asista. Toda la información se mantendrá confidencial y no será compartida con ninguna persona dentro o fuera de las escuelas o universidad. La información que usted puede proveer es muy importante para mí como educadora.

**Información de Antecedentes:**
El propósito de este estudio es para mejor entender la percepción de los padres Latinos sobre su involucramiento en la escuela junior high y como la escuela y los padres pueden mejor trabajar juntos con la escuela para alcanzar las necesidades académicas de sus hijos.

**Procedimiento:**
Si usted decide ser parte del estudio le preguntaremos que nos asista con lo siguiente:
- Responda a doce (12) preguntas durante una entrevista que será grabado en la grabadora y que durara aproximadamente 45 minutos (tal vez sea menos).
- Revise los datos escritos (25 a 30 minutos aproximadamente).
- Provee sugerencias sobre la interpretación que usted a proveído con sus respuestas (15 a 30 minutos)

Aquí hay algunas de las preguntas que se le preguntarían:
- Cuáles son las maneras en cual usted participa en la escuela que asiste su hijo/a?
- Como ayuda usted a su hijo surgir/tenga éxito en la escuela?
- Como ayuda a la facultad/maestros en la escuela intermedia para que ellos ayuden a su hijo/a mejor dentro de la escuela?

**Archivos**

La que está conduciendo este estudio pedirá documentos sobre los eventos donde ha habido participación familiar/de padres de familia.

**La naturaleza voluntaria del estudio:**
Su participación en este estudio es estrictamente voluntaria. Esto se refiere que todos respetaran su decisión si desea o no desea ser parte del estudio. Ninguna persona en las escuelas comunitarias de Wayne lo tratara de manera diferente si decide no participar. Aunque decida unirse al estudio ahora, puede cambiar de mente después. Si se siente estresado durante el proceso de entrevista puede parar en cualquier momento. También puede omitir cualquier pregunta que lo hace sentir incomodo o es muy personal. Quisiera agregar que su voluntad de participación o no desea continuar con el estudio, esto no impactara la relación entre me, la investigadora y su acceso a los servicios de la escuela

**Riesgos y beneficios del estudio:**
Hay riesgos mínimos al participar en este proyecto de investigación. Al igual, pueda que usted tenga experiencias durante la entrevista que lo hagan sentir incomodo cuando esta compartiendo malas experiencias relacionadas. Algunos participantes pueden descubrir que responder a ciertas preguntas revela sentimientos sobre ellos mismos que nunca habían sentido antes. Si en cualquier momento se siente incomodo, usted puede retirarse del estudio sin dar ningún explicación.
No hay beneficios para usted al participar en este estudio, pero su ayuda puede agregar la información sobre las percepciones de los padres latinos en su involucración. Adicionalmente, esto promoverá el cambio social en una manera positiva.

**Compensación:**
No habrá compensación por el estudio.

**Confidencialidad:**
Cualquier información que provee para este estudio será tratada anónimamente y todos los datos se mantendrán bajo llave en un cajón y en la computadora que solo la investigadora tiene acceso con una palabra clave. La investigadora no utilizara su información para cualquier propósito fuera de este estudio. También, la investigadora no incluirá su nombre o cualquier información que pueda identificarlo en este reporte del estudio.

**Contactos y Preguntas:**
La investigadora que está conduciendo este estudio es Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner. Puede ponerse en contacto con migo si tiene preguntas ahora o en cualquier momento al teléfono xxx-xx9-xxxx, (4xx) 3xx-xxxx o puede mandarme un correo electrónico a mytzy.rodriguez@escuela.edu. Si desea hablar en privacidad de sus derechos como participante puede llamar a la Dra. Leilani Endicott. Ella es la directora del Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones en la Universidad de Walden. Su número de teléfono es 1-800-925-3368 y su extensión es 1210. La investigadora les proveerá una copia de esta forma para que lo mantenga.

_____

**Consentimiento:**

He leído la información de arriba. Yo he recibido las respuestas a preguntas que tenga en este momento. Soy mayor de 18 años de edad, y doy consentimiento para participar en este estudio.

_____

Firma del participante

_____

 Firma del investigado

2014.09.3
0 18:28:17
-05'00'

Appendix C: Open Ended Questions and Sample Transcribed Notes

Participant # I.D.: _____L.2.3/1_____      Date of Interview: _October 10, 2014_

Setting: _____School parking lot (inside a car)_   Interview #:_____2_____

Research Question 1: How do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at

the junior high level?

Open Ended question 1: What are ways you participate at your child's school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Pues I was doing the art program so I started working so I couldn't; también puse I was going to be voluntary web when they need help I will help out | She calmly mentioned this while trying to keep her toddler from running around. She appeared reminiscent. Her other two children were at home with their father doing homework. She appeared hurried, as she had mentioned that she needed to get home because her husband would be leaving for work soon. |

Open Ended question 2: How do you help your child be successful at school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Pues helping him out with homework getting involved in his classes; easy yet probably in high school it might get harder. | She appeared concerned that she would not be able to help him more than she had already been helping him. She implied that it was harder to help the higher in grades her children went. |

Open Ended question 3: How do you help the middle school staff/teachers to help your

child be successful at school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Going to the meetings that they have. To call me if anything if he is not doing good or if it is not going good. | This was the third time I asked her a question in Spanish and she responded in English. I would of course then continue the conversation in English. |

Open Ended question 4: What information/documents/resources do you use to help your

child be more successful at school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Reading, practicing letters helping out while they on the things they are not doing good. Take him to the library. Ay se me pasa el tiempo, mi esposo tiene que salir. | I found it interesting that when she was speaking about the home/house that she would use Spanish, but when she spoke about school, it was in English. |

Research Question 2: What are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used by the school?

