INVESTIGATING THE HEADWATER: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PK-12 STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN PK-12 EDUCATORS TO PROMOTE AUTHENTIC EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

A Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Missouri

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

JASON M. MORTON

Dr. Barbara Martin, Dissertation Supervisor

MAY 2011
The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

INVESTIGATING THE HEADWATER: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PK-12 STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN PK-12 EDUCATORS TO PROMOTE AUTHENTIC EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Presented by Jason M. Morton

A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

__________________________________________
Dr. Barbara N. Martin, Dissertation Advisor

__________________________________________
Dr. Sandy Hutchinson

__________________________________________
Dr. Linda Bigby

__________________________________________
Dr. Doug Thomas
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I will always be eternally grateful to my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Barbara Martin, whose patient mentorship and steady encouragement compelled me to demand a level of excellence in myself I had not previously deemed possible. Dr. Martin was the first to suggest that I consider a dissertation with a social justice agenda on a topic for which I was passionate. I am forever grateful to her for her guidance in this regard, as this academic exercise has humbly compelled me to reconnect to my Latino roots with an indefatigable sense of ethnic and cultural pride. Moreover, Dr. Martin compelled me to maintain my eyes on the prize with a maternal and nurturing, yet intractably firm, instinct. A simple hug or an “I am proud of you” on an e-mail or on draft feedback served far more to inspire and motivate me than she could ever imagine.

Along the same lines, I am deeply appreciative for the insightful input and guidance of the other members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Linda Bigby, Dr. Sandy Hutchinson, and Dr. Doug Thomas. The depth of constructive feedback they provided on both content and format was absolutely indispensable in my efforts to craft a study of which I could be proud.

I am forever indebted to my wife Tracey, who has supported me for many years in my efforts to advance my education for the betterment of our family. I would not be penning these comments were it not for her patience and encouragement while I was gone for two summers in Columbia and home late on many nights for classes and research. I left behind Tracey to attend to our then three-month-old daughter Avery and four-year-old son Nathaniel during that first summer and on innumerous days and nights to follow; that alone speaks volumes to her support.
I want to thank my parents, Robert and Beatrice Morton, for instilling in me the value of an education at a young age. Neither persisted educationally beyond high school, but both always reiterated to me their desire for me to do better for myself and my family and to pay it forward, if you will, with my own children. Thanks to their support, I was among the first on the Latino side of my family to attain a postsecondary education, and now the first to attain a doctorate degree.

I also want to recognize my Cohort 6 team in Lee’s Summit and my B-2 summer team. The former made every Wednesday night in Lee’s Summit a night I truly looked forward to. Never was there a dull moment or discussion with our lively group; our vast array of personalities, politics, and pet peeves led to some truly unforgettable “rich and thick” discourses over our two years together. Regardless of our differences, however, we jelled well together and grew both personally and professionally as a result. The latter, my B-2 summer team, taught me the true meaning of shared decision making and collaborative work. Being a fiercely independent individual, it was a much-needed exercise in humility to learn that our group efforts were far superior to anything any one individual in the group could have crafted. I am a better person on both a personal and professional level to have worked with and learned from these individuals.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank the participants who gave their precious time and voice to this study. This study would not have been possible without the candor and inestimable insight that each participant brought to the table. It was an absolute honor and inspiration to listen to and learn from these amazing educators.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...........................................................................................................ii

LIST OF FIGURES .....................................................................................................................viii

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................ix

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................................

   Background .......................................................................................................................... 1

   Conceptual Framework ....................................................................................................... 4

   Statement of the Problem ................................................................................................... 7

   Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................... 8

   Research Questions ........................................................................................................... 9

   Design of the Study ............................................................................................................ 9

   Limitations and Assumptions of the Study ....................................................................... 10

   Design Controls ................................................................................................................ 12

   Definition of Key Terms ................................................................................................... 13

   Summary ........................................................................................................................... 15

Chapter

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .................................................................................

   Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 17

   A Dual Lens: Critical Race and Latino Critical Theory ...................................................... 18

      Critical Race Theory ....................................................................................................... 18

      Latino Critical Theory .................................................................................................. 22

   Social Capital Theory ....................................................................................................... 26
Persistence Issues in Educational Attainment ...............................................................29

Secondary Persistence Issues ....................................................................................30

Postsecondary Persistence Issues .............................................................................31

Lack of Academic Preparation ..................................................................................33

Perceptions of PK-12 Education and the Formation of a Learner Identity ............37

Negative Perceptions Regarding Status, Power, and Opportunity ......................37

Positive Perceptions Regarding Status, Power, and Opportunity .........................42

Forming an Educator Identity - Does a "Familiar Face" Matter? .........................44

Implications for PK-12 Latino Recruitment ..............................................................47

Need for Early Identification of Teacher Candidates .............................................48

Increased Social Capital for Both Students and Parents ....................................50

Increased Enrollment in Two-Year Versus Four-Year Institutions .......................54

Reassessment of Teacher Admission and Certification Exams .........................55

Field Placement of Latino Candidates into Critical Learning Settings ..............57

Authentic Commitment to Diversity .........................................................................59

PK-16 Leadership Implications ...............................................................................61

Summary ...................................................................................................................63
Chapter

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ..............................................

   Introduction........................................................................................................66
   Research Questions ..................................................................................................67
   Rationale for Use of a Critical Collective Case Study .............................................67
   Limitations of a Critical Collective Case Study Design .......................................70
   Design Controls ....................................................................................................73
   Participants ...........................................................................................................75
   Data Collection and Instrumentation ...................................................................76
   Data Analysis Procedures .....................................................................................81
   Summary ..............................................................................................................83

Chapter

4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA .................................................

   Introduction...........................................................................................................84
   Study Design .........................................................................................................85
   Data Collection Methods .....................................................................................86
   Conceptual Underpinnings ..................................................................................86
   Research Questions ..............................................................................................87
   Process of Data Analysis .....................................................................................88
   Settings ...............................................................................................................88
   Participants .........................................................................................................92
   Themes ...............................................................................................................98
   Summary ............................................................................................................122
Chapter 5. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 124
Summary of Findings .................................................................................................. 125
Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 133
Limitations .................................................................................................................. 141
Implications for Practice ......................................................................................... 144
Recommendations for Future Study ........................................................................ 147
Concluding Overview ............................................................................................... 150

APPENDIX

A. Gatekeeper and Informed Consent Documents ................................................. 152
B. Educator Participant Interview Protocol ............................................................ 158
C. On-Site Observation Form .................................................................................. 162
D. University of Missouri – Columbia Institutional Review Board Approval .... 164
E. Data Codes ............................................................................................................ 166

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................ 168

VITA ......................................................................................................................... 184
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Role of Relational Support through the Synergy of Educators, Family, and Community</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Role of Institutional Support as an Iterative Structure</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conclusions Based on Study Findings</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INVESTIGATING THE HEADWATER: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PK-12 STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN PK-12 EDUCATORS TO PROMOTE AUTHENTIC EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Jason M. Morton

Dr. Barbara N. Martin, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera (2005) posited that "the underachievement and underrepresentation of Latinas and Latinos at each point in the educational pipeline might be better explained by investigating the educational conditions at the elementary and secondary 'headwater'" (p. 276). In this dissertation, a critical collective case study examined the perceptions of PK-12 Latino educators (specifically, those of Mexican-American descent) regarding their personal experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how those perceptions may have positively or adversely impacted their consideration of education as a career. Through data analysis of the elementary and secondary “headwater” (Solorzano et al.), the researcher sought to determine ways in which transformative PK-16 educational leaders can fashion authentic strategies to bolster the future recruitment of talented Latino students.

The participants for this collective case study consisted of six practicing PK-12 educators - two elementary, one middle-level, and three secondary. Data collection methods included audio-recorded interviews and observations in the school setting. Two themes emerged with one clear constant: the Role of Relational Support (via the three subthemes of Educators, Family, and Community) and the Role of Institutional Support (via the three subthemes of Increased Student Expectations, Building Capacity, and Cultural and Socioeconomic Awareness and Validation).
The researcher identified strategic recommendations for transformative PK-16 educational leaders to bolster the recruitment of Latino students into the PK-12 education ranks. First, as supported by Bourdieu (1986), Lin (2001), Portes (1998), and Yosso (2005), Latino youth need to accumulate at least as much (if not more) social capital as their majority peers to secure resources through durable social networks to access information, influence, and social credentials while reinforcing and recognizing their Latino identity (Lin) with the "instrumental and emotional support [necessary] to navigate through society's institutions" (Yosso, p. 79). Secondly, critical collaboration is needed among PK-16 educational leaders to curtail the perpetuation of subtractive schooling (Venezuela, 1999) institutional practices via programs that could significantly bolster Latino participation and achievement in postsecondary education (Weiher et al., 2006) while providing both students and parents added social capital to navigate the often-convoluted transition process from PK-12 to postsecondary institutions.

The implications of this inquiry for practice in education could affect both K-12 institutions and higher education institutions as they reflect on existing practices, most of which are predicated upon majoritarian norms (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008), so as to cultivate an authentic commitment to diversity with educational practices that respect and validate the unique cultural (and socioeconomic) qualities that Latino youth bring to school each day. It is the intent of the researcher that more institutions will infuse the relational and institutional support necessary to address (and someday ameliorate) the professional epidemic (Ramirez, 2009) of the inverse growth of PK-12 Latino educators relative to the American population as a whole.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Over the course of American history, various ethnic and/or cultural minority populations have observed a considerable influx in population over particular periods. Recent polarizing events regarding immigration reform have focused the American zeitgeist almost exclusively on the explosion in Latino population growth in recent decades. As Bennett, McWhorter, and Kuykendall (2006) noted in their research, “since 1970, when only 4.7 percent of U.S. residents were foreign born (as compared with 14.9 percent in 1910), the numbers of such individuals have tripled” (p. 536). Among these individuals, nearly one half of these new immigrants are Latino, with 28 percent coming from Mexico (Gibson, 2002). Geographically, the proliferation of Latinos varies greatly from state to state, with Texas feeling the greatest brunt of this sea change. Kirby, Berends, and Naftel (1999) estimated that - by 2025 - minorities will make up two-thirds of the student body in Texas, 46 percent of whom will be Latino.

Regardless of geography, the numbers become even more profound when accounting for net international migration (NIM). Ortman and Guarneri (2009) recently compiled population projections for the United States government in terms of population size and growth, age structure, race, and Hispanic origin distribution. Regardless of the data series, a peripheral glance at the high NIM data revealed that the Latino population could rise by as much as 15 percent nationally, from 16.3 percent in 2008 to upwards of 31.3 percent in 2050. Within this growing population is yet another level of regional and cultural diversity issues to consider. As Hernandez and Lopez (2004) noted, "[r]acially,
Latinos can be Black, Asian, Indigenous, White/European, or a mixture of these four. Latinos may come from one of 25 Spanish-speaking countries, and variations exist from region to region, often with a mixture of dialects" (p. 38).

Gibson (2002) thus posited there is "a pressing need to recruit more Latinos into teaching so that our teacher force is more reflective of the student population" (p. 247). However, this ideal is far from a reality in schools currently. When writing about the “leak” of qualified minority teachers, Gursky (2002) noted that 85 percent of teachers in the pipeline of teacher preparation programs were white females - a population which has the highest attrition rate in schools with large minority populations (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Kirby, Berends, & Naftel, 1999). In research related to the general minority population, Nunez and Fernandez (2006) found that “students of color make up one-third of our nation’s schools, while people of color comprise only 13 percent of the teaching force” (p. 51). Peterson and Nadler (2009) found that only 14 percent of the teaching population was African-American or Latino in 2003. Bracey and Molnar (2003) extrapolated similar data specific to the Latino population, noting that they constitute fifteen percent of the student population and only four percent of the teaching population. Sadly, for those minorities who do enter the teaching profession, Kirby et al. found that they are disproportionately placed in high-minority schools or districts; in spite of this (or because of this, depending on one’s perspective), Latino teachers who were tracked over the ten-year course of this study had the lowest early attrition rates over the first four years of teaching.

The question then begs itself: is this indeed the foundation for the professional epidemic of which Rodriguez (2009) speaks? As Ladson-Billings (2005) posited, “We
insist that prospective teachers demonstrate that they can be successful with a diverse group of students, [yet] we demonstrate no such success in our own professional lives” (p. 231). As the review of literature suggested, there is ultimately a disconcerting disconnect between the idealism of multiculturalism preached in teacher education programs and the reality of the schools they support. Howard (2003) captured the essence of this disconnect best when he noted that, “at the current rate, many students stand a good chance of completing 12 years of schooling and never coming into contact with a teacher of color...” (p. 150).

It is therefore the purpose of this paper to explore ways for PK-16 educational leaders (particularly those at the secondary and postsecondary levels) to bolster the recruitment of talented Latino students (specifically, educators of Mexican-American descent) into the PK-12 education ranks by exploring any possible connections that may exist between consideration of education as a profession and perceptions of the profession based on personal experiences one had as a PK-12 student. As Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera (2005) stated, "To better understand the underrepresentation of Latinas and Latinos in postsecondary education, it is important to begin with an examination of their [PK-12] experiences… the underachievement and underrepresentation of Latinas and Latinos at each point in the educational pipeline might be better explained by investigating the educational conditions at the elementary and secondary 'headwater'" (p. 276). The complex issue facing the researcher was to determine whether or not there were common experiences and/or perspectives across subjects that may have either impeded or facilitated PK-12 educational persistence.
Multiple researchers (Fernandez, 2002; Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007; Sanchez, Reyes, & Singh, 2006; Valenciana, Weisman, & Flores, 2006) have noted the need for research in this area. Fernandez posited, “Although… research and policy reports may document educational conditions that affect Latina/Latino students, they seldom incorporate students’ own perspectives on their education, moreover, they do not acknowledge how these students cope with or respond to these educational outcomes” (p. 47). Valenciana et al. echoed this statement, espousing that “[l]ittle is known about what Latinos think about their schooling experience, what factors impact on their academic success, and…the effect of Latino educators on Latino students” (p. 83). Ultimately, additional research is needed to understand the factors that help Latinos find educational success (Sanchez et al.) and identify processes that support academic attainment after high school (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain). Through this clarified understanding, PK-16 educational leaders can perhaps fashion authentic interventions that can help Latinos finish high school and college (Sanchez et al.), thus expanding access for these historically marginalized populations to higher paying occupations and career opportunities (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain).

Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by three conceptual frameworks: critical race theory (CRT), Latino critical theory (LatCrit), and social capital theory. CRT was employed by the researcher to identify institutional structures, policies, and practices (Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005) in PK-12 schools that encourage or discourage Latino students from recruitment into the education ranks. A focus was placed on the unique positionality of educators of Mexican-American descent. Accordingly, the researcher
aimed to mitigate some of the ambivalence that exists among LatCrit scholars about the Latino community’s group identity given the fluid nature of race and ethnicity encompassed within the “Latino” label (Trucios-Haynes, 2001). Finally, social capital theory was used to explore means by which PK-16 educational leaders and other institutional agents can provide institutional support (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) to empower potential Latino educators to become agents of social change and social justice themselves (Stanton-Salazar, 2004) via a career in education.

CRT originated in schools of law at the turn of the century to examine and question "the ways in which 'race-neutral' laws and institutional structures, practices, and policies perpetuate racial/ethnic educational inequality" (Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005, p. 274). This racialized framework, now extended in the scholarly canon to include educational institutions, accentuates the need to view institutional policies and policy making in a historical and cultural context. Such a perspective can illustrate how entrenched majoritarian notions of color blindness and meritocracy inherently disadvantage minorities through racial inequality (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008; Solorzano et al.). CRT compels individuals to recognize their own involvement and personal investment in oppressive institutional and ideological structures through five central themes: 1) the centrality of race and racism; 2) the challenge to dominant ideology; 3) a commitment to social justice and praxis; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) an historical and interdisciplinary perspective (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001; Solorzano et al.).
Conversely, Latino critical theory (LatCrit) was initially designed by legal scholars who felt CRT had focused too much "on the racial oppression of the Black community as it is constructed within the Black-White paradigm" (Trucios-Haynes, 2001, p. 6). LatCrit is unique in that it addresses Latino resistance to majoritarian cultural norms (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008) as well as the ambivalence many Latinos have towards their ethnic and racial identity (Trucios-Haynes). Consequently, the LatCrit framework compels researchers to “investigate the ways in which the dominant culture defines [the Latino] group…in order to suit its convenience” (Trucios-Haynes, p. 3). In this regard, Flores and Garcia (2009) elucidated on the need in research to “break free from the essentialized Latin[o] that we have formulated to measure authenticity and belonging… Sometimes we hold [multiple] positionalities at once, and because of that our experiences are different” (p. 169).

Finally, the researcher wanted to account for the social capital (or the lack thereof) that Latino students accumulate over the course of their PK-16 career relative to their majority peers. Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social ties, familial cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), and extrafamilial networks (Portes, 1998) with institutional agents across institutional domains (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) to generate valued resources (e.g., an education). Through this "storehouse of different types of resources," (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, p. 25), Latinos can mobilize and secure the relational resources and institutional support needed "to secure goods and forms of support that facilitate the accomplishment of goals - within a particular institutional context [e.g., a school] organized by hierarchical relations of power and privilege and normalized by the dominant culture" (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, p. 25). Consequently, Latinos can convert
social capital gained from that institution into *instrumental action* that enables them to successfully "exercise greater control over their lives and their futures" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 10) and to manage "stressful borders and institutional barriers" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 26) through connections with caring adults within the school who enable these low-status youth (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) to academically succeed at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

**Statement of the Problem**

The inverse growth of the Latino general population relative to the Latino teaching population is of particular importance. Ortman and Guarneri (2009) projected that the Latino population could climb by as much as 15 percent nationally, from 16.3 percent in 2008 to upwards of 31.3 percent in 2050 yet, as Gursky (2002) noted, 85 percent of teachers in the current pipeline of teacher preparation programs are white females. By no means is the researcher implying that a Latino student cannot receive the same quality education from a white female as he or she would from a Latino educator.

