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Haitian Adult Immigrants as Learners and Parents

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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MA, University of Bath, 2007

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Haitian immigrant parents often face challenges to visibly engage in their children's education in the United States due to social, cultural, and economic factors. This study addressed parent involvement (PI) among Haitian immigrant parents of adolescents in a Florida community. The purpose of this exploratory, multiple-case study was to better understand connections between immigrant Haitian parents' beliefs and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescents' learning. Three research questions were developed to explore Haitian adults' lived experiences and perceptions of themselves as keepers of knowledge and as learners, their experiences and perceived roles as parents, and the resources they possessed that could increase PI. The conceptual framework included social constructs of family literacy, new literacy studies, and funds of knowledge. Nine Haitian parents of teenage children and 3 educators and liaisons from the community were selected for interviews. Qualitative data analysis included open coding, theme identification, and triangulation of data from an archival PI survey. Findings indicated that adults' experiences with learning at home and learning at school influenced their perceived parenting roles and self-efficacy at home, the type of PI in which they engaged, and future aspirations for their children. Results were used to develop a white paper aimed at community stakeholders to enhance educators' and social service providers' cultural knowledge of Haitian families and to promote two-way communication. The project may encourage the development of culturally responsive PI strategies and adult learning opportunities benefiting local and trans-national Haitian communities throughout the United States.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated first and foremost to my parents, Stephen and Philmene Octavien. Thank you for your investments of love, energy, time, and money in me. You have inspired me to new heights. May God continue to bless us with your presence here on Earth. To my loving husband, Salem, please know that your long-suffering has not been in vain. I look forward to spending more quality time with you and the boys, undisturbed by guilt-riddled thoughts that I should be reading, researching, or writing something…not enjoying ice cream on the beach. To our four sons, Shiloh, Brockton, Jahkaree, and Jahrew, this study is for you. As third generation youth, you have no excuses. Always strive and aspire to greatness! To adult educators Suze Lindor and Ron Luehman, thank you for setting me on my bend toward adult education. May you rest in peace. Finally, to all immigrant parents out there who are striving to make a better life for their children, thank you for your selflessness and sacrifice. Remain steadfast in your beliefs, vigilant in the oversight of your homes, and firm in your spiritual convictions. One day your children will see with new eyes all that you have done on their behalf, and they too shall give thanks.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

Haitians are one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States. A large county in South Florida boasts the 7th highest concentration of Haitian transnationals, approximately 9,000 residents (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014). Since the mid 1960s, Haitians have emigrated from Haiti, a third world country, in search of economic solvency and increased opportunities for themselves and their families. However, numerous sociocultural issues that impacted them in their homeland, such as poverty, adult illiteracy, limited schooling, and racial inequities, persist throughout their journeys (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Stepick & Stepick, 1990). Typically, Haitian immigrants in the United States are Black, are impoverished, have limited literacy in their native language, are English language learners (ELLs), and at home speak Creole, a language spoken by no other ethnic group in the world. Additionally, Haitian households, more often than not, are family homes composed of school-age children and extended family members (Buchanan, Albert, & Beaulieu, 2010; Stepick, 1982). Despite the unique social and economic circumstances that challenge Haitian adults' resettlement efforts, they are expected to actively engage in the educations of their children enrolled in schools in the United States like native-born parents who are familiar with the inner workings of school systems and school expectations (Cone, Buxton, Lee, & Mahotiere, 2013).

Locally, Haitian immigrant parents face challenges supporting their children in schools and the educational system. Parent involvement (PI) among Haitian parents is low, and a significant number of parents cite cultural and language barriers as factors limiting their participation; more research is needed to better understand these barriers

(Zmach & Cruz, 2015). Notably, this trend of poor PI among Haitians is nothing new. Since the 1960s, spurred by an influx of Haitian immigrants to the United States, scholars have taken a keen interest in Haitian school children and by default their parents. Much of the early literature indicated that, to the detriment of Haitian students, Haitian parents were unengaged in their children's academic and social development.

Empirical studies of culturally and linguistically diverse families from the last decade indicate that the problem with these families has less to do with general disinterest and lack of motivation and has more to do with social inequities and cross-cultural communication. Scholars suggest that adults' demographic backgrounds and related social inequities impact their involvement in the schooling and development of their children (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernández, 2013; Hogg, 2011; Lareau, 2000, 2011). Also, , understanding how immigrant adults were raised, including their educational experiences, employment backgrounds, and social networks, is of utmost importance to forging strong school-home partnerships (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Zhang, Pelletier, & Doyle, 2010). Furthermore, non-White parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds tend to perceive and enact PI differently from parents in the dominant culture as a result of their cultural upbringing (Suizzo, Pahlke, Yarnell, Chen, & Romero, 2014). This is especially true for Hispanics based on empirical studies (Crosnoe, 2010; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

What educational professionals in the local community expect Haitians to know and do as parents may differ from what Haitians actually know and are capable of doing with the resources they have in their given circumstances. However, there is a paucity of

current, culturally cognizant research about Haitian adults. The purpose of this exploratory, multiple case study was to gain a greater understanding Haitian adults as parents, knowers, and learners and what resources (e.g., skills, knowledge, networks) they possess. In-depth interview techniques were conducted to delve deeper into the problem. Qualitative data analysis techniques were implemented to identify emergent patterns and themes. Findings from interviews with educators and community liaisons with experience working with Haitians were compared with archival data from recent Title I Parent Involvement Survey District Reports (TPISDR).

Definition of the Problem

The problem in a South Florida community was that Haitian immigrant parents face challenges supporting their children in the local schools and educational system. This problem is consistent throughout the general literature, which indicates that Haitian parents are consistently absent at site-based events concerning and benefiting their children. Culturally and linguistically diverse parents' beliefs and what is expected of them by teachers and school personnel are often incongruent, resulting in the mislabeling of parents as disinterested, passive, and unengaged (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Taliaferro, DeCuir-Gunby, & Allen-Eckard, 2009). Scholars who explored Haitian PI through a culturally tinted lens have avoided contributing to mainstream perceptions of immigrant parents as lazy and unmotivated (Cone et al., 2013; Doucet, 2011a, 2011b; Elie, 2011; Mahotiere, 2013). Instead, researchers have recounted that a lack of information, inexperience with school programs, and differing cultural expectations

contributed to differences in PI. Such studies suggest that more accurate depictions of Haitian parents' cultural norms and realities are needed.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Throughout the local community, Haitian immigrant parents face challenges supporting their children in schools and the educational system. Evidence of the problem comes from Title I PI Survey District Reports, a compliance piece conducted in the local school district annually since 2010 (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). The 2014 report included a cross comparison of survey results since its inaugural year, revealing that about a third of Haitian parents had never attended a meeting at their children's schools during the school year, about 40% had never attended a meeting where Title I was discussed, and an astonishing two thirds of parents had never volunteered at their children's schools (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). These numbers remained fairly consistent through 2014. A closer look at the 2014 survey results indicated that the Creole-speaking parent community was not getting involved at their children's schools to the same extent as families who spoke English and Spanish. Of the 282 Creole-speaking parents surveyed, 109 reported facing language and cultural barriers to participation (Zmach & Cruz, 2015).

At the school level, to enlist PI and as a part of the school district's federal obligations, schools distribute school-parent-student compacts in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole at the beginning of each school year. The purpose of these compacts is to outline in writing how the trio of parents, school staff, and students will be responsible for promoting student achievement. Despite yearly development and distribution of

compacts in multiple languages, getting parents involved at schools has been a struggle. For example, at a local Title I middle school that serves a student body composed mostly of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, administrators have been faced with the challenge of getting Haitian parents to participate in the governance of the school through the school advisory council (SAC) and the parent teacher organization/association (PTO/A) (J. Bledsoe, personal communication, September 14, 2014). The State of Florida requires each school to form a SAC committee and membership to mirror the demographic composition of the student body within 10%. District employees may not exceed 49% of said membership (Florida Department of Education, 2014). Although PTO/A's are standard bearers of PI across U.S. schools, unlike SAC they are not mandatory. The stringent requirements of SAC have made it very challenging but also necessary to get Haitian parents on board at that middle school, and the nonrequirement of a school PTO has led to the demise of the organization on campus due to a lack of parent participation. The multicultural fair held at the middle school in 2014, which did not require a monthly on-site commitment as SAC, was attended by only a fraction of Haitian parents (J. Bledsoe, personal communication, September 14, 2014). The turnout of Haitians to the district-wide Title I Parent Academy Summit I in its inaugural year, 2014, was relatively low as well. I observed that very few Haitians were in attendance despite the widespread distribution of flyers and the use of phone dialer messages advertising the event as well as the provision of free child care, transportation, and Creole interpreters to circumvent the usual barriers to participation.

An unpublished study conducted in the same county in South Florida one year before the first district PI survey echoed the struggles of the Haitian diaspora and corroborated findings from district surveys (Saint-Jean, 2009). In 2009, a nonprofit organization was awarded a grant to undertake an empirical study to identify the social service needs of the local Haitian community. Saint-Jean, an American trained physician and epidemiologist born in Haiti, was placed at the helm of the study. Saint-Jean (2009) conducted a quantitative survey with a sample of 313 adult Haitian residents. The study indicated that Haitian adults are faced with several interrelated social issues that can be broadly categorized as low educational attainment, poor second language acquisition, underemployment, and exigencies of family life. Specifically, Saint-Jean highlighted the fact that less than half the total Haitian adult population had attained a high school diploma and as many as 15% had never formally attended school. Most adults worked in the hotel and hospitality industry and food service. Many participants expressed an interest in GED classes as well as improving their English language proficiency, which most judged as fair or poor (Saint-Jean, 2009).

Additionally, the Haitian needs assessment exposed gross disparities in PI. The majority of Haitian adult parents surveyed felt they spent quality time with their children; however, over 33% of parents reported that they were not engaged in their children's educations (Saint-Jean, 2009). In the closing recommendation, Saint-Jean (2009) reiterated the school district's longstanding struggle to expand communication with Haitian parents. He stated that language barriers have thwarted the school district's efforts to engage Haitian parents in the educational process. Saint-Jean (2009) also

stressed the need for translation of important social service documents into Creole and English literacy classes.

Title I Parent Involvement Survey District Reports and the experiences of secondary school administrators coupled with the unanticipated findings coming directly from the Haitian community needs assessment attest to the lack of PI among Haitians. However, neither findings from the district reports nor the needs assessment explain this phenomenon in full. A greater understanding of sociocultural factors that mediate Haitian parents' involvement in their children's educations is critical to the academic and acculturative success of Haitian students. The literature further indicates the challenges faced by multilingual and multicultural families within the wider U.S. educational context.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Review of current scholarly literature provides compelling evidence of a rift between the type of PI that school personnel expect and that minority parents actually undertake. Researchers investigated PI across a number of racial groups including Hispanics (Crosnoe, 2010; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001) Asians, (Nam & Park, 2014), and specific ethnic groups such as African Americans (Suizzo et al., 2014). Although researchers conceded some variation in practices across these groups, they also confirmed that in general there was incongruence in minority parents' chosen activities compared to White, middle class parents. In addition to race and ethnicity, other factors such as social class (Lareau, 2000) and a dearth of practical knowledge on parenting an adolescent (Connors & Epstein, 1994; National Center for Families Learning, 2014) are

said to limit the quality, type, and frequency of PI. Recently, a positive correlation was found between participation in adult basic education programs and the quality and frequency of PI (Shiffman, 2011). Although researchers' opinions may clash where regarding the most influential cause of limited PI, much of the literature points to the overwhelming fact that adult education and training impacts, to some degree, parents' engagement in their children's schooling. The Adult and Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998 (AEFLA) explicitly stated that its purpose was to "assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2013, p. 1). The focus of this piece of legislation was the interconnectedness of adult education and the capacity to reinforce child-rearing skills through learning in adulthood.

Poverty, lack of access to quality schooling, and illiteracy are among the most serious social issues plaguing Haitian society (Smith, Gélineau, & Seligson, 2012; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). Despite their academic shortcomings and cultural differences, Haitian parents are still expected to navigate complex school structures and participate fully in the schooling of their children like English-speaking middle-class parents (Cone et al., 2013; Mahotiere, 2013). Although Haitians residing in the United States are said to have high aspirations for their families like White middle-class families (Nicholas & Severe, 2013), this factor alone might not negate the fact that Haitian students fit the profile of high school dropouts. Haitian children are often poverty stricken and are exposed to a great number of stressors in the home (Rosenthal, 1995). Whereas a

team effort between schools and parents may make the difference between attrition and high school completion among Haitian youth, little is known about the social and cultural considerations that ought to be addressed when eliciting the involvement of adult Haitian parents who are new to the community and unfamiliar with the norms of U.S. schools.

The purpose of this exploratory, multiple case study was to gain a better understanding of the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. This study focused on Haitian adults as parents, knowers, and learners and what resources they possess that could be used to forge stronger school-home partnerships.

Definition of Terms

Adult learner: For the purpose of this study, an adult learner was broadly understood to be one who participates in learning in any of three settings: formal institutional, nonformal, and informal (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007).

Low educated: The term used to describe foreign-born adults who are not literate in any written language, including their mother tongue, and have less than an elementary education. Usually, their educations are disrupted due to family responsibilities, illness, or war. The term is used to distinguish immigrants who arrive with inadequate schooling from immigrants who were highly educated in their countries of origin and bring with them to the host country transferable reading and writing skills (Choi & Ziegler, 2015; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009).

Parent involvement (PI): A framework of six types of involvement between schools, families, and communities that impact students' success: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004).

School-home partnership: The purposeful and planned contractual relationship between a child's school and his or her parent(s) by which both parties work in collaboration to promote and mutually benefit from student success (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004).

Significance of the Study

To be more effective in their parenting, Haitian immigrants must have a firm understanding of the U.S. educational system and schools' expectations as well as increased English language proficiency. From the mid to late 1990s, studies of Haitians focused primarily on the challenges immigrant children faced in adjusting to the linguistic demands, academic rigor, and cultural expectations of U.S. schools. Most empirical research on this population failed to address parents' side of the story. Fortunately, in the past decade, the research lens has shifted slightly to include the perspectives of Haitian parents, providing for a broader understanding of social and cultural issues that impact their involvement. Researchers have noted the need to investigate culturally and linguistically diverse families such as Hispanics and Haitians and to share with school personnel and stakeholders the cultural considerations that ought to be addressed when working with these minority groups (Cone et al., 2013; Doucet, 2011a; González, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013; Mahotiere, 2013).

Immigrant families generally have high hopes for their children, and Haitians are no

exception (Nicolas, DeSilva, & Rabenstein, 2009); however, how these aspirations

materialize in parents' day-to-day engagement in the schooling and development of their

adolescent children has not been well documented.

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to gain a better

understanding of the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning

experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and

development. Exploration of Haitian adults' perceptions and experiences in their roles

may afford educators and administrators valuable insight into who Haitian adults are and

cultural considerations that ought to be addressed when setting expectations,

communicating, and soliciting parents' engagement in their children's schooling.

Knowledge of the resources parents possess is imperative to developing PI strategies that

effectively link schools to the home culture. A culturally responsive approach to

involvement may yield more desirable PI outcomes and may contribute to greater

retention and increased acculturation of Haitian youth. Rather than focusing on where

Haitian parents fall short, I focused on parents' strengths as effective means to connect

schools and homes. Although the challenges of the local Haitian community provided the

impetus for this investigation, findings may afford educators practical insight that could

be used to serve Haitian families settled across the Eastern United States.

Guiding Questions

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to gain a better

understanding of the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning

experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. The preponderance of early PI research literature, with some exceptions, glossed over immigrant parents' culturally rooted parenting practices and varied learning experiences; researchers opted instead to depict culturally and linguistically diverse parents residing in the United States as intellectually deficient and lacking in social capital. Furthermore, very little research within the body of literature on Haitian immigrants has addressed the interconnectedness of adult learning and PI. I sought to make a distinction between the experiences of first generation immigrant parents and those of Generation 1.5, who while born in Haiti, spent most of their formative years in the United States. This inquiry may establish the potentially important role that immigrant adults' past, present, and future learning experiences play in their PI. The experiences of adult parents were examined to paint a more accurate picture of Haitian adults' PI efforts and their strengths as learners and keepers of knowledge. The intent of this exploratory study was to answer one major research question "What are the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development? Three subquestions were developed to help guide my research:

1. What are immigrant Haitian adults' experiences and perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners?

2. How do immigrant Haitian adults experience and perceive their role in supporting their adolescent children enrolled in secondary schools in the United States?

3. What resources do Haitian parents possess that can be used to better connect the school and home?

Review of the Literature

In this section, I present a review of scholarly literature related to the research problem, which was the challenges Haitian immigrant parents face supporting their children at school and in the educational system. I searched the literature using electronic education databases including ERIC, EBSCO, and Sage. To ensure saturation of the literature, other domain-specific databases and traditional printed books and peer-reviewed journals were also searched. A number of key terms were used alone and in combination: *Haiti*, *Haitian*, *Haitian-American*, *immigrant*, *Generation 1.5*, *parenting*, *PI, adult learning*, *illiteracy*, *low literacy*, *secondary grades*, *high school*, *middle school*, and *adolescent.* Whenever possible, the most current scholarly works were consulted on the subject. However, given the dearth of current research on Haitians, some earlier scholarly articles and print materials were consulted to develop a profile of Haitian immigrants and their children.

The literature review begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework. The study was grounded in three socially oriented concepts: family literacy, New Literacy Studies (NLS), and funds of knowledge (FoK). I then address the professional literature to elucidate the depth and breadth of the problem in a broader educational context. I organize this review using three themes: foreign-born adult literacy and English language learners, minority PI, and Haitian adults and their school-age children.

Conceptual Framework

  Family literacy. Since the early 1900s, across the United States there has been a notable push to encourage parents to read to their children at home (Morrow, Paratore, Gaber, Harrison, & Tracey, 1993). Family literacy, a term used interchangeably with other terms such as intergenerational literacy or community literacy, falls under the umbrella of PI (Sapin, Padak, & Baycich, 2008). Family literacy is regarded as a highly effective and favorable practice denoting two meanings. One refers to formal, structured programs sponsored by an agency or institution. The other, which was used in the framing of this study, refers to less formal programs and has a broader application to the family home (Sapin et al., 2008). A fundamental tenet of family literacy, in the formal sense, is to increase children's and adults' acquisition of language and literacy skills explicitly taught in schools. High-intensity family literacy programs are interventions of choice for high-risk student groups coming from low-literacy, low-income homes (Doyle, 2012). In formal programs, many of which are grant funded, parents and adult extended family members, especially those for whom English is a second language, learn literacy and/or parenting skills. Research has shown that through these programs parents may also develop other social skills and experience positive affective benefits from participation (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Zhang et al., 2010). The benefits of family literacy are not exclusively reserved for young learners nor are they always in the form of tangible skills such as reading and writing.

  In recent years, acceptance of broad definitions of family literacy has been strong among scholars and practitioners to circumvent the one-size-fits-all approach (Crawford

& Zygouris-Coe, 2006). Family literacy is complex, but most scholars agree that it encompasses "the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community…. Sometimes, family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children 'get things done'" (Morrow, 1994, p. 3). A pioneer in the field, Auerbach (1989) suggested that knowledge could arise from a broader conceptualization of family literacy as a phenomenon woven into the "fabric of daily life" (p. 166).

To revalue learning and parenting as they take place in all homes, without passing judgment on parents based on their varied formal educational backgrounds, literacy skills, or parenting styles, it was critical that a broad definition of family literacy be adopted in this study. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, family literacy encompassed the spontaneous and sometimes planned literacy practices by which parents and other adults living in the home could have a visible impact on children's as well as their own cognitive and social development without outside guidance. Family literacy from this orientation positioned Haitian immigrant parents, who were the focus of this study, as more than learners who acquire knowledge of host culture norms, but also keepers of knowledge formally and informally obtained through their lived experiences. This perspective reinforced the fact that as their children's first teachers, parents share and exchange their skills and knowledge with their children on their terms and by their own volition.

New Literacy Studies. Scholars have grappled with the stand-alone definition of the term literacy first, before making the leap to define family literacy. There are two

extreme views in the dispute as to how literacy skills are acquired: the cognitive perspective and the social perspective. Cognitive views frame literacy learning as "as an individual difficulty that derives from some current, or past, personal problem or circumstance" (Crowther & Tett, 2011, p. 134). From this perspective people who do not possess the ability to encode and decode written texts may be overlooked, and the diverse range of other skills and knowledge they possess may be undervalued (Davidson, 2010). A compelling example of cognitive theories of literacy in practice can be found in one definition that underpinned the United Nations (UN) global literacy study. "A literate person is one who can both read and write a short, simple statement on his or her everyday life. An illiterate person is one who cannot, with understanding, both read and write such a statement" (United Nations Statistical Division, 2008, p. 147). This definition used in studies around the world to distinguish between a literate person and his or her antithesis epitomizes the restrictive view of literacy accepted worldwide, but rejected by Gee (1991) and Street (1998), founding members of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) camp.

New literacy studies is a relatively new research tradition that is in direct opposition to cognitive approaches to literacy. Although cognitive theories of literacy are espoused throughout the majority of educational institutions, scholars continue to problematize what is viewed as conventional wisdom concerning what literacy is, how it is obtained, and what it is capable of doing (Parr & Campbell, 2012). The NLS tradition offers an alternative, which affords researchers a wider social lens through which to examine the practice of literacy. Street (2005), one of the foremost leaders of the

movement, asserted that "literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill….it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (p. 418). In essence, literacy learning does not occur in a vacuum absent a social context. In fact, the exact opposite may be true. Sociocultural theorists posit that learning and human development are inextricably rooted in social contexts and are the result of learners' interactions with objects, people, and events (Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011). A more middle ground approach is taken by social cognitivists who assert that learning comes through observation of behaviors in one's environment (Merriam et al., 2007).

Critics of NLS take issue with the fact that NLS research is limited to localized or situated literacy and not global literacies that are often times imposed upon the local (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). Others take issue with the framing of NLS, arguing that the micro versus macro approach is too restrictive (Kell, 2013). In the end, there may be good cause for the reconciliation of cognitive and social theories of literacy. Davidson (2010) elaborated on how the coupling of dichotomous views can make literacy instruction widely accessible and more equitable for all.

There is value in a view of literacy that does not propagate literacy only in its written or visual form. Sociocultural views of literacy take into account that listening and speaking are unquestionable antecedents to reading and writing. Therefore, in their reconceptualization of literacy, proponents esteem the oral tradition as much as print is already esteemed worldwide (Parr & Campbell, 2012). Also, the concept of NLS brings added value to educational research in that it provides a means by which in-school literacy practices can be distinguished from out-of-school practices evident in less formal

contexts (Hull & Schultz, 2001). Justification for this distinction is based on the observable fact that a wider lens can inform understanding of what informal literacy practices entail and "from a pedagogic point of view, what is there to be built upon if the aim is to help such people to add dominant literacy practices to their linguistic repertoire" (Street, 1997, p. 81). Well before their first formal instructional experience, adult literacy learners have amassed valuable social skills, knowledge, and experiences that help them function and survive. These assets ought to serve as the building blocks for their learning of formally recognized literacy skills.

The application of an NLS approach was imperative in this study given the high incidence of illiteracy and limited schooling that typically characterize Haitian populations. The risk of further marginalizing limited-literacy Haitian parents was reduced in this study when a broader understanding of what it means to be literate was adopted. This study was more inclusive and offered a wide variety of perspectives through the adoption of an NLS approach.

Funds of knowledge. The preponderance of PI literature reflects a deficit discourse that portrays parents from nondominant cultures as lacking or deficient (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Hogg, 2011). However, Moll et al., (1992) broke away from this tradition, highlighting the family composition and sociocultural assets unique to immigrant households. Although the homes of Mexican immigrants in the Midwest were perceived to be economically and experientially impoverished by outsiders, Moll and his associates unearthed rich deposits of skills, knowledge, and community resources "essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). These

culturally-specific resources, known collectively as funds of knowledge (FoK), have strong potential to connect children's seemingly disadvantaged homes to their schools by bringing insider voices (those of parents and children) to the forefront (Andrews & Yee, 2006). Only then can what is learned about children's lived experiences from parents, family members, and the children themselves be used to inform instructional practices in formal school settings.

Despite having its start in studies of the family homes of primary school students (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992), FoK has been used as a model for adult education as well. The FoK approach underpinned a recent study of the educational ideologies that limit and facilitate young adult Hispanic students' transitions to postsecondary studies (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2012). Likewise, Mexican-American high school graduates attributed their positive outlook on attending college to the FoK found in their homes (Kiyama, 2010). Other researchers found the FoK concept to be particularly utilitarian in cases aimed at understanding how teachers' experiences and demographic backgrounds influenced their beliefs and instructional practices (Andrews, Yee, Greenhough, Hughes, & Winter, 2005). Additionally, a greater understanding of the skills and knowledge possessed by adult English language learners (Piersma, 2013) and adult parents of school children (Hensley, 2009) can be gained through application of the FoK approach. Within the FoK framework, Olmedo (1997) used oral history to portray a Puerto Rican matriarch and her fellow Latinas' resourcefulness. Through this study, Olmedo was able to support her claim that oral history has a rightful place in education. Nonetheless, there are some limits to the FoK research framework. Although Oughton (2010) affirmed the value and

necessity of applying FoK to better understanding adult learners, she also warned that practitioners ought to be vigilant and reflective so as not to impose labels that overgeneralize and essentialize adult learners' cultures, practices, and experiences. Hogg (2011) revealed that there are more questions than there are answers as to the use and validity of FoK research methods, but also admitted that FoK is essential to teacher pedagogy.

From a critical point of view, FoK serves as a means to dismantle achievement gap discourse that underpins Eurocentric, White privilege throughout academia. The norm has been to use language and labels that dichotomize and essentialize minorities from nondominant groups as intellectually inferior and lacking in terms of social capital (Carey, 2014). However, action research within the FoK framework can counter seemingly rational and benign logics of social capital (Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012). FoK research has the potential to shift power from schools back to families, in practical ways. For instance, educators who teach students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, linguistically challenged, or members of the racial minority often live in remote neighborhoods and come from White middle-class families. They seldom show up at students' homes, and when they do it is often to provide instruction or deliver bad news. In physical space and culture, these teachers are quite distant from the realities of the students they serve (Baeder, 2010; Rong & Preissle, 2009). Home visits, which underpin classic FoK research, decrease the physical distance separating teachers and students while observations and probes about the families' cultural, educational, and employment backgrounds and social networks help close the cultural knowledge gap

(Baeder, 2010; Byrd, 2012). Home visits enable teachers to connect with parents on their territory and repositions families as the authorities on the subject matter, their children and their lives, thus turning the tables so that the teacher is now the eager learner.

Conceptual synergy. The common thread linking family literacy, New Literacy Studies (NLS), and funds of knowledge (FoK) is the socially embedded contexts in which they are grounded. In essence, devotees to these concepts embrace and revalue what some might perceive to be mundane, day-to-day social interactions that take place outside of the school. Separately, backers of each concept have struggled to establish their legitimacy in schools. However, collectively, they have found empirical support in one another. Often a study rooted in on one concept refers to the other directly or indirectly. For example, since the early years of family literacy research, scholars, Morrow, et al. (1993) urged that a wider lens be used by scholars when framing the term *literacy* in family literacy. The authors' sentiment is echoed by scholars and practitioner who support the NLS movement. There again, the connection between NLS and FoK is also illustrated through their proponents' unyielding conviction that knowledge and skills that are acquired outside of school contexts are valuable and ought to serve as the foundation of what is taught in school. In such instances when supporters of any of the three constructs, family literacy, NLS, or FoK, invoke the foundational tenets of another, they are confirming the natural vertices that form the conceptual triad used in this study.

The positions adopted by proponents of the three constructs illustrate their extreme cognizance of deficiency discourses concerning groups from non-dominant cultures, to which mainstream narratives of literacy, language, culture, and family life all

contribute. The natural synergy between the three constructs provides a research framework within which immigrant Haitian parents' development as learners, the assets that they possess, and the social interactions that facilitate bilateral transmission and exchange of assets (i.e. knowledge and skills) between adult parent and adolescent child can be explored. Ethnographies, case studies, or other methodologies can give way to a deeper and richer understanding of these social phenomena at play.

In the sections to follow, several current studies and seminal works across three research veins, immigrant adult learners, minority PI, and Haitian families are critically reviewed. In particular, this section provides a backdrop as to *who* foreign-born English language learners are. Subsequently, the needs of secondary school children and a selection of parent demographic factors that motivate and inhibit parents' involvement in their children's educations are underscored. The section concludes with an overview of studies that provide a profile of immigrant Haitian adults and their adolescent school children residing in the United States.

Immigrant Adult Learners

Global trends in adult and youth literacy. Historically, adult literacy rates have fluctuated worldwide. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in some 18 countries with verifiable literacy data in 1990, such as Mexico and Egypt, literacy rates saw a positive upward tick over the subsequent two decades. Conversely, the African nations of Congo and Madagascar as well as the Western Caribbean nation of Haiti experienced a decrease in adult and youth literacy rates during the decade from 2000 to 2010 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics,

2012). Future projections of adult and youth literacy rates worldwide are on the pessimistic side. Dozens of countries were projected to have over one million illiterate adults and some countries five times that number in the year 2015. "The findings are not encouraging: only three countries [out of 41] are projected to reach or exceed the goal of 50% reduction of the adult illiteracy rate sometime between 2000 and 2015: China, Indonesia and Iran" (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012, p. 7). Even more discouraging news was put forth by the organization. In spite of notable increases in literacy trends strongly attributed to women's gains in literacy skills, they forecasted that only two of the 38 countries, Brazil and Mexico, had reached gender parity goals in literacy rates by the 2010. The organization projected that in 2015 nine countries spanning South America, Asia, and Africa would have illiteracy rates in excess of 10 million adults (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012).

Poverty is the most common causes of illiteracy worldwide. In addition to cultural expectations other life altering events as political oppression and natural disasters often limit opportunities for formal schooling or disrupt learners' educations for an extended period of time (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010).Immigration may also create a situation in which foreign-born adults and youth find themselves locked out, linguistically speaking, from their new home societies. While the United States immigrant stock draws heavily from several countries on UNESCO's lengthy watch list for adult and youth illiteracy, well before the arrival of substantial waves of immigrants of Latin American and Caribbean descent onto U.S. shores, the nation was already plagued by the social problem of illiteracy (Harman, 1970). According to an historical overview of U.S. census data

dating from the Colonial Era until 1970, illiteracy was the norm. In fact, in 1870 an

estimated 20% of the populace could not read or write in any language and among

Blacks, that number was four-fold at 80%. (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of

Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Although the

aforementioned numbers have since decreased, immigration trends in the United States

during the 20th century to modern day provide a backdrop to a type of situational cause of

illiteracy, different from the illiteracy that native-born Americans faced mostly due to

inadequate schooling.

Immigrant adults' backgrounds. The United States has been and remains the

most attractive destination for immigrants worldwide. Approximately one-fifth of the

world's total immigrant population calls the United States home. The immigrant

population in the United States continues to grow and in 2013 an estimated 41.3 million

residents, mostly women, were foreign-born accounting for 13% of the total population.

When the native-born children of immigrants are included in the total count, the number

of first and second generation immigrants to the United States nearly doubles to 80

million. Immigrants tend to be older than the native-born population and less than one

percent of the immigrant population was less than 5 years of age (Jong & Batalova,

2014). The vast majority of immigrants to the United States in the late 20th century and

early 21st century have been from Latin America, particularly Mexico and following at a

distant second Asia, with large shares of immigrants from both China and India. This

trend sharply contrasts immigration trends of the 1960s when Italian, German and

Canadians of White European descent made up the largest shares of the foreign-born

population. The cultural diversity of the immigrant population is also reflected in the abundance of languages spoken in homes. According to Jong and Batalova (2014), just under a quarter of the total population, an estimated 61.7 million residents spoke a language other than English at home in 2013. The Spanish language was spoken by the majority of the population followed by Chinese and Tagalog (Jong & Batalova, 2014).

Even though immigrants are presumably well versed orally in their native languages, an estimated 50% of the foreign-born population in the United States was classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) in 2013. This means that approximately 20.4 million people reported that they spoke English "not at all" or at best "well" (Jong & Batalova, 2014). According to the National Reporting System's annual report to Congress for the 2010-2011 program year, adult learners across the nation were enrolled in one of three types of programs, adult basic education 46%, English literacy 42% and adult secondary education 12%. Additionally, nearly 50% of adult students enrolled in English literacy programs tested into beginning level courses (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2013). Students at the early levels of literacy instruction are characterized by their limited ability to read and write in any language. Although they may be able to recognize a string of letters and even copy them, beginning literacy learners fall short of making the connection between written text and oral language. Furthermore, at the lowest echelons of literacy proficiency, beginning learners possess a minimal command of the English language and therefore rely heavily on non-verbal gestures or use of a handful of words they possess in their bank of English vocabulary to communicate (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010).

Adult English language learners (ELLs) vary by large in terms of their mastery of reading and writing skills (Wilson, 2014). To identify members of this heterogeneous group, various terms have been adopted and adapted over the years. Typologies that serve overtly instructional purpose have come to replace terms as *functional illiterate* and *absolute illiterate* (Ribeiro, 2006) although others clearly found no fault in the use of the term *illiterate* (Huntley, 1992; Williams & Chapman, 2007). Decades ago, Haverson and Haynes (1982) identified several categories of literacy learners that are commonly used today for grouping and to differentiate instruction, non-literate, preliterate, semi-literate and non-roman alphabet literate. These typologies help to situate the cause of adults' illiteracy within particular historical, social, political, and economic contexts and provide a better indication of where students were at on the literacy spectrum. Others have since added non-alphabet literate and Roman-alphabet literate to the list of diagnostic terms (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003).

In recent years, the acronym LESLLA, which stands for low-educated second language and literacy acquisition, was coined to identify immigrant adult literacy learners who are caught in a paradoxical situation where they must take on the cognitive task of learning how to decode print for the first time in their lives. This they must do while also learning to read, write and comprehend a second language (Vinogradov & Liden, 2009). Use of the term LESLLA goes beyond conventional terms as ESL, English language learner (ELL), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and limited English proficient (LEP) in that it makes an additional and important distinction. The term LESLLA distinguishes between immigrant learners who were highly educated in their

countries of origin and bring with them transferable decoding and encoding skills to the

classroom and foreign-born adults who are not literate in any written language. Over two

decades ago, Huntley (1992) astutely observed the latter emerging trend, which she

reconstructed in her aptly titled work "The New Illiteracy." Huntley noted that the social

lives of illiterate people were conditioned upon the societies in which they lived.

Illiterates, who lived in societies that highly valued literacy, generally advanced countries

as the United States, would be marginalized, whereas illiterates who lived in societies

that were underdeveloped or developing and that placed little value on literacy would not

suffer much in terms of social disadvantages.

By no means should immigrants' literate or illiterate status define who they are;

after all immigrants to the United States have come from diverse racial, ethnic, political,

socioeconomic and religious backgrounds. Nonetheless, newcomers' varying abilities to

read and write in English are measures of great interest to researchers and decision-

makers. Spurred on by growing immigration trends in the United States, around the turn

of the century, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) was implemented to

quantify foreign-born adults' English literacy skills across three-literacy scales prose,

document, and quantitative. Published findings in 2009 indicated that immigrants scored

lower than their native-born counterparts on all three task-based assessments. Variations

in participants' scores were correlated to their background characteristics as age of

arrival, length of residence in the United States, educational attainment in their countries

of origin, and first language spoken prior to starting school (Baer, Kutner, Sabatini, &

White, 2009). It is worth noting that despite the alarming literacy trends and statistics, not

all immigrants have been classifiable as English language or literacy learners. Of the estimated 41.1 million foreign-born residents of the United States in 2013, only half were deemed LEP. The other half of the immigrant population, about 20.4 million people age 5 and up were likely proficient in the English language (Jong & Batalova, 2014) and were not in as great need of English language instruction.

Challenges of immigrant adults. The impact of illiteracy in adulthood is life-long and has implications for generations to come. Adults who are illiterate often share similarly negative and marginalizing experiences impacting their social, psychological, and economic wellbeing (Martinez & Fernandez, 2010). Not only is the label illiterate stigmatizing but it can be used pejoratively and divisively. The term has been used to imply deficits both moral and social and has had strong, negative connotations with terms as mindless, blind, and underdeveloped (Ribeiro, 2006). People who are illiterate often experience feelings of fear and insecurity, which alongside limited schooling experiences may limit the expanse of their social and human capital networks (Martinez & Fernandez, 2010). They enter the workforce less frequently, and tend to hold low-skill and low wage jobs (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Furthermore, legislation and policy can be used to disenfranchise people who cannot read. A case in point is the two decades between 1945 and 1965 in the American South where government officials subjected scores of Blacks to a battery of literacy tests. This treatment eventually gave way to the establishment of citizenship schools that sought to disempower the status quo though literacy instruction based on the fight for civil rights and the critique of racist propaganda (Kates, 2006).

As the above example illustrates, different sociopolitical agendas often underpin the thrust to teach adults how to read and write in the dominant language. Literacy education in the United States dating back to the Colonial Era had strong religious undertones. From there, the push for English literacy evolved first to a sort of civic education; however, in the last century marked by the onslaught of foreigners to the United States, the purpose of English literacy shifted to vocational training and immigrant education (Merriam et al., 2007). Despite their burgeoning needs, adult language learners were less likely to participate in adult and secondary education courses, formal and informal (Hansman & Mott, 2010).

According to classic adult education research, most adults are motivated to continue to grow intellectually and learn new skills. However, participation is often impeded by salient barriers as cost, time constraints, lack of access to formal learning opportunities and programs that go against the fundamental tenets of adult learning. Programs that instruct on content that adults find irrelevant and lack immediate application to their lives fail to keep adults' interest and continued participation (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Barriers to participation faced by native-born adults are also the struggles of foreign-born adults, but to a greater extent. There are several other limiting factors unique to immigrants: immigration policies, economic recessions, their parents' cultural views of education, the educational opportunities that they experienced in their homelands, and their attitudes towards learning are great barriers to overcome (Menard-Warwick, 2005). Furthermore, programs geared towards immigrant adults such as Adult Basic Education (ABE) and ESL often have long waiting

lists for enrollment, a situation that is exacerbated by limited trained human resources and budget shortfalls (Auerbach, Barahona, Midy, Vaquerano, & Zambrano, 2009). In the end, a combination of social factors often impact immigrant adults' level of participation in and their access to critical adult literacy, language, and basic education programs.

Immigrant adults' schooling experiences. Unequivocally, much of the foreign-born adult population in the United States is in dire need of second language and literacy instruction in order to ameliorate their self-concept and social, political, and economic position. However, that is not to say that immigrants who have not mastered the English language are at some intellectually inferior or less capable level. Scribner and Cole's (1978) classic experimental study of schooled and unschooled Vai people of West Africa supports the notion that literacy does not necessarily equate to higher level thinking or intelligence. The researchers remarked that in other non-Western societies the purpose of literacy is not merely for job security or advancement, but that literacy serves quotidian purposes that often go unremarked. Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal work was similarly influenced by the Vai tribe of Liberia. The researchers underscored the fact that for many "newcomers" learning is situated within a community of practice and that knowledge and skill mastery calls for newcomers to fully engage in an apprenticeship of sorts guided by an "old-timer" who is more knowledgeable. This sociocultural practice of learning is encapsulated in the notion of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Although this type of learning is real or legitimate as the term implies, it takes place on the periphery that is outside of formally recognized educational contexts, and may be invisible to the untrained eye.

Foreign-born adults are not blank slates longing to be filled. In 2013, approximately 28% of the 35.7 million immigrants to the United States 25 years of age or older had earned a 4-year degree or higher (Jong & Batalova, 2014). Although nearly a third of the immigrant population that same year had not completed high school or earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate, one of the foremost theories of adult learning maintains that all adults bring with them countless and invaluable formal and informal learning experiences. A major tenet underpinning andragogy is that adult learners have within themselves "both a greater volume and different quality of experience from that of youths. By virtue of having lived longer" (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles and colleagues go on to say that "…for many kinds of learning the richest resources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves." (p. 66). From the seminal works of Moll et al., (1992) and collaborations with their predecessors Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) to more recent scholarly investigations (Macias & Lalas, 2014; Marshall & Toohey, 2010; Subero, Mendiburu, & Esteban-Guitart, 2015) there is compelling evidence that through the narratives of adult newcomers a wealth of knowledge can be unearthed and evidence of multiple literacies, which lie on the periphery, can be made visible. These experiences can be used strategically and didactically to support the social and academic development of the next generation of immigrant children.

Parent Involvement in the Education of Adolescents

Parenting an adolescent in the middle grades (11-14 years old) up through high school (15-19 years old) can present a more formidable challenge when compared to

parenting young children in elementary school. Pre-teens and teenagers often require increased academic and social support at this transitional stage into young adulthood. During this sometimes fragile developmental stage issues with identity and belonging, grade retention, discipline, gang membership, bullying, drug and alcohol experimentation, sexual activity, teenage pregnancy and drop out begin to arise (Phelan, Yu, & Davidson, 1994). Specifically, immigrant children, depending on their socio-demographic backgrounds, may be more prone to disabilities, both physical and learning-related when compared to all other children in the United States (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Also, although youth literacy rates have increased worldwide, young people ages 15-24 in Latin America and the Caribbean, like adults from that region, trail behind the rest of the world (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). The consequences of social and psychological issues and of reading disparities are far-reaching if left unchecked. These problems have the potential to affect parents, schools, and communities and to a greater extent adolescents' future families and socioeconomic prospects.

A committed partnership between stakeholders is necessary to counteract the mounting problems facing minority adolescents. Schools, families and communities can have measurable influence on children's academic and social development given that the three spheres are not mutually exclusive, but often overlap (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). The school-home partnership at the heart of PI denotes that both parties formally agree to deliberately "work toward shared goals and to share the profits and benefits of mutual investments" (Epstein, 1992, p. 1). Six actionable terms describe the widely accepted ways people and organizations can get involved. They are parenting, communicating,

volunteering, learning at home, and decision-making and collaborating with the community (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). These typologies are broad categories under which multiple permutations of involvement strategies and practices can be devised between schools, families, and communities. Through planned collaboration, stakeholders can reap the numerous benefits of PI to include increased academic performance, improved social adjustment, and facilitated transition to post-secondary studies (Ou & Reynolds, 2014).

Although at the secondary grade level the need for coordinated problem solving between stakeholders is paramount, the task of meeting that need often falls primarily upon the school. Ironically, precisely at the time when adolescents require the most guidance and support, parents' engagement in their schooling begins to decline rather rapidly in middle school and continues to taper downward through high school (Connors & Epstein, 1994; Lee, 1995). Scholars have deliberated on several factors that contribute to this downward shift in PI: parents' mistaken assumption that their children do not want them involved, the fact that secondary schools are more complex and thus more difficult to navigate, especially for parents who themselves have had less than positive schooling experiences, the intimidation brought on by the more rigorous curricula taught in middle and high schools, and decreased effort on part of schools to reach out to parents; (Brannon, 2007; Patrikakou, 2004). There is also the instability of the household due to precarious living arrangements, changes in the family composition, and rising parent-child conflicts (Rumbaut, 1994; Thomas, 2012a).

According to Patrikakou (2008) the decline in parents' influence over their children is more than likely a myth. She redirected readers' attentions towards two simple facts: (a) parents and school staff misconstrue adolescents' natural tendency to strive for greater independence from adult authority as a barrier, rather than an indication of their developmental stage; and (b) adolescents, specifically high school students, often perceive that they will be much more successful in school if their families expect them to and are there to support them. With this information in hand, it then becomes critical that parents understand what their children's needs are and tailor their involvement so that their chosen activities are perceivable by their children and align with their expectations.

According to Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler's (2007) seminal study, parents' understanding of their roles and perceived self-efficacy can help predict the extent to which they get involved and in what ways. Granted, most parents want to support their children and be involved in their schooling (Lareau, 2000), however, numerous demographic factors and parenting characteristics appear to impact parents' outlooks and serve to motivate or inhibit the activities in which they choose to partake. It is widely disputed which parent factors are pivotal to the academic and developmental success of school children. Contributing to one side of the dispute are studies that support the notion that *who* parents are (e.g., race, culture, educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status) is tantamount to student success (Cheadle & Amato, 2010; Lareau, 2000, 2011). Opposing research (McCoy & Cole, 2011; Ou & Reynolds, 2014) contends that *what* parents do is key (e.g., help with homework, read with the child, volunteer at school, ask the child about what they learned and have high expectations for their child).

Perhaps in a sort of compromise between the two extremes, some scholars have suggested that regardless of who parents are and whether parents are formally involved in schools or informally at home, the impact on student achievement is just about the same (LeFevre & Shaw, 2011).

The list of parent characteristics and demographic factors that have been investigated along the line of PI research is exhaustive. Still, where it concerns culturally and linguistically diverse parent groups' patterns and perceptions of PI, race, class, and immigration appear to be of critical importance. Although race, class, and immigrant status are merely social constructs, the real and imagined imposition of these labels can greatly shape minority parents' perceptions, attitudes, experiences, resources, and access to institutions in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Darder & Torres, 1998). In order to better understand the driving forces behind PI in language minority communities and ultimately address achievement gaps in more cohesive manner, researchers have taken a keen interest in these salient factors among others. In subsequent sections, scholarly literature from interrelated research domains is critically reviewed as they pertain to minority PI in the broader, American educational context.

Social and Cultural Factors Impacting Parent Involvement

Race and ethnicity. At the turn of the century the U.S. Census Bureau utilized six racial categories of interest in its data collection to include, White, Black, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian Pacific Islander and Hispanic. In earlier versions of the decennial census, mixed-race was also an option. The presence or absence of different racial categories as options on the census has been the source of many problems,

resulting in protests, lawsuits and widespread confusion (Hirschman, Alba, & Farley, 2000). Some researchers are of the strong opinion that because race has come to mean different things to different groups in the United States, as stigmatizing or as something to be overcome, these differing perceptions render race an outdated mode of classification. Furthermore, a growing portion of the population may identify as belonging to more than one race, and thus origin may appear to be a better indicator of belonging than race (Hirschman et al., 2000).

Despite the contentious nature of race as an identifier, many combinations of racial categories have been investigated concurrently in comparative empirical studies of PI for good cause (Cooper, Crosnoe, Suizzo, & Pituch, 2009; Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; Suizzo et al., 2014). Where it concerns minority PI, proponents of critical race theories assert that to understand where and how minority students are falling behind and their parents falling short of meeting schools' expectations a nuanced understanding of race-based differentials is crucial. Racial and ethnic minorities tend to be on the undesirable side of the widening achievement gap and are being left behind. The parents of these children also tend to be at the center of discussions of PI "problems and remedies" (Baquedano-López et al., 2013) . Researchers problematize the fact that the achievements of minority children are often compared to White-Europeans, who historically have had a head start in their educations. Scholars who are critical of PI advance the argument the values and expectations of PI are normed according to the ways in which White middle-class families, which act as the dominant group, enact their roles in schools and in their homes. These parents typically meet their social expectations

through participation in high visibility activities on school campuses and reinforcement

of academic concepts their children learned at school in their homes (Baquedano- López

et al., 2013). White middle-class parents may be more inclined to participate in typical PI

activities such as bake sales or membership in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

than their non-White counterparts. Middle class European American mothers tend to

emphasize trust and exhibit a more "laissez-faire" attitude towards the academic

socialization of their children, placing more emphasis on social achievements than

academics (Suizzo et al., 2014). Authors of critical race works (Burton, Bonilla-Silva,

Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010) might add that White parents, unlike minority parents,

can afford to have a more relaxed attitude about their children's academic success due to

the fact that they can and often do operate under the guise of "White privilege,"

exercising their relationships established upon trust that was garnered simply based on

the fact that they are White. The PI practices of White middle-class parents are often

positively received and encouraged within the wider educational community; whereas

other non-traditional practices of ethnic minorities are often rejected by teachers and

administrators as faulty PI. Studies have brought to light the jarring differences in school

personnel's perceptions of PI activities conducted by Whites compared to those

conducted by other racial minorities (Williams & Sánchez, 2011).

Racially diverse families often perceive and put into action their parenting roles in

ways that are culturally unique namely because from one culture to the next childrearing

goals may differ, and different characteristics, and outcomes may be stressed and given

more importance in their societies (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Additionally,

immigrant adults' childhood schooling experiences in their native countries and their own parents' beliefs and involvement in their schooling may serve as points of reference for their involvement in the educations and development of their own children ; (Zhang et al., 2010). Latinos, in particular, tend to take a more didactic approach to parenting, entrusting the structured academic learning to teachers who they view as experts (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). They "…often operate with a cultural model of parenting (educación) that views moral learning as the bedrock of academic learning and moral teaching (not academic teaching) as the primary role they have in their children's school readiness" (Crosnoe, 2010, p. 4). On the other hand, Asians engage in school-like activities that mirror those of White, middle-class families such as homework help and tutoring (Lee, 1995), and act on those aspirations outside of school through strategic procurement of resources found in their own communities (Nam & Park, 2014). Despite the fact that Asian parents often boast very high education standards for their children, given that their chosen PI activities occur at home, outside of the periphery of the school sphere, they are often perceived negatively by White teachers (Crosnoe, 2010). Black American parents from the middle class employ a combination of parenting practices to support their school-age children such as control, warmth and responsiveness (Suizzo et al., 2014). All things considered, although Blacks have endured a longer and arguably more arduous history in the United States living side by side with Whites, their views and the ways in which they enact their roles in the lives of their school-age children are more likely to align with those of other minority groups new to the country (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010; Suizzo et al., 2014).

Although the term race has become conflated with ethnicity, per the research, ethnicity is a key element in PI as it is telling of immigrant parents' motivations and perceptions of PI (Ryan et al., 2010). Also, given that culture and language are inextricably bound, ethnicity can be very telling of the language or languages spoken at home and the type of parenting and learning that takes place outside of school (Nam & Park, 2014). Ethnicity helps researchers make other all so important distinctions in academic performance and social adjustment not based on physical characteristic or phenotype as with race, but based on a shared cultural ethos (Hirschman et al., 2000). For example, while the term Black when used in the United States may conjure images of African-Americans, or just people of dark complexions Black includes native-born citizens, naturalized citizens, and descendants from African nations, the Caribbean, South America, Mexico, Central America, and Europe (Thomas, 2012a). A closer look at pan-ethnic groups such as African-Americans often times reveals stark parenting differences within the overarching racial category. Rong and Preissle's (2009) inquiry made clear distinctions along the line of ethnicity between the challenges and success of Haitian, Jamaican, and Nigerian students and their Black immigrant parents. Furthermore, despite being of different races, minority parents who carry hyphenated identities as African-American and Mexican-American may be closer in their parenting practices than White parents. Researchers (Suizzo et al., 2014) found that ethnic minority mothers shared a cultural model of socialization that emphasized determination coupled with intervention, unlike White mothers who were more relaxed where it concerned their children's academic performance. In fact, an empirical study of parents of school-age students in the

early grades found that minorities assigned equal value to both academic and social

success to a greater extent than Whites (Ryan et al., 2010). White parents there again,

were more likely to overemphasize social success.

Social class. On the contrary, social class, not race according to Lareau's (2000,

2011) groundbreaking research, was the leading factor shaping parenting practices and

involvement among adults. She attributed waning levels of PI during the latter part of

children's schooling to inequities inherent to parents' socio-economic statuses (SES) such

as insufficiencies in social capital and cultural capital. Through extensive ethnographic

study, she found that middle-class parents compared to lower-class parents had a

penchant for three distinguishing characteristics. First, they were highly interested in and

invested more time planning and executing their children's out-of-school activities. Also,

their interactions with professionals, such as doctors, revealed a higher level of comfort

and thus these parents were more likely to reach out to professionals for help for their

children. Finally, their verbal exchanges with their children were less restricted by

commands and directives and more likely to include the language of negotiation and

reason. These qualities, which she encapsulated in the notion of concerted cultivation, set

middle-class parents apart from disadvantaged parents who engaged in the

accomplishments of natural growth. She claimed that these parenting differences can help

explain, at least in part, achievement gaps among children. The presence and impact of

social class differences in parenting was confirmed via Cheadle and Amato's (2010)

quantitative study, which complemented Lareau's ethnographic research. One key

difference however, is that the researchers found race and ethnicity to have greater

influence in shaping parenting practices than Lareau originally let on. Notably, the sample population used in Lareau's seminal work lacked the ethnic diversity necessary to make such distinctions. Lareau sampled primarily, White and African American households from the middle and working class.

Williams and Sánchez (2011) conducted an exploratory, multiple case of the parents of African-American students, and school personnel at a public, inner-city high school. This population of low-income parents regularly experienced poverty of time, limited access, shortages in financial resources and a lack of awareness. Deficits of all sorts limited low-income, Black parents' involvement at their children's schools. On the other hand, the barriers to PI for middle class African-Americans may differ mainly in that they are not as hard-pressed for money and time. In the end, all classes of African Americans, wealthy, middle-class and impoverished may have to overcome racist attitudes and their own trepidations about participating in typical PI activities dominated by Whites (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). In the end, being of the same socioeconomic status may not always be an equalizer.

Educational attainment. Educational attainment, a long-standing key measure of socioeconomic status, can help promote and sustain upward social mobility as can possessing a significant amount of social capital (Payne, 2013). Lareau (2000) discerned that regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds all parents want to be involved in their children's schooling; she conceded that generally it is the more-educated parents who seemed to do so for the duration of their children's education. Researchers cannot stress enough the pivotal role that parents' own educational experiences and attainment

levels play in their involvement in their children's educations. Parents not only engage in activities that they themselves believe are important and are their duty as parents, but they become involved in activities that they believe they themselves have the necessary skills and knowledge to help their children become successful (Green et al., 2007). Connors and Epstein (1994) concluded that PI ebbs, not for lack of interest or desire, but due to the fact that most parents are under-informed. In their large scale study of the partnering of schools, families, and communities at the high school level, parents expressed a desire to be more involved, but they felt they need more information on how to help their teenagers academically as well as developmentally. More recently, the National Center for Families Learning (2014) reported that although the vast majority of parents believed that the time spent with their children on a daily basis was quality time, slightly more than half "wished they knew how" to make better use of it (p. 7). Shiffman's (2011) study provided a rare glimpse of the intersection where PI meets adult learning. The types and frequency of PI practices in which adult parents transitioning from welfare engaged was positively correlated with their participation in adult basic education and GED courses. This finding is significant given that unlike formal family literacy programs, parenting was not explicitly taught as a part of adult course curricula, but was undoubtedly influenced by parents' re-engagement in their own educational pursuits.

Immigration. In 2014, 654,949 immigrants were granted U.S. citizenship through the naturalization process (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2014). Although citizenship may be ideal, in order for immigrants to become citizens of the United States.,

they must have a physical presence and continuous residence in the in the country, be of good moral character, pass both an English and civics test and demonstrate an attachment to the U.S. Constitution by taking the Oath of Allegiance. With few exceptions made for the elderly and disabled, all requirements must be met (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2014). The English language and civic exams in particular may represent significant barriers to citizenship for low-educated immigrants who are otherwise eligible (Etzioni, 2007).

In addition to naturalized citizen, various other classifications are used by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to define the rights, and responsibilities afforded to persons residing in the United States and to delineate their access to public services. The categories include official citizenship through nativity, bestowed only upon those born in the United States. All others are classified as immigrants, a term that is often used interchangeably with the word foreign-born. This category consists of naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, those who entered as refugees and asylum seekers, legal temporary residents such as international students and workers on visas, and on the farthest end of the spectrum, unauthorized immigrants (Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

Arguably the most injurious category of immigrant status is that of the unauthorized immigrant. Also known as illegal aliens, illegals, or undocumented, the plight of these immigrants and their children known as Dreamers has been well documented and publicized in recent years (Martinez-Calderon, 2010; National Immigration Law Center, 2011). Without a doubt, current immigration policies threaten

adolescent and adult learners' post-secondary and employment prospects in the United

States given the obstructive nature of certain laws that seek to deport illegals and their

children who were brought to the United States involuntarily (Olivas, 2012). As a result

of their unresolved illegal status, some immigrants fearfully view the institution of the

school as the long arm of the law, especially with the growing presence of youth relations

deputies (YRDs) on elementary and secondary school campuses (Valdez, Fitzhorn,

Matsumoto, & Emslie, 2000; Weiler & Cray, 2011). Moreover, due to their precarious

illegal statuses immigrant adults and youth who do not possess formal identifying

documents recognizing their legality may lack access to or may choose not to seek

critical social services for fear of deportation (Martinez-Calderon, 2010).