Open Ended question 1: What kind of communication do you receive from the school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Letters, phone calls, messages via the phone when there is a late start, they call and leave voicemail. It might be harder to understand for my neighbors and so I help translate for them because they only speak Spanish. | She was so calm, her voice was quiet, her patience with her little one that was getting ornery was exemplary and I commended her on it. I mentioned that I had two boys of my own and that sometimes my patience was not at the level she had. She smiled. |

Open Ended question 2: How do staff/teachers/students communicate with you about events, functions, activities?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Through the calendar, my boys tell me what the events. So teachers tell the kids so they can tell the parents. | She asked for a few minutes so she could provide some attention to her toddler. We both paid attention to her son and played a little with him, providing him with something to entertain himself with while we continued. |

Open Ended question 3: What type of communication do you receive about your student?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Pues nada, no se mi niño tiene , como esta en el programa especial eso es lo que me mandan | She was a little annoyed that she did not receive a lot of communication aside from the one that she received for special education. |

Open Ended question 4: Are there any recommendations about improving communication (if applicable) with the school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Maybe they can send message in Spanish to the people, or flyers. I do understand but a lot of people don't or they don't want to go because they feel that no one will speak Spanish that is what I think I see that the Spanish parents not involved we have a lot of bilingual people. You were the first one in so many years, I know people in [name of close by town] who speaks Spanish, and it's a lot different when you have someone. The new person is doing good cuando estuvo interpretando mi mother-in-law no sabe muy bien Español y no le decía lo que decía la doctora que sea 100% mejor. | As she mentioned I was the first person in a long time to be as interpreter, I understood it to mean not only as an interpreter, but as a leader. She went on to explain that the new person may know the language, but she does not understand the population as well as I did. Once again I noticed that as soon as she spoke of personal issue, she transferred more to Spanish and she code switched. |

Research Question 3: What are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at

the school?

Open Ended question 1: Do you participate in any parent groups at the school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| WEB me mandan emails for art classes no puedo por mi trabajo. | This answer was short and to the point, she stressed work was an issue, and there appeared to be a little guilt as she said this. |

Open Ended question 2: What kind of help is available to you or your children at the

school?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Special Ed; I don't know anything else. Aquí todavía se siente el racism apenas están abriendo. Cuando entraron mis hermanos no hay maestros hispanos si quieren váyanse a [town]. Entraron con mis cuñados y aprendieron poquito a poquito. | She mentioned Special Ed as the only resource available. And then she went on to speak about racism. She became reminiscent about when her brothers attended school in the town next to where she lives. She did not openly say that racism leads to students being placed in Special Ed., but did she have an underlying message? I wonder? But this is not part of my research. |

Open Ended question 3: How does the school help you understand the processes and

procedures of how the school functions?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| Handbook but I don't read it a lot; only no nada at the beginning of the year only. It would be beneficial para estar | As a parent it is hard to read a handbook when you are busy or when it may not |

| | |
|---|---|
| más informados de lo que está pasando. | pertain to you, or it is not of a high priority at the moment (my thoughts) |

Open Ended question 4: What kinds of programs are available for parents?

| Transcribed Notes | Researcher Notes |
|---|---|
| La otra cosa que no me gusta es la mascota.  Porque el diablo azul, no sé dónde ir, a veces se me pasa el council meeting.  Me gustaría apoyar pero la mascota en las camisas no me deja porque so Cristiana.  Hay más gente hispana está llegando más en [town].  En 2003 no hay pero ya llegaron más gente.  No van entender me da pena van a decir. | Although the question asked for specifics about the program, she provided an underlying cultural aspect that prevents her from attending the events too.  It is the devil mascot, which goes against her religion. She also provided some history as to when more Latino people began to come to [town].  She also mentions she feels bad that new people who arrive do not understand [English]. Implied. |

Appendix D: Fundamental Questions and Open Ended Questions for the Study

1) How do Latino parents perceive their roles and responsibilities at the junior high level?

    a.   What are ways you participate at your child's school?

    b.   How do you help your child be successful at school?

    c.   How do you help the middle school staff/teachers to help your child be successful at school?

    d.   What information/documents/resources do you use to help your child be more successful at school?

2) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the communication strategies used by the school?

    a.   What kind of communication do you receive from the school?

    b.   How do staff/teachers/students communicate with you about events, functions, activities?

    c.   What type of communication do you receive about your student?

    d.   Are there any recommendations about improving communication (if applicable) with the school?

3) What are Latino parents' perceptions of the resources available at the school?

    1.   Do you participate in any parent groups at the school?

    2.   What kind of help is available to you or your children at the school?

    3.   How does the school help you understand the processes and procedures of how the school functions?

    4.   What kinds of programs are available for parents?

Appendix E: Curriculum Design Plan

Project TAPA Workshops
*Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes*

A Curriculum Design Plan to Support Latino Parents and Educators in Building
Collaboration at the Junior High Level

By

Mytzy V. Rodriguez-Kufner

The Problem

**Introduction**

**Purpose of Project TAPA Workshops**

The purpose of this curriculum design plan was to assist Latino parents of junior high students understand various aspects of parental involvement and engagement in a small rural Midwest district. The project was specifically geared towards addressing the issue of low Latino parent involvement at the school along with finding out what perceived barriers prevented parents from participating more in a school setting. For this reason a unique program was proposed that brought together different facets of the education field to help decrease the barriers discussed by the parents.