As CRT theorist Taylor (2009) espoused, “We are hobbled by the paradox of a largely White teaching staff whose practices, consciously or not, contribute to the racial achievement gap yet who are unable to see what they are doing” (p. 9). Talented Latino educator candidates are simply not as likely to consider a low-paying, low-prestige profession (Avery, 1997; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004) that has traditionally suppressed educational opportunity (Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004) for those unwilling to assimilate to majoritarian norms (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008). Consequently, the absence of minority educators inadvertently stifles social capital by
promoting Latino educational subordination to the majority in terms of both authority (Villegas & Lucas, 2004) and intelligence (Branch, 2001).

Research suggests that, if a student rarely sees individuals who look and/or speak like him or her behind the teacher’s desk or in other professional educator roles (e.g., counselor, administrator), the potential for consideration of education as a profession is greatly diminished (Carrington & Tomlin, 2000; Howard, 2003; Stern, 2009). By building the ranks of highly qualified Latino educators that can emulate, validate, and celebrate a young Latino’s ethnic, cultural, and/or language background (Gomez, Rodriguez, & Agosto, 2008; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Marx, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999), those students can better forge a social and cultural identity as a Latino learner (Quiocho & Rios, 2000) that bolsters their self-image (Kohli, 2009). Moreover, the presence of Latino educators can enrich the experience of majority students and educators (Wilberscheid & Dassier, 1995), reduce stereotype threat (Steele, 2009), and provide role models to non-Latino students, thus perhaps dispelling many of their preconceived (and often stereotypical or racist) notions of what Latinos can and cannot achieve (Kane & Orsini, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to add to the knowledge base a clarified understanding of how the PK-12 student experiences of current Latino teachers of Mexican-American descent may have positively or adversely affected their consideration of education as a viable and appealing profession. Through an analysis of “the educational conditions at the elementary and secondary 'headwater’” (Solorzano et al.,
2005, p. 276), perhaps PK-16 educational leaders can fashion authentic interventions to help Latinos from all subgroups to educationally persist through both high school and college (Sanchez et al., 2006) by exploring the implications of current recruitment practices in areas such as: early identification of teacher candidates, strategies to increase social capital for both students and parents, strategies to bolster enrollment in four-year institutions, and strategies that promote an authentic commitment to diversity.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the present study:

1) What are the perceptions of PK-12 educators of Latino descent regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how might those perceptions have impeded or facilitated educational aspiration and persistence?

2) Do Latino educators believe that their presence in PK-12 educational institutions can further mitigate negative perceptions of the efficacy and potential of Latino youth not only for themselves, but also for those of different races and ethnicities?

3) How can PK-16 educational leaders inform and implement transformational strategies to bolster future recruitment of Latino educators?

Design of the Study

The researcher initially decided to use a basic qualitative research design (Merriam, 1998) to gather information regarding subjects’ perceptions of their experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, as this paradigm would have mollified the
intent “to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). However, the general design eventually selected for the study was the collective case study approach, which allowed the researcher to explore multiple cases (i.e., subjects) and processes that were “bounded by time and activity” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15) to collect open-ended, emergent data (Creswell) one could use to develop relevant themes for analysis. In qualitative data collection, the researcher is the primary instrument (Merriam, 1998) in all facets, including the identification of the sample as well as the modes of qualitative data collection to be employed. As a person of Mexican-American descent, the researcher was uniquely positioned as an "insider" where he could determine the criteria needed for maximum variation; as Patton (1990) noted, small yet diverse samples can reveal patterns that might not have otherwise emerged in homogeneous situations.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

As Heppner and Heppner (2004) posited, “all studies have limitations” (p. 340). No matter how much a qualitative researcher attempts to stratify a sample, it will never be truly generalizable in the quantitative sense. Nonetheless, one must be attentive to these limitations in order to design as rigorous a study as possible (Heppner & Heppner).

Ideally, an attempt would have been made to stratify the population before selecting the sample to better reflect the true characteristics of the desired population (Fowler, 2002). In order to make any assertions of generalizability, the sample size would need to be larger and more representative of multiple variations in the "Midwestern state" being studied (i.e., suburban, rural, ethnically homogeneous versus heterogeneous, etc.). Had a larger sample size been available, a thicker, richer data collection and analysis may
have been conducted with improved implications for the study (Merriam, 1998).

Consequently, the researcher followed the guidelines as posited by Creswell (2007) for naturalistic generalizations based on the data collected.

An additional limitation of a qualitative case study approach is that “case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (Merriam, 1998, p. 42). Moreover, interviews can be limited in scope, as the information is indirectly filtered through self-reporting, is not delivered in the natural field setting, and may be biased by the researcher’s presence (Merriam), especially if the researcher is unable “to ask real questions and to explore, not to share assumptions” (Merriam, p. 87). If, however, the proper degree of rigor is employed in researcher interpretation via intensive and holistic description and analysis of the central phenomenon (Merriam), this design can be much more concrete and contextual (Merriam) than naysayers of qualitative research might attest.

The use of CRT/LatCrit as one of the conceptual frameworks of the study also poses certain limitations, specifically the essentialist notion that CRT/LatCrit researchers simplistically treat all people of color similarly (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003; Trucios-Haynes, 2001). It is thus imperative that CRT/LatCrit scholars view race as a fluid and dynamic concept (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal) and that "one’s identity is not based on...race, but rather is multidimensional and intersects with various experiences" (Delgado Bernal, p. 118).

Finally, as Creswell (2003) espoused, it is imperative that “the qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study” (p. 182). As a public PK-12
educator and aspiring administrator of Mexican-American descent, the researcher acknowledges that biases may have existed that could have adversely affected his interpretation of the data.

**Design Controls**

In spite of these limitations, the researcher attempted to ensure rigor and quality through the appropriate qualitative means of assessing validity and reliability. The researcher employed accuracy checks such as triangulation of data via member-checking (through feedback from the research subjects of transcribed data), rich and thick description, clarification of researcher bias, and the presentation of negative or contrary information (Creswell, 2003). Regarding qualitative research, Merriam (1998) argued that “is not only fanciful but impossible” (p. 206) to assess reliability by traditional means. However, once again, the researcher can do so by examining the dependability or consistency of data via researcher positionality, triangulation, and an extensive audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher also ensured trustworthiness by increasing reliability, the ability to replicate findings (Merriam, 1998). Since the research was the primary research instrument, reliability could be seriously affected. Considering this before, during, and after data collection and analysis allowed for greater care to minimize influence, while at the same time interacting enough with research subjects in order to gather data for improved reliability. This required what Merriam (1998) described as a tolerance for ambiguity and sensitivity. Furthermore, all of the source data was logged and saved. This audit trail will ensure that others could return to the research and draw conclusions similar to the original researcher.
Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were identified as being important to the understanding of the investigation. Definitions were provided to give readers a clearer understanding of key concepts and to establish a critical common language (Bruffee, 1999), thus inculcating in readers the capacity to create knowledge and reach a deeper understanding of the study and its results.

Additive schooling. This term encompasses practices that validate and celebrate Latino students’ culture and language as a strength, not a deficit (Valenzuela, 1999).

Arenas of value action. This term posits five “arenas where valuation processes occur” (p. 56): the self, the group, the organization, the community, and the culture (Begley, 1999). An analysis of the dynamics across these arenas can facilitate moral dialogue, where “[d]ifference becomes not something to fear, or to avoid, but part of the rich fabric of human existence with which we interact on a daily basis” (Shields, 2004, p. 116).

Authentic caring. This term encompasses educational practices that liberate and move students “toward realizing their humanity through self, familial, and community critical reflections” (Romero, 2009, p. 221).

Counter-storytelling. This term refers to the “method of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009, p. 138).
Cultural deficiency. A term (Rolon, 2002), also known as deficit thinking (Kohli, 2009) or subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), that encompasses educational practices that minimize (or altogether invalidate) Latino students’ culture and language, thus perpetuating “racialized stereotypes result[ing] in a culture of low expectations” (Kohli, p. 244).

Experiential knowledge. This term promotes the use of research methods such as storytelling, testimonies, and narratives (Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera. 2005) to create “culturally and linguistically relevant ways of knowing and understanding” (Delgado Bernal, 2003, p. 109).

Institutional agents. Individuals in institutional domains (e.g., schools) that can develop social capital (e.g., an education) through the cultivation of relational resources and institutional support that allow marginalized populations to eventually convert their social capital into instrumental action that enables them to better control their futures (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Interest convergence principle. The notion, as delineated by Aleman (2009), that change traditionally occurs only if it is beneficial to the majority White population.

Latino. Although this term has an incredibly fluid dynamic as illustrated by Trucios-Haynes (2001) in the review of literature, the researcher focused exclusively on educators of Mexican-American descent.

Majoritarian norms. The terminology, as defined by Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, and Solorzano (2008), given to the value and belief structure of the majority (White) population within which others assimilate.
Perceptions. For this study, this term will refer to both real and perceived "barriers, obstacles, or other forms of individual and societal oppression than those at the center" (Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998, p. 32) that subjects in the study may have encountered during their PK-12 schooling.

Racism. The researcher will use Marable’s (1992) definition of racism as “a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color” (p. 5).

Racist nativism. The notion, as delineated by Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, and Solorzano (2008), “that [Latino] immigrants are exploiting welfare, education, and health care systems in the U.S., thus posing a possible threat to the depletion of such resources for use by ‘true’ Americans” (p. 43).

Stereotype threat. As delineated by Steele (2009), “the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one’s self-definition” (p. 168).

Summary

Research suggests that a PK-12 educational system entrenched in majoritarian norms (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008) and practices of a population hub that no longer exists have inevitably inhibited the recruitment of qualified Latino educators at a rate commensurate with the growth of the Latino population at large. This study was thus initiated so as to explore strategies to bolster future enrollment in this
regard. Through the dual lens of CRT/LatCrit and social identity theory, the researcher sought to analyze the perceptions of Latino educators who have persevered in the profession. By examining the experiences of these subjects as students themselves in the PK-12 milieu, the ultimate goal was to identify areas in which future leaders may hone their attention in order to address this growing professional epidemic (Rodriguez, 2009).

Provided in this chapter are the background and purpose of the study as well as an overview of the sea change in Latino demographics in the general population as opposed to the educator population. Provided in Chapter Two is a review of related literature relevant to the present study, while outlined in Chapter Three is the research design and methodology undertaken for the study. Presented in Chapter Four is an analysis of the data collected. Finally, discussed in Chapter Five are the findings, conclusions drawn, implications, and areas for future study.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The researcher focused on general research surrounding the Latino population as a collective whole in order to begin exploration of issues impacting the recruitment of Mexican-American educators into the PK-12 ranks. Additionally, certain research regarding African-American educators was simply too relevant and compelling to exclude. As the research commenced, this focus compelled further study of three conceptual frameworks that resonated throughout many of the readings: critical race theory (CRT), Latino critical theory (LatCrit), and social capital theory.

CRT proved to be invaluable in using "race as an analytical tool, rather than a biological or socially constructed category used to compare and contrast social conditions, [to] deepen the analysis of educational barriers for people of color, as well as illuminate how they resist and overcome these barriers" (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003, p. 246). LatCrit, a critical theoretical complement to CRT, proved to be important in going beyond the Black-White paradigm upon which CRT scholarship was originated to address Latino concerns (Trucios-Haynes, 2001). Finally, social capital theory proved to be useful in researcher analysis of various forms of institutional support to cultivate the ability for Mexican-American educators (both current and potential) to manage "stressful borders and institutional barriers" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 26) through connections with caring adults within their schools. Such connections can enable these low-status youth (Stanton-Salazar) to academically succeed at all levels. Each lens will be explored in detail in the first part of the literature review.
The review of related literature then delved into specific realms that supported the need for this research to enhance the existing canon. Many consistent themes arose regarding persistence of education at both the secondary and postsecondary level that begged further study. Analysis of these themes was perceived as vital given the dearth of "highly qualified" educators and academic preparedness in many high-minority districts. Subsequently, the review of related literature investigated the research regarding the power of identity development as a learner and perceptions (both real and perceived) among Latinos regarding their own experiences as students, student teachers, or educators themselves in the PK-12 milieu. Included was the literature regarding both negative and positive perceptions of the education profession regarding status, power, and opportunity, as well as other obstacles that may impede Latino students from considering education as a viable and attractive career option. The review also explored the ethnic and cultural implications of forming an identity, and whether or not a “familiar face” can really make a difference. The chapter concluded with an examination of specific implications for Latino educator recruitment, as well as what both PK-12 and higher education educators and leaders might do to begin remedying this professional epidemic (Ramirez, 2009).

A Dual Lens: Critical Race and Latino Critical Theory

*Critical Race Theory*

Critical race theory (CRT) originated in schools of law at the turn of the century to examine and question "the ways in which 'race-neutral' laws and institutional structures, practices, and policies perpetuate racial/ethnic educational inequality"
This racialized framework, now extended in the scholarly canon to include educational and other social institutions which mirror the diversity, strengths, and weaknesses of this society (Marx, 2008), accentuates the need to view institutional policies and policy making in a historical and cultural context. Through this conceptual structure, one can illustrate how entrenched majoritarian notions of color blindness and meritocracy inherently disadvantage minorities through racial inequality (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Huber et al., 2008; Solorzano et al.). As Taylor (2009) espoused, "For those of us increasingly worried about the backsliding of the gains of the civil rights era, [CRT] was a lifeline, a source of an explanatory model, and a wellspring of tools for action" (p. 9).

CRT compels individuals to recognize their own involvement and personal investment in oppressive institutional and ideological structures by acting "as a sort of disinfectant which dispels some widely-held misconceptions about people of color, assumptions which are often held unconsciously" (Litowitz, 2009, p. 308). Five central themes comprise the disinfectant of CRT scholarship. As Delgado Bernal (2002) posited, “These five defining elements come together to offer a unique way to approach educational research and to move researchers and educators into spaces of moral and critical practice” (p. 110).

Centrality of race and racism. CRT scholars concur that race and racism are defining characteristics of American society that are endemic, permanent, and central factors in explaining many minority experiences with our nation's institutions, including education (Crenshaw et al., 1996; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001; Solorzano et al., 2005). For the purpose of this study, Marable’s (1992) definition of racism was used as “a system of
ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color” (p. 5). Solorzano and Yosso (2009) posited that this definition was one of the first to “shift the discussion of race and racism from a Black-White discourse to one [supportive of a dual CRT/LatCrit lens] that includes multiple faces, voices, and experiences” (p. 132).

Litowitz (2009) frankly posited, “Racist assumptions about minorities pervade our mind-set and are reinforced in the media and popular culture. Race is encoded not merely in our laws, but in our cultural symbols such as movies, clothes, language, and music” (p. 293). Consequently, these pervasive assumptions often foment what Steele (2009) termed stereotype threat, or “the event of a negative stereotype about a group to which one belongs becoming self-relevant, usually as a plausible interpretation for something one is doing, for an experience one is having, or for a situation one is in, that has relevance to one’s self-definition” (p. 168). Research within a CRT framework thus promotes the analysis of the multiple identities of people of various races and/or ethnicities without essentializing their experiences (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003) under one stereotypically-biased umbrella.

Challenge to dominant ideology. CRT also exposes "how the dominant ideology of color blindness and race neutrality act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in American society” (Solorzano et al, 2005, p. 275). Researchers such as Aleman (2009) have posited the interest convergence principle, or the notion that change traditionally occurs only if it is beneficial to the majority. It is thus
important to "advocate a situated perspective which brings out the nuances of life as experienced by historically oppressed minorities" (Litowitz, 2009, p. 294).

Commitment to social justice and praxis. CRT researchers view institutions through the metaphorical lens of what Morgan (2006) termed *instruments of domination*, a lens “…forc[ing] us to recognize that domination may be intrinsic to the way we organize and not just an unintended side effect” (p. 330). Conversely, Solorzano and Bernal (2001) noted that CRT researchers "acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with the potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower” (p. 313). It is thus imperative to commit to a social justice agenda that aspires to eliminate all forms of subordination (Solorzano et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). CRT is not radical, per se; its researchers simply refuse to remain silent in order to "give strength and empowerment in a society determined to cling to established habits of repression” (Taylor, 2009, p. 12).

Centrality of experiential knowledge. CRT researchers must have the fortitude to "challenge Eurocentric epistemology and questions dominant discursive notions of meritocracy, objectivity, knowledge, and individualism" (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003, p. 246). Traditional notions of epistemology in PK-16 education must be rethought to reflect an increasingly multicultural population. This can be accomplished through "the creation of culturally and linguistically relevant ways of knowing and understanding" (Delgado Bernal, 2003, p. 109). Such *experiential knowledge* can be legitimately and critically gleaned from research methods such as storytelling (*cuentos*), testimonies (*testimonios*), and narratives (Solorzano et al., 2005).
An historical context and interdisciplinary perspective. In order to provide a more holistic understanding of minority students, the origins of CRT can be traced not only to disciplines rooted in studies of race, but in areas such as law, sociology, ethnic studies and women's studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Moreover, CRT researchers keep the racial conflicts of the past front and center in their memory so as not to lose sight of the initial catalysts for this school of critical thought. Taylor (2009) captured the essence of maintaining this historical context when he mused, "A common occurrence in discussions about race is a tendency not only to render the complex simply, but to disregard the historic conflict in which it was spawned. This amnesia may not be deliberate but reflects the ordinary narcissism of each generation, or the worry that dwelling on the past may inhibit our ability to move beyond it" (p. 7).

Latino Critical Theory

Latino critical theory (LatCrit) was initially designed "to highlight the ‘racing’ of Latina/os in the legal discourse” (Aleman, 2009, p. 185) by legal scholars who believed that CRT had focused too much "on the racial oppression of the Black community as it is constructed within the Black-White paradigm" (Trucios-Haynes, 2001, p. 6). Like CRT, LatCrit also explores "the ways that so-called race neutral laws and policies perpetuate racial and/or ethnic...subordination” (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 108). From an educational standpoint, LatCrit and CRT both "challenge the dominant discourse on race, gender, and class as it relates to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups" (Delgado Bernal, p. 109). From a methodological standpoint, both LatCrit and CRT purport to "capture the stories, counter-stories, and narratives of marginalized people. They suggest that we must recognize and
address the lives of students of color who are often the objects of our educational research and yet are often absent from or silenced within this discourse” (Fernandez, 2002, p. 46). Consequently, both LatCrit and CRT promote a social justice agenda and a critical pedagogy that "place[s] the lived experiences of Students of Color at the center of the teaching and research enterprise” (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 335).