The language of immigration policies often discriminates between what is proper

handling of immigrant groups based on their ethnic origins and political claims. For

instance, whereas some groups such as Cubans and Vietnamese fleeing communist

countries have been favorably received and provided for through generous government

resettlement assistance such as access to English language and vocational programs,

others such as Nicaraguans have seen their applications for asylum denied. Shunned and

unwilling to self-deport, many Nicaraguans have lived on the fringes of society in fear of

forced deportation, a form of what Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call systematic

persecution. However, the public school system can help parents and children to

transcend their undocumented status through civic engagement (Rogers, Saunders,

Terriquez, & Velez, 2008) and social justice education (Lee & Walsh, 2015). Notably,

the stringent putative actions of schools (i.e. suspension) may consequentially lead to

young adults' lackluster participation in democratic processes (Kupchik & Catlaw, 2015). Dabach (2014) also warned that teacher' misperceptions of ethnic and language minority students' as non-citizens may also contribute to the disenfranchisement of immigrants.

Although the lives of first generation immigrants, those born outside of the United States, are often rife with struggles to learn to speak the dominant language, and find sustainable employment (Wilson, 2014), the Pew Research Center (2013) reported that the impact of race, ethnicity, class, education, and legal status and their resulting hardships, may be less visible along immigrant generational lines. Through its survey the organization confirmed that more favorable educational, economic, and social outcomes were experienced by later generations of Asian, Black, Latino, and White immigrants born in the United States, that is second, third or later generations. Today, the estimated 20 million second generation immigrants who are the native-born offspring of first generation immigrants appear to struggle to a lesser extent and are experiencing great acculturative success. This population, educated domestically, often perceived their living conditions and standards of living as exceeding those of their parents (Pew Research Center, 2013). Interestingly, a unique generation of immigrant that was not explicitly surveyed by PEW can be found hovering between the two traditional immigrant generations, 1st and 2nd. The challenges of the aptly named Generation 1.5 population may significantly differ from the generations that precede them and generations that follow where culture, psychology, language, and class are concerned (Rumbaut, 1994; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Generation 1.5 adult learners oscillate between two cultural and linguistic extremes. From an educational point of view their needs are unique given that

they are neither international students who completed all of their secondary educations abroad, nor are Generation 1.5 students native speakers of English like the second generation. Generation 1.5 immigrants are bilinguals who arrived in the United States around the age of 14 and although they may have completed their secondary education in domestically they may still need years more of academic English training in order to be on the same level as their native-born counterparts (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Conversely, some scholars have challenged the discourse of partiality surrounding this generation of learners. According to Benesch (2008), those who identify as Generation 1.5 do not view themselves in terms of demographic, linguistic, and academic partiality, but instead as minorities who regularly encounter racism.

Finally, regardless of immigrants' legal status in the United States, the act of immigrating itself can severely compromise the welfare of the family in terms of their emotional wellbeing, finances, and family living arrangements (Landale, Thomas, & Van Hook, 2011). Immigration unites families as well as tears them apart and as children, parents, and extended family members part ways, the separation may create emotional rifts and mental instability (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). An empirical study of the mental health profiles of Caribbean Blacks in the United States corroborated this fact. Williams et al. (2007) reported high levels of stress and the prevalence of psychiatric disorders throughout this immigrant population when compared to native-born African American Blacks. However, outcomes varied by gender, ethnic origins, immigrant generation, and immigration history. In terms of family living arrangements, immigrants are more likely to live in the inner-cities of the United States and their homes

are more likely to be two-parent homes with a father present in the home when compared to the native-born population. However, this trend varied greatly by ethnic group (Rong & Preissle, 2009). This is significant given that the family structure may have direct consequences for parents' involvement and students' achievement, in particular their grade point average (GPA) (Heard, 2007). Heard (2007) concluded that the negative consequences of single family homes and short and long-term changes in family structure can be buffered by strong social support from people who are racially similar to students as well as by making educational advantages available to young learners.

In this section several key parent demographic factors were discussed, as they related to minority parents' involvement in the wider educational context. The review of the literature included race, ethnicity, language, class, educational attainment, and immigration. Although scholars may contend that some factors are more prominent than the others, where it concerns minority PI the overlapping nature of demographic factors are good reasons to qualify their statements. The diversity in social and cultural factors impacting immigrants makes for unique and unpredictable outcomes for their families. In sections to come, many of the same factors are revisited, however, as they directly relate to the realities of Haitian families residing in the United States.

Immigrant Haitian Adults and Their Children

Background. Haitians come from the Caribbean island of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Haitian citizens face many challenges, the most prominent being abject poverty, food insecurity and unequal access to educational opportunities. It is then no wonder why since the early 1970s, a great multitude of

Haitians known back then as "boat people" (Stepick, 1982) have emigrated from Haiti to the United States in search of equal opportunities and means to economic self-sufficiency. In 2009, Haitians were among the fastest growing minority groups in the United States, a trend that has since continued given that the federal government granted thousands more Haitians temporary protected status (TPS) after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake ravaged the island nation in early 2010 (Wasem, 2011). Decades before that catastrophic event Haitian communities were already settled across the United States with the highest concentrations of Haitians in Florida and New York (Buchanan et al., 2010).

When Haitian immigrants arrived on American soil, many by boat and some by plane, the troubles that they faced in their native land were not simply left behind. Unlike other Caribbean Blacks from Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, Haitian immigrants often struggle due to the fact that they do not speak the dominant language, English (Thomas, 2012a). The vast majority of Haitian families in the United States speak a language other than English at home most likely Haitian Creole (Buchanan et al., 2010; Plaisir, n.d.). Illiteracy and limited schooling which are characteristic of Haitian populations in Haiti often translate to unequal participation in the U.S. labor markets in low-skill, low-wage jobs. Similar to Haitians in Haiti, many Haitian immigrants in the United States also live below poverty lines (Buchanan et al., 2010).

Although the educational and training needs of Haitian adults are indeed great, their school-age children, in particular adolescents, remain a high risk group in dire need of academic and developmental support. In order to increase their academic and social performance schools invite and expect Haitian parents to get involved in their educations.

However, over and over again, Haitian parents have failed to meet schools' standards and expectations of involvement.

Social inequities in Haiti. Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, is embattled with crime, corruption, poverty, and victimization which wreak havoc on the nation's political, economic, and educational systems. While much of the problems which plague Haitian people could be addressed through education, comprehensive elementary and secondary educations are luxuries afforded to a select few in Haiti. Pervasive economic, gender, and race-based inequities permeate Haitian society resulting in gross disparities in opportunities for Haitian citizens (Smith et al., 2012). For example, it was less probable that a Haitian woman residing in Haiti had even the most basic education, when compared to a Haitian man. The United Nations Education and Scientific Organization's (UNESCO) global adult literacy study reported that over 1 million Haitians, mostly women, could neither read nor write in Haitian Creole or French which share official language status (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). Additionally, children from homes headed by college educated mothers, were more likely to experience a wealth of educational and economic opportunities scarcely accessible to Haitians whose mothers were not college graduates. Notably, Haitians of the fairest complexions often achieved a couple more years of education than their darker skinned compatriots (Smith et al., 2012). Inequities in class and color have their roots in the slave-holding system of Haiti and reflect the legacy of White European colonialism (Civan, Vilsaint, & Morisset-Métellus, 1994). First known as Hispaniola, the prosperous island was initially colonized by the Spanish Crown. The western third of the island now known as Haiti was then

taken via treaty by the French and after slave-led revolt and independence in 1804 the republic was occupied by the United States to re-establish stability and protect American interests.

Due to the dilapidated state of the Haitian public school system the majority of school children attend private schools backed by diverse funding models and socio-political agendas. Therefore there is great variation in students' basic reading and math proficiency scores from one school to the next (RTI International, 2014). Despite financial backing and intervention from world renowned organizations as USAID and UNESCO, most Haitian school children, like their parents, are emerging or struggling readers. Even though Haitian Creole has a less complex orthography when compared to languages as English or French, in 2009, the majority of Haitian students had not developed the skill to read a text in either French or Creole and at the same time comprehend what they had read until up around the third grade or years later (RTI International, 2014). Furthermore, from a pedagogic point of view, there may be little consideration for school children's varied learning styles. In typical Haitian schools, children may be expected to acquire key skills and concepts through rote memorization and recitation. Unlike most American schools which embrace a participatory model of learning, Haitian school children are taught not to question the teacher who is granted unquestionable authority by parents (Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003).

It is worth noting that although there no accountability measures in place to better guarantee high performance outcomes from elementary and secondary schools, Haitian parents typically pay about 61% of their school-age children's education costs (RTI

International, 2014). Bearing in mind that many Haitians live on less than $2 a day, and some who live in extreme poverty live on only half that amount (Sletten & Egset, 2004), it is no wonder that Haitian immigrants "…have high hopes for their children who grow up in the United States where public schools are available to all" (Nicholas & Severe, 2013, p.98). However, out-migration from Haiti to the United States of a spouse, adult child, or family member who is of working age impacts Haitian families differently. In many cases it increases Haitian school children's educational prospects and lifts some of the family's financial burdens through the receipt of remittances. In 2012 alone, over $1.6 billion in remittances were sent to Haiti, the majority of which came from the United States (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014). However, the pattern of migration where some are left behind, may also leave an economic void for already impoverished families to fill if monetary transfers are not being made from abroad to families back home. As a result, Haitian children's schooling is frequently disrupted when a contributing member of the family leaves for the United States. By the same token, children's schooling may be cut short if elders deem that continued tuition payment is an unnecessary expense that can be better used elsewhere if the child too will eventually emigrate (Amuedo-Dorantes, Georges, & Pozo, 2010). In anticipation of the child's emigration from Haiti to join their parents or relatives in the United States, the child may be kept at home and does not reenroll in their home school.

Given the breadth of economic and social disparities across Haitian society, the deplorable conditions of the public school sector in Haiti, and the economic and psychological cost of emigration, Haitians who arrive on American soil have a

remarkable challenge ahead. In order to become economically solvent and achieve their desired socioeconomic status, they must strive to learn and adjust to the sociocultural norms of American life. This population must acculturate and assimilate linguistically and schools can serve as the primary agent towards achieving this objective among multicultural, multilingual students (Gay, 2002). However, given the diverse life experience of Haitian newcomers, invariably some Haitian immigrants will fare far better than others in their pursuits.

Haitian immigrant resettlement in the United States. Outside of the Republic of Haiti, the Haitian populace is strongest in the United States. In the time spanning over two decades between 1990 and 2012 the Haitian population tripled in size. As of 2012 some 606,000 Haitians lived stateside which was an estimated 1.5% of the total population (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014). Haitians represent the second largest group of Black Caribbean immigrants, second only to Jamaicans (Thomas, 2012a). In 2010, when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake further debilitated Haiti, the United States opened its doors to even more individuals and families seeking refuge from the aftermath of the natural disaster (Wasem, 2011). Prior to the earthquake, the vast majority of the estimated 830,000 Haitian expatriates and decedents, had re-settled in the Florida (376,000) and New York (191,000) with a considerable percentage of the remaining Haitian population distributed among four smaller northeastern states (Buchanan et al., 2010). Census enumerations, however, are often impacted by Haitian immigrants' culture of distrust of the government, their questionable immigrant statuses, inability to read and speak English as well as high rates of mobility among them. A combination of these factors

may lead to an undercount of the Haitian population residing in the United States (Stepick & Stepick, 1990; Wingerd, 1992).

Haitians in the United States maintain strong transnational ties and social connections to friends and family members living in Haiti (Allen, Marcelin, Schmitz, Hausmann, & Shultz, 2012). The economic and psychological well-being of Haitian families in Haiti as well as abroad are often exacerbated by burgeoning immigration statuses of those individuals to whom they are closely tied (Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2010; Baquedano-López et al., 2013). In the United States, federal policy towards undocumented Haitian entrants entails migrant interdiction, mandatory detention, and eventual repatriation. Some are critical of this policy which they argue is biased given that immigrants as Cubans are regularly granted asylum despite not having proper travel documents (Wasem, 2011; Stepick, 1982). In the wake the 2010 earthquake, this policy evolved. Regardless of legal status, an estimated 48,000 Haitians who could prove they were in the United States a year before the catastrophe or arrived within the year after were granted temporary protected status (TPS) which shielded them from removal and lawfully authorized them to work (Thomas, 2012a). Many Haitians who were U.S. citizens petitioned for entrance of their family members around the time of the earthquake. Roughly 55,000 applications were approved for family members to emigrate from Haiti to the United States, however, due to the backlog, petitioners were long-awaiting visas which would grant their relatives legal permanent residency (Wasem, 2011). Haitians' TPS is set to expire in January of 2016 (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014).

Astoundingly, nearly 60% of Haitians living in the United States are foreign-born (Buchanan et al., 2010). Therefore, it is critical that this growing minority population is not lumped into the Black racial category as is so often done (Nicolas et al., 2009). This caveat against placing Black people, such as those from African nations, the Caribbean, and Latin America in one category is based on their individual cultural and linguistic diversity which is obscured by the blanket racial category. Moreover, Haitians should not be confounded with African-Americans, a sub group which many Haitian-Americans do not self-identify as (Zephir, 2001). Although Haitians take great pride in their African identity (Plaisir, n.d.) and are indeed a subgroup of the Black racial category, early on Bryce-Laporte (1979) followed by Buchanan-Stafford (1987) keenly observed that Haitian immigrants in the United States triply qualify as a minority group given their status as foreigners, the fact that no other cultural group speaks Haitian Creole, and that they are Black. These unique cultural and linguistic characteristics serve to distinguish this Black minority group from all others.

A common language, more often Haitian Creole than French, is a strong mobilizing factor in Haitian communities settled along the eastern seaboard of the United States (Plaisir, n.d.).According to the U.S. Census, Haitian immigrants were more prone to live in poverty, had a lower median household income, and had more family members living under one roof when compared to the total population (Buchanan et al., 2010). However, Haitians are said to be a resilient group who often find hope for their futures in their faith. Haitians often seek and get support from Catholic or Protestant religious organizations to which most have strong affiliations (Opitz, 2002). These organizations

play a central role in Haitian community building and subsistence through the provision of spiritual, economic, psychological, and educational assistance from those who share their cultural values and speak their native tongue.

On the other hand, overreliance on the Haitian Creole language and a lack of proficiency in the English language present the greatest challenges to Haitian families' abilities to organize a better life here in the United States. Census data revealed that more than 80% of Haitians over the age of five spoke a language other than English at home (Buchanan et al., 2010). Although English speaking Haitians in the northeast were generally more educated than most other immigrant groups, their high levels of educational attainment hinged upon being from families of higher socioeconomic status (Nicolas et al., 2009).

Whereas many Haitian newcomers in the United States live at or below poverty lines, an educated Haitian upper and middle class once existed. However, it remains unknown if the stratification in social class persists among Haitians immigrants. The first wave of Haitian immigrants to the United States was notably from the upper strata of Haitian society. The wealth of this elite group, often mulattos of mixed race and fair complexions, afforded them the opportunity to send their children to study abroad in France and travel by plane, as opposed to shanty boats when making their sojourns to the United States. They held the concentration of power and money in Haiti but were forced to flee from the heavy hand of Dictator Jean Claude Duvalier who rose to power around 1964 (Stepick, 1982). The next waves of Haitian immigrants however, were not of the same socioeconomic class. Arrival of the Haitian middle class was followed by poor,

Black, urban Haitians who also claimed they were fleeing political persecution (Stepick, 1982).

Still today there is no clear indication as to whether the three classes of Haitian immigrants have been absorbed by similar classes in the United States or the direction of their social mobility. Middle class Black immigrants from West Indian countries as Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad have a linguistic advantage in that their countries are English-speaking which facilitates their transition into the United States labor market (Pew Research Center, 2013). These groups who do not have to strive towards linguistic assimilation often find sustainable employment requiring similar technical or white-collar professional skills as the work they performed back home (Thomas, 2012a), but this is often not the case for Haitians who speak a Creole language shared by no other cultural group. Furthermore, during the times of early settlement Blacks belonging to the middle class, but who were illegal entrants, resigned themselves to do work for which they were overqualified and which they were ashamed of doing (Bryce-Laporte, 1979).

A pair of more recent reports based on U.S. Census data shed some light on the legal status, economic wellbeing, and educational attainment trends of people of Haitian ancestry (Buchanan et al., 2010; Camarota, 2010). In 2008, Haitians were more likely than the total immigrant population to be naturalized citizens of the United States. Over 48% were naturalized citizens, compared to 43% of the total immigrant population. (Camarota, 2010). Additionally, Camarota (2010) reported that for nearly a decade, between 2000 and 2008, 183,188 Haitians were awarded green cards or granted legal permanent residence mostly based on petitions for family-based immigration and best

estimates of illegal Haitians in the United States was around 76,000 in the year 2000.

According to a report directly from the Census, in 2009, Haitians were in the labor

market at a disproportionately higher rate than the total population. Haitian men and

women earned a median household income of $33,000 and $29,000 respectively.

Comparatively, Haitians' earnings were several thousands of dollars short of the average

annual earnings of the total population of the United States. Haitians were less likely to

own their homes and more likely to be unemployed. In terms of educational attainment,

compared to the total population, the Census reported that 22% of Haitians in the United

States had not earned a high school diploma. Additionally, Haitian males and females

over the age of 24 were about 10% less likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher

(Buchanan et al., 2010). Moreover, Haitian households were more likely to be family

homes shared by adults and children, but less likely to be intact nuclear families and less

likely to have health insurance (Buchanan et al., 2010; Camarota, 2010; Portes &

Rumbaut, 2001).

Haitian adolescent school children in the United States. In 2008 and 2009, an

estimated 310,000 Americans born in the United States, reported having at least one

parent who was born in Haiti. (Camarota, 2010). Haitians parents believe that education

is the primary means of upward social mobility. As such they place much emphasis on

high school graduation and post-secondary studies (Nicholas, Stepick, & Stepick, 2008;

Nicolas et al., 2009). Several research studies provide barometer readings as to how well

Haitian school children are acculturating and assimilating linguistically, which are critical

to academic success and continuing education. Research provides insight into the

experiences, skills, and challenges particular to Haitian school children from as early as their pre-school years (Ballenger, 1992; Delgado & Scott, 2006) to as late as the commencement of their post-secondary studies (Carbonell, Philossaint, Kijai, & Bailey, 2011; Lauture, 2007). Ever since the late nineties, researchers took a strong interest in adolescent school children of Haitian descent which has since tapered off. Whereas some studies focused entirely on Haitian youth (Bachay, 1998; Elie, 2011; Nicholas & Severe, 2013; Vilme & Butler, 2004; Walsh, 1999) others sampled groups of Haitian adolescents among other immigrant students in comparative empirical studies (Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, & Queen, 1998; Paez, 2008; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003; Solano-Flores & Li, 2006; Walters et al., 2005). Collectively, these works suggest that there are some commonalities, what could be called a shared adolescent immigrant experience. Notably, among the usual blanket factors of language barriers, issues of acculturation, and poverty there are a handful of exceptional contextual factors that may impede Haitian adolescents' academic and social pursuits.

Schoorman and Jean-Jacques's (2003) analysis of prominent factors to which "…the 'problem' of being Haitian in the U.S. school culture" can be attributed is devoid of the issue of language proficiency (p. 310). Instead, the researchers cited frequently neglected factors as inappropriate course placement, issues of non-participation, school staffs' misunderstanding of non-verbal communication, and issues of self-identity which give rise to peer and intergenerational conflict. Speaking to the latter issue, there are several compelling reasons why Haitian students should not be categorically tossed into the Black populace without regard for their inherent cultural and linguistic differences.

As explained by Rong and Preissle (2009), Haitians, Nigerians, and Jamaicans, make up the bulk of the population of Black immigrant children in the United States. However, these nationalities differ greatly where language, culture, and immigrant experience are concerned.

Although some Haitians may choose to preserve their culturally identity for reasons of rejection and discrimination by dominant student groups, other Haitian high school students may take on the hyphenated identity as Haitian-American or a completely unrelated identity as African-American (Rumbaut, 1994; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003). For years, during the early waves of Haitian immigration the media perpetuated harmful images of Haitians as practitioners of the voodoo religion, carriers of the AIDS virus, and a people prone to violence and corruption (Giles, 1990). These socially stigmatizing labels contributed to prejudices which Haitians faced and their choice of a non-Haitian self-identification Evidence of discordant psychosocial development among the first generations of Haitian youth in the United States is present in shocking student statements throughout the early literature. "[I] would rather be a dog than be Haitian" (Giles, 1990, p. 319). "My sister told me not to tell anyone at school that I was Haitian or they would say I eat cats and beat me up, and that I was to tell people that I was Jamaican" (Bachay, 1998, para. 6).

Although their children may have found alternate identities to be safe havens from the prejudice and rejection of their peers, Haitian parents frequently perceived their children's choice of a non-Haitian self-identity as an outright rejection of their home culture. When compared to Black immigrant children, native-born Black youth who are

not from immigrant backgrounds have the worst schooling outcomes (Thomas, 2012b). It is therefore palpable that Haitian parents' perception of the "Americanization" of their adolescent child or perceived downward assimilation when they take on the identity of African American or Black American was cause for friction in many Haitian homes (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In some cases, in particular households where one natural parent was missing from the home, adolescent children's embarrassment by their parents also became a source of intergenerational conflict. This was especially true for Haitian daughters of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Perhaps a sign of the changing times, in the last decade first generation Haitian students in Miami recurrently rejected the cultural identity of "American." Their strong tie to their culture regardless of their length of residency in the United States is perhaps a positive in terms of identity development, but might also be counterproductive to the linguistic and social acculturation processes (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Vilme & Butler, 2004).

From an instructional point of view, the needs of Haitian children may be more pronounced in some areas when compared within the Black population and to all other students. In the year 2000, Haitian school children had a physical disability rate equivalent to all Black children, and a learning disability rate that was less than half of that of the total population of school children (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Haitian high school students in South Florida schools had greater tendencies of academic failure on high-stakes standardized math and reading tests allegedly due in part to the fact that they are subject to racial segregation (Nicholas & Severe, 2013). Whether the racism they perceive is imagined or real, remains to be seen, but many second generation Haitian

youth, like their Black immigrant peers, anticipate that they will come face to face with racism despite being highly educated. Their negative outlooks are also detectable in their statement that the United States is not the best place in the world to live (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Paez's (2008) study enumerated quite specifically the English language proficiencies of immigrant secondary students of Chinese, Dominican, and Haitian descent residing in the Northeast. Unlike the other two groups where at least a handful of students performed on or above grade and age level, all Haitian students in the sample population between the age of 10 and 16 performed below their peers on the assessment of their bilingual verbal academic ability. The researcher suggested that students' splintered educational backgrounds in Haiti and overall lack of formal schooling experience positively correlated to their poor acquisition of the English language. In the same northeast region of the United States, Walsh (1999) conducted a review of a mandatory literacy program in Boston which served Haitian students with limited formal schooling. The program was praised for its approximate 50% graduation rate and 39% post-secondary participation rate. Given the percentage rates, at first glance the labeling of this program as "successful" appears to be a premature celebration of mediocrity. On the contrary, expectations at the long-running bilingual literacy program were not lowered; instead academic standards and rigor were raised in order to prepare students for life beyond high school. The case study established that without deliberate planning to arrive at the correct combination of motivational, instructional, and relational elements the high achievements of low-literacy Haitian students would be next to impossible.

Ironically, although the lack of literacy skills in the native and target languages is problematic, so is increased proficiency in the English language. Tse's (1995) empirical study is often credited as the first to document immigrant children's roles as language brokers who negotiated meaning between the home and host language for parents or other members of the community. This brokering of sorts is captured in a couple studies of Haitian high school students (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003). As Haitian teens increased their proficiency in the English language, they were frequently obligated to serve as translators and interpreters for their less English proficient parents and family members. This highly demanding task for which parents often signed students out from school or kept them from an extracurricular activity, created potentially hazardous relationships where roles were reversed and the parent became highly dependent upon the child for understanding and decision-making. Such circumstances where the child acculturates at a faster rate than their parents may lead to an erosion of immigrant parents' authority in their own households (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003).

Haitian parent involvement. Surprisingly, despite the significant size of the Haitian population in the United States and the unique needs of Haitian families, there is a dearth of professional scholarship on parents' engagement in their children's learning and development. Regrettably, only a handful of current studies afford practitioners an indication as to how Haitian parents of school-age children are presently getting on in this critical area. The preponderance of PI research about Haitians was published decades ago as a reaction to the influx of the three waves of Haitian immigrants to the United States.

A case study about the previous generation of children and parents serves as a springboard towards a more nuanced understanding of the barriers limiting PI in the Haitian community. Giles (1990) derived issues and interventions for counseling Haitian students and their families from the case of Jean, a typical Haitian student. The researcher determined that one of the most salient reasons why Haitian children have difficulty adjusting to American schools is the differences in "the role American schools expect parents to play in their children's education and the role Haitian parents are realistically able to play" (p. 318). Giles noted that Haitian parents are subject to eroding parental authority and are at risk of losing several types of power which they normally exercise over their households in Haiti (Giles, 1990). Many parents whom the researcher came across in her role as a counseling professional not only lacked the language and academic skills necessary to help with homework, but were impeded by their limited English, their feelings of shame due to their awareness of their own limited educations in Haiti, and the demanding schedules of the low-wage, low-skill jobs they held. Some parents who were illegal entrants to the United States were even intimidated by the possibilities of being reported by school administrators whom they perceived to be extensions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (Giles, 1990, p. 318). These contextual factors contributed in some way to Haitian parents' absence at school events and minimal contact with educational professionals at their children's schools.

More recently, a survey of factors and demographic characteristics which contributed to young Haitian women's completion of post-secondary studies revealed that psychosocial factors such as self-motivation and self-perception had the most impact on

the young women's academic success. In the domain of social capital, family support was a much stronger contributor to their completion of a bachelor's degree or higher, than community support and knowledge of a second language (Carbonell et al., 2011). Doucet (2011a) delved deeper into the contributions of Haitian parents, again at the high school level, focusing intentionally on specifics elements of PI among Haitian parents of newcomers. This study made significant contributions towards understanding differences in the ways in which PI as performed by Haitian mothers and fathers may sharply contrast with the PI typical of White, middle-class parents. Most notably, whereas White middle-class mothers generally take the lead role in the area of communication with the school and on-site appearances, in cases where Haitian fathers were in the home, they would fulfill this role and mothers were relegated to coordinating the child's transportation to and from school. Not to take way from the merits of the study, it is worth noting that Doucet (2011a) sought to superimpose samples of Haitian parents' involvement experiences onto the three root paradigms of ritualization preconceived by her, rather than allow themes to emerge naturally from the data.

Others have investigated PI in a more exploratory manner identifying emergent themes from qualitative data. Among them, Lauture (2007) suggested in her dissertation that parents' lack of involvement negatively affected Haitian immigrant children in grades K-8 and those who have transitioned to American colleges. In addition, Elie's (2011) doctoral study examined the challenges faced by young Haitian newcomers, many of whom had limited formal education, in adjusting to a bilingual program in an American school. The researcher found that while caregivers (biological parents and

guardians) were mostly satisfied with their children's progress, they rarely attended

school events voluntarily and were minimally involved in their children's schooling. She

concluded that Haitian parents' detachment from their children's schools, infringed upon

the success of the K-8 bilingual program (Elie, 2011). Unlike other researchers who

focused primarily on Haitian PI in the school sphere, Schoorman and Jean-Jacques

(2003) provided the rare glimpse of how local community-based networks and culturally

aware educators can provide meaningful support to immigrant students and their parents.

Overview of the Literature

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study is to gain a better

understanding of the connections between Haitian parent' culture and learning

experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and

development. As such, the review of the specific literature in Section 1 included three

themes which support the purpose of this study and informed the development of the

guiding research questions. To begin, a profile of immigrant adult learners was put forth,

with particular emphasis placed on who are foreign-born adult English language and

literacy learners in the United States, what their needs are, and what they bring in terms

of formal and informal schooling experiences. Subsequently, a great deal of scholarship

that forms the knowledge base concerning PI in general was presented alongside the

challenges of involvement at the secondary grade levels. A discussion was then led on

several interrelated cultural and social factors which impact PI to include, race, social

class, educational attainment, and immigration. The review then transitioned, taking these

broader topics and applying them specifically to Haitian adults and their children. Within

this theme, critical background information on Haitian culture and society was presented alongside the educational backgrounds of Haitian people. The review tied in specific social and cultural issues which may put Haitian adolescents at risk of academic failure and poor social development. Finally, Haitian parents' involvement experiences and practices were reviewed giving way to poignant cultural differences as noted throughout the early literature and emerging research.

Through this search it became evident that, although PI research has proliferated over the years, there is no panacea for the rapid decline in parents' engagement in the schooling of their adolescent children. Rather, some scholars attempt to ferret out factors which motivate and inhibit PI during the secondary school years. Others take to task PI literature and research for the inherent bias and the inequities it perpetuates. Despite their seemingly disparate agendas, these studies rely heavily on parents' demographic backgrounds and contextual factors to predict, but more often correlate parents' involvement to their children's varied academic performance and social development. To that end, this study aims to explore the linkage of Haitian parents' own cultural backgrounds and learning experiences to their involvement in their children's schooling and development.

Research Application

After the final data analysis phase was completed, research outcomes were used to inform the development of a white paper. Given that Haitian immigrant parents face challenges supporting their school-age children it was appropriate that findings were communicated to local school administrators as well as social service providers and

Haitian community leaders. The white paper put forth frameworks for the development of two research-based initiatives, a tool kit for educators and social service providers (SSPs) and a parent involvement network (P.I.N.). The aims of the initiatives were to enhance community stakeholders' cultural knowledge of Haitian families and encourage the development of culturally responsive parent involvement strategies and adult learning resources. Full implementation ought to help diminish roadblocks limiting Haitian families' engagement in schools and the greater community.

The study and ensuing project compliment current efforts throughout the community in two ways: a). Continue this line inquiry beyond the preliminary data provided by the school district and literature and b) Provide empirical support for specific considerations for Haitian PI and adult learning. In its design, the project takes a departure from the usual deficiency orientation which focuses primarily on the needs and struggles of minority adults. While this facet was presented, the intent of the project was to highlight and sensitize educators to the assets and merits of the Haitian adult community. The project stands to promote positive social change by expanding stakeholders' cultural knowledge and better equipping them to address issues which emanate from within the local Haitian community in a manner that is culturally responsive and effective. Although I drew impetus for the present study from the local Haitian community, the white paper stands to help promote social change in Haitian transnational communities throughout the United State through increased awareness of the issues and provision of strategies and tools to overcome them.

Summary

In Section 1 the study was introduced and the problem in the local community was defined. The first section brought to the forefront the rationale for the study drawing evidence of the problem from the local and wider educational contexts. Parent involvement data from the school district's annual surveys as well as personal accounts from school personnel support this investigation. Furthermore, justification for the study was gleaned from the research literature which re-affirms that dissonant PI activities among culturally and linguistically diverse parents are commonplace, and that parents are indeed engaged just in ways that are outside of the accepted norm. Scholars suggest that investigation of non-Latino families, on whom there is dearth of research, is necessary to better understand the cultural considerations that ought to be made when working with other language minority families as Haitians. Definitions of a few key terms used throughout the study were also provided for clarity. The significance of the study and its potential to catalyze social change among stakeholders in the local educational context were also discussed. This study stands to provide keen insight into the convergence of PI and adult learning issues. The three research questions which underpinned the study were presented and an extensive review of relevant literature which aligned with the questions was conducted. First, the discussion of the trio of socially oriented constructs which form the conceptual foundation of the study was provided, followed by a review of the specific literature which gave breadth and depth to the problem

Moving forward, Section 2 provides an overview of the methodology consisting of several subsections including qualitative research design and approach, research

rationale, sample population, and ethical considerations. Section two concludes with a

discussion of the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The related project is

introduced in Sections 3 where its design, implementation, evaluation, and implications

are discussed in detail. Section 4, the final section of the study, comprises my personal

reflections on the strengths, limitations, and potential impact of the project as well as

analyses of myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer.

Section 2: The Methodology

This section comprises a detailed overview of the research methodology used in the study. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. In the study I addressed the following subquestions: (a) What are immigrant Haitian adults' experiences and perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners? (b) How do immigrant Haitian adults experience and perceive their role in supporting their adolescent children who are in secondary school in the United States? and (c) What resources do Haitian parents possess that can be used to better connect the school and home? I present the study design here, along with the rationale for the research design, a description of the participant sample, and an explanation of the research context and ethical considerations for human participants. I conclude with an overview of the data collection and data analysis processes used in this study.

Multiple Case Study Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. Taking into consideration the procedures and characteristics inherent in quantitative and qualitative research paradigms and the nature of this inquiry, I determined that a multiple case study design best suited this study. A collection of cases can be compiled and analyzed in the investigation of contemporary phenomena, a specific population, or a condition (Stake,

2005). A multiple case study design lent itself to this study when I compared it to quantitative research designs such as experimental, correlation, and survey. These quantitative designs were less suitable for this particular study given that they often limit the scope of the inquiry to a few predetermined response categories by employing closed questioning techniques. Also, data analysis techniques that complement quantitative research designs yield results in the form of measures of central tendency and strongly rely on statistical interpretations for generalizability to the greater population (Creswell, 2012). The purpose of this study, to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon in rich, descriptive terms, could not be achieved through quantitative means.

Case study research designs make use of open-ended questions, which afforded me the opportunity to probe deeply and provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon. Moreover, qualitative research is concerned with individuals' interpretations and perceptions of their lived experiences and the manner in which they construct their worlds (Merriam, 2009). In recent years researchers have used qualitative case study designs in exploring the lived experiences of adult literacy learners and the affective consequences of literacy learning (Lukes, 2011; Terry, 2006). Lukes (2011) warned of equity and power issues that may arise between researcher and participants when quantitative designs such as questionnaires are used with participants who have limited literacy skills and lack schooling experiences. The scholarly works of Lukes (2011) and Terry (2006) served as exemplars of the present case study research designs, which are best suited to understanding phenomena within a bound group of potentially vulnerable and marginalized people.

Participants and Sample Size

The primary participant group consisted of nine Haitian parents from the local community. Volunteer participants met three criteria to be deemed eligible to take part in the study: (a) they self-identified as ethnic Haitians, (b) they were foreign-born, and (c) they were the biological parents or kinship guardians (Housman, 2013) of an adolescent child attending a local secondary school (Grades 6-12). The second sampling included three educators and community liaisons. Eligible participants needed to meet two criteria: (a) they possessed at least 3 years of experience working with adult Haitian adults and/or youth and (b) said experience must have been gained within an organized educational context (e.g., school, church, afterschool program, extracurricular activity). In all, the experiences and views of 12 volunteer participants were gathered and analyzed.

I considered several elements when determining the floor and ceiling of the sample size. Contrary to quantitative studies, which typically include random and large samplings of the population, qualitative studies include fewer cases ranging from a single case up to 40 cases (Creswell, 2012). The exploration of multiple cases within a single study would facilitate comparison between cases and the identification of patterns and salient themes (Glesne, 2011). In determining the optimum number of participants, I felt it was advantageous to study a larger sample of parents to ensure rich perspectives in the study through the selection of multiple parents who possessed varied demographic characteristics. Also, a larger sample would help me facilitate the cross-analysis of data from which patterns and themes could be teased out. To settle on the optimum number of educators and community liaison participants for this study, I considered their availability

within the community in terms of the size of the population. There are far fewer

educators and community liaisons in the community who were experienced in working

with Haitian adults and youth than there were Haitian parents. Also, the purpose of

interviewing educators and liaisons was not only to gain different perspectives on the

issues but for the clarification they could provide on parent interview data and the fact

that they could add validity to the study. More than one educator and community liaison

was needed to triangulate data within the group as well as outside of the group when

comparing their insights on Haitian adult learning and parenting to those of the actual

parents.

Moreover, I considered the length of time, the foremost limiting characteristic of

case study research, when settling upon the sample size. Single case studies, not to

mention multiple cases, often require lengthy investments of time to collect and analyze

data. Adding a second dimension to the time element was the fact that most of the parent

interviews had to be translated from Haitian Creole into English by me. In the end, I

attempted to approach the sample size objectively to reduce the risk of diluting the depth

of the investigation by presenting too many cases and providing enough cases so that

patterns could be teased out.

Sampling Techniques

Given that the challenges Haitian immigrants face supporting their children in the

local schools and educational system was a community-wide problem and not bound to

any one institution or organization, this made for a very large population of potential

participants. To make the best use of their time and energy, qualitative researchers tend to

steer clear of convenience sampling and generally use a targeted purposeful sampling technique to identify individuals who possess characteristics and information of interest to their studies (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Therefore, for this particular investigation, I used purposeful sampling techniques. I identified and invited parents, educators, and community liaisons from the local setting who fit the participant profile to participate in the study. In each instance, an invitation script was developed and used for the purpose of recruiting and prescreening potential participants.

Within the category of purposeful sampling is a multitude of sampling techniques to choose from to include: convenience, critical case, maximum variation, purposeful random, and snowball. Although I was familiar with the research context and remained an active member of the Haitian community, my knowledge and network of immigrant adult Haitian parents residing in the local community was finite. Therefore, I used two sampling strategies that fall under the umbrella of purposeful sampling to identify parent participants: maximal variation sampling and snowball sampling. The concurrent use of multiple sampling strategies in qualitative research is not uncommon and is sometimes necessary (Creswell, 2012). To achieve maximum variation in the Haitian parent sample, I sought out eligible participants who had different characteristics and traits relevant to the study (Merriam, 2009). Characteristics of interest included immigrant generation (first generation or Generation 1.5), gender, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, workforce participation, occupation, residential location (urban or rural), and child's gender and grade level. As a result of these efforts, I hoped to present diverse perspectives and capture the complexity of the issues.

The use of snowball sampling slightly increased the probability that maximum variation was achieved given that I asked participants to recommend individuals in the community who had the best understanding of the problem and who may be interested in participating (Creswell, 2009). From informants' recommendations, I invited participants to take part in the study, I ensured that they met the basic eligibility criteria, and I used the screening tool to ensure maximum variation by hand-selecting consenting participants who possessed varied characteristics that might add value to the study. In the end, nine parents and three educators/community liaisons consented to participate in the study, and one face-to-face interview was conducted with each person. Brief follow-up interviews were scheduled as needed.

Role of the Researcher

I needed to be cognizant of how my personal experiences and biases may influence the researcher-participant relationship and my interpretation of the data. I am the daughter of a nonliterate father and limited literate mother, both of whom immigrated to the United States separately in search of a better way of life. Also, I am a first generation college graduate and the first in my nuclear family to attend and complete college. My academic background includes undergraduate studies in Latin American and Caribbean culture and the Spanish language and a master's in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). I am the mother of two boys, who are toddlers, and stepmother to two male students enrolled in elementary and middle schools in the district. Also, I am currently employed by the school district where I work as a reading resource teacher and ESL support staff at a Title I designated high school. In the past I

have taught English and language arts at the middle and high school levels. Currently, most of the students I work with in small group and one-on-one settings are bilingual English and Creole or Spanish speakers with a few monolingual English speakers scattered throughout.

Furthermore, I am an active member of the wider Haitian community who has a stake in the members' subsistence and successful acculturation. I have taken on many leadership roles in the community such as establishing a nonprofit organization aimed at providing adult instruction in the native language and English literacy and computer literacy courses. As a scholar and athlete, I am often hailed by Haitians and non-Haitians as a success story coming out of the community. I have held various positions within the Haitian community and the larger local educational community. Over time I have established working relationships with a number of potential participants. As a second generation Haitian American, I have developed diverse associations with members of the Haitian community including colleagues, former adult education students, close relatives, distant relatives, family friends, and acquaintances. These associations have been forged through interactions in diverse settings such as adult ESL programs; church, community and civic events; family gatherings; secondary education forums; and more casually in passing. In these contexts I have worn many hats including teacher, student, compatriot, relative, and congregation member.

These preestablished relationships, though variable in strength, supported my efforts to recruit participants. At the same time, I did not work in close proximity to potential participants, and participants and I were not in constant contact. Therefore, I did

not perceive that I had much coercive influence over participants in their decision to participate or in the information they chose to divulge or withhold.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical practice called for the protection of research participants. Several security measures were taken to protect participants from harm and ensure their rights. I provided all participants with a copy of the informed consent form in the language they were fluent, either Haitian Creole or English. The consent form outlined the purpose of the study, the level and types of participant involvement, possible risks, and assurance that participants may withdraw their consent at any time. Back translation procedures were employed to confirm the accuracy of the translation of the informed consent form. Bearing in mind the pervasiveness of limited literacy and low educational attainment in the Haitian community, I read the informed consent form aloud in participants' preferred language to reduce stress and circumvent the possible arousal of negative reactions to the task of having to read and comprehend the document in any language. I furnished a copy of the informed consent to all participants including parents, educators, and community liaisons. Those who had no objections to their participation verbalized their consent and signed a copy of the document for my files.

To exercise due diligence in ensuring that interviews and the research process were mutually beneficial, I was attentive to participants' comfort and stress levels and I took care to ask and respond to questions in a manner that was neither critical nor judgmental. I also anticipated the fact that sensitive and potentially harmful information may be shared with me. To safeguard participants' identities, each person was asked to

provide a pseudonym, or one was provided for them. Pseudonyms were used to mask participants' identities throughout the study. Also, the interview transcripts were de-identified to ensure the confidentiality of participants' information. All data were securely stored in digital from (downloads of audio recorded interviews and electronic transcripts) on a password encrypted computer to which I only have access. Printed transcripts and the physical digital recording device were stored in a safe under lock and key. Data will be kept for 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

As a token of appreciation, I gave each participant a $20 visa gift card after the first interview. After the approval of the study, all participants will have received a brief summary in electronic format or print of research findings in English or Haitian Creole. To accommodate parent participants' who may have literacy and language needs, a 15-20 minute oral summary of research findings will have been provided. The purpose of this presentation is so that limited literacy participants could better understand how their participation contributed to a greater understanding of the problem in the Haitian community and a way forward. This briefing will have been scheduled at participants' convenience, in either a face-to-face setting, over the phone, or via e-mail.

Data Collection

Interviews and Parent Involvement Survey District Reports

Interviews and document reviews were the primary data collection methods employed for the present study. Both methods stem from the qualitative research tradition and provide a systematic approach to gathering information conveyed by people about their experiences, perceptions, feelings, and beliefs (Stake, 2005). Interviews entail that I

engage participants in conversation, in either a one-on-one or a small group setting, using ready-made questions related to the research inquiry. In qualitative research, some or all data may be derived from interviews (Merriam, 2009). Conversely, document review does not require human cooperation for the collection of data. Rather, public records or artifacts that were previously developed for other use are reviewed in search of what they can reveal about the problem (Merriam, 2009). I recognized that both methods have limitations in common; in particular, data is filtered and interpreted by the researcher. In the case of interviews and in the case of documents, the information was previously interpreted by the document preparer. As such, agents, to include participants, researchers, and document preparers may not share the same perceptions and ability to express what they mean or feel (Creswell, 2009). I believed that where this study is concerned, the strengths of the pair of data collection methods outweighed the limitations. Although the challenges which Haitian parents face supporting their school-age children in the schools could not be directly observed in their natural setting, face-to-face interviews with Haitian parents, educators, and community liaisons provided me a means to collect historical information, detailed descriptions of their activities, and their experiences and beliefs as seen from their points of view. Moreover, archived public documents on PI afforded me an unobtrusive means to access information on Creole-speaking parents' backgrounds and beliefs, where the issues were concerned (Creswell, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews with parents and community liaisons took take place in private settings proposed by the researcher such as the conference room of a branch of

the public library, a conference room at a restaurant, and the meeting room at a church. Though parents were discouraged to schedule interviews in their homes given the likelihood of interruptions and the possibility of privacy breaches, several interviews were conducted in this setting. Specific conditions were ensured by participants in order to agree to in-home interviews. Namely, participants and I ensured that my presence as a researcher would not expose the participant or family members to greater risks. Also, extra measures were taken to ensure privacy and quiet during the interview. Interviews took between 35 minutes to an hour and entailed audio recording participants' responses to as set of predetermined questions.

The primary data collection instrument was an original, researcher-produced interview protocol designed for the parent sample. The protocol was revised based on feedback from scholars and bilingual community members. Back-translation procedures were used to confirm the accuracy of the translations of the parent interview protocol into Haitian Creole. The translated document in Haitian Creole was sent electronically to a qualified translator to be back-translated into the original language, English. The translator did not have the original English documents to refer to. The resulting documents, my Creole version and the translator's resulting English version were compared. Necessary syntactical and grammatical revisions were made to improve the validity and reliability of the interview protocol in Haitian Creole. I also considered cultural, linguistic, and dialectal differences that might impact the comprehensibility of the protocol. Using both the English and Creole translations, input was solicited from community members to ensure comprehensibility of questions and probes. Their

feedback was used to inform revisions to the document and to ensure that the interview protocol was scripted in a standard Haitian Creole dialect.

In anticipation that some participants would be first generation immigrants and others Generation 1.5, the parent interview protocol was bilingually scripted in English (Appendix B) and Haitian Creole (Appendix C) to accommodate participants' oral language preference. The use of an interpreter and translator was not necessary given that I am a native speaker of both languages. Born in the United States to Haitian parents, I grew up speaking Creole at home and in the community with my parents and relatives, but spoke primarily English at school and with friends. I also studied Creole, its history and orthography extensively during my master's studies in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). From time to time I have served on professional boards and committees as a Haitian representative and have worked for over 8 years as an independently contracted translator and interpreter in the domains of health care, law, insurance, and education.

The second interview protocol (Appendix D) was used to interview educators and community liaisons subsequent to the collection and preliminary analysis of parent data. The protocol was revised based on feedback from scholars and community members. This protocol was scripted in English only, given that the educators worked in the community and were presumably fluent in English. Therefore, the use of back translation procedures was not necessary for the interview protocol. This instrument contained two placeholder questions that were intended to inquire about educators' and community

liaisons' views on recurring themes from parent interviews as well as their insight on data that potentially fell outside of dominant findings.

Both interview protocols contained built-in breaks to ensure that I checked in with participants on a regular basis and safeguarded against imposing on participants' and their family members' time. A stopwatch was used to keep track of time and an alarm was set for the halfway point to ensure that participants and I remained on schedule and did not exceed the 1 hour mark. In the event that a follow-up interview was necessary due to a lack of time or the need for clarification, a second interview protocol was developed with more pointed questions and probes for parents or community liaisons to answer. The second interview was brief and did not exceed 20 minutes.

Additionally, data from TPISDRs, which have been conducted annually since the year 2011, were coupled with interview data. The results of these questionnaires were made public by the local school district's Department of Federal and State Grants (FSG) in the form of a comprehensive report on the district website. These documents represented findings from the analysis of raw survey data gathered from parents of children enrolled in all Title I eligible schools within the district. To ensure accuracy, FSG members of staff completed a number of data review procedures at different times during the data collection and analysis process. Individual survey items were included from year to year to test the validity of parent responses, and limitations of specific items on the survey were underscored (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). The survey instrument has been consistently found to be a valid tool for quantifying parents' perspectives, attitudes, and beliefs. The survey questionnaires were designed to solicit responses regarding parents'

perceptions of home-school involvement, home-school communication, and participation in PI activities for the current academic year. Language preferences, preferred modes of communication, and educational attainment information were also collected. Yearly, parents' perceptions of PI at their children's school were analyzed and a discussion of the areas where the district was doing well and those that could be improved upon was included in narrative form in the report (Zmach & Cruz, 2015).

Whereas interviews with Haitian parents, educators, and community liaisons provided depth of understanding, the addition of relevant findings from the most recent district reports provided breadth to this study. The three data sources were complementary and added validity to the study. I used reflective journaling to keep track of the data and emerging themes.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Analysis Techniques

During and upon completion of each interview with parents I took notes in my reflective journal, remarking emergent themes and ways of thinking about the data. Raw interview data in the form of participants' and my words were then transcribed by me. Several interviews also needed to be translated from Creole into English. I carefully listened to the audio recordings and translated the dialog from Creole directly into English making notes on particular words, phrases, and utterances that were culturally difficult to translate. Each interview transcript was transcribed and interviews were analyzed on their own merits as well as part of the collective. A recursive multi-step process requiring the individual and simultaneous analysis of interview data from each

case was used (Creswell, 2012). The transcripts were used to weave parents' stories into a cohesive sketch of their lives. This step obligated me to look at the data word for word and read it line by line. As such I became intimately familiar with my data and was able to focus my attention on salient information shared by parents individually and to identify patterns as they began to arise. During this process I also took notes and began coding the data using colors to identify reoccurring comments stated by parents and educators. Hand analysis techniques using an Excel spreadsheet were used to store, organize and code the data. Coding procedures consisted of preliminary reflection on the data, annotation of the transcripts with notes, personal reflections and memos. A cataloging system was then used to systematically organize the data so that it could be compared, contrasted and further mined for patterns. Some days I stepped away from the data in order to approach them with fresh eyes. I distilled the data into larger themes that captured the essence of parents' attitudes, opinions, experiences, and views.

To ensure accuracy and the quality of evidence, I considered interview data singularly and in light of other interviews and document data in the form of percentages and frequencies. The triangulation of data using multiple data sources, interviews with parents, interviews with educators, and community liaisons coupled with archival data from PI district reports proved to be complementary. The triangulation process increased validity and extended the line of inquiry from purely a Haitian PI point of view to one that sought substantial connections with adult learning.

All data points were taken into account, and I presented discrepant cases that did not fit dominant patterns because they could enhance perspective on the issues. Educators

and community liaisons were asked to comment upon these cases stemming from parent interviews, for clarification and confirmation of their discrepant nature.

Data Presentation

Emergent themes and subthemes were presented in relationship to the overarching research question and sub questions that they answered. To follow, the parent interview data are first presented in narrative form as individual sketches that were casually sectioned according to parent participants' experiences as learners and knowers and as parents of adolescents. Subsequently, the results were reported by research question using data from the all three sources, parent and educators/liaisons interviews and school district PI reports. The aggregation of data led to the emergence of themes and subthemes that addressed each of the four research questions. Additional formats of data presentations included the use of vignettes, and poignant quotes (Creswell, 2012).

<center>**Sketches of Parent Participants**</center>

Nine adult Haitian immigrants consented to be interviewed for this study, six women and three men. Five interviews were conducted primarily in Haitian Creole and four in English according to participants' language preferences. At times, the language of interviews switched between Creole and English. The nine adults interviewed were parents of adolescents in grades 6-12, covering all secondary grades. Table 1 displays additional demographic background information for all nine parent participants. About half of all interviews took place in public settings such as a private room in the public library, church conference room, and private space in a cafe and the other half in participants' homes. Semi- structured interviews (ranging from 35 minutes to an hour

long) were used to gather their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. Participants'
responses to questions about their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes as learners and
knowers as well as parents of secondary students enrolled in American middle and high
schools were woven together and represent their personal narratives. The sketches to
follow afford readers a small, yet insightful, glimpse into the beliefs, practices and
realities of a diverse set of immigrant Haitian adults who were both learners and parents.
Also, brief profiles were developed for the three educators and community liaisons who
took part in in-depth interviews as a means to triangulate findings.

Table 1

Haitian Parent Participants' Demographic Backgrounds

Pseudonyms	Gender, age & marital status	Years in U.S.	Language preference	Highest grade completed	Current occupation employment status	Child(ren) gender & grade level
Johanne	Female 54 married	2 ½	Creole	6th (two years intermittently)	In-home childcare	Female 10th
Fabienne	Female 40 married	14	Creole	6th (intermittently)	Unemployed	Female 7th
Nadege	Female 49 married	22	Creole	6th consecutive	Cashier	Male 9th
Marie-Jane	Female 46 married	22	Creole/ some English	4th consecutive	Unemployed	Female 9th Male 12th
Tony	Male- 49 married	37	English	4 year degree/ some post graduate	Tutor to English learners	Male 10th
Widlene	Female 40 single	37	English	2 year vocational/ some college	Dental assistant	Male 11th Male 6th
Manoucheca	Female 35 married	29	English	High school/some college	Unarmed security guard and home health aide	Male 10th
Kervens	Male- 50 married	23	English/ some Creole	11th /some vocational	Carpenter handy-man	Female 6th
Schneider	Male- 50 married	6	Creole	Masters	Attorney, social studies professor (Haiti) tax preparer (U.S.)	Female 8th

Johanne

   Learning and knowing. Johanne was a 54 years old Haitian national. As a child

she spent many years laboring at home, never having gone to school. However, as she

matured, she thought it was necessary and around the age of 9 or 10 Johanne enrolled

herself in school. However, her schooling was soon disrupted by family members who

had errands for her to run for them. By her early teenage years, just a couple of years

after matriculating herself in school, she had no choice but to drop out. At the age of 15,

her mother passed away. She and her siblings raised themselves and cared for their widowed father who was chronically ill; he never remarried. Her parents' expectations for her were never made known.

Johanne moved to the capital, Port-au-Prince where she started taking sewing classes and learned embroidery and weaving. Later on in life she tried once again to pick up where she had left off in her schooling, occasionally attending adult classes in the evening and even paying for private lessons. However, now a mother of two, she could not keep up with the demands of her studies and work. Johanne spoke fluently in Creole, her mother tongue, but she could neither read nor write in Creole. Still, she found work in a factory that produced paper products. She worked with heavy machinery to roll and cut toilet paper. She also ran her own micro commerce selling goods, from which she learned how to make a budget, price her goods and calculate whether she made a profit. In her free time she enjoyed gardening, which she was really good at.

About two and a half years ago, Johanne left Haiti, bound for the United States where she joined her husband and daughter who had resettled there several years earlier. Each member of the small family of three was permitted to claim legal residence in the United States on separate occasions. First her husband gained residence from his brother. He then applied for residency for his daughter and wife. Johanne was the last to arrive 5 years later. She was obligated to leave her eldest son, now in his late twenties, in Haiti to be looked after by his father. This separation deeply saddened her. She also left behind her seven siblings who were dependent upon her financially.

The trio was renting a room from a close relative. In all, 12 people, specifically six adults and six school children lived in the home. For a living, Johanne provided in-home child care services to other Haitian parents in the community, but she was unlicensed. She stated that she always loved kids and enjoyed looking after them. She credited the toddlers she looked after for teaching her some common English words and phrases. Her job, however, limited her ability to participate in adult English classes at the school just a few miles down the road from her home. To her, English was an avenue leading to employment and self-realization. If she had the opportunity to study anything, be it a profession or vocation, she would have studied law. As a child in Haiti, she used to travel miles in town to attend public trials in at the courthouse. She was never afforded that opportunity by her parents. However, she was not without hope, as she offered up an anecdote of a former Haitian president who went to school at the age of 40 and learned read. She believed that an adult was never too old to learn. Although she realized that her knowledge of the English language was not sufficient to study for the U.S. citizenship exam, she boasted that she knew some key facts about the American flag. She named its three colors, cited the number of stripes and explained that the number of stars on the flag symbolized the number of states in the union. She beamed with pride of her knowledge, which she had gained from listening in on various adults' conversations.