The program called *Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes* (TAPA), or Learning Workshops for Parents of Adolescents, focused on the four categories highlighted from data analysis and highlighted Latino parents' major needs as follows: how to navigate the schooling system, how to help adolescents, and provide ESL classes through content within a setting that respects parents' manner of communication. It helped students increase their motivation and improve their schooling experience by helping to increase self-efficacy for the parents. This in turn helped students raise their self-efficacy as mentioned in Hoover Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement. There were four main areas/goals covered which include the following:

1.  Increasing communication between Latino parents of junior high students and school personnel for the benefit of students.

2. Empower parents in their roles as participants within the junior high community by providing ESL classes.

3. Help parents serve as role models for their children by providing classes on this developmental stage in their children's lives.

4. Helping parents reach a comfort level where they can attend future workshops in a face-to-face venue by providing them the knowledge of how schools function.

The overarching goal within the the project was to create a program that entailed a series of workshops to help in the following areas: how to navigate the schooling system, how to help adolescents, and provide ESL classes through content within a setting that respects parents' time while providing them with the means to easier communication with the school.

Incorporating the curriculum design plan-- TAPA--provided assistance for parents in a safe manner, within a period that did not constrain them, and in the language, they knew and understood.  This type of 'professional development' for parents has helped them be more proactive in their child's education while empowering them.  A study highlighted role construction and showed that Latino parents tended to stay more involved after they were given trainings on how school functioned and expected of them, which significantly impacted their understanding of how to parent better (Bakah, Voogt, & Pieters, 2011; Cattanach, 2013; Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004; Paredes, 2011).

**Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The proposal for implementation was the summer of 2015.  Three out of the four organizations had all the pieces available for this project to begin.  The Migrant program

began by contacting parents in early May. I, as lecturer, started teaching a Linguistics college course where one of the assignments was to teach children literacy skills using English as a Second Language methodology. The local church has been waiting for people to use their empty classrooms for over a year. In addition, District RW helped in any way possible once the program was up and running in the fall. Yet, during the summer it was not necessary to ask for their support. As the program grows throughout the year, the church will be instrumental in the sustainability of the program. The following highlighted how each phase was undertaken:

Phase 1: Key stakeholders are contacted for approval and support of program.

Phase 2: Pamphlets are sent to the parents to recruit them for the program.

Phase 3: Parent classes begin.

Phase 4: Evaluation of the curriculum design plan takes place at the end of 9th or 10th week/session. Presentation to stakeholders of success or opportunities for improvement is provided.

Phase 5: Meet with stakeholders to discuss the viability and expansion of program during the year.

By working with the community, a parent program was set which was combined with academic assistance for students. Starting a conjoined program for parents of adolescent students helped to begin implementing the support that parents sought as highlighted by Parent three's recommendation on the type of support needed from the schools.

The timeline of the project is listed below.  Due to small town politics and the

manner in which business is run, if volunteers take up the banner for a project, people

support your endeavor.  Therefore, the start time and end time for the curriculum design

plan did not require a lot of meetings as with a bigger district.

Week 1: Key stakeholders are informed

Week 2: Parents are recruited

Week 3-11: Program runs once a week

Week 12: Assessment of program and report to appropriate stakeholders.

The *Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes* (TAPA) was initially

volunteered to be done by me as part of my service learning project for the college she

works for as a lecturer.  The cost to the school was minimal as the college provides grants

to professors to perform the service learning projects.  This grant amount helped with the

cost of supplies for the paper, and other office supplies needed for the 9-week sessions

along with the creation of booklets for the parents to take home.

District RW's role in this endeavor was to help advertise the TAPA throughout

the district so parents had knowledge of the workshops being offered this summer.  A

sample of the pamphlet that was sent home is a follows:

**Propósito:**

**Horario:**

Martes y viernes

10:30 a 11:30 de la mañana
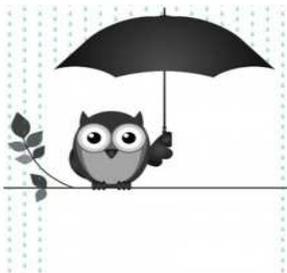
**Local:**

El Centro de Educación Temprana

803 S. Providence Rd.

Wayne, NE 68787

**Patrocinadores:**

Migrant Program

Wayne State College

Wayne Community Schools

Methodist Church

**Contactos:**

Sra. Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner

**Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes**

**(T. A. P. A)**

*Un Programa de Verano*

*Junio 15 a Julio 3, 2015*

---

**¿Por qué ayudar a su hijo/a durante este tiempo de desarrollo?**

**Talleres:**

1. Ayudando a su hijo navegar por la adolescencia.

Helping your son/daughter navigate through adolescence, is the name of the first workshop that general discusses the changes that children undergo, what parents can expect, and how they can help to communicate with their children regarding these changes. It focuses on the social, emotional, and physical needs that many teenagers are experiencing and what parents can do to help them within these areas.

2. Entendiendo a mi adolescente: cambios de niño a adulto

Understanding my adolescent child, is the second workshop that provides a way for parents to communicate with their child transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This workshop focuses on learning how to communicate with the teenager who may become rebellious, introspective, needy, and not be making correct choices.