Beyond these parallels lie numerous differences that distinguish LatCrit from CRT. For one, as Huber et al. (2008) posited, unlike “past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves…and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream” (p. 39). Consequently, this overt resistance to majoritarian cultural norms (Huber et al.) has culminated in a nation where Latinos “are perceived as foreigners, ironically, in a land that once belonged to [many of] them…legalized Mexican immigrants, as well as Chicanas/os, continue to be racialized as undocumented and perceived as non-Americans” (p. 46).

Secondly, whereas most African-Americans would agree with the essentialist notion that they share a common racial identity (and are recognized as such by the United States government), LatCrit scholars "confront [their] community's ambivalence about its group racial identity” (Trucios-Haynes, 2001, p. 3). This ambivalence is reflected in the myriad of categories for Latinos on the U.S. Census which recognizes a rapidly growing population of people by ethnicity alone. Trucios-Haynes profoundly articulated this conundrum in the following passage:
The diversity of the Latina/o peoples in the United States confounds efforts to create a group identity. The dynamics of Latina/o identity are fluid and include Spanish, African, and Amerindian cultures, and conquest by both the English and Spanish. We are: recent immigrants and people whose families lived in the United States for generations; people from many different nations in Latin America, although the largest groups are from Puerto Rico, Cuba and Mexico; citizens, refugees, legal residents and undocumented workers; people of mixed race ancestry, primarily a combination of Amerindian, African, and Spaniard peoples, as well as part Anglo-American; people with varied language skills who are fluent in the Spanish language, speak an indigenous language, or only speak English; and people born in one of the many nations of Latin America or born in the United States (p. 25).

Because (or in spite of) this diversity, Trucios-Haynes (2001) thus challenged researchers to "investigate the ways in which the dominant culture defines our group as a Non-White, White or non-racial group…in order to suit its convenience” (p. 3). Latinos should not have to learn to trust their "survival instincts" (Padilla, 2001, p. 70) and tailor their language, behaviors, or actions to align with and assimilate within majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008; Padilla). They should not have to self-identify as White or employ rhetoric (Padilla) that will only exacerbate the stereotype threat (Steele, 2009) often faced in daily life when trying to assimilate into mainstream culture. Solorzano and Yosso (2009) conjectured that the “majoritarian story distorts and silences the experiences of people of color [by relying] on stock stereotypes that covertly and overtly link people of color, women of color, and poverty with ‘bad,’ while emphasizing that White, middle- to upper-class people embody all that is ‘good’” (p. 136). Such majoritarian stories have only served to provoke racist nativism (Huber et al., 2008) and “Anglo perceptions that the Latina/o population is too large, growing too fast, and too illegal” (Gonzalez & Portillos, 2007, p. 247), thus perpetuating and advancing policies detrimental to Latinos in both the criminal justice and educational systems (Gonzalez &
Portillos) and “posing a possible threat to the depletion of [social services] for use by ‘true’ Americans” (Huber et al., p. 43).

Valdes (1998) thus posited four functions of LatCrit: the production of knowledge, the advancement of transformation, the expansion, and connection of Latino struggles, and the cultivation of community and coalition. Through these four functions, LatCrit theorists aspire to "assess the multidimensionality of the Latino/a identity to understand how White supremacy impacts the Latina/o community, and the ways in which Latinas/os may reinforce White supremacy. In so doing, LatCrit theory can help develop a new foundation for building coalitions with other communities of color" (Trucios-Haynes, p. 4).

For the purposes of this study, a dual lens of CRT and LatCrit was utilized. By using critical race theory, an attempt was made to identify institutional structures, policies, and practices (Solorzano et al., 2005) in PK-12 schools that encourage or discourage Latino students from recruitment within the education ranks. The researcher concurred with the argument that CRT can be broadened beyond the Black-White binary (Yosso, 2005) to "include the multidimensionality of Latinas/os within the dominant race construct in this society" (Trucios-Haynes, 2001, p. 30). By using Latino critical theory as well, the focus was further honed to educators of Mexican-American descent. By doing so, the hope was that the findings of this study could be used in tandem with studies of other dimensions of the Latino identity to begin developing a group racial identity that will allow Latino peoples to develop lasting coalitions that can translate social justice dogmatism and academic research to pragmatic and systemic changes in PK-16 educational institutions.
Social Capital Theory

An analysis of the recruitment of "low status youth" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) such as the average first-generation Latino college student would be incomplete with conceptual underpinnings rooted solely in issues of race and ethnicity. One would be remiss to not also consider the social capital that these students accumulate over the course of their PK-16 career. Moreover, it is also imperative to consider the educational ramifications for Latinos whose deposits of social capital over the course of their PK-12 student career are sparse at best.

Multiple definitions of social capital abound. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as the amount of resources that are "ranked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition... to membership in a group" (p. 248). Portes (1998) defined social capital as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (p. 6). Lin (2001) defined social capital operationally "as the resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for actions" (pp. 24-25) in order to access information, influence, social credentials, and identity reinforcement and recognition (Lin). Finally, Yosso (2005) clarified the nature of these resources through "networks of people and community resources...[to] provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions” (p. 79).

All four of these definitions emphasize the importance of social ties, familial cultural capital (Yosso, 2005), and extrafamilial networks (Portes, 1998) with
institutional agents across institutional domains (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) to generate valued resources (e.g., an education). As Saunders and Serna (2004) elucidated:

As first-generation Latino college students make the transition from high school to college, a reconfiguration of relationships and constructive social ties transpires... It is through access to these social networks that students not only acquire the skills and knowledge to qualify for and consider college but also begin to accommodate a college-going identity (pp. 148-149).

Such social networks can cultivate a "storehouse of different types of resources, embedded in social relations, that can be mobilized when an individual or group wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposeful action" (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, p. 25). As a result of these expanded networks, once marginalized populations can mobilize and secure the relational resources needed "to secure goods and forms of support that facilitate the accomplishment of goals - within a particular institutional context organized by hierarchical relations of power and privilege and normalized by the dominant culture" (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, p. 25).

Unfortunately, as Stanton-Salazar (1997) articulated, there are five overlapping impediments to the accumulation of social capital for low-status youth: 1) the differential value accorded youth based on race, gender, etc.; 2) the myriad of barriers that inhibit minority youth from participating in mainstream settings; 3) minority evaluation and recruitment processes that assume assimilation and ignore cultural capital; 4) the institutionalization of distrust and detachment; and 5) ideological mechanisms that hinder students from seeking out or giving help when needed (pp. 7-8). Consequently, social capital in situations such as this becomes a source of social control as opposed to a source of family support or benefits through extrafamilial networks (Portes, 1998). The simple reality of contemporary society is that "social interactions tend to take place among
individuals with similar lifestyles and socioeconomic characteristics" (Lin, 2001, p. 39), a phenomenon that Lin referred to as the norm of *homophily*, or the *like-me hypothesis*. As a result, differential opportunity structures (Lin) emerge for "interpersonal ties to [the] people capable of transmitting vital, diversified resources (Stanton-Salazar, p. 7), thus often denying social capital to the very populations who need it most.

It is thus important, as Stanton-Salazar (1997) posited, to cultivate "regular and unobstructed opportunities for constructing instrumental relationships with institutional agents across key social spheres and institutional domains" (p. 6). *Institutional agents* have a moral imperative to impart the necessary "resources, privileges, and support necessary to advance and maintain... economic and political position in society" (p. 6). Such *institutional support*, Stanton-Salazar maintained, can manifest itself in the following forms:

1) *the provision of various funds of knowledge* associated with ascension within the educational system (this form of support includes *implicit and explicit socialization into institutional discourses* that regulate communication, interaction, and exchange within mainstream institutional spheres);

2) *bridging*, or the process of acting as a human bridge to gatekeepers, to social networks, and to opportunities for exploring various mainstream institutions;

3) *advocacy* and related forms of personalized intervention;

4) *role modeling*;

5) the provision of *emotional and moral support*; and
6) the provision of regular, personalized, and soundly based evaluative feedback, advice, and guidance that incorporate the thoughtful provision of institutional funds of knowledge, as well as genuine emotional and moral support (p. 11).

Through accumulation of social capital through institutional support, young people who are new to the nuances of that institution or instructional sphere (e.g., first-generation college students) will perhaps convert their social capital into instrumental action that enables them to successfully "exercise greater control over their lives and their futures" (Stanton-Salazar, p. 10).

Persistence Issues in Educational Attainment

Before examining in-depth the research regarding recruitment of Latino educators in PK-12, one should also acknowledge and analyze the research regarding Latinos who never graduated from high school and/or college, often in spite of the best intentions. Multiple researchers (Auerbach, 2004; Fry, 2002; Roderick et al., 2009; Swail et al. (2005); Zalaquett, 2005) have found that Latino high school students’ aspirations to attend postsecondary institutions of learning have increased significantly in recent decades and are just as high (if not higher) than their majority White counterparts. Nonetheless, there remains a significant chasm between said aspirations and the actual attainment of a bachelor’s degree. Solorzano et al. (2005) captured the essence of this dichotomy when making the following compelling assertion:

Despite the...Supreme Court decision [Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003] declaring that in 25 years race will no longer be a significant factor in determining access to and graduation from college for students of color, our data and analysis indicate that, for Latinas/os, their race and ethnicity will continue to be strongly related to the quality of, and equality in, their educational conditions and outcomes throughout the educational pipeline (p. 286).
Secondary Persistence Issues

Many issues materialize that have historically inhibited Latinos from achieving the rudimentary goal of a high school diploma. According to the U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics (2005), Latinos have the highest high school dropout rate of any ethnicity or race, at twenty-six percent of the overall population. Sadly, many of these individuals end up incarcerated in our nation’s penal system. Through a LatCrit framework, Gonzalez and Portillos (2007) asserted that “policies that marginalize Latinas/os in the education arena are [often] responsible for their criminalization… Racist educational and criminal justice policy are clear culprits in this barrio-ization process that has been more interested in limiting, rather than moving forward, Latina/o educational and societal advancement” (p. 261).

Academic factors certainly come into mind first for most casual observers in explaining this conundrum. As Valenciana et al. (2006) found in their research, “Latinos are retained a grade at a rate that is three times higher than that of the overall population and Latinos are much more likely than other students to drop out of high school” (p. 82). Schuhmann (1992) looked beyond mere academics and posited that “this [dropout] risk is not necessarily academic in nature but is a complex phenomenon involving family, finances, and cultural and linguistic considerations” (p. 98). Niemann et al. (2000) radically posited that higher education may lead to alienation from ethnic communities and lead to educational/relationship goal conflict that might threaten traditional gender roles, potentially leading to the loss of a Latino marriage partner.
Ultimately, due to a myriad of factors, many students capable of success at the postsecondary level deny themselves the opportunity to achieve before the proverbial door even opens. As Stern (2009) conjectured in his study of Chicago schools, “some major disconnect happens that prevents many students from attending college, even those who are accepted” (p. 46-47). CRT scholar Steele (2009) offered a compelling explanation for this phenomenon that all PK-12 educators should heed when positing that students are likely to “disidentify” in domains (i.e., school) where aspirational cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) is low and, consequently, their prospects for success are poor:

The theory begins with an assumption: that to sustain school success one must be identified with school achievement in the sense of its being a part of one’s self-definition, a personal identity to which one is self-evaluatively accountable. This accountability – that good self-feelings depend in some part on good achievement – translates into sustained achievement motivation. For such an identification to form, this reasoning continues, one must perceive good prospects in the domain, that is, that one has the interests, skills, resources, and opportunities to prosper there, as well as that one belongs there, in the sense of being accepted and valued in the domain. If this relationship to schooling does not form or gets broken, achievement may suffer (Steele, 2009, p 163).

Postsecondary Persistence Issues

A compelling argument can be made that the intrinsic ambition for Latinos to pursue a postsecondary education is as strong as other ethnicities or races, but the attainment of such a degree nonetheless remains elusive for many. Statistics indicate Latino students do not attend institutions of higher learning at the same rates as other students in the United States (Auerbach, 2004), therefore remaining undereducated relative to the total population (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Although the numbers have increased steadily in the past thirty years, Fry (2002), Roderick et al. (2009), and Zalaquett (2005) have all observed that rising college enrollment for Latinos has not
subsequently translated into notable increases in graduation rates, despite Latinos often having average grades and achievement relative to peers of other ethnicities or races.

In his Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) study, Stern (2009) revealed this disparity between the aspirations and reality of postsecondary education: "Only 60 percent of Latino students who aspire to graduate from a four-year college do so, compared with 77 percent of African-Americans and 76 percent of Whites" (pp. 46). The lag in both college attendance and completion between Latinos and other racial and/or ethnic groups is equally alarming when considering that, in 2005, there was nearly a twenty percent discrepancy in estimated college completion rate between Latinos and their White counterparts (32.6 percent versus 52.7 percent), not to mention the three-to-one ratio in attainment of a Bachelor's degree or higher (10.5 percent to 34.3 percent). The discrepancy would appear to be more profound for Latinos of Mexican descent. As Garcia and Bayer (2005) noted, "Mexicans are significantly less likely than others to attain a college education, net of an array of individual, family, and high school background factors" (p. 529).

Why, as Stern (2009) posited, does this disconnect between ambition and reality occur so profoundly for many Latinos? Delayed postsecondary enrollment (most often due to financial constraints) would appear to be one factor. Swail et al. (2005) observed “a gap of 5.5 points between Latinos (77.6 percent) and White students (83.1 percent) exists with regard to entering postsecondary education within 7 months of high school graduation...44 percent of White students graduate within the four-year timeline of a traditional Bachelor's degree, but less than one quarter (23 percent) of Latino students are able to do the same” (p. I-4). For those Latinos who do make it to the postsecondary
realm, many are often more likely to work, to work longer hours to defray educational expenses, to attend part-time to mitigate college costs, to defer enrollment beyond traditional years, or to drop out altogether (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Of all of these factors, part-time enrollment is considered the highest risk factor for dropping out before completion of a degree (Fry, 2002). Many Latinos face a constant struggle in balancing family obligations and the requirements of a full-time college student (Lopez, 1995), thus often choosing postsecondary institutions based on proximity over fit (Carrington & Tomlin, 2000).

*Lack of Academic Preparation*

Of all the factors researchers have pondered to better understand issues of secondary and postsecondary academic persistence, one underlying theme emerges: many Latino students are simply not prepared for the academic rigor that lies ahead of them as they progress through the PK-16 pipeline, much less for the college experience that may clash with the culture of their homes and communities (Villegas & Lucas, 2004). As Ladson-Billings (2005) conjectured, “The one argument that rarely surfaces is that the dismal K-12 academic performance of students of color effectively cuts them off from postsecondary education opportunities” (p. 230).

How exactly is the educational pipeline severed for many of these students? Many blame the ethnocentric perspectives of *cultural deficiency* (Rolon, 2002) or *deficit thinking* (Kohli, 2009) that many schools implicitly employ, practices that define Latino students not by what gifts they bring to the school socioacademically, but rather by what they lack and do not bring to the table, thus perpetuating unwarranted blame and
“racialized stereotypes result[ing] in a culture of low expectations” (Kohli, p. 244). As Zalaquett (2006) posited, "Many educators still believe that Latina/o children are not interested in education or are incapable of succeeding in an academic setting and assume these are the reasons why they drop out from school” (p. 36). Valenzuela (1999) framed this perspective as subtractive schooling, the notion that schools can subtract resources from youth by dismissing Latino students’ schema of nature and minimizing (or altogether invalidating) the Latino student’s culture and language, instead focusing on assimilation into mainstream (i.e., White) educational structures to help “disadvantaged” students who are socioacademic “failures” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009; Yosso, 2005).

Regardless of the terminology, these practices can leave an indelible mark on many promising Latino students. As Stanton-Salazar (1997) posited, "the established social order... obligates teachers to act as purveyors of unequally distributed rewards and punishments, as gate-keepers and controllers of scarce resources… and as representatives, and often unwilling 'agents,' of a classist, sexist, and racialized societal order. Over time, such contradictory roles can produce resignation in teachers and ambivalence in students" (p. 18). Moreover, as Marx (2008) astutely noted, “Refusing to acknowledge this limitation of racial imbalance is evidence of color blindness and a preference for keeping one’s eyes shut to issues that can be addressed only once they are confronted” (p. 84). Schuhmann (1992) thus argued that “[future] language used to refer to ethnic minorities in the schools... must reject such terms and concepts of the past as remediation and language deficient” (p. 103). Further, as Stanton-Salazar posited, students should not have to acquire “decoding” strategies in order to deposit social capital in the form of funds of knowledge. The reality of contemporary PK-12 education,
however, is that students must have “either an explicit or implicit understanding that the rules governing social advancement, particularly the official assessment of 'having scholastic ability,' have much to do with acquiring and exhibiting the dominant discourse in social interaction…[They must] tap into the cultural logic of the dominant group…'make sense' of this cultural logic…[and] know how to role-play using the institution's 'identity kit'” (Stanton-Salazar, p. 13). Educators must thus engage in a “critical analysis of epistemologies that underlie curriculum and other school processes” (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003, p. 247) if they are ever to dig deeply into issues (such as ability grouping and tracking) that hamper the education of many “disadvantaged” students.

In the meantime, many Latino students are simply not ready to pursue a college education, much less the degree in PK-12 education that is the focus of the study at-hand. Many do not even get a fighting chance at rigorous coursework. Stanton-Salazar (2004) conjectured that “working-class students most often gain social capital from middle-class peers and adult agents in institutional contexts rich in social and cultural capital (e.g., advanced placement classes, extracurricular activities)” (p. 20). However, as Gonzalez et al. (2003) found, Latino students have been traditionally underrepresented in honors and AP courses but overrepresented in special education programs. Swail et al. (2005) quantified this assertion when they noted that “[f]orty-three percent of White students took courses in the top two quintiles of curriculum intensity, compared to 30 percent of Latino students. Conversely, 43 percent of Latino students took courses in the lower two quintiles of academic intensity compared to 39 percent of White students” (p. I-2). The issue becomes even more compounded in some states with large Latino populations. In

[35]
California, for example, Collatos et al. (2004) found that “almost 70 percent of all Latino… high school students are enrolled in classes that do not meet the minimum course requirements for in-state 4-year universities” (p. 165). The researcher can only wonder if Steele’s (2009) notion of stereotype threat may have played a role in swaying the vanguard of potential Latino educators away from education as a career due to the fact that few of their caliber have been able to have a sense of success or belonging in the domain of curriculum-intense classes.