Parenting an adolescent: Johanne's daughter was 15 years old in the tenth grade. At home Johanne instructed her daughter on her appearance and personal hygiene, manners, and values. Johanne and her husband did not earn much, but they tried to meet all of their daughter's needs and some of her wants. Just about a year before she sat down

for this interview, they purchased a cell phone for her and took on the monthly bill. Still,

Johanne stressed to her daughter that she must be content with what she had and should

not envy others. In recent weeks leading up this the interview the cell phone was

indispensable to Johanne, as her daughter was forced to move out of the family home on

account of a tiff she got into with her relatives living in the home. Her daughter was

living a few blocks away at an aunt's house, but her personal belongings remained at

home with Johanne. Johanne never stopped caring for her daughter despite the distance

between them. She called her to invite her to stop by the house before or after school for

something to eat. She also called her several times a day to see how she was doing and

ensured she was in the aunt's house at a reasonable time and was not staying out late

beyond her curfew.

Johanne expected her daughter to take school seriously. She lectured her many a

time about making something of herself and even suggested that her daughter study

medicine, or engineering. She was thankful that her daughter was a bit of a homebody,

not yet into boys, and focused on her academics. Johanne's daughter shared with her that

she wanted to be an architect or engineer someday, which pleased her mother. Johanne's

daughter was involved in several time-consuming after school activities such as the

Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and she completed service hours at the

public library. Afterschool, Johanne fed her daughter and asked her about the progress

she was making on her homework. Johanne kept close track of her daughter's comings

and goings from one activity to the next. She also kept a close eye on incoming mail for

her daughter's report cards, which Johanne and her husband both scrutinized for the

number of A's and B's their daughter earned. Her daughter often shared with her the progress she was making in various classes as well as her weaknesses. Johanne was pleased that when her daughter was not participating in a school-sponsored activity she was at home, resting or reading a book under the watchful eye of an adult.

Fabienne

Learning and knowing. Fabienne was a 40-year-old divorcee born in Haiti. Growing up she experienced learning difficulties. She pointed to her living situation, not her cognitive abilities, as the source of those difficulties; she was impoverished and attended school on and off for several years. Her formal schooling ceased at the sixth grade level. At school she learned both Haitian Creole and French although her French was limited. Haitian Creole, her mother tongue, was the language she used at home and out in the community. Her parents' never explicitly expressed career or professional aspirations they had for her. She reasoned that her parents never chose a path for her because of the lack of possibilities available to peasant families as hers living in the outskirts of the city. Cooking and cleaning were an essential a part of the education she received at home. Equally, she learned from her mother and father to respect her parents and family members. Fabienne's upbringing reinforced obedience and good decision-making. She asserted that she can see the fruits of her parents' labor in her calm demeanor and respect for others as an adult.

Fabienne has lived in the United States for the past 14 years. She lived with her three school-age children, her toddler, and that child's father. Her mother was the first to emigrate from Haiti. At 29 years of age she and her five siblings received papers by way

of her mother to lawfully enter the United States where they have lived ever since. Due to logistical challenges of traveling to and from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office, Fabienne has never studied for the U.S. citizenship exam and admitted that at this point in time it is not a priority. She was confident, however, that if she would study she could pass the two part examination, despite the fact that unlike Haitian Creole and French, Fabienne did not claim to know English at all.

Fabienne discerned that her strength in the English language was listening, not speaking. Over the years she picked up a few English words, here and there, while on the job. In Haiti Fabienne ran her own micro commerce selling goods in local markets. In the United States she has only ever worked as a dietary aide and dishwasher. At the time of the interview, Fabienne was unemployed and looking for work. She did not recollect having had any opportunities to learn a skill, profession, or language when she first arrived. The only learning that came to mind was a handful of on-the-job orientations that were required on the first day she reported to work. If there were opportunities early on, Fabienne did not take note of them because it was critical that she found sustainable employment to provide for herself and her child. In the interim while she looked for work, Fabienne had made up her mind to begin attending adult ESL classes just down the road from her home for a few nights a week. Although she had yet to enroll in the adult education program, she was confident that the classes would add to what she already knew in English. In addition to increased English language proficiency, Fabienne aspired to be gainfully employed so that she could take care of her children and educate them.

She also aimed to strengthen her Christian walk and become a member at a church where she could attend regularly with her children. To fortify her faith she prayed frequently for courage, enlightenment, strength and the right words to instruct her children.

Parenting an adolescent. The focal point of Fabienne's life had been the welfare of her children. In her free time, she enjoyed tending to their needs and taking care of her home. Fabienne felt that she had a good relationship with her eldest, a 13-year-old daughter in the seventh grade. Fabienne was diligent about her daughters' safety and security and constantly checked on them at night where they slept in their beds. She wanted her teenager to have an open relationship with her. Fabienne was confident that she had taught her daughter to be respectful. She was also certain that her daughter had learned from her how to cook and clean and look after her siblings. Fabienne engaged in these types of domestic activities with her daughter on the weekends and during her time off.

For the first time ever, Fabienne's daughter joined an organized sport after school. In years past, the only extracurricular activity in which she engaged was tutoring as needed. When her daughter has struggled with assignments, she has received homework help before or after school although she has not needed help this year. After school, Fabienne routinely saw to it that her daughter was fed, completed her homework in her bedroom, and only then was permitted to watch television. For the current school year, Fabienne has not been contacted about her daughter's academic progress or behavior. In fact, Fabienne recalled that only twice during her daughter's educational history has the school ever phoned home in this regard. On the few occasions Fabienne has promptly

responded to the teachers' requests. She firmly believed that during the school day her daughter's teachers were responsible for educating her and as such they deserved the same respect and obedience Fabienne demanded at home. After graduating from high school, Fabienne would like her daughter to attend college. Like her own parents, Fabienne had no particular career or professional aspirations for her daughter; just that she wisely chooses a path that would help her help herself in the future.

Nadege

Learning and knowing. Nadege was a 49-year-old native of Haiti. As a child she attended primary school, but due to illness she never went on to receive a secondary education. Her formal education ended in the sixth grade, but by then she had learned Haitian Creole and a little bit of French. At home, where Creole was spoken primarily, her parents gave her what she called "a good education," which consisted of conversations bearing guidance and parental wisdom. It was not clear to her exactly what her parents expected of her in terms of career or profession. However, she did recall with certainty that her parents advised her to do something good of her own choosing. Her parents expressed that her course of study should not bring shame upon the family and ultimately should "make the family happy". After completing the sixth grade, she did not continue her schooling. Upon recovering from a long-term illness, Nadege went on to take sewing courses.

Nearly 22 years ago Nadege left Haiti. With exception to a brother who visited regularly, her immediate family also resided in the United States. Nadege was married and lived with her husband, her adult son and his wife, her three school-age children, and

a newborn granddaughter. Nadege has spent a little less than half her life in the United States and over time had taken advantage of several learning opportunities. When she first arrived in the United States she endeavored to take English classes; however, being that her mind was occupied with thoughts and concerns for the children she left back home in Haiti, she could not concentrate on her studies. She stopped attending classes because she could not retain what was being taught. At that point in her life she figured that her studies in the English language were a waste of time. Although English pronunciation was difficult for her, she could comprehend much more of what she heard. She compared her proficiency in the English language to other Haitians she had come across and those in her immediate social circle, and felt that she was a bit stronger than most. She credited her knowledge of English, however limited, to her work environment where she had picked up a few words here and there. Her English was enough to get by and get things done on her own without the help of her children. Perhaps a testament to her competence in the English language, Nadege studied for and passed the citizenship examination on her own without the aid of an interpreter or tutor. She used the booklet, and on occasion, the CD provided by the immigration office to prepare for the examination.

Nadege believed that a person was never too advanced in age to learn. In the same breath, however, she explained that it is not easy to learn when someone gets on in age, citing memory loss and the need for constant repetition. She knew this from personal experience. Years earlier, she made multiple attempts at becoming a certified nursing assistant (CNA); however, as with English classes, she had difficulties retaining the

information and thought it was a waste of money to continue. She also admitted that as she learned more about the essential duties of a CNA, she found the job to be less appealing. The CNA certificate was not a way out of her current job at the grocery store where she has worked for years, but a backup plan in case she would have been laid off or fired. Nadege took great pleasure in the cashier job that she held at the time. She stated that her job kept her mentally stimulated. On the job she has taken computer-based learning (CBL) courses as well as received training on various aspects of customer service and customer service related programs and equipment. Beyond work, she enjoyed taking care of her household, attending church and participating in small groups such as the choral group. A religious woman, Nadege's personal goal was to feel closer to God, which she worked on daily through prayer, constant reflection on her conduct, and by practicing appreciation.

Parenting an adolescent. Although Nadege was content with her job at the grocery store, she made it clear that she did not want her 14-year-old son who was born in the United States following in her footsteps. Nadege was adamant that her son achieve a post-secondary education. To propel him towards that path, Nadege talked to her son daily about the expectations she had for him at school and about making good choices where it concerned the friends he kept. Routinely, she reminded him to conduct himself at school the same way he does at home, demonstrating respect for adults and for people in authority.

Her son, a ninth grader in his first year of high school, has made a great deal of progress academically and behaviorally since transitioning from middle school to high

school. Nadege had not received any complaints from his teachers, nor had she felt compelled to visit the high school as she had done in years past by paying visits to both his elementary and middle schools. Before he entered high school, Nadege used to regularly attend school meetings and to communicate with her son's teacher and the principal over the phone or face-to-face. She would take the initiative to call his teachers to ask how he was doing or show up on campus just to see what he had completed at school. She would also make a point to meet with teachers because she could not help him with his homework. She felt that the school personnel reciprocated because she took that initiative. Teachers called and left messages to share news of his progress with her. The faculty and staff at the school were welcoming and did not make her feel any sort of way about her English or lack thereof. Nadege had yet to take the same initiative since her son entered high school for lack of time, but she vowed that she would do so soon. For the time being, Nadege only learned about her son's progress and school related information from her son who would share information at will or when his mother asked. Even though she felt that her son was honest with her, in the past she followed up with the school and made surprise campus visits without informing him.

Nadege felt confident that she had taught her son to take responsibility for his personal hygiene, that she had communicated to him her expectations and aspirations for his education, and that she had instructed him well in her religious beliefs. As of late, both Nadege and her son had been busy with work and football respectively. However, on any given weekend she might have taken her son out to the zoo or simply hung out with him at home or around town. Weekly church attendance on Sundays was the norm.

Nadege worked most days during the week and often times was not home to monitor his studies and completion of his homework. Given her time constraints with work and her limited English, when she arrived at home, her role was limited to asking him if he had completed his homework.

Nadege shared that assisting her son with is homework was difficult for her because her English was not good enough to understand the materials and to check if he had made any mistakes. As a result, she has pushed her son to discuss his difficulties with his teachers. When challenges persisted beyond her immediate capabilities, she has reached out to school faculty and staff or family members. For instance, Nadege granted a nephew of hers living on the East Coast to have online access to her son's grade book. He frequently checked her son's grades and reported back as to her son's progress and areas of weakness. Often her nephew made her aware of challenges her son was experiencing in school well before there was any other indication of academic troubles at home. For homework help, Nadege has also asked her eldest daughter, a senior in college, to assist her brother. In these ways, Nadege helped her son meet her expectations for him.

Marie-Jane

Learning and knowing. Marie-Jane was a 46-year-old native of Haiti. While growing up, her experiences learning at school and at home were distinct. She had difficulties retaining what she was being taught. However, learning at home was different in that she could learn something, such as a new recipe from her mom, just by observing the activity and never actually taking part in it. While she learned a touch of French at

school, she became fluent in Haitian Creole, which she learned from her parents. She dreamed of becoming a nurse someday, but she lamented that her parents never gave her that opportunity. This realization seemed to trouble her. Although she asserted that all Haitian parents want their children to become someone someday, her parents never told her what they expected of her specifically. She added quite frankly that she never asked.

Nearly 22 years ago, Marie-Jane emigrated from Haiti to the United States. Although her immediate family also resided in the United States, some extended family members remained in Haiti. She arrived in the country having only achieved a fourth grade education. Despite her elementary education, she studied for the U.S. citizenship exam using the typical audio and visual materials provide by the immigration office in English. Marie-Jane recalled that her experience studying for the test was positive. However, she did not believe that she spoke English very well, but she suggested that her language skills were better than a friend's. Marie-Jane learned English by listening to what others said. She acknowledged that dialectal differences in the English language sometimes impeded her comprehension.

A devout Christian, Marie-Jane was self-assured that she was good at putting God first in all things that she does, as well as encouraging and helping others if and when she has the financial means. She was healing from a knee injury that she sustained on the job and from the subsequent surgery. Sometime before the interview she was let go from her full-time job and was in the process of looking for work. For years she worked two jobs as a housekeeper and a Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA). She was very grateful for the formal training she had received in this profession and wanted to find work in the

same field. Marie-Jane remarked that since the move to computer-based job applications,

she has had trouble finding employment and is dependent upon others to help her find

new leads and complete applications. Although she could recognize the basic components

of an application, like *name* and *address*, she had trouble responding to questions that

were particular to the employer. Therefore, she set her sights on learning how to fill out a

job application in English. This, she said, would make her very happy. Mari-Jane had

very few qualms about learning in adulthood. In fact, after returning from her upcoming

trip to Haiti, she had planned to take English classes in the evenings. She expressed regret

over the fact that she, unlike some people she knew, was not motivated enough to stick

with the English program she started many years ago.

Parenting adolescents. Marie-Jane was married and shared her home with eight

people: her husband, her three school children, and three other adult relatives. Her 15-

year-old daughter had just entered her freshman year of high school and her18-year-old

son, was completing his senior year of high school. Both children were born in the United

States. Marie-Jane has seen clear gender differences in raising a daughter and a son

especially when it comes to taking advice. Outside of those minor issues at home, the

teenagers were relatively good students at school. Over the course of their educational

careers, Marie-Jane insisted that she had never gone to the school on account of

complaints or issues with her children, but she had gone there for personal matters. More

specifically, she has never visited the high school where her children are enrolled on

account that she had yet to receive a letter from the school inviting her to come. Thus, she

rationalized, that since the school had not called, nor had they written a letter, then they

were not in need of her presence. Usually, she learned about what was happening at her children's schools from phone calls initiated by the school. Flyers and bulletins sent home about extracurricular activities also informed her of upcoming events, which for the most part she attended.

She was confident that she had taught her children how to present and conduct themselves in society, to respect people and display good manners. She especially emphasized the requirement to greet people upon entering a room or crossing paths with them in public settings. This was a part of her own etiquette training in Haiti. In her spare time or on the weekends when she was off from work she often went out with her children. On Sundays the family attended church. Both children were heavily involved in sports and the whole family showed their support by attending games and matches. During the school week, Marie-Jane has observed her son completing his homework at home whereas her daughter did not do much to complete her homework at home . On occasion she spotted her teenage daughter reading a book around the house, but her daughter had told her that she had tutoring at school and that she had completed her studies before cheerleading or basketball practice. Marie-Jane often asked them if they have completed their homework, just as her own mother did when she and her siblings were young children studying in Haiti. However, she proudly clarified that she modified her mother's system by taking the monitoring piece a step further by asking to see the homework and by verifying that it was getting done. According to Marie-Jane, her own mother was not formally educated, and as a result, she was not able to effectively supervise her children's studies. She vividly recalled times when she would tell her

mother that she was reading a book or studying when in actuality she was not. Recollection of these moments made her laugh. Marie-Jane was confident that she could not be misled by her kids. She had very high expectations of them, which may explain her vigilance. In the future, after graduating college, Marie-Jane wanted her children to strive towards any and all post-secondary opportunities available to them because she herself was not afforded an opportunity to earn a diploma.

Tony

Learning and knowing. Tony was 49 years old. Originally from Haiti, he resettled in the United States some 23 years ago. He vividly recalled the struggles of his childhood in Haiti where he was raised by his father. They had struggled economically, and food was scarce. At home he remembered that his father, although he had only an elementary education himself, stressed the importance of getting an education. Despite financial hardships, his father had paid tuition monthly to keep his children enrolled in private schools because the government did not provide enough public schools for the Haitian children. He remembered that it was at a young age, perhaps the first grade, when his dad was at last able to help him with his homework. His father was very firm with him and would discipline Tony if he did not remember something he was taught repeatedly. But Tony did not hold a grudge; he knew if father's actions were out of love for him. As Tony progressed in school, his father was no longer able to help him with is homework. He then relied on friends and formed small study groups with his peers to better understand the subjects he was studying.

As a child, Tony used to collect old cans and other discarded materials, and he used them to build toy cars. Tony's father observed his creativeness with his hands and would have loved for him to become an engineer or mechanic of sorts. After earning a high school diploma in Haiti, Tony went on to study automotive mechanics for 2 years. However, his fathers' dream for him was cut short when his mother, who was already living in the United States, sent for Tony to join her. While in the United States Tony studied for the U.S. citizenship exam, which he recalled was easy. He and all of his family were permanent residents of the United States. His mother had since retired, and his father had passed away.

Having arrived in the country while in his mid-twenties, Tony was obligated to return to school because his post-secondary credits earned in Haiti were not accepted in the United States. Rather than continuing with the same course of study in automotive repair, Tony chose a different path which was business. He earned a 4-year degree after which he commenced his master's level studies in education. He worked for many years in the banking industry as a mortgage loan originator, which he felt was a rewarding job. However, he has found his most recent career move to be even more fulfilling. Tony was working as a classroom paraprofessional in the public school system in a support role for English language learners (ELLs). He had done that job for 3 years. He placed his master's studies on hold and was working towards a professional teaching certification in mathematics grades six through nine. Based on the state's evaluation of his credentials, Tony was about 12 college math credits shy of earning a temporary educator's certification.

Unlike many of the newcomers Tony provided support for the middle school classroom, Tony's proficiency in the English language was established well before emigrating from his country of origin. Knowing that he would one day join his mother in the United States, Tony deliberately took classes in English, in addition to French, Spanish, and Haitian Creole while still in Haiti. He spoke Haitian Creole and French fluently, understood Spanish somewhat, and as he said, he could "defend" himself in English. Although he was content with his competence in the English language, he conceded that there was always room for improvement. Tony was never much of an avid reader or writer in neither French or English and believed that he could improve some in his writing skills.

Tony attested to the fact that learning in adulthood can be a challenge; especially given the many hats he wore as a husband, father, employee, and now as a college student. He also believed that the amount of time that had lapsed since he was last a student has made his current endeavors in mathematics more difficult. Tony strongly believed that in the end, his hard work would pay off. He credited his training in the martial arts for teaching him discipline and responsibility. A martial arts national champion and former instructor, he believed that his preparation for the world of work began there, in the dojo.

Parenting an adolescent. At home Tony and his wife were responsible for a 14-year-old son. They also shared their home with one other adult. Raising his son in the United States has been a great experience for him and he thanked God for it. Having experienced education both in Haiti and the United States, Tony frequently drew from his

personal experiences to instill values in his son. Tony was positive that he had taught this son to be responsible, to try his best even if he fails, and to remember that education is the key to success. He shared with him anecdotes about growing up in Haiti and the advantages of being raised in the United States. The way he saw it, his son was privileged because he had the benefit of a bus waiting at the curb to take him to and from school, of two hot meals served at school, and of quality tutoring before and after school, all of which Tony did not have access to growing up in Haiti.

Tony passed down to his son his love for the martial arts. On the weekends and his days off Tony drove him to karate class, or they took part in a family outing. Tony shared that lately, his own schooling, in particular his homework load, had disrupted the flow of their weekly father-son activities. When Tony got home from work or school, he expected that his son, who had arrived hours earlier, had found something to eat and had started completing his homework in his bedroom. Tony's son had what Tony considered the bad habit of studying with the television on. Tony had been trying to break him of this habit and had stressed to his son that he expected him to study with the TV turned off. Even when he was completing his own homework, he let his son know that he was willing to drop what he was doing to help. His son usually declined the help with his homework, but that did not stop Tony from communicating with his son's teachers.

Tony explained that his son did quite well in the way he conducted himself at school, considering that he was a grade level ahead of his peers of the same age. He was a 14-year-old sophomore; most kids are 15 when they enter their sophomore year of high school. As such Tony noted that he required a bit more prodding to get things done. Even

so, teachers have always complimented Tony on his son's conduct in class and the respect that he showed towards them. However, Tony expected more from him and wanted his grades to parallel his good behavior. Tony boasted that he has never missed an open house and that he used opportunities to meet face-to-face with teachers as well as by e-mail in order to establish strong lines of communication. He also perused the school website to find out about activities at his son's school and frequently checked his son's grades and upcoming assignments via the grade book on the parent portal online. Tony was of the opinion that the school district used technology quite effectively.

Despite the fact that he himself held a 4-year degree, Tony stressed to his son that he did not want him to take the same educational path. After his son would graduate from high school, Tony wanted him to aim for more than a 4-year degree. He reminded his son that a 4-year degree did not guarantee him a job or financial solvency. In fact, he described to his son the consequences of not having a good education. He stated that these life stressors were the factors that drove Tony to spur his son to do well in high school and to pursue a higher education.

Widlene

Learning and knowing. According to Bahamian law, children born to Haitian parents were not recognized as citizens of the country. Born in the Bahamas to Haitian parents, Widlene had no recollection of life outside of the United States and had no citizenship ties to her place of birth. She came to the United States at three years of age where she since lived with her immediate family. The sibling group of five was always tight knit, for which she credited her parents. From her parents she also learned how to

take care of the house, cook, and clean. Although Creole was primarily spoken at home with her parents, neither of whom spoke English, Widlene did not consider herself to be fluent in Creole. She was able to understand a little bit of Spanish, but while she was listening and writing in English was when she had the most confidence. Widlene felt that she could improve her vocabulary and speaking skills some. Because she was one of the oldest children in the home, she stated that she learned English on her own. Given that her parents did not speak English, she and her siblings had to be self-reliant. Back in high school, almost 20 years before she sat down for this interview, she and her younger sister had studied together for the U.S. citizenship exam. She recalled that the whole process was fairly easy and that she passed.

Widlene completed all of her formal education and workforce training in the United States, starting with pre-K. In high school she was employed as a waitress in a country club and a cashier at a supermarket. Her early jobs taught her how to speak to people, customer service and dealing with money. Her parents expected her to go to college and get a degree, which she did not think much of. After graduating with her high school diploma, Widlene pursued post-secondary studies just as her parents wished, completing some college before transitioning to vocational school. Several years after graduating she earned a certificate in dental assisting. She took great pleasure in her job where she was always learning new things. She believed that there was always room to learn, even in adulthood. Case in point, after years of working in the dental field, she had been considering a career change, but she was not sure what exactly she wanted to do. As to what spurred on this change, she was not sure of that either, but she was sensing that a

change was due. In the immediate future she wanted to volunteer at the homeless shelter or shelter for abused women. However, from her point of view she had not taken any concrete steps towards that goal and did not know where to start. What she did know was that as early as the following year she would like to take a trip to Haiti accompanied by her sons. She believed that this would be an opportunity for them to better understand their heritage and to understand the real daily struggles endured by so many people.

Parenting adolescents. Widlene was a divorcee and single mother to two boys. She enjoyed parenting her sons and believed that as a mother she was doing well. Basketball had been at the center of their weekend activities in the recent months. She provided transportation to and from their games and attended games to show her support. Widlene spent the majority of her free time with her sons. On non-game days, they visited with their grandparents or worked on the organization of their home. Although her sons shared a passion for basketball, which they played in their free time and as an organized extracurricular activity, her experiences raising them had been very different given their unique personalities and academic needs.

Parenting her eldest, a junior in high school, was fairly easy with some minor challenges. Widlene shared that her son had an individual education plan (IEP) ever since Pre-K. She attended all of his quarterly IEP meetings for the past 13 years of his educational history. From one year to the next she played a role in the development and execution of his IEP. She believed that having an IEP benefitted her son in that he got more time to get his work done and to work towards comprehending the subject matter. When he or his younger brother struggled to understand a concept, which was

uncommon, Widlene helped as best she could. She researched the homework problem online, and even enlisted her sister as a backup for homework help. Often times her eldest son studied late into the night in his bedroom. She described him as studious, consistent, and in some ways predictable in his work ethic. Widlene was certain and happy that the accommodations in his IEP would follow him on through college. She wanted both of her sons to graduate from high school and work towards at minimum a two-year degree.

Conversely, her youngest son, an 11-year-old in middle school was not so challenged academically, but he lacked focus for other reasons. She described his flaw as being the class clown and "Mr. Popular" which distracted him at school. He was not nearly as focused and studious as his older brother. Widlene had witnessed a gradual change in his focus and maturity since he entered the sixth grade, which she was grateful for. She believed that the fact that teachers in the middle school were stricter and more persistent unlike his teachers in elementary school which helped to compel his change for the better. Also, although her youngest son was a great student academically speaking, Widlene used e-mail and phone communications with his teachers to help redirect his focus and behavior.

Contacts and visits with the school for either of her sons were as needed primarily using e-mail and phone. Widlene stayed informed of her children's academic progress though interim reports that were issued every 4 weeks, as well as the district grade book portal which her sons checked and showed her almost daily. In terms of what was happening in her children's lives and with their classmates at the schools, her sons kept her informed. She believed they shared almost everything with her and sometimes a bit

too much information. She reciprocated by imparting good advice, much of which was based on her own experiences in secondary school. She felt that it was her responsibility to talk to them about the friends they kept, about peer pressure and overall build up their self-esteem. She also remarked, with a smile, that she had to talk to her sons about girls.

Manoucheca

Learning and knowing. Manoucheca was 35 years old. Although she came to the United States at the tender age of 6, she recalled with great details the troubles she had learning at school and struggles she experienced living with family friends while her mother was preparing a life for her in New York. Her schooling was never disrupted, yet she had difficulties learning in school in Haiti. At home, she was neglected and abused by her caregivers and each time upon receipt of the news of her daughter's mistreatment her mother moved her from one home to the next. Finally, after several years of suffering in the hands of strangers, her mother brought her to the United States where she has lived for 29 years alongside her U.S.-born siblings. She found learning in U.S. schools to be a more pleasant experience because in Haiti the threat of corporal punishment was always looming if a student made a mistake. An avid reader with a great memory, Manoucheca recalled that studying for the U.S. citizenship exam was fun but nerve-wracking at the same time. Even before taking her oath of citizenship less than 2 years ago, Manoucheca felt that she had assimilated linguistically and culturally. Although Manoucheca speaks and understands some French, which she learned during her childhood in Haiti, she felt she was more proficient in Haitian Creole, but she still would not describe herself as fluent.

Manoucheca was the eldest of four children. She learned and was responsible for cooking, cleaning and caring for her siblings, skills that proved useful after her mother passed away. By default, Manoucheca, then in her early twenties, became the guardian of her siblings who were in middle and high school and then took on the financial responsibility of caring for her grandmother and several family members who were in Haiti. She recalled that her mother never talked to her about her expectations and that she understood that it would be up to her to make a way for herself. After graduating from high school she took some college courses and was still a few credits short of an associate's degree. She completed her studies as a patient care technician (PCT) some years ago and planned on taking a refresher course for the requisite state licensure in Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) before sitting for the actual test. Passing the test would qualify her to work in her area of certification. From Manoucheca's point of view, her PCT certificate was a step towards her goal of becoming a registered nurse (RN). Two weeks before the interview she started working part-time as a home health aide (HHA) which allowed her to practically apply what she had learned at school, such as taking patients' vital signs and giving them showers. She was also employed full-time as a licensed unarmed security officer on the night shift.

Parenting an adolescent. In recent years, much of Manoucheca's educational pursuits had been motivated by the fact that she is married and the mother of two children. She was confident that among other things, she had taught her eldest a 15-year-old high school sophomore the value of a good education and that she had clearly articulated to him her expectations: education, good judgment in who he calls a friend,

and to never do drugs. At home, she also emphasized the use of proper English which she models for her children. She stated that she did not keep many friends who were themselves Haitian or who spoke "slang" because of the negative perceptions in society. She asserted that per teachers in the last school district he was enrolled, her son was a model student, but he was teased by his peers for the way he spoke because it was "white". This teasing, in part, motivated her family to relocate. In his current school he had not experienced those problems and was flourishing academically and athletically.

A great deal of Manoucheca's free time was spent taking her son to his football games and wrestling matches and attending his competitions. She directly supported his teams and coaches by volunteering her time and donating resources such as bleach and detergent to the wrestling team. She felt that she had to give a little more than others to compensate for the fact that the school her son attends was situated in an impoverished neighborhood and that there were children on the team whose parents were not supportive and did not give back. Although her participation in his activities was time consuming and exhausting, she wanted her son to have a better experience than she had as a teenager. She added that he was worth it because he was an all-around good kid. She had never had any complaints about him.

During wrestling season her son often completed his homework at school under the supervision the coaching staff and during the off-season Manoucheca closely monitored his studies. She explained that her son knew to keep her informed of paperwork she may need to sign and activities and meetings that were going on at the school which she and his stepfather regularly attended. She also made her e-mail address

and phone number available to his teachers in the event that his behavior needed to be redirected. Manoucheca felt that it was critical that parents be involved in their children's lives and that they push them to want more for themselves. Her son was an aspiring football player, which Manoucheca was supportive of, although with one stipulation, he had to graduate college with a 4-year degree. The way she saw it, her son's priority should be earning a scholarship right out of high school and keeping it through college. From Manoucheca's point of view, one foreseeable barrier to her educational aspirations for her son was the fact that her son is Black. She went on to explain that Black men are often stereotyped as being poorly educated and that the media portrayed Black men as such. Despite the trials her son may face based on his race, Manoucheca still had high hopes for his future and expected him to accomplish more than she ever did.

Kervens

Learning and knowing. Kervens was a 50-year-old father of four. He had been living in the United States for nearly 23 years. At the time of the interview, his mother, siblings and other family members still lived in Haiti, where he was born. Kervens felt that his parents did a fine job at pushing him to become somebody. His childhood in Haiti consisted of attending school away from home and learning to farm on the weekends. Kervens credited his parents for much of what he learned at home. They had very high expectations for him and taught him to respect others, regardless of their status, that cursing was not tolerable and that his extended family members, like his uncle had the right to discipline him if he was acting out of place. Although his sisters were not enrolled in school for lack of financial means, Kervens's father stressed that as his only

son, it was important for him go to school and make something of himself. His father exposed him to hard work out in the fields as a way of saying that a good education could deliver Kervens from a future of manual labor and poverty. Kervens completed the eleventh grade in Haiti, but was not satisfied with his learning experiences in the classroom. He recounted that there were many things that he thought he had learned, only to realize later on that there were major gaps in his knowledge. He blamed the lack of detailed explanations and the absence of caring and committed professors for his academic shortcomings. He also acknowledged that the fact that his parents could not read exacerbated the situation.

Kervens went on to learn carpentry, masonry and other construction skills from a Haitian boss who he paid to take him on as an apprentice. He continued down this path when he immigrated to the United States in his early twenties. Kervens attended vocational school which extended his knowledge in the construction field. He also completed the fifth level of an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program. However, Kervens was exposed to spoken English through a friend, ever since he lived in Haiti. Thus, in addition to his native Creole, and the little bit of French he learned in school, Kervens spoke English and some Spanish which he learned on the job. He rated his English proficiency as between 50-60% and believed that there was still more to learn in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Despite his perceived low English proficiency, Kervens studied for and passed the U.S. citizenship exam.

Now as a family man, Kervens decided to return to school in hopes of earning his general contractors' license and a better living. He traveled frequently to different

locations to take courses in the evening with a couple of his friends. He thoroughly enjoyed the learning experience, and felt that regardless of whether or not he earned the license, the skills and concepts he had learned in class had already proven very useful in his line of work.

Parenting an adolescent. Kervens was the father of four, three girls and a boy. His eldest, a daughter, was in the sixth grade. Kervens believed that it is his duty to keep a watchful eye over his daughter to ensure her safety. This, he stated, was the focus of Haitian parents who had daughters. He and his wife taught their daughter to respect everyone and how to cook. They stressed that she should focus on school. A part of his role had been taking his family to church where his children could learn values and boundaries. He was highly concerned about negative peer pressure his daughter may have been experiencing. He feared that drugs, alcohol and tobacco were accessible at school and out in the community. His aim was to make sure his daughter read and did her homework. Although, overtime he had helped her establish good study habits allowing him to be less involved in her studies.

His daughter was involved in choirs and dance. His role was to pick her up from her afterschool activities. Kervens stayed connected to her middle school through the letters they sent home. He also called the school or attended meetings to check up on his daughter's progress. He had high aspirations for his daughter as he envisioned that she would continue her schooling even after earning a 4-year degree. Kervens strongly believed that a good education would afford his daughter an easier life than he has had.

He wanted her to take full advantage of all the good things the United States had to offer, but believed that it would be up to his daughter to make the right choice.

Schneider

Learning and knowing. At 50 years of age, Schneider's reflection on his childhood conjured up good and bad memories. Although they were poor, his parents found a way to put him and keep him in school year after year. He recognized that this was a very difficult task for a Haitian parent to accomplish. He spoke passionately about the troubles he faced learning in school, the use of corporal punishment in the classroom and his struggles to find help with his studies while at home. Schneider's parents had very high expectations for him because they believed he was very intelligent. His parents pushed him to do well, though they could do very little to help him with his academic studies given their limited schooling. He had fond memories of the support he received from his mother, father and siblings in the form of parenting and caring. They would wash and iron his clothes and prepare breakfast for him before he headed off to school. After completing his bachelor's degree in Haiti, he traveled abroad to France where he earned a master's degree in international law. He then returned home to Haiti where he attended teacher training school for two years and became a full-fledged professor of social science.

Schneider was fluent in Haitian Creole, his mother tongue, French, the language of his profession and English which he learned since immigrating to the United States about 6 years prior to the interview. However, he was not a year round resident, nor was he a United States citizen. Given his career aspirations in Haiti, he did not feel that the

time was right for him to change his nationality. Schneider lived and worked between

both countries, traveling back and forth every two or so months. Though he was a

practicing attorney and professor in his home country, in the United States he was trained

as a tax preparer. As a part of his high school education in Haiti, he had taken English

classes, but felt that learning more English in a formal program was necessary in order to

lead an active life in the United States. According to Schneider, a person without English

in the United States was like a person who did not have an education at all. In his free

time he enjoyed reading up on matters dealing with his profession. He did not have any

current plans to return to school, but he had considered studying for a Juris Doctorate

(J.D.) later on in life when all of his children had left the home and had completed their

post-secondary studies.

      Parenting an adolescent. Schneider was married, and he and his wife shared

their home with their three children, all of whom were born in Haiti. His youngest, a girl,

was 12 years old in the eighth grade and only recently had arrived in the United States

two years prior. She was a clarinet player in the middle school band and attended an

afterschool program. In Haiti Schneider enrolled her in etiquette classes. He believed she

learned from him how to conduct herself out in society and he reinforced social skills,

such as good table manners at home. He felt that his daughter was a very good student in

Haiti. Thus, Schneider held her to the same standard at her current school, despite the fact

that the rigor and language of instruction had changed dramatically. Whenever he was at

home in the United States, he believed he served as his daughter's second teacher and

guide. He made it a point to help her with her studies. Also, when he was away in Haiti, he did his best to support her over the phone.

He felt that his children were lucky to have a parent in the home that could support them all around, academically and developmentally. Growing up in Haiti, he did not have the level of academic support from his own parents that he is now providing to his children. He intentionally watched his favorite game show with his daughter so that they could learn new words and phrases in English together. Schneider had always been good at mathematics and made himself available to help his daughter when she struggled in that subject area. He encouraged her to make an effort at her studies and to use a dictionary whenever she got stuck on a word. Schneider was very proud that his daughter was no longer classified as and ELL student and was doing well in school.

Having raised all his children between Haiti and the United State, Schneider was very familiar with both educational systems. He preferred the U.S. system to the Haitian one because as he saw it there were greater opportunities for hands on and experiential learning; whereas in the Haiti of his childhood, he was expected to learn through rote memorization and repetition. He also felt that the U.S. system was more open to PI, which was a plus. He was a strong proponent of the trilogy between the teacher, parent and student. Schneider preferred to communicate with his daughter's teachers via face-to-face meetings and phone calls were a secondary means. He referred to his daughter's report card grades as a means to stay informed of her academic progress. Schneider wanted his daughter to graduate from high school and to attend college. However, a 4-year degree would not satisfy him. He believed that his daughter should at least earn a

masters' degree just as he did. He was willing to work and do whatever it took to get her to college and support her throughout her studies. However, he said that he understood fully and realistically, that her achievement did not only depend upon his aspirations for her, but that his daughter must have for herself the willingness and conviction to achieve.

Profiles of Educators and Community Liaisons

Ms. Gondola. Ms. Gondola was an Italian-born high school educator, who herself emigrated from Europe to the United States some 15 years ago. She was a foreign language teacher well versed in Italian, French, and Latin. Although she had a short six month stint as an adult educator in the English language learner (ELL) program where she taught Haitian adult learners, she has worked directly with Haitian newcomers in grades 9-11 full-time for 15 years. She was the cosponsor of an afternoon academic support program which provided pre-teaching, scaffolding and other interventions for ELLs. Furthermore, for 10 years she sponsored a foreign language club with a diverse student membership. During her decade-long tenure as club sponsor, the position of officer was held by different Haitian students for 9 of those years. From her experiences she has garnered the respect of her peers as an authority in ELL content, instructional strategies, and what she calls the human component of working with immigrants which constitutes providing timely social, psychological and emotional support to the ELL student body.

Reverend Flanbert. Reverend Flanbert has held many prominent positions in his communities, both in Haiti and in the United States. Of Haitian origins, the ordained pastor had over 45 years of field experience working with Haitian families in the capacity

of minister, teacher, and mentor. He also worked for many years in the school district as a paraprofessional providing direct academic support to high school Haitian ELL students and translation services for their parents, faculty and administrators. Reverend Flanbert's foremost roles and passions had always been ministry and teaching. Since leaving Haiti he had coupled spiritual ministry and education as a means to address the needs of the human being holistically. His belief system centered on not just tending to the souls of members of his congregation but on ensuring that his flock experienced a greater quality of life here on Earth.

Dr. Claire. Dr. Claire was an insider and rising leader in the local Haitian community with over 25 years of experience working with Haitian adults and children. Born to Haitian parents, she immigrated to the United States from Haiti at the age of 16 where she had her first encounters with the English language. She graduated from a local high school in the district and went on to study cosmetology before pursing bachelors, masters, and terminal degrees in education. At the time of the study she was a professional educator in the school district where she taught French and served as an ESE inclusion teacher. Her experiences and research led her to consultancy roles and various positions that placed her in the forefront of the Haitian community. She had facilitated countless Title I PI workshops on behalf of the district and her most recent print publications had opened doors for her to conduct educational seminars in Haitian schools and churches locally and in Haiti.

Results by Research Question

A greater understanding of immigrant Haitian adults' perceptions and experiences in their roles as parents of secondary students and learners themselves was sought through this exploratory study. The purpose was to identify the connections between adults' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. Multiple case study research methods were used in this inquiry. The narratives of adult parents as well as insight from local educators and community liaisons and archival data were gathered and explored for themes and patterns. To keep the findings clearly organized and concise, I chose to report results by individual research questions which guided this study starting with research subquestions numbers 1, 2 and 3. These subquestions provide insight into the cultural, perceptual and experiential nuances of being an immigrant Haitian adult learner and parent. I then expand out into the major research question which addressed the broader connections between themes which emerged in response to the subquestions. Although the results are presented by research question, given the breadth of the study there was a great deal of thematic overlap. Throughout this section rich, illustrative quotes from adult Haitian immigrants and educators/community liaisons as well as some statistical data from the most recent district PI survey reports are used to validate themes and patterns and to increase the credibility of my analysis. Subsequently, lucid explanations supported by the literature are used in the interpretation of the results. The section then closes with conclusions drawn from the research and a summary of the contents of Section 2 Methodology.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, What are immigrant Haitian adults' experiences and perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners? The following themes were identified in response to that question: *Home-Oriented Learning Guaranteed, Scars of (Un)Schooling, English for Life,* and *Learners for a Change.* These themes were undergirded by several subthemes and patterns that are illustrated in greater details using some of the most poignant quotes provided by key informants.

Home-Oriented Learning Guaranteed

Haitian immigrant adults were accustomed to two distinct learning experiences which derived from their cultural upbringings. Learning was expressed as a two-pronged system organized into *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* (Creole). The former in some ways was the Haitian cultural equivalent of character education in the United States coupled with domestic skills training and the latter, corresponded to schooling. The identified categories of learning *edikasyon* (learning at home) and *enstriksyon* (learning at school) were fundamentally different in terms of the people and mediums by which knowledge was transferred; contexts in which students learned, the value inherent to each type of learning, student satisfaction and ends that could be achieved by acquiring them. Take for example Marie-Jane's childhood experiences:

> DP: Think back to your childhood. What was it like for you learning at school and at home?
>
> Marie-Jane: It was a little difficult. It wasn't easy for me to learn.
>
> DP: Why was that?

Marie-Jane: My head was too hard. I don't know what happened, but I didn't pick up quickly.

DP: So when you were in class what made it known to you that it was difficult for you?

Marie-Jane: Well, the reason that made me know that I had difficulties [is that] for children who understand, who learn quickly, when you tell them something, it's twice that you'll tell them. However, when you're repeating, repeating, repeating, [yourself] until you have said it up to five, six times before the person understands, that's a person that doesn't learn quickly.

DP: So for you—?

Marie-Jane: Yeah, I was a little slow.

DP: And at home did you feel that it was the same situation? What was it like for you learning at home?

Marie-Jane: No. When I was at home I learned very quickly. If my mom was cooking food and she told me 'Come watch what I'm doing.' I might not want to actually put my hands in it [get hands on] but whatever she's teaching I take it very quickly.

Marie-Jane's learning at school and at home illustrates, in high contrast, the differences between the two learning environments and related experiences that were somewhat typical of immigrant Haitian adults. Despite their innate differences both education and instruction were essential to adults' perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners.

However, in Haitian society learning that was oriented towards the home and the

greater community was guaranteed. Haitian immigrant adults' experiences with

edikasyon in the Haitian cultural context were fairly consistent, in the sense that every

participant asserted that they learned key skills and ways of thinking and conducting

themselves at home and in their communities. Their educations were directed by parents

and close relatives during childhood and adolescence. Fabienne's definition of an

education captures the essence of most immigrant adults' childhood learning experiences

at home.

> Education at home means when you live at home you respect your parents, you
>
> respect your family. That means there are things that you're not supposed to do.
>
> You wake up and you'll cook for your parent's, you wash, clean the house. You
>
> know, that's what an education is. (Fabienne)

With regards to gender, most women interviewed learned how to cook and clean

from their parents. An education in the Haitian culture seemed to naturally lend itself to

training in domestic skills, such as these. This type of training was prevalent among the

women interviewed. According to Dr. Claire it was a sort of preparatory training for

children who were expected to "run their own households someday". Gender seemed to

guide whether a child was taught to cook and clean as there was little noted difference

between the *edikasyon* female adults received at home in Haiti or post immigration in the

United States. Participants Widlene and Manoucheca both learned household skills from

their parents; despite having relocated to the United States at a very young age.

Like Fabienne, most other adults stressed that they learned values and social

norms, especially respect at home from their parents. Respect was a consistent part of

Haitians' educations at home. Adults stressed that respect was to be extended to everyone, from all walks of life regardless of their social status. As Kervens put it, "However the person is you have to give that person respect. Little, medium, high, however the person." Nadege explained that demonstrating respect and etiquette according to her "system in Haiti" can help a person get what they need because people who are not treated with respect will likely mislead them. Kervens added that culturally, Haitian parents wanted folks in the community to have a positive impression of their children and upon meeting the child community members should respond "Oh, that child respects people!" He went on to explain that the reason being is that a Haitian child who is in trouble or who encounters a problem outside of the home is very likely to get help from people in his community if he is known as a respectful person. In this case, respect was more than a tool to assist people in getting what they wanted moving forward in life, respect could potentially save their lives.

The lessons taught by parents were almost always transmitted via oral language. Throughout interviews adults told of how their parents *pale* or talk to them. During their youth, adults heard life lessons, personal anecdotes, lectures on respect for family and people in authority and explanations of social graces. "A good education" per Nadege, was when a parent "talks to you, they tell you what would be good for you today…what not to do, what would be advantageous for you…" Critical thinking, decision-making and good judgment were apparently an integral part of Nadege's upbringing at home and the same could be said for several others. Although the primary method through which Haitian children learned was *pale*, observations and experiential learning were also a part

of their parents' teaching repertoire. For instance, to teach him the importance of school, on the weekends Kervens's father deliberately brought him to their family farm to work alongside him. The lesson he was trying to emphasize for his son was that if he did not perform well at school, he would have to work hard doing manual labor to provide for his family.

Reverend Flanbert remarked that in Haiti there is a saying that goes "Haitian children learn at home, at school, and on their way home from school." The latter part of that adage refers to the fact that growing up in Haiti; participants' communities were also places of learning. Haitian communities may have served as environments where the characteristics taught to children could be checked and reinforced. "So if I have my uncle, if I'm on the street he's coming [and] he saw I'm doing something wrong, he has a right to punish me," remarked Kervens.

Haitian adult immigrants seemed to be more than recipients of *edikasyon*; they were beneficiaries who derived an advantage from the knowledge passed down to them from their parents. Most adults believed that they learned well from their parents and expressed a sort of satisfaction and pride regarding their upbringings. They would boast, that their parents gave them a good education at home or that they learned a lot from their parents. Adults used the past tense to refer to their *edikasyon* as a process that was complete and good. Educations were given to them, and only a few defined this type of learning as a future aspiration or something they were in need of. Nadege mentioned that she was working on herself in terms of "…behavior, appreciation, and things you should do and things you shouldn't do." Fabienne had similar goals as part of her spiritual

growth. However, this learning in terms of private prayer, praise and worship was almost always a self-directed practice within the broader religious context.

By and large, Haitian youngsters were expected to internalize discourse, characteristics, and skills that were taught through interactions in their homes and out in their communities. It was compulsory that they demonstrate their acquisition of culturally significant characteristics and skills through every day, practical application of their *edikasyon*. Based on the results, well into adulthood Haitian immigrants' learning from close relatives and the community was for the most part solidified and ingrained in their identities. Fabienne felt that the value of respect for others, which she learned from her parents, was reflected in her personality "Because I am a person who respects people. I've never been in conflicts with people ever sense I was a kid until an adult." Similarly, Tony affirmed that his home life defined him and strengthened his character.

> And that's how life was and I would probably say that this kind of life that I live kind of shaped me for who I am right now. So I know that things are not always going to be easy, so you have to work hard for it. (Tony)

An *edikasyon* seemed to be the foundation of life in Haiti where people lived in poverty and faced daily hardships. In essence a good *edikasyon* helped Haitians to cope in light of their circumstance.

Reverend Flanbert elucidated on the cultural nuances of *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* in Haiti. He explained that like two concentric circles, instruction was embedded within the larger sphere of education. It was not only possible for a Haitian adult to be educated without ever having gone to school; it was somewhat the norm. On

the other hand, culturally, for an adult to achieve a high level of *enstriksyon* at school but never an *edikasyon* from their family could be disgraceful and even devastating. A person who did not know how to conduct him/herself in society, exhibited poor social graces, did not use proper etiquette or speak respectfully with others was routinely looked down upon as someone *san edikasyon*, that is someone lacking an education.

Scars of (Un)Schooling

Immigrant Haitians' experiences with *edikasyon* differed greatly from their experiences of *enstriksyon,* that is to say formal schooling. Many immigrant Haitian adults were not privy to an extended history of instructionally sound and uninterrupted schooling neither in Haiti nor the United States. Although their *edikasyon* may have been perceived to be complete, some immigrants' instructional experiences were fundamentally different and left much to be desired. Only a handful of participants completed high school or beyond (see Table 1); however, whether they were low-educated or highly educated, most immigrant adults suffered adverse schooling experiences in Haiti which left their mark on their lives. The source of mental scars left by their schooling, or lack thereof, varied to include: poverty and economic hardship; gender inequities; inadequate instructional methods and tools; poor teacher training; parents' limited academic knowledge; and the fact that as adults, immigrants had "a lot going on."

Poverty and financial hardships were the most cited reasons for the disjointed schooling experienced by several immigrant adults. Their families simply did not have

the financial means to provide their children opportunities to go to school regularly, if at all.

> When I was a kid so I went to school; however, after that I stayed home…I went to primary school and after that I didn't really continue too far in secondary, but I went to primary. (Nadege)

> I lived with my dad, although he only had an elementary school education, having his children, put them in school, to him that was very important. Although economically the life was not kind of easy. And also I should say that in Haiti most of the schools you find they are private school....So my dad had to pay on a monthly basis. (Tony)

> Why he didn't send [my sisters] to school because at that time they didn't have enough support to brought them to school. (Kervens)

Johanne's case was a dissimilar to the others given that her family did not view schooling as a priority, although she did. As a result, she defied the adults and self-enrolled in school, though she was unable to sustain her schooling for long.

> When I was a child I had good intentions for school, but you know I came to go today and then not go tomorrow. And after I just didn't go to school. But I liked it. I was the one who used to go. When I was 9, [or] 10 years old I had started. I saw that school was necessary so I went. But if I went today my aunt or my cousin didn't' want me to go tomorrow and they have something for me to do so that way it came to pass that I didn't go. When my cousin started to talk a lot [nag]

around 12-13 years old I saw that I couldn't go anymore so I went to sewing.

(Johanne)

Like Johanne, after completing the sixth grade Nadege also went on to take sewing

courses as an alternative to formal schooling. Other gender differences in schooling also

emerged from adults' narratives. Kervens believed that in the past, schooling may have

been viewed by parents as a priority for male offspring.

But when I came to school, my father was told me, he had only me, like his dad

passed away so he had only me. He said I have only one son, I have to push him

to school, to finish his education…My sisters some of them, the older ones didn't

go to school, some of the little ones go to school. But they always push

everybody. Why [my dad] didn't send them to school, because at that time they

didn't have enough support to brought them to school. However, the parents

always focus on the boy, mostly. Not now, [but] in the old generation the parents

always focus more on the boys than the girls. (Kervens)

There seemed to be some truth to Kervens's statement as all three of the Haitian men who

were in their late forties, early fifties were considerably more educated than the collective

of women who were in or around the same decade of life and who spent their formative

years in Haiti. Johanne self-enrolled in school during her early adolescent years and

attended on and off for a couple of years before she was obligated to drop out to run

errands. Fabienne on the other hand, had gone to school on and off, but stopped at the

sixth grade, Nadege completed the sixth grade and Marie-Jane attended primary school

and completed the fourth grade. By contrast, when Tony left Haiti he had already

completed high school and had commenced his post-secondary studies. Kervens estimated that he had about a twelfth grade education by American standards and had taken up an apprenticeship in construction before emigrating. The most learned of them all, Schneider had completed a master's degree in international law while studying abroad in France.

There were considerable differences among Generation 1.5 women, Widlene and Manoucheca who arrived in the United States at the age of 3 and 6 respectively. Both women completed Grades K-12 domestically. Widlene went on to vocational school and Manoucheca completed some college and held a couple certifications and licenses. Perhaps because schools are free in the United States, the gender differences in schooling were in no way as pronounced for Widlene and Manoucheca, who were educated in the United States, when compared to the four first generation immigrant women who spent their formative years in Haiti. Still, despite the fact that their educations were continual, these two women lagged behind Tony and Schneider in terms of educational attainment. Thus, the provision of free schooling alone does not explain the higher levels of educational attainment accomplished by these men.

The absence of a basic education may have caused the most irreparable harm. Since arriving in the United States 2 ½ and 14 years ago respectively, neither Johanne nor Fabienne believed they have had any opportunities to learn. Not even English language classes were accessible to these women due to the fact that they both had to start working immediately to support their families. The lowest-educated of the group, they did not believe they had an opportunity to make up for the loss that began in Haiti. Many years

later, a few participants grieved the learning opportunities that they missed and wished

they had taken full advantage of opportunities to return to school.

> But school is everything and well I didn't go to school. I did have one year or so.
> (Johanne)

> It's not like that I don't like it [adult night school]— that's [just] lazy— it is
> laziness. Because, I'm in the country [United States] for a good amount of time, if
> I did like everyone else too and went [to adult school] I [already] know A and I
> would [have learned] B, [and by now] I [would] know AB and C. (Marie-Jane)

What Marie-Jane was trying to say was that back then she had some basic knowledge and

if she would have continued going to adult school, like so many other Haitian immigrants

she knew, she would have added to her knowledge base. According to her, she lacked

motivation to attend school. She seemed to be living with that regret.

On the other hand, immigrants who had more consistent schooling during their

childhoods believed they had opportunities to learn skills or professions in the United

States. Marie-Jane earned a license as a certified nursing assistant (CNA). Similarly,

Nadege pursued CNA licensure on several different occasions; however each attempt

ended in failure. Kervens took classes at a local trade school to enhance his knowledge of

carpentry and construction skills which he had learned in Haiti. Schneider learned the

language and regulations of tax preparation. Widlene completed all of her studies in the

United States. A few years after high school she went on to vocational school earning a

certification in dental assisting. Manoucheca completed her training as a patient care

technician (PCT) and unarmed security guard. Thus, compared to unschooled Haitian

immigrants, those who were schooled may have brought with them foundational knowledge and skills that were transferable in the American educational context.

As described earlier, poverty and financial hardships were the dominant explanations for the limited schooling experienced by many Haitian immigrants who spent their formative years, early elementary and secondary grades, in Haiti. However, economic lack was not the source of all difficulties faced by immigrant Haitian adults. For those who had the good fortune of going to school, inadequacies in instructional methods, tools, and teacher training also negatively impacted their learning and knowledge base. Schneider, a social studies professor who attended teacher training school in Haiti, elaborated upon and personally attested to the leading sources of learning difficulties he, and perhaps other Haitian school children, experienced in Haitian classrooms:

> Let's say for example in the past when a child was in the fundamental years— [they] used to use a sort of books that were a lot more difficult, but today they don't use those books anymore. In terms of methods as well… They would tell you to write for instance the word *manman* [mom] and if you write that word mom and you made three errors in it then they would spank you three times or give you three lashes. If you're writing a dictation that had four or five phrases that had a group of words to form the phrase, with every phrase that you made a mistake it's that many lashes that they give you. So it was a lot more difficult and I went through that route. (Schneider)

Among those who started their formative educations in Haiti, the threat of spankings and

lashes for every error made was very real. Schneider explained that those methods were

no longer used in Haiti due to changes implemented by the Ministry of Education;

however, they had already left their mark on the lives of several school children, now

adults. Manoucheca and Kervens for instance, their instructional experiences fit in with

Schneider's description of methods formerly used in Haiti. When I inquired about her

childhood learning experiences in Haiti and the United States, Manoucheca recalled the

psychological dissimilarities of learning in both environments.

> Difficult because the school in Haiti is not the same as here. Because you have to
>
> literally read chapters and then the next day you'd only have a couple of hours to
>
> memorize everything in the book. And then the next day they would actually call
>
> row by row and we are all supposed to be basically repeating every single thing
>
> from line to line. And honestly I didn't do that well all the time. Because I had a
>
> lot going on…It [learning in the United State]) was different because you didn't
>
> get spanked if you don't remember something. Because you know in Haiti if you
>
> didn't do so well with your letters you get a spanking. Like the teachers were
>
> allowed to spank you, which is terrible. But here it's not like that, so you kind of
>
> tend to focus more on education instead of stressing out because 'I might get a
>
> beating because I won't remember'. It was more laid back, easier [here in the
>
> United States]. (Manoucheca)

The learning environment was an additional stressor for Manoucheca. However, she

found learning in the United States, post immigration, to be much less stressful because

corporal punishment was prohibited. Although Kervens's learning difficulties stemmed from challenges in his childhood, it was much later on in life when realized that he had some significant learning gaps. In his opinion, his lack of knowledge of certain concepts was due to the methods his professors used in Haiti and a general lack of explanations.

> You have to go to your house and read everything, you have to hold them right there [pointing to his head]. But some points they didn't tell you word by word what the meaning of them is but there are some good points I didn't hit on them. So when you grow up then you realize there was something missing. (Kervens)

Kervens called into question some Haitian professors' motives for becoming teachers. He reasoned that some teachers were in the field for financial gain and not because they had the passion and skill to teach.