3. Poniendo limites al adolescente: la disciplina

Placing limits on my adolescent: how to discipline my child, focuses on effective discipline strategies that parents can use that are effective and will retain that level of respect between the parent and the child without making the child rebel. Topics include the area of respect, looking at boundaries, knowing your adolescents friends, and others.

4. Sus derechos dentro de la escuela

Your rights at School, focuses on learning about how the school structure is set up and what rights parent have within a school. What they can and cannot do, in particular focusing their participation at the Junior High level.

5. Comunicación entre la casa y la escuela

The *Communication between Home and School workshop* focuses on providing the vocabulary that teachers and other educators use. It will highlight what different words refer to. This workshop incorporates the use of English words so that parents become familiar with these words when they attend workshops or other school events. It will provide a venue to practice the words as if they were communicating with the teacher. It will help them to understand the steps to set up times to meet with the teacher and how to effectively gauge and gather information about their child's performance at school. There are other scenarios also presented along with the vocabulary that will make you successful in communicating with the school.

6. Más que tarea.

More than Homework, is a workshop that allows parents to go beyond finding help for their child at school. It allows parents to understand that aside from homework there are other parts of school that will help their child be successful during the junior high as well as in high school and beyond.

(This is not the actual size. It would be printed so that it would be folded in a trifold.)

This program supported the school district's compliance with not only the revised

Nebraska statute 79-532, which mentions helping parents understand the school system

better in terms of policies and academics (National PTA, 2009), but also compliance with

incorporating a BPAC for their Title III.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

The importance of diverse stakeholders within any project is paramount to its

success.  Stakeholders, according to Merriam-Webster (2014) are those individuals who

invest and are "affected by a certain course of action" (n.p).  In this case the stakeholders

who worked with this project included the Director of the Migrant program at the state

level, the Director of Special Education/ Early childhood center, Principal at the junior

high, Lecturer at the college, and the parents participating in the program.  The roles of

each are outlined below:

*Director of migrant program at the state level*:  The director provided the names

of parents who would benefit from this program.  She had knowledge of the program and

no monetary dollars were provided from this area.

*Director of special education/ early childhood center:*  She was informed of the

benefits of the program.  She helped with providing a space at the early education center

where there was a summer program being run.

*Principal at the junior high*:  He was informed of the program running this

summer with additional help requested for during the school year given the information

from the program that was run this summer.

*I, as the lecturer at the college*: The Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes (TAPA) were initially volunteered to be done by me as part of her service learning project for the college she works for as a lecturer.  The money came from the service learning monies awarded for this endeavor.

*Parents:* They participated in the classes and provided rich information on each class at the end of each class during the evaluation in order to improve the classes.

*Students of parents*: Attended the summer enrichment classes while their parents receive the trainings outlined above.

*Students at the college*: During the school year, children would have enriched literacy classes provided by college students in my classes earning an ESL endorsement from the college.

## Project TAPA Lesson Plans

The curriculum design plan within the project study was divided into 3 main areas of learning.  What follows are the lesson plans that allowed parents to learn about their adolescent in an environment where Spanish was spoken.  The last two workshops were in an ESL setting.  This provided parents the vocabulary they needed in order to work with school personnel.  The following are the detailed lesson plans for each of the workshops that were expanded upon once feedback was acquired from the parents for additional workshops.

**Workshops to Increase Awareness of the Adolescent**

The adolescent brain has chemical changes that create the physical changes that parents experience of their child in terms of physical, emotional, and social.  Therefore,

the following workshops highlight two beneficial areas gathered from the interviews that helped a parent understand their adolescent child: helping the adolescent and understanding the school's structure and governance.  All the workshops are delineated as follows:

## Lesson Plans for Helping the Adolescent

**Title: *Ayudando a su Hijo a Navegar por la Adolescencia*. Session 1**

*Purpose*: "Helping your son/daughter navigate through adolescence," is the name of the first two workshops that discuss the changes that children undergo, what parents can expect, and how they can help to communicate with their children regarding these changes.  The workshop focuses on the social, emotional, and physical needs of teenagers and their experiences, as well as what parents do to help them within these areas.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours

*Objectives*: During the first session parents will become knowledgeable with the emotional, physical, and social changes that many Latino teenagers undergo and which parenting mistakes to avoid.

*Anticipatory Guide*: A quick checklist of different teenager characteristics dealing with emotional, physical, and social changes will be given to parents. This allows for the person teaching the class to pre-assess quickly student knowledge of the topic.  Because it has a before and after checklist option, it also provides students the opportunity to become engaged in their learning (Fullan, 2014).

*Beginning*: The class will begin with introductions.  Parents will be read the book, *The very hungry caterpillar*, by Eric Carle in Spanish.  This will introduce the lesson about the changes that children undergo metamorphosing into an independent butterfly.

*Activities*: PowerPoint presentation will be shown and questions will be asked throughout the presentation.

*Middle*: Discussion of how we view the adolescent child will be done during the middle part of the lesson.  A couple of slides on the PowerPoint will highlight what adolescence entails.  Parents will be asked to remember how they handled adolescence.  They will be shown how to create a collage of themselves.  Placing all their likes and dislikes, words that are often said or implied, actions that they often do, what kind of friends they hang out with, their dreams, and etc.