For those Latinos who do progress to some degree of postsecondary education, many find they must take two steps back for every step forward. Roderick et al. (2009) found that only 20 percent of Latino high school graduates would be considered college-ready, compared with 40 percent of their White peers. Roderick et al. also noted that, “[i]n the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, 62 percent of African-Americans and 63 percent of Latinos who enrolled in college were placed into a developmental (that is, remedial) college course, compared with 36 percent of whites” (p. 189). More recent data from the college readiness standards for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) revealed that White high school students in that state were twice as likely as African-Americans and Latinos to graduate from high school ready to enroll in credit-bearing coursework at a traditional four-year college (Roderick et al.). As similar findings evolve elsewhere, one might ponder the long-term impact for future aspiring Latinos. Solorzano et al. (2005) captured this concern best when noting that “[t]his lack of achievement and attainment at each point in the educational pipeline has resulted in both a loss of talent to U.S. society and a loss of important role models for the next generation of Latina/o students who aspire to
educational and professional careers" (p. 277) To further drive their point home, Solorzano et al. presented some compelling data in their Latina/o Educational Pipeline. The numbers are telling: for every ten Latino students who enter our PK-16 system with the eager anticipation that all children bring to the table in their formative years, five will drop out of school altogether. Regardless of the factors at play, Solorzano et al. ultimately posited that only one out of every ten Latino students will make it through the pipeline intact.

Perceptions of PK-12 Education and the Formation of a Learner Identity

Negative Perceptions Regarding Status, Power, and Opportunity

One of the central focus questions for the research at hand was the impact that the "power of perception" might inadvertently have in the recruitment of qualified Latinos to the PK-12 education ranks, particularly those who have encountered some of the challenges to educational persistence previously mentioned. As Ladson-Billings (2005) stated, "because of increased opportunities, fewer people of color opt to teach… with accessibility to more lucrative professions such as law, medicine, and business" (p. 230). The noble contribution to the common good that most associate with education does not seem to be as strong a motivator as it once was. Ideally, as Rodriguez (2009) posited, "a career in teaching needs to be looked upon and advertised as a prestigious career option with opportunities for supportive interaction with other students and faculty" (p. 21). However, as Wilberschied and Dassier (1995) noted, “the incentive to choose a career in education is low…The intrinsic reward of helping children grow and develop is not as appealing as it was to previous generations. Public servants of all types have less prestige than in the past” (p. 3). Moreover, if the PK-12 experience was inherently oppressive for
a Latino student, one might argue, why would that individual consider a profession that "suppress[es] the educational opportunity for... youth and lead[s] them to a future that requires more effort to keep on current standing with other students, much less than trying to climb up the ladder of opportunity" (Swail et al., 2004, p. vii)?

Tellez (2004) further captured this conundrum in the following quote: "They (Latinos) are told that school is their only hope of "making it," but their immediate experience tells them otherwise. Their classroom needs repair, the books are old, and the teacher knows nothing of the lives of the students. After years of the same brutal routine, such promises for the future are hollow encouragement” (p. 43). Moreover, as Howard (2003) posited, "The placement of reluctant teachers in urban schools has the potential to return schools to the types of practices and attitudes that became commonplace in many newly desegregated schools following Brown v. Board of Education. Many white teachers, placed in [minority] schools where they did not want to work, 'served their time' and requested transfers at the first opportunity" (p. 152). Boyd et al. (2005), Hanushek et al. (2004), Scafidi et al. (2003), and Strunk and Robinson (2006) echoed this concern that teacher mobility (to another teaching position or out of the field altogether) is greater in schools serving high proportions of low-income and/or minority populations, thus populating such schools with educators who often barely meet the minimum standards for certification and, thus, competency.

The equation of education with a subpar salary and deplorable working conditions also sways many potential recruits of all races and ethnicities from the PK-12 ranks. As Avery (1997) et al. (1997) found in their survey of potential candidates, "the major reason for not selecting education as a profession was the belief that teachers do not make
much money” (p. 21). Although many candidates are often not informed enough about the lucrative salaries and benefits available in many districts across the nation (Avery), those salaries are nonetheless often not enough to work in schools or districts serving large minority populations. On this note, Hanushek et al. (2004) went so far as to posit that a school with 10 percent more [minority] students would require 10 percent higher salaries to neutralize the increased probability of teacher attrition. Hanushek et al. (2004) also found that salary increases were positively correlated to teacher mobility to suburban districts, thus providing a partial explanation for the exodus of many majority educators from urban schools once a better financial opportunity presents itself. Programs like Teach for America and Teacher Education for the Advancement of a Multicultural Society (TEAMS) may provide financial support to defray college costs and serve as an incentive for educators to work in urban schools (Nunez & Fernandez, 2006) at the onset of their careers, but these programs cannot reduce attrition down the road of highly-qualified educators from those institutions of learning. Accessibility to highly-qualified Latino educators to fill some of those positions would help, as Latino and African-American educators are often more likely to work in such urban settings for a lower salary so long as they have job satisfaction and security through somewhat stable working conditions and administrative support (Perry, 2005). Again, though, the fact remains that Latino educators remain grossly underrepresented relative to the Latino student population” (Hanushek et al., 2004, p. 351), making this a lofty idea at best.

Among the minute numbers of Latinos who eventually graduate from a four-year institution, researchers also support the notion that Latinos often do not consider education as a profession because of the negative experiences they had as students.
themselves. As Gordon (2005) noted, Latino frustration with misplacement in English as a Second Language (ELL), the inability to use one's primary language without feeling ostracized, the preoccupation with proving one's authenticity as Latino (not every Latino has a surname with a tilde or an accent mark), and the frustration with educators unprepared to work with these unique skill sets simply deters many from considering the profession. Some educators are unprepared (or unwilling) to acknowledge, as Lauerman (2000) posited, that language immersion for immigrant Latinos is often like "a fall from a cliff of familiarity into the ice-cold water of the unknown. Each day [can be] like a ride down a rapids. There [can be] little to hang on to - just a few words picked up here and there that gradually beco...me ...a lifeline of written and spoken English" (p. 17). On the other hand, a large majority of educators are well-intending individuals who nonetheless, “without an understanding of the complexity of ethnicities and how they are mediated through socioeconomic class, color, educational opportunities, and regionalism... are bound to mislabel and misinterpret their students, resulting in profound inequities” (Gordon, 2005, p. 85).

For those Latinos who do make it into the PK-12 education ranks, many often find that they are the sole Latino on a staff, perhaps in the entire district. In a study by Carrington and Tomlin (2000), some minority staff surveyed "expressed their apprehensions about being 'cold-shouldered' by teachers and socially isolated in the staff-room" (p. 149); similar findings were echoed in the works of Jones et al. (1997), Osler (1997), and Siraj-Blatchford (1991). It would be a fallacy to attribute every "cold shoulder" to bigotry, though. As Carrington and Tomlin went on to say of their subjects, "Racism can be experienced in the staff room as well as in the classroom...In three of the
cases the problem appeared to arise more from insensitivity on the part of the staff concerned than from overt racism..." (p. 151). Marx (2008) also noted similar insensitivity in a study of a school with a large Latino student population but only one Latino educator: “When two or more Latinos walked the hallways together or ate lunch together, observing teachers and administrators would lament that the students were segregating themselves” (p. 83). The unfortunate reality of contemporary American society is captured in the following passage from Stanton-Salazar (1997):

> The school system has always attempted to establish a buffer between its young people and the racism and all other 'isms' on the outside; yet such negative forces have always found a way to permeate the social world of the school… the social distance, distrust, and latent - and not-so-latent - antagonisms rooted in our stratified society can and do manifest themselves in subtle ways in the interpersonal relationships between minority children and adolescents and institutional agents (p. 20).

Moreover, as Taylor (2009) posited, “We are hobbled by the paradox of a largely White teaching staff whose practices, consciously or not, contribute to the racial achievement gap yet who are unable to see what they are doing” (p. 9). An increased minority staff can empower educators to hear viewpoints other than their own that might influence their decision-making processes beyond typical ethnocentric action while embracing the changing school population before them in many districts (Larson, 1997).

Thus begs the question - can a more diverse PK-12 education force nationally serve well to improve perceptions of the efficacy and potential of Latino youth for those of different races and ethnicities? On a similar note, can a more diverse education force undo deeply-rooted perceptions for many Latinos that schools cheat them (and other minority students) and exist mainly to serve the aspirations of the majority (Quiocho & Rios, 2000)? Multiple researchers imply a moral and sociological imperative for
educators to do so sooner rather than later for the betterment of all students. By perpetuating the image (and typical reality) of a PK-12 teacher in America as a white, middle-class female (Gomez et al., 2008; Gordon, 1994), American youth are "getting the message that the educational system is doing little to counteract the stratification that exists in the larger society…the absence of minority teachers conveys to school children that White people are better suited to hold positions of authority in society” (Villegas & Lucas, 2004, p. 72). Moreover, one might also argue that with this authority comes subordination in perceived intelligence that inadvertently perpetuates the stereotypes that hinder many Latinos from being considered as intellectual equals. As Branch (2001) elucidated best, "early-formed impressions about the exaggerated intelligence of European-American folk confirmed by their overabundance in the profession [as well as] erroneous assumptions about the intelligence of African-Americans, Latinos, and other people of color may be reinforced merely by their absence as teachers in the nation's classrooms" (p. 257).

Positive Perceptions Regarding Status, Power, and Opportunity

Given the myriad of negative perceptions regarding their own experiences as students, it comes as no surprise that many Latino educators consider the social justice implications regarding access to knowledge for their Latino students that may have been overlooked in their own schooling (Olivia & Staudt, 2003). Whereas they may have experienced subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) as a student, many Latino educators may see its polar opposite, additive schooling, as an equalizing means to institutional support (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) and academic networks those students may not have had before (Valenzuela). To this end, as Lauerman (2000) wrote in his profiles
of various recipients of the Rockefeller Fund Fellowships for Minority Students Entering the Teaching Profession, "many of them see teaching as a political activity" (p. 9) or see the personal, professional, and political dimensions of their work as one; subsequently, they may view themselves as "the bridge connecting immigrant parents, their assimilating children, and a beleaguered institution" (p. 9). Niemann et al. (2000) proposed that this be considered as a recruiting tool for higher education, noting that college “personnel may learn to frame educational pursuits as methods by which students can fight discrimination, enhance ethnic pride, and assist their communities when they return with their college degrees" (p. 59).

For many Latino educators, particularly those marginalized as learners themselves, education is an opportunity to impart what Nunez and Fernandez (2006) described as the Youth Empowerment Approach (YEA), a model that "involves students in a problem posing, creative planning, action, reflection cycle that encourages intelligent engagement with social problems" (p. 52). Many Latino educators cite a lack of exposure themselves to pedagogical strategies that maintain a spotlight on multiculturalism, social justice, and youth empowerment (Nunez & Fernandez). Therefore, it is often interesting to see that what they consider to be student strengths and assets to the classroom are often perceived as impediments by their majority peers, many of whom could reduce stereotype threat in their own classrooms by: emphasizing optimistic educator-student relationships, challenge over remediation, stressing the expandability of intelligence, affirming domain belongingness, valuing multiple perspectives, role models, nonjudgmental responsiveness, and building self-efficacy (Steele, 2009).
For example, the review of literature previously alluded to the relegation of many English Language Learners to remedial or special education status (Collatos et al., 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2003; Roderick et al., 2009; Schuhmann, 1992; Swail et al., 2005). As Lauerman (2000) posited, though, "Many studies have shown that bilingual education not only raises the self-esteem of non-English speakers; it also improves their fluency in written and spoken English. A second language does not crowd English out of a child's head. On the contrary, fluency in one language creates a fertile bed in which other languages can take root and prosper. When students take pride in their native tongue, they can also help other students to learn that language" (p. 43). Ultimately, as Gardella et al. (2005) conjectured, it is a moral imperative for "[e]ducators from various backgrounds [to] reach out to... Latino students in relationships that affirm such cultural values as familismo (importance of family), personalismo (the preference for personal over impersonal relational styles), conflanza (trust), respeto (mutual respect), and dignidad (care for the dignity of each person)" (p. 42). Romero (2009) expanded on this with the notion of authentic caring, or practices that liberate and move students “toward realizing their humanity through self, familial, and community critical reflections” (p. 221).

**Forming an Educator Identity - Does a "Familiar Face" Matter?**

As idealistic at Gardella et. al (2005) may sound, the reality of PK-12 education suggests that educators from various backgrounds may not be able to reach out culturally (and, subsequently, academically) to Latino students in a way a fellow educator of Latino origin could. Gomez et al. (2008) captured this dilemma in an interview with a prospective Latino educator:

They [White educators] haven’t had to deal with issues of language or culture and those are the kind of things Latino students deal with – how they’re viewed in a
The question for the next phase of research then presents itself: does the race or ethnicity of an educator affect student perceptions of the profession regarding status, power, and opportunity in a positive or negative manner? Moreover, can exposure to educators of various races and ethnicities increase the cultural capital (Anderson, 1996; Enwefa et al., 2002; Valenciana et al., 2006) that can prevent Latino students from experiencing diminished levels of aspiration or from feeling their educational endeavors are driven by majority values (Kane & Orsini, 2002)? In addition, can Latino educators serve as important role models to non-Latino students and their preconceived (and often stereotypical) notions of what Latinos can achieve (Kane & Orsini)?

An affirmative response to the previous question can be argued for students of all races and ethnicities. As Wilberschied and Dassier (1995) stated, "the perspective and life experience of the minority teacher help to enrich the experience of mainstream students and educators. Those students and faculty alike may reformulate their perceptions of many aspects of life and society" (p. 4). Villegas and Lucas (2004) echoed this, noting the presence of minorities in professional roles "challenges the myth of racial/ethnic inferiority that many White youngsters internalize about people of color" (p. 73). Unfortunately, many shortsighted individuals in today's society are quick to dismiss such diversity as an attempt by public education to impose other presupposed undesirable cultural values on one's children. As Carrington and Tomlin (2000) sadly observed, "Because of the continuing salience of racial and ethnic divisions in society, their actions will be monitored assiduously by children whose ethnicity may be different from their
own” (p. 150). However, as Gordon (2005) articulated best, "this has nothing to do with race-matched teaching; it has everything to do with bringing a variety of committees and capable people together whose life experiences enable us to better understand the complexity of issues facing young people and their families today” (p. 30).

For Latino students in particular, the research suggests that a familiar face can open pipelines of positive perception and ambition that may have been previously untapped. Many researchers (Gomez et al., 2008; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Marx, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999) believe one answer to the estrangement of many Latino youth from school lies in emulating their ethnic, cultural, and language background in well-trained educators. One of the primary foundations for this belief is the fact that there are often few role models for Latinos to serve as mentors and advocates (Schuhmann, 1992) and ease the cultural conflict that often exists between school and home (Zurita, 2005). As Stern (2009) noted, for those Latino students in the urban core in particular, "the college-educated teacher Latinos encounter may be the only college-educated person they're going to meet in a ten-mile radius" (p. 47). Latinos and other minorities "need to see that their own people, from their own background, are there...[to] show them what they can do" (Carrington & Tomlin, 2000, p. 145) and, in turn, to boost their confidence and enthusiasm for learning (Dee, 2004). The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) echoed this argument, noting that minority students tend to have higher academic, personal, and social performance when taught by teachers from their own ethnic groups.

The presence of a familiar face has implications for future recruitment into the PK-12 education ranks. If a student rarely sees individuals who look like oneself in
professional roles in their schools, the potential for consideration of education as profession is likely to be significantly reduced (Howard, 2003). Moreover, as alluded to earlier, the forging of a social and cultural identity as a Latino learner has an undeniable impact on how Latino educators regard their role (Quirocho & Rios, 2000); as Kohli (2009) conjectured, “Every child deserves to have an education where their cultural identity is acknowledged and respected. School staff must be culturally sensitive in order to cultivate and nurture positive self-images of their students” (p. 245). As a result of the negative perceptions of the profession they may have formed as students themselves, "prospective teachers of color also may be more and aware than their white counterparts of unjust schooling practices experienced by...people of color, may be more likely to hold dimensions of a social consciousness and to take responsibility for transforming schools and society, and be more aware of how institutions...such as schools operate to maintain a system of unequal outcomes often correlates with students' ethnic background and social class" (Gomez et al., 2008, p. 268). In a study of twenty-six teachers at school, one of whom was Latino and the others of whom were White, Marx (2008) noted a significant difference in responses in that the sole Latino teacher “showed he cared and had high expectations without unduly giving ‘pointed attention’ to Latino students, better allowing them to ‘blend in’” (p. 82).

Implications for PK-12 Latino Recruitment

Regardless of the factors that are contributing to the low numbers of Latinos entering the PK-12 education ranks (much less postsecondary education of any kind), a need clearly exists for an education force that better mirrors the racial and ethnic diversity of its students. Ramirez (2009) went so far as to describe this situation as a professional
an epidemic, a situation “which requires states, school districts, junior colleges, and all institutions where teacher credentials are recommended to take active measures to increase the number of ethnic minorities entering the teaching profession” (p. 19). The final section of the review of literature thus explores implications for bolstering the recruitment of highly qualified Latino educators to fill vacancies across the country, irrespective of the school’s location or demographic.