Moreover, among the educated, the learning difficulties they faced at school often spilled over into their home lives. As students, it was difficult for them to find the help they need from their parents who themselves had limited or no schooling.

> A lot of Haitians for the alphabet [alphabetization] we are behind. So all parents didn't know any words, and how to write. So as you grow up, [whatever] they give you at school, you have to come home hit yourself [beat yourself up] to learn it, and to read it. Some people get help, but most of the people don't have the help in that case. (Kervens)

> As far as homework is concerned, you know, my dad unfortunately was not able to help with homework because of his, academic level. But I had to find friends

and I had to form groups with other students from school so that I was able to
understand some of the subjects. And that's how life was… (Tony)

Unfortunately I lived in a house where there were not people who had the level
that was able to help me. (Schneider)

Even Widlene, who was educated in the United States, faced similar challenges as the
three men.

Learning at school was easy. I had no issues at all. At home mom and dad didn't
speak English, so we had to do everything on our own. So, all our learning was on
our own. (Widlene)

Although the first three quotes are from men who attended school in Haiti, Generation
1.5 participant Widlene had a similar experience. She and her siblings were obligated to
fend for themselves in order to get through school because her parents could not read or
speak English, the language of her schooling in the United States. So it could be said that
difficulties at school were sometimes amplified if parents and those living in the home
did not have the educational experience or language skill to provide much needed
instructional support to these Haitian children who are now adults.

Schneider contextualized the idea of PI, the Haitian Creole equivalent being the
word *ankadreman*. The term is a derivative of the French word *encadrement* which
means framing, support or supervision. Though *ankadreman* was a working concept in
Haitian society, it was limited to parental and familial support at home. In terms of the
school curriculum, parents *ankadre* or support their children by reinforcing what they
learned, providing clarification and explanations on homework assignments. The

personal experiences of Schneider, Marie-Jane, Tony, Widlene, Manoucheca and Kervens' revealed that their parents were not able to *ankadre* them academically given their limited schooling or lack of "alphabet" according to Kervens. Haitian parents however, were vocal about their expectations. They "pushed" their kids, they provided breakfast in the morning before school (unlike in the United States, lunch was not served at school in Haiti), and they did other things like launder and iron their school uniforms. Schneider was the beneficiary of this form *ankadreman* from his parents, siblings, and others who lived in his home growing up, but he regretted that he was forced to cope and manage his school work without assistance.

In terms of the interconnectedness of schools and homes in Haiti, again Schneider vouched that it was virtually inexistent. Although he attended teacher training school in Haiti, his conviction that mainstream PI structures in the United States did not exist in Haiti, was based on his personal experiences prior to his daughter immigrating to the United States.

In Haiti what they used to do they have a meeting with all professors. However, [among] parents there is none of that where parents would ask for a meeting with the professor to ask the professor how their child is working… When [my daughter] went to school in Haiti I know that every three month they organize a meeting but the meeting is not about work. But it's a meeting where they will present first of all the difficulties and advantages…what's good for the school or the problems the school is facing, like the economy, etcetera, parents not paying. However, to know how the child is individually developing there's nothing like

that. The meetings are to present the school in general or the school [won] a

championship…(Schneider)

He believed that Haitian schools did not create opportunities for parents to get involved.

From his experiences, parents who showed interest in engaging with their children's

schools were rejected. Schneider could explain the cultural differences between PI in

both the United States and Haiti, given that two of his older children went through and

graduated from secondary schools in the United States, while his youngest up until 2

years prior to this study, remained in Haiti where she received her elementary education.

Other Haitian immigrant adults experienced difficulties that arose from their life

circumstances, that is to say that they "had a lot going on," these were Manoucheca's

exact words. She used this phrase to describe her lack of academic progress and focus on

account of the fact that her mother was in New York and had left her in Haiti with family

friends. She moved several times and was physically, mentally, and sexually abused by

her guardians. Another example is Nadege's experience when she first arrived in the

United States and tried her hand at English classes.

But my kids were in Haiti and I was always thinking about them and thinking

about them and I gave it [English classes] a rest. It's like I just studied something,

I don't understand it, can't retain it, so I'm like it's time that I'm wasting. (Nadege)

Nadege also made several attempts at passing a training course to become a certified

nursing assistant (CNA); however she never finished the course mostly because she could

not remember what she was being taught. Having a lot going on in terms of separation

from her children seemed to create a fog in her memory and diminished her motivation to

continue. Johanne, a 54–year-old mother and wife, who ran an unlicensed, home daycare also had a lot going on. In order to contribute to the household finances she looked after several children in the tight quarters where she, her husband, and her daughter slept. Johanne never turned away a new client and was obligated to be flexible for parents who had inflexible and varying work schedules. Given that parents would often pick up their children late in the day, and also because she was exhausted, she was unable to attend English classes in the evenings.

> At times I could have gone to [adult education site] but [one] does not have time. When the parents come and pick them up and you know up there [the adult education site] is pretty far and you don't have time to walk and you just feel that you can't go. And you know it happens that you're not motivated either if you don't find someone to go with you—by the time you finish it's four, five, six, seven, o'clock. Perhaps if you find someone to walk there with you it will be more motivating. But when you see that you're going to take to the streets on your own and then you have to return again. (Johanne)

The distance and the absence of a companion to walk with her to school were clearly additional demotivating factors.

Participants' schooling experiences, though rife with difficulties, were not always easily categorized or explained. Fabienne just thought she was "bad at learning" and provided little more of an explanation beyond, "You know it was Haiti." Marie-Jane reasoned that she just "did not pick up well" and seemed to blame herself for her underachievement. Adults were critical of their schooling in terms of quantity and

quality, especially those who did not have even the most basic education. They believed

that they suffered and that their unemployed status and the inaccessibility of adult

education programs were evidence that the lack of learning opportunities in Haiti

thwarted their potential in the United States.

English for Life

Although formal learning opportunities may have been limited for several

students, the number of opportunities to learn a language whether at school or elsewhere

seemed to be in their favor. The English language was not taken for granted by those who

found themselves "living in it" especially after many years of living in Haiti where they

spoke the national language, Haitian Creole, fluently and were able to function even if

they were not literate. Many immigrant Haitian adult newcomers recognized the power

that was inherent in speaking the language, if not reading and writing it. Schneider, who

has lived in the United States for 6 years, said it best "…when you come to a country and

you do not speak the language, it is like someone who has never gone to school." A

lawyer in his home country, he took several years of formal English classes to help him

transition to a life as a tax preparer during the alternating months when he lived in the

United States.

In fact, the majority of participants at least started taking English lessons in Haiti

or in the United States and within the group of parents some completed entire English

language programs. Even Marie-Jane and Nadege, who were low-educated, were able to

use their limited literacy skills to study for and pass the U.S. citizenship exam. All

participants who prepared for and passed the exam used the same tools and methods, the

book in English, the audio CD and independent or pair study at home. No one actually enrolled in a formal citizenship course.

Learning English was quite important to Johanne because in her own words it was the language she was "living in." She had a keen awareness of her limited literacy in Creole and adamantly stated "I don't have English, I don't speak English." Despite not being able to attend adult school in the 2 ½ years she has lived in the United States, Johanne learned a few English phrases and words informally in different contexts. She boasted that she had a great memory for her age and that she had learned several civics related facts in passing, though she always told herself that she could not pass the U.S. citizenship exam because she did not meet rumored employment requirements.

> When they tell you about the flag, I always know it has 13 stripes, it has three colors. When they're asking you about the states [I]always know how many states there are. There are people that say there are 53 states but I know that there are 50…I don't get the information [from anyone] it's just that when they are talking I sometimes hear them say that. (Johanne)

Moreover, she learned several phrases of common courtesy from the children she cared for at her in-home daycare.

> I know 'good morning' that means *bonjou* [Creole translation]. After that 'thank you' is *mèsi*. And after that, when the children say to you 'thank you' you say 'you welcome'. Little William talks to me too and I talk to him. When they ask you for something, they say 'mine, mine'…[I learned these words] when the

children are talking to me. And I sometimes hear the adults saying it too.

(Johanne)

In similar fashion, Fabienne, Nadege, and Marie-Jane all "picked up some words" on the job. The latter two participants also took some English classes early on when they first arrived in the United States. Kervens completed five levels of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in an adult education program in the United Sates. Well before immigrating, Kervens had some knowledge of the English language which he learned from a family friend who frequently traveled back and forth between Haiti and the Bahamas.

Although English was the language that they were "living in," several adults still preferred Creole, their mother tongue, over English. The TPISDR provides a quantitative analysis of PI survey data followed by discussions and recommendations which serve to inform strategic plans at the district and school levels (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). Per the 2015 TPISDR, 6.3% of middle school parents and 6.9% of high school parents may prefer to read or write in Haitian Creole. During interviews, five of the nine participants stated that their language preference was Haitian Creole. Among the Creole speakers, there was an observable sense of pride in the fact that they could claim the language as their own, in spite of their desires to learn English.

Ever since I was a kid. You know it's your language ever since you're raised, so you're used to it. (Johanne)

But me, the native, natal, foundation of mine is Creole (excitedly)! (Marie-Jane)

Conversely, Generation 1.5 immigrants Widlene and Manoucheca lacked confidence in

their Creole-speaking abilities although growing up it was the primary language spoken at home.

> Just a little bit of Creole. I'm not fluent in it. I understand that, but to say things back to a person that's speaking to me, I'm like—I'm not confident enough to speak it that well. (Widlene)
>
> Creole I'm not that bad, I can actually read, and try to write Creole. But I'm not going to say that I'm really good at it. (Manoucheca)

Born in Haiti and raised in the United States since she was 6, the 35-year-old Manoucheca went on to speak to the acculturative change that she had undergone over the past 29 years.

> I just felt like English became my priority, my—you know what I mean, first language. It's almost as if I gave up my citizenship from my country to become part of somebody else's country. So it's kind of hard to remember anything from your country. (Manoucheca)

Although they were not classified as Generation 1.5, long-time residents Tony and Kervens also preferred English for interviews. In fact, the interview with Kervens was set to take place in Creole, but when I asked him questions in Creole, he responded almost entirely in English. This went on for a while, until I switched into English so as not to undermine his abilities in the English language. Kervens would only jump into the Creole language when he felt he wanted to clearly make a point.

Furthermore, among adults who grew up in Haiti, French was familiar to many who spoke it only a "little bit." However, French was spoken fluently by only a select

few who had received their formal training in the language in school in Haiti. A teacher and attorney in Haiti, Schneider used French as the medium of communication just as regularly as he did Haitian Creole. "I speak French which I learned at school, which is the language of my profession in my country." Tony was also a polyglot who formally learned four languages at school in Haiti. He remarked, "I speak of course Creole fluently. I speak French fluently. I understand Spanish a little bit, and I can defend myself in English."

The multilingual characteristic of the Haitian population is not so surprising when finding are compared to the TPISDR. According to the 2014 report, over 21% of parents in the local school district reported being bilingual or trilingual. In particular, bilingual English/Creole was the language preference of 6% of middle school parents and 6.9% of high school parents. Interestingly, the survey may reflect the fact that several participants picked up a third language, Spanish, stating that they spoke it "a little bit." They mostly learned Spanish in passing, and used it rather infrequently. Kervens for example, learned a bit of Spanish from Latino limited English proficient co-workers on construction sites where he worked on a regular basis. Tony and Widlene also understood some Spanish, but would not say that they were fluent. This code switching of sorts was observed throughout most interviews. Interviews with Fabienne, Nadege, and Marie-Jane, who clearly had Creole preferences, were interspersed with English words, phrases and entire sentences. On occasion, Nadege and Schneider used French words to express themselves. Even educators and community liaisons Dr. Claire and Reverend Flanbert moved between English and Haitian Creole as the medium of communication during interviews.

All participants were familiar with at least two, if not more languages. Their confidence in their abilities seemed to vary based on exposure to the language and whether their language learning took place in a formal or informal learning environment. Code switching was commonplace during interviews with immigrant adults regardless or their educational level. Generation 1.5 adults were more likely to claim the host culture language as their own and lacked confidence in their fluency in the mother tongue. The present study did not examine fluency and usage of their second, third and even fourth languages, but it was understood that knowledge of the English language was essential to life in the United States.

Learners for a Change

The theme learners for a change signifies that adult Haitian immigrants acknowledged that if they were able to push through perceived barriers, learning had the potential to catalyze serious change in their lives. When asked, all participants answered in the affirmative that a person was never too old to learn. Although the subject of learning in adulthood seemed to conjure only thoughts of learning in brick and mortar classrooms, Marie-Jane appeared to have a keen sense that learning could occur anywhere, anytime and from anyone regardless of the phase of life one was experiencing.

A person is never too old to stop learning. Because I might know something and you don't know it. And you might know something and I don't know it. There are times that people believe that it's only at school you learn. No! You might be walking on the street right out here and you learn. (Marie-Jane)

All participants believed that people could learn even when they were advanced in age. However, age, memory and a lack of self-confidence seemed to be the most resounding obstacles to learning, was well as the typical challenges of work and family life. Johanne and Fabienne both responded with anecdotes about people they had heard of who went back to school in their senior years and were successful. These stories seemed to inspire them.

> For example there was a President in my country, they are always saying that, who went to school at 40 years old. And it came to pass that he was president and then at 40 years of age he went to school. You are never too old to know [to have knowledge]. (Johanne)

> I know. I know because what you said there is true. I was watching TV and there was a guy how old—74 years and he still goes to school. And he graduated at 74. You are never too old, because it's when you are dead, maybe when you're finished living. (Fabienne)

Others responded quite positively as well, although several participants who had attained a higher level of education compared to Johanne and Fabienne added caveats about the troubles of learning in adulthood. The challenges these participants noted are generally well documented throughout the literature.

> When you're older it takes more time to learn but it's never too late to learn. (Nadege)

> It is definitely a difficult thing, when you're getting up in age to go back to school to learn you know. When you pair up those things with the responsibilities that

you have, you have family, you have job, now when you want to manage schooling with this, it can be very difficult. It's not because you cannot learn, but you probably do not have enough time. But, I think learning keeps your mind [sharp], that's my personal opinion. And I can attest to that, currently I'm taking a couple math classes, trigonometry and calculus. (Tony)

Absolutely! Why not! There's always room to learn, always. Every day you're learning something new. (Widlene)

Wow, I mean it's true you are never too old to learn. Learning to me in adulthood, you have to really want to learn because it's not like you are 15, 20 [years old] anymore. You're older and your mind-set, that doesn't really work the same. (Manoucheca)

Well it's a good experience. To learn what you didn't know…when you [are] learning something you didn't know and when you know it, it becomes a plus for you. (Kervens)

Interestingly, once the question was personalized and participants were asked about their personal learning aspirations, among the low-educated adults, all of whom were women, there was a twinge of disbelief and self-doubt in their responses.

Well, now that I'm already old do you think? Do you think that's for me anymore? I just leave that for my eldest daughter, for my children. (Fabienne)

Wow!—Well to learn— my child, Dayana, I'd like to learn a lot of things. But it's not going to be easy for me to learn them. For now—oh [a bit anxious]! (Marie-Jane)

In the future, it's never too old to learn. However, there are times, for the moments, for the time being that, that which you were supposed to learn, the possibilities are not easy for you. The head isn't the same anymore to learn. You are already—have advanced in age. It's too difficult, [but] if you had started it, [already] it would be better. Perhaps you can continue. It's difficult to learn right now. (Nadege)

The women gave many reasons why they were unable to take on learning at this stage in their lives. Johanne's response may have seemed encouraging at first glance: "What I would like to learn, I would like to be educated and then to learn law. But in the end— Law, I love it." However, her comment in the original Haitian Creole has sociolinguistic implications. When the phrase "in the end" or *men a fen* is followed by a brief reflective pause, it hints at regret and self-resignation.

For the most part, learning in adulthood was almost always linked to employment. To put it quite simply, participants saw learning as a means to get a job, change jobs, or maintain the status quo in case they lost their job. For the low-educated, learning, in particular learning English, was an opportunity to change their employability. At the time of the interviews Johanne, Fabienne, and Marie-Jane were unemployed and expressed similar aspirations for their futures.

I'd like to find a way you know, so that I could learn to speak the language like, so that I can find a little job. (Johanne)

What I'm telling you is what I pray to God and if he wants to do me a favor I tell him to give me a job so that I can take care of [my children]…I am going to [the

adult education site nearby] so I can hear the English words better. What I have I

am going to add to it again [enhance my knowledge]. (Fabienne)

Well on the subject of learning I personally can't fill out an application on my

own. But if I could get to the point where I'd be able to complete an [job]

application on my own and answer all the questions that I needed to answer…It

would be good for me. (Marie-Jane)

Despite being very aware of their shortcomings in the English language, Tony, Widlene,

Manoucheca, Kervens, and Schneider were not explicitly working on their competence in

the English language. Among the educated group of participants, learning in adulthood

was attached to the prospects of changing jobs which was not contingent upon their

English language abilities.

Currently I'm studying to get my certification in teaching… After these two math

classes that I am currently taking I will be taking geometry because the state of

Florida asked me to provide them with an additional eleven to twelve credits of

math so that I can have the temporary certification to teach math sixth through

ninth grade. (Tony)

My plan is to actually go take the state board test, the CNA. I will probably take

the little refresher course and just go from there. (Manoucheca)

I'd love to learn something else, I don't know what but I'd love to have another

career…Something you know not medical wise, but I don't know, I'm just

thinking…Just for a little bit. (Widlene)

Well, now I went back to school to try to get the contractor's license…It's kind of

hard for me because the language is not my language. I try hard to get it, so hey

it's good to try! (Kervens)

Also, some participants saw formal learning as a means to impede or cushion

them against change and help them maintain the status quo, rather than catalyze change.

I went to study [CNA] because I said better that I had it in hand. That means even

if you work, if they fire you, you had something that you had in hand. (Nadege)

…the fact that I was able to go to school and graduate as a patient care technician.

I mean I know it's not something big, but it's like a stepping stone. You know just

to have something to fall back on, just in case. (Manoucheca)

Notably, among the educated, sometimes learning was for the sake of learning. This was

especially true for Generation 1.5 Haitian immigrant adult women. That is to say, the

change that they were looking for was in the form of a new challenge or a mental

exercise. Manoucheca wanted to take up crocheting because she thought it was a "neat"

and "different" activity that would challenge her. Widlene had been considering changing

careers from a dental assistant to a field that allowed her to work with children for no

other reason than, "just trying something new." For these two women who had spent

almost all their lives in the United States, studying something outside of the dental

assisting field and learning to crochet was not tied to their employability, a promotion or

a change in socio-economic status. To put it another way, learning was something they

did, just because they could; and they saw nothing wrong in that. Similarly, Kervens

stated that not passing the contractor's licensing exam would not be a complete failure on

his part, because "…there is something you didn't know [now] you become good with it." He felt that either way his studies would pay off because there was an immediate take away of new knowledge and skills that he could apply on the job.

Despite questions about their own abilities and regrets of the past and the demands of work and family, all participants perceived learning as an opportunity for some sort of change. Occasional statements espoused by individuals suggested non-job related motives for participants to engage in learning to include: inspiring their children to learn, and to "achieve something the same as everyone else." In general, however, it could be said that immigrant Haitians' educational aspirations for themselves were linked to their occupational aspirations.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 posed the question, How do immigrant Haitian adults experience and perceive their role in supporting their adolescent children enrolled in secondary schools in the United States? Three themes emerged from the data: *Lopsided Communication, Working in the Background,* and *Controlling for Social Risks.* These themes describe parents' experiences and diverse roles where it concerned their children's in-school and out-of-school learning and development.

Lopsided Communication

The local school district strives to communicate with all parents through various mediums to include: site-based meetings, print, phone calls, e-mail, district and school websites, an automated messaging system, an education channel, a mobile app and social media outlets (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). An extra effort is made to communicate with

multilingual parents through the provision of translation services, print materials scripted in the native language, and interpreters at school-based events (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). However, two-way communication between schools and Haitian households is lopsided with the school doing most of the communicating.

According to a recent TPISDR just under half of the Creole-speaking parent population surveyed, said they had attended a parent meeting during the school year (119) compared to the small majority of parents (122) who said they had not attended a parent meeting during the school year. Similarly, there was a nearly equal split between the number of Creole-speaking parents in the school district who stated that they had attended a meeting where Title I in particular was discussed (115) and the number of parents responded negatively (112) stating that they had not attended such a meeting (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). Table 2 displays findings from the 2015 TPISDR which quantified Creole-speaking and multilingual parents' perceptions and engagement at their children's schools.

Table 2

Parent Involvement by Language

Survey Question Items	Response	Creole		Multilingual	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Attended school meeting where the Title I Program was discussed	Yes	115	1.7	476	7.2
	No	112	1.7	588	8.8
Attended a parent meeting during school year	Yes	119	1.8	730	11.0
	No	122	1.8	536	8.1
Language/cultural barriers with participation at school	Yes	135	2.0	264	4.0
	No	99	1.5	950	14.3
Translation services are available	Yes	193	2.9	905	13.6
	No	33	0.5	97	1.5
Information in language I understand	Yes	256	3.8	1275	19.2
	No	17	0.3	67	1.0

Source: Zmach, C.C., & Cruz, J., (2015). 2014-2015 Title I Parent Involvement Survey District Report. Collier County Public Schools. Federal State and Competitive Grants.

Interviews with Haitian parents contradicted the survey data in some ways. When asked to describe their experiences contacts and visits with their children's teachers and schools, not a single immigrant Haitian parent had a complaint, or a negative experience to report. However, according to the survey, nearly a quarter of middle school (24%) and high school (23.3%) parents reported language and cultural barriers with participation at school. This is not to say that data concerning barriers of the linguistic and cultural sort were unreliable. In truth, it must be taken into account that about a third of the parents interviewed had never visited their children's schools, and a few others limited their contact to an "as needed basis." These parents who might be characterized as passive or reactive may have very little to report given that they have not had any contact or limited contact with their children's schools. Johanne, Nadege, and Marie-Jane seldom or never

visited schools where their children were currently enrolled. These parents remained in the background and passed up opportunities to visit the school while another waited for a personal invitation or "good reason" to visit the school.

> No, I don't usually go. They used to call her father. However, since being at the high school they haven't called her father… (Johanne)

> When he was at the middle school I always [visited], I haven't done it yet at the high school. (Nadege)

Parents gave a different reason for not visiting the Title I high school where, coincidentally, all four of their children attend.

> When they have the meetings at the school, it's her aunt that may go. She has two kids [they] are [enrolled] at the high school too. (Johanne)

> So just today I told myself that I would call to make an appointment, but in any of the coming days I'm going to call to make an appointment to see how he's working. (Nadege)

> Well, the reason I don't go is that I've never received a letter that they sent to invite me to any meeting or what they're doing. And I know that when you go to school if the child does things that are not good, they write the parent or call them. That means that if they don't call me and they don't write me that means they're good. (Marie-Jane)

Johanne's explanation seemed to allude to the likelihood that her husband and sister-in-law, who had spent significantly more years of their lives in the United States, were better equipped, perhaps linguistically or in terms of understanding the school system, to

attend meetings and make school visits. Nadege's response suggested that it just slipped her mind and it was just a matter of time before she visited because she did not fully trust that her son was keeping her apprised of his progress. Marie-Jane, on the other hand, felt that without a formal invitation from the school and given that there was no notification that her children were behaving poorly or not making academic progress there truly was not a need for her to make an appearance at her children's high school. Likewise, Fabienne seemed to expect that the school would call if there were any problems, academic or behavioral. "Ever since she started school [this year] they never called me for her. They never call me to tell me like to do homework or that she does badly."

Fabienne, was low-educated as were the other three women, had a clear understanding of her role as a parent and the role of the school as seen through her description of how she reacted to a past phone call from her eldest daughter's teachers. When confronted about the content of the call, her daughter responded defensively stating that her teacher "did not like her." Fabienne retorted:

> The teachers cannot say that they don't like you. Well, if the teacher doesn't like you the teacher is looking to give herself trouble because they pay her. That is to say that in this case she is your mom it's her and she's [the one] giving you an education. When she's done around four o'clock [in the afternoon] she sends you to me so I can do the rest. But eight [o'clock] in the morning until four o'clock [in the afternoon] she's the one giving you an education. (Fabienne)

Clearly from Fabienne's perspective, the school was interconnected with the home, and in some way teachers served as her proxies during the school day. However, despite this

perceived partnership and shared responsibility for her daughters' education, Fabienne had never visited her daughter's school, nor had she spoken to the teacher prior to receiving the phone call. However, she had given the teacher the benefit of the doubt in this situation and did not accept her daughter's excuse. It is not completely clear why this is so, and if this perspective was commonly held among Haitian parents. However, as is discussed in the upcoming section, during talks with their children, parents often emphasized that children should comport themselves at school in the same way they were expected to do so at home and should show respect for teachers.

Although communication with their children was frequent, low-educated Haitian parents' communication with teachers and school staff was one-sided. Conversely, immigrant Haitian parents who were educated were more apt to take the lead in requesting meetings and communicating back to schools with increased frequency. Schneider preferred to call face-to-face meetings with teachers and administrators. He and Nadege both claimed that they did so without "a well-defined reason" beyond wanting "to know how the child is working." Nadege was unique in that she was not "highly educated" by the standard definition of the term, having only completed the fourth grade in Haiti. However, she seemed to have a finer understanding of the system, perhaps because to my knowledge she had at least one other child graduate from the local school system. She counted on her daughter, now a college senior, to help her son with his studies. Also, Nadege gave her nephew access to her parent portal for the online grade book, and he helped her monitor her son's academic progress.

A select few parents took the lead and initiated communication and visits with their children's teachers and school administrators. The more learned parents were also more apt to attend meetings like meet and greets, open house or other invitations to school events. Manoucheca bragged that she and her son's stepfather attend "every" meeting, and similarly Tony claimed that he never passed up opportunities to meet with his son's teachers.

> I think I'm very good at that. My son's teachers, I have great lines of communication with them. I e-mail them; in fact I'm someone who— I think I even check my son's grade book more than he even checks it himself. (Tony)
>
> Contacts have been as needed, via e-mail, phone sometimes. He does have his IEP that I have to be at every, — I believe it's quarterly. (Widlene)
>
> Well [my son's] teachers I told them they need to put me on speed dial…Also they got my e-mail, I told them anything to e-mail me and I will check it. (Manoucheca)
>
> But we always call them [teachers], to ask how they're doing there. Or when we go there we ask the teacher how the kids doing… So we sometimes go on the meeting with them, and sometimes we call them to ask how they doing. (Kervens)

A unique case, Widlene has attended meetings for her eldest son who was on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) "because he's one of those kids who just needs a little longer time to get stuff done, to soak stuff in." Her son, who at the time of the interview was a junior in the eleventh grade, has had special accommodations as far as she could remember, dating back to Pre-K. She had attended every one of his quarterly meetings

because as she saw it, she was "Just trying to figure out where he's lacking and just to get him where he needs to be." Parents were familiar with and used traditional communication methods such as report cards and interim reports which are progress reports distributed mid-way through the quarter, to stay informed. In addition they relied upon print materials in their children's backpacks to keep them informed. However, a small minority also took advantage of available technology driven resources such as the school district's grade book portal and website.

> They are always online looking at their grades, because we have access to do that now thank goodness…They use the portal to go online daily, most the time…At least two or three times a day. (Widlene)

> The school district for my community, they use technology very effectively. It's a way, online you can find out what's going on. (Tony)

> Conversely, Johanne, Fabienne, and Marie-Jane, who were low-educated adults, relied heavily upon the release of interim reports and report card grades, or trusted their children to keep them apprised of their academic progress. They also exploited only a few channels of communication available to them.

> DP: How have you found out about how your daughter is doing in school and activities that are happening at the school?

> Fabienne: They called me for her once. Yeah, the teacher; they used to send the.

> DP: In the mailbox?

> Fabienne: No they send it to me through her.

> DP: And other activities? How do you know out about those activities?

Fabienne: No, it's the teachers that call about it and at times she tells me what the teacher is doing.

Fabienne anticipated that the school would call her or that her daughter would share important information with her. There were no other means through which she communicated with the school.

Interestingly, despite the fact that Johanne only had a splintered elementary education in Haiti, had only lived in the United States for 2 ½ years, and the fact that she was experiencing the American education system for the first time because of her daughter, Johanne was confident that she effectively monitored her daughter's grades and seemed familiar with the grading system.

And when the month is up I always ask her 'where is your report card?;..you know they send them in the mail…I understand them. Like the first weeks she entered school her report card was with A's all the way through and then after that the second report card I said oh, the report card doesn't have any A's and she tells me. She told me know that she has some things that she didn't quite understand, that she was going to find a way to get better. I always check that. And then she always shows it to her dad too.

Johanne seemingly understood that an "A" letter grade was what her daughter should be striving for and kept track, perhaps mentally, of her daughter's' previous grades for comparison. The quote also illustrates that Johanne was confident that her daughter was forthcoming about her academic progress and that her daughter would take the initiative to get help in areas where she lacked comprehension.

Despite differences in modes and frequency of communication according to immigrant Haitian parents' educational attainment, there were some commonalities. First, regardless of their level of education and language preference, many parents counted on their adolescent children to keep them informed. Also, parents often stayed informed of events, activities and their children's progress and conduct via phone calls (voice dialer or live person). Furthermore, though unquantifiable, at least some print materials sent home from schools through students were getting into their parents hands. It was evident that despite the fact that some print materials reached their destinations, they might not be understood by low-educated parents regardless of whether they were scripted in English or Haitian Creole.

According to the previous two TPISDRs published in 2014 and 2015, parents from all cultural and language backgrounds in the district preferred similar methods of communication (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). At the middle school level parents from all language groups overwhelmingly preferred the use of print material being placed in students' backpacks (41.6%), and not too far behind, phone calls (32.9%). These preference were reversed at the high school level where most parents preferred phone calls (33.6%) to material in backpacks (29.5%). Comparatively, more parents preferred e-mail at the high school level than at the middle school level; however e-mail remained in third place at both levels. Notably, use of other modes of communication as the district website (2.7% and 6.1%) and district app (0.8% and 1.2 %) was almost nominal among parents of middle schools and high school students respectively.

Immigrant Haitian parents' communication with their children's schools was indeed skewed. Communication was mostly one direction from school to home. Although parents were the consumers of information as it came in, how they received, responded, and reacted to school communications depended upon several factors, the educational level being the most evident. However, there were indications that other factors may have led to disproportionate levels of communication between schools and Haitian households such as parents' knowledge of existing modes of communication available to them and their ability and willingness to exploit them. The impact of these factors on two-way communication between schools and Haitian immigrant homes is worth exploring in greater depth.

Working in the Background

As the theme suggests, immigrant Haitian parents were not always in the forefront of their children's lives, but they were indeed active in the background. Parents felt comfortable and competent in the background where they prepared their children mentally and physically for school, monitored their behavior and academic progress, and attended meetings and events as needed. Parents played the role of preppers, monitors, drivers, and fans in their children's lives.

There were several ways by which immigrant Haitian parents prepared their children for school. Parents' preparatory responsibilities were mostly in the form of talks, the provision of food, and enforcing good habits and practices concerning personal hygiene and appearance. Parents frequently engaged in talks, with their children. These conversations emphasized respect and cautioned against negative friendships. To *pale* or

talk to their children was an integral part of immigrant Haitian adults' roles as parents.

According to Nadege, "…you always talk to the children. If they don't understand, [or]

listen, you just made your effort." That is to say that as a parent, regardless of how the

child responds to talks the parent had done their part. These lectures that seemed to brief,

but frequent, served to remind children of parents' expectations for the way they

conducted themselves at school. Among mothers and fathers, talking to their children

seemed to be commonplace. Numerous parents emphasized respect and several stressed

that their children's behavior at school ought to parallel the way they were expected to

conduct themselves at home.

> To raise the child you have to talk to them so that they understand. You put them
>
> sit down [you tell them to take a seat] and you talk to them [you say] when you go
>
> to school you are not there to play it's learning, that's what you're going there to
>
> do. Respect your teachers and if they call your name it's whatever they tell you to
>
> do that's what you do. (Johanne)
>
> I talked to her, for her education to not disrespect people. She's supposed to
>
> respect people, be it family, [or] strangers, she is supposed to respect them.
>
> (Fabienne)
>
> I talk to him [and I tell him] that when you go to school…The way that we raised
>
> you at home, that you will continue it. That is second. Even the teacher too, you
>
> should respect him/her. (Nadege)
>
> The first thing you teach the child is how to appear out in society. Secondly, you
>
> show the child to respect people. You show the child— how do you say that— is

that the word that means respect [fumbles the word manners]? … Yes, manners.

It's truly [important] when you have a child to show them how when they make an

appearance out in society how to present themselves. (Marie-Jane)

Mental preparation for school did not stop at students' conduct. Male and female parents

alike emphasized to their children the value of an education and the importance of

striving academically.

[I taught my son to be] responsible….to try his best even though he failed. You

know in the end, if you try your best you will be able to deal with your failure.

And the other thing that I taught my son is that education is the most important

key for someone to be successful in life. (Tony)

I always told them, respect for everyone and focus on school. Try to learn good

because the country offers you a lot of things. (Kervens)

The vast majority of parents also talked to their children about the friends they

kept. Parents from both generations cautioned their children to think critically about other

kids in their company.

It's good. She does not disrespect me, she's so quiet. I don't know if up ahead her

friends will take her head [take over her mind] but —-. (Fabienne)

Those three things don't do drugs, stay in school and be careful with who you

become friends with. (Manoucheca)

Parents wanted their children to "limit" the friends they had. They did not want their

children to let friends "control" them or "take over their minds," nor did they want their

children to succumb to peer pressure and take part in "bad thing[s]" such as drugs, alcohol, and negative social behaviors such as gossiping and teasing.

The provision of meals also played a very large part in parents' roles and was a common form of preparation for school and studying. The mother of an avid football player and wrestler, Manoucheca felt that "…as a parent, you need to play the role, you need to make sure your kid eats right." Many other parents echoed her sentiments and frequently pointed out that they fed their children or expected their children to feed themselves before they sat down to study and before and after extracurricular activities.

> …when she gets from school and she eats and studies…Or if she has a program [afterschool] she comes home and eats, bathes, and change her clothes and then if she has a program she goes. (Johanne)
>
> Well me, as soon as they come from school and as long as I've given them food I always ask them to do their homework. (Marie-Jane)
>
> I always tell him that after school when he gets home to find something to eat before he even studies homework. (Tony)
>
> We expect them, when they come from school to take a shower and eat something and [to do] homework. (Kervens)

Nearly all immigrant Haitian adults felt that feeding their children was a part of their role as parents. Fabienne even mentioned that it was more than a parental obligation. "Feed my kids, take care of my kids give them food" was what she was good at and enjoyed doing.

Also, there were other forms of preparation that fell outside the categories of talks and food for which parents felt responsible. Personal hygiene and appearance were high on some parents' lists of conversational topics. Parents like Johanne and Nadege not only talked to their children about hygiene, but they ensured that they showered, brushed their teeth, and ironed their clothes before school.

In terms of academics, most parents described their roles in their children's studies strictly as monitors. Immigrant Haitian parents oversaw homework completion, academic progress, classroom conduct, and one in particular monitored the execution of her son's individual education plan (IEP) yearly. Across the board there were no hard and fast rules about homework completion or studying among immigrant Haitian parents. A few parents mentioned studying in a quiet setting; however that that was only a suggestion not a rule. It seemed that there was a long-standing understanding between parents and children that if they needed to study or had homework, it was a priority that needed to get done.

Regardless of parents' own educational backgrounds, nearly all perceived their role in their children's studies was to "make sure they do their homework" and to ask "how homework is going." Besides these two common remarks, there was no other unifying or systematic way in which Haitian parents monitored homework. In fact, I identified eight different factors which mitigated parents' roles in terms of their availability and the extent to which they could monitor and assist with homework completion and studies overall. The quotes to follow indicate that students' activities at

school and parents' educations and schedules may have the most profound impact on Haitian adolescents' studies outside of school.

1. The provision and use of before and after school academic support programs.

   Well, Kyle he always does his homework at home. I see it for myself that he does his homework. But Tina— I don't see her do her homework like that. But she tells me that she has tutoring. She tells me she has tutoring, she did her homework at [the high school] before she practices [for cheerleading]. (Marie-Jane)

   Well because she always does her homework if you see that she doesn't do her homework or if she can't understand the homework before school they always give her help at school. And after that she'll come home. (Fabienne)

   So usually by the time he gets home everything is done and the [football and wrestling] coaches actually supervise their grades to make sure it stays on point. (Manoucheca)

2. Parents' perception of their children's aptitude and self-efficacy.

   Well I don't really have a role as far as that [homework] because Johnny, he's really smart. (Manoucheca)

3. How vocal the child is about needing help.

   …if he's working on his homework I ask him if he needs any help. But most of the time he tells me that he doesn't need any help. (Tony)

4. Child's study habits as reinforced by parents' over time.

   Studying wise or what not, Tommy is usually up till about 10-11 o'clock getting work done. Eric, not so much by eight nine o'clock he's already in bed. I pretty

much don't do a whole lot because they pretty much have it squared away. (Widlene)

She's the one—we don't have [a role in how she studies]—because we start early in that, we don't have to push her too much. When she come home she does her stuff. (Kervens)

5. Conflicts between child's activities and parents' schedule.

No, it's not here [where homework is completed] because of my schedule, like I have any type of [work] schedule 9 o'clock, 7 o'clock. There are times that when he's playing football he's already come home before me. He just tells me that he did his homework or he did it at school. (Nadege)

You know when I get off work and he's in high school and is already home… But I always ask him if he needs help because even though I'm doing my homework I always tell him 'Hey if you need help come to me I'll put my homework on the side and help you with yours. (Tony)

6. Parents' competence in the English language.

Both for studying and for completing the homework they are a little bit difficult for me because the English I'm not too good at it. That means to say that if he made a mistake that I could [actually] understand it. (Nadege)

7. Parents' previous academic training or perceived strengths and weaknesses.

…mathematics at school she didn't understand it. I use my available time so that we can meet quite frequently, for us to talk about this and for me to help her— to help her understand mathematics. (Schneider)

I don't have any role in band because [that whole thing of] playing music, I don't know anything about that. (Schneider)

8. Growing up, parents' own experiences with parental support with their studies. When I went to school in Haiti my mom used to have a system [she would ask] have you guys studied? Instead of studying, we didn't study but we told her yes… but [now that I am a parent] I have to make sure to see if it's true…I told mom yes because I know she couldn't see [for herself given her lack of education]. And there are times I'm holding the book in my hand and she did ask me am I studying and I say yes and I'm not studying in reality. [Therefore] I make sure to see for myself, to know if in reality they're doing what they say they're doing. (Marie-Jane)

There were numerous factors that impacted parents' self-efficacy with helping their children study and learn at home. Often the mitigating factors overlapped, making for different outcomes from day to day.

Manoucheca and Widlene, the two Generation 1.5 participants, mentioned occasionally helping their sons when they struggled with academic concepts. However, Tony and Schneider explicitly stated that they perceived their roles in supporting their adolescent children more as teachers, than as monitors:

My role in her studies, I've become like a second professor because everything she doesn't understand she has to ask me to helper. And I serve for her as a guide as well. (Schneider)

Both Tony and Schneider, one an aspiring secondary math teacher and former martial arts instructor and the other a social studies teacher in Haiti respectively, described providing their children with direct instruction in areas in which they were struggling. Additionally, Schneider proudly explained that in order to expose his daughter to new words in English they often enjoyed watching the television game show Family Feud together. He found this show to be instructive and reminiscent of a show that was a childhood favorite of his in Haiti.

Outside of academic activities, some parents were also involved in their children's hobbies and sports. Among the nine parents, many of their middle school and high school children were involved in sports at their schools or other extracurricular activities as Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), band, dance and martial arts. Where it concerned extracurricular activities, immigrant Haitian adult parents' primary responsibility, as they saw it, was to coordinate their children's transportation to and from activities afterschool and on the weekends.

> So encourage him and I'll put myself available to do whatever I can as far as driving him wherever I can and picking him up if he has to stay after school for this type of activity. (Tony)

> I am the bus. Other than that nothing. No, I don't participate like in, sports mom or anything like that. I'm just there to cheer them on. I told them, [I am] just there to support. (Widlene)

Widlene also perceived her role beyond providing transportation, as being a devoted fan as well. But Widlene seemed to draw the line there, stating that she was not a

"sports mom." She may have been suggesting that a sports mom, commonly known as a soccer mom in American culture, might do more than chauffeur their child to games and watch them play. Manoucheca more so played the role of the sports mom, which Widlene turned down. She describe sitting in the football stands for many hours before leaving to work the night shift, a sacrifice she was willing to make. In the recent past, she had volunteered her time as well as donated items like bleach and laundry detergent to support her son's wrestling and football teams. The polar opposite of the generation 1.5 mothers was Fabienne. She stood out because she stated quite frankly that she did not do anything to support her daughter who for the first time was participating in a middle school sport. Although Fabienne consented to her daughters' participation, she could not recall the name of the sport and did not assert any role in her daughters' athletic activity.

Controlling for Social Risks

Immigrant Haitian adult parents did not always stay in the background, preparing, monitoring, and supporting their teenagers' studies and extracurricular activities. At times, parents took the lead in their children's social development in an attempt to safeguard them from socially stigmatizing experiences. In this role, parents were the locus of control, and neither deferred to the school nor their children for decision-making. Throughout interviews Haitian parents used the word *kontwole* or control, to mean to keep track of someone or something or to calculate figures. The term ought not to be confounded with the term "controlling" which in American society has a negative connotation and could be equated to being overbearing or imposing. Parents confidently took actions to control their children's level of exposure to psychological, physical, and

socially risky behavior. It was evident that parents' controlling behaviors and socialization of their child differed based upon their children's gender.

Five of the participants in all, Johanne, Fabienne, Marie-Jane, Kervens, and Schneider, had daughters in secondary school. According to Kervens, it was typical of Haitians to "always focus on girls, watching every little move they make." Two mothers used the word control on several occasions to describe how they would keep track of their daughters' whereabouts. Three of the parents spoke about their role in controlling their daughters' environments, for example by blockading their windows, checking the content of their backpacks before school and after school, or providing them with cell phones so that they could keep track of their whereabouts. Fabienne was very protective of her eldest and youngest daughters and kept constant surveillance of them at home.

> While raising Gerline right now she is in a bedroom, before I go to bed at night I go in her room and I check on her and my other daughter [who is much younger]. As soon as my eyes are open until the night I check on her again. The window where she's at has something on the outside [a barrier]… I tell her 'you are 13 and [your sister] is three, it's two little babies that I have. (Fabienne)

Johanne's motives for purchasing a cellphone for her daughter were clearly to keep track of her daughters' afterschool activities, especially because Johanne did not know how to drive. At the time of the interview her daughter had been kicked out of the family home for being disrespectful to the owner who lived in the house with them. Her daughter was living with an aunt, which seemed to cause Johanne a lot of anxiety.

Sometimes I always call her despite the fact that she is not [living] at the house. All day I'm calling her to see how she's doing. That's why I always make an effort, despite the fact [that I don't have much], I pay the telephone for her and so I can take control of [keep track of] her more. Sometimes it's 10 o'clock at night I call her. It's sometimes 11 o'clock and she's like 'well I'm sleeping and you're calling me' and I tell her well I have to know where you're at. You know you're [living] at your aunt's house so I have to call you. If school lets out and [she] doesn't' stop by I call her to see if she hasn't left school yet. I check on her. (Johanne)

A few weeks after the interview Johanne's daughter was allowed back into the family home after apologizing to the owner for being disrespectful. Like Johanne, Fabienne purchased a cell phone for her daughter. Fabienne felt compelled to monitor and limit the access her daughter had on the device. "I gave her a phone. Now I have a nephew of mine who is checking the phone and I have people who are giving her control." Interestingly, despite her limited education, her actions imply that she may have had some insight as to the dangers of granting her daughter unlimited and uncensored access to the internet. Fabienne's supervising of her daughter's phone access may be an extension of the fact that immigrant Haitian parents sought to reduce the risk of their daughters' becoming involved in romantic relationships too early.

Although he did not speak outright about it, Kervens seemed to believe that his primary duty as a father was to prevent his daughter from prematurely engaging in romantic relationships.

You know somehow to not involve too early in certain things because there's too [much] danger. Especially when they grow up young and they can go with this, with that, and when they become bigger they realize they did something wrong, you try to help them with it. Because when they went too early, they might get involved with somebody they didn't like. But when they grow up, they say 'So why did I do that?' [Then they are] regretful then in life. We try to help them with all those things, and explaining some situations. (Kervens)

In a roundabout way, Kervens seemed to be hinting at concerns that his daughter might have sex at an early age or even become pregnant. This speculation is based upon his mentioning of future regret and long-term consequences. In order to protect her from stigmatizing experiences he and his wife try to help his daughter by explaining possible situations to her. Other parents also engaged in a sort of socialization, by sharing with their daughters their hopes and desires as parents.

I told her that there's not a problem for her to do that [study engineering], but even though there are possibilities for her to do it she has to keep control of her head [keep her head on her shoulders]. It's that she shouldn't rush to be in love [in a romantic relationship] but there are times that she has told me that—she doesn't think about that and she's not going to be in one. I always tell her that I'm very happy, to hold on, hold on [keep holding on] . It's even better still when the child is not interested in that. (Johanne)

Just like Johanne and Kervens, Fabienne also painted a picture of the harsh reality that awaited young girls who moved too fast into relationships and did not focus on their

schooling. Fabienne shared with me that to her surprise, just a few days before the interview her daughter asked her "Mommy at what age can I have a boyfriend?" Fabienne suspected that a few of her friends had boyfriends, and thus a conversation was due on the topic. To her daughter's question she quipped, "You can have a boyfriend around 30 years old," and when her daughter replied that 30 was "too much!" Fabienne lovingly explained that it was the best decision for her future. She told her that if she ventured to fall in love prematurely, that is before completing high school and college, she would be destined to live with a man who would not respect her.

It was clear that most parents were concerned about their daughters getting involved in relationships too early and the risk it posed to their educations. However, sons brought on a different concern for parents. Rather than monitor their son's whereabouts, immigrant Haitian parents sought to protect them from engaging in mischief and misconduct at school. Five participants, Nadege, Marie-Jane, Tony, Widlene, and Manoucheca, were parents of young men. Between them they had six sons enrolled in secondary school. Adult parents who had boys were also controllers; however, they exercised less control over their sons' environments and more control over their behavior.

Parents did not speak explicitly on the topic of discipline which was to be expected since the line of questioning did not go in that direction. However, there were some indicators of Haitian parents' transitions in and out of the role of disciplinarian when their son's conduct was undesirable at school.

> Well [his] teachers, I told them they need to put me on speed dial. He happen to say A and B [this and that] while they are trying to teach the class, they better hit me up and call me. Because his job is to come here to learn, not to interrupt the classroom. Also they got my e-mail, I told them anything to e-mail me and I will check it. (Manoucheca)

Tony worried that this son might misconstrue his constant monitoring of his grades and resulting disciplinary actions for unsatisfactory academic performance as done out of some emotion other than love.

> …as a parent, you know you have to fill the role, play the role as a parent as a disciplinarian and everything, sometimes my son may think that I don't love him. (Tony)

> Mothers in particular also talked to their sons about their interactions with girls. Their focus was less on the timing of relationships with girls, but more on how their sons treated girls.

> Oh god, they are boys—That's all I have to say. You know [I talk to them about] the girls, the friends, just being careful. The peer pressure just everyday stuff that they go through at school. (Widlene)

> I talk to him that when you go to school, even if you're playing at school, you don't do all type of playing around with the kids, especially girls, you don't play in any which way with them. (Nadege)

Again, parents gave the impression that they were less concerned with their sons' environment. Widlene, for example, mentioned supervising her boys in the past as they

played basketball at the community park, but stated that "now I just let them go."

Manoucheca, on the other hand, was the only parent who sought to control her son's

environment, but on a larger scale. A race conscious mother, she tried to shield her son

who was being picked on for sounding "white," Manoucheca believed that the teasing

that occurred in the school community would have a psychologically adverse effect on

her son, whom she encouraged to use proper English. Therefore, she made the decision to

move from Miami, Florida back to her hometown to shield him from the ridicule of his

peers.

Research Question 3

The last of the research subquestions asked, What resources do Haitian parents

possess which can be used to better connect the school and home? Haitian parents had at

their disposal several intangible, but indispensable resources that could be used to better

connect the school and home. Two themes emerged from the data: *Community of*

Believers and Supporters, and *Experienced in Work and Life*. The identified resources

and assets were not in the form of material goods, but characteristics, networks, and

practical skills, and knowledge that may have a place in the education.

Community of Believers and Supporters

When parents were confronted by a problem that was beyond the scope of their

social, economic, or cognitive capabilities, rather than succumb to the issue, their

reflectiveness aided them in determining when and to whom to reach out to for assistance

in resolving the issue. Many Haitian parents were adept at identifying key people and

establishments with whom they could connect and find support in overcoming barriers.

These groups included the church, their relatives and the school. The term believer as used in the thematic title refers to the fact that a number of Haitian parent participants quite frequently alluded to their church affiliations and spoke openly of the role that their spiritual beliefs played in their lives. Reverend Flanbert, a long-time leader in the Haitian community, viewed the role of the church in the community as more than a place of worship; it was a social hub that helps to coalesce the Haitian community around a shared experience, language, and culture and a place where people, can find help, support, and knowledge. In the past, the reverend himself, church staff, and members of the congregation have assisted Haitians who are often victims of social injustices and experience an array of economic, educational, health, and social issues.

Among the nine participants, immigrant Haitian mothers seemed to practice their faiths, more than the fathers. Furthermore, older, low-educated participants were likelier to bring up their spiritual beliefs and practices when asked about what they enjoyed doing, or were good at or about their weekend activities with their children.

> The only thing is I just prayed to God that he saves our lives, that God gives me good health, that God gives me courage, gives me strength so I can work, take care of them and their education until God wants to take me. (Fabienne)

> I like to go to work, I enjoy going to church [and] after that I don't really go anywhere else. So, I go to work when I get off from work I cook, I take a bath and I go to church. (Nadege)

> What I'm good at the first thing [is] in everything that I'm doing I always put the department of God first, because, even if you see that you were going to try to see

> if you can gain the strength [yourself], but if you don't have him [God] you're not
>
> in it. I'm not 100%, but I feel like I'm good in that area. (Marie-Jane)

Only the generation 1.5 women, Widlene and Manoucheca, and two of the men, Tony

and Schneider, did not indicate that they attended church.

According to Rev. Flanbert, an estimated 75% of the local Haitian population was

composed of church goers. Among the majority who indicated that they attended church,

their faith appeared to serve as a moral compass that would unfailingly guide their

decisions-making in terms of "what to do and what not to do," according to Nadege. Not

only were some adults' personal aspirations related to their spiritual growth, but they

were convinced that instruction in their spiritual beliefs was an integral part of their child

rearing responsibilities. Parents not only practiced their beliefs but also took their

children to church along with them. Sundays seemed to be reserved exclusively for

church attendance.

> Sundays are for church and on the other days we relax together. (Marie-Jane)
>
> But like on the weekend there are times if I'm here on Saturdays I will tell them
>
> let's go to the zoo. We go, we wake up, and we go out. After that I tell them on
>
> the weekends, on Sunday we go to church. (Nadege)

The church helped parents, so it seemed, to provide their children with values and good

character educations. An example can be found in Fabienne's narrative. Her three-part

objective for her family was to be gainfully employed, attend church, and educate her

children. In order to achieve the second part of her objective, she reached out to folks in

her community of believers. "I asked people like a pastor who [once] prayed for me, then

he called a pastor and had him give me an address so I can go to church with the children." Parents like Kervens saw the role of the church as helping him and his wife teach his four children boundaries. "That's a plus for us because when your kids follow God's rules, so there are certain things they are not going to do."

Among the believers, their spiritual convictions seemed to extend into their everyday life. They not only believed in a higher power, they also "dared to believe" according to Dr. Claire, that they and their children could overcome adversities. In this sense, the term believers took on a second meaning, connoting a sort of doggedness, or determination in character that was exhibited by some adults. Fabienne's example of what God is capable of doing in her life illustrates the depth and reach of her faith.

> Whereas I could be sitting right here [laid off] and I am looking for a job. I might not be able to speak English and because I don't speak English they don't want to take me. However, if God wants to do a miracle in a second right here, I could speak English just like the White person is speaking English because it's God that does the miracle. It is God that has the power. (Fabienne)

Additionally, immigrant Haitian parents' community was not limited to the church. Issues related to their children's social development and schooling were often resolved through relationships with other support groups, namely their relatives and on occasion school faculty and staff.

First and foremost, it must be said that the concept of family in the Haitian cultural context seemed to be fluid. When asked at the beginning of each interview, to "tell me about your family," many participants asked for clarification or proceed to

qualify their answers. A seemingly straight forward question in the English language had many more unforeseen implications as to how participants would answer.

> I have seven brothers and sisters left in Haiti. I have nieces and nephews, but that's not family…family is your mom, dad, brothers, and sisters. (Johanne)
>
> When you're speaking of family that means, wife and children you know that? (Marie-Jane)
>
> When you mean family you mean my dad [and] mother? (Tony)
>
> You know like you'd only consider your immediate family to be like your husband, [and] your kids. (Manoucheca)
>
> Well when you're speaking of family, parents as well? Because you know the system in Haiti—in America if you're talking [to] someone about family they start with the mother, father, and son and daughter. In the Haitian system, when you talk [about] the family, all the cousins, aunties, grandpa grandma, it's all included. (Kervens)

Clearly, participants viewed family as either immediate family or extended family what Marie-Jane clarified as *gran fanmi* in the Creole language. Notably, the vast majority of participants was married and lived with their spouse in the home, except for Widlene, who was a divorcee, raising two boys on her own. Also, despite being in intact two-parent homes, the majority of Haitian parents were not living with their children's biological parent. More than half of study participants' adolescent children were living with either a stepfather or stepmother in the home. Schneider's daughter for example, lost her mother in the 2010 earthquake which devastated Haiti. She now lived with her

stepmother and half-siblings while her father traveled back and forth between Haiti and the United States. A couple of the stepfathers were approached for interviews, but declined. All interviews were held with the biological parents only, given that stepfathers declined the opportunity to participate for one reason or another.

Irrespective of how family was defined and the composition of the family home, Haitian adult parents looked to members of their nuclear families and also reached out to their extended family members for support and assistance. Most commonly, Haitian parents relied on their children to keep them informed. The expectation was that adolescent children would keep their parents apprised of significant experiences, needs, information, and events such as their struggles with assignments, upcoming activities at the school, and important papers that required parents' attention.

> She is the one who usually tells me. If there's an activity like right now there's an activity in the afternoon…I don't remember [the name] but she told me about it. (Johanne)
>
> When I get back from work I ask him how his day was at school and any homework and if he's working on his homework I asked him if he needs any help. But most of the time he tells me that he doesn't need any help. (Tony)
>
> Usually via phone calls or the kids will tell me [about school activities]. (Widlene)
>
> And I always ask him if there's anything I need to know, any paperwork I need to sign. And the meetings, I'm basically the one who keeps up with all the meetings. (Manoucheca)

Parents like Widlene and Johanne believed that their children were honest and open with them in this regard. They trusted that their children would share with them anything worth knowing.

> Widlene: Because they tell me everything, and they tell me mostly everything to be honest with you. They tell me what the other kids do, you know.
>
> DP: Do you feel like they tell you what they do?
>
> Widlene: Sometimes, I'm sure they do sometimes. The little one a little bit more information than I need to know, the oldest one not as much.
>
> Yes, she always tells me [if she is not passing]. We always see her report card too and she always tells us that she has X number of A's, X number of B's—Yeah she always tells us that. (Johanne)

On the other hand, other parents adopted a trust but verify type of approach where they would follow up with primary sources. For example, when her son was in middle school, Nadege would schedule surprise visits to his school to discuss is academics and conduct with school faculty and administration.