*Activity*:  Draw a picture of yourself in the middle. Add the following within the different puzzle pieces: 1) What were the most common words you used as a teenager, 2) What kind of clothes did you wear?, 3) What kind of food did you eat?, 4) What activity did you like to do the most?, 5) Who were your friends, and why? 6) What was one thing you hated, 7) One dream you wanted to accomplish when you grew up?
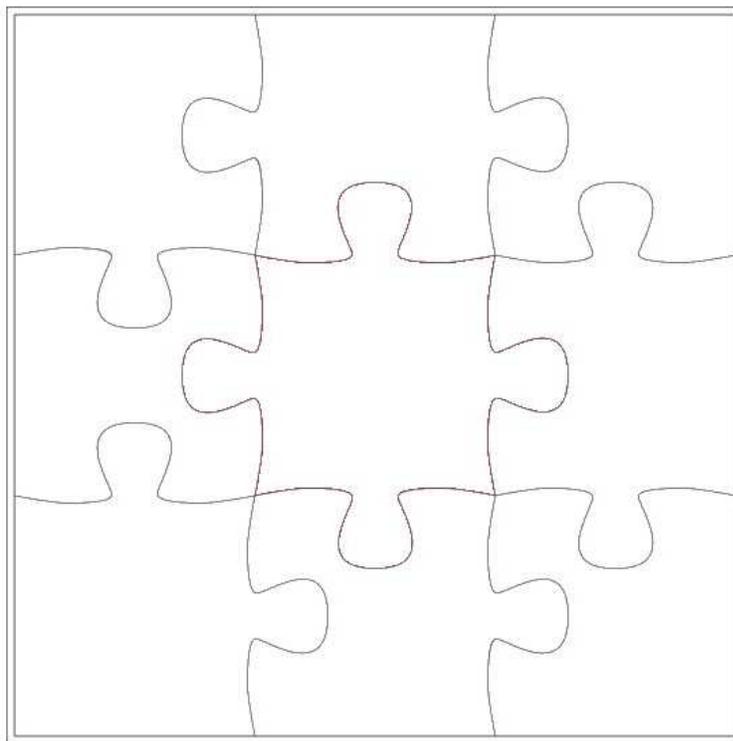
*End*: Parents will be asked to do a similar collage that they practiced in class, but this time it will be of their child.  They will place all their child's likes and dislikes, words that are often said or implied, actions that are often done by their children, what kind of friends they hang out with, etc.

*Activity*: Evaluation forms will be filled out

*Assessment*: The parents will fill out the evaluation form below.  Additionally, they will be asked to have their teenagers do the activity they learned in class to their adolescent and bring that to class for session number two.  Parents will compare their perceptions of their child to their child's perception of him/herself.

Evaluation Form (English)

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions:*

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

1. I found the session to be very informative.          4          3          2          1

2. I learned information that I will use from.          4          3          2          1

        the sessions

3. The material covered was just the right length.          4          3          2          1

4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment.          4          3          2          1

5. The written information provided to me is useful.          4          3          2          1

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

## Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

| | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

**Title:** *Ayudando a su Hijo a Navegar por la Adolescencia.* **Session 2**

*Purpose*: "Helping your son/daughter navigate through adolescence," is the name of the first 2 workshops which discuss the changes that children undergo, what parents can expect, and how they can help to communicate with their children regarding these changes.  It focuses on the social, emotional, and physical needs that many teenagers are experiencing and what parents can do to help them within these areas.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours

*Objectives*: During the second session parents will become knowledgeable with the emotional, physical, and social changes that many Latino teenagers undergo and which parenting mistakes to avoid.

*Anticipatory Guide*: Parents will revisit the quick checklist of different teenager characteristics dealing with emotional, physical, and social changes will be given to parents they were given the previous week. This allows the parent to self-assess their knowledge of what they have learned from last week. Because it has a before and after checklist option, it also provides students the opportunity to become engaged in their learning (Fullan, 2014).

*Beginning*: The class will begin with introductions (in case we have new parents that have joined).  A quick review will highlight what we did the week before and recapitulate what was done before by looking at papers hung around the room.  A brief PowerPoint presentation will introduce them to new vocabulary that they need to be aware of, along with videos that highlight the physical, emotional, and social changes that adolescents undergo.

*Activities*: Parents will highlight what they found from the assignment by placing them in the appropriate poster paper hung around the room labeled: emotional, physical, social changes, and other. Discussions will ensue and be tied to the information that was discussed.

*Middle*: Additional PowerPoint slides will capture what steps can be taken in order to help the parents understand their children. What can mothers do with their sons/daughters, what can fathers do with their sons and daughters will highlight the relationship building ideas that can be used at home.

*Activity*: Role-playing different scenarios based on what parents placed on poster paper around the room. The second activity will have them revisit the anticipation guide from session one. Evaluation forms will be filled out

*End*: The class will be wrapped up by looking at the collage that they did of their child and analyzing what they can do as parents to understand their children better based on what they have learned. Love you forever, by Sheila McGraw will be read in Spanish to the parents as a conclusion.

*Assessment*: The parents will fill out the evaluation form below.

## Evaluation Form (English)

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. the sessions | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. The material covered was just the right length. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment.  4     3     2     1

5. The written information provided to me is useful.  4     3     2     1

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

## Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

|  | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

**Title:** *Entendiendo a mi Hijo Adolescente*. **Session 3**

*Purpose*: Understanding my adolescent child, is the third workshop that provides a way for parents to communicate with their child transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This workshop focuses on learning how to communicate with the teenager who may become rebellious, introspective, needy, and not be making correct choices.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours.