Need for Early Identification of Educator Candidates

In a recent survey of students at a California high school that was 93 percent Latino, Rodriguez (2009) found that 39 percent of those surveyed saw teaching as a “job I would like to do if I can’t do something else: (p. 19). Conversely, 42 percent responded affirmatively to the statement, “No way, I wouldn’t want to teach” (p. 19). Such results beg further study to the rationale behind these students’ choices. Many researchers argue that we simply need to do a better job of educating young people that education can be a career that “fits their skill sets, interests, and future goals” (Richardson & Watt, 2005, p. 487). Towards this end, Nunez and Fernandez (2006) espoused that “[o]utreach is critical to recruit the diverse population[s] we support, including those who might not necessarily see themselves reflected in the teaching position or might not think they have the means to do it" (p. 51). The sad reality, however, for many future educators in teacher education programs today is they had not expressed a desire to teach while in high school (Hanushek & Pace, 1995), presumably because that desire was cultivated to little or no degree. Multiple researchers thus espouse that we should “develop programs [that] reach out to minorities still in school, offering encouragement and incentives to enter the teaching profession” (Peterson & Nadler, 2009, p. 58) in order to explore alternative
means to understanding Latino students' motivations in order to cultivate interest in education (Oliva & Staudt, 2003) and do a better job of recruiting early career deciders, especially minority populations, to teacher training programs” (Hutchinson & Johnson, 1994, p. 66). In terms of when to begin, one could argue that preparation for the possibility of a career in education should begin well before one’s high school years (Schuhmann, 1992; Perry, 2005).

PK-12 schools and districts need not hoe this road alone. Castro (1989) suggested partnerships between PK-12 districts and higher education that not only identify potential teaching candidates in their formative years, but also monitor their academic performance to ensure that this goal is an attainable one in the future. Such programs have already begun in states with large minority populations. The Puente project in California, for example, has served well to instill in many minority Puente students a deep commitment to pursuing higher education (Moreno, 2002) by providing them bridges (i.e., puente) along their pathway to college (and beyond, in some cases) through family involvement, culturally enriched teaching, counseling, mentoring, and peer support (Cooper, 2002). Through supportive (versus patronizing) guidance and interpersonal strategies that extend beyond intellectual development and attend to social, emotional, and inner life skills (Rendon, 2002), Puente students appear to be more likely to graduate than academically gifted non-Puente students of Latino descent (Gandara, 2002). Similar stories of increased persistence on the part of Latino students can be found in the Futures minority cohort mentoring program in California (Collatos et al., 2004) and the GEAR UP program in Texas (Weiher et al., 2006). All three programs expose Latino students of similar ambitions to one another in order to reduce intragroup achievement stress (Lopez,
2005) and require modest, local, and inexpensive changes to the current system that could significantly bolster Latino participation and achievement in postsecondary education (Weiher et al.). Moreover, all three programs provide both students and parents with a larger toolkit, if you will, to improve persistence levels across the PK-16 spectrum.

*Increased Social Capital for Both Students and Parents*

Therefore, identification of potential educators in their formative years is all for naught if those candidates do not possess the *institutional support* (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) and instrumental knowledge (Auerbach, 2004) needed to acculturate them smoothly from the transition from high school to college (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007). As Stern (2009) conjectured, Latinos (particularly first-generation college students) often lack the social capital necessary to navigate the complex waters of college admission, financial aid, and the like, largely because the *institutional agents* in their life did not provide them adequate navigational cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) via resources about school programs, academic tutoring and mentoring, or assistance with career decision making and college admission, thus denying the opportunity for social capital to replicate itself in some form (Stanton-Salazar).

Matters become compounded when parents of first-generation Latino college students, whom they are especially dependent upon for making educational plans and decisions (Roderick et al., 2009), lack the social capital to offer much (if any) assistance in the process of navigating the many facets of the college pathway (Roderick et al.; Stern, 2009; Zurita, 2005). As Swail et al. (2005) posited, "Latino students [are] much less likely to have a parent with an earned educational credential at any level than White students (p. I-1). Unfortunately, in such situations, Latino students "frequently make all
of the decisions about their educational future themselves, with little adult guidance” (Zalaquett, 2006, p. 39), particularly on the part of the institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar) charged with helping them (e.g., counselors, admissions officers, etc.). The situation becomes even more pronounced for immigrant Latino students who are "accustomed to managing their own school decisions, just as they [are] accustomed to serving as cultural brokers for immigrant parents" (Auerbach, 2006, p. 285).

A need thus exists, as Roderick et al. (2009) espoused, for “[d]istricts and schools [to] combine the resources and support to increase capacity within schools with the signals and incentives that reinforce both student and teacher behaviors that build college readiness” (p. 203). Doing so, one could argue, would serve well to validate potential students’ academic self-concept and proactively identify ways to encourage the development of an optimistic outlook and positive self-concept (Hernandez, 2000) that, in turn, might improve postsecondary Latino persistence and graduation rates. Moreover, by expanding resources and supports beyond the Latino student to his or her family, school officials are, in essence, helping parents help their children increase their social capital, as "parents might realize the limits of their support and perceive the necessity for others adults to become involved in their children's lives" (Sanchez et al., 2005, p. 62). In turn, they are cultivating the potential for utilization of instrumental action (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) for previously marginalized individuals (both students and parents) to shape a proacademic identity (Stanton-Salazar, 2004) to "convert their social capital into institutional support for the express purpose of reaching certain goals" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 10); for example, to ensure that their son or daughter might be the first to graduate from college.
Such programs, however, are not guaranteed panaceas for a skeptical audience such as that of the marginalized Latino. As Gandara and Bial (1999), cautioned, social capital is a complex and cumulative process that cannot be easily transmitted by “token” programs. For authentic expansion of social capital to occur, authentic programs for increased parental communication, participation, and involvement (Perry, 2005) such as the Futures and Families outreach program in California much take hold nationwide. As Auerbach (2004) noted, this program "provided a forum where issues that disproportionately affect families of color could be openly discussed, [thus] enhancing families' awareness of barriers to access as well as strategies for overcoming and protesting them” (p. 137). Further, the development of social capital for students and parents to bolster college readiness must, as Saunders and Serna (2004) posited, “foster spaces for critique and resistance to develop… the critical consciousness…. necessary to disrupt prevailing patterns of social reproduction within postsecondary institutions” (p. 161). Efforts to cultivate social capital for Latino students and parents must also respect the cultural capital (Anderson, 1996; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Enwefa et al., 2002; Valenciana et al., 2006) they bring to the table as well as acknowledge the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) these individuals bring to the table – that is, the knowledge, skills, and contacts needed to resist oppression that students of color acquire in their families and communities and bring, unrecognized, to schools. Ultimately, acceptance of programs such as those previously mentioned will increased commensurately as the volume of the social capital possessed increases with the size of the network of connections individuals can mobilize (Bourdieu, 1986).
Beyond building trust, the fostering of supportive relationships and nurturing of familial cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) with both students and parents can "combine the powerful influence of loving, supportive parents and the practical support of non-parent adults, siblings, and peers, so that caring is coupled with critical informational support" (Sanchez et al., 2006, p. 64). The typical Latino parent may have strong college aspirations for one's offspring, but nonetheless may not be able to invest in a child's education in the completion of a college admissions application or a scholarship form (Stern, 2009). In place of such instrumental knowledge (Auerbach, 2004), however, Auerbach (2006) posited that "moral support for education is the foundation - perhaps the essence - of how Latino parents [particularly immigrants]...participate in their children's schools...they speak in terms of apoyo (support) rather than involvement in the mainstream sense" (p. 276). Such moral support is at the heart of the notion of familismo, or the value of family, to provide the critical support system or network that can foster success and resiliency for Latino students (Fry, 2002; Gardella et al., 2005). At the PK-12 level, school officials can use familismo "to increase their effectiveness in creating a culture of success and increas[ing] the number of Latina/o students applying, attending, and completing degrees in higher education" (Zalaquett, 2006, p. 44). Once there, college leaders should tap into these robust support networks (Ashburn, 2007) through programs that might enhance the success of Latino college students (Ashburn). Teacher education leaders must also embrace these networks, perhaps even going so far as to include consultations with the families of students who have yet to declare a major (Branch, 2001). Family can play a key role in choosing or rejecting a profession (Schuhmann, 1992). According to Lauerman (2000), many minority parents now discourage their
offspring from becoming educators, now that other professions are open to minorities that were not in the not-so-distant past.

*Increased Enrollment in Four-Year versus Two-Year Institutions*

An added difficulty in recruitment of potential Latino educator candidates is the fact that "fewer than half of Latino students who aspired to attain a four-year degree applied to at least one four-year college" (Roderick et al., 2009, p. 198), opting instead for enrollment at the local community college as their first (and perhaps only) step on the postsecondary journey. Solorzano et al. (2005) noted that, in spite of a spike in college enrollment that year, 78 percent of the growth occurred at two-year colleges. In that same year, according to the U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Education Statistics (2005), 15 percent of those enrolled in two-year colleges were Latino, whereas 6 percent in four-year institutions were Latino. For many of those enrolled in two-year colleges, it would appear that the terminus of their educational aspirations would occur there. According to the findings of Swail et al. (2004), "73 percent of Latinos aspired to postsecondary education, but only 55 percent - a full 20 percent lower than the national average - aspired to a B.A. The aspirations of Latino students in the U.S. were the lowest of any group in [their] analysis" (p. iv).

It would appear then, as Swail et al. (2005) espoused, that "Latinos seeking a four-year degree are somewhat disserviced by beginning at a two-year institution" (p. III-3). For those wanting to pursue a four-year degree in a professional program (such as teacher education), "solid advising must take place about postsecondary education and the type of institutions students and families should consider" (Swail et al., p. III-3). Successful links from the community college to the traditional university have begun to
crop up in various places across the country. For example, the *Comenzamos* ("Let's begin!") program in Connecticut has served well as a successful "transition from outsider to insider status in higher education" (Gardella et al., 2005, p. 47). Flores et al. (2007) also posed the need for more cost-effective options for postsecondary education for Latinos remiss to pursue a four-year degree because of the inordinate amount of debt they will accrue. The creation of such options will ultimately require a “collaboration between community colleges and universities… in addressing the current teacher shortage and in assuring retention and success of teacher candidates” (Flores et al., p. 54), as well as bridging institutes, mentoring, and parental involvement to ease the academic assimilation of Latino college students into the postsecondary milieu (Flores et al.).

**Reassessment of Teacher Admission and Certification Exams**

Standardized tests have proven to be the bane of existence for many Latino students progressing through the educational pipeline. High school exit examinations, for example, are now being linked with greater high school dropout rates (Roderick et al., 2009). For those Latino students who do make the successful leap to a four-year college and a teacher training program, many find themselves facing yet another standardized hurdle in the form of teacher certification exams that screen out candidates for reasons often not directly related to teacher effectiveness, thus inhibiting the supply of teachers by as many as four percentage points versus states who do not require a state certification exam (Hanushek & Pace, 1995).

For those eager to discount the possibility of cultural bias or overprediction of initial skills (Steele, 2009) in these exams, consider the following - failure rates on teacher certification exams for minorities have been statistically proven to be two to ten
times higher than those for whites (Schuhmann, 1992). Ultimately, standardized tests like the PRAXIS not only provide an insufficient measure of the academic capabilities of minorities (Justiz & Kameen, 1988), but they also “systematically” (emphasis in original) produce inequalities in American society, whether or not these policies and practices are intentional on the part of individuals who maintain them” (Bennett et al., 2006, p. 532). Moreover, such high-stakes testing “often results in teacher candidates following a remediation track rather than a college degree track” (Flores et al., 2007, p. 58), thus compelling many of these candidates to opt for career paths that are more lucrative financially, less stressful, and provide better working conditions (Branch, 2001).

Given the fact that tests like the PRAXIS are often the single measure by which nontraditional Latino students might seek alternative certification (as is the case in Missouri), the implications for bolstering the number of highly-qualified Latinos in PK-12 education are significant. As Peterson and Nadler (2009) noted, "In 14 states, the percentage minority for those alternatively certificated exceeds by a wide margin the percentage minority of the state's teaching force as a whole" (p. 59). For defenders of standardized tests such as the PRAXIS to determine entry into the field in many states, Peterson and Nadler further posited that "[t]eachers learn to teach by practicing the craft...both the teaching shortage and the paucity of minority teachers can be alleviated by opening the classroom door to all college graduates, not just to those who have taken the required courses associated with state certification" (p. 58). Peterson and Nadler went on to suggest that a correlation between increased minority teachers and student learning exists where avenues to genuine alternative certification have already been opened.
Field Placement of Latino Candidates into Critical Learning Settings

Many veteran teachers, regardless of race or ethnicity, have horror stories to proffer a willing ear regarding student teaching placements that simply did not fit them personally or professionally. Although placement options are limited in some areas due to the dearth of diverse districts surrounding a college, placement officials in teacher education programs throughout the country must nonetheless be sure to "take into account teacher candidates' language skills and carefully place them and monitor what is being asked of them in both diverse, multiple language rich placements and in schools with majority monolingual English speakers" (Gomez et al., 2008, p. 280). Moreover, to counter potential prejudice and discrimination in field experiences, according to Gomez et al., placement officials must "take into account how students individually are experiencing their peers, field placements, the course materials, and/or relationships among these [components]" (p. 281).

Gomez et al. (2008) also addressed the reciprocal need for critical reflection in placement when noting that "[u]niversity supervisors and course teachers as well as cooperating teachers in the public schools require critical reflection on their identities as teacher educators and how they live out their ideals. So, too, do teacher candidates require such critical reflection on their identities and the implications of these for their classrooms" (p. 281). This does not automatically suggest that Latino educators should be placed by default in schools with higher proportions of Latino students. As Strunk and Robinson (2006) cautioned, "Teachers may derive greater satisfaction from educating students who reflect their own racial identity. Yet a staff whose racial composition reflects one's own racial identity may proxy for other characteristics undesirable to the
teacher and thus does not necessarily reflect distaste for colleagues of one's own racial/ethnic group” (p. 91).

Kohli (2009) made a salient argument when positing, “Teachers of color are often already aware of the trauma that racism can cause students. It is important for teacher preparation programs to tap into this knowledge and recognize it as a strength” (p. 236). However, instead of focusing on matching field placements primarily by similarities in race or ethnicity, placement officials would be prudent to acknowledge the social justice mentality of many minority students and make their placements where "students have the opportunity to practice the multiculturalism and social justice activities that are advocated in their classes" (Gomez et al., 2008, p. 281) and in many of their own lives. In a study of the Futures college access and intervention program, Saunders and Serna (2004) found that many of the participants "felt a social responsibility toward underrepresented youth" (p. 155). Multiple researchers have elucidated upon this notion. Perry (2005) found that "[t]he top recruitment initiatives for African American and [Latino] candidates are humanistic factors: contribution to humanity and helping young people" (p. iv). In his analysis of the Rockefeller Fund Fellowships for Minority Students Entering the Teaching Profession, Lauermann (2000) found the Fellows "attributed their success to their abilities to understand the students they teach - relating, analyzing, helping, developing, and believing in each child" (p. 63). The University of Indiana - Bloomington even went so far in the past decade as to create the pioneering Project TEAM: Transformative Education Achievement Model, a program predicated on "strengthening social justice through education by engaging ethnic minority students to examine questions of justice in education in education, multicultural teaching, mutual
inquiry, leadership, and professional development” (Rodriguez, 2009, p. 21). Sadly, although this program served well to develop a critically-minded service mentality in teachers (Nunez & Fernandez, 2006) and a positive sense of community for its students, it was nonetheless halted due to financial constraints (Rodriguez).

**Authentic Commitment to Diversity**

Ultimately, the steps taken by teacher education programs and prospective employers across the nation to bolster recruitment of highly-qualified Latinos into PK-12 education must be authentic if they are ever to become systemic in nature. It is dangerous logic, as Yosso (2005) cautioned, for educators to assume that outsiders need to conform to their purportedly effective and equitable system. Furthermore, as Phillips (1993) cautioned, assurances need to be genuine as opposed to temporary solutions with fleeting results; otherwise, many Latino youth will simply "choose other professions that provide the personal and professional validation they seek" (Branch, 2001, p. 260). Kohli (2009) further posited that “[t]eacher preparation programs should be a place where teachers can develop awareness and gain strategies to intervene on racial inequity in the classroom. To do so, however, these programs must also challenge their own racial biases” (p. 248).

They must recognize that Latino college students are "not culturally deficient or deprived, but may actually possess cultural resources and assets that sustain and foster positive dispositions among individuals” (Villapando, 2003, p. 621). Sadly, Solorzano et al. (2005) addressed the reality that, "within the current sociopolitical climate of anti-affirmative action, anti-immigration, and xenophobia, we have seen college administrators pursue a policy of retrenchment when it comes to recognizing the salience of race/ethnicity in education and the impact of racism on their campus" (p. 288).
By ignoring the cultural distinctiveness of Latino students, critically analyzing the social inequities about which many are concerned (Branch), and repudiating the cultural wealth (Villalpando & Solorzano, 2005) and cultural capital (Anderson, 1998; Stanton-Salazar, 1997) that Latinos draw from in their college education, collegiate retention efforts often overlook the importance of these assets in fomenting academic success (Villalpando, 2002). As Stanton-Salazar noted, "the radical transformation of the dominant 'culture of power' - at least within the school - must be an integral feature of any network-oriented intervention, and minority youth and their agents must equally and jointly participate in this necessary transformation" (p. 34). Such transformation requires what Lin (2001) termed heterophilous interactions with people unlike the institutional agent (Stanton-Salazar); such efforts ultimately “demand effort, as the interacting partners, aware of the inequality in differential command over resources… need to assess each other’s willingness to engage in exchange...both partners in a heterophilous interaction have to make a greater effort in forging the interaction than those in a homophilous interaction. Heterophilous interactions therefore are relatively less likely to occur" (p. 47).

It is thus imperative for institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) in postsecondary institutions to embrace the tenets of CRT and LatCrit in order cultivate social capital through institutional support (Stanton-Salazar) for Latino students, both potential and realized. As Solorzano et al. (2005) espoused, “[a]lthough colleges clearly provide economic, social, political, and other benefits to the small trickle of Latina/o college graduates who can navigate them successfully, these post-secondary institutions also exercise a significant degree of oppression by sustaining a campus culture and
climate that marginalizes, devalues, and silences these students” (p. 287). If we are ever to end this silence for good, we must adapt a CRT and LatCrit framework that will “expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. We will have to take bold and sometimes unpopular positions…We will have to adopt a position of consistently swimming against the current” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 33).