> That's to say that the child is a child, they can lie to you. Plus they might know that you don't speak English and they'll tell you that everything is good and there wasn't anything too good in truth. So that's why I'll go check. The child doesn't have to know when you're going to the school. (Nadege)

A few parents indicated that they also tried to get their children to help themselves before they were compelled to intervene.

…for example if there is something she wants to study herself, tell her to go to your room and try to learn it on your own. If you have a problem and you don't understand, come and I'll help you. (Schneider)

Parents mainly enlisted their adolescent children to help them self-monitor their own academic progress and keep track of their academic and extracurricular activities. There were also a number of examples where Haitian parents reached out to other family members for assistance with similar issues as they arose. Widlene, for example, called upon her sister as "backup" when she was unable to assist her sons with challenging assignments. Nadege counted on her daughter, a college senior, to "take responsibility for her brother" who was struggling in math, because Nadege could not assist him with his homework given her limited English.

Sometimes parents acted proactively to avoid potential issues. For instance, Fabienne may not have felt that she could herself limit her daughter's access to content on her phone and vigilantly monitor her daughters' cell phone activity because of her limited literacy and lack of English proficiency. As a result she tasked people in her network to help her do so. Likewise, Nadege also gave a nephew access to her grade book parent portal so that he could help monitor her son's grades. As a final example, Johanne's sister-in-law and husband attended meetings at her daughters' high school in her stead, though the reasons why were unexplained.

On occasion, immigrant Haitian parents reached out to school faculty and staff for assistance. Parents who were more confident in their communication abilities and knowledgeable of the "system" contacted teachers directly or scheduled appointments

with principals. Nadege in the next example, used the school as a third resort when her son struggled academically. There was a sort of hierarchy in which she used her daughter who was in college as the first point of contact. Nadege then worked her way down the list from her son, then to initiating a meeting herself.

> I told him to tell the teacher what it is that you are weakest in. He tells me sometimes he talked to the teacher and sometimes they don't want to hear him. So I told him that I'll make an appointment perhaps I can find some help in that. (Nadege)

Tony, on the other hand, bypassed his son and went straight to the teacher for answers when he could not understand what was going on with his son's grades.

> And if I see something that is not clear to me— that I don't like as far as the grade is concerned I e-mailed the teacher to find out how it came about…(Tony)

Notably, several parents took advantage of opportunities for their children to receive tutoring before and/or afterschool in so that their children got the clarification and assistance they needed with assignments. It was not clear, however, whether parents initiated participation in tutoring programs or merely consented to teachers' requests that their children take part.

> …if she can't understand the homework before school they always give her help at school. (Fabienne)

> But she tells me that she has tutoring, she did her homework at [the high school] before she practices [cheerleading or basketball]. (Marie-Jane)

As the following quote suggests, some parents counted on athletic coaches to follow through on their apparent commitments to supervise homework completion and academic progress.

> So sometimes he does his homework at school and well now since he's doing wrestling I think on Wednesdays and Thursdays the coach actually has a room for them, for all the wrestlers to go to study and do homework. So usually by the time he gets home everything is done and the coaches actually supervise their grades to make sure it stays on point. (Manoucheca)

Many more examples of how parents reached out to school faculty and staff for assistance were discussed in the results of Research Question 2, in particular the theme titled Lopsided Communication. In these instances parents initiated contact, reacted to communication requests, or made themselves accessible to teachers by providing their contact information in advance of any need.

Experienced in Work and Life

Haitian immigrants possessed a wide range of work, education, and general life experience that made their stories unique. To begin, these adults had a diverse range of household, workforce, and career experience. Table 3 displays the array of occupational categories including unskilled work, skilled and semi-skilled work, semi-professional and professional held by participants at the time of the interviews or in the past.

Table 3

Immigrant Haitian Adults' Workforce Experience by Occupation Type

Unskilled	Skilled & Semi-Skilled	Semi-Professional	Professional
Server/Waitress	Customer Service	Dental Hygienist	Attorney
Cashier	Factory Line Worker	Home Health Aide	Teacher
Dietary Aide	Automotive Mechanic	Tax Preparer	Martial Arts Instructor
Dishwasher	Construction	Tutor/Paraprofessional	Banker
Gardening	Handyman	Unarmed Security Guard	Mortgage Loan
Cooking	Masonry	Certified Nursing	Originator
Cleaning		Assistant (CNA)	
Micro Commerce		Patient Care Technician	
Unlicensed Childcare		(PCT)	
Provider			

Note. The list takes into account both past and current occupations held by study participants.

The division of labor between men and women and between first-generation migrants and Generation 1.5 immigrants was not clear-cut. Though the sample was small, men were likely to work in semi-professional or professional domains, whereas women were either unemployed, held unskilled labor jobs, or did semi-professional work in the allied health field. Generational differences were only evident among women, given that the sample did not include Generation 1.5 men. Widlene and Manoucheca, members of the Generation 1.5 sub-group, were employed as a dental assistant and an unarmed security guard and part-time home health aide respectively. The women with the least schooling, Fabienne, Johanne, and Marie-Jane, were unemployed at the time of interviews. Nadege, who had a sixth grade education, was employed for many years as a cashier at a grocery store. Manoucheca's job as an unarmed security guard seemed oddly placed among the other women who typically had experience in or aspired to domestic positions and work in the social service sector. However, it must be said that her post as an unarmed security guard was not where she envisioned herself for the long-term.

Manoucheca dreamed of becoming a registered nurse, and according to her she was in active pursuit of that dream. The fact is that several other participants aspired to better jobs and careers and did not see their current posts as their final destination.

Speaking more broadly, no two immigrant Haitian adults had the same immigration story. Each individual had a unique story that began in Haiti (the exception being Widlene who was born in the Bahamas) and was continued in the United States. Adults' narratives were diverse on many fronts, from their family composition and socioeconomic welfare in Haiti, their schooling experiences in Haiti, the routes through which they arrived in the United States, who they left behind in their native land, their length of residency in the United States, the opportunities they have had to learn a skill or profession, their general interests, and their experiences raising Haitian-born or U.S.-born adolescents in the United States. The Sketches of Immigrant Adults, available in Section 2 provide a fuller picture of their lives. The few quotes to follow provide a snapshot of their individuality.

> It just so happened that my mom died early and then my dad he became ill. So after my mom died it was us that were working hard to help him, it was us that had to care for him and then he died at 96 years old…Ever since then when my mom died I was 15 years old. (Johanne)

> I used to be a martial arts instructor. So I know that I'm very good at martial arts. In 1988, I was national champion. So I'm good at it, I used to be [good] at it [laughter]. (Tony)

I'm a construction worker I'm a handyman, plasterer, tile, masonry, I like carpentry. When I do those parts I feel like I'm doing something. I always like hard work. Because my dad he was a farmer. When I [was] little I went to school, when I came back on Saturdays he always took me to the farm, to work with him. Because he want me [to know], if I can I make it somewhere else, I have to work hard. Because if you don't work hard, you cannot eat. (Kervens)

I don't want people to stereotype my kids because they're Black. Well, Madeline I know she's biracial, but just— I don't want that stereotyping thing like ' oh, ok, Black people don't speak proper English' which is a lie. Or if you do speak proper English 'oh you sound white'. (Widlene)

You know my mom left the six of us in Haiti. God sent her here. After a length of time she entered us. Thirty years-old found me here [I celebrated my thirtieth birthday in the United States]. I came here around 20 something years old and well, since I had already had a child someone picked me up. I got married to a man and then we couldn't live together. You know in Haiti long time ago and today it is two different systems. There weren't possibilities. (Fabienne)

The above quotes illustrate the distinct interests, childhood traumas and circumstances, immigration experiences, and the fears and concerns that constituted the personal narratives of these Haitian immigrant adults. A shared story element between most participants is that their journeys to the United States were made possible through another family member, as illustrated in the last quote from Fabienne. Johanne, for example, emigrated from Haiti to join her husband and daughter. Her husband received his papers

through an older brother who filed for him. He, in turn, filed for their daughter and eventually for Johanne to lawfully enter the United States. Johanne and her daughter were separated for about 6 years before being reunited 2 ½ years ago. Another example, Tony was raised by his father while his mother had already immigrated to the United States. Once he was approved to lawfully enter the country, he was obligated to put his college work in automotive mechanics on hold. With time he changed his mind and pursued an opportunity to study business. Lastly, Widlene's parents met and married in Haiti, moved to the Bahamas, where they gave birth to her. Her family then immigrated to the United States when she was only three years old. At the time of the interview she had yet to ever set foot on Haitian soil, but given Bahamian immigration laws, her nationality is Haitian.

Dr. Claire described the Haitian diaspora residing in the United States as having "audacity" and "tenacity" in that they ventured towards and often achieved the American dream of home ownership despite their past and current struggles. This determination is what separated successful Haitians that *degaje yo,* that is they figured it out and made things happen for themselves, from those who did not. Such remarkable experiences gave way to an outgrowth of anecdotes that can be used didactically. Perhaps because they are value laden, parents often shared their personal stories in talks with their children and relatives. Every life event and every circumstance impacted each participants' lives differently, sometimes in their favor and sometimes not. Good or bad, it is this "*sousi*" as pointed out by Schneider, this sort of wisdom that can only be gained through living, which separated adults from their younger and inexperienced children.

Major Research Question

The major and final research question aimed to identify the links between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. The connections linking immigrant Haitian adults' culture and learning experiences as knowers and learners and their experiences in their roles as parents to adolescent children were numerous. There was not one, but several golden threads that seemed to run throughout the results and which pulled the themes together. The following major themes were identified in response to the overarching research question: *Deprived Parents and Privileged Children*, *Follow Your Parents, Not Your Friends*, and *Don't Be Like Your Parents, Be Better*. These themes are replete with subthemes, patterns, and divergent findings that are both telling and thought-provoking. Suffice to say, I was not able to delve into the minutia of the lived experiences of every single case, but I aimed to provide a panoramic view of the foremost connections and at the same time infinite possibilities of life as an immigrant Haitian adult parent.

Deprived Parents and Privileged Children

All participants spoke freely of the difficulties they faced growing up, the necessities they were deprived of, and the opportunities they were denied during their time in Haiti and eventually in the United States. Poverty and hardship unified the narratives of the nine Haitian immigrant adult participants interviewed. Given that most participants grew up poor, it was palpable that the scarcity of food, a basic human necessity, was brought up on several occasions. According to Tony, in Haiti "sometimes

you may go to school with an empty stomach, in the morning and until you get back home to find something to eat." When Manoucheca left Haiti for New York, she recalled that the first English words her mother taught her to string together were "I am hungry," in order to ensure that she asked for food and was fed at her daycare. The provision of food for their children was a reoccurring theme and proved to be an integral part of the supporting role of parents in the lives of their adolescent children.

Overall, the opportunity to attend school was the one provision that several adult participants seemed to feel that they were deprived of during their childhoods and later on in adulthood.

You know it was Haiti. If your parents did not have money to send you to school to continue, you might go this year and then next year you stop. That's how I was. It was not me, it was the situation. (Fabienne)

Adults who were low-educated were disappointed by their current prospects. All three women, Johanne, Fabienne, and Marie-Jane, were unemployed at the time of the interviews. They expressed dismay and discontent about their English language proficiency, and felt to some extent that the time for them to learn a new skill or profession had mostly passed. Even Generation 1.5 participants Widlene and Manoucheca were not completely satisfied with their career paths. In general, the lack of schooling and opportunities seemed to shatter several adults' dreams of making something of themselves in the future. Johanne was passionate about law studies during her childhood. She recalled that as a child she would leave her home early in the morning and walk miles into the city center in order to attend public trials in Haitian courtrooms.

If she could study anything, she would study law, but she felt it was too late for her. For Marie-Jane, her lack of schooling, for which she seemed to blame her parents, had a tremendous impact on her self-perception.

> Marie-Jane: Every parent always wants good for their children. So my parents would have liked me to become a person tomorrow. (Marie-Jane)
>
> DP: But—You don't feel like a person?
>
> Marie-Jane: Yes, I feel like I'm a person, but it's not this person that I wanted to be.
>
> DP: So who did you want to be?
>
> Marie-Jane: Let me tell you, when you're telling someone that they should be someone tomorrow it's like you're going to school, that's your dreams ever since you were a child. So you said when I'm done with school I'm going to become a teacher, or when I'm done with school I'm going to learn to be a doctor, or when I'm done with school I'll learn to be an engineer, or when I'm done with school, I'll go into the nursing field. That's your dream that you want to achieve. However, when you have a dream that you haven't achieved that means you haven't found anything.
>
> DP: So what did you want? What dream did you have for yourself, or what dream did they have for you?
>
> Marie-Jane: For my own dream I wanted to become a nurse. That's what I wanted, but they didn't give me the opportunity.
>
> DP: And your parents what did they want for you?

Marie-Jane: Well, I didn't ever ask them and they never told me.

Marie-Jane was not the only participant whose parents did not outline career or professional expectations for them. In fact, there was a sharp contrast between women and men on the subject of parental expectations. Women, regardless of whether they were first generation or Generation 1.5 immigrants, either believed their parents did not expect much of them, or could not articulate specifically the educational expectations or career goals their parents had set for them outside of becoming "something" or "someone" in the future.

What they wanted was to put you in school, so you could become something tomorrow, so that you could help them. (Johanne)

What my parents wanted?—You know in the country on the outskirts,—nothing because there wasn't possibility. (Fabienne)

Even if someone wanted something more for you, [you] may not have continued to arrive where you should arrive but they still talk to you. You're supposed to do something that's good that could help you tomorrow. (Nadege)

At the beginning, like going to college getting a degree. That was about it. Nothing too major. They didn't expect a whole lot out from all of us. (Widlene)

I don't know, I don't think she really expected anything because it's not like we ever really sat down and had a conversation about how far I wanted to get in life, what I wanted to do in life. It was more so what I expected from me. (Manoucheca)

On the other hand, whereas women spoke in generalities, were modest about their parents' expectations, or even troubled by the lack of conversations concerning expectations, men were more apt to specify career paths their parents wanted for them and spoke with a sense of pride and satisfaction on the topic.

> My dad would love—because you know when I was growing up I would love to use my hand to make little cars and any kind of can that I could find I turned it into a car and put a string in it and running around the house. And my dad thought that I was going to be a mechanic guy, like engineering. (Tony)
>
> To tell you the truth, they pushed me to go become something, I can be a doctor or a lawyer—So I didn't finish it. (Kervens)
>
> In truth my parents really expected a lot from me. Why? Because I was someone that was intelligent, because when you are in school and they see that you are intelligent, your parents are expecting more from you and they a little bit push you, encourage you to finish school. (Schneider)

Of the nine participants, five had higher than eleventh grade educations. For this majority who actually had the opportunity to attend school consistently, a reoccurring theme was their parent's inabilities to assist them with their studies due to a lack of "alphabet" or their "low level." Tony and Widlene both recalled that their parents' educations topped out somewhere around the first or second grade. The type of PI experienced by this group was the customary supports and preparations for school. Although some participants' own parents would "push" them in their studies, their encouragement did not compensate for the fact that they did not possess the academic

training necessary to reinforce curricular activities at home. The absences of substantial help with homework and studying was the source of a mental angst as participants struggled to learn the material on their own.

Immigrant Haitian adults had many regrets as a result of the necessities, both perceived and real, that they were deprived of, learning opportunities they were denied, and dreams that they never saw come to fruition. Deficiencies in food, schooling, PI, and employment opportunities riddled the narratives of immigrant Haitian adults. Still, in the areas where they were lacking, they seemed to compensate in the lives of their children. Haitian immigrant adults made many conscious decisions and sacrifices for their children. Giving of themselves was more than obligation; it was an investment of their time, energy human resources, money, or a combination of these forms of capital. For example, Johanne stopped paying for private reading lessons when she was in Haiti, not because she did not perceive the need to know how to read and write, but because she saw the need to as she said, "invest" her time into her job as a way to support her son and daughter.

> After that when I went to Port-au-Prince and I became older I started paying people to give me lessons and things, but I saw that every time I went—Ahhh [sucks her teeth in frustration], I wasn't motivated. You have to work, you have to do everything. I saw my kids before me and I had two kids [at the time] and I came to invest myself in them. (Johanne)

Johanne's experience was not the only example of investment and sacrifice. Despite

being in school himself, Tony felt that he invested a good portion of his own time in

monitoring his son's academic progress.

> But I have to make it clear that, 'you know that it's because I love you that I'm
>
> doing that. What I'm doing consumes a lot of my time, to look in your grade book,
>
> to e-mail teachers'. (Tony)

Fabienne was open about her willingness to make significant sacrifices in exchange for

material goods, such as a cell phone, clothes, and shoes that her daughter wanted, in order

to give her a more comfortable life than she had experienced.

> If you have something that you need, say mommy I need X such thing. If today I
>
> can't give it to you, then I will tell you, that tomorrow or next week I will earn a
>
> check, and I will leave a bill [unpaid] to give you whatever it is that you need.
>
> (Fabienne)

It is important to note that despite their willingness to make great sacrifices, Fabienne as

well as Johanne warned their daughters not to make them "*fè egzijans*" that is to do more

than is necessary by disguising a want as a need.

Immigrant parents strongly believed that their children were privileged when

compared to their own lives, which were often defined by lack. Comparatively,

immigrant Haitian school children had educational and material advantages that their

parents took close notice of. In fact, Widlene's short-term goal was to travel to Haiti with

her two sons for the first time in all of their lives. She believed that by embarking on this

journey she would be helping them connect with their heritage and afford them the

opportunity to see for themselves the struggles of Haitian people. She concluded that this experience would help her children come to the realization of their privileged status.

Not only did the children of Haitian immigrants receive a good *edikasyon* at home, which was the parents' duty to provide, but they were also afforded a level of *enstriksyon* that surpassed what their parents had known. From parents' perspectives, the schooling experienced by their children was far superior in terms of quality and continuity as well as the extra school-related perks they received. Tony, who worked in the local school district as a paraprofessional and who was an aspiring math teacher, elaborated quite passionately about the "privilege" experienced by children studying in American schools, his son being of no exception.

> Because my take on that is that coming from a third world country, Haiti, I know how hard it is for students to wake up in the morning, to walk miles to go to school. And here in the U.S. a student has the privilege to have your ride waiting for you several feet from your house, you get on that bus, go to school, they pick you up. When you get to school there is a cafeteria open for you to get your breakfast and around 11:30 or 12 you get lunch. And also some schools provide you great support as far as helping you with your homework. To me I cannot comprehend how a student in the U.S.—in the U.S. school system does not do good in school. (Tony)

Comparatively, Tony's childhood in the impoverished Haiti was the polar opposite of the childhood and adolescence being experienced by his 14-year-old son who was born in the United States. Tony painted a gloomy picture of his own formative years in Haiti which

helped bring into sharp contrast the differences between a parent's deprived life and his child's privileged life.

> Raised in Haiti, it was not easy compared to the way it is in the U.S., as far as you have to walk miles to go to school. And also when you get to the classroom, the classroom environment is totally different to the way that it is here in the U.S. Sometimes you may go to school with an empty stomach, in the morning and until you get back home to find something to eat. At home I remember my parent, I lived with my dad, although he only had an elementary school education, having his children, put them in school, to him that was very important....you have to pay to go to school because the government, there's not enough that the government provides for the Haitian school-age student. So my dad had to pay on a monthly basis. (Tony)

Adults with on-going schooling experience often lamented the fact that they did not have academic support at home with their studies. These adults, turned parents, believed that their children were lucky to now have regular support in the form of tutoring or direct instruction in addition to the traditional supports—the monitoring and preparation that most Haitian parents were able to provide.

> Fortunately my children have a chance, they found that I already have a level [of education] where I could help them in their educational plans, I can support them in that sense and I can support them in the other way that I just explained to you. So, lucky for them, because I didn't benefit from that when I was in school in Haiti. I didn't have that chance. I had to do my homework to figure it out try to

> understand it on my own. When I had a word that I didn't understand, and I couldn't find a person in the house to ask them what does this mean? What does this say? So I was obligated—when I go to school the next day I had to ask the professor 'can you explain this to me?' [or] 'What does this mean?' So I never had that chance. (Schneider)

The "chance" that Schneider mentioned that he never had often underpinned Haitian adults' parenting behaviors and educational aspirations for their children. For example, Manoucheca tirelessly supported her son day in and day out, but she did so without regret because she never had the chance to experience that level of support from her mother.

> …basically I had to learn that once you have a kid in high school you don't have a life anymore. Because he's into all that sport, he plays football, and now that football season is over he's doing wrestling. Unfortunately due to my schedule I can't go to his matches, but every single football game I'm there and then leaving from there to go to work. It's tiring and attending meetings and participating in all the activities to help the football team…it's a lot…I mean it's a good experience but—I just feel like I want to make sure my son has a better experience than I had growing up—in high school. (Manoucheca)

The level of deprivation experienced by Haitian immigrant parents, like Manoucheca, seemed to have a relationship with their aspiration for their children. The worse off a parent believed they were, the more opportunities parents wanted for their child. Parents had a keen awareness of the material and experiential advantages that their children

possessed. Perhaps, it is for these reasons they held their children to high standards and were very optimistic about their children's futures.

Follow Your Parents, Not Your Friends

Most Haitian parents were self-assured that they had received a good education from their parents. Their upbringings were points of pride that they often talked to their children about. Parents shared with their children values that came from their "system" in Haiti as remarked Marie-Jane. They taught their children respect and courtesy and the also talked to them about reprehensible characteristics such as envy and stealing. The content of talks often included advice and allusions to "paths" and "routes" that their children should follow.

> Take the path that is good for you because the one that has the thorns, if you step there, the thorns will prick you. But the path that is clear, that does not have thorns, that does not have barriers, that is the path to take. (Fabienne)

Where it concerned their character education, specifically spirituality and morality, many immigrant Haitian parents believed that they served as models for their children to emulate. A number of Haitian parents were church goers and people of faith. Although they would engage in different activities throughout the week, Marie-Jane, like other parents, was adamant that "Sundays are for church" and the remainder of the week was open for other family activities. Parents who were church goers took their children along with them to church. These parents strongly desired that their adolescent children would follow their lead and take the same paths that they were on. Nadege was very clear about where she stood. Going to church was compulsory in her household.

> And I go to church with him. Church, the path and I'm taking and I'm trying, that's the one you're supposed to take. And when you're older and you want to take your own path you take it. But while you're here, [living] with me, that's the one you take. (Nadege)

Another example could be taken from Fabienne who struggled for a while to find a home church for herself family to attend. As she recounted her story, she seemed very anxious about the fact that she was not taking her four children to church regularly which was one element of her three-part goal for her family.

> I've already found a church. I'm just not prepared to take the children. I have a church already. My objectives are to work, go to church, and make the education of my children. (Fabienne)

The feeling that she was not prepared to take her children to church, even after she had found a suitable home church seemed to stem from the fact that at the time of the interview she was unemployed. It seemed to consume her, the fact that she was unable to provide for her children in the way that she would have liked. Given that Fabienne did not feel that she could "make the education" of her children on her own, she turned to prayer to elicit the help of a higher power.

> Because you see [points to the linens on the floor] at the moment I was laying on that sack praying to God. What I'm telling [you] is what I pray to God and if He wants to do me a favor I tell him what—to give me a job so that I can take care of them. (Fabienne)

Fabienne's parenting practices and the content of her talks with her children were closely intertwined with her spiritual beliefs. Taking their children to church may have afforded Haitian parents a sense of security, as a comment made by Kervens suggested. "That's a plus for us because when your kids follow God's rules, so there are certain things they are not going to do." He added:

So for church, when you are a church member so, you want your kids, your family to be [on the] same line with you. Because if you are church member, when you grow up, you don't want your kids to be somewhere else, without going to church. So Haitian parents always focus—[are] good at that. To push the kids, that's another push for the kids to be God kids. We like that. (Kervens)

For several Haitian parents, instruction of the religious sort may have provided adults and children alike with boundaries based on morals and values. Regular church attendance thus served to reinforce these principles weekly and ensured that children stayed in step with their parents. Kervens referred to being Godly kids as "another push," in addition to parents pushing their children to strive academically.

If parents were push forces, surely friends were pull forces. Apparently, their children's choices of friends were seen as formidable influences that could derail Haitian youngsters from their parents' dreams for them. As a result, across the board, much time was dedicated to the subject of friends during talks with their children.

The bad things is everywhere [In the United States] has drugs, alcohol, tobacco, that's right there. It's at school, it's on the [streets], it's everywhere. If you go to school you're going to find a lot of people who are going to try to talk to you

about it, but good or bad. Friends can bring you to a lot of wrong places, you

didn't have to go there, but they will try to push you to. And if you follow them,

it's up to you. That's what I always talk to them about. (Kervens)

Widlene's warnings about friends were based on her own experiences in high school in

the United States.

It's not so much bullying, because I can't use that word bullying. It's like the

negativity with the kids and so forth. I remember, experience that when I was in

high school. It's like girl chatty stuff [gossip]. I know what it can be like when

you're on the receiving end of it. Yeah, you know so for that that was always in

the back of my head, so when they are going to middle school, high school

whatever I always let them know hey there's always going to be those people,

those kinds of friends just stay away from them. Do your own thing. Don't focus

on them. Make sure you're running the right track or walking the straight line.

(Widlene)

To stay the course could be very difficult for adolescents. The way that Kervens

saw it, the pressure from peers to get involved in drugs was very real. Manoucheca

shared a similar concern about drug use. Both parents acknowledged that not all friends

were bad. Manoucheca just advised her son to "Limit the amount of friends that you

have, because not everybody is your friend." Kervens asserted that some friends "can put

you on a good line" if they themselves follow a good line. He warned,

So if they follow a wrong line, they want you to go on the same line they are

following. So my role is to teach my kids, the way good, the way bad if you want

to take this way you can do good and if you want to take that way it can be bad for you. It's up to you to choose. (Kervens)

Whereas Kervens believed that the choice of a good or bad path was his daughter's to make, Nadege was not completely convinced that her son's friends could control him all the time or that her son himself was totally in control. She believed in a divine destiny of sorts in which the child could be pre-programed to be "good" regardless of surrounding influences.

Well here is his problem he's a good kid but friends, for example he has some little friends that at times he more so lets them control him. I always talk to him at times the person is much older than you there might not be even older than you but they have a sense more than you and they might not want to do something but they send you to do it. That means, it doesn't mean that those kids are going to make him not listen to you if it's not God's plan. If a child wants to be good you don't even have to talk to them. But you want that when you do talk to him that they listen to you. (Nadege)

When asked about her experience raising her adolescent daughter, Fabienne's response was that "It's good. She does not disrespect me, she's so quiet. I don't know if up ahead her friends will take her head [control her] but —." Fabienne had a genuine concern that her daughter's friends would change her. Fabienne believed that her daughter could be easily led astray for want of material things that her friends had, but that Fabienn could not proivide.

If the Metro [PCS cell phone] is in your hands, it's what I can give you at the moment. Don't ask friends to borrow clothes to wear. If you see a friend has a pair of tennis shoes on their feet and you only have sandals do not ask your friends and borrow their tennis shoes to put on your feet. Because I'm poor and it's an effort that I'm making, that is to say you don't make me embarrassed out in society so to speak. Don't look at what your friends are doing and for you to do the same. I am your friend. (Fabienne)

Fabienne feared that one day friends could have a greater influence than she had over her teenage daughter. She wanted to take the place of her daughters' friends and wished to model multiple roles for her daughter besides being a mother figure.

If you have something whatever you have going on, and that you want to say it's me you should tell it to me because I'm your friend, I'm your mom, I am your sister, I am your aunt. You have something to share, it's with me you should share it. Don't tell friends anything of yours. And don't follow what your friends are doing to do that too. (Fabienne)

The fears and concerns where understandable, still many parents were also confident that all the "preaching and singing" which Tony used to refer to talks, would eventually sink in. As Nadege put it, "If you don't listen you're the one who is going to see it. If you don't listen to me that means—especially Haitian parents there are not any who don't talk to their kids." If Haitian children made the conscious decision not to heed their parents' warnings and if they chose to disregard their parents' advice, then children could only

blame themselves, not their parents, for outcomes that opposed the paths that were set before them.

Don't Be Like Your Parents, Be Better

Most immigrant Haitian parents invited their children to follow in their footsteps in terms of their character and morality; however, the converse was true where it concerned their schooling and by extension their occupations. The vast majority of parents had no aspiration for their children to be like them in this domain; rather they wanted their children to be better and do better in terms of their educational pursuits. Parents frequently brought up their talks with their children which included conversations about their college plans. As stated by Nadege "…you cannot put that type of learning into someone's head but you can give the person that advice, what's good for them." All immigrant Haitian parents, from the low-educated to the highly educated, advised their children to strive for a higher education beyond high school mostly because they "never had a chance" to do so themselves.

> what I would want is for when the child finishes school, is for any and every type of diploma that exists for them to have them all! Because, I myself didn't have. (Marie-Jane)

> I want my kid at least to get a four-year degree—If not a two [year degree] then a four. A two is fine as long as you get a college degree. Because you know I feel like I missed out and I haven't had the opportunity to do it yet because I've been so focused on them and just not feeling like I'm ready to do that yet. But for them, definitely! (Widlene)

I always explain that to them, so if you finish your high school you go to college, you finish college and you go to bachelor degree so everything come easier for you. I always explain that. So I didn't hit that part, you can hit it if you focus. (Kervens)

Parents' motives for pushing their children towards a higher education also took into account the reality that they would not always be around to house, feed, and in general support and counsel their children and their future grandchildren.

Because like I told him one day I'm not going to be here, my husband is not going to be here to provide that home for him. And then one day you are going to be a parent. You need to show your kids, you know what, my parents had it hard and they aimed to get where they were at before they were gone and they pushed me to where I'm at. (Manoucheca)

The first part is education. The more educated you are the more easy the life comes to you. So, if you don't focus to get a good education that mean you're on low level. You have to work hard and bust your head to eat, to feed your family. So if you get a good education, you become a good knowledger [knower]. So, hey, the things come easier for you. (Kervens)

Although high school was indeed a milestone in their children's lives that was worth celebrating, a couple of parents seemed to downplay the value of a high school diploma. They affirmed that high school graduation was merely a step towards a better life, but it was not the finish line.

I like when the child finishes graduating high school, that means that high school is one step but not all I'm looking for. I need you to continue. When you go to school, you graduated high school, in reality you know how to read but you don't have anything else that you understand, that you know. However, to find the advantage, it's when you continue, you should continue so that you can find a job; you can have a good job. You have to continue going to school. (Nadege)

So I don't think high school graduation it's enough. When you graduate from high school it's just a stepping stone. It's like a door that's open and now it's up to you to go through those doors. And I need him to aim higher. (Manoucheca)

It was clear that most parents did not want their children to have the same level of education as themselves, nor did they want their children to have the same workforce experience that they were currently experiencing. Parents talked to their children in hopes that through these conversations their children would sidestep pitfalls in their education and career pathways.

And I use that [anecdote] to tell them, that's why you have to do good in school. Because, if I am living paycheck to paycheck right now, I don't want you to be living the same life that I'm living. It is very stressful…that brings stress on your relationship because if you live paycheck to paycheck, you will probably find yourself in the position to work two jobs to make ends meet. (Tony)

You always say, that you want to talk to the child tomorrow [and tell them] here I am, I work at [a grocery store], but I wouldn't want that tomorrow, that it's here that you [will] be working as well. (Nadege)

Realistically, only one parent, Schneider, welcomed the idea that in the future he and his daughter would share the same level of education, which is understandable given that he held a master's degree in international law.

> That's difficult for me I'll always envision that my child finishes university. I'd always be fighting [working aggressively] to find help, for me to work, for me to prepare, so that my child will go to university. (Schneider)

When presented with the idea that for some parents it is enough if their children graduate high school and others they want their children to go on to college, Schneider was fairly certain about the educational level he had already envisioned for his daughter who was in the eighth grade. All other parents wanted their children to do far better than them and to excel in areas where they never had an opportunity to meet their full potential.

Immigrant Haitian adult parents' ambitions for their children were frequently expressed as *ka yon moun demen,* which in English translates to "can be someone tomorrow." This expression seemed to be inherent in Haitian culture as it or similar language was asserted throughout interviews with the parents and corroborated in interviews with educators and community liaisons. This notion reoccurred throughout the study when referring to what underpinned participants' learning aspirations in adulthood. The majority of adult participants except for Tony, Kervens, and Schneider, could not explicitly define the professional or vocational expectations that their own parents had for them when growing up. In response to this line of questioning participants often defaulted to the idea that their own parents wanted them to be someone tomorrow, this they were sure of. The expectation to make something of oneself in the future seemed to be

unspoken, nonetheless it was culturally understood and commanding in participants'
lives.

When speaking about their own dreams and aspirations, the phrase *ka yon moun
demen* sometimes implied that adults had yet to feel as though they had arrived, or
fulfilled their dreams.

> I'd like to go to work, so that I can achieve something the same as everyone
> else. (Johanne)

I feel like I'm a person, but it's not this person that I wanted to be. (Marie-Jane)

A combination of experiences appeared to lead adults to this outlook. To Johanne, in
order to be deemed worthy in the eyes of others, she believed that she needed be formally
employed, not just running an unlicensed daycare out of the bedroom that she was
renting. As a result she had set her sights on learning English. The person that Marie-Jane
had envisioned becoming was a registered nurse, but her training capped at a certified
nursing assistant. As a result, she was quite discontented with her profession but, at the
same time grateful that she had earned her licensure despite her struggles with the
English language. Without a doubt, the notion that a person can be someone or something
tomorrow was multifaceted. The term was flexible as it embodied several ideas: (a) the
potential for a life change was conceivable despite challenges, (b) an expressed yearning
to replace dissatisfaction based on a perceived lack, missed learning opportunity, or
deferred dream, and (c) an underlying need to be acknowledged as successful in the eyes
of others in society.

Dr. Claire clarified that the notion *ka yon moun demen* was not only a desire, but a mind-set that is generally adopted by Haitians growing up in Haiti. She also pointed to the fact that in the Haitian cultural context, the notion is often attached to a select few professions that require extensive schooling and high functioning in terms of cognitive ability. The participants' personal narratives about growing up in Haiti, their parents' expectations for them, and their educational aspirations identified five careers: doctor, lawyer, engineer, teacher, and nurse/medical professional.

So you said when I'm done with school I'm going to become a teacher, or when I'm done with school I'm going to learn to be a doctor, or when I'm done with school I'll learn to be an engineer , or when I'm done with school, I'll go into the nursing field. That's your dream that you want to achieve. (Marie-Jane)

To tell you the truth, they pushed me to go become something. I can be a doctor or a lawyer so I didn't finish it. So that's kind of where they were pushing you O.K. But, Haitian parents always want their kids to be in a high level so the jobs at the high level are doctor lawyer, high level positions. To become somebody. (Kervens)

I went to what you call normal school so that I can teach and I studied law as well. I went to France, I have a Masters in international law so for me to do something else it would be a doctorate [J.D.] that I would do in the same domain of law. I wouldn't do anything else… (Schneider)

What I would like to learn, I would like to be educated and then to learn law. (Johanne)

And my dad thought that I was going to be a mechanic guy, like engineering. (Tony)

See I have been thinking about that [a career change]…I don't know if I want to go into education, I just don't know. Probably medical, but maybe the medical side instead of the dental side. (Widlene)

Mrs. Gondola added that over the span of her 15 year career as an educator in the United States she had observed that Haitian school children generally aspire to professions that afford them the opportunity to become economically solvent, but are also essentially social in nature. She explained that these five career paths satisfy an essential role in Haitian communities that are characteristically economically poor and physically ailing and one could add afflicted by corruption and social injustice.

Manoucheca and Marie-Jane both aspired to become registered nurses, a job that by nature would help them help other people.

My goal is to basically work in the nursing field, in a hospital to be a registered nurse. If not, anything that has to do with helping people. That's my thing. (Manoucheca)

I like to help. I like to help a lot a lot. It's because I don't have. However, if I had and I knew someone who was in need I would help them. (Marie-Jane)

It is likely that during their childhoods many Haitian immigrants' own parents operated under the frame of mind that their children could be someone and possibly earn a professional degree.

What [my parents] wanted was to put you in school, so you could become something tomorrow, so that you could help them. (Johanne)

Every parent always wants good for their children. So my parents would like me to become someone tomorrow. (Marie-Jane)

Later on in life, some of these adults turned parents seemed to cast similar aspirations and dreams upon their adolescent children. There again, some parents hinted that titled professions such as doctor and engineer, were the optimal career paths for their children.

I used to tell her that this is what I'd like for her to study after she goes to college, and learn to be an engineer or doctor or something good so that tomorrow you can help yourself when we are not here. (Johanne)

I don't think it's enough for my son to just only graduate high school and not obtain college…There's a lot of Black doctors out there, but the media doesn't put that out. (Manoucheca)

Adults' perceived potential for self-fulfillment seemed to be more profound for their children, who the majority of parents deemed were at an advantage where it concerned their schooling and overall wellbeing. Parents overwhelmingly believed that their children were more likely than them to "be someone tomorrow" and that parents were less likely to achieve their dreams. For example, Fabienne pretty much abandoned the idea that she could undertake new learning opportunities and still make something of herself at 40 years of age because she had "left that [learning] for [her daughter] and kids." According to Tony, "It's in the Haitian culture, your parent may not be successful in life but they would love to see their children become successful." Tony, Nadege, and

Schneider were like minded and believed that wanting one's child to be someone tomorrow was a commonly held belief among Haitians. Schneider and Nadege, however, seemed to be of the opinion that the natural desire for one's children to make something of themselves was not merely a phenomenon tied to the Haitian culture, but a universal truth across cultures.

> Everyone has that ambition that their child would be something tomorrow. (Nadege)

> When you are in school and they see that you are intelligent, your parents are expecting more from you and they a little bit push you, encourage you to finish school. Because to finish school not only in Haiti, but in all cultures, in all societies, that's when you start to live. (Schneider)

In some instances the idea that their children could make something of themselves punctuated parents' statements of their aspirations. "If you take school seriously, so you become someone tomorrow," Kervens advised his daughter. Tony was grateful to God that as a parent he was granted the opportunity "raise someone [who will be], in the future, able to contribute to society." For Nadege, reminding her son that he was to make something of himself was a normal part of her daily talks with him. The notion was sandwiched among the practices she has taught her son well such as personal hygiene and attending church.

> I tell him that when you go to school you put on lotion you put on deodorant you take a bath you brush your teeth. That means even if you didn't use cologne you

don't have a bad odor on you. Also, I tell him that you are to be something

tomorrow. To hold that in your head. And I go to church with him. (Nadege)

Although parents shared the sentiment that their child could be someone tomorrow, there

were two clear conditions. First, the children had to listen to their parent and internalize

their advice they offered. Several parents believed they could do little more than talk to

their child. Thus, the second condition was that children out to be self-motivated and

intent on making the most of their education and opportunities that came their way.

> In truth there's a question of determination and conviction that means I could have
>
> my will to make them advance or move forward but the person has to have their
>
> own conviction, their own will. They can say 'No, when I finish high school I'm
>
> going to do such and such thing' and then they stop right there [never to go on to
>
> pursue those things]. (Schneider)

Conceivably *ka yon moun demen* was a belief learned by Haitian adults and one to

which they clearly wanted their own children to subscribe. However, not all parents had

preconceived career pathways for their children. Fabienne felt that it was her daughter's

prerogative to choose, as long as she chose well.

> At that point she is in college and when she's done she can go on to learn
>
> whatever she wants. Because where I'm at I can't make the choice for her. So
>
> tomorrow she—so that it can help her live tomorrow. (Fabienne)

Fabienne's openness to career paths for her daughter is similar to the ambiguous

expectations that several female participants stated that their parents had for them. For

instance, growing up, Nadege's parents granted her free will to choose, but the byproducts of that career choice, whatever it may have been, were quite clear.

> They [parents] still talk to you, you're supposed to do something that's good that could help you tomorrow even if these studies are not too much you may still do something with yourself that won't make them embarrassed or ashamed. Something that would be able to help the family. Something that would make the family happy you know. (Nadege)

So, it seemed that in order for children not to succumb to the same fates as that of their parents in terms of participation in the workforce the main requirements were that parents should talk frequently with their children and articulate their expectations. On part of the children, their responsibilities were to heed their parents' warnings, take their parents advice, and ultimately choose to do something good that was beneficial to their futures. Whatever the choice the children made, the primary criterion was that the path they took would ensure that their children were much better off than their immigrant parents.

Summary of Emergent Themes

Qualitative data analysis resulted in the identification of 12 themes. The themes emerged from nine in-depth interviews with immigrant Haitian parents. Interview questions and probes from a semi-structured interview protocol were used to address three research subquestions and one major question. The first research subquestion explored immigrant Haitian adults' experiences and perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners. Four themes were identified in response to this question: *Home-Oriented Learning Guaranteed*, *Scars of (Un)Schooling*, *English for Life*, and *Learners*

for a Change. These themes encapsulate immigrant Haitian adults' consistent experiences learning key values and skills at home. Participants also faced challenges learning at school or suffered adverse consequences as the result of disrupted schooling. Newcomers often viewed the English language as a very necessary part of their daily functioning in the United States. Among participants who could fathom the idea of learning at their current stage in life, there was consensus that learning could catalyze positive change in their employment status and overall wellbeing.

The second research subquestion addressed the ways in which immigrant Haitian adults experienced and perceived their role in supporting their adolescent children enrolled in secondary schools in the United States. Three themes were identified in response to this question: *Lopsided Communication*, *Working in the Background*, and *Controlling for Social Risks*. These themes covered several aspect of immigrant Haitian parenting roles and PI. In their roles as parents to school-age children, participants were more often the recipients of communications from schools, rather than initiators. A one-way communication strategy from school to home was more prevalent among low-educated adults. Also, participants' parenting responsibilities included preparatory work to get their children ready both mentally and physically for school, but these forms of PI were less visible on school campuses. Participants' roles as parents to teenagers called for them to safeguard their children from socially stigmatizing situations. The shielding and disciplinary actions taken by parents and their socialization of their children differed according to their children's gender.

The third research subquestion underscored immigrant Haitian parents' resources, which can be used to better connect the school and home. A pair of themes was identified in response to this question: *Community of Believers and Supporters* and *Experienced in Work and Life*. These themes signified that participants had access to a network of people and organizations that helped support their families. Low-educated parents seemed to tap into their support network more often in order to overcome their personal limitations. Despite their shortcomings, participants also had skills in the domestic workforce and in professions that may prove useful in teaching and learning contexts. Participants' migration narratives were also sources of knowledge that could be used didactically to connect the school to the family home.

The major research question took into account thematic findings which grounded and unified the three subquestions. The intent of the major research question was to identify the foremost connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. A trio of themes was named in response to this multifaceted question: *Deprived Parents and Privileged Children*, *Follow Your Parents, Not Your Friends*, and *Don't Be Like Your Parents, Be Better*. These three thematic expressions juxtaposed immigrant Haitian parents' lived experiences next to their perceptions of their children's current realities along with parents' worries and optimism for their children's futures. The first theme signified that parents' personal narratives, which were marred by poverty and hardship, often contrasted with their perceptions of their children's lives, which they believed were defined by excess opportunities. Although parent participants believed

they were role models for their children, they also feared that their children would succumb to negative peer pressures that would jeopardize their futures. In the end, parents yearned for their children to do exceedingly better than themselves and felt that post-secondary studies would lead their children towards an elevated socioeconomic status and a more comfortable life in the United States.

Interpretation of Findings

The interplay between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development is a complex phenomenon. Although findings may not be generalizable to the larger immigrant Haitian population, given the small sample size, there were several resounding elements of life as a learner and parent which merit further discussion. This multiple case study aimed to explore and validate the individual experiences of immigrant Haitian adults as well as highlight shared phenomenon among those experiences. In this section, salient results are discussed alongside a few of the more subtle outcomes in relation to the larger body of literature. Once again, in order to keep the interpretations organized and concise, I chose to discuss the results first according to the three research subquestions. I then expand the interpretations outwards to address the major research question which focused on the broader connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development.

Research Question 1

The first research subquestion addressed immigrant Haitian adults' experiences and perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners. Participants had several

commonalities in their learning experiences in Haiti and the United States. Therefore, this

section is divided accordingly to succinctly summarize immigrant Haitian adults'

perceptions and experiences pre- and post-immigration as well as the unique experiences

of Generation 1.5 women.

Haitian Immigrants as Learners and Knowers

For the eight out of nine men and women who had childhoods in Haiti, their lives

were rife with difficulties. Poverty and food scarcity were resounding topics, which is not

surprising given that Haiti was and remains a third world country (Smith et al., 2012).

Also, formal schooling was an object to be desired by Haitian immigrants who came

from underprivileged backgrounds, though women suffered the brunt of the

discrimination. In keeping with the literature, economic and gender based inequities

limited female participants' opportunities to attend school and move out of poverty

(Smith et al., 2012). Being that poverty is the most common causes of illiteracy

worldwide (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010), it was no wonder that among participants,

illiteracy and limited-literacy were a defining part of the lives of four out of the six

women, all of whom spent their formative years in Haiti. In 2012, UNESCO's study of

adult literacy world-wide reported similar findings in Haiti, highlighting gender

inequities in educational access and attainment (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012).

Use of a wider lens to examine the social practice of literacy made it quite evident

that Haitian adults' learning, in Haiti in particular, was divided into two categories,

e*dikasyon* which implied learning at home (character education, household and domestic

skills and spirituality) and *enstriksyon* which was equated to more formal learning and

training at school. Sociocultural researchers (Gee, 1991; Street, 1998) espoused that it is

critical that the distinction is made between in-school and out-of-school literacy practices.

They emphasize that a nuanced understanding of learning as it takes place outside of the

four walls of the school house affords researchers and practitioners valuable insight as to

approaches to teaching more commonly accepted literacies. In the Haitian cultural

context the distinction between in-school and out-out of school learning was part of deep

culture although the inherent differences between *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* translated

into discrete types of knowledge, experiences, and barriers. These variables impacted

participants' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of self differently, although some common

underlying themes were visible.

When growing up in Haiti, all participants' parents impressed upon them the

importance of values such as respect for authority, social graces as greeting people

regardless of how familiar they were with them, and the meaning of hard work. The

women, in particular, learned household skills as cooking, cleaning, and caring for

members of their immediate families. These characteristics and skills were mostly taught

via the use of the oral language or "talks" and sometimes experientially through hands-on

activities like farming the land. Participants had no qualms about the quality of learning

that took place at home and was often deepened and reinforced out in the community.

On the other hand, formal schooling opportunities were severely limited, mostly

due to economic hardship. Although all participants attended school at one point or

another, for several women their schooling lacked consistency and continuity over the

long-term. Most grieved their lack of schooling beyond the early elementary or middle

grades. Some blamed their parents for not granting them the opportunity, and others were more forgiving, citing the lack of "possibilities" as the main culprit leading to their current circumstances. Participants who had the good fortune to attend school regularly, however, had their share of complaints as well. The learning contexts and teaching methods in Haiti are generally less than ideal when compared to schools in the United States (Bernard et al., 1996). Per the literature and participants, students sometimes go to school hungry and walk many miles to school. Several participants denounced the instructional methods used to teach them. They felt that rote memorization and repetition, what some refer to as "*par coeurisme*," which translates to learning "by heart," was not beneficial to their acquisition and that these outdated approaches may have led to acute gaps in knowledge and comprehension (Myrick 1992, as cited in Lauture, 2007, p. 11). Moreover, at the time of their schooling, the principal intervention and disciplinary method experienced by this older generation of learners seemed to be corporal punishment. The regular use of lashes and spankings may have created an environment that was not the most conducive to learning, as participants were anxious about making mistakes for fear of looming physical repercussions. At home, given that their parents lacked the "alphabet," participants struggled to find suitable help completing their assignments and studies.

Although participants' experiences of *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* were often contrasting, upon second glance the terms did not seem to be at odds. Based on participants' lived experiences, education and instruction were not synonymous, nor were they clearly opposing. Participants gave the impression that their disparate learning

experiences at home and school were not a naturally occurring phenomenon so much as it was a situational one mitigated by poverty and hardship. Immigrant adult participants gave strong examples of how the boundary lines of education and instruction often blurred and overlapped. For participants who attended school regularly and those who did not, school related affairs were brought home and home related problems were brought to school. On these occasions, as they shared their stories, adults did not scoff, nor were they caught off guard by the overlap of the two spheres; perhaps it was because bringing schooling home and vice versa was an expectation of, not an encroachment on their lives. So, it became clear that *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* were not dichotomous. They were co-existing forces which shaped Haitians' identities as knowers and learners.

Most participants were able to specify their personal strong points and deficiencies in their character, the English language, or skills that impacted their employability. The keen ability to self-examine was critical to Haitian immigrants' envisioning of learning goals for themselves which often aligned with a perceived gap in learning, a missed opportunity, or a yearning for self-fulfillment that could only be brought on by economic progress and stability, and for a few participants, by spiritual growth.

The results of the study suggest that many immigrant adults strongly believed that at the juncture where a fitting and proper *edikasyon* at home meets effective *enstriksyon* at school is where they can perceive themselves as accomplished in the eyes of the communities in which they were rooted. For the majority, instruction, rather than education, had the most potential to catalyze the greatest change in their adult lives which

were unfurling in the United States. This is because the moral and spiritual teachings of *edikasyon*, which they had received from their families back home, had already ferried them to their current destinations in life. Low-educated Haitian adults who lamented the quality and quantity of schooling they received in Haiti implied that in order to propel their lives forward into a more fulfilling and prosperous future, formal schooling would be necessary. It should be said that participants' perceptions of self and their projections for their futures appeared to be inextricably tied to their occupational attainment.

Despite having acknowledged that engaging in formal learning during their sojourns in the United States would be necessary, not all participants were equally driven to undertake learning a skill or profession, nor were learning opportunities equally accessible to all adults. Reportedly, social and cultural inequities experienced by Haitians living in Haiti, often linger during their stay in the United States (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Stepick & Stepick, 1990). Adults attested to the fact that learning at home and at school in Haiti and in the United States was different, that is to say that the systems and expectations are different. However, for many participants their struggles remained the same. Barriers to ongoing schooling in the United States included typical constraints as scheduling conflicts with adult education programs, low motivation, and upon occasion the absence of transportation to program sites (Knowles et al., 2005). Atypical barriers which adults in this study were confronted with included separation from family as a result of immigration and poor schooling experiences and learning opportunities in their country of origin. Out migration often jeopardizes families' psychological well-being, economic stability, and family composition and living arrangement (Landale et al., 2011;

Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). Moreover, among Caribbean Blacks, Haitians often have the hardest time establishing themselves in the United States given that their native language is not English (Thomas, 2012a). Although Haitian Creole was for many participants their preferred language and a source of pride, several female participants had mild to severe difficulties reading and writing in any language. Also, participants stated that having "a lot going on," was in itself a significant challenge. Parents wore many hats, which meant they juggled multiple responsibilities: raising children, working to earn an income to support relatives in the United States and those left behind in Haiti, returning back to school, adjusting to career changes, and balancing work and familial obligations. For women in particular, the direct consequences of limited schooling were quite evident in their lives. Unequal participation in the labor market, unemployment, and employment in low-skill jobs is the norm among low-educated Haitians (Buchanan et al., 2010). As discussed in the literature, a number of issues unique to immigrants, especially limited or disrupted schooling, are very challenging to overcome (Menard-Warwick, 2005; Terry, 2006; Vinogradov & Liden, 2009).

The presence of barriers seemed to be amplified in the lives of participants, primarily women, who had few schooling opportunities; yet these participants needed schooling the most. Their lackluster participation in adult education programs, despite the fact that programs were, as some parents mentioned "just down the road" from their homes, is not uncommon. English language learners at the lowest echelons of literacy proficiency are the least likely to participate in literacy learning and the most likely to have limited access to programs (Hansman & Mott, 2010). Although all participants

believed that adults could learn even if they were more advanced in age, those who possessed only a few years of education in Haiti were less likely to be able to reconcile the idea of formally learning a language, a new skill, or profession at their current stage of life, with their current realities. This detachment hinted at the fact that some participants' perceived self-efficacy, which is their ability to "regulate their own learning and master academic activities," may have been compromised (Bandura, 1993, p. 117). Self-efficacy is a strong determinant of leaners' aspirations, motivation, and academic achievement. Thus, participants who possessed only a few years of schooling were not likely to be in active pursuit of their goals if they required formal schooling; whereas moderate to highly educated adults were either currently enrolled in school or could at least picture themselves learning in the future without any serious misgivings.

All was not lost however, for participants who were low-educated and had yet to enroll in language and literacy programs. Although the word *learn* in the interview question "in the future what would you like to learn" was misinterpreted as only formal learning taking place in a brick and mortar building and led by a teacher, adults learned quite a bit, especially language, informally. The majority of participants specified that listening and comprehension in English was their strong suit, though speaking, reading, and writing was challenging to some. Haitian newcomers did not give themselves enough credit for the acquisition of new words, facts, and concepts in multiple languages, mostly English but a "little bit" of Spanish and French as well. Aural and oral skills were integral to the literate experience and overall learning experiences of Haitian participants in this study. Arguably, literacy acquisition is a social practice, unconstrained by one's ability to

read and write (Street, 1998, 2005). Orality is deeply rooted in the Haitian cultural tradition (Bernard et al., 1996; Civan et al., 1994). For decades there has been an improved understanding of the legitimacy of learning outside of school and the potential for skill mastery by newcomers who engage in learning from those in the community who are more knowledgeable (Scribner & Cole, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991). That is to say, listening and speaking are valuable antecedents of reading and writing, and the absence of the latter set of skills should in no way imply unintelligence among this or other groups of learners.

Furthermore, participants who at least were moderately educated in Haiti or the United States studied for and passed the U.S. citizenship exam. This majority employed self-study methods at home, along with the basic reading and listening materials provided by the immigration office. The earlier examples of language learning as well as the numerous examples of autonomous study illustrate ways in which learning may occur among Haitians through interactions with others as well as self, outside of formally structured programs. Humans' interactions with other humans and objects as well as events result in learning (Wang et al., 2011). This type of learning as it happens within and without the Haitian community is easily glossed over in the literature, for want of proof of acquisition of more globally recognized literacies.

Generation 1.5: Learners Between Worlds

The strict definition of Generation 1.5 states that these are immigrants who arrived in the United States at or around the age of 14 (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). By definition, Manoucheca and Widlene were not in the strictest sense Generation 1.5

immigrants, in that they arrived in the United States at the young ages of 6 and 3 years old respectively. However, in keeping with recent and earlier intergenerational immigrant studies, their experiences were uniquely different from those of their first generation immigrant counterparts (Benesch, 2008; Pew Research Center, 2013; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). For one, they had very little to no pre-immigration schooling experiences. Manoucheca vividly recalled her troubled early learning experiences in the Haitian school system up until she immigrated to New York when she was 6 years old. Conversely, Widlene had no recollection of life in general while in the Bahamas. Barriers to learning during their childhoods included their parents' lack of fluency in the English language and perhaps their parents' low expectations for them.

For Manoucheca and Widlene, motivation for learning in adulthood was linked to their occupational attainment, but going to school in the future did not seem as pressing as it was for their low-educated female counterparts, Johanne, Fabienne, and Marie-Jane. This is perhaps because both women completed Grade K-12 and their post-secondary studies in the United States. They had ample opportunities and access that other, older female participants only dreamed of. It is not unusual that these women had well established jobs in semi-skilled occupations, unlike first generation participants who were unemployed or held low-skilled jobs (Pew Research Center, 2013; Wilson, 2014). Furthermore, unlike their peers, learning was sometimes for the sake of learning, that is to say that Generation 1.5 immigrants engaged in learning activities not to influence their employment prospects so much as to change environments, experience something new, or to challenge themselves.