*Objectives*: Parents will acquire and practice using appropriate conversational resources in order to improve communication with their adolescent.

*Anticipatory Guide*: Parents will take a true and false questionnaire regarding communication with their adolescents. This will lead the conversation throughout the session.

*Beginning*: PowerPoint presentation will look at how teenagers communicate with each other, their parents, and others about relevant topics such as school, peer pressure, feelings of depression, bullying, etc.

*Activities*: Parents will place their concern about topics they want to talk to their teens about, but they are too afraid or embarrassed on a sticky note and place it on a poster board. These will be tabulated and placed into themes.

*Middle*: Five big ideas and suggestions will be shared with the parents using choice theory (Glasser, 2013).

*Activities*: Role-playing activity will help parents utilize the ideas, recommendations, and suggestions from the most prevalent themes on the poster board.

*End*: Parents will create a little booklet called the Passport to better communication. It will be filled with ideas and suggestions they learned in this session from the presenter and from other parents in the group. The following are sample pages within the Passport to better communication with your adolescent.

|  | My Passport to Better Communication with<br><br>my Adolescent |
|---|---|
|  |  |

| First Strategy:<br><br>Scenarios when to use:<br><br><br>What I should avoid saying:<br><br><br><br>What I should say instead:<br><br><br><br><br>Reason: | Practice at home:<br><br>Scenarios when I avoided using inappropriate words:<br><br><br>Words I would have said before:<br><br><br><br>Words I used instead:<br><br><br><br><br>Outcome: |
|---|---|

*Activities*: Create a booklet. Evaluation forms will be filled out

*Assessment*: Parents will go home and write down how they avoided using

inappropriate language with their children.  They will bring this Passport next time to the

fourth session.

## Evaluation Form (English)

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| the sessions |  |  |  |  |
| 3. The material covered was just the right length. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. The written information provided to me is useful. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

## Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

|  | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

5.  El material escrito me va servir.　　　　　　　　4　　　　3　　　　2　　　　1

6.  Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

**Title:** *Poniendo Límites a mi Adolescente: Como Poner Disciplina.* **Session 4**

*Purpose*: Placing limits on my adolescent: how to discipline my child, focuses on effective discipline strategies that parents can use that are effective and will retain that level of respect between the parent and the child without making the child rebel. Topics include the area of respect, looking at boundaries, knowing your adolescents friends, and others. This will be covered in two workshop sessions.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours.

*Objectives*: Parents will understand how to control their own feelings of anger as well as how to react to an angry adolescent with the use of strategies.

*Anticipatory Guide*: Parents will watch a video on a parent-child interaction (https://youtu.be/7372sih5PZQ).

*Beginning*: What do you do when you are upset with your adolescent? Which buttons are pushed more easily than others are?

*Activities*: Parents will add a phrase within each of the buttons that sets them off using the following sheet from greatest to least. Button number 3 is reserved for that one thing that the adolescent says or does that gets one's anger to open up automatically.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | 7.<br>5.<br>*3.<br>1. | 8.<br>6.<br>4.<br>2. |

*Middle*: Power points presentation will show parents how to manage and understand their own emotions of anger first. It will also show what can and cannot be controlled. It will then discuss what we can do when our adolescents are angry. It also shows how our thoughts influence achieving a positive outcome for both parties. This will all be through a PowerPoint presentation.

*Activities*: Parents will review the button template activity above and determine what they can do in order to decrease their own anger. They will add strategies and words they can use within their passport they created in session three. Role playing exercise will provide them with examples of situations where raising one's voice is effective and when it is done (if ever). Discipline strategies will also be provided within this format and added to the passport booklet.

*End*: Review of what has been done will be discussed within the rest of the PowerPoint. A video will be seen to end this session.

*Activities*: Evaluation forms will be filled out.

*Assessment*: Parents will go home and write down how they avoided using inappropriate language with their children. They will bring this Passport next time to the fourth session.

<div align="center">Evaluation Form (English)</div>

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| the sessions |  |  |  |  |

3. The material covered was just the right length.     4         3       2       1

4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment.     4         3       2       1

5. The written information provided to me is useful.     4         3       2       1

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

## Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

| | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

**Title:** *Más que Tarea: Ayudándole a que Encuentre Éxito*. **Session 5, 6, and 7 (this topic can be expanded to include three sessions, see objectives below)**

*Purpose*: More than homework is a workshop that allows parents to go beyond finding help for their child at school.  It allows parents to understand that aside from homework there are other parts of school that will help their child be successful during the junior high as well as in high school and beyond.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours.

*Objectives*: 1) Parents will learn about helping their adolescents use executive functioning skills in order to help their children be successful at school.

2) Parents will learn the steps needed on preparing to send their child to college. (ESL component of class)

3) Parents will learn important words for them to use when communicating with the school. (ESL component of class)

*Anticipatory Guide*: Card game will be played in groups of three (National Association of College Admission Counseling).  The question is, What does playing this game of cards with your children have to do with helping them organized themselves in life?

*Beginning of lesson*: Parents will be introduced to vocabulary they will use throughout the session on executive functioning skills.  This vocabulary will be in English.  They will get to practice using the vocabulary as the presentation for the first objective.  Additional sessions will be needed in order to cover the other objectives.

*Activities*: Parents will use the words they used with a peer. They will practice saying these words as the presentation continues. When they see the word on the slide, they will turn to a partner, say the word, and tell their partner what it means.