PK-16 Leadership Implications

PK-16 educational leaders must thus be increasingly cognizant of the role individual values play as a primary catalyst for organizational actions that either cultivate or neglect an authentic commitment to diversity. Within his arenas of value action, Begley (1999) posited a metaphorical onion “to illustrate the arenas where valuation processes occur and the dynamics among these distinct arenas” (p. 56). At the core of the onion is the self, where personal values are the leader’s initial source for guidance, however laden they may be with biases or value conflicts that may adversely affect their judgment. Ethical leaders must have the intestinal fortitude to critically examine their own biases and imperfections (Brown, 2004). Moreover, Larson and Ovando (2001) reminded us that it is not ethically prudent to adopt “difference-blind institutionalism” (p. 67) in our schools. Simply put, it is an egregious oversight to impose homogenizing and stifling influences on increasingly diverse student populations. All students are not inherently the same; it is a fallacy of logic to treat them as such.

The second and third layers of Begley’s (1999) metaphorical onion concern the group, which would include professional subordinates under the leader’s wing and tutelage, and the organization of the school or district itself. Ethical leaders cannot allow those within the group and organization to allow their insulated individual values and
biases to foment unhealthy conflict with the community they serve, either intentionally or inadvertently due to their ignorance of the diversity around them. Ethical leaders also cannot fall into the comfort trap that Martin (2002) coined the “uniqueness paradox” (p. 63). Organizations like to believe they are inherently different from others, but such qualities can often be readily found elsewhere. Shields (2004) thus asserted the need for transformative leadership deeply rooted in moral and ethical values for educational leaders to examine their existing organizational culture in a manner which “critique[s] the ways… our present practices marginalize some students…and privilege others – both overtly and through our silences” (p. 127).

Part of that process for ethical leaders must be the development of what Shields (2004) termed moral dialogue, where “[d]ifference becomes not something to fear, or to avoid, but part of the rich fabric of human existence with which we interact on a daily basis” (p. 116) Such dialogue is paramount to articulating, assimilating, and redefining the values of the self, group, and organization with the final two layers of Begley’s (1999) onion: the community and the culture. As Smith and Reynolds (1998) wrote, “Leaders who wish to strengthen or change institutional culture must seize all opportunities to open up discussion of the institution’s essential values and bring to these occasions a strong sense of which values they believe must be preserved or nurtured” (p. 29). Ethical leaders cannot allow individual or group value conflicts and biases to discount the cultural capital (Anderson, 1998) that parents, their children, and the surrounding community bring to the table. On the contrary, they must work toward “the collaborative reconstruction of a new social ground” (Anderson, p. 592) if they are ever to “dismantle oppressive structures and mechanisms prevalent both in education and
society” (Brown, 2004, p. 96). Morgan (2006) elucidated on this notion when noting the following: “One of the interesting aspects of culture is that it creates a form of ‘blindness’ and ethnocentrism… There is considerable value in adopting the standpoint of the cultural stranger because, in becoming aware of the stranger’s point of view, we can see our own in a refreshingly new perspective” (p. 125). Bolman and Deal (2003) echoed this sentiment, noting that “[c]ulture is both a product and a process. As a product, it embodies accumulated wisdom from those who came before us. As a process, it is constantly renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves” (p. 244).

A final lens to frame an authentic approach to diversity can be found in Morgan’s (2006) metaphor of organizations as *instruments of domination*, a metaphor that “forces us to recognize that domination may be intrinsic to the way we organize and not just an unintended side effect” (Morgan, p. 330). Many attend (or work) in schools where historically marginalized populations feel utterly powerless, as if they are “no more than semiautonomous pawns moving themselves around in a game where they can learn to understand the rules but have no power to change them” (Morgan, p. 191). PK-16 educational leaders must be explicitly aware of the cultural politics (Anderson, 1996) within their organizations if we are ever to progress beyond “the myriad ways that social institutions maintain a status quo that benefits some while silencing, marginalizing, and pathologizing those voices that challenge its legitimacy” (Anderson, p. 958).
Summary

The review of literature focused on four major topics: persistence issues in educational attainment, perceptions of PK-12 education and the formation of a learner identity, implications for PK-16 Latino recruitment, and PK-16 leadership implications. The following components were carefully researched: 1) the dichotomous relationship between growth of the Latino population and the number of Latino educators in the PK-12 milieu; 2) secondary and postsecondary persistence issues that can derail graduation from high school, much less college; 3) the enduring power of negative and positive perceptions of PK-12 education regarding equal access to status, power, and opportunity; 4) the effect of a "familiar face" on Latino educational persistence; 5) the need for postsecondary schools of education to identify potential educators early and provide them and their families with the social capital necessary to thrive at a traditional four-year university; and 6) an authentic commitment to diversity in the education ranks by PK-16 transformative leaders willing to reflect on both personal and institutional values that may stifle efforts to cultivate a new generation of PK-12 educators who can reflect a clearer image of the population they are charged to serve.

These components were analyzed from a dual lens of critical race/Latino critical theory as well as social capital theory to frame the need to shift the dynamic in which the majority of Latino students are educated from subtractive schooling to additive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999). Otherwise, future potential Latino educators may pursue other professions simply because they fear the frustrations they may have once felt as students themselves towards certain aspects of their PK-12 schooling experience might manifest themselves in their own practices, thus perpetuating the vicious circle that precluded so
many of their ethnic peers (and perhaps themselves at some point along the educational pipeline) from success.

As Solorzano and Bernal (2001) posited, The United States has "a rich historical legacy that includes active struggles to gain equal access to quality education" (p. 310). For generations, majoritarian cultural norms (Huber et al., 2008) have been imposed on Latino students, compelling them to assimilate to the dominant ideology by shedding the unique cultural and social capital they may have brought to the table and creating "stressful borders and institutional barriers" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 26) in the process that stifle acceptance and value of their personal identity in an educational domain (Steele, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative, as Stanton-Salazar (2004) espoused, "for the researcher... to find [transformative] ways of neutralizing or minimizing this conflict within [schools], and to assist the individual, the peer group, and/or the larger peer community in developing empowering ways to participate in their multiple and culturally disparate worlds - not only for... individual educational success, but also as a means for preparing to become an effective agent of social change and social justice" (p. 34).

Chapter Three will delineate the research design and methodology of the study. Included in the discussion will be a rationale for employing a collective case study research design for this study. Chapter Four will analyze the data collected. Finally, the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research will be presented in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Solorzano and Yosso (2001) posited that CRT/LatCrit studies pose a unique methodological intersection between the emancipatory tenets of critical theory and the need for theoretical sensitivity. This paradox is captured profoundly in their following analogy to the 1997 movie *Amistad*:

In order to defend the freedom of a group of kidnapped African slaves in a U.S. court of law, John Quincy Adams first searches for the life history of his eventual clients. He asks their advisor, ‘What is their story, by the way?’ After being given a pat answer as to the geographical place they were from, Adams repeats his question, ‘No, what is their story?’ He admonishes the advisor, stating, ‘You and this young so-called lawyer have proven you know what they are, they’re Africans, congratulations. What you don’t know and as far as I can tell haven’t found in the least to discover is who they are…’ (p. 477).

The researcher thus sought to develop a research design and methodology that would effectively navigate through this paradox while seeking to generate socially transformative knowledge that might address and perhaps ameliorate (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009) PK-12 institutional conditions that continue to hamper the accumulation of social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) for potential PK-12 Latino educators. Accordingly, included in Chapter Three are a statement of the research questions, the rationale for use of a collective case study approach, and the limitations therein. Also included are a description of design controls, the participants, a discussion of the data collection and instrumentation, procedures of data analysis, and a brief summary.
Research Questions

Researchers should allow the literature review to direct the identification of viable and relevant research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006) by using it "deductively as a framework for the research questions or hypotheses" (Creswell, 2003, p. 32) while having a dialogue with the literature (Merriam, 1998) to ascertain whether or not the proposed research will add to the existing canon on the subject. The following research questions were thus gleaned from the literature review to guide the present study:

1) What are the perceptions of PK-12 educators of Latino descent regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how might those perceptions have impeded or facilitated educational aspiration and persistence?

2) Do Latino educators believe that their presence in PK-12 educational institutions can further mitigate negative perceptions of the efficacy and potential of Latino youth not only for themselves, but also for those of different races and ethnicities?

3) How can PK-16 educational leaders inform and implement transformational strategies to bolster future recruitment of Latino educators?

Rationale for Use of a Critical Collective Case Study

Before deciding on a qualitative approach, the researcher weighed the benefits and the drawbacks as opposed to a critical quantitative (Stage, 2007) or mixed methods approach. Critical quantitative research would have deliberately required the researcher to be more objective and linear than one might be within the qualitative paradigm. However, the CRT/LatCrit qualitative researcher implicitly aspires "to identify, analyze,
and transform those structural and cultural aspects...that maintain the marginal position and subordination of [people of color]" (Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998, p. 212). One must therefore be cognizant that the process is interactive and iterative in nature and, therefore, not subject to linear development strategies (Merriam, 1998). A researcher cannot fully grasp the core of the problem until fully cognizant of the factors and variables that may influence results (Creswell, 2003).

Conversely, a mixed methods approach was considered that would have included the critical quantitative approach (Stage, 2007). Such an approach would have allowed the use of quantitative data (e.g., survey results) to "call into question models, assumptions, and measures traditionally made under the positivist perspective" (p. 9) so as "to forge challenges, illuminate conflict, and develop critique...in an effort to move theory, knowledge, and policy to a higher plane" (p. 8). Critical quantitative researchers seek not only mere statistical significance to support or refute their hypotheses, but implicitly desire the data to "reveal inequities and identify social or institutional perpetuation of systematic inequalities in such processes and outcomes" (Stage, p. 10). By doing so, the CRT/LatCrit researcher would argue, "margins can...be viewed as both sites of oppression and sites of resistance, empowerment, and transformation" (Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998, p. 215), standing in sharp contrast to the positivist approach.

However, Fink (2006) posited that "]it is probably best to adopt...an already existing and tested survey form" (p. 12) in order to utilize previous instruments and question their collected data for patterns. Since no existing survey instrument was identified that had already been field tested or piloted in order to establish content validity and refine the clarity of the questions and the overall format of the survey.
(Creswell, 2003; Fink, 2006), the researcher ultimately chose to exclusively pursue a qualitative approach.

The general design thus selected for the study was the collective case study approach (Creswell, 2007), which allowed the researcher to explore in-depth "how individuals experience and interact with their social world [and] the meaning it has for them" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p.4). Multiple cases (i.e, individual subjects) were selected from multiple sites to collect open-ended, emergent data (Creswell, 2003) by “captur[ing] multiple realities that are not easily quantifiable... [through a] holistic approach to information collection in [a] natural setting” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 72). The conceptual frameworks of CRT and LatCrit served as a conduit for the researcher to explore "how larger contextual factors [e.g., race/ethnicity, power, and oppression] affect the ways in which individuals construct reality" (Merriam & Associates, p. 4). Moreover, the conceptual framework of social capital theory addressed the exploration of power – “who has it, how it’s negotiated, what structures in society reinforce the current distribution of power, and so on” (Merriam & Associates, p. 327). The latter framework thus suggested a sociological orientation to the case study, as it aspired to examine “the structure, development, interaction, and collective behavior of organized groups of individuals” (Hancock & Algozzine, p. 32).

The choice of a critical qualitative paradigm poses many benefits. For one, all qualitative research is phenomenological in that it focuses on the lived experiences of its subjects (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Moreover, the critical researcher would conjecture it is an asset to bring one’s subjective personal values and standpoint (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to the table, so long as biases such as one's personal biography (Creswell,
2003) do not compromise the integrity of the research. Ultimately, as Carter and Hurtado (2007) asserted, "research as a catalyst for change or a form of advocacy...can be an effective means for conducting... research on marginalized groups and for populations where simultaneous interventions and research are needed" (p. 32). Creswell (2007) echoed this assertion, positing that, "[b]esides dialogue and understanding, a qualitative study may fill a void in existing literature, establish a new line of thinking, or assess an issue with an understudied group or population" (p. 102).

Limitations of a Critical Collective Case Study Design

Several limitations were inherent in this critical qualitative case study. First, the study was completed with a small sample size. Ideally, the researcher would have stratified the population before selecting a sample that truly reflected the characteristics of the desired population (Fowler, 2002), thus enhancing assertions of generalizability on the part of the researcher. A sample of this size is not practical in most qualitative studies, however, as “practical exigencies of time, money, and other resources also play a role, especially in doctoral research” (Seidman, 2006, p. 55). Moreover, as Merriam and Associates (2002) posited, small samples are often “selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p. 28).

Therefore, the researcher worked near the parameters as delineated by Creswell (2007) of identifying “no more than four or five cases” (Creswell, p. 76) in order to ensure naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, rich, thick description was provided that cultivated an “adequate database [for] readers [to] be able to determine how closely their situations match, and thus whether findings can be transferred”
Undergirding all of this process were the criteria of sufficiency and saturation (Merriam & Associates; Seidman, 2006); as Seidman articulated, “‘Enough’ is an interactive reflection of every step of the interview process and different for each study and each researcher” (p. 55).

Another limitation of the study is that “case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (Merriam, 1998, p. 42). If, however, the proper degree of rigor is employed via intensive and holistic description and analysis of the central phenomenon (Merriam), this design can be much more concrete and contextual (Merriam) than naysayers of qualitative research might attest.

The use of interviews as a central data collection instrument also poses certain limitations. For one, interviews are limited as the information is indirectly filtered, are not always delivered in the natural field setting, and may be biased by the presence of the researcher (Merriam, 1998), especially if the researcher does not have enough distance “to ask real questions and to explore, not to share assumptions” (Merriam, p. 87). Secondly, participants may be reluctant to tell of certain incidents. As Carrington and Tomlin (2000) espoused, "They may feel that there would be a loss of face in recounting such events to their mentors or other staff; the act of recounting may be avoided because it would be distressing in itself; and they may be reticent to give details of unprofessional conduct to an 'outsider'" (p. 150). Also, the use of counterstories as part of the interview protocol can be somewhat problematic. As Litowitz (2009) argued, storytelling places more emphasis on the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of narration that can lead in any direction: “If one set of narratives can make us more sympathetic to people of color,
it stands to reason that a different set of narratives can make us less sensitive” (p. 303). Ultimately, as Seidman (2006) espoused, “If the researcher’s goal…is to understand the meaning people in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry” (p. 11), so long as the interviewer has the capacity to produce knowledge through his interaction with each conversational partner (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The use of CRT/LatCrit as one of the conceptual frameworks of the study also poses certain limitations, specifically the essentialist notion that CRT/LatCrit researchers simplistically treat all people of color similarly (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003; Trucios-Haynes, 2001). Taylor (2009) expanded on this notion, positing that the framework "can be accused of lacking coherence, since oppressed people are rarely monolithic, and their narratives reflect a wide range of experiences” (p. 12). It is thus imperative that CRT/LatCrit scholars view race as a fluid and dynamic concept (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal) and that "one’s identity is not based on...race, but rather is multidimensional and intersects with various experiences” (Delgado Bernal, p. 118). The researcher has attempted to control for this by focusing exclusively on educators of Mexican American descent, thus attempting to construct community among and between all Latino subgroups (Trucios-Haynes).

Finally, if one is to pursue a critical approach to research, it is imperative to appraise one's personal values before proceeding in order to "check [one's] own biases” (Fink, 2006, p.20) within the context of the study as well as the biases reflected in the literature and the character of data and data collection. Rather than trying to eliminate these biases, it is also imperative that “the qualitative researcher systematically reflects
on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Rubin and Rubin (2005) expanded on this assertion when noting, “Interviewers are not expected to be neutral or automatons… [but they have] to be self-aware, examining… biases and expectations that might influence the interviewee” (p. 30). Finally, the CRT/LatCrit researcher should aim for some modicum of equilibrium in his or her positionality. As Litowitz (2009) espoused, “The outside perspective is valuable in the first place because it provides check and balance against the views of the insiders; so that what results is an overall balance between inside and outside. And that is our goal – a balanced view” (p. 307).

Design Controls

Kvale and Brinkman (2009) defined validity in qualitative research as referring “in ordinary language to the truth, the correctness, and the strength of a statement, [from which a] valid inference [can be] correctly derived from its premises” (p. 246). Through truthful dialogue with the conversational partners (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) of the study, “valid knowledge claims emerge[d] as conflicting interpretations and action possibilities [were] discussed and negotiate[d]” (Kvale & Brinkman, p. 247). To ensure the validity of said knowledge claims, member checking (Merriam, 1998) was employed; the researcher solicited feedback from research subjects by “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from which they were derived and asking them if the results [were] plausible” (Merriam, p. 204). Through this feedback, as Merriam and Associates (2002) conjectured, it was the researcher’s goal that “participants should be able to recognize their experience in [the researcher’s] interpretation or suggest some fine-tuning to better capture their perspectives” (p. 26).
Trustworthiness was also ensured by increasing reliability, the ability of other researchers to replicate findings with similar consistency (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Merriam, 1998). Since the researcher was the primary research instrument (Kvale & Brinkman; Merriam & Associates, 2002), reliability could have been seriously affected. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited, interviewers can and should be adaptable and flexible instruments capable of responding to unexpected outcomes with skill, tact, and understanding (p. 107). Consideration of this premise throughout data collection and analysis allowed for greater care to minimize influence with a tolerance for ambiguity and sensitivity (Merriam, 1998), while at the same time interacting enough with subjects to gather adequate data for improved reliability.

Qualitative researchers can ensure reliability by looking at the dependability or consistency of data via researcher positionality, triangulation, and an extensive audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Merriam and Associates (2002) argued:

Reliability is somewhat problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static, nor is what many experience necessarily more reliable than what one person experiences…The more important question for qualitative researchers is whether the results are consistent with the data collected (p. 27).

Researcher positionality, as Taylor (2009) posited, is a perspective that must be disclosed to all participants in the study. Not only does it identify the frame of reference from which the researcher presents data, interpretations, and analysis, but it is also a central tenet of the CRT/LatCrit conceptual framework. Furthermore, all of the source data was logged and saved. This audit trail will ensure that others could return to the research and draw conclusions similar to the original researcher.
Participants

In qualitative data collection, the researcher is the primary instrument (Merriam, 1998) in all facets, including the identification of the sample and the modes of qualitative data collection to be employed. As a person of Latino descent himself, the researcher was positioned as an "insider" to assist in the determination of the criteria needed for maximum variation; as Patton (1990) noted, small yet diverse samples can reveal patterns that might not have otherwise emerged in homogeneous situations. To this end, the sampling design selected was purposeful sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1998); specific subjects were selected to "best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question" (Merriam, p. 185), subjects who “are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory” (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 73). To bolster the effectiveness of the study, multiple participants from multiple sites were sought so as to maximize variation (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Seidman, 2006); the logic being that, “if there is some diversity in the nature of the sites selected (an urban and a rural school, for example) or in participants interviewed… results can be applied to a greater range of situations by readers or consumers of the research” (Merriam & Associates, p. 29).