Generation 1.5 learners in the literature are often pegged as linguistic and academically incomplete or partial. There was some evidence of this in the present study as neither participant claimed to be fluent in Haitian Creole, which was their first language early on. Widlene felt she could certainly improve her English speaking skills, and Manoucheca made a conscious effort to surround herself with non-Haitians who spoke "proper" English to ensure that she did not pick up on slang or language that could be perceived as "unprofessional." Furthermore, Manoucheca elucidated upon the acculturative change that came about as she unconsciously moved from Creole as the medium for communication to English which she put into words as, "I gave up my citizenship from my country to become part of somebody else's country." Benesch (2008) argued that members of the self-perceptions of members of the Generation 1.5 had less to do with their partiality or linguistic, academic, and demographic shortcomings and more to do with their experiences as minorities who are frequently discriminated against. On that note, it was certainly true for Manoucheca that race appeared to be in the forefront of her life. At 35 years old, her racial consciousness led her to be concerned about how her speech developed and how it would be perceived by outsiders. The discussion about her aspirations for her son's future was headed by the disclaimer "What I am about to say goes back to that race thing." She was critical of the media's unrealistic portrayal of Black men as uneducated and as men who worked only in non-professional occupations. Furthermore Manoucheca shared that her son was discriminated against for sounding "White", which prompted her move back to the county where she had attended school. She was seriously concerned that he would come face-to-face with discrimination later on

as a Black man who was college bound. Manoucheca also questioned outsiders'

perceptions of her biracial daughter. Without a doubt, her heightened racial

consciousness had an effect on her life and influenced her socialization of her children.

Widlene, on the other hand, who was raising two young Black men on her own, made no

mention of race or discrimination as neither a systemic barrier nor a topical subject in

talks with her children. However, Widlene may be the exception as Black parents across

social classes tend to engage in racial socialization in order to prepare their children for

the roadblocks they will almost certainly face growing up in American society (Peters,

2002; Reynolds, 2010; Scott, 2003).

Notably, there were striking similarities between the experiences of Generation

1.5 and first generation participants who were raised in Haiti. Female participants,

regardless of their generation received a similar *edikasyon* at home. Like their first

generation female counterparts, members of Generation 1.5 were also taught to cook and

clean and learned to care for siblings and family. In terms of *enstriksyon*, when

Generation 1.5 female participants were compared to the highest educated male

participants born and raised in Haiti, Generation 1.5 women lagged behind in education.

In this way Widlene and Manoucheca were similar to their first generation female

counterparts. This may be in part due their parents' expectations for them that were low

or unspoken. Time after time, female participants in this study revealed that their parents

either did not expect much from them or never talked to them about what they had

envisioned for their futures; thus leaving them to their own devices.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 addressed the ways in which immigrant Haitian adults experienced and perceived their role in supporting their adolescent children enrolled in secondary schools in the United States. Parent involvement among Haitian participants hardly mirrored those of the dominant culture. However, involvement in their children's schooling and development more closely aligned with the cultural models followed by other ethnic minorities, primarily Latinos. This section presents an interpretation of the results concerning Haitian PI as they compare to dominant parent groups and ethnic minorities.

Haitian Parent Involvement Unlike the Mainstream

Epstein and Jansorn (2004) identified half a dozen types of involvement at school which today form the foundation of PI strategies and programs, and which underpin the notion of the school-home partnership: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Immigrant Haitian adult participants in this study played both supporting and lead roles in their children's schooling and development. Participants' roles and responsibilities in their children's lives seemed well defined and understood by them. As a group, the degree of interconnectedness between Haitian parents and their children's schools fell short of the most common expectations of the U.S. school system. White, middle class families are presumed to be the dominant group upon whom the expectations of PI are based (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). The often high visibility PI structures that White parents engage in, as well as their more lax attitudes towards academic socialization, often

contrast those of other racial minorities (Burton et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2010; Suizzo et al., 2014).

To illustrate the similarities and differences across cultures I attempted to dissect Haitian PI, as told by participants, into the half-dozen popular categories touted as favorable in U.S. schools. In the end, only a few PI activities manifested in participants' narratives on raising an adolescent child. Even among the more obvious examples of Haitian parents' engagement in any given type of activity, participation was meager. The only exception was the first category of involvement, parenting, the category in which parents exhibited the highest degree of self-efficacy.

Parenting. Of the six generally accepted categories of involvement in U.S. schools, the vast majority of Haitian parent participants were adept at parenting as illustrated by the supporting and lead roles which they undertook. Parenting, according to Epstein and Jansorn (2004) takes into account parenting skills, and the provision of family support and home conditions which foster learning. In the support role, participants cared for their children through physical and mental preparation for school. Parent participants provided meals for their children or in their absence, stressed that their children ought to feed themselves before and after school and extracurricular activities. Some parents also emphasized to their children that they should exemplify good personal hygiene practices in order to "present themselves well" when out in society. More than that, just about all parents engaged in talks with their children on a regular basis. These lectures, afforded participants key opportunities to reiterate their short and long term expectations of conduct and academic progress. Parents' conversations with their

children included discussions about the value of a good education and the effort that their school-age children ought to be putting forth towards their studies.

In the lead role, participants were the locus of control, rarely deferring to other adults for input as to how to shield their children from potential danger and socially unacceptable behaviors. Unlike communication with schools, parents' lead role was less of a reaction to incidents and comprised more preventative actions to circumvent incidents in which their children could come into contact with "bad things" and negative situations. This role which participants played in their children's ;life called for them to keep track of their children's whereabouts, exercise control over their surroundings, and limit their exposure to potentially harmful experiences. How the handful of participants went about exercising their control depended upon their child's gender. Where participants who had daughters tried to stay apprised of their daughters' comings and goings and talked to them frequently about the risks of moving too fast into romantic relationships, participants who had sons were more concerned with regulating their son's conduct at school. In general, Haitian parents tend to be strict and often aim to maintain a firm grasp on their children in order to ward off the possibility that they would become Americanized; Haitian adolescents often respond positively to this parenting practice (Nicholas et al., 2008).

Communication. Two-way communication between schools, students' homes, and with other families at the school is an essential element of PI (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004). Communication with school faculty and staff was regularly initiated by highly educated participants who spoke English fluently. Among parent participants who only

had a few years of schooling and did not speak English well or at all, communication was mostly one way, from school to parent, but would most certainly elicit a reaction from them. Despite the fact that the district offered several modes of communication, low-educated parents seemed to be either unaware of their options or they were not capable of exploiting Web-based applications such as e-mail, the district website, and the district mobile app. Overall, the latter two options ranked last in use by all parent groups, regardless of home language in the district (Zmach & Cruz, 2015). Some participants preferred to meet face-to-face with school personnel, and as such they took the initiative to schedule conferences with teachers and administrators on school campuses. Along the same vein, meetings such as open house, intended to acquaint parents and teachers and share important information with parents, were mostly attended by parents who possessed moderate to high levels of education. However, most parents implied that they would also attend meetings if the school called them personally and expressed that their attendance was imperative. Most parents seemed to rely upon phone calls placed to their homes to keep them informed in the event that their children's conduct became an issue. Without a personal and formal invitation to the school, some parents did not believe that a school visit was warranted, and others passed on the responsibility to a spouse or relative to represent them at school-sponsored events.

In terms of communicating academic progress, again participants who were more educated took advantage of the technology made available through the district and regularly tracked their children's progress via the electronic grade book. On the other hand, participants who had limited schooling relied upon their children to communicate

to them their progress and academic struggles. Though low-educated, some parents felt they understood the grading system enough to comprehend the content of interims and report card, which they looked out for in the mail or waited for their children to bring home from school. Though there was overwhelming proof that communications from the school were regularly received by participants across the board, the inverse was not true. Not all parents communicated with the school or visited their children's school. Educational attainment and proficiency in the English language seemed to determine the extent to which parents were able to initiate communication intended for school leaders and general educators.

Volunteering. Schools ought to work on the recruitment and organization of volunteers, providing regular and occasional volunteer opportunities to support the school and classrooms (Epstein et al., 2009). In the present study, evidence that participants volunteered at their children's schools was negligible. Of the nine parent participants, volunteering at the school was only brought up by one parent, Manoucheca, who was raised in the United States. She felt that she was playing a role in her son's life that, regrettably, her mother never did. Given that many Haitian children were involved in sports or other afterschool activities, participants concerned themselves with coordinating their children's transportation to and from school or school related events after hours. However, volunteering at these athletic events, which about half of the participants stated they attended to show their support, was relatively non-existent. Even among highly educated parents, two of whom worked in educational settings in Haiti and the United States, volunteering their time at the school was not an activity in which they engaged.

Learning at home. Immigrant Haitian households were indeed family homes (Buchanan et al., 2010; Stepick, 1982). Anywhere from four to 12 adults and children lived in homes where participants resided. Participants shared their homes with multiple children, elder relatives such as aunts and uncles, distant relatives such as cousins, grandchildren, and even family friends. These homes were primed for family literacy activities as several generations were living side by side (Morrow, 1994; Sapin et al., 2008). Among participants there was an inkling of evidence of planned literacy practices as with the father, Schneider, who regularly watched the game show Family Feud with his daughter because of its "instructive" nature. Also, Johanne, a child caregiver, learned English phrases from the toddlers she looked after in her home. There was also Marie-Jane, who perceptively remarked that learning does not only happen at school. She remarked that, "children learn from adults and adults learn from children." However, these isolated comments and observations are not sufficient enough to generalize to the wider population that family literacy practices are commonplace in Haitian homes. In order to capture a broad spectrum of family literacy practices, both planned and spontaneous in nature, researchers often engage in long-term studies of family interactions while in the home and community (Hart & Risley, 1992; Lareau, 2000, 2011). This study only provided a snapshot of in-home learning activities. The literacy practices taking place in these bustling and multigenerational households is worth a more in-depth investigation.

In their supporting role participants did monitor their children's homework completion and studies. Some parents were not equipped linguistically or academically to

get as involved in their children's academic studies as they may have liked. Participants who had less schooling were more inclined to ask their children if they had completed their homework and watched over their children as they did their homework. However, low-educated parents were not able to check for sure if the work was actually being done and the quality of said work. Several parents thus relied heavily on their children to let them know if and when they had studied and if they were experiencing any difficulties. Conversely, for the four high school graduates in the study, their default role was that of monitor, but when their children were in need of direct instruction or hands-on assistance, they often felt competent enough to provide it. Still, even a few of those parents had to admit that sometimes the school work confounded them as well, at which point they reached for the computer for help, phoned a family member, or encouraged their children to work it out on their own.

The quantity of intensive academic instruction that was taking place from day to day in participants' homes may have been outweighed by the teaching of values, customs, and home skills. Even passions for activities like the martial arts and cooking were passed down from parent to child over time. Haitian parent participants in this study emphasized the importance of cultural norms such as showing respect for people in authority or their elders, greeting everyone with an embrace, and displaying good manners. Again, it was critical that children were well versed in how to present themselves, and by extension represent their parents when out in society. On this subject, parents seemed to talk ceaselessly with their children about their expectations which transferred to all settings, school included. Participants, especially those who were

church-goers, believed that they embodied what it was they wanted their children to represent morally and spiritually.

      Decision-making. Results of the study were devoid of the solid evidence needed to assert that parent participants were involved in decision-making at their children's schools. Regardless of their educational and occupational attainment, no participant mentioned being involved in school committees such as the School Advisory Council (SAC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), or ever having a say in the way school programs and events were run. Epstein et al. (2009) suggested that traditional organizations such as the PTA were not the only vehicles for school advocacy. District level councils and local committees that support families are also avenues to encourage parent leadership and participation. Widlene did attend quarterly IEP meetings in which she had a say in her son's educational plan; however, her participation only impacted her son and had no measurable impact school-wide.

      Collaborating with the community. Notably, several participants had worked collaboratively with one community organization, the church. In these instances, however, the school had no role as an intermediary or direct beneficiary, given that the purpose of the collaborative effort was for the development of Haitian children's character and to instill in them their parents' spiritual beliefs. Although the partnership between the church and several parent participants did not have an explicitly academic focus, educators and community liaisons strongly believed that the church could and should promote education and provide educational programs as a means to lift the Haitian community out of dire circumstances. The church, among other community and civic

organizations, can serve as a hub where parents can receive critical information on programs and services that will help families maintain stability and good health (Epstein et al., 2009). In the local community, the Haitian church seemed to serve as a hub for its congregation members; however, according to educators and community liaisons the church and schools were not working collaboratively despite the obvious mutual benefits of a school-church relationship.

The disconnect. Doucet (2011a) concluded that implicit to PI "rituals" as they are performed in the United States, is the ability to distinguish between "the mainstream" and "the marginalized" (p. 404). In a different study, she asserted that the rift between schools and Haitian homes may be intentional. That is to say that Haitian parents demonstrate agency by recalibrating "the relationship between home and school in a way that allows them to maintain a sense of control over the influence of the outside world on their children" (Doucet, 2011b, p. 2706). She suggested that the level of privacy maintained by Haitian families living in the United States, the strictness exercised over their children, and parents' limited contact with schools were all evidence of the resistance. Indeed, in the present exploratory study there was evidence of the latter two elements as participants sought to control their children's environments and behavior and to some extent maintained a one-way communication strategy with schools. These elements were discussed in greater details as themes under the results of Research Question 2, *Lopsided Communication* and *Controlling for Social Risks*. In the next section, Haitian PI is compared to other non-dominant parent groups in the United States. The discussion highlights various shared elements between Haitian PI and PI among cultural, language,

and socioeconomic minorities, specifically, Latinos, African Americans, and West

Africans.

Haitian Parent Involvement Better Aligns with Ethnic Minorities

The PI differences between Haitian participants and what is convincingly normal

for White middle class families are profound. Of the six categories of involvement,

Haitians rated the strongest in parenting and learning at home, that is only if learning at

home is inclusive of the acquisition of cultural values and norms. The stark differences

between what is hailed as "good" PI in U.S. schools and what Haitian parents actually do,

can be better understood from a cultural perspective. From one culture to the next,

parents' child-rearing goals may differ and different characteristics and outcomes may be

given more value (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). In this multiple case study

participants had a tendency to stress their children's display of good moral character and

wanted their children to conform to social norms that were important to them. Without a

doubt, participants' childhood experiences and their own parents' beliefs and

involvement in their schooling, oriented and influenced the way they were raising their

own children and the degree of involvement in their educations (Zhang et al., 2010).

Given the accounts of the historical and current state of affairs in the Haitian school

system, coupled with the cultural models of PI in Haiti, it is no wonder why some

immigrant Haitian parents in this study did not take part in traditionally American PI

structures in their children's schools.

Race and ethnicity play strong roles in the cultural models of parenting adopted

by minorities and the language that is spoken at home (Nam & Park, 2014; Ryan et al.,

2010; Suizzo et al., 2014). Scholarly studies of Latino families, the majority minority group in the United States, stand as prime examples of cultural differences in child rearing when compared to the dominant culture. Crosnoe (2010) found that Latinos' parenting model was one of *educación* in which they stressed moral learning rather than academic instruction and perceived this to be their principal role in their children's schooling. In the same vein, among Latino parents there was an inclination to take a more didactic and hands-on approach to parenting. However, Latino parents are less apt than White parents from the middle class to interact with their children's teachers. Instead Latinos tend to entrust the structured academic learning to those who they view as experts and they may perceive unsolicited school involvement as challenging teachers' authority (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Suizzo et al., 2014).

Like Latinos, participants in the present study prided themselves in providing a good character education for their children, meaning that children learned to respect adults and those in authority, obedience, critical thinking, how to use good judgment, and how to conduct themselves accordingly in society. Haitian parents were very confident in regard to this aspect of their parenting role. The provision of food and parental wisdom in the form of talks, as well emphasis on good personal hygiene were not only integral to their roles as parents, but an important part of their children's school readiness. The duality of learning in the Haitian cultural context, *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* delineates parents' and schools' responsibilities along the same lines as Latinos' cultural model of parenting, *educación*. Among participants, academic teaching and learning were mostly left to educators whom parents trusted, almost without question. Fabienne for instance,

espoused a shared sense of responsibility with teachers for her daughter's learning. She acknowledged that teachers were responsible for her daughter's education from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Afterschool, Fabienne would then take over and "do the rest." Participants did not have any complaints or criticisms for teachers, nor did they report any negative experiences communicating with their children's teachers or visiting their children's schools. According to Tony, "I never miss one [open house]. I meet with the teachers and because I know that teaching is very difficult, I thank them for helping shaping my son." Haitian parents were hardly intrusive in the daily affairs of their children's schools, a practice that is said to be more common among White middle class parents who are more apt to view teachers as their equal or in some cases their inferior (Lareau, 2000, 2011).

Empirical findings based on a study of African immigrant families also reflected Haitian immigrant participants' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of parenting. Roubeni, De Haene, Keatley, Shah, and Rasmussen (2015) conducted a study of 12 West African, Muslim families living in the United States. Qualitative analysis of their migration narratives unveiled two key findings which were central to the present study:

> "First, children's education was perceived as a means for recovering past losses and overcoming struggles, particularly in the domains of material loss and status loss…. Second, the narratives also revealed that parents upheld a dual interpretation of the term *education*, which they talked about interchangeably" (p.295).

Additionally the authors found that West African parents spoke frequently about "unwanted peer affiliations" that threatened the heritage culture. So it looks as if despite

ethnic, religious, and geographical differences between Haitians and West Africans, there were strong links in their migration narratives which focused on generational betterment, equipping children with a good moral upbringing at home, and protecting children from the threat of Americanization.

Other cross-ethnic comparisons included perceived barriers and the types of socialization undertaken by Haitian parents. Working class or poor African-American parents at public, inner-city high schools were found to regularly face four barriers to involvement (a) Time poverty, (b). Lack of access due to physical disability or the timing for school events, (c) lack of financial resources and (d) lack of awareness (Williams & Sánchez, 2011). It can be said that at least one of the four barriers manifested in the lives of all nine participants. Some participants were confronted with multiple barriers, but in the case of Haitian parents I would extend the list to add a fifth barrier, limited English proficiency which generally is not an issue for U.S.-born Blacks.

African American mothers may echo similar aspirations to those expressed by Haitian parents in that they believe their children have the freedom to choose their educational paths, that the benefit of education was viewed in terms of job-related opportunities, and that their children's education would one day meet or exceed their own (Suizzo et al., 2014). Importantly, African American mothers often exercised more strict and direct control and across the board were 10 times more likely than White mothers to believe that race and discrimination were educational barriers (Suizzo et al., 2014). As such, it appears that the racial consciousness exhibited solely by Manoucheca was not out of place in this study. The cultural model of racial socialization adopted by Black parents

of all classes is necessary to prepare Black children to live in a world where they must "cope with ubiquitous deterrents and roadblocks that inhibit their access to mainstream American life" (Peters, 2002, p. 58). This means that Black parents, in addition to dealing with common issues with discipline and management, regularly engage in psychological exercises and provide anecdotes and reminders to prepare their children to live in a racialized world (Reynolds, 2010; Scott, 2003). African American mothers who are highly educated are frequently compelled to advocate for their children in instances where they perceive inequitable treatment of their children from non-African American teachers (Suizzo et al., 2014). However, at times they feel obliged to hide their worries about discrimination in order to maintain healthy working relationships with their children's teachers (Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Despite some similarities between Haitian parents and other Blacks within this all-encompassing, blanket racial category, there were demographic, linguistic, and cultural differences in the challenges and successes experienced by immigrant parents and their children (Rong & Preissle, 2009; Thomas, 2012a;). Within the group of nine immigrant Haitian adult participants, there were obvious differences in emphases placed on cultural norms, child-rearing practices, and the degree of separation or interconnectedness with schools. Low-educated immigrant parents, who were unemployed, or employed in low-skilled jobs, preferred Haitian Creole to English. They were also less apt to attend school sponsored events and more likely to be recipients, not initiators of communications with the school. They seldom if ever attended meetings on school campuses and greatly depended upon their adolescent school children to keep

them apprised of school events, their academic progress, and their schooling needs. On the other hand, participants who held semi-skilled, skilled, semi-professional, or professional occupations took preemptive measures to ensure their children's success. They both attended and requested conferences with teachers as needed, they attended school sponsored events at the schools' requests, and they exploited to a greater degree the numerous modes of communication available between them and their children's teachers.

According to Lareau (2000, 2011), social class differences may explain, at least in part, the more obvious differences within the parent sample. Her ethnographic study revealed that working class and poor American families, White and Black alike, value education to an equal or greater extent as middle class families. However, they may face insurmountable barriers in terms of their skills, perceived self-efficacy, and resources. Underprivileged families may lack educational competence, which limits the assistance that they are capable of providing their children with school work, as well as limits the types of interactions they have with their children's teachers.

Giles (1990) was among the first to note that Haitian parents were susceptible to feelings of shame given their limited educations. Parents from lower social classes are often cognizant of their educational shortcomings and as such experience self-doubts (Lareau, 2011). Furthermore, illiteracy can be stigmatizing and induce feelings of fear and insecurity among adults (Martinez & Fernandez, 2010).The children of low-educated parents may resist unsolicited help given that parents' may not be able to provide direct instruction in the same way as the classroom teacher. Parents' limited proficiency in the

English language may also destabilize normal power relations, as parents become overly reliant upon their children for decision-making (Giles, 1990; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). At the time of the study, Johanne's daughter and Marie-Jane's son were both living outside of the family home. Johanne's daughter was kicked out of the house by her uncle who believed she was disrespectful. It remains unclear why Marie-Jane's son, a senior in high school, was living with a white family that was unrelated to him. These two instances of atypical living arrangements may reflect familial destabilization and internal conflicts that researchers speak of.

Lareau (2011) added that parents' evaluation of the quality of schooling their children receive may be shaped by parents' perceptions of their position on the occupational hierarchy. Therefore, parents who are professionals may be more comfortable interacting with teachers and even lodging complaints against them. However, parents who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and are at a lower occupational status than teachers may be intimidated by them and only voice their concerns if the issue is deemed to be very serious. Elie (2011) concluded that Haitian parents, who are generally satisfied with their children's schooling, do not attend school events on a voluntary basis. It cannot be said that all Haitian participants fit these exact descriptions according to their occupational attainment. Participants Nadege, Marie-Jane, and Kervens did not fit the mold as they seemed to connect with teachers on a semi-frequent basis, despite their low to moderate levels of education. Nevertheless, Haitian parents in this study did exhibit various noteworthy traits divisible along social class lines that are worth further investigation.

Research Question 3

The third research subquestion highlighted resources Haitian parents possess which can be used to better connect the school and home. Participants in this study were demographically, experientially, and linguistically diverse. This diversity gave way to a stream of unique skills, knowledge, and community resources that can be used strategically to bridge the gap between schools (middle schools and high schools) and immigrant Haitian households.

Wealth of Skills and Knowledge

Participants possessed skills and knowledge acquired through both formal and informal means. From Haiti, many participants brought with them working knowledge of vocational and trade skills or experience in domestic jobs. Participants' length of residence in the United States ranged from 2 ½ years to just under 40 years. Jobs and careers held by immigrant adults during this expanse of time, post-immigration, occupied both ends of the spectrum from routine manual jobs as dishwasher to paraprofessional careers as a certified nursing assistant (CNA). In the years before emigrating from Haiti participants held other positions including: student, apprentice, small business owner, line employees in the manufacturing sector, and attorney. Some women also learned how to cook, clean, sew, and care for their households and Kervens learned to farm the land from his father. Based on the results of the present study Haitian participants' domestic and agricultural skills alongside their formally recognized jobs and professions can be used to connect schools and homes. Similar assertions were made about Latino families in the groundbreaking research conducted by Moll et al.(1992). The researchers developed an

abbreviated list of household funds of knowledge that were available to Mexican-American children. Referring back to Moll et al.'s list of household funds of knowledge, Haitian parents in this study exhibited aptitude in the fields of agriculture, economics, religion, household management, material and scientific knowledge, and law, just to name a few categories.

Getting to know immigrant families is critical to parents' and children's engagement at school. Parents' "interests and talents" according to Breiseth (2016) ought to be explored by educators and used strategically to enhance classroom and school-wide activities and overall to forge stronger relationships. The occupations held by Haitian participants and the interests they nurtured also point towards competencies in different content areas. For this, among other reasons, Haitian adults should not be pigeon-holed to only sharing knowledge of their food and culture at school events. Beyond the stereotypical perceptions of what Haitians know and are capable of doing lies a wealth of skills and knowledge that serve a utilitarian function in their homes, but may also prove useful in the classroom.

Many participants were multilingual, knowledgeable in three, or in one case, four languages. Most parents, though not fluent in a third language, understood Spanish or French "a little bit." Given that language and culture are inextricably tied, knowledge of multiple languages opens up parents to new ways of thinking and knowing. The multilingual capabilities of Haitian adults may help facilitate communication between Haitian parents as well as across cultures, perhaps with Hispanic families, who locally are the second largest population after non-Hispanic Whites. Olmedo (1997) affirmed that

oral history is a natural fit in educational contexts and is a means to put elders' resourcefulness and experiences on display. Thus, participants' cumulative life stories in Haiti and the United States, regardless of their educational and occupational attainment, may also be rich sources of anecdotes that are didactic and encourage introspection and gratitude in others.

The embeddedness of the oral literary tradition in Haiti may make it even easier for Haitian families to share their narratives with students and teachers, despite several parents' challenges with print literacy. Linguists speculate that a variation of Haitian Creole may have been spoken as early as the 15th and 16th centuries (Bernard et al., 1996). Some of the first written literature in Haitian Creole dates back to the 18th century, but an official orthography was not established until the 1940s. The language itself was not officially recognized as one of the official languages of the land until 1987. The lengthy history of telling stories and riddles as well as singing precedes written Haitian literature by 300 or more years (Civan et al., 1994). This may go to explain the power of spoken Creole in Haiti and in Haitian enclaves throughout the United States. Immigrants' personal stories, and what brought them to the United States can prompt a seldom experienced appreciation for the struggles and hardships faced by immigrant families and the sometimes awe inspiring outcomes that unfold against all odds (Breiseth, 2016). Action research within the funds of knowledge framework has the potential to inform teacher pedagogy and dismantle notions commonly held among educators that immigrants are intellectually inferior and their homes deplete of social and cultural capital (Carey, 2014; Hogg, 2011; Zipin et al., 2012). In particular, home visits, during

which teachers observe and absorb cultural knowledge from families, tend to close the physical and psychological distance often separating teachers from parents (Baeder, 2010; Byrd, 2012).

Family and Community Centered

Scholars vehemently argue that the general body of literature all too often reflexively portrays culturally and linguistically diverse families as lacking in social capital (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Hogg, 2011). In addition to educational attainment, social capital can catalyze upward social mobility and its absence may engender a vicious cycle of poverty and hopelessness. On the contrary, in this study participants gave the impression that they were connected with an eclectic community composed of their relatives and the church and were hopeful for a better tomorrow for their children. Latinos, in particular, have been known to embody the notion of *familismo*, which implies intergenerational cohesion, interdependence, and emotional support, that puts the needs of the collective, before the individual (Durand & Perez, 2013; Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, & Garcia, 2009). In the case of the Haitian participants, their immediate and extended family members, including siblings, in-laws, and nieces and nephews, often had defined roles in their children's upbringing, giving life to the adage "it takes a village." In Haiti, extended family plays the equivalent role of the nuclear family in mainstream American society. That is to say that family, in the broadest sense of the word, is the social unit (Civan et al., 1994). This network of relatives helped to fill short and long-term skill and knowledge gaps where parents fell short. Family members helped to monitor children's online presence, they kept an eye on children's

grades, and they attended school meetings on parents' behalves. According to Carbonell et al. (2011) after self-perception and self-motivation, social capital in the form of family support was a leading contributor to young Haitian women's completion of their post-secondary studies.

Most of the same participants who emphasized the role of family also expressed strong religious beliefs and ties to the church. According to Opitz (2002), Catholic and Protestant churches are vital to the spiritual, emotional, educational, and financial well-being of Haitian families. Participants often reached out to church leaders for assistance in all areas of their lives, not just ministry. The multifaceted role of the Haitian church was confirmed, not by Reverend Flanbert. Haitian immigrants looked to the church for spiritual guidance and believed that regular church attendance would help them mold their children's character. Cook (2000) found that Haitian youth between the ages of 16 and 20 had more problems than their Latino and African-American counterparts; however, these problems were partially alleviated through regular church attendance and mentorship. That study concluded that church attendance more than one day a week contributed to positive psychosocial behaviors and the development of self-regulatory abilities among Black teenagers living in inner cities across the United States.

Around the country, religious spaces are places of gathering for Haitian people from a broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds and life experiences. A sense of community is created in the Haitian church through the unity of spiritual beliefs and congregation members' mother tongue, Haitian Creole (Plaisir, n.d.). Haitian churches may provide an opening for schools to connect with Haitian families on a regular basis as

they attend services weekly during the day and night. Also, in Haiti 75% of the 90% privately owned schools have a religious affiliation (Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2010) meaning that Haitians immigrants in the United States are very likely to perceive the interconnectedness of church and school as a natural one. Churches may afford schools the opportunity to work collaboratively with Haitian community leaders and men, women, and children from all walks of life.

It is worth noting that participants who made mention most of their support networks were primarily low-educated women, namely Johanne, Fabienne, Nadege, and Marie-Jane. Kervens was an exception in this case, given that he was male and had completed the eleventh grade in Haiti. It is conceivable that the reason why their networks were frequently talked about throughout interviews was because these participants were the most in need and thus tapped into their community resources more often than participants who had more schooling. The networks as they were described by participants may not have been vast and were in some ways restricted to a closely knit group of people who spoke the same language, were of the same culture, and belonged to the same social class; nonetheless the relationships seemed to run deep. Participants trusted individuals and the church to make available to them sound advice and timely support where it concerned their children's safety, schooling, and social development. Unlike the student teacher relationship, which is limited to the confines of the classroom and the occasional afterschool event, children's connections with their kin are often "thick" and "multistranded" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). When compared to teachers, family members may play multiple roles, both instructive and social, in children's

development, thus fostering stronger bonds as a result of getting to know the child as a "whole person, not merely as a student" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133).

Participants who had high levels of education also claimed access to a modest network of individuals, not of the familial sort, but of teachers and administrators. Educated parents believed they had "good lines of communication" with teachers and often spoke one-on-one via the phone, e-mail, or face-to-face with school personnel about how their child "is working" at school. However, the development and maintenance of relationships by educated participants was over the short-term with their children's grade level teachers and principals. Conceivably, these positions changed from one year to the next and may not guarantee the sort of privilege that social capital of this sort ought to generate over the long term. This point may be moot given that by virtue of their education, participants who had at least completed some college were more familiar with the expectations of the school system, more academically and linguistically competent to meet those expectations, and held higher occupations that afforded them much more of the resources they needed and wanted.

Major Research Question

Themes from the three research subquestions were pulled together in order to address the major research question. The aim was to identify the foremost connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development. The two threads that ran throughout the results of this study are captured in the following thematic titles: *Living Role Models and Teachers*, and *Generational Betterment*. The core connections were

social, cultural, and psychological in nature and foundational to defining immigrant

Haitian adults' attitudes, beliefs, self-perceptions, and roles as parents.

Living Role Models and Teachers

Participants learned and believed that a person was much better off if he or she

experienced both types of learning, *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon*, which would lead to a

greater quality of life and an improved sense of self-fulfillment. This was not only a

conviction that immigrant Haitian adults held for themselves, but one they fervently

believe for their children. Tony, for example, counseled his son, "your good manner that

you have, you have to pair that up with your grades." His advice speaks to the connection

between *edikasyon* and *enstriksyon* and the value and emphasis placed on them in the

Haitian culture. Where it concerned a home education, parents exhibited a heightened

sense of self-efficacy in their ability to teach their children home skills, proper conduct,

and ways of thinking critically. Their children were also expected to live ethically and

spiritually, traits that some parents believed they modeled. Haitian parents in the study

were similar to Latino parents, who regardless of their educational attainment and

immigration status, often viewed themselves as "living models of behavior for children"

(Durand & Perez, 2013, p. 49). Among participants, being their children's first teachers

was just as important as making provisions of basic needs for their children.

Participants' narratives could be categorized into three instructional phases, that of

the learner, knower, and teacher. As learners, participants had acquired the language and

cultural norms of their native Haiti through their families and in their communities. Post-

immigration, host culture norms were sometimes learned formally through school

programs in the United States, but often through life events where they were active participants or passive observers. As knowers, participants possessed knowledge that they would use to guide their lives and to inform their decision-making. The value of that knowledge was determined by its perceived utility in different realms. Academic knowledge did not necessarily outweigh social or household knowledge, but participants seemed to have a keen awareness of its' inherent value in the United States. As teachers, participants shared and presumably exchanged skills and knowledge, with their children from the onset of their young lives.

Participants' varied perceptions and learning experiences, both formal and informal, served as the curricula from which they instructed their children in life sustaining, life changing, and lifesaving skills and ways of thinking. For instance, children were taught basic hygiene practices, cooking and cleaning, as well social graces. These could be categorized as life sustaining skills that would help children get by daily, at school and out in the general public. Children were also taught to think critically and avoid friendships that may counteract the *edikasyon* they received at home. Parents emphasized that children should do their best and, always strive for a higher education beyond high school. These psychosocial skills and socialization strategies were life changing, as they would ensure that children remained on track towards breaking generational cycles of poverty, or for more educated parents sustaining their perceived class status. Furthermore, children, especially young women, were closely watched for fear of being taken advantage of emotionally or physically. Parents barricaded windows, checked backpacks, censored media they had access to, checked in on them frequently, and

monitored their environments almost obsessively. Participants also sought to control their

sons' conduct and ensure that they did not get into mischief, interact foolishly with girls,

or behave in ways that were unbecoming of gentlemen at school. One participant went as

far as to talk to her son about the dark reality he faced in the United States as a man of

color. These controlling and preparative efforts were put forth to shield their children

from predators, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, peer pressure, discrimination and racism, all

which could be socially and psychologically debilitating. According to the Family

Strengthening Policy Center (2007), parents' primary role is providing their child with

the five S's: sustenance, stimulation, support, structure, and surveillance. They uphold,

that, "When parent/caregivers are proficient in these five areas, children and youth

thrive" (p. 4). Symbolic representations of these five parenting practices were highly

visible among the collective and indeed weaved in throughout individuals' narratives.

Although life in the United States offered many "good things," parents were

cognizant and responsive to the "bad things" as well. To offset these negative forces that

had the potential to pull their teenage children off course, some parents took their

children to church. This is not a drastic measure, as it was once estimated that 80% of the

population in Haiti was affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church and the remaining

20% was Protestant (Civan et al., 1994). The church is viewed as another instructive

entity in their children's lives. As Cook's (2000) study confirmed, Haitian youth

benefited from regular church attendance. One of the handful of Haitian youngsters

sampled for that study stated "you have to have somebody watching your back and if

that's God, then that's mighty big" (pg. 727). In the present study, church membership

obviously provided boundaries and social limits for their children to adhere to. Parents were hopeful that through regular church attendance, children would also learn to circumvent socially toxic people, behaviors, and situations. Moreover, for a few parents, their religious beliefs were a source of courage and optimism. In the face of their struggles, hardships, and growing sense of powerlessness, they believed in the possibility of a better tomorrow for their children who were not in their feeble hands, but in God's hands.

Generational Betterment

Haitian parents value education, and in Haiti parents make great sacrifices to send their children to school, which is not free, unlike the United States (RTI International, 2014). In Haitian culture it is believed that "only a good education can improve the lot of the family" ensuring a better tomorrow for both child and parent (Bernard et al., 1996, p. 13). This belief is supreme and remains true for immigrant parents raising children in the United States. All nine participants in this study wanted their children to graduate high school and pursue a post-secondary education. The commonly held idea among participants that their child *ka yon moun demen* or could be somebody tomorrow denotes hope and the possibility of upward social mobility and economic empowerment. Haitians, typically have high aspirations for their children which was evident without question in this study among others (Nicolas et al., 2009). Generation 1.5 immigrant Widlene, set her standards the lowest, stating that a 2-year degree was adequate for her two sons. Most other parents raised outside of the United States wanted their children to attend graduate school, but not expressed in those words. Marie-Jane wanted "every type of diploma that

exists, for them to have them all!" Kervens advised his daughter, "so if you finish your high school, you go to college, you finish college and you go to bachelor degree. So everything come[s] easier for you." Although he may not have had the clearest understanding of the order in which universities and colleges award degrees at varying levels (hence a bachelor's degree came after a 4 year degree) this father's aspirations for his eldest daughter were set high and were honorable.

Participants yearned for their children to do better than they did in terms of educational and occupational attainment. In the singular case of Schneider who held a master's degree, he wanted his daughter to be at least his equal. Findings of high educational aspirations among Haitian immigrants may lend themselves well to better understanding why educational attainment is higher among second-generation immigrant children of African and Caribbean descent when compared to U.S.-born Black children (Thomas, 2012a). Roubeni and colleagues' (2015) examination of West African families' migration narratives revealed that parents' experiences of loss were interconnected with their educational aspirations for their children. Furthermore, Nicholas and colleagues' (2008) 3 year ethnographic study of Haitians in South Florida added that Haitian youths' success is attributed to student motivation and persistence as well as social conceptions of familial obligation. The researchers found that achievement among Haitian youngsters can be linked to their fear of letting their parents down and to having a positive desire to repay their parents for all their sacrifices.

The notion of paths, which was highlighted in the results of this study and by other researchers, was an important one (Nicholas et al., 2008). Participants often alluded

to routes or paths that their children ought to follow. Children's lives seemingly forked into two paths. The first path carved out by their parents, ensured growth and prosperity. Parents had sacrificed to make this path available to their children. They also modeled how to walk down that path and frequently talked to their children about their hopes and desires for them. Parents' efforts were so that their children could share in the vision. Then there was the alternate path, which was a path characterized by "barriers" and "thorns" according to Fabienne. This path was defined by stubbornness and rebellion on part of the child. According to most parent participants, the greatest threat to their children's success was not so much institutional or systematic barriers, but was social in nature. Parents feared that their children would succumb to negative peer pressure and lose their way. Several studies have highlighted identity development issues among Haitian school children who take on hyphenated identities or non-Haitian identities all together (Cook, 2000; Giles, 1990; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003; Zephir, 2001). If achievement in the Haitian culture is truly associated with cultural conceptions and familial relations (Nicholas et al., 2008), then it is imperative that Haitian parents maintain their cultural ties and that their children's Haitian identities remain intact. Doucet (2014) led an in-depth discussion concerning identify formation among Haitian youth. Based on a review of the literature as well as her field notes, she laid out the commonalities and disparities in cultural identity formation within the Black racial category and the Haitian ethnic group.

Issues with self-identity engender peer and intergenerational conflicts as parents try to ward off the Americanization of their children and cling to their Haitian cultural

roots (Nicholas et al., 2008; Rumbaut, 1994). Perhaps for this reason, participants in this study believed they had nurtured good relationships with their children, commenting that "she's good, she respects me" or "he's a good kid." Participants believed that their children were honest with them and trustworthy. These positive character traits coupled with a good education at school would guarantee Haitian children a better life than that experienced by their parents. Whereas it is Haitian parents' responsibility to provide for their child at all costs, it is the child's duty to be a high achiever. A Haitian parent's greatest accomplishment would be raising a child who grows up to be somebody tomorrow. For some parents, to be someone meant that their children chose a professional occupation as a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or nurse. For other parents, their children could choose their own paths as long as it would "help them help themselves." In either case, children should rise and have access to a higher society, not only ensuring that the family name was lifted, but that aging parents would be taken care of.

<div align="center">**Conclusions**</div>

Problem with Parent Involvement

Practitioners and some authors of PI literature have pointed to the low profiles often kept by Haitian immigrant parents on school campuses as contributing to the mounting PI problem and student underachievement. This problem was engaged in this multiple case study. The answers as to why this adverse reporting pattern has been perpetuated were observable, but previously they had not been explicitly addressed. Based on the results of this study I argue that the problem as it stands is not Haitian parents per se, rather it is with the framing of PI and the absences of cross-cultural

training to bridge the rift between what Haitian parents actually know and do and what educators know and expect.Haitian cultural insiders Civan et al., (1994) explained that,

> "Since in Haiti there are no PTAs and parents are not routinely asked or encouraged to participate in school matters and decisions, Haitian parents are also often confused by the amount of parent involvement that is expected by the schools in the United States" (p. 16).

Confusion is one thing, as it hints of being exposed to PI according to the United States model and opportunities to meet them head on. However, what I am referring to is a lack of awareness of the model, which is a completely different issue. In a broader sense, Haitian parents may not be aware of conceptual differences in PI between their native Haiti and the United States. Having only a few years of schooling in their native country may mean that some parents have limited exposure to PI norms typical of Haitian schools. Even so, the differences between parental roles in the Haitian education system and in the American system are vast; hence knowledge of expectations in Haiti may not even be transferable to the U.S. school system. In fact, there is almost no comparison because PI in the Haitian cultural context is virtually non-existent in terms of some of the most symbolic structures in the United States (communicating, volunteering, and decision-making). Haitian parents in this study were committed to their roles, as illustrated by how they cared for and nurtured their children at home. This type of involvement is almost obligatory in the Haitian culture, but is often overlooked. Besides parenting, the Haitian school system does not promote other forms of PI as symbols of a caring parent nor as predictors of high student achievement.

Real barriers compromised opportunities for Haitian parents to engage with schools in the ways that schools would have liked. The most common barriers were limited literacy, limited English proficiency, limited time, and scheduling conflicts. For instance, Haitian immigrant parents, especially those who had limited English and only a few years of schooling, exhibited a heavy reliance upon their children as messengers and language brokers. They were overly dependent upon their school children to inform them of school events, their academic progress, and other school-based issues. Low-educated parents may have also depended on their children, a relative, or a friend to read print communications sent home from schools and to respond to them if necessary. Williams and Sánchez (2011) found that the lack of awareness of events and the problems at school among inner-city parents was largely due to the fact that parents and schools both relied upon students to relay messages between both parties. Students not only communicated information inaccurately, but more often than not, they failed altogether to share messages with the intended recipients. Even though parents and school officials pinpointed the source of communication breakdowns, nothing was done to remove students as messengers, which perpetuated the problem.

Beyond the lack of awareness of daily events at school buildings, there is a more general lack of awareness of the American model of PI. Take for example Johanne and Fabienne, who were the least involved on campus and communicated the least with their children's schools. Both women admitted that they did not attend meetings on campus, that they had very little contact with their children's teachers, and that they relied upon their children and/or family members to stay informed. At first glance, these women

might have been labeled as uninvolved and disconnected. However, their attitudes towards higher education and their high aspirations for their children say the contrary. Haitian parents' high esteem for education and their aspirations for their children's futures were perhaps the most poignant and seldom considered sign that they may be unaware of the expectations of U.S. schools. At first glance, parents like Johanne and Fabienne may give the impression that they are uninvolved. However, if they did not believe that they were doing everything in their power to "push" their children forward, then they should have had lower educational aspirations for their children based on an admission of failure on their part to play the role of the engaged parent. This certainly was not the case. From Johanne who had 2 years of formal schooling and immigrated from Haiti about 2 ½ years ago, to Tony who had completed some graduate work and had lived in the United States for nearly 4 decades, they were all resolute that their children would graduate high school and pursue post-secondary studies, even if they did not have the financial means to put them through school.

As previously noted in the results of the major research questions, Haitian parents believed that their child could be somebody tomorrow. Often times that somebody was a titled professional as a doctor or lawyer. Parents did not believe that their children's success hinged upon their doing more than they were doing leading up to the time of the study. There was no internal sliding scale used to predict their children's future success as it compared to their perceived degree of engagement. The only condition that parents attached to their statement of aspiration was that their child could be somebody tomorrow if and only if they turned their backs on negative friendships and took the path which

Haitian parents had painstakingly carved out for them. So, it can be said that Haitian

parent participants strongly believed that they were playing their part in the school-home

partnership, bringing me to my final point.

A lack of awareness may not only be on part of Haitian parents. Educators are

often under informed or ill-informed of minority cultures in general and their conceptions

of PI more specifically. School personnel in any context bring with them their own biases

and assumptions based on their experiences or inexperience. Although

educators/community liaisons Reverend Flanbert and Dr. Claire were cultural insiders

and Mrs. Gondola had 15 years of experience working with large groups of Haitian

secondary students and could empathize with the immigrant experiences, their knowledge

and experiences with Haitian families may not be typical of local school faculty and staff.

Of the reported 2,752 teachers in the local school district who volunteered their racial

demographic information, only 98 were Black. The 4% Black teacher population does not

align with the reported 12% Black student population (Leonor, 2016, para. 27). It must be

said that the Black racial category is not indicative of the ethnic backgrounds of Black

teachers. Although they are racially Black, they may not identify as ethnic Haitians, but

as African-Americans or other. Rong and Preissle (2009) noted that Black teachers in the

United States have traditionally been of African American heritage. They add that Black

educators can serve as "role models and cultural brokers" for Black immigrant children

and help them reconcile their knowledge and understanding of school expectations pre

and post immigration (p. 206).

Furthermore, it is well known that in the past very little of the course work required by colleges of education across the nation offered explicit training in parent and family involvement. At the pre-service level, aspiring educators are often poorly trained or ill-equipped to work with their students' parents. In-service teachers often come against such barriers as having enough time to sharpen their skills and lack of knowledge of their students home language which is necessary to make critical connections with classroom parents (Brown, Harris, Jacobson, & Trotti, 2014; National PTA (n.d.,b). Without the proper training, educators must rely on their established mental models through which they may proceed to set impractical PI expectations for Haitian parents. Opportunities for school personnel to turn the mirror upon themselves in order to self-examine their PI assumptions and cultural biases in their thinking and practices are infrequent; however, these opportunities are indeed necessary in order to connect with parents on equal ground. The change that may possibly be catalyzed through taking a more culturally sensitive approach has nothing to do with lowering PI expectations, but has everything to do with adjusting them in order to make them a more natural fit into the mental models familiar to culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse parents.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Section 2 was composed of a detailed overview of the research methodology used to operationalize the study as well as the study results and conclusions. The purpose of this study to was to gain a better understanding of the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their

adolescent children's learning and development. I used a multiple case study design for this inquiry which drew from three data sources: a sample of nine immigrant Haitian adult parents and three educator/community liaisons as well as archived school district PI survey reports. Data from the three sources were used to triangulate findings and as such increase the validity of the study. A purposeful sampling technique combined with snowball and maximal variation strategies were used to recruit participants. The initial recruitment of participants called for me to use bilingually scripted pre-screening tools, consent forms, and semi-structured interview protocols. Recruitment and interviews were conducted by me in the participants' language of choice, either English or Haitian Creole. Consenting participants took part in one or two face-to-face interviews. The use of a reflective journal helped me to debrief, keep track of emergent themes, as well as explore my own biases and their potential impact on my interpretation of the data. Data were kept confidential and securely stored.

I developed nine participant sketches to provide a glimpse of immigrant adults' roles as learners and as parents to adolescents. Data analysis was completed solely by hand; transcripts were organized by question and response using a word processing spreadsheet. I personally translated and transcribed the data, then read each transcript carefully, word for word and line by line, and made annotations and color coded poignant quotes. The analysis process was reiterative and recursive, in this way I was able identify numerous themes and patterns as they related to the major research question and three subquestions.

In order to respond to each of the guiding research questions and to keep the findings clearly organized, I settled upon reporting findings by individual research question. Although there were some overlaps in themes, this reporting approach allowed me to answer each question in a manner that was both concise and coherent. Illustrative quotes, vignettes, and explanations were used to present findings and support their interpretation using the currently available body of scholarly literature. The results gave way to several salient themes and subthemes as they related to immigrant Haitian adults as learners, knowers, and parents of adolescent school children.

In response to the overarching research question three themes were developed: *Deprived Parents* and *Privileged Children*, *Follow Your Parents, Not Your Friends* and *Don't Be Like Your Parents, Be Better*. Through these themes I was able to illustrate the contrast between parents' and children's lives and how they linked immigrant adults' culture and learning experiences to their roles and experiences raising teenagers enrolled in American secondary schools. Findings indicated that some Haitian parents, particularly those who were low-educated did not conform themselves to the PI norms of the U.S. school system. However, the practices and beliefs of other more educated parents, inched far closer towards schools' expectations of PI, but still fell short in critical areas. Although a reasonable sampling of the immigrant Haitian adults was taken, the findings may not be generalizable to the population at large. As the result of the findings from the exploratory study, I believe that a number of variables drive PI in the Haitian community, with the most salient being (a) immigrant adults' educational backgrounds, (b) adults'

English language proficiency, and (c) the degree to which adults chose to adhere to Haitian parenting models.

Educators and school administrators who serve Haitian adults and youth should know and take into consideration factors that drive and limit PI among immigrant Haitian families. In order to help educators and school leaders become more familiar with the communicative and cultural norms and realities of the growing population of Haitian families residing in the local context, a project in the form of a white paper was developed in response to research findings.

Section 3: The Project

Current researchers contend that a number of social and cultural factors contribute to the profound differences in involvement among linguistically and culturally diverse parents such as Haitian immigrants. This study addressed a number of these factors to fill a gap in research regarding parents' inexperience with school programs and differing cultural expectations between Haitian parents and schools. In this exploratory multiple case study, I reported on these issues, and the results served as the foundation for the project, a white paper. Through information in the white paper, I advised professionals regarding frameworks for two initiatives that may encourage and enhance communication among immigrant Haitian adults, schools, and social service providers.

A detailed description of the project is provided in Section 3. This section includes justifications for the project goals and the rationale as it related to the research results and the suitability of the project as a solution to the research problem. I provide a review of the literature in support of the white paper and best practices in PI and for working with Haitian families. A plan for the implementation and subsequent evaluation of the project is outlined. Section 3 concludes with a discussion of the implications of the white paper, its significance at the local level, and its potential to catalyze social change in the larger educational context.

Rationale

A leading figure in 21st century PI research, Epstein and her associates (2009) problematized the meaning of the term *workshop* where it concerned PI. The chief complaint was that the traditional conceptualization of a workshop connotes "a meeting

about a topic held at the school building at a particular time" (Epstein et al., 2009, p. 15).

Epstein suggested that a reconceptualization of the term workshop is necessary.

According to Epstein, workshop redefined ought to "mean making information about a

topic available in a variety of forms that can be viewed, heard,

or read anywhere, anytime" (p. 16). Given the scope of the problem, which at its core was

a problem of cultural misunderstanding, and given the problem was not confined to any

one institution, a workshop in the traditional sense would not be suitable. As such, I opted

to compose a white paper. Unlike traditional workshops, which are constrained by time

and physical space, a white paper was means by which I could disseminate

recommendations for critical initiatives and reach a wider audience of stakeholders

wherever and whenever was most convenient for them.

Review of the Literature

The white paper was inspired by the problem outlined in Section 1 and informed

by the results of the study in Section 2. Given the results and the selected project genre, a

second literature review was called for. The review of the literature opens with a brief

overview of the project genre, including the purpose, content, and structure of white

papers and why this option was the best fit for my project. I also review literature

concerning best practices in PI and recommendations for working Haitian families.

Boolean searches were conducted using the following key words and phrases:

parent/family involvement, *best practices/strategies*, *working with immigrants*, *migrant*

families, and *cultural considerations*. To ensure saturation, I used Google Scholar and

searched the following educational research databases: ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE, and EBSCO.

White Papers

Researchers use various technical writing genres to synthesize and disseminate the results of their studies to an array of audiences. Researchers' are often motivated to report and share their findings primarily because, as stated Merriam (2009), "Research is of little consequence if no one knows about it; other practitioners have no way to benefit from what the researcher learned in doing the study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 237). A white paper is one of many types of papers used in applied fields to report and disseminate research results to a target audience. White papers have their origins in government, signifying an officially issued report that is both "authoritative and informative in nature" and takes a clear stance on an issue or philosophy (Sakamuro, Stolley, & Hyde, 2016, para. 2). The white paper genre has been adopted as a formidable marketing tool across domains outside of politics and academia. In the world of commerce, white papers have evolved somewhat in their purpose, content, and form with the intent of informing current and potential clients' decision making processes, clarifying marketing strategies and offering solutions to complex problems (American Marketing Association, 2016). Composing a white paper remains a popular means of distilling results of a study to the most critical points and sharing them with researchers and practitioners within the fields of study.

The target audience of a white paper can be the public at large or can be focused on a specific company or organization that has a problem or need that has yet to be

addressed. Without careful attention paid to the subject matter, an author runs a risk that the white paper may be ignored by the intended reader or passed to a subordinate if the content does not address the problem and offer a practical solution. Therefore, a white paper is meant to address the needs of the reader rather than push a personal or unrelated agenda.

Unlike memoranda, which are used internally, white papers are typically directed to an external audience to which the author has no affiliation, and are intended to enhance understanding and garner support for a proposed solution. White papers, like position papers, can be used to explain results and conclusions of a study, and they can be used to argue a specific position or propose a solution to a problem (Sakamuro et al., 2015). According to the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a branch of the American Library Association, white papers are "powerful advocacy tools…that may help the association meet its advocacy goal in its strategic plan, while at the same time providing its members and other library workers with a valuable resource to support the work they do" (American Library Association, n.d., para. 1). Both YALSA and the American Academy of Family Physicians (2016) used the terms white paper and position paper interchangeably.

Although the terms white paper and position paper appear to be synonymous, they may have some marked differences. While both are used to recommend policy changes, white papers are much more comprehensive in content than a simple policy declaration (American Academy of Family Physicians, 2016). According to the guidelines and templates published by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, n.d.), white

papers differ from position papers not only in length (5-15 pages compared to 2-4 pages), but in content as well. According to the NAGC, position papers are much shorter and have two requisite components: (a) take an official position on an issue relevant to stakeholders and (b) include a call to action that supports, encourages, or recommends action for consideration by the governing body. The purpose of a white paper is much broader to "inform conversation and the knowledge base" (National Association for Gifted Children, n.d.). The fact that issue briefs have similar guidelines and serve a similar purpose as position papers clouds my understanding of their differences. There are subtleties that help differentiate between the multitude of publication genres available to researchers and policymakers Nevertheless, organizations go to great lengths to ensure that the submission guidelines for their genre of preference are clearly and concisely outlined, including the purpose, content, headings, and format.

The popularity of the white paper may be attributed to the fact that writers across domains often find composing one to be more "freeing" given that the paper is "chunked" into digestible parts, and is not weighed down by details (Georgia State University, n.d., see technical writing genres para. 5-7). White papers include concise headings to earmark critical information and keep the discussion moving forward. In structure, a white paper differs from the traditional essay, which includes transition words and sentences as sign posts of topical changes. Like essays, however, white papers are written in narrative form, but also include bullet points, charts, and graphs to display data and convey point. A white paper is usually 10-20 pages and can adequately address any subject in 30-60 minutes of reading time (Georgia State University, n.d.). White papers have a fairly

typical structure with slight variations in publishing guidelines from one organization to the next. Generally, the reader is guided by clear headings including the introduction, discussion, recommendations for best practices, conclusion, and endnotes and/or references. A whitepaper may also include an abstract, background, future direction/long-term focus, and appendices (American Library Association, n.d.; National Association for Gifted Children, n.d.).

Given the multiple genres for the project, including memos, essays, policy statements, issues briefs, and position papers, a white paper seemed to be the most suitable. A white paper is a natural vehicle for expanding and informing stakeholders' knowledge base concerning the study and cultural factors that ought to be considered when working with Haitian immigrant adults and their families. The general guidelines for a white paper afforded me the appropriate space to advocate for the implementation of recommendations and build support for the development of the proposed tools and resources. The white paper should increase conversations about issues emerging in communities of Haitian newcomers and also support multiple stakeholders in their line of work. The white paper allowed me to condense the dissertation into a document that was reader friendly and respected stakeholders' demanding schedules.

Best Practices in Parent Involvement

Although educators identify PI as a best practice, the activity includes several effective strategies. The following topics are some of the most favorable PI strategies used to engage multicultural parent populations connected to U.S. schools.