*Middle of lesson*: After the parents have mastered using the words singularly, a full sentence in English will be incorporated. This will help them use the word in a meaningful manner throughout this part of the presentation on how to incorporate functioning skills at home.

*Activities*: Jigsaw activity will have three groups of parents teaching each other about one functioning skill and practicing within their group the sentence and vocabulary word they were introduced to earlier.

*End of lesson*: Review of the functioning skills along with an opportunity to place the new strategies they learned in their passport will help them to increase their knowledge of adolescent needs.

*Activities*: Incorporate knowledge into passport from session 3. Evaluation forms will be filled out.

*Assessment of lesson*: They will go home and try one of the games with their children. They are to report back if they have tried any other games on a list provided to them at the end of class.

<div align="center">Evaluation Form (English)</div>

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

the sessions

3. The material covered was just the right length.　　4　　　　3　　　2　　　1

4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment.　　4　　　　3　　　2　　　1

5. The written information provided to me is useful.　　4　　　　3　　　2　　　1

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

## Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

| | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

**Lesson Plans for Understanding the School's Structure and Governance**

**Title: Sus Derechos Dentro de la Escuela. Eighth session**

*Purpose*: Your rights at School, focuses on learning about the structure of a school setting and the rights parent have within a school. What they can and cannot do, in particular focusing their participation at the Junior High level.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours.

*Objectives*: Using content area instruction parents will learn different English vocabulary words in context that will make them successful in communicating with school personnel.

*Anticipatory Guide*: Pre-test on matching English words with pictures. Have matching definitions for higher-level participants, and have one challenge question where they can write. This determines the different areas of English language knowledge parents have and where to begin the lesson.

*Beginning of lesson*: PowerPoint with the structure of a school with pictures will be shown. Words like office, secretary, principal, assistant principals, etc. will be shown to highlight where parents enter the school and who they might speak to first.

*Activities*: Parents will practice saying these words in a sentence (s).

*Middle of lesson*: Greetings will be introduced and practiced in this part of the lesson. Phrases like good morning, good afternoon, good evening. I am here to ask a question. I am here to see_____. Other phrases may be used which incorporate the words they learned during the first part of the lesson.

*Activities*: Small groups will practice different scenarios with each other.

*End of lesson*: Governance of a school will be looked at here. Parents will continue to build on the knowledge they have above. New words will be incorporated into their vocabulary.

*Activities*: Parents will create a representation of the school and governance through a drawing. They will get into groups of two or three (or more depending on group size but no more than 4 to 5 to a group). A 'prize' will be won for best picture voted by the group. Evaluation forms will be filled out.

*Assessment of lesson*: They are to relate what they learned with another person. They can go to school and try it out or someone from work who knows only English or another peer that they believe has more knowledge of English than they do.

## Evaluation Form (English)

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|      the sessions |  |  |  |  |
| 3. The material covered was just the right length. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. The written information provided to me is useful. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

|  | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

**Title: *Comunicación Entre la Casa y la Escuela*. 9th session.**

*Purpose*: Communication between Home and School, focuses on providing the vocabulary that teachers and other educators use.  It will highlight what different words refer to.  There are three workshops that incorporate the use of English words so that parents become familiar with these words when they attend school events.  It will provide a venue to practice the words as if they were communicating with the teacher.  It will help them to understand the steps to set up times to meet with the teacher as well as effectively gauge and gather information about their child's performance at school.

*Duration*: 1 to 1 ½ hours.

*Objectives*: Parents will add to the greetings from last week in order to learn how to ask appropriate questions in terms of their students' academic growth and progress.

*Anticipatory Guide*: They will be asked to write down in Spanish what they know about certain vocabulary words.  They will also ask them to put them in some kind of order.

*Beginning of lesson*: List of words will be introduced.  Students will practice these in a series of activities.

| 1. | Absent | 11. | Notice |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Back to school night | 12. | Parent |
| 3. | Chaperone | 13. | Permission |
| 4. | Delayed opening | 14. | Quiz |
| 5. | Early closing | 15. | Report card |
| 6. | Expectations letter | 16. | Signature |
| 7. | Field trip | 17. | Supply list |
| 8. | Grade | 18. | Tardiness |
| 9. | Late arrival | 19. | Test. |
| 10. | Note | | |

*Activities*: Each group will pick one of the activities to do in their group. If they get done early they can work on the second activity. Activity 1: Each person says one of the vocabulary words aloud and then calls on one of the other group members to point to the appropriate pictures. That adult then says a different word and calls on another member to point to the picture. This is repeated until all the words have been used. Activity 2: The above activity is reversed by selecting a picture and having the group member say the corresponding word to the picture. The adult chooses another person and this continues until all the group members have gone and there are no more words to review.

*Middle of lesson*: Instructor asks how many times a child has taken a letter home or how many times it has actually gotten into their hands? Parents will be shown these various samples:

- School supply list
- Expectations letter
- Back to school night notice
- Notice about changed school days or hours
- Permission form for field trip
- Report cards
- Events

*Activities*: Parents are asked to determine what each of the letter is saying and how they would respond to each.

*End of lesson*: Parents will be asked to write a note to school. Given various examples parents will come up with a way to indicate such things as an absence from school due to illness, etc.

*Activities*: Parents will be divided into three or four groups and the will need to write a note based on the following situations: broken arm, child not in attendance due to illness, they broke their arm, someone passed away, etc. Evaluation forms will be filled out.

*Assessment of lesson*: Parents are to practice writing a letter to me about any situation they encountered during the year last year.