Efforts were thus made to interview six educators of Mexican-American descent who were currently teaching at the elementary, intermediate, or secondary levels in a PK-12 institution. By doing so, the intent was “[t]o convince readers that [the] research does not have an unintended slant, [by selecting interviewees] whose views reflect different, even contending, perspectives” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 64).

Again, it should be noted that subgroups under the Latino umbrella were differentiated by focusing exclusively on educators of Mexican-American descent. As
Garcia and Bayer (2005) conjectured, Latinos "are frequently lumped into one group, essentially ignoring the differences that may exist between the differing ethnic groups that comprise this larger group. As such, reported findings may yield misrepresentations and potential errors if separate subgroup analyses are not executed" (p. 529). Moreover, as Hernandez and Lopez (2004) noted, "[g]iven [the] heterogeneity and the diverse experiences and distinctive histories of each Latino group in the United States, there are no 'cookie cutter' approaches to increase access and retention rates of the Latino community" (p. 54).

Data Collection and Instrumentation

*Ethical Considerations*

Kvale and Brinkman (2009) posited that ethical issues pervade all seven research stages in the following manifestations. Ultimately, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) cautioned, “While people [e.g., a university Institutional Review Board] may make up guidelines for ethical decision making, the tough ethical decisions ultimately reside with [the researcher], with [his/her] values, and with [his/her] judgments of right and wrong” (p. 52):

1) When *thematizing*, researchers must be mindful that the purpose of the study is to improve the human situation being investigated (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

2) When *designing*, researchers must first secure informed consent from all subjects (see Appendices A & B). As Seidman (2006) asserted, “In order to willingly consent in the truest sense, potential participants must know enough about the research to be able to gauge in a meaningful way whether they want
to proceed” (p. 61). Conversely, researchers must take into account “the conflict between a complete disclosure of the rationale of the research beforehand and withholding information from the participants, which may sometimes result in knowledge that can improve the condition of the larger community” (Kvale & Brinkman, p. 72). Researchers must also consider possible consequences of the study for subjects and not lead them to disclose information better left private (Kvale & Brinkman; Seidman). Finally, researchers must protect the confidentiality of the subjects while remaining mindful that anonymity “can serve as an alibi for researchers, potentially enabling them to interpret the participants’ statements without being gainsaid” (Kvale & Brinkman, p. 73).

3) Researchers must be mindful of the stress and changes in self-understanding that may occur as part of the interview situation (Kvale & Brinkman). To this end, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) posited, “Researchers should avoid hurting those they are interviewing by aggressively trying to push them to talk about topics that be upsetting, personal, or humiliating” (p. 108).

4) Researchers must maintain fidelity to all oral statements during transcription (Kvale & Brinkman).

5) Researchers must conduct their analysis to the appropriate depth given the data gleaned (Kvale & Brinkman).

6) Researchers must report knowledge in as secured and verified manner as possible (Kvale & Brinkman).
7) Researchers must consider the implications of reporting private interviews in public (Kvale & Brinkman).

Observation Protocol

Before conducting each initial interview, the researcher spent all or part of a school day in a complete observer role (Creswell, 2003), studying each subject in his/her natural professional setting(s) and role(s). These observations served two purposes, as articulated by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995): 1) they allowed the researcher to become familiar with the setting and to develop a working relationship and rapport with the subject, and 2) they allowed the researcher to share a “day in the life” with the subject and to document this experience in writing. Field notes (see Appendix C) were thus created to acquire “a deeper immersion in [the subject’s] world in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important” (Emerson et al., p. 2). Through these field note descriptions, the researcher aspired to actively interpret and make sense of events that may not have necessarily been significant upon initial inspection, thus turning each observation “from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscription and can be reconsulted” (Emerson et al., pp. 8-9).

Interview Protocol

Kohli (2009) posited that the use of a CRT/LatCrit methodology "must benefit the participants, and the communities they come from” (p. 238). Therefore, one-on-one interviews were utilized to generate counterstories or narratives (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) from subjects that might yield significant information regarding their individual experiences (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006) as students in the PK-12 milieu. Each
individual constituted a bounded system, or unit of analysis for the case study (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

Solorzano and Yosso (2009) defined storytelling as the "method of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society)" (p. 138). Within this paradigm, the use of counterstories can serve four theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical functions as delineated by Solorzano and Yosso (2001):

1) they can build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice; 2) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems; 3) they can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing the possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position, and 4) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone (p. 475).

Through these functions, the goal was that the counterstories gleaned through these interviews might inform the identification through data analysis of ways in which subjects might have been oppressed or subjugated in the PK-12 milieu, stories that might "catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar dysconscious racism" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 24). When viewed through the conceptual framework of CRT/LatCrit, counterstories serve well as "a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. [They] can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009, p. 138).

Based on this conceptual framework, interview questions were designed to critically delve into the perceptions of subjects on their experiences as PK-12 Latino
students (see Appendix B). The review of literature assisted in the development of the interview questions (Merriam, 1998), as areas of focus were gleaned from the subheadings that emerged as a result of the review. These questions addressed subjects’ experiences (or the lack thereof) regarding areas such as: obstacles to educational persistence, academic preparation, the racial and ethnic diversity of mentor educators, early identification as potential teacher candidates, strategies provided to increase social capital for both students and parents, strategies provided to encourage enrollment in four-year versus two-year institutions, and whether or not they perceived an authentic commitment to diversity on the part of the institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) they encountered as a student in their PK-12 career.

The interview format consisted of a semi-structured interview protocol including main questions, probes, and follow-ups (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) designed to elicit open-ended responses with clarity and precision (Rubin & Rubin) and draw out additional insight from subjects when possible (see Appendix B). The main questions were the “scaffolding of the interview” (Rubin & Rubin, p. 133), a limited number of questions prepared in advance, to develop rapport with the subject (Bogdan & Biklen) and ensure comprehensive coverage of the research problem. Rubin and Rubin posited the following regarding the unpredictable nature of the format: “The interview, like an ordinary conversation, is invented new each time it occurs” (p. 12). Each subject should be acknowledged as a unique conversational partner (Rubin & Rubin) that may not conform to a uniform set of questions. As Rubin and Rubin further posited, “An interview is a window on a time and a social world that is experienced one person at a time, one incident at a time” (p. 14). Consequently, follow-up questions were
important “for obtaining depth and detail, and help[ing] in obtaining more nuanced answers” (Rubin & Rubin, p. 136). Undergirding both levels of questioning were probes, or semantic techniques that kept the momentum of each conversation going.

Participants were then interviewed individually on one or two separate occasions at each site after gaining access to the subject’s natural setting from the appropriate gatekeepers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; see Appendix A). The researcher aspired to "better understand the experiences of [the subjects] through deliberative and mindful listening techniques" (Taylor, 2009, p.10) that would assist him in "figuring out how to make them matter in the educational system" (Taylor, p. 10). Bogdan and Biklen’s assertions were also heeded that more substantive responses can be gleaned through active listening, empathy, and the treatment of subjects as experts in the area being researched. Moreover, the employment of a second interview with each participant when necessary allowed the researcher to elicit relevant details for clarification of any vague assertions made by the subject (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Data Analysis Procedures

Kvale and Brinkman (2009) used a miner metaphor to address the epistemological considerations of data analysis, noting that “knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal... By means of a variety of data-mining procedures, the researcher extracts the objective facts or the essential meanings" (p. 48). Researchers cannot view social phenomena holistically (Creswell, 2003) and inductively (Merriam, 1998) unless coding methods are utilized that reflect the research at hand with exhaustive, mutually exclusive categories (Merriam) that logically flow from the data collected.
After all field notes were completed and interviews were transcribed, coding methods were employed that could "capture the complex categories or phenomena in [the] data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 47). Weiss (1994) noted that “some coding categories we bring to our studies before ever knowing what the interviews will produce... Others we bring with us as readiness to interpret respondents' comments in one way or another” (p. 155). Merriam (1998) referred to such classification schemes as etic, or previously created by the researcher. Although the researcher certainly had particular classification schemes or typologies in mind for analysis of the research, he specifically sought those of an emic nature - that is, those found in the culture of organizations (i.e., PK-12 educational institutions) themselves (Merriam). The researcher also openly sought out in vivo codes, labels that emerged from the exact words used by interview subjects (Creswell, 2007). Such semantics lend themselves to a much richer and thicker description of the data than would have occurred with preexisting coding labels.

Consequently, an open coding approach was employed using both inductive and iterative analysis (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Seidman, 2006) allowing for patterns and themes to organically become emergent (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Through the conceptual frameworks of CRT/LatCrit and social capital theory, the researcher simultaneously utilized values coding and narrative coding to analyze the data. Values coding, as delineated by Saldana (2009), encompasses the:

…application of codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview, [and are] “appropriate for... studies... that explore cultural values and intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies (pp. 89-90).

Narrative coding, as delineated by Saldana, is “appropriate for exploring intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions to understand the human condition
through story, which is justified in and of itself as a legitimate way of knowing” (p. 109). From these, several overarching themes, or "outcomes of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection" (Saldana, p. 139), were gleaned. Finally, since multiple cases were used, the researcher heeded Creswell's (2007) recommendations to "first provide a detailed description of each case and themes within the case, called a within-case analysis, followed by a thematic analysis across the cases, called a cross-case analysis, as well as assertions, or… the meaning of the case" (p. 75).

Summary

Included in Chapter Three was the rationale for the use of a case study to investigate the perceptions of PK-12 Latino educators regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu. Also provided was an introduction of the significance of the study and the need for PK-16 educational leaders to take transformative steps to bolster the recruitment of highly qualified Latino educators in all schools, not just those with large Latino student populations. Subsequently, the main research questions were presented. A description was then presented of the participants and sampling method, followed by the data collection and data analysis methods. Included in Chapter Four is a detailed description and analysis of the data. A summary of the findings, the limitations of the study, implications of the study and recommendations for future research are provided in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this investigation was to add to the knowledge base a clarified understanding of how the PK-12 student experiences of current Latino teachers of Mexican-American descent may have positively or adversely affected their consideration of education as a viable and appealing profession. Through an analysis of “the educational conditions at the elementary and secondary 'headwater’” (Solorzano et al., 2005, p. 276), it was the hope of the researcher that PK-16 educational leaders can perhaps fashion authentic interventions to help Latinos from all subgroups to educationally persist through both high school and college (Sanchez et al., 2006).

Accordingly, when viewed through the lens of social capital theory, one might argue that these institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) would expand access for these historically marginalized populations to higher paying occupations and career opportunities (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007). This is particularly relevant in the milieu of PK-12 education, given the harsh reality that, “at the current rate, many students stand a good chance of completing 12 years of schooling and never coming into contact with a teacher of color” (Howard, 2003, p. 150).

Presented in this chapter is a review of the study design, data collection methods, conceptual underpinnings, research questions, and process of data analysis. Additionally, descriptions of each setting and an introduction of the educator participants will be presented.
In addition to social capital theory, the study was viewed through a dual lens of CRT and LatCrit, both of which use counterstories as a "method of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society)” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009, p. 138) and as a key element to give voice to the oppressed (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Both CRT and LatCrit promote a social justice agenda and a critical pedagogy that "place[s] the lived experiences of Students of Color at the center of the teaching and research enterprise" (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 335). Moreover, as Creswell (2003) conjectured, CRT accentuates “issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation” and gives “voice for these participants, raising their consciousness, or advancing an agenda for change to improve the lives of the participants” (p. 11). Therefore, in keeping with that concept, the researcher presented the data in vivo, whenever possible, in participant’s own words.

Study Design

The collective case study (Creswell, 2007) allowed the researcher to explore in-depth "how individuals experience and interact with their social world [and] the meaning it has for them" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p.4), exploring the connection between subjects’ perceptions and experiences as PK-12 students and their decision to pursue a career as a PK-12 educator. Six cases (i.e., individual subjects) were selected from four sites (two urban, one suburban, and one rural) to collect open-ended, emergent data (Creswell, 2003) by “captur[ing] multiple realities that are not easily quantifiable... [through a] holistic approach to information collection in [a] natural setting” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 72). Each educator was purposefully selected (Creswell, 2003) because he or she was an educator of Mexican-American descent who could, in the
researcher’s mind, perhaps “facilitate the expansion of the developing theory” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 73).

Data Collection Methods

Before beginning the on-site interviews, the researcher secured permission from each district gatekeeper and respective school leaders to conduct research and to have access to faculty of the school relevant to the study at-hand. The researcher then completed the formal University Institutional Review Board application, which included providing information about the purpose and extent of the study. Following approval from the University of Missouri-Columbia (see Appendix D), the researcher traveled to each site to begin collecting data. Informed consents were signed by all educator participants (see Appendix A) prior to observations and interviews. Following the interviews, participants received a verbatim transcript of their interview and were provided the opportunity to provide feedback by modifying and/or clarifying their recorded responses through the procedure of member-checking (Creswell, 2003). The data were triangulated through on-site audio-recorded interviews, which were member-checked, and field observations of interactions among educators and students or other educators, which were recorded in a field log and research journal (see Appendix C).

Conceptual Underpinnings

For the purposes of this study, a dual lens of CRT and LatCrit was utilized. The former allowed the researcher to identify institutional structures, policies, and practices (Solorzano et al., 2005) in PK-12 schools that encourage or discourage Latino students from consideration of a pedagogical career. The latter allowed the researcher to "include the multidimensionality of Latinas/os within the dominant race construct in this society"
(Trucios-Haynes, 2001, p. 30) by honing in on educators of Mexican-American descent. Additionally, the lens of social capital theory was employed to further hone the researcher's focus on "regular and unobstructed opportunities [or the lack thereof] for constructing instrumental relationships with institutional agents across key social spheres and institutional domains" (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, p. 6). By accumulating social capital through *institutional support*, young people who are new to the nuances of that institution or instructional sphere (e.g., first-generation college students) may convert their social capital into *instrumental action* that enables them to "exercise greater control over their lives and their futures" (Stanton-Salazar, p. 10).

**Research Questions**

Based on the conceptual underpinnings, the following research questions were formulated:

1) What are the perceptions of PK-12 educators of Latino descent regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how might those perceptions have impeded or facilitated educational aspiration and persistence?

2) Do Latino educators believe that their presence in PK-12 educational institutions can further mitigate negative perceptions of the efficacy and potential of Latino youth not only for themselves, but also for those of different races and ethnicities?

3) How can PK-16 educational leaders inform and implement transformational strategies to bolster future recruitment of Latino educators?
After the field observations and participant interviews, the data were analyzed to
determine themes and categories.

Process of Data Analysis

Observations and field notes, gathered during visits to each site, provided direct
perceptual data. Individual interviews were conducted with six educators at four different
sites. Follow-up interviews were arranged as necessary to clarify understanding. Each
participant received information about the research study, and an informed consent with a
description of his or her rights. Audiotapes, made during each interview, were transcribed
verbatim. The researcher shared copies of the transcription with interviewees, asking
them to verify the accuracy of their words and intent. Analysis of each interview began
following verification from the participants.

All data were examined and assigned the following codes (see Appendix
E): Further codes included the following: educator participant 1 (E1), educator
participant 2 (E2), educator participant 3 (E3), educator participant 4 (E4),
educator participant 5 (E5); interview 1 (I1), interview 2 (I2), interview 3 (I3),
interview 4 (I4), interview 5 (I5); field observation 1 (FO1), field observation 2
(FO2), field observation 3 (FO3), field observation 4 (FO4), and field observation
5 (FO5). Additional codes included the following: settings/contexts (SETCON),
values (VAL), attitudes (ATT), beliefs (BEL), and relationships (REL).

Settings

*Site 1: Pinnacle High School.* The first site for this collective case study
was an urban secondary charter school, which will be heretofore referred to as
Pinnacle High School (pseudonym) for the purposes of this study. Pinnacle High
School was a 9-12 school of nearly 200 students. The student population was over 90% Latino, nearly three-fourths of whom were English Language Learners (ELL). Within that subgroup, fewer than 10% were "Level 1" ELL students who spoke very little, if any, English. These students had one block per day set aside for ELL-specific study, whereas they were immersed in regular courses with the assistance of a paraprofessional for the remainder of their day.

The school was set in the heart of a largely Latino community on the edge of a large Midwestern city, yet it was not a community school in the traditional sense. Students came from throughout the urban core to this charter school in promise of a better education than what was offered by their public neighborhood schools; most lived a reasonable distance from the building. Businesses and restaurants around the school showed more Spanish signage than English, reflecting the large number of Latinos who resided there. The building itself was a former office building previously occupied by an advertising firm. To enter the building, visitors walked through a well-secured front door, signed in, and were buzzed in by the office secretary. Upon entering the building, however, one walked into a small - albeit welcoming and friendly - commons area for students/waiting area for visitors. Every staff member and student the researcher encountered was very affable and professional. Facilities may have been lacking but, during the course of the observation, they did not in any way impede the "culture of high expectations" the principal spoke of when giving an overview of the charter's history.

Site 2: Pinnacle Middle School. The second site for this collective case study was an urban middle charter school, which will be heretofore referred to as Pinnacle Middle School (pseudonym) for the purposes of this study. Pinnacle
Middle School was a first-year 7-8 charter school of nearly 100 students. The student population mirrored its sister school, Pinnacle High School.

Since the existing facility for Pinnacle High School had zero room for expansion, a site several blocks away was identified on the neighborhood’s edge for the charter’s expansion into the middle school realm. Again, the building was a former office building that had been economically retrofitted to serve as a middle school. Unlike the high school, visitors could simply walk through the entry door and sign in with the office secretary. There was no commons area for students of any kind; lunch was eaten in classrooms. Due to the lack of an available conference space, the subject on this site was interviewed in an open coat nook adjacent to an emergency exit. Facilities were admittedly lacking, and may have somewhat impeded the "culture of high expectations" due to the limited amount of space for this age group to expend their adolescent energy, if you will.