Create a Welcoming and Culturally Supportive School Environment

To cultivate strong, working relationships with parents and caregivers, regardless of their demographic backgrounds, educators must begin by communicating that they are welcomed in schools (Breiseth, 2016; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Spaulding, Carolino, Amen, & Ball, 2004). Graham-Clay (2005) argued that the communication process does not necessarily begin with spoken words but with first impressions created through welcome signs at the school entrance and friendly gestures such as a smile or a greeting by office personnel. Furthermore, Graham-Clay listed additional factors contributing to the creation of a welcoming environment, including the cleanliness of the school, exhibition of student work, and the sounds and activities in school hallways.

For parents, a friendly environment that is welcoming toward their cultural and linguistic heritage helps to garner their trust and build relationships. Durand and Perez (2013) found that relationships with school staff and the "bilingual climate" were the most telling factors of how welcomed Latino mothers and fathers felt at school, which advances the case for increased training in interpersonal skills and cultural competence among school personnel. Furthermore, a comfortable and culturally welcoming school environment goes a long way toward helping students who traditionally have been disenfranchised and discriminated against. A positive school climate will reduce stressors, diminish the impact of cultural shock, and help students build trust (Rong & Preissle, 2009). According to Gartrell (2012), trust is the cornerstone of all working school-home relationships. Gartrell affirmed that the six widely publicized categories of PI are an interrelated, four-tiered system of practices built on "trusting, reciprocal

relationships" (p. 67). A baseline in trust is needed to attain the first level of engagement in which parents are open to and accept program information. To encourage parents to continue to cross subsequent levels in which they actively engage in their children's education, participate in programs that benefit more than just their children, and engage in significant personal and professional development, parents' trust and confidence in the school must continue to grow.

Diversify Communication Formats and Languages

Communication is the focal point of PI efforts. Schools have become adept at creating and maintaining one-way communication strategies aimed at students' homes, such as memos, newsletters, school-home notebooks, report cards, and digital media stored on CDs or DVDs (Adkins et al., 2004; Graham-Clay, 2005).

Williams & Cartledge, 1997). Although print materials, often sent home in students' backpacks, are an effective method overall, there are caveats. Schools ought to be cognizant of the format and accessibility of correspondence that bears their name. Through extensive evaluation of nearly 500 documents, Nagro and Stein (2015) found that the print communications that went out to high-risk parent groups over the past 30 years frequently exceeded recommendations. Early recommendations started at around the ninth grade level and trended downward in the 1990s to around the fifth grade level. However, contrary to what was advisable for the times, the readability level of written school-home communications over the past three decades was around ninth grade. In response to this surprising finding, Nagro and Stein warned that "a lack of attention or sensitivity to the needs of all parents with respect to reading abilities undermines an

important value and expectation in American education that parents must make informed and educated decisions about their child" (p. 19). In a separate publication, Nagro (2015) advised that all print and Web-based communications be assessed prior to publication for five elements: print, readability, organization, structure, and ease. Nagro'sPROSE checklist provides a meaningful outline for improving written communications from school to home, especially high-risk homes defined by low-income, limited literacy, and students with disabilities.

The cultural and linguistic diversity characteristic of 21st century classrooms necessitates that school-home communications be not only readable, but linguistically accessible as well. The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (n.d.a) offered several detours to working around the commonly cited English language roadblock to PI. They advised that print materials be scripted in the home language and that schools scour the community for interpreters and translators to serve at workshops and meetings. Though they may be native or near native speakers, it is highly recommended that translators and interpreters are trained on the nuances of language brokering and language discrepancies to circumvent serious issues which may arise during cross-cultural or intercultural communication (Paone & Malott, 2008).

Suffice it to say, efforts to translate print and Web-based communications in any language may be of little use when communicating with parents who are not literate. Audio and visual communications come highly recommended as tools to overcome barriers created by limited English language proficiency (LEP) and low-literacy (Behnke & Kelly, 2011; Sanchez & Walsh, 2010). The National PTA (n.d.a) also laid out the

option to build in small group breakout sessions when conducting activities with a mix of parents who speak different languages. After addressing the audience as a whole, parents can be steered into separate rooms according to their language preference so that in-depth discussions can be facilitated by a bilingual professional. Small groups would then come together for a rejoinder at the end of the meeting where bilingual group leaders would share out discussion points. Another option to assist LEP parents is the implementation of bilingual or multilingual help lines or hotlines (Graham-Clay, 2005; Spaulding et al., 2004). In addition, the strategic creation of bilingual home-school liaison or coach positions within the school community is a popular feature of schools striving to create and maintain two-way dialogues between parents and homes (Spaulding et al., 2004). Similarly, *charlas* which are small group chats among mothers that are attended by a school liaison*,* may also add a human and more personable element to PI and advocacy efforts than technology-centric communications alone (Isensee, 2014).

Unlike written communications which are often static and do not afford parents the opportunity to provide feedback, technology enhanced communication platforms have opened doors to greater on-going interactions between schools and homes (Olmstead, 2013; Ramirez, 2001). In recent decades, school-home communication efforts have been bolstered via current and emerging technologies such as voice-mail, community access television, school websites, e-mail, chats and instant messaging, smart phones, Web-based videos, electronic grade-books and student information systems, mobile apps, social media outlets, two-way video conferencing applications and messaging systems for emergency alerts and notifications (The Children's Partnership, 2010). These

technologies can help facilitate two-way communication between schools and homes.

Still, unified implementation of communication technologies is more challenging to

achieve as they often elicit serious concerns on part of parents and school staff about cost,

privacy, the widening digital divide, and accessibility given variability in parents' native

language (Adkins et al., 2004; Collins, Yoon, Rockoff, Nocenti, & Bakken, 2016).

Despite the innate challenges two-way communication presents, schools ought to take

full advantage of opportunities to initiate meaningful and frequent dialogues with parents

to keep them apprised of their children's achievements. An issue brief published by The

Children's Partnership (2010) hinted to the fact that the achievement gap may have a

positive relationship with the technology gap in the United States. To combat this

problem, they outlined ways in which schools and community organizations can use

technology to effectively empower parents.

Offer Flexible Scheduling

Without a doubt what is considered "good" parenting is challenging. According to

a national poll taken of parents, work demands presented the most challenging aspect of

parenting their child (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007). Among parents of low

socioeconomic status, financial concerns topped their list of external factors which made

parenting very difficult. Minorities in the next round of surveys cited job loss, too little

family time, and challenges connecting with people in their community as the most

prevalent factors contesting their abilities to parent (Family Strengthening Policy Center,

2007). In order for PI measures to be effective, stakeholders must take into consideration

human ecological factors. The ecological model of parenting represents four layers of

environments that impact parents' effectiveness directly or indirectly: (a) family (parent/caregiver, child/youth), (b) primary environments (e.g., school, church, peer groups, workplace and home), (c) local contexts (greater community, neighborhood, family-services systems) and (d) the macro system (media, public policy, social and economic structures) (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007). At any given time, one, some, or all environmental factors are pushing and pulling parents in different directions, vying for their attention and making unequal demands for their time, energy, and resources. As such, school leaders and general educators ought to be cognizant of how these factors impact parents' availability, physical health, and mental wellbeing.

Although the school building remains the most common location to meet with parents, there are a number of alternative meeting places where educators and parents can connect. The general consensus among scholars and practitioners is that faith-based organizations, community centers, afterschool programs, and parents' own homes are suitable meeting places off campus (Baeder, 2010; Breiseth, 2016; Mallard, 2016). These settings are often more welcoming, conveniently located, and staffed with people from the community with whom parents are more familiar. In partnership with the MetLife Foundation, The Afterschool Alliance (2008, 2012) made a compelling case for the reconceptualization of afterschool programs as bridges or brokers connecting schools with parents that have inflexible schedules. According to the organization, these parents often come against language barriers and exhibit low levels of trust. The alliance provided multiple examples of existing afterschool programs around the country that are engaging parents through innovations in program planning. Home visits, in particular,

may serve a dual purpose, not only in terms of convenience for the parent, but also the opportunity it affords teachers and home-school liaisons to get to know the family in their environment. However, conducting home visits cannot be done using ad hoc approaches. Home visits require careful planning and coordinating between parents and visitors (Byrd, 2012).

Scheduling a time to meet may prove more difficult than settling upon the location. As previously stated, from an ecological standpoint, various people, interest groups, and service organizations in adults' milieu may be competing for their time. Thus, it is never safe to assume that work is the *only* scheduling roadblock to overcome. Whenever possible, weekend and non-traditional hours should be considered when coordinating meetings and events aimed at parents. Breiseth (2016) suggested that when scheduling to meet with parents, it is best practice to ask parents to propose the location and time thereby decreasing the likelihood of a cancelation or an absence without prior notification.

Enhance Pre-and In-Service Teacher Training

The foremost best practices in PI may seem like common sense to educators who received their training in the United States. Be that as it may, the notion of parents as partners in their children's education is not a long-standing belief in American education (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Furthermore, as early as 2001, a national study sponsored by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs reported that a mere 2.5 % of teachers of English language learners (ELLs) actually had credentials in teaching English as a second language or bilingual education. According to

the study, course requirements for a degree or licensure in bilingual education would have included formal training in cultural and linguistic diversity and cross-cultural perspectives among a number of other courses (Menken & Antunez, 2001). Teachers in the early years of their careers may not feel equipped to connect with parents as partners in their children's education (MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2006). To their detriment, most educators at the pre-service level have not received training in PI and veteran teachers at the in-service level do not have the time it takes to enhance their skills through professional development (Brown et al., 2014; Graham-Clay, 2005; National PTA, n.d., b).

Research has shown that explicit PI training for pre-service teachers resulted in significant knowledge gains and attitudinal changes (Brown et al., 2014). A quasi-experimental study was conducted using the Parent Teacher Educators Connection (PTE-Connect), a systematic curriculum developed collaboratively between several U.S. universities. The modules comprised discussions and case studies and when interspersed throughout traditional college of education courses, the modules were found to have significant impact on pre-service teachers' specific knowledge of PI. Implementation of the curriculum with pre-service teachers also generated positive changes in their attitudes towards PI and their beliefs as to the benefits of school-home partnerships. Given that the study was conducted with teacher candidates, implications for future classroom application were uncertain. However, Rothstein-Fisch, et al.'s (2009) study of professional development workshops that focused on implicit cultural beliefs of minority

cultures, catalyzed changes in in-service teachers' thinking and innovations in their professional practice.

Arguably, teachers need cultural competence and understanding of families' cultural orientations in order to build relationships with parents and engage them. However before delving into lessons on cultural beliefs held by others, it is good advice for educators to reflect on what is culture and explore their own cultural identity and orientations (Bennett, 1986). A large-scale study recently revealed that white cultural identity or "whiteness" among early childhood educators working with immigrant children in U.S. preschools was a formidable roadblock to family engagement. It was argued that the construct of whiteness manifested in teachers' negative perceptions of immigrant families, social distancing, and attitudes that parents, not members of the dominant culture, should change their ways. Educators were not in the least perceptive of their negative and unwarranted perceptions of immigrant families (Adair, 2014).

Cheatham and Santos (2011) stated that reflection on what is culture encourages teachers to break away from thinking about cultural orientations in dichotomous terms as better or worse, or good or bad. Teachers may fail to see cultural orientations as occupying a spectrum and thus use words as *always* and *never* to describe the frequency of cultural practices. Instead teachers should think about cultural orientations as "appropriate or adaptive to individuals' cultures, meaning that the culture based-behaviors help families successfully manage their daily lives" (Cheatham & Santos, 2011, p. 77). The strategic use of introspective exercises can challenge educators to remove their culturally tinted lenses when confronted with a problem or contradiction in

their ways of knowing and thinking about the world (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008).

Pedagogically sound cultural training increases cultural sensitivity and competence,

meaning that a teacher is more knowledgeable of how to conduct himself or herself and

are better equipped to identify and to address problems as they arise. Also, explicit

knowledge of differences in time and communication orientations helps educators and

counselors interpret parents' gestures, what they say, as well as when they pause or

choose not to say anything at all. Knowledge of communicative subtleties exhibited by

parents, teachers, and school counselors can help foster positive outcomes during parent

teacher conferences which are commonly the most challenging, tension-filled interactions

(Cheatham & Santos, 2011).

Familiarity with the cultural and linguistic attributes of students and families in

the school community is critical. By the same token, teachers ought to be trained on the

differences across cultural groups. When teachers were asked to define *culture*, Joshi,

Eberly, and Konzal (2005) found that they neatly packaged culture into a handful of

characteristics and traits. Study participants responded in three ways: as a set of beliefs

and values, as customs and traditions or as religion and language. Gonzalez-Mena (2008)

cautioned that "cultural labels are necessarily generalizations" (p. 22). This is evidenced

by a study conducted by Durand and Perez (2013) that raised the question of continuity

and variability across racial groups. For their investigation of Latinos they sampled

Puerto Rican, Dominican, Central American, and multi-ethnic parents. This sample

presented with continuities as well as discontinuities in their attitudes and perceptions of

education, PI, parental roles, and the school environment. Factors as educational

attainment, social class status, and immigrant generation appeared to play a role in

divergent and convergent thinking among Latino mothers and fathers in the study.

Educators must realize that in the global educational context, each family faces a

different reality within their cultural milieu. It is the educator's responsibility to seek to

understand unique qualities that distinguish one family from another (Gartrell, 2012;

Kasahara & Turnbull, 2005). A reductionist approach to cultural training risks

overgeneralizing or essentializing the home culture into basic categories which might not

stand true for all who take on the same ethnic identity.

Work With Families and Within Communities

Scholars are making a strategic shift from employing the term parent involvement

to *family* involvement to acknowledge that entire families, not just parents, contribute to

the intellectual, social, and physical development of a child (Epstein & Salinas, 2004;

Epstein et al., 2009; Sapin et al., 2008). When educators and school personnel work with

linguistically and culturally diverse families, miscues are inevitable. However, the

number and the severity of misunderstandings can be diminished by cross-cultural

training for parents and families. Newcomers, both parent and child, require a broad

understanding of the U.S. education system and explicit training in the expectations of

their children's school (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Families should learn important

information about program options, graduation requirements, testing schedules, planning

and funding post-secondary educations, and much more from counselors and teachers

(Spaulding et al., 2004). At the school level, the creation of a parent orientation video or a

series of informative videos can increase awareness of expectations and positively impact

parent engagement and student achievement. More traditional instructional strategies include PI workshops, seminars and events such as family literacy nights held at schools (Graham-Clay, 2005). Parent trainings should not only enhance parents' knowledge base, but also expand upon their assets and cultural capital through increased social interactions and networking within their communities of practice (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Marshall & Toohey, 2010; Zhang et al., 2010)).

Neighborhoods and the greater community can have a significant impact on families' daily lives. Poor community conditions can detract from parents' effectiveness (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007). However, as Epstein and Salinas (2004) pointed out, strong community partnerships can complement parents' efforts and enhance their parenting capacity and abilities. The scholars named a sample of local community groups which should work alongside school action teams to coordinate resources in support of parents, to include: businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and post-secondary institutions.

Immigrant families are often at higher risk of socioeconomic instability, not necessarily for lack of money, but for lack of "exposure to information, insufficient family supports, or few positive role models" (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007, p. 2). It is important that families at risk of mounting socioeconomic instability are connected with community resources as referral agencies, adult education, English as a second language programs and parenting courses. The value of faith based organizations in immigrant communities ought not to be discounted because traditionally these organizations spearhead immigrant causes thereby securing the people's trust.

Interagency collaboration can alleviate social, economic, and familial stressors that are obstacles to parents' effectiveness and wellbeing (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2007; Spaulding et al., 2004).

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Working with Haitian Families**</div>

The corpus of research on best practices in PI is well established. Where it concerns linguistically and culturally diverse PI, the body of literature has proliferated over the last decade. Comparatively, as the focus is narrowed to immigrant Haitian families, the quantity of practical guidance becomes scant; nevertheless, several works provide practical advice for working with Haitian families. This section of the literature review features a few studies that specifically highlight Haitian children, parents, and families and recommendations for professional practice in educational contexts.

Teaching and Learning

Haitian immigrants, like their African and Caribbean counterparts, are in need of a caring and culturally supportive school environment (Bachay, 1998; Rong & Preissle, 2009). A welcoming school environment would serve to counteract reported experiences of unbridled racism and discrimination, and to diminish feelings of culture shock among Black immigrant learners. Educators at all levels working with Haitian learners need professional development on how to engage this group and to assess and address their needs holistically (Nicolas et al., 2009). Scholars have contended that changes in curriculum and instruction are necessary in order to increase achievement among immigrant Haitian learners. According to Lauture (2007) the challenges which Haitian students face in U.S. classrooms often go unnoticed by educators. She shed light on the

fact that immigrant Haitians transitioning to U.S. colleges must adjust their learning and studying styles, process information differently, and are obligated to translate English texts into their native French or Creole in order to fully comprehend what they are being taught. In terms of placement, Lauture (2007), suggested that improvements should be made to educational plans for Haitians and if necessary retention at the early years of their studies should be considered. Elie (2011) seconded Lauture's recommendation, asserting that Haitian students should not be placed based on age and if warranted students should be retained in order to shore up their literacy and language skills before moving them forward to more rigorous course work. Based on their study of Haitian English language learners, Solano-Flores and Li (2006) concluded that dialectal variations spoken by Haitians students ought to be taken into consideration when seeking to attain an accurate measure of their achievement in the native language. Rong and Preissle (2009) warned school counselors against wide-spread presumptions of low achievement among Black immigrant students. Giles (1990) advised that counselors work to make grade level placement processes more accurate through the development and use of assessments that can accurately appraise students' knowledge and skills.

New entrants will have varying schooling experiences and may have to be "overtly taught that thinking for oneself is highly valued in American schools" (Civan et al., 1994, p. 15). Bilingual instruction may be the best means to support newcomers who are not literate according to Elie (2011). She advised that Haitians should be taught English through the native language, Haitian Creole, to support acquisition. However, she conceded that the lack of academic resources in Haitian Creole may present a problem

sustaining bilingual education, at which point educators ought to consider French as the medium of instruction. Doucet (2014) informed practitioners that Haitian students, young and old, may push back against learning in Haitian Creole because they question its legitimacy as a "real language" (p. 15) Newcomers who have heavily accented speech require the patience and sensitivity of their teachers and peers (Rong & Preissle, 2009). At the collegiate level, professors ought to consider making adjustments to their instruction to "facilitate classroom discussion that would sensitively engage all students" specifically immigrant students who lack sociolinguistic knowledge and are often reticent to speak up and participate in class discussions (Lauture, 2007, p. 122).

In order to understand differences in achievement among culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, Elie (2011) suggested that school districts conduct comparative studies of the educational services provided to all newcomers which should reveal where schools are falling short in the academic and social preparation of Haitian students. It is imperative that pre-service and in-service teachers are made aware of the fact that Haitians differ in culture, language, and history from their African American counterparts. Haitian youth may toggle between American and Haitian identities depending upon the given situation. However, they still have a keen awareness of their parents' expectations that differ from expectations held by African American parents (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Bachay (1998) suggested that "by honoring the language, values, parental and educational cultural orientations that are indigenous to Haitians" Haitian adolescents develop and thrive in American schools. Whereas bilingual Creole/English or French/English teachers are perhaps best equipped to address the

linguistic needs of Haitian learners (Elie, 2011; Walsh, 1999), Black educators, even if

they are not Haitian, may be in the best positions to help Black immigrant youth make

sense of their Blackness in their new social environment (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

Haitian students may need overt instruction in common sociolinguistic cues as

looking teachers in the eyes when spoken to (Civan et al., 1994). The work of Ballenger

(1992) advances the case that teachers too, could benefit from training in culturally-based

speech cues. An understanding of the way Haitian parents speak to their children would

help teachers better control and manage Haitian students' behaviors. Teachers must also

practice patience with Haitian students who may be confused by the more informal nature

of teacher-student relationships and inadvertently overstep socially acceptable boundaries

(Civan et al., 1994). What is considered misbehaving in American classrooms may well

be tolerated or acceptable behavior back home. With the help of parents, teachers should

seek to determine whether or not misconduct on part of the student can be explained

within the context of the home culture (Rong & Preissle, 2009). However, when initiating

parent teacher conferences, teachers should understand that Haitian parents may react

negatively to their "routine" requests given that in Haiti, these meetings are rare and only

called at the advent of a very serious problem (Civan et al., 1994).

Promote Haitian Parent/Family Involvement

Early scholarship concerning Haitian PI in schools noted the need for parent

training. According to Civan and colleagues (1994) the instructional needs of Haitian

parents and their children are fundamentally the same, "Haitian parents, like their

offspring, also need to be gently educated as to what is expected of them" (p. 16). Giles

(1990) in her initial study shared similar sentiments about the needs of Haitian parents.

More recently, Elie (2011) proposed that a variety of community-based agencies could

share with Haitian parents and guardians information concerning the U.S. education

system. She promoted the use of a variety of media outlets and formats such as

workshops and parent meetings to get critical information to parents. The author also

advised that parents who cannot read should be encouraged to bring along a family

member or a friend from their social circle to interpret materials on their behalves.

A variety of topics should be presented and discussed at parent workshops,

meetings, and seminars where Haitian parents are in attendance. In addition to general

topics beneficial to the parent body as a whole, Haitian immigrant parents should be

educated on the peer pressures in their communities given that as newcomers, they may

lack familiarity with elementary and secondary school environments (Rong & Preissle,

2009). Also, it is critical that the subject of discipline is broached with audiences of

Haitian parents as well as non-Haitian social service providers. For some time now,

allegations of child abuse at the hands of Haitian parents have been problematic (Alcena,

2016; Ballenger, 1992; Giles, 1990). Barbara Alcena, a Generation 1.5 Haitian

immigrant, former foster care child, and now social service case worker, noted in a recent

social justice feature article that Haitian parents tend to lean towards the authoritarian

style of parenting. What is culturally normative for Haitians is physical punishment,

which contrasts American norms of child discipline. After providing the American

definition of child abuse and neglect, she posed the rhetorical question, "Based on that

definition, can we say that most of us Haitians have been abused in some way shape or

form?" (para. 2). Alcena was making the point that the broad definition of abuse and neglect is easily operationalized in the justice system to ensnare Haitian parents who are not aware of legal boundaries that limit child discipline in the American culture. As such, all Haitian discipline can be misconstrued as abuse. Roubeni et al., (2015) found that West African immigrant parents also felt anxious about the legal restrictions placed on child discipline in the United States.

Gonzalez-Mena (2008) brought the subject of diversity and discipline to the forefront, stating that "talking about discipline taps into sensitive areas of personal histories as well as cultural differences" (p. 138). She clarified that what is deemed inappropriate behavior and appropriate disciplinary actions vary by culture. She affirmed that disagreements on discipline require that personal judgments are set aside and a more profound understanding is sought out by each side. Ballenger (1992), in her work with Haitian preschoolers and their teachers, noted in the footnotes,

> "Mainstream assumptions about 'proper' ways of talking and dealing with children's behavior often stand in the way of distinguishing a functioning family, for example, from a dysfunctional one, in distinguishing a child whose parents are strict in order to help him or her succeed from one whose family simply does not want to deal with the child's problems" (p. 206).

She went on to say that the consequences of accusations of abuse are multiplied when parents who are vulnerable and powerless are up against powerful institutions as schools, social service providers and law enforcement. Alcena (2016) resolved that the rise in the number of Haitian children removed from their homes and entered in the foster care

system was attributable to inadequate education and knowledge of other disciplinary methods available to parents.

Haitian parents may not be accustomed to participating in the educational decision-making process given the reported nonexistence of parent teacher associations in Haitian schools (Civan et al., 1994). Parents may not be skilled in advocating for their children who are often under referred for critical educational services and resources designed to meet their needs (Delgado & Scott, 2006), underachieving on high stakes assessments (Nicholas & Severe, 2013), and overrepresented in juvenile justice corrections facilities (Walters et al., 2005). Haitian parents must have opportunities to learn how to cultivate their school leadership skills in the United States and should be afforded access to platforms where their collective voices can be heard. Schools and service agencies should look to work collaboratively with Haitian families and the community organizations, specifically churches which are the epicenters of Haitian communities (Plaisir, n.d.; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003).

More recently, Reynolds, Crea, Medina, Degnan, and McRoy (2014) found that Haitian immigrant parents self-reported low levels of involvement when compared to Latinos. However, the authors surmised that given that Latinos are the majority minority group in the United States this group may be more cohesive and may have greater access to an extensive social network. They add that the fact that school faculty and staff did not include Haitian representation may have attributed greatly to lackluster PI among Haitian immigrant parents. Therefore, attendance at school events would be dubious for parents whose cultural and language group was not reflected in the school's personnel.

Schoorman and Jean-Jacques (2003) suggested that "border crossers" who are employed by the school system, identify as Haitian and speak Haitian Creole fluently may be in the best position to connect the school and broader Haitian community given that as cultural insiders they are perceived as trustworthy by their fellow Haitians (p. 314). To maintain ongoing involvement, Giles (1990) advised that counselors, school administrators, and teachers reassure Haitian parents that anything said in confidence at schools will not be reported to immigration services. This she stated is a fundamental component of building trust in the Haitian community.

Coordinated and integrated plans between social service referral agencies and providers can help Haitians close the gap in provisions, resources, and information that separate them and schools and will support a healthier acculturative process (Bachay, 1998; Schoorman & Jean-Jacques, 2003). At the same time, partnerships with Haitian families can be reciprocal, in that the community stands to learn from the knowledge and cultural resources they bring with them from their homelands (Elie, 2011; Lauture, 2007). Teachers should be sensitized to and respect Haitian cultural values of close familial ties, community cooperation, hard work, spirituality, respect for authority, and the importance of education which often align with traditional American values (Civan et al., 1994; Giles, 1990; Plaisir, n.d.).

Project Description

The exploratory multiple case study culminated in the development of a white paper, entitled "From Roadblocks to Pathways: Clearing the Way for a More Engaged Community of Haitian Families." The paper is directed at three audiences: local

educators, and school leaders, social service providers, and the Haitian community. The white paper is supported by literature concerning best practices in PI and recommendations for working with Haitian families. The project comprised a proposal for two major initiatives in their early developmental stages- a tool kit for educators and social service providers and a parent involvement network (P.I.N.). Both initiatives can be individually tailored to meet the needs of stakeholders according to their missions, human resources, budgets and policy limitations. The proposed concepts are bundles of tools and resources some of which are modeled after existing initiatives. Other concepts are new ideas based on case study interviews and a review of the literature.

Included in the project are three pre-developed resources that are essential to the tool kit. The first resource offers a synopsis of the exploratory, multiple case study which was the precursor to the white paper. This resource provides an overview of the study, the dozen themes which emerged from the data and a small cross section of representative quotes from the nine immigrant Haitian adult parents who took part in in-depth interviews. The second resource is a comprehensive inventory of 39 cultural roadblocks and considerations when working with Haitian families. The final resource provides a bulleted checklist of 45 practical recommendations for educators and social service providers to put to work. Though guidelines for white papers generally suggest anywhere from one to a handful of recommendations or proposed solutions, for this study a much more inclusive checklist of cultural considerations, and practical recommendations was necessary for several reasons: (a) the study was exploratory in nature, (b) four research questions were addressed through the study, and (c) a wide cross section of salient

research in PI and adult learning was used to inform the study. The third ready-made

resource is a synopsis of the exploratory, multiple case study which was the precursor to

the white paper. This resource is comprised of an overview of the doctoral study, the

dozen themes that emerged from the data, and a small sampling of representative quotes

from the nine immigrant Haitian adult parents who took part in in-depth interviews.

In order to make the document easy to navigate, cultural considerations and

recommendations were sectioned into five categories representing various aspects of the

Haitian cultural and immigrant experience: (a) immigration,(b) educational

background,(c) language and literacy, (d) learning and working in the United States, and

(e) family values and PI. The range of topics covered should add to the perceived

usefulness of the document as a reference guide and training tool. The trio of

predeveloped resources ought to serve as springboards from which stakeholders can

begin to refine the tool kit, develop the P.I.N., seek funding and interagency

collaboration, and garner community buy-in.

Project Goals

The goal of the project white paper t is to share with stakeholders proposed

initiatives that will encourage and enhance cross-cultural communication and

understanding between the community of educators, social service providers, and the

immigrant Haitian community. In addition, the project will make known some cultural

considerations and several practical recommendations when working with Haitian

families. Key findings from the present study are also provided for further insight into the

study results and implications for practitioners.

Specifically, the stakeholders identified as beneficiaries of this project include, local school administrators, school teachers, Haitian adult parents, Haitian school children, as well as a broad range of social and family service organizations which assist the immigrant Haitian community. The project stands to address the problem by adding to the body of current research and information concerning Haitian families, making known immigrant Haitian parents' cultural expectations, experiences, and inexperience with school programs as well as highlighting their strengths as members of the greater community.

Resources and Support

The white paper is a concise document written with the intent of sharing key considerations and recommendations to a broadly defined group of stakeholders. As such, the resources and support systems necessary to implement the recommendations and proposed projects are not included in the white paper. There is no way to know for certain how permissive or limiting policies, human resources, facilities, and budgets will be for institutions, organizations, and individuals who may potentially benefit from carrying out the suggested projects and using the document as a learning tool. Any entity looking to implement one, some, or all aspects of the white paper will need access to tangible resources as those mentioned above and the less tangible resources as time, community relationships, leadership skills, communicative competence, and expertise in technical domains. Factors impacting the quality and degree of implementation will be both external and internal given the level of community collaboration involved. Although students will not have a role in the implementation of the project, a representative number

of Haitian immigrant adults should most definitely be included in conversations concerning the creation of policies, objectives, and educational content.

Project Implementation

The white paper will be implemented in three ways: through e-mail, by posting it to websites, and via conferences. In combination, these approaches will ensure a wider readership. The white paper will first be delivered via e-mail to designated stakeholders. Public directories will be used to look-up recipients' e-mail addresses and a spreadsheet will be used to keep track of recipients and for follow-up purposes. The e-mail will include a cover page that provides a brief self-introduction, and the goal and content of the project. The attached electronic copy of the white paper will also have an embedded link to the published copy of the dissertation in ProQuest for readers who would like to take a more in-depth look at the study.

In the local school district, leaders in the following positions were identified as recipients of the white paper: the district superintendent, coordinator of research and program evaluations, ESEA manager-parent involvement, executive director of secondary schools, director of adult and community education, and all principals and assistant principals at Title I schools. The project will also be sent to the deans of the college of education at the four universities and colleges in the region from which the local district draws many of its new teachers and where many current teachers go for in-service trainings.

In the Haitian community, the white paper will be sent to members of the Haitian pastors' association, and several Haitian community leaders and activists outside of the

association who I became acquainted with through the Haitian Coalition. The 12

interview participants are counted among the group of recipients. I will translate a

summary of the project into Haitian Creole and will share it with research participants

who had a Creole language preference. The plan is to share the white paper in its entirety

with participants who had an English language preference. A phone call, face-to-face

meeting, or an e-mail will be used to share the white paper with participants. The

timeframe for sharing the project with research participants will be about 4 weeks from

the acceptance of the doctoral study. This month-long window should provide ample time

to translate the document and schedule individual meetings with participants.

Moreover, the white paper will be shared with leadership teams at local social

service agencies which serve a significant number of Haitian families, to include but not

limited to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Sherriff's Office, Legal Aid

Services, Health Department, Education Foundation, and Shelter for Abused Women and

Children. Other organizations which foster interagency collaboration will also be

considered in the list of recipients.

The time table for the first round of e-mails to external stakeholders will be

approximately four weeks from the date this study is approved and will be on-going as

new stakeholders and agencies of interest are identified. A friendly follow-up e-mail will

be sent out approximately 2 weeks after each e-mail was initially sent out. The primary

purpose of the follow-up e-mail is to ensure that stakeholders received the initial e-mail

and that it did not end up in their spam folders. I will also take the opportunity to field

any questions recipients may have and to make note of comments they are willing to

share. The same ends could be accomplished via a loosely scripted phone call if there is no response to the initial two e-mails.

The second means by which the white paper will be shared out will be by posting it to various websites that generally post articles concerning multicultural education, PI, immigrant families, and the Haitian diaspora. A number of Haitian blogs-sites have emerged in recent years and are also potential online locations where the paper can be housed and shared with a wider audience of readers. I will scour the Internet for organizations whose activities and missions align with or complement the content of the white paper. I will keep a running list of sites that I have contacted to formally request that their hosts consider posting the paper to their websites.

The final approach to sharing the project will be at conferences, which alongside journal publication are a common method of sharing case study research with colleagues and stakeholders (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 2009). The paper will be revamped to meet conference requirements in terms of length and take on a more creative presentation format. Conferences afford researchers access to an audience of readers who may share similar interests and who can provide valuable "feedback on assertions and representations" made in the study (Glesne, 2011, p. 268). The first step will be to look up annual and regional meetings in my domain. I will keep a running list of submission deadlines and submit proposals to present as venues become available.

Project Evaluation Plan

An evaluation system can be systematic or informal, both of which can provide critical insights for the duration of a project as this. The style of the project and the ways

by which it will be implemented can present a challenge in developing a systematic

evaluation plan that helps determine the success of the project and steps moving forward.

However, a couple of formative approaches lend themselves well to assessing how well

the white paper was received by the audience at large and whether the goals were met.

The objective of the evaluation would be to document outputs of activities, that is to say

"focus on outputs or changes that occur as a result of some activity" (Spaulding, 2008, p.

18). In this case the activity being monitored is the dissemination of the white paper and

readers' perceptions and their application of document recommendations. The plan would

use a combination of informal and formal approaches which is commonplace in program

evaluation (Caffarella & Vella, 2010). One option is to solicit feedback from recipients

by politely requesting that they reply to the initial e-mail and share their reactions to the

white paper, and any light criticisms they may have. Recipients would also be invited to

pose any questions regarding assertions and representations made in the paper. This

evaluative feedback in the form of open-ended questions provides depth and generally a

much richer response than to close-ended survey questions (Spaulding, 2008). E-mailed

responses would be collected on an on-going basis and analyzed as they came in using

qualitative data analysis strategies.

A more formal evaluation plan would call for the development of a survey which

is a typical methodology in the field of program evaluation (Spaulding, 2008). A survey

would be either included in the body of the introductory e-mail or embedded via a link in

the white paper itself just before the references section. A tool like Survey Monkey could

be used to gather stakeholders' initial responses to the paper. Also, in the future, after

they have had ample time to implement some of the best practices, stakeholders could be invited to provide their input as to the practical nature of the initiatives.

Another way to evaluate the successful implementation of the project would be to gather input informally submitted in the comments areas of websites and blogs where the white paper is publically posted. These types of response are similar to the open-ended responses solicited from stakeholders; however, since there will not be any guiding questions to respond to, the public is free to respond as they wish. Because visitors regularly post their opinions and reactions directly to sites and comments often stimulate a discussion thread, this form of qualitative feedback should be taken into account. The number of site visits or traffic to sites could also be included in the evaluation process that is if site hosts are willing to share that data for analysis. Although the latter approach is not a tool typically used by evaluators, experts in the field are always open to using alternative and creative approaches to collect a variety of data (Spaulding, 2008).

Over the long term, if the local school district resolves to implement some or all components of the proposed initiatives, the outcomes of the annual school district PI survey would also be telling of changes in school leaders' and general educators' professional practice as well as Haitian parents' attitudes and perceptions. The survey category of the greatest interest would be home-school communication, and the survey items that would be of interest are the degree to which Haitian Creole-speaking parents: (a) felt comfortable communicating with school administration, (b) felt comfortable talking with their children's teachers, and (c) felt that language/cultural barriers limited their participation at school. An increase in the first two items and a decrease in the last

may be indicative of end outcomes related to the project. Of course, other variables will have to be taken into account to determine the degree to which the white paper could be credited with these positive changes in the local community. In the end, all of the data, both formal and informal in nature, would help me determine the degree to which the project objectives were met, the perceived usefulness of the white paper, as well as to inform revisions.

Project Implications

Local Community

The white paper entitled "From Roadblocks to Pathways: Clearing the Way for a More Engaged Community of Haitian Families", is directed at three audiences: educators, social service agencies, and the Haitian community. For all stakeholders, the document can serve as a guide towards developing communication strategies and supports. It is also a foundational learning and training tool targeting pre-service and in-service educators who have little to no knowledge of, or exposure to Haitian cultural norms. This is particularly important in the local school district where as previously stated in the conclusions of Section 2, only a very small group of educators, approximately 4%, self-identified as Black, Haitians or otherwise; whereas three times that number of Black students and their parents were being served in the school district. For seasoned teachers, the white paper ought to inform their conversations and impact their professional practices on a deeper level. The document by way of cultural considerations and recommendations for practice challenges teachers and school leaders

in the local setting to reflect upon their positions and to be cognizant of how their own identities come to bear on their interactions and relationships with Haitian people.

For members of the Haitian community in particular, the white paper as a whole can aid in their understanding of cultural differences and help to determine in what ways they can inch closer towards meeting U.S. schools' expectations without compromising their own cultural mores and values. Also, the project is as a tool for self-advocacy in many domains where Haitian immigrants have needs that have generally been glossed over for lack of empirical evidence and wide-spread awareness. Because Haitians in the local community lack a unified voice, it is my hope that through conversations spurred on by the representations and assertions provided in the project, Haitian adults will be empowered to demand change in their community and more frequently participate in decision-making processes that impact them and their families.

Far-Reaching

Enclaves of Haitian communities have been settled across the United States and are growing in membership. Although the problem in the local community was the impetus for the study, the Haitian diaspora may face similar challenges supporting the next generation in their educational pursuits in all corners of the United States. The present study which was the substantial basis for the white paper was informed by empirical research that sampled Haitians residing in Florida, New York, California, New Jersey, and other state. Therefore, it is conceivable that the project has the potential to reach and impact audiences of researchers, practitioners, and Haitian community members far and wide, especially given that it can be shared easily in an electronic

format. In the larger educational context, the white paper affords stakeholders valuable insight into who Haitian adults are .Stakeholders will also learn of some cultural considerations that ought to be made when setting expectations for and communicating with Haitian parents. Gains in cultural insights will support stakeholders' efforts and help them to solicit Haitian families' involvement in their children's schooling as well as encourage community engagement. A concerted effort on part of all stakeholders, schools, social service agencies, and Haitian community members may help diminish the prevalence of social, cultural, linguistic, and psychological risk factors among Haitian youth and thus strengthen their academic and acculturative success.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

There were several limitations to this project. First, the study that served as the precursor to the project included nine Haitian parents from the local community in South Florida; therefore, the project excluded other minority groups' perceptions and experiences with involvement at school and home. Also, participants shared their personal narratives, from which assertions and representations of Haitian parents and families were made. It is never the goal of case study research to apply findings to the wider population. As a result, the outcomes that informed the project may not be generalizable to the wider Haitian population (Creswell, 2012). The perspectives of several categories of parents and caregivers who were underrepresented or missing altogether from the study included Generation 1.5 fathers, fathers in general, single parents, stepparents, and kinship guardians such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Participants were also from suburban communities. Researchers who would like to replicate the study should sample a representative cross-section of Haitian parents living in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Readers who wish to implement the recommendations in the white paper ought to seek a cultural expert or coach from the local community for additional insights on Haitians in their region, as variability can be expected.

Additionally, the project included frameworks for two initiatives to facilitate two-way communication among schools, social service providers, and Haitian families. Schools and agencies that see fit to implement the tool kit and the parent involvement

network (PIN) should assess the needs of their particular communities to determine whether the need exists to develop resources and modify them accordingly. Also, a significant investment in time, money, and expertise may be called for to develop the resources that were narrowly outlined and must be fleshed out. Stakeholders should work collaboratively with other organizations whose missions align with their own. Also, community stakeholders should consider interagency collaboration and cost sharing when developing multifaceted trainings and communication resources.

Despite these limitations, there were strengths to the project. The white paper was a persuasive tool that could convince stakeholders to develop the two community initiatives. Also, it was conceived as a training tool that could be fashioned and altered to encourage and enhance cross-cultural communication among schools, community organizations, and immigrant Haitian adult parents. The project laid out in plain language numerous cultural considerations and practical recommendations pertaining to Haitian families. The white paper is easily accessible and sharable via the Internet. Organizational headings were used so readers could peruse sections that were of greatest interest to them.

The white paper is an original and welcomed addition to the existing body of literature on the growing Haitian immigrant population in the United States. I searched the Internet, conducted cursory Google searches, and searched multiple scholarly databases to find a document that came close. To the best of my knowledge, a similar document published in the past 5 years does not exist. Unlike other tip sheets or quick reference guides that are narrowly focused on one domain, the white paper project was

comprehensive in the range of topics covered (immigration, educational background, language and literacy, learning and working in the United States, and family values, and PI). Also, the white paper was not used to overemphasize what Haitian parents lack in terms of knowledge and capital or cultural dissonance between Haiti and the United States (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Burton et al., 2010). Instead, I sought to break away from mainstream deficiency discourses by presenting solutions. The white paper was used to emphasize new ways of thinking about immigrant Haitian culture and experiences. The paper also provided insights into the strengths and cultural assets possessed by immigrant Haitians adults that could be used to involve them in the educational process and in their communities.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

A series of workshops targeting educators and Haitian community members could have been developed in lieu of a white paper. Workshops could have been conducted live or held in a virtual learning environment for school administrators and teachers. Online professional development is widely used and may increase accessibility and attendance; however, it would be up to governing boards and instructional designers to determine whether a synchronous or asynchronous instructional model would be a best fit considering the target learner population and the learning goals (Caffarella & Vella, 2010).

Workshops targeting Haitian community members are perhaps most effective if held face to face given concerns about limited literacy, low English language proficiency, computer literacy, and the widening digital divide between those who do and do not have

frequent and reliable Internet access. Live workshops would diminish the impact these factors have on access to and transfer of learning and would also afford Haitian adults an opportunity to pose questions, voice their concerns and opinions, and share what they already know. Workshops could be attended by trained bilingual English/Creole and English/French interpreters. When scheduling workshops, developers could survey parents for the best times and locations to meet.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I have found it is much easier to consume lengthy, dense, and technical scholarly works than it was to develop a single work of my own that was worthy of my fellow scholars' and practitioners' leisurely reading time. This challenging undertaking required a significant investment of time, reflection, and self-criticism, and the courage to set, attain, and applaud small goals. These goals were sometimes heftier than others such as the completion of an entire chapter, but often they were more negligible such as writing a section or paragraph, composing a solid introductory or concluding sentence, or finding the right phrase or word to capture the essence of what I wanted to say. In this way, I learned that scholarship is not for the faint of heart. Despite being what I and others considered a good writer and competitive student, I have come to know adversity through my unwavering commitment to add an original and meaningful work to the scholarly body of literature.

I learned that the development of scholarship evokes feelings of pain and pleasure. At any given moment as an aspiring scholar, I was confronted with writer's

block, database searches that turned up zero relevant results, interview data that were overwhelming and seemingly unconnected, and the frustration of knowing that despite my progress there were still several chapters and many more headings to fill. I asked myself how I could possibly say anything more on the matter. However, there were other moments when ideas flowed, my word count increased threefold with seemingly little effort, my precise Boolean search turned up a half dozen current and relevant articles, certainty I had reached saturation in my literature review, new connections sprung up out of nowhere, and the moment I brought my doctoral study to a close with a final end mark. I have learned that, unlike a coin toss, there is certainty when undertaking and completing a scholarly venture. I have learned that I am not faint of heart, that I can endure, and that I have what it takes to be a scholar-practitioner.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

My goal for completing this dissertation has always had an instructional focus. I dreamed of returning to working with adult learners, especially Haitians in my community who have limited schooling and literacy. I hope that this study and project help to inform policies and methods used to teach this marginalized group and their families. During this school year in the middle of developing the project, I was asked to work as a resource teacher, which put me in a position to serve as a liaison between the high school and the parents of ELL students who speak Spanish and Haitian Creole. This well-timed opportunity injected meaning and relevance into my study and the project. I witnessed, firsthand, the talking points in the literature that I reviewed and in my own research findings. Although I am a cultural insider, the study helped me to interpret

interactions between culturally and linguistically diverse parents and students and their

teachers. I believe I am in a much better position now to serve as an intermediary

between schools and language minority families by helping them learn about one another,

develop a mutual respect, and communicate effectively.

I am starting my journey toward advocating for change in my community;

however, I trust that the scholarly writing process, the final study, and the development of

the project will continue to inform my practices and quests for knowledge. The countless

hours and years spent developing this study mandate moments of reflection and

introspection. The completion of this work brought me to a new crossroad in my

professional career and cultural heritage. As an educator, I have a greater appreciation for

those called on to work with newcomers. Despite the fact that their social, academic, and

emotional needs are great, educators can make personal connections with their students,

work to students' strengths, and seek strategies to address students' weaknesses. As a

second generation Haitian immigrant, my eyes have been opened to the struggles my

parents endured to resettle in the United States and to raise me and my five siblings. I

have a greater awareness of Haitian cultural practices and orientations that my parents

firmly held to so that achievement in this country and at this and earlier levels of my

academic and social development would be possible. I trust that educators, whether

cultural insiders or outsiders, who approach the issues surrounding immigrant learners

with genuine interest and fervor, will find that their work feeds into their identity and that

there is honor and dignity in teaching.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

I have learned that a project cannot address everyone's problem, but a well-focused project can help to alleviate one or more issues through carefully crafted and well-executed solutions. In many ways the white paper reflects my professional experiences and passions as a linguist and educator in both adult language and literacy programs and in secondary schools. I have learned that to develop a project that I am proud of, I must be informed about the problem and passionate about the community that can be lifted up by solving it. As a project developer, my passions and personality have been infused into my work. I will continue to inject myself into every initiative I help design or lead. I will listen to the community I am serving, include their voices in the design of the project, and be mindful of the project objectives, outcomes, and limitations. I trust that by taking a more people-centered approach to project development, I will inspire others to do the same and be more effective in this line of work.

Leadership and Change

I have always known that to be a change agent one must be a leader, but not just any leader. Through my research and the development of the project, I have solidified in my heart and mind that to catalyze change in the immigrant Haitian community at the local level, I must seek first to serve them. Though there will be a time and a place for preaching and teaching, as a servant leader I must be willing to work within the community to make a long-lasting impression (Russell & Stone, 2002). As a servant leader, I will do more listening than speaking, and when I do speak, my words will echo the voice of the people. Among other characteristics, servant leaders exhibit humility and

selflessness. They choose not to spend all of their time at the front of the line, blindly trusting that others will follow. Servant leaders put others before themselves, choosing to fall back to where they share a view of what is to come. Being at the end of the line means a servant leader puts herself or himself in the best position to encourage those who lag behind and catch those who are falling. Positive social change is imminent for anyone who embraces this type of leadership style and takes on a worthy cause.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The content and tone of the white paper is positive, and through it I hoped to encourage its readership to develop communication strategies that are culturally responsive and mind-sets that are culturally sensitive. In the project I succinctly laid out the strengths and assets that Haitian immigrants possessed and that could be built upon to help them develop as parents, learners, and citizens. I expect that a firm understanding of whom Haitian immigrant families are, what they value, and what they are capable of doing, can help to debunk the most commonly held myths, stereotypes, and false perceptions about Haitian students (Nicolas et al., 2009). Within the project I make it clear that the development of PI strategies that effectively link schools to the home language and culture is imperative. Through the project I made a case for the development and use of culturally responsive approaches that would yield more favorable PI outcomes and contribute to greater retention and increased acculturative success of Haitian youth in the United States.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications

The research conducted in the past decade on immigrant Haitians focused more on school children and growing concerns about their academic achievement, identity development, and overall acculturative success. However, Haitian adults remained on the periphery of such studies and were seldom solicited to participate in empirical research, which portrayed them as one thing or the other to the general public. If PI is truly capable of equalizing the playing field for language minority children, then researchers ought to solicit the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of immigrant Haitian parents. Practitioners would then be better informed to provide parents with explicit training in U.S. school expectations and mainstream PI structures. I found that by preparing this exploratory, multiple case study, I could affirm that Haitian parents play integral roles in their children's academic and social development. The findings in my multiple case study afford researchers a rare glimpse of Haitian parents' dual roles as learners and parents and the interconnectedness of said roles. Through their narratives spoken in their language of preference, several significant connections were made between Haitians' cultural and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their children's learning and development in the United States. For now, there is no indication that the Haitian population in the United States has been on a decline; rather Haitians continue to arrive claiming refugee status or as economic migrants. Therefore, the need for intimate knowledge of the inner workings of Haitian families will be ongoing, and Haitian people will be better served by an informed body of educators and social service providers.

Application

  The project can be immediately applied to the field as a communication strategy and support system. The white paper can serve as a reference guide and training tool for pre-service and in-service teachers and school personnel with little to no modifications made to the document. At the school level, the project ought to inform conversations and decisions about curriculum and instruction, allowing for an increase in the amount of recruitment of Haitian parents to participate on school advisory committees and parent teacher associations. At the district level, application of the project can inform talks about diversity and inclusion in school staffing and conversations about strategic plans for community and parent engagement. At the community level, the study and project serve as a representation of the struggles, aspirations, and strengths of the local Haitian community. The study can be used to augment the voice of Haitians in the community who must learn to advocate for a better tomorrow while including the voices of the next generation of Haitian immigrants. Reflection on the specific kinds of content found in the white paper project may help diminish feelings of powerlessness among Haitians and embolden them to affirm their place in the community.

Directions for Future Research

  Through the present study I sought to address four pointed questions with the overarching question being, "What are the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development?" Despite addressing the guiding questions extensively, the answers only spawned more questions. In the future researchers with a similar research

agenda should consider conducting the study in rural and urban immigrant Haitian and Haitian-American communities. Also, given the small sample used for this study, it would be worth noting how family composition, gender roles, and the socioeconomic status of immigrant Haitian households impact parenting and involvement at school.

Researchers willing to take on such a study should take care to include the multiple perspectives of parents and caregivers that were missing or underrepresented in the present study. Furthermore, investigators should seek a deeper understanding of the funds of knowledge available in immigrant Haitian households. Although the concept of New Literacy Studies supported in part the conceptual framework of this study, clarification is needed as to literate and non-literate immigrant Haitian adults' perceptions of literacy as a social practice. Many of these factors were touched upon; however, an ethnographic or longitudinal research approach would better address questions which stand to inform classroom pedagogy, PI practices, and first and second language instruction and acquisition. To undertake such an endeavor would require a long-term commitment by a researcher or a team of researchers who are cultural insiders or who remain in close contact with immigrant Haitian people.

Other lingering, more developed questions that remain on my mind include: What are immigrant Haitian adolescents' attitudes and perceptions of their immigrant parents' involvement in their learning and development? What if any continuity in PI exists across generations of Haitian immigrants (first, second, and third generation as well as Generation 1.5)? In what ways are the first language and target language used during interactions between immigrant parents and children? Additionally, given that Haiti was

first colonized by Spaniards, I am curious to know more about the ways that Haitian PI compare to PI among Latinos. I trust that the present study can provide scholars and practitioners with a springboard from which to launch into anyone of these inquiries in the future.

Conclusion

Immigrant Haitian adult parents are expected to actively engage in the education of their children despite unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances which challenge their efforts. Although their voices are consistently underrepresented in the existing body of parent involvement (PI) literature, the present study provided a diverse group of nine immigrant Haitian adults the opportunity to share in their own words their wide-ranging learning experiences inside and outside of schools in Haiti and in the United States. Participants were also invited to open up about their parenting roles and responsibilities in supporting their children's social development and schooling. Their narratives traced back to their childhoods and moved forward into their current realities, providing a stunning defense against claims that Haitian immigrant parents are uninvolved in their children's schooling. Adult participants' learning experiences and Haitian cultural conception of parenting, vis-à-vis mainstream expectations of parent involvement offered the most insight into the so-called "parent involvement problem." The present study revealed in great detail that the parenting model adhered to by immigrant Haitian parents diverged from the mainstream, placing more emphasis on *edikasyon* as the foundation for *enstriksyon*. That is to say, newcomers from Haiti believed that they played an integral role in preparing their children mentally and

physically for school and trusted that this level of preparation made teaching possible for teachers and learning possible for their school-age children.

Through this study I set out to glean a better understanding of the problem in the Haitian community, thereby laying the groundwork for more effective solutions. Although there may indeed be more than one way to solve a problem, the present study made a strong case for the reformulation of the parent involvement problem as a problem of cross-cultural miscommunication and insensitivity. Based on the interpretation of the results, I believe a paradigm shift in the way that culturally and linguistically diverse parents are perceived by educators is necessary. Equally necessary are increased opportunities to raise awareness among the immigrant Haitian community of the inner workings of U.S. schools and school expectations. These are the first steps in the right direction towards an equitable solution.

In the culminating project, a white paper, I provide stakeholders with several ways forward. The document included two initiatives that can enhance and encourage two-way dialogue between schools, social service providers, and immigrant Haitian families. Alongside the outcomes of the present study, a pair of predeveloped checklists of cultural considerations and practical recommendations can support the work being done in the local community. As an educational professional and member of the Haitian immigrant community, I am proud of this work and the potential it has to catalyze visible social change. I am optimistic that a concerted effort between community stakeholders can encourage cross-cultural understanding and promote the development of genuine and

mutually beneficial partnerships with Haitian families and other minority groups in the

local setting and transnational communities.

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Appendix A: The Project

From Roadblocks to Pathways
Clearing the Way for a More Engaged Community of Haitian Families

A White Paper By Dayana Octavien Philippi, Ed.D.

Introduction

Immigrant Haitian adults frequently face challenges supporting their adolescent children enrolled in American secondary schools. Haitian immigrants are expected to actively engage in the education of their children, despite unique social and economic circumstances which often challenge their resettlement efforts. The intent of this three-part white paper is to provide frameworks for the development of two research-based initiatives, a tool kit for educators and social service providers (SSPs) and a parent involvement network (P.I.N.). The aims of the initiatives are to enhance community stakeholders' cultural knowledge of Haitian families and encourage the development of culturally responsive parent involvement strategies and adult learning resources. Full implementation of these initiatives ought to help diminish roadblocks on Haitian families' paths towards community engagement.

The tool kit and P.I.N. are detailed in Parts 1 and 2 of this white paper, respectively. They were designed in tandem, and their complementary nature should foster two-way communication and partnerships between schools, SSPs, and the Haitian community. The initiatives are composed of a bundle of training tools, resources, and programs that encourage self-reflection as a professional practice, promote constructive conversations, guide training for pre-service and in-service personnel, and overall, inform the important work of community stakeholders. Part 3 of this paper comprises three predeveloped resources that are essential to the initiatives. The first resource (Part 3A) is a comprehensive inventory of 39 cultural roadblocks and considerations when working with Haitian families. The second resource (Part 3B) provides a bulleted checklist of 45 practical recommendations for educators and SSPs to implement. The third resource (Part 3C) is a synopsis of the exploratory, multiple case study which was the precursor to the white paper. This resource includes an overview of the study, the 12 themes which emerged from the data, and a small cross section of representative quotes from the nine immigrant Haitian adult parents who took part in in-depth interviews.

Both the tool kit and P.I.N. have the capacity to be expanded to meet the growing needs of other minority language groups specific to any region. Through wide-spread dissemination of this work I aspire to promote positive social change in the education and wellbeing of transnational Haitian communities throughout the United States.

Part 1 Tool Kit for Educators and Social Service Providers

To better support educators and social service personnel who work with Haitian families, a virtual tool kit could be developed. The tool kit would be a collection of current and newly developed educational resources that can be referenced for information on Haitian families and used to mount cross-cultural trainings. Learning communities would have ongoing access to domain specific knowledge housed in a centralized, online location.

The content of this virtual tool kit would focus on four categories of learning outcomes: 1) acquisition of knowledge, 2) changes in attitudes, values, beliefs, and practice through self-reflection, 3) enhanced cross-cultural communication, and 4) strengthening problem-finding and –solving capabilities. The following is a list of critical resources organized according to how they can inform professional practice. Simple titles were given to each resource to indicate its content and how it might be used. Each title is followed by a brief explanation of approaches and aims.