## Evaluation Form (English)

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| the sessions |  |  |  |  |
| 3. The material covered was just the right length. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. The written information provided to me is useful. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

## Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

|  | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

These workshop lessons helped parents to become more self-efficacious in that parents learned how to help themselves navigate through the school system as well as became aware of the changes that took place within their adolescent child. By working with the different organizations within this rural community, the workshops will help parents see that there are many resources available to them within the community that they may not have been aware of before. Because this is a curriculum design plan, parents will be able to suggest additional workshops in the future. Their input will be invaluable in supporting the growth and maintenance of this type of parental program.

## Evaluation Plan

The type of evaluation that was done for this project included both formative and summative assessments. The tool that was used for this type of assessment is provided below. The tool is both formative and summative in that each session will have an evaluation form given to the parents for them to provide feedback on the content and delivery as well as ask them questions on self-efficacy (i.e., Did the session make you more confident in helping your child (if applicable)? How will you use this information to help others in your community?). Because the tool is in Spanish, it will be a quick and

easy format for the parents to understand and for the evaluator to decipher. Additionally, the tool is summative in that it can provide an overview of the parent's growth from the beginning to the end of the sessions.

The overall goal was to achieve continuous feedback from parents and provisions for future workshops they requested. This type of assessment is one of the strategies that Beck (2012) suggests for enhancing parental participation. Because it does model the HDS model of parent involvement, using language similar to their surveys and given to parents will provide the information needed to grow and change the program accordingly. The tool can be found as follows:

Evaluation Form (English)

*Please provide us with information regarding the workshops/session by answering the following questions*:

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I found the session to be very informative. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I learned information that I will use from. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| the sessions | | | | |
| 3. The material covered was just the right length. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I felt comfortable in this learning environment. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. The written information provided to me is useful. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Suggestions for future workshops include:

_____

7. Suggestions for improving how to engage parents at the school include:

_____

Forma de Evaluación (Spanish)

*Por favor provéenos con la información sobre las talleres/sesiones respondiendo a las siguientes preguntas*:

| | Estoy Firmemente de acuerdo | Estoy de acuerdo | No estoy de acuerdo | Firmemente no estoy de acuerdo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Encontré que la sesión dio mucha información. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Aprendí algo que usare de este taller/sesión. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. El material dentro de la sesión fue suficiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Me sentí cómodo dentro de este ambiente. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. El material escrito me va servir. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

6. Sugerencias para talleres futuros incluyen:

_____

7. Sugerencias para mejorar como involucrar a los padres en la escuela incluyen:

_____

## Conclusion

The project that was created attempted to reduce the language barriers and improve communication and the nature of the relationship between the Latino parent and the school. The curriculum study plan served to clarify perceptions of the lack of resources available and increase parent empowerment in terms of the knowledge they possessed about adolescence. The workshops within the curriculum design plan also served to increase the language skills of the parents, therefore providing them with the skills they needed to communicate with the school. Ultimately, parents were aided in meeting the demands within state and federal policies on parent and family engagement, which helped their child become more successful at the school level.

Appendix F: Report to Principal

To: Mr. WJH Principal
From: Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner, Researcher
Date: June 9, 2015
Re: Report on Research Findings and Proposal for Workshops for Latino Parents –
Talleres de Aprendizaje para Padres de Adolescentes (*TAPA*)

Dear Mr. WJH Principal,

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that my research findings and proposed solution
to increasing Latino parent involvement at the junior high has been completed.

My study included interviewing Latino parents who had children at the junior high in the
Grades 7 and 8 this past year. The purpose was to find the following: 1) To examine
Latino parents' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities using Hoover Dempsey's
model of parental involvement; 2) To analyze Latino parents perceptions as they relate to
District RW's understanding of parent involvement in the 21st century and key
challenges specific to Latinos; and, 3) To provide suggestions on how both Latino parents
and the junior high personnel can create a better home-school partnership through better
communication.

Please find below a summary of the findings, and timeline for implementation to
ameliorate this problem:

| Themes found from study: | Solution: | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| Parents found that it was difficult to attend many of the events due to time constraints held in the evenings. | Hold summer workshops that meet during the day. | Phase 1: Key stakeholders are contacted for approval and support of program. Phase 2: Pamphlets are sent to the parents to recruit them for the program. |
| Lack of resources: In particular workshops on how to help their adolescents with homework, behavior, etc. | Hold workshops that deal with the issues of adolescences and help parents to know how to help their adolescents be successful not only academically, but also socially, and other issues that may arise (i.e. discipline) | Phase 3: Parent Classes begin. Phase 4: Evaluation of the program is done at the end of nine sessions. Presentation to stakeholders of success or opportunities for improvement. |
| Lack of Resources: ESL Classes | Provide parents an opportunity to learn about navigating through the school system and developmental growth of their child during the adolescent years via a Content Based ESL program. | Phase 5: Meet with stakeholders to discuss the viability and expansion of program during the year |
| Lack of resources: How to navigate through the school system | Provide parents with the tools (i.e. language) to better communicate their needs with school personnel. This goes together with the ESL classes mentioned above. | |

Please let me know if you would meet with me in order to discuss this in more detail.
Not only would this provide a solution to low Latino parent involvement, but it would
also aid in complying with Title III and parental involvement.

Sincerely,

Mytzy Rodriguez-Kufner

Cc: Mr. Superintendent
    Mrs. Director of Special Education/Director of Early childhood program