Outcome 1. Acquisition of knowledge	
a. **FAQ Sheet**	A targeted list of frequently asked questions and answers on Haitian immigrant families. The document would serve as a quick reference for commonly asked questions.
b. **Haitians in America: Culture and Language for Professionals**	A brief video which provides a historical overview of the immigrant Haitian populations' defining cultural and linguistic characteristics. This multimedia resource would provide educators and SSPs with foundational knowledge needed to build relationships with Haitian families.
c. **Haitians in America: Culture and Language for Professionals- Mini Assessment**	A follow-up to the video, this 10-20 item quiz would provide a measurement of foundational knowledge and understanding.
d. **Annotated Bibliography**	A list of current scholarship and seminal works on Haitian families (adult learners and school children). This document would be valuable to stakeholders looking to deepen their knowledge or to conduct action research. Part 3C of the white paper contains a synopsis of one such study conducted by Philippi (2016). The multiple case study was the precursor to this white paper project.
e. **What Educators and Social Service Providers Need to Know**	This well-defined list of Haitian cultural roadblocks and considerations was predeveloped and was placed in Part 3A of the white paper. This document highlights common aspects of the Haitian culture and immigrant experience. The inventory is organized into five categories: Immigration, Educational Background, Language & Literacy, Learning & Working in the U.S., and Family Values & Parent Involvement.
Outcome 2. Change attitudes, values, beliefs and practice through self-reflection	
a. **Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity**	This 32 item assessment developed by Kenneth Cushner, (1986) or the updated version (V2) provides a reliable measure of

		intercultural experience. The results provide opportunities for reflection. Administration of this assessment would help to determine the need for on-going cross-cultural sensitivity training. Free copies of the original assessment are available online to the public.
b.	**Conducting Funds of Knowledge Community Field Trips and Home Visits**	A how to guide to touring predominately Haitian neighborhoods and scheduling individual visits to Haitian households. Through methods as observation, reflective journaling, and asking probing questions, learners would explore the strengths and assets of the Haitian community being served. The aim of the manual would be to help reduce both the physical and psychological distance that often separates social service providers from clients.
c.	**The Immigrant and Refugee Experience**	A professional development workshop on the human experience of leaving ones homeland and the challenges of resettling in a linguistically and culturally different country. This workshop would sensitize learners to the social, economic and psychological needs of immigrants. Overt training in this area would help providers better empathize with Haitian immigrants.
	Outcome 3. Enhanced cross-cultural communication	
a.	**English/Haitian Creole Call Script**	A bilingual phrase sheet for communicating student progress, conduct, and concerns to parents over the phone. Using this document would help school interpreters and paraprofessionals better communicate with Haitian parents by using a consistent tone and a standard dialect.
b.	**101 Haitian Creole/English Phrases**	A quick reference guide and training tool for non-Haitian Creole-speaking professionals who desire to learn common words and phrases in Creole to increase their communicative competence.
c.	**Haitian Parent Orientation Video**	An informative video scripted in Creole and aimed at Haitian parents of middle and high school students. The video would briefly orient parents to the school's program options, key personnel, how to contact the school, progress reporting systems and dates, and critical policies in attendance and discipline. The orientation video ought to be audio based, with little to no text. It should be viewed by parents and students upon new student enrollment, at open house, or during parenting seminars.
d.	**Haitian Parent Orientation- Word Document Template**	An itemized checklist of important information (bilingual school contacts, counselor's phone number, attendance and discipline policies, testing dates etc.). The document ought to be bilingually scripted in English and Haitian Creole. It should be customized for the school by their action team and shared with parents after watching the corresponding video.
e.	**Haitian Parent Acculturation Videos**	Similarly formatted to the same standards as the Haitian Parent Orientation video, this video series would share with parents the expectations of the American education system. Videos should expand upon Haitian parents' knowledge in the following areas: school programs options, parenting practices, how to

		support their children's learning at home, and planning for and funding post-secondary studies.
Outcome 4. Strengthen problem solving and problem finding capabilities		
a.	**Recommendations for Practice**	This resource has been predeveloped and can be found in Part 3B of the white paper. It includes an exhaustive checklist of practical recommendations based upon a review of the literature and empirical research. Recommendations were written in actionable terms and speak to barriers that Haitian families face, as well as highlight the many assets and strengths that they possess as learners and parents. The 39 recommendations were organized according to five categories: Immigration, Educational Background, Language & Literacy, Learning & Working in the U.S., and Family Values & Parent Involvement.
b.	**Frequent Issues, Options to Consider, and Difficulties You May Encounter**	A learner-centered course using scenario-based problem solving. The course would be designed to help educators learn strategies and knowledge in the domain of Haitian parent involvement and to help them commit what they learned to memory. Best used within professional learning communities given that responses are open-ended and ought to stimulate dialogue.
c.	**Frequent Issues, Options to Consider, and Difficulties You May Encounter- Discussion Forum**	An asynchronous, online discussion forum for educators and social service providers enrolled in the similarly titled course (see 4b above). The discussion ought to be led by a facilitator. Weekly topics could be based on the scenarios in the course or generated organically as they are determined by service providers' needs and experiences.
d.	**Cross-Cultural Coaching**	A live chat feature via the Web that affords subscribers an opportunity to discuss school, organizational or community - based issues with a knowledgeable cultural insider. Subscribers would use an instant messaging application to dialogue with a Haitian cultural expert who can inform their understanding and provide guidance as to an appropriate course of action.

Part 2 Parent Involvement Network (P.I.N.)

A parent involvement network or P.I.N. could be developed to address the communication problem between service providers, particularly schools and Haitian homes. This initiative is a system of interconnected communications tools developed with the objective of diminishing the impact of common communication roadblocks: limited schooling, computer illiteracy, limited English proficiency, and lack of awareness of U.S. schools' expectations. Use of P.I.N. would provide meaningful and timely language support to both teachers and immigrant Haitians parents. The aim of P.I.N. is two-fold: 1) Improve the frequency and quality of two-way communications between schools and immigrant Haitian homes, and 2) Extend opportunities to Haitian parents to take part in the decision-making process.

a. **Language Line**	This inbound call center was conceptualized as a means to directly promote increased parent communication with schools. Phones are the most accessible communication tool available to parents across of socioeconomic status levels. Parents would be able to place phone calls to a toll free line. Each parent would be assigned an individual passcode for themselves and one for their child that they will use as an identifier. The line will be manned by trained bilingual liaisons, who would field incoming phone calls and perform a triage directing parent's questions and concerns' to faculty and staff on parents' behalves. The liaisons would use e-mail or phone calls to facilitate the communication of information and questions to the appropriate school personnel. Whenever possible, the liaison would respond based on standard information posted directly on the school website, thus providing an immediate resolution. A return call could be placed to parents within 24-48 hours of receiving a response from a school representative.
b. **Language Line- Progress Monitoring**	Ideally, the Language Line would also be used for parents to check their children's grades. This feature would surely help to close the digital divided separating schools that often make communication technologies readily accessible and leaving behind those parents who cannot take full advantage of these applications for lack of literacy or computer literacy. Parents would have a signed authorization form on file to grant liaisons permission to log in to the portal on their behalves. Liaisons would then review with parents the child's current standings in each class according to the grade book. This would be a tremendous service for parents who want to be kept apprised of their children's grades on a more frequent basis than the interim period or distribution of report cards, but due to their personal limitations rely solely on their children for accurate and up-to-date information.
c. **Teachers' App for Parent Communication**	An electronic application could be developed for teachers, to allow them to communicate to Haitian parents their children's academic progress, conduct, and general concerns and needs. The app would comprise a set of standard comments and observations in the form of menu options. Having a pre-scripted

	application, rather than one that solicits open responses from teachers, would increase the objectivity of the calls placed by interpreters and would decrease language discrepancies and the duration of calls. Teachers would provide a call back number or e-mail in the event that parents desire more detailed explanations, input, or to schedule a parent teacher conference. Bilingual liaisons from the language line would place two live calls in the native language at different hours of the day (a.m. and p.m.) to maximize the likelihood of making contact with parents outside of the workplace. A third attempt would be made using an automated voice messenger with a pre-recorded message. The automated technology would make multiple attempts at reaching parents. Upon receiving the recorded message parents would be prompted to take a brief survey to provide feedback as to their satisfaction with the call. For live calls, liaisons would notate parents' feedback, and forward notes to the requesting teachers' e-mails within 24-48 hours. Teachers would also be informed of other possible outcomes such as a wrong number, disconnected phone line, or a voice mailbox that was not set up. In which case, school personnel should be notified that updated information or a secondary contact number is needed from parents.
d. **Automated School Calendar**	Voice messaging software could be used to schedule automated phone calls and send text messages to Haitian parents. The voice and text messages would remind parents of important school events in their native Haitian Creole. Some key reminders would include the distribution of interims and report cards, open house, opening of the state assessment window, financial aid night, and early release dates and dates schools are closed. Parents would opt into this service.
e. **Ti Koze or "Small Talk"**	Small group meetings could be organized on and off school campuses with Haitian mothers in order to informally discuss pathways to graduation and higher education in a welcoming setting. Modeled after Spanish *charlas*, which have been popping up in school districts that serve high populations of Hispanic students (see Isensee, 2015), *ti koze*, the Haitian Creole equivalent, would encourage Haitian mothers to meet regularly to discuss within themselves different child rearing topics and issues they are facing. Meeting topics would be developed organically as they are determined by parents according to what is important to them and what they want to know. Mothers would also have an opportunity to develop family education plans and identify people and existing organizations who can help them execute their plans. A language liaison would attend all meetings and play a support role. Liaisons would answer questions and facilitate the communication of critical needs, and parents' perceptions of school programs with the local school(s) that serves their children. In essences, *ti koze* would extend Haitian mothers' social networks and provide opportunities for the collective to advocate for their needs.

Part 3 Tools

Three essential tools were developed in advance in support of the tool kit for educators and SSPs, and P.I.N. These tools include: an inventory of cultural roadblocks and considerations (3A), a checklist of recommendations for practice (3B), and a synopsis of the multiple case study that informed and inspired this white paper (3C). These tools are easy to navigate given that clear organizational headings were used. Both lists of cultural considerations and practical recommendations are sectioned into five categories representing various aspects of the Haitian cultural and immigrant experience:
1) Immigration, 2) Educational Background, 3) Language and Literacy, 4) Learning and Working in the United States, and 5) Family Values and Parent Involvement. The synopsis of the doctoral study is sectioned according to the four research questions which guided the study and the dozen themes which were identified in response to them. The themes are supported by a representative sample of quotes from Haitian immigrant adults who participated in the study.

Implementation of these tools may benefit a long list of community stakeholders, to include: school administrators, teachers, community leaders, and social service providers such as the department of children and families, legal aid, and the sheriff's office. The trio of tools found in this section can serve as a springboard from which stakeholders can begin to refine the tool kit and P.I.N., seek funding and interagency collaboration, and garner community buy-in.

Part 3A CULTURAL ROADBLOCKS & CONSIDERATIONS

Cultural roadblocks which Haitian immigrants face are numerous. Whereas some Haitian immigrants are confronted with a few of the same barriers they came up against in Haiti (e.g., poverty, low educational attainment, and gender disparities) others experience completely new challenges brought on by the simple fact that they are newcomers in a culturally and linguistically different land. It is neither possible nor desirable to describe all social and cultural roadblocks which Haitian families face in the United States. Therefore, several of the most common roadblocks are underscored and explained by way of cultural considerations. These aspects of the Haitian culture and immigrant experience merit the special attention of school personnel, social service agencies, and community leaders. Although the following lists are composed of broad generalizations that may not be applicable to all communities or individuals, they are put forth as essential components of the Haitian culture and immigrant experience that stakeholders ought to bear in mind when developing educational programs and devising communication strategies. The considerations are organized into the following five categories:

1) Immigration, 2) Educational Background, 3) Language and Literacy, 4) Learning and Working in the United States, and 5) Family Values and Parent Involvement. It is prudent that stakeholders secure the assistance of a cultural expert from the local setting if more targeted information on specific Haitian communities is warranted.

Immigration

☐ Haitian immigrants may have experienced trauma in their home country or during their journeys to the United States. The island nation has suffered decades of political unrest and corruption. Some of the first refugees and asylum seekers known as "boat people" risked treacherous waters and traveled by shanty boat to arrive on American shores (Stepick, 1982). More recently, in 2010 a 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the country claiming hundreds of thousands of lives (estimates vary ranging between 46,000 to 316,000) and displacing over 1.5 million Haitians (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014).

☐ Haitians may be obligated to leave close relatives (parent, spouse, child, or sibling) behind in Haiti. Separation as a result of out migration may cause anxiety and psychological instability. Furthermore, immigration may impact the family composition and living arrangements.

☐ Haitians often maintain close familial ties and have financial obligations to relatives back home. In 2012 alone, over $1.6 billion in remittances were sent to Haiti, the majority of which came from the United States (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014).

☐ Identifying as Haitian does not necessarily imply Haitian birth. For instance, immigrants born in the Bahamas to Haitian parents are not granted Bahamian citizenship. Others may take on Haitian identities despite being born outside of the country.

☐ Generation 1.5 immigrants' experiences, perceptions, and needs may differ greatly from their 1st and 2nd generation counterparts. Haitians who immigrate at a very young age (infancy to around age 14) may have limited recollection of or connections to Haitian culture and identify more with American cultural norms.

☐ The Haitian population has grown considerably over the years. The vast majority of Haitian immigrants in the United States reside in Florida, New York and across a few other Northeastern states. Collier County, Florida boasts the 7th highest concentration of Haitian

transnationals in the U.S. approximately, 9,000 residents. The number of Haitians in Southwest Florida rises to over 15,000 when Lee County is taken into account. (Nwosu & Batalova, 2014).

☐ A culture of distrust and fear of deportation among undocumented Haitians and their family members may attribute to gross undercounts of Haitian populations as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. In the absence of legal documentation immigrant may choose not to seek critical health care or may not have access to care.

☐ Haitian immigrants in the United States triply qualify as a minority group given their status as foreigners, the fact that no other cultural group speaks Haitian Creole, and that they are black. Haitians regularly experience racism and discrimination both in the United States and in Haiti where a lighter skin complexion can be leveraged socially.

Educational Background
☐ There are two coexisting categories of learning in the Haitian culture, *edikasyon* (education) and *enstriksyon* (instruction). The former implies home schooling where values, character, social graces and domestic skills are taught by family and reinforced in the community. The latter term implies learning at school for academic or vocational purposes. Haitians believe that both types of learning are essential to achieving self-fulfillment.

☐ In general, educational attainment among Haitians is low due primarily to limited access to quality and affordable schooling. The Haitian public school system, though free, lacks infrastructure and cannot accommodate the number of Haitian students in need of schooling.

☐ Gender disparities persist in Haiti. Women did not have the good fortune of traditional schooling may have been encouraged to take sewing classes or undertake a micro-commerce business for a living.

☐ On average, Haitians live off of $2 a day and parents pay 61 % of tuition costs for their children to attend private, often parochial schools ran by religious organizations (RTI International, 2014; Sletten & Egset, 2004).

☐ The educational system in Haiti is structured in so that schools provide 10 years of basic education and three years of secondary education. Unlike schools in the U.S., Haitian schools group students according to academic ability, not age.

☐ Achievement on the national exam determines Haitian students' college worthiness. Only a small percentage of students are invited to apply to Haitian colleges and universities. This is a very competitive system and scholarships are few and far between.

☐ Instructional methods in Haiti once emphasized rote memorization and repetition. While Haitian classrooms are said to be less participatory than U.S. classrooms, educational reform has pushed towards discovery learning.

☐ Though now forbidden in Haiti, older generations of learners very likely experienced corporal punishment as a form of intervention and discipline in the classroom.

☐ Typical Haitian schools do not encourage parents to volunteer on school campuses, engage in the decision-making process, nor do they invite parents to regularly communicate concerns and request progress reports from teachers. School teachers are viewed as the authorities where children's academic learning is concerned.

☐ The Haitian cultural conception of parent involvement known as *ankadreman* hinges upon what

parents are willing and capable of doing at home, not school. In Haiti, parents' primary role is to prepare their children for school (launder and iron school uniforms, ensure good personal hygiene and provide a fortifying meal before school).

☐ Like in the U.S., Haitian parents are also tasked with supporting their children's studies at home. However, due to many parents' limited schooling, Haitian youngsters may not have been afforded much needed academic support and reinforcement at home.

Language & Literacy

☐ Besides Haitians, no other ethnic group speaks Haitian Creole (*Kreyòl Ayisyen*). Creole is the native language of all Haitians and French is spoken by the highly educated elite, though they both share official language status in Haiti.

☐ Creole is neither a French dialect nor Pidgin, it is a legitimate language, with an officially recognized orthography and spoken by an estimated 90% Haitians as their mother tongue. Only an estimated 2-5 % of Haitians speak French, but many Haitians will say they do, because French is a marker of the upper class.

☐ In Haiti, many school children and their parents alike, are emerging or struggling readers. Even though Haitian Creole has a less complex orthography, when compared to languages as English or French, the majority of Haitian students have not developed the skill to read a text in either French or Creole and at the same time comprehend what they had read, until up around the third grade or years later (RTI International, 2014).

☐ Haitian school children are exclusively taught in Creole during the first four grades of their educations. Creole is subsequently replaced by French as the primary language of instruction from grade five and beyond. The use of Creole in schools was met with widespread opposition from parents from all social classes.

☐ Gender-based disparities persist in Haiti and as such Haitian girls/women are less likely than boys/men to have ever attended school. The United Nations Education and Scientific Organization's (UNESCO) global adult literacy study confirmed that over 1 million Haitians, mostly women, could neither read nor write in their mother tongue Haitian Creole or French (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012; Smith, Gélineau, & Seligson, 2012).

Learning and Working in the U.S.

☐ Generally, there is no reciprocity for degrees/certificates earned in Haiti. Adults looking to transition into the same or similar vocations/careers may be required to start from scratch.

☐ Unlike other Caribbean blacks from Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago, Haitian immigrants often struggle to find work and take on similar jobs they held in Haiti due to the fact that they do not speak the dominant language, English.

☐ Among Haitian immigrants, learning may imply formal instruction provided by a teacher in a traditional brick and mortar classroom. Adult learners may undervalue informal learning opportunities and may have limited exposure to virtual learning environments.

☐ In the U.S., Haitians participate in the workforce at a disproportionate rate. Haitian women are more likely than women from other Latin American countries to be active in the workforce. Immigrants, Haitians being of no exception often hold down two or more jobs in order to make ends meet.

☐ Haitians' educational aspirations are directly linked to their desires to change their

employment and economic status. This may be especially true among the low-educated and unemployed who have the lease access to critical language and skills training programs.

Family Values & Parent Involvement

☐ Haitian homes are more than likely two parent homes; however, these homes may be composed of a biological parent and a step parents. A form of cohabitation *plasaj* is not uncommon among Haitians, but is not legally recognized as a common-law union.

☐ Haitian immigrants perceive that their primary role in their children's education and development is to teach them values and build their character. Parents will likely place great emphasis on respect, obedience, hard work and pro-social behavior.

☐ Haitian parents may strongly believe that they are role models for their children who should emulate them in terms of morality, spirituality, character and work ethic.

☐ The Church serves as the main support system for the Haitian community. Church-going Haitian parents feel very strongly that their children too, should attend church and adopt the principles of their faiths.

☐ Myth and misunderstanding surrounding the practice of the voodoo (voudun) religion have circulated adding to the mysticism and social stigmatization. Although voodoo is practiced in Haiti by all social classes, its adherents are outnumbered by practitioners of the Catholic and Protestant faiths.

☐ In general, Haitian parents have very high aspirations for their children. Most parents desire that their children attend college/university in order to attain higher occupational and social statuses than they have attained.

☐ Low-educated Haitian parents rely more on their children to keep them informed of their progress and needs. Parents who are moderate to highly educated and proficient in the English language more often take the initiative to communicate with school personnel.

☐ Low-educated parents may not attend school events or meetings on school campuses for lack of confidence and limited English proficiency among other reasons. However, in some instances they will designate a relative to serve as a proxy in their absence.

☐ Of the six standard categories of parent involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and community collaboration) Haitian parents are most adept at parenting. They ensure their children's school readiness through the provision of food, talks that set and remind their children of their expectations and by coordinating transportation to and from school and extracurricular events.

☐ Haitian parents tend to lean towards the authoritarian style of parenting. What is culturally normative for Haitians is physical punishment, which contrasts with American norms. In recent years there has been a rise in allegations of child abuse at the hands of Haitian parents given the cultural differences in parenting.

☐ They may exercise control over their child in different ways, according to their children's gender. Whereas parents closely monitor their daughters' surroundings to shield them from potentially harmful people and socially stigmatizing situations (sexual abuse and teen pregnancy), they are more concerned with their son's behavior outside of the home.

☐ Haitians can be very expressive and animated using hand other physical gestures to express their selves. Haitians are also boisterous in their speech, and speaking loudly is often

misinterpreted by non-Haitians as aggression or anger. In many cases, Haitians are having a passionate, but respectful discussion among themselves.

☐ Parents may perceive their children's friends as threats to their children's upbringing and the values they have tried to instill in them. Peer pressure and drug use are serious concerns for parents who have envisioned college-going paths for their children.

☐ Parents may not feel that it is their place to critique teachers who are perceived to be subject matter experts. Haitian parents may have very little negative comments or experiences to report about schools and teachers for several reasons.

☐ Haitian parents may perceive teachers as having a higher social status than them. Unequal power relations and feelings of intimidation may come into play in instances of low reporting of negative perceptions and experiences.

☐ For parents who have very limited schooling experiences, the school building in size and atmosphere may be an intimidating place. Also, parents may not feel confident in their abilities to navigate the school system as a whole.

Part 3B Recommendations for Practice

When working with immigrant Haitian families, it is best practice to consider and revisit the culture, language, and experiences of Haitian people throughout the decision-making process. Several pointed recommendations are put forth for that purpose. These recommendations are organized according to the following categories: 1) Immigration, 2) Educational Background, 3) Language and Literacy, 4) Learning and Working in the United States, and 5) Family Values and Parent Involvement. Although recommendations speak to barriers which Haitian families face, they more so highlight the many assets and strengths that Haitians possess as learners and parents. Recommendations are written in actionable terms that should be put to work by stakeholders to better engage Haitian immigrant families.

Immigration

- o **Understand why they left.** Haiti is a third world country. Though Haitians emigrate from the island nation for a variety of reasons, the most resounding is poverty and hardship. Like many other immigrant groups, the hope of new opportunities and economic betterment attracts Haitian people to the United States.
- o **Assume nothing.** In 2008, Haitians were more likely than the total immigrant population to be naturalized citizens of the United States. Over 48% were naturalized citizens, compared to 43% of the total immigrant population. Additionally, for nearly a decade, between 2000 and 2008, 183,188 were awarded green cards, or legal permanent residence mostly based on petitions for family-based immigration and best estimates of illegal Haitians in the United States was around 76,000 in the year 2000 (Camarota, 2010).
- o **Be aware of current policies.** United States immigration policies deal with Haitians differently (some argue unfairly) than other ethnic groups. Current immigration policies threaten adolescent and adult learners' post-secondary and employment prospects in the United States given the obstructive nature of certain laws that seek to deport illegals and their children who were brought to the United States involuntarily
- o **Show empathy.** Immigration applications are reviewed and determinations are made on a case by case basis. The economic and psychological well-being of Haitian families in Haiti as well as abroad are often exacerbated by burgeoning immigration statuses of those individuals to whom they are closely tied
- o **Approach with caution.** Immigration status may be a sensitive subject to broach, especially with those who are undocumented or whose relatives are undocumented. Some immigrants fearfully view the institution of the school as the long arm of the law, especially with the growing presence of youth relations deputies (YRDs) on elementary and secondary school campuses
- o **Be mindful of their physical/mental well-being.** Due to their precarious illegal statuses immigrant adults and youth who do not possess formal identifying documents recognizing their legality, lack access to or choose not to seek critical health/social services for fear of deportation.
- o **Encourage civics self-study.** Haitian immigrants quite often engage in self-study for the U.S. citizenship exam using the basic materials (booklet and CD) provided by the immigration office. Many who endeavored to study for the exam passed. Gaining U.S. citizenship marks a milestone in the lives of many Haitians.
- o **Teach EL-Civics.** Due to their limited literacy, some immigrants are unable to study for the

U.S. citizenship exam. Provide course offerings which integrate English language instruction and civics education to meet the dual needs of literacy learners who aspire to be naturalized U.S. citizens.

Educational Backgrounds

o **Listen and learn.** Collectively, there are some commonalities in immigrants' stories, what could be called a shared immigrant experience. However migrants' personal stories, and what brought them to the United States differ widely and can prompt a seldom experienced appreciation for the struggles and hardships faced by their families and the sometimes awe inspiring outcomes that unfold against all odds.

o **Assess before placing.** The intake or enrollment process is critical to proper course placement for Haitian immigrants enrolling in secondary and post-secondary institutions. School personnel ought to consider diversifying the types of assessments used to place students and include assessments in the native language in order to determine if identifiable knowledge/skill gaps are the result of poor schooling, learning differences/difficulties or simply language barriers.

o **Appreciate their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd language.** Well educated Haitian adults may be multilingual and well versed in Spanish and English in addition to Creole, and French. Prior to the educational reform of 1978 Haiti, still heavily influenced by the French, followed a classic curriculum which taught classic languages as Latin and Greek. The multilingual status of Haitians should be appreciated and used as a springboard for learning across content areas.

Language & Literacy

o **Ask about the past.** Although a quality education may be hard to come by in Haiti, Haitian immigrants come from all levels of social class and may vary greatly in their educational attainment. While Haitian curricula emphasize literature, art and philosophy, rural schools may emphasize vocation and agronomy. The only way to know for sure what they know, and enjoy studying, is to ask.

o **Put it in your own words.** Haitians speak a language that is foreign to most cultural outsiders. Interpretation and translation services are key for educators and other stakeholders to clearly communicate their expectations and afford Haitians in the community a voice. There must be a concerted effort and an expressed commitment to making language services available and accessible for the benefit of all parties.

o **Survey language proficiency/comfort.** Many Haitians are multilingual, therefore it is imperative that service organizations survey individuals (formally or informally) in order to determine the language they are most comfortable reading, writing and speaking in. The results should inform the language in which documents go out and interpretation services are rendered.

o **Say what you mean and mean what you say.** In order to make expectations known and orient immigrants to U.S. norms of the school, the workplace and the community, a clear, concise and consistent message must be shared. This means that translators/interpreters ought to be trained on the finer points of providing language services as dilemmas will otherwise arise as the result of language discrepancies and poor training. Traditional and emerging audio and video communication technologies also provide a means to serve immigrant populations and send out a consistent message.

o **Use print sparingly.** Some Haitians are literate and others are not and there is no visual marker of their literacy status. During conferences, meetings, training sessions or appointments avoid overuse of printed text unless English language proficiency has been verified. Where possible use the oral language (phone calls or face-to-face interpretation

services) or visual media like Web-based videos, DVDs and posters to get your point across.

Learning and Working in the U.S.

o **Start with the mother tongue.** Illiteracy can be socially, economically and psychologically debilitating. It is therefore imperative that literacy instruction with newcomers start with the native language to check and reinforce foundational skills and strategies before transitioning to English literacy instruction. In addition to the social and economic gains there are to make based on learning to read and write, literacy in the native language is related to many positive psychological outcomes.

o **Compare and contrast L1 to L2.** From an instructional point of view, a firm understanding the differences and similarities between the first and second language can help teachers predict errors that students will make and to overall accelerate the language acquisition process. At minimum ESL/literacy teachers should know: 1) Haitian Creole is a phonetic language; assigning only one sound to each letter symbol. 2) Unlike English, Creole makes use of an accent mark to modify sounds; there are 10 vowels, three semi-vowels and 17 consonants in the language. 3) Like English, and Spanish it typically follows the subject-verb-object (SVO) sentence pattern. 4) Creole is a blend of French, Spanish, and West African languages (Ewe and Yoruba) and grammars. Some English words have been adopted into the Creole lexicon. 6) Some Haitians look down on the use of Creole in schools and out in society, as French the language of the colonizer is considered a marker of success.

o **Bring the outside in.** The oral tradition is very rich and strong in Haiti. Spoken literature in the form of anecdotes, proverbs, jokes, riddles, songs, and games are integral to Haitian social norms. Storytelling, in particular, is seen as a type of performing art. Oral history is a natural fit in educational contexts and is a means to put elder's resourcefulness and experiences on display.

o **Hold them to a high standard.** An education is viewed as the only means to upward social mobility in Haitian society. As such Haitians take school very seriously and place great emphasis on grades and test scores. It is said that it is harder to earn a "B" in school in Haiti than to than to earn an "A" in school in the United States. Students with some schooling experiences can and will expect to be held to a high standard. So long as learning differences and difficulties have been taken into account, teachers set their performance expectations high.

o **Focus on listening.** Of the four skills (reading, writing, listening/comprehension, and speaking), immigrant Haitian adults may be the most confident in their listening (aural) skills in the English language. Listening may be a good starting point in the classroom, especially with learners who are not literate; in this way they can have a "taste" of success before moving on to the skills that challenge them most.

o **Make provisions for vocational ESL.** Haitian immigrant adults often learn English words/phrases informally while on the job. This is especially true for low-educated adults working in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. Haitians may not believe that the content of traditional ESL classes that do not have a workforce readiness focus is relevant to their everyday lives and future aspirations. Vocational English classes would serve dual purposes for immigrants who find that they need to be gainfully employed, but at the same time need English to get and sustain that job. Given the relevance of vocational English classes to their lives, the provision of such courses ought to reduce dropout rates.

o **Flex time.** Many Haitians have at minimum dabbled in ESL classes since resettling in the United States. Some have even completed entire ESL programs. However, the demands of work and family life often lead to attrition from these programs. English language and

literacy programs ought to provide a flexible schedule. Adult education programs should consider providing classes in the mornings so that learning does not contend with their familial duties as childcare, cooking for the family and church related events that take place afterschool and during the evening hours. In tourist regions, such as South Florida, seasonal jobs in the in the hotel and hospitality industry which employs many Haitians have shut down or full-time jobs have cut hours. Thus, Haitian adults may have more time during the spring and summer months to commit to their studies.

o **Expose to "other" college and career options.** Growing up in Haiti, students have been socialized to pursue a career as a doctor, nurse (mainly women), lawyer, engineer, or teacher. They may not have been encouraged to explore other career paths that lend themselves well to their talents or are stepping stones towards their goals. It is important that educators encourage students to explore other professional and vocational fields and expose students to non-traditional career options.

Family Values & Parent Involvement

o **Know their strengths.** Rather frequently researchers and educators focus on Haitians parents' deficits and differences in terms of time poverty, lack of access, lack of resources, lack of social capital, lack of awareness and lack of English proficiency. This downcast tradition is burdensome and does not portray families fairly. Haitian families possess many cultural assets and their values often align with American values. While awareness of their shortcomings is important, knowledge of their strengths is vital to responding to their needs in a way that is culturally sensitive and effective.

o **Get familiar.** Familiarize yourself with Haitians' values, customs and traditions. It is critical that cultural outsiders are familiar with the basic dos and don'ts of Haitian culture in order to avoid cultural misunderstandings. Here are just a few: Do personally greet everyone in the room (only exception is large gatherings), show respect, be obedient (children). Don't suck your teeth, roll your eyes, whistle around adults, look adults in the eye when being reprimanded (children). Know that Haitians are "naturally" loud speakers, especially when engaged in passionate debates or playful banter.

o **Make it a family affair.** Haitian households are very likely to be family homes composed of parents, children and extended family members. In Haitian society, the extended family is the core support network. Develop enrichment programs and community events that are inclusive and benefit the whole family, not just parents or students.

o **Start family literacy programs.** Census data reveals that more than 80%of Haitians over the age of five speak a language other than English at home (Buchanan, Albert, & Beaulieu, 2010). Family literacy programs have the potential to benefit multiple generations of Haitians living under one roof. Create intergenerational literacy programs that do not hinge upon adult figure's literacy status as it may vary from one home to the next.

o **Count on mom and dad.** In Haitian households, mothers are responsible for childcare and the general upkeep of the home, while fathers are tasked with doing the heavy labor and often times, discipline. In two parent households, it is essential that both parents are included in any communication pertaining to their children's welfare as each parent plays a different, but complimentary role in their upbringing.

o **Know they value school.** Haitians may be especially grateful for the fact that unlike most schools in Haiti, their children attend school "tuition free", are picked up at a bus stop nearby and receive breakfast and lunch free of charge. In Haitian society, and education is viewed as the sole means of climbing the social latter, so parents may be eager to learn of ways of getting their children through high school and on to college. Knowing this should help educators interpret parents' actions with a more open mind and less "value-laden

point of view". However, program objectives and logistics must be designed in a way that they align with Haitian values and are attentive to the demands of their jobs and families.

o **Understand Haitian discipline.** From one culture to the next, what it means to appropriately discipline a child varies. In the United States, Haitian parents struggle to navigate the thin line between discipline and abuse as physical punishment is the cultural norm for disciplining a child. It is critical that they are educated on laws defining child abuse and are trained on methods to appropriately discipline their child according to American cultural norms.

o **Pick up on cultural pleasantries.** Commonplace greetings and other simple phrases and gestures may go far during initial introductions, especially where new enrollments and parent conferences are concerned. Saying *Bonjou* (hello), shaking hands or asking *Kouman ou ye* (how are you) as a parent enters the door communicates to a parent that they are welcomed here. This small, but telling, effort just may set the tone for a more positive exchange.

o **Captivate at church.** Over 80% of Haitians are followers of the Catholic Church and the other 20% Protestants. Haitians attend church regularly, at least one or more times a week. Churches provide captive audiences. Culturally speaking, the union between religion and education is a natural one as most schools in Haiti are ran by religious organizations (Civan, Vilsaint, & Morrisset- Métellus, 1994). Joint efforts between organizations and predominantly Haitian churches may prove more effective in informing Haitians of new community initiatives, and soliciting their participation.

o **(Re)define "need".** Haitian parents believe that their children are privileged, when compared to their disadvantaged backgrounds. Many parents, who grew up in poverty stricken homes and experienced food scarcity, find that their children's basic needs are being met and even exceeded in the United States. When promoting programs and services, determine how what is being pushed as a critical "need" will be perceived by a Haitian parent. Although Haitian parents make great sacrifices for their children, they may perceive what you are offering as a "want" and not a necessity. Understand that they may politely decline, because suffice to say, they grew up and survived without.

o **Create new lines of communication.** Schools with significant Haitian populations may have bilingual personnel on site who are dedicated to interpreting at conferences, placing calls to parents, and transcribing letters and backpack-borne memos. However, this setup is outdated as it only promotes one-way communication, from the school to home. The creation of a language line where parents can call in and are assured that they will speak with someone who speaks their language, provides a means for them to share important information, ask questions and get answers

o **Phone home.** Haitian parents of secondary students prefer and rely on phone calls and letters home to keep them informed of their children's progress and conduct. Try calling during the a.m. hours and again during the p.m. hours in order to reach parents who may work different shifts. Routinely encourage parents to update their contact information.

o **Schedule home visits.** Educators who teach socioeconomically disadvantaged or linguistically challenged students or members of the racial minority often live in remote neighborhoods and come from White middle-class families. In this instance, teacher and student are separated both by a physical distance and psychological distance. Home visits enable teachers to connect with parents on their territory and repositions families as the authorities on the subject matter, their children and their lives. Home visits where the sole intent is to get to know the family, turns the tables so that the teacher is now the eager learner.

o **Diversify meeting locations & times.** Schools campuses can be intimidating and unwelcoming for anyone who has limited schooling or does not speak the English. Recreations centers, churches and community centers at apartment complexes are just a

few good locations to connect with parents off campus. These sites are often more familiar, welcoming and conveniently located. Also, variations in the times events and meetings are held, helps to remove time constraints that are usually cause for rescheduling. If you don't know where to start, it is best to ask the parent what location and time works best for them.

o **Know your role.** Educators must be cognizant of how they may be perceived in the eyes of parents. As members of a non-dominant cultural group, parents' evaluation of the quality of schooling their child receives may be shaped by their perception of their position on the social and occupational hierarchy. Therefore, parents who are professionals may be more comfortable interacting with teachers. However, parents who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and are at a lower occupational status to teachers may be intimidated by them and only voice their concerns if the issue deemed as very serious. Teachers ought to reflect upon their roles and equity and power issues which may arise between them and parents who have limited literacy skills and lack schooling experiences

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Part 3C Haitian Adult Immigrants as Learners and Parents

The Study at a Glance

The purpose of the exploratory, multiple-case study was to gain a better understanding of immigrant Haitian parents' learning experiences, their beliefs, and the connections to their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning. The conceptual framework was made up of three social constructs: family literacy, New Literacy Studies, and funds of knowledge. Institutional review board (IRB) approval was obtained for the study. Through purposeful sampling, nine parents and three educators and liaisons from the community were selected for in-depth interviews. Qualitative data analysis methods included: open-coding, emergent themes, and triangulation of data from interviews and an archival parent involvement (PI) survey.

The study revealed that immigrant Haitian parents' experiences with *edikasyon* (learning at home) and *enstriksyon* (learning at school) influenced their conceptions of their parenting roles, their aspirations for their children's future, and their perceived self-efficacy at home, and supporting their children's schooling. Haitian parents stressed moral learning and conduct rather than academic instruction at home and perceived this to be their principal role in their children's schooling. Of the six categories of parent involvement, immigrant Haitians appeared to emphasize parenting. Learning at home was also fair, that is only if this category was inclusive of the acquisition of cultural values and norms and home skills, not just academic learning. In the four remaining categories of parent involvement, communication, volunteering, decision-making and collaborating with the community, engagement was sparse and varied according to immigrant Haitian parents' schooling experiences, immigrant generation, and social and occupational statuses. I concluded that immigrant Haitian parents' perceptions of their roles frequently and unknowingly to them, conflicted with the roles which schools expected them to play in their children's education. The results of this study, on the whole, advanced the case for the development of teacher and parent trainings and communication strategies and supports.

12 Emergent Themes

To address the problem, several research questions were developed. The guiding questions comprised three subquestions and one major question that unified them. The analysis resulted in a dozen emergent themes in response to the questions. Alongside each theme I provide a summary and a few poignant quotes representing the experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of Haitian immigrant adults.

Research Subquestion 1

What are immigrant Haitian adults' experiences and perceptions of themselves as knowers and learners?

Theme #1. Home Oriented Learning Guaranteed

In Haitian society learning that was oriented towards the home and the greater community was guaranteed. Haitian immigrant adults' asserted that they learned key skills and ways of thinking and conducting themselves at home and in their communities.

Education at home means when you live at home you respect your parents, you respect your family. That means there are things that you're not supposed to do. You wake up and you'll cook for your parent's, you wash, clean the house. You know, that's what an education is. (Fabienne)

Theme #2. Scars of (Un)Schooling

Whether they were low-educated or highly educated, most immigrant adults suffered adverse schooling experiences in Haiti, which left their mark on their lives. The absence of a basic education, however, may have caused the most irreparable harm.

A lot of Haitians for the alphabet [alphabetization] we are behind. So all parents didn't know any words, and how to write. So as you grow up, [whatever] they give you at school, you have to come home, hit yourself [beat yourself up] to learn it, and to read it. Some people get help, but most of the people don't have the help in that case. (Kervens)

In terms of methods as well… They would tell you to write for instance the word manman [mom] and if you write that word mom and you made three errors in it then they would spank you three times or give you three lashes. (Schneider)

But school is everything and well I didn't go to school. I did have one year or so. (Johanne)

Theme #3. English for Life

Some immigrants were multilingual, fluent in two, three, or even four languages. However, proficiency in the English language was not taken for granted by those who found themselves immersed in English speaking contexts on a daily basis.

…when you come to a country and you do not speak the language, it is like someone who has never gone to school. (Schneider)

I just felt like English became my priority, my—you know what I mean, first language. It's almost as if I gave up my citizenship from my country to become part of somebody else's country. So it's kind of hard to remember anything from your country. (Manoucheca)

I speak of course Creole fluently. I speak French fluently. I understand Spanish a little bit and I can defend myself in English. (Tony)

Theme #4. Learners for a Change

Adult Haitian immigrants believed that people could learn even when they were advanced in age.

They acknowledged that if they were able to push through perceived barriers, learning had the potential to catalyze serious change in their lives. Most participants saw learning as a means to get a job, change jobs, or maintain the status quo in case they lost their job.

It is definitely a difficult thing, when you're getting up in age to go back to school to learn you know. When you pair up those things with the responsibilities that you have, you have family, you have job, now when you want to manage schooling with this, it can be very difficult. It's not because you cannot learn, but you probably do not have enough time. (Tony)

Well on the subject of learning I personally can't fill out an application on my own. But if I could get to the point where I'd be able to complete an [job] application on my own and answer all the questions that I needed to answer…It would be good for me. (Marie-Jane)

I went to study [CNA] because I said better that I had it in hand. That means even if you work, if they fire you, you had something that you had in hand. (Nadege)

Research Subquestion 2

How do immigrant Haitian adults experience and perceive their role in supporting their adolescent children enrolled in secondary schools in the United States?

Theme #5 Lopsided Communication

Two-way communication between schools and Haitian households was uneven with the school doing most of the communicating. However, the frequency of communication with schools was greater among higher educated Haitian parents, who in addition to phone calls and meetings on campus, also used technology to get and send information.

Well, the reason I don't go is that I've never received a letter that they sent to invite me to any meeting or what they're doing. And I know that when you go to school if the child does things that are not good, they write the parent or call them. That means that if they don't call me and they don't write me that means they're good. (Marie-Jane)

My son's teachers, I have great lines of communication with them. I e-mail them; in fact I'm someone who— I think I even check my son's grade book more than he even checks it himself. (Tony)

Theme #6 Working in the Background

Although their children took center stage, many parents felt comfortable and competent in the background where they prepared their children mentally and physically for school. Parents played less visible roles as preppers, monitors, drivers, and fans in their children's lives.

I talk to him [and I tell him] that when you go to school…The way that we raised you at home, that you will continue it… Even the teacher too you should respect him/her. (Nadege)

Those three things don't do drugs, stay in school and be careful with who you become friends with. (Manoucheca)

…mathematics at school she didn't understand it. I use my available time so that we can meet quite frequently, for us to talk about this and for me to help her— to help her understand

mathematics. (Schneider)

I am the bus. Other than that [driving them to their basketball games] nothing. No, I don't participate like in, sports mom or anything like that. I'm just there to cheer them on. I told them, [I am] just there to support. (Widlene)

Theme #7 Controlling for Social Risks

At times, parents took the lead in their children's social development in an attempt to safeguard them from socially stigmatizing experiences. Parents' controlling behaviors and socialization of their child differed based upon their children's gender. Whereas most parents were concerned about their daughters getting involved in relationships too early and the risk it posed to their educations, in regard to their sons their efforts were more focused on keeping them from engaging in mischief and misconduct at school.

All day I'm calling her to see how she's doing. That's why I always make an effort, despite the fact [that I am poor] I pay the telephone for her and so I can take control of [keep track of] her more. Sometimes it's 10 o'clock at night I call her. (Johanne)

...as a parent, you know you have to fill the role, play the role as a parent as a disciplinarian and everything, sometimes my son may think that I don't love him. (Tony)

Research Subquestion 3

What resources do Haitian parents possess which can be used to better connect the school and home?

Theme #8 Community of Believers and Supporters

Many Haitian parents were adept at identifying key people and establishments with whom they could connect and find support in overcoming barriers. These groups included the church, their children, their close relatives, and on occasion school personnel.

...the only thing is I just prayed to God that he saves our lives, that God gives me good health, that God gives me courage, gives me strength so I can work, take care of [my four children] and their education until God wants to take me. (Fabienne)

Because you know the system in Haiti—in America if you're talking [to] someone about family they start with the mother, father, and son and daughter. In the Haitian system, when you talk [about] the family, all the cousins, aunties, grandpa, grandma, it's all included. (Kervens)

I told him to tell the teacher what it is that you are weakest in. He tells me sometimes he talked to the teacher and sometimes they don't want to hear him. So I told him that I'll make an appointment perhaps I can find some help in that. (Nadege)

Theme # 9 Experienced in Work and Life

Haitian immigrants possessed a wide range of work, education, and in general life experience that made their stories unique. Participants had distinct interests, childhood traumas and circumstances, immigration experiences, and fears and concerns that comprised their personal narratives. These cumulative life stories are rich sources of anecdotes that are often didactic and

may encourage introspection and gratitude in others.

Ever since then when my mom died I was 15 years old. My father lived with us in the house and my little sisters and I were outside [of the home] and we took care of him. He died at 96 years old and he never took a wife again. (Johanne)

I used to be a martial arts instructor. So I know that I'm very good at martial arts. In 1988, I was national champion. So I'm good at it, I used to be [good] at it [laughter]. (Tony)

You know my mom left the six of us in Haiti. God sent her here. After a length of time she entered us. Thirty years-old found me here [I celebrated my thirtieth birthday in the United States]. (Fabienne)

I don't want people to stereotype my kids because they're Black. Well, Madeline I know she's biracial, but just— I don't want that stereotyping thing like ' oh, ok, Black people don't speak proper English' which is a lie. Or if you do speak proper English 'oh you sound white'. (Widlene)

Major Research Question

What are the connections between Haitian parents' culture and learning experiences and their experiences supporting their adolescent children's learning and development?

Theme #10 Deprived Parents and Privileged Children

All participants spoke freely of the difficulties they faced growing up, the necessities they were deprived of, and the opportunities they were denied during their time in Haiti and eventually in the United States. Immigrant parents strongly believed that their school-age children had educational and material advantages that they never had.

You know it was Haiti. If your parents did not have money to send you to school to continue, you might go this year and then next year you stop. That's how I was. It was not me, it was the situation. (Fabienne)

I feel like I'm a person, but it's not this person that I wanted to be. (Marie-Jane)

Because my take on that is that coming from a third world country, Haiti, I know how hard it is for students to wake up in the morning, to walk miles to go to school. And here in the U.S. a student has the privilege to have your ride waiting for you several feet from your house, you get on that bus, go to school, they pick you up. When you get to school there is a cafeteria open for you to get your breakfast and around 11:30 or 12 you get lunch. And also some schools provide you great support as far as helping you with your homework. To me I cannot comprehend how a student in the U.S.— in the U.S. school system does not do good in school. (Tony)

Theme #11 Follow Your Parents, Not Your Friends

Where it concerned their character education, specifically spirituality and morality, many Haitian parents believed that they served as living models for their children to emulate. Their children's

friends were seen as formidable influences that could derail Haitian youngsters from the college-going paths that their parents had painstakingly carved out for them.

So for church, when you are a church member so, you want your kids, your family to be [on the] same line with you. Because if you are church member, when you grow up, you don't want your kids to be somewhere else, without going to church. So Haitian parents always focus—[are] good at that. To push the kids, that's another push for the kids to be God kids. We like that. (Kervens)

If you see a friend has a pair of tennis shoes on their feet and you only have sandals do not ask your friends and borrow their tennis shoes to put on your feet. Because I'm poor and it's an effort that I'm making, that is to say you don't make me embarrassed out in society, so to speak. Don't look at what your friends are doing and for you to do the same. I am your friend. (Fabienne)

Theme #12 Don't Be Like Your Parents, Be Better

The vast majority of parents had no aspirations for their children to be like them in terms of education and career. Rather they wanted their children to be do far better than them and to excel in areas where they never had an opportunity to meet their full potential. All parents had college-going and professional aspirations for their children.

…what I would want is for when the child finishes school, is for any and every type of diploma that exists for them to have them all! Because I myself didn't have. (Marie-Jane)

And I use that [anecdote] to tell them, that's why you have to do good in school. Because if I am living paycheck to paycheck right now, I don't want you to be living the same life that I'm living. It is very stressful…(Tony)

I used to tell her that this is what I'd like, for her to study after she goes to college, and learn to be an engineer or doctor or something good so that tomorrow you can help yourself when we are not here. (Johanne)

Appendix B: Parent Interview Protocol English

I.   Parent's Language, Education and Educational Goal

1) Tell me about your family. Are they all here, are some in Haiti?

2) Think back to your childhood. What was it like for you learning at school and at home?

b) Tell me about what your parents expected of you.

  a) What is the highest level of education you actually completed?

3) Tell me about the things you are good at or that you enjoy doing.

  a) Since living in the U.S., what kinds of opportunities have you had to learn a language, skill or profession? Have you ever studied for the U.S. citizenship exam?

  i) (if Yes) Tell me about that experience.

  ii) (if No) Why is that?

Pause. Ask "How are you doing? Do you need a break?"
4) Tell me about all the languages you know.

  a) Where and how did you learn that/those language(s)?

  b) So, how do you feel about your English language skills?

5) In the past, what kinds of things have you had to learn that were related to a job?

6) Some people say you are never too old to learn. What are your thoughts on learning in adulthood?

7) In the future, what would you like to learn?

a) Do you have any learning related goals let's say for a job, citizenship, church or a dream you want to achieve?

b) In what ways have you started working towards that goal?

Pause. Ask "How are you doing? Do you need a break?"

II.   Parenting a Child who is in Secondary School

8) Now let's talk about parenting a teenager in secondary school (middle or high school). How would you describe your experience parenting (child)?

9) Name 3 (three) things you feel very confident that you have taught (child) well.

10) On your days off or on weekends, what kinds of activities do you do with (child)?

11) Tell me about how (child) usually studies and does homework, and your role in that.

   i.   Are there any family rules about studying and doing homework?

Pause. Ask "How are you doing? Do you need a break?"

12) Tell me about (child's) after school activities such as participation in sports, band or an academic club.

   ii.   What is your role in that usually?

13) Let's talk about communication between you and (child's) school. Tell me about your contacts and visits with (child's) teachers and school.

   i.   How have you found out about how (child) is doing in school and activities that are happening at the school?

14) For some parents it is enough for them if their child graduates high school. Others want their child to go to college. What are your thoughts on that?

15) As you know I am looking for Haitian families with children in secondary school. Who else do you suggest I talk to find out more about the experiences of Haitian parents living in the United States and who are parenting a child who is in secondary school?

Thank you very much for sharing your experiences. All the response you have given today will remain confidential. If I have any additional questions or need clarification on something you said, I will be sure to contact you to schedule a second interview at your convenience. If you have any questions, concerns or something you wish to add, you may contact me on my cell phone or e-mail. You can find my contact information on the copy of informed consent form which you received.

Appendix C: Parent Interview Protocol Haitian Creole

I. Lang, Edikasyon, e Objektif Edikatif Paran

1) Pale m de fanmi ou. Eske yo tout isit la, o eske gen kèk ann Ayiti?

2) Panse tounen nan tan ou te timoun. Kouman l te ye pou ou apran nan lekòl e lakay ou?

   a) Di mwen ki sa paran ou atann de ou?

   b) Ki nivo edikasyon ou konplete aktyèlman

3) Pale m de kèk aktivite nan ki ou fò obyen sa ou remen fè nan tan lib ou.

   a) Depi tan w ap viv nan peyi Etazini an, ki kalite opòtinite ou te gen pou aprann yon lang, konpetans oswa pwofesyon?

   b) Eske w janm etidye pou ekzamen sitwayènte Amerikèn nan?

      i) (si Wi) Pale m de eksperyans ou.

      ii) (si Non) Pou ki rezon?

Poze. Mande "Kouman w santi w? Eske w bezwen yon bwek?"

4) Di mwen de tout lang ou konnen.

   a) Ki kote e kouman w apran lang sa (yo)?

   b) Ki jan ou santi ou sou konpetans ou nan lang Anglè a?

5) Nan tan pase, ki kalite bagay ou te aprann ki gen rapò ak yon djyòb?

6) Gen de moun ki di ou pa janm fin twò vye granmoun pou aprann. Ki sa w panse sou sijè aprann nan laj granmoun?

7) Nan lavni a, ki sa ou ta renmen aprann?

a) Èske w gen nenpòt objektif aprann ki gen rapò avèk, a nou di yon travay, sitwayènte, legliz oubyen yon rèv ou vle reyalize?

b) Nan ki sans out a di w deja kòmanse travay nan yon direksyon pou reyalize objektif sa a?

Poze. Mande "Kouman w santi w? Eske w bezwen yon bwek?"

II. Metòd Fè Levasyon Yon Pitit ki nan Lekòl Segondè

8) Koulye a annou pale nan sijè metòd pou fè levasyon yon tinedjè (adolesan) ki nan lekòl segondè. Kouman ou ta dekri eksperyans ou nan fè levasyon (pitit la)?

9) Lonmen 3 (twa) bagay ou santi trè konfyans ke ou te enstwi (pitit la) byen.

10) Nan jou òf ou o nan wikenn (fen semen) nan, ki kalite aktivite wou fè avèk (pitit la)?

11) Di m sou ki jan (pitit la) anjeneral etidye e fè devwa l ak wòl ou nan sa.

a) Èske gen nenpòt règ fanmi sou etidye ak fè devwa?

Poze. Mande "Kouman w santi w? Eske w bezwen yon bwek?"

12) Pale m de aktivite (pitit la) l aprè lekòl tankou patisipasyon nan espò, bann mizik, oswa yon klib akademik.

a) Anjeneral, ki wòl ou nan sa?

13) Annou pale sou kominikasyon ant ou menm ak lekòl (pitit la). Rakonte m de kontak e visit ou ak pwofesè e lekòl (pitit la).

    a)   Ki jan ou kòn aprann enfòmasyon sou ki jan (pitit la) ap fè nan lekòl la ak

        aktivite k ap pase nan lekòl la?

14) Pou kèk paran li se ase pou yo si pitit yo gradye lekòl segondè. Gen lòt ki vle pitit yo

    ale kolèj. Ki sa w panse ou sou sa?

15) Kòm ou konnen m ap chèche fanmi Ayisyen ak timoun nan lekòl segondè. Avèk ki

    moun ou ta sijere mwen pale pou m chèche konnen plis sou eksperyans paran

    Ayisyen k ap viv nan peyi Etazini epi k ap elve yon timoun ki nan lekòl segondè?

Mèsi anpil pou pataje eksperyans ou. Tout repons ou te bay jodi a ap rete konfidansyèl.

Si mwen gen nenpòt kesyon adisyonèl oswa bezwen klarifikasyon sou yon bagay ou te di

mwen pral kontakte pou fè randevou pou yon dezyèm entèvyou nan yon tan ki bon pou

ou. Si w gen nenpòt kesyon, enkyetid oswa yon bagay ou ta vle ajoute , ou ka kontakte m

sou telefòn selilè mwen oswa voye m yon imel. Ou ka jwenn enfòmasyon pou kontakte m

sou kopi fòm konsantman enfòme ou te resevwa a.

Appendix D: Educator and Community Liaison Interview Protocol (English Only)

1. What is your experience working with Haitian adults in the local community?

2. What is your experience with Haitian adolescents who are in middle or high school?

3. What barriers and challenges do Haitian adults face in the local community?

4. What resources or assets would you say Haitian adults possess?

   Pause. Ask "How are you doing? Do you need a break?"

5. What is your point of view on Haitian parents' involvement in the schooling of their children enrolled in American middle and high schools?

6. In your professional opinion, in what way is Haitian parents' involvement related to their own learning?

7. While interviewing parents, the phrase "to be someone tomorrow" seemed to be a reoccurring theme, what can you tell me about that?

8. One situation in particular sticks out from all other parent interviews. What can you tell me about the systematic or institutional barriers that exist for Haitian parents and children (socioeconomic, language, race, class)?

Thank you very much for sharing your experiences. All the response you have given today will remain confidential. If I have any additional questions or need clarification on something you said, I will be sure to contact you to schedule a second interview at your convenience. If you have any questions, concerns or something you wish to add, you may contact me on my cell phone or e-mail me. You can find my contact information on the copy of informed consent form which you received.