Site 3: Prairie Trail High School. The third site for this collective case study was a suburban/rural secondary school, which will be heretofore referred to as Prairie Trail High School (pseudonym) for the purposes of this study. Prairie Trail High School was a 9-12 school of nearly 1,500 students. The student population was nearly 90% White; only 5% were of Latino descent. Students considered “Level 1” ELL students had one block per day to work one-on-one with an ELL-specific instructor; otherwise, they were fully immersed in the English language for the rest of their schedule.

The school was set in the heart of a unique suburban/rural community on the edge of a large Midwestern city. Like Pinnacle, it was not a community school in the traditional sense. The district serviced nearly 150 square miles in an area that was

[90]
suburban on the western end and distinctly rural on the eastern end; the main campus was nestled in a remote area in the middle. The community clearly took great pride in the school; many from neighboring districts in the urban core often moved to the area to better the educational opportunities for their children. The building itself was a traditional campus consisting of multiple buildings that have been added over the years as expansion warranted. Although some areas were somewhat worn and dated, the facilities were nonetheless far superior to those observed at the first two sites.

Site 4: Reagan High School. The fourth site for this collective case study was a rural secondary school, which will be heretofore referred to as Reagan High School (pseudonym) for the purposes of this study. Reagan High School was a 9-12 school of over 600 students. The student population was nearly 96% White; only 2% were of Latino descent.

The school was set in the heart of a rural community roughly an hour away from a large Midwestern city. It was definitely a community school in the traditional sense, the building sitting in the central core of this bedroom community. The community clearly supported education in the district, as voters had recently approved a multimillion dollar bond issue in a tight economy to build this new state-of-the-art high school for the needs of its growing community. The researcher happened to observe on the day of the school’s Courtwarming assembly. It was clear that these students had a level of esprit de corps in their school that one does not often see outside of a tightly-knit rural environment.

Site 5: Cesar Chavez Elementary School. The last site for this collective case study was an urban elementary secondary school, which will be heretofore referred to as Cesar Chavez Elementary School (pseudonym) for the purposes of this study. Cesar
Chavez Elementary was a K-6 school of over 450 students. The student population was over 60% Latino and nearly 30% Black; only 6% were of White descent. The school was set in the heart of a largely Latino community on the edge of a large Midwestern city and was a community school in the traditional sense.

As with the Pinnacle community, businesses and restaurants around the school conveyed a Spanish flavor that mirrored the large number of Latinos who resided there. The building itself was relatively new, probably at least half a century newer than any building in the immediate area. To enter, the researcher had to identify himself through a closed-circuit camera and intercom before he could enter. Upon signing in, the researcher made a rather circuitous walk through the building to reach the subjects' classroom. Along this walk, the various hangings on the walls revealed a school rich in Latino culture, pride, and high behavioral and academic expectations for all students, including a large ELL population. In response to rising national concerns about social promotion for students, the school was one of several in its district to implement a true standards-based approach to education. Students did not advance by grade level, but by mastery of different levels of standards in their core subjects (namely math and communication arts). By doing so, Cesar Chavez teachers were able to provide a focused level of one-on-one differentiated instruction that is difficult to attain in the traditional grade-level classroom.

Participants

A total of six educators accepted the invitation to participate in the study. One participant originated from each of the aforementioned sites with the exception of Cesar Chavez Elementary, where two participants agreed to participate. Of the six, two were elementary teachers, one was a middle school teacher, and three were secondary school
teachers. Four were female, and two were male. As the following profiles will illustrate, participants were common in that they fell under the Mexican-American subgroup; otherwise, there was rich variation in PK-12 experiences and personal backgrounds.

*Educator 1*: The first participant, George Bailey (pseudonym), was a secondary social studies teacher at Pinnacle High School. In addition to teaching four different classes, George also sponsored two groups, coached two more, and served in an athletic leadership capacity for the school. George was in his seventh year of teaching; all of those years were at Pinnacle. Prior to teaching, George had worked in a federal outreach program at a state university where he had the opportunity to tutor and counsel high school students in the surrounding area. George grew up in a bilingual suburban Midwestern middle-class home, with a mother of Mexican-American descent and a father of White descent. Although he went to preschool in Mexico, the majority of his PK-12 student career was in a predominantly White suburban school district. In the interview, it was clear that George represents his unique Latino identity to students with a self-deprecating wit that adolescents can appreciate and respect:

> Yeah, I'm Latino, but I'm also... and they note this... and I tell them this, 'Look guys, compared to you, really, I'm just a suburban white kid.' You know, they can tell. The only difference is, I understand Spanish, so if they're cussing at me, I know exactly what they're saying...

*Educator 2*: The second participant, Pedro Lopez (pseudonym), was a mariachi and orchestra teacher at Pinnacle Middle School. In his fifteenth year of teaching, Pedro had just begun working at Pinnacle this year; again, Pinnacle was in its inaugural year as a charter school. Prior to Pinnacle, Pedro's first seven years were spent in an urban Midwestern school district at the middle level. He then proceeded to teach in a suburban district on the West Coast for seven years at both the elementary and middle levels before
returning home due to "my wife, family, friends, the economy." Pedro grew up at a young age in subsidized housing in a predominantly African-American community, moving to a predominantly White community in his late elementary years; both communities were in the urban core of a large Midwestern city. Issues of race and ethnicity were clearly of significance to Pedro in his formative years:

And I would go to the YMCA by myself, 3 or 4 blocks, and I was the only Mexican kid there playing pool with the kids...with the other African-Americans. I was black, in other words, back in that day. You know, I would be called the names - "Taco", "Wetback", and all that stuff here and there. At the YMCA, I had some white kids – older kids, kids who were working out. White kids spit on me while I was in the shower. And there was a young one; I was going to try to attack him, but those guys were there, but I just took it and I couldn't do nothing at that time. But I don't hold any anger or anything like that.

The latter statement in this passage sums up the researcher's collective observations of Pedro. Although this was a man who had clearly endured many obstacles thus far in life (particularly his personal battle with attention deficit disorder, to be addressed later on in the chapter), Pedro nonetheless exuded a spirit of optimism and deep warmth that was inspirational to observe. This warmth was explicitly apparent in his interactions with students and convictions about the transformative power of music education that the researcher observed during his brief visit.

**Educator 3:** The third participant, Jennifer Douglas (pseudonym), was a secondary Spanish teacher at Prairie Trail High School, which also happened to be her alma mater. Jennifer was in her fourth year of teaching, her “first” at Prairie View. Prior to this year, Jennifer taught at both the middle and secondary levels in three suburban Midwestern districts (including a previous one-year stint at Prairie View). As with Pedro, Jennifer eventually returned home primarily to be closer to family and her future
husband, with whom she had once pursued her passion for Debate in high school.

Jennifer’s parents followed proper naturalization protocol and came here from Mexico when she was four-years-old, settling in an urban area in an adjacent Midwestern state; they later moved to the Prairie View suburbs during Jennifer’s middle school years. When talking during our interview about the decade-long failure of the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act legislation to pass muster in either chamber of the United States Congress, it was clear to the researcher that Jennifer knew just how lucky she was for her racial/ethnic identity not to be an impediment to her future goals:

I have talked to many people… that I think are intelligent and educated… and their comment is, “Well, they should be working on that while they're in school.” And I look at them and say, “Really. And what should they do?” “Well, I don't know… I'm sure there are ways to fix it.” And I look at them and I go, “Actually, there are zero ways for them to fix it! They are screwed!” And they kind of look at me with this blind look, like, “Oh, well, not my problem…” When you stump them kind of shrug and go, like, “Well, they shouldn't have come here anyways…” The kid had no choice but to come here…. My parents had the foresight to come here legally [when] I was 4. I could have been any one of those same kids, with the same drive, the same commitment, but the inability to do anything with it.

The preceding quote, along with many others gleaned through the researcher’s discussion with Jennifer, also revealed a highly intelligent and dynamic individual with a strong sense of social justice and advocacy, as well as high academic expectations, for all of her students that may be perceived as “disadvantaged” due to their race, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic standards.

**Educator 4:** The fourth participant, Delfina Hurtado (pseudonym), was an elementary teacher at Cesar Chavez Elementary. Delfina was an ELL teacher who worked specifically with students who had been in the country for fewer than six months
in what she referred to as a “New Americans” classroom. Upon graduation from college, Delfina spent her first year in education as a teaching assistant in a nearby suburban district. She was in her eighth year of teaching; all of those years were at Cesar Chavez. The majority of her PK-12 student career was in a predominantly White suburban public school district; she was educated in a Catholic school from fourth through eighth grade as a matter of convenience for her family.

Delfina grew up in a bilingual suburban Midwestern middle-class home, with a mother of Mexican-American descent and a father of Mexican-American and German descent. Much like George, Delfina readily acknowledged the cultural differences between her and her students:

…I don't speak Spanish or anything, so... It wasn't like a Spanish-speaking house. We had little customs that we'd still do, you know, but nothing like kids that are from Mexico that celebrate things all the time. So I don't think I really put it together that much or thought about it that much that I was Mexican-American until I got older.

Although the formation of a Latino identity may have happened later in life for Delfina, it was clear to the researcher that Delfina’s career path had deepened her cultural pride. Like Jennifer, she conveyed a strong sense of social justice and advocacy as well as high academic expectations for all of her students, in spite of their language barrier as “New Americans.”

*Educator 5*: The fifth participant, Pilar Arredondo (pseudonym), was also an elementary teacher at Cesar Chavez Elementary. Pilar was an ELL teacher who worked in a variety of co-teaching roles for special education students and “new beginners.” Raised by family members other than her mother and father, she was schooled in Mexico and immigrated to the United States nearly twenty years ago. At first, language was a
major barrier for Pilar; as she stated, “…my English was not there. Came here in 1992 and didn't speak a word of English. I knew how to read it in my own way and how to write it, but it's so different…getting it out.” A short time later, Pilar began to realize that her lack of proficiency in English was affecting her ability to advocate for both herself and her children:

So when I got married and I moved to the States, and I saw the opportunity, I just jumped to it. I didn't even think about it. First to learn English, then to learn how to help my kids. That was my big concern. I needed to help my kids. Because I had gone to the first parent-teacher conference. I didn't understand a word what the teacher was saying. And that was so frustrating to me. It was like, “I need to do something.” And I just set up a goal and didn't think twice…

Pilar’s story was one of the most inspirational the researcher encountered, as it was truly a model of persistence, drive, and ambition in spite of numerous obstacles. She began her career at Cesar Chavez Elementary as a paraprofessional. Ten years after being encouraged and supported by numerous colleagues to attain certification for ELL, Pilar completed her degree (while learning English in the process) through a nearby private college, thus becoming the first in her family to acquire a postsecondary degree. At the time of the research, she was in her fifth year as a teacher and clearly relishing the mentor and advocate role she could now provide to her students, having overcome the obstacles many of them were facing with unrelenting persistence.

_Educator 6:_ The final participant, Isabel Hunter (pseudonym), was a secondary Spanish teacher at Reagan High School. Isabel was in her twelfth year of teaching; all of those years were at Reagan. When asked about how she got into teaching, Isabel replied that she hadn’t "gone the traditional way, if there is such a thing.” Prior to teaching, Isabel had worked as a WIC nutritionist and breast-feeding educator for a nearby county health
department. Due to budget cuts, Isabel's hours were reduced, compelling her to begin substitute teaching at Reagan High School. When a Spanish position opened, Isabel obtained alternative certification and altered the trajectory of her career in education - a decision that, in retrospect, she is grateful to have made.

Isabel grew up in a border town in the South, served her country in the military for four years, and attended college in a conservative, predominantly White college in the West. Although a woman of Mexican-American heritage, her heritage was not an inherent component of Isabel's individual identity. As she noted when queried about the number of Latino teachers during her PK-12 years, "I have never considered, you know, that this person is this. So I guess I just; it was just a person teaching." However, Isabel was well-aware of the need to inculcate respect for diversity with her students given the homogenous nature of the community she served:

"Obviously, I don't have many Spanish-speaking students or [students] of Hispanic background, but what I'm hoping to do is to show that we're all diverse, and that it's okay for people to be different and that there's more than one way to do things."

Themes

Using the data set and the predetermined codes, the following themes emerged: 1) the Role of Relational Support, with the subthemes of: a) Educators, b) Family, and c) Community; and 2) the Role of Institutional Support, with the subthemes of: a) Increased Student Expectations, b) Building Capacity, and c) Cultural and Socioeconomic Awareness and Validation. In tandem, these two themes paint a vivid picture for PK-16 educational leaders of the sociological impact they can have through the implementation
of transformational strategies during the formative years to attract more Latino youth to PK-12 education; that connection will be detailed in Chapter Five.

The Role of Relational Support

Educators. Within the theme of the Role of Relational Support, many counterstories emerged of educators whose mentorship and relational support had a profound impact on participants at critical junctures in their youth in various ways - most, ironically, that had no direct correlation to the race or ethnicity of the mentor educator. An unintended theme emerged when casually comparing the responses by gender. Both George and Pedro spoke at length of their desperate need for role models during the "awkward" and "terrible" middle years. Each cited the need for educators who could provide a "safe haven," as George put it, that "made it worthwhile to come to school," that made "you [feel] like you were part of a team, you were part of something," teachers who "made it feel like home..." Both men also cited teachers who were the first to make a personal connection to them as students, the first to encourage and inspire them, and the first to cultivate within each of them what George called an "infectious" passion for both their content and teaching. As Pedro recalled,

Well, my high school band director. You know, back then... you're young, you think, “I can do what that guy's doing,” you know, and that's what I kind of felt at the time. I have so much respect for him now, because he was able to do great things with the kids. And so that's why I kind of like... that's something I can do. I was great about music, and I felt like, “Hey, I can do this. This is a job that I would like to do.”

On the other hand, a couple of the women participants who spoke to this issue were not concerned with passion so much as personability and respect through nurturing and
caring examples. Jennifer recalled an unlikely example of an educator role model from her elementary years:

He was an ex-Marine, and he was the one male teacher in the elementary school. He was the P.E. teacher and he was black and he was huge and he was fun, but he was authoritative. He... moved to the middle school as an assistant principal... I remember being in fourth grade, and he came to each individual class and told us he was leaving and he wasn't going to be there, and I remember all the girls were crying because we just grew really attached. For a lot of them, he became a father figure. I could see that, and I was just attached to him because he was just great. He was everything that was great about teaching; he was personable and was a friend, but he also demanded respect.

Pilar was the only participant who attended school in Mexico. When looking back at experiences from her elementary years, Pilar recalled a teacher who instilled a service mentality in her students at a young age by clearly going above and beyond for her at-risk students; this mentality has continued to serve Pilar well in her efforts as a Level 1 ELL teacher and mentor for students of her own who are desperately in need of support and stability:

Well, I do remember this teacher in elementary school... I remember inviting us to her house to do a vegetable garden. And she would divide the garden and we were taking spots and planting different things. After she invited us the first time, she kept inviting more and more students. She took those students who were like mean or... not being so fortunate, I guess. Because, I didn't have my Mom and my Dad, I grew up with family members. And this other girl that I remember, Catalina, she didn't have a Mom either. She was growing up with Dad and all the relatives. So she used to take care of us, in a way that she would teach us things; in the kitchen, outside, and always talking and talking and talking and talking. And I feel like she helped me so much that... She used to teach us with caring. You know, when you take that inside and you want to really communicate to others, help others... she had that. So I guess that's why I decided, you know... not why, but she was a big influence, I guess.

All of these examples illustrate educator role models in the early lives of these PK-12 educators who were willing to build authentic familial relationships with their students.
through "love and support" (as Pedro put it), mutual respect, authentic caring (Romero, 2009), and validation of students as unique individuals - not, as Pilar put it, "just another number."

Of all the participants, Delfina was the only one who specifically identified a Latino educator who acted on his own time and accord to encourage her to become involved in the school's LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) services at a time when she was admittedly not on track due, in part, to some of the peers with whom she chose to associate:

They had a college day at UMKC, and I was - I didn't wanna go, cause none of my friends were gonna go. And it was optional if you wanted to. The bus... picked up all the kids from all the high schools in the district and took you down to UMKC... And my counselor was like, “I think you should go.” Actually, he wasn't really my counselor, but he was the counselor that headed the whole LULAC thing... And he was like, “I think you should go, and it'd be really good for you and..” I'm like, “Nobody's going, I'm not gonna know anybody...” He's like, “Just go...,” and he basically talked me into it. So I went, and then I ended up going to UMKC. I saw him, just this last summer, and I told him... I said, “You know, I probably - I don't know if I would have went there if I would have - wouldn't have gone that day and like, met other kids, and just saw the campus and everything... I probably didn't know at the time, but now I look back and I think... 

Pedro and Jennifer were the only participants who responded in the affirmative when asked if they would have benefited from having more Latinos present in his PK-12 schooling. Although Jennifer did not think she would have necessarily benefited, she nonetheless saw the value of Latinos in professional positions for other Latino students:

...I think they need to see role models of their own ethnicity to feel like they can... “Oh look, she can do it.” Like her, you know, coming in and getting a degree. These kids need to know that and see that.

Conversely, Pedro indicated that the “relatability” factor helped him greatly as a first-generation college graduate and educator. Moreover, Pedro was the only one who spoke
specifically to the benefits of Latino educators to non-Latino students. As Pedro stated, "[Students] haven't seen any educators as Latinos. I mean, instead of seeing them in the restaurants and doing all these other things, you know, having an educator would bring a different light to how they view Latinos." It is important to note, however, that Pedro also cited two educators who “got through” to him that were of the minority population, but not of Latino descent:

I had a great Geometry teacher in high school… He was disabled, but I understood him. I mean, I felt smart with him. I worked hard, I think, in my high school years. But he was a great teacher… And he was African-American. Another African-American teacher who was a Geography teacher… I was cheating on the first test and I got an A. But, after that, she was like… “Man, you did really good on this test. I have great expectations for you.” I was like, “Oh man, I'm going to have to really study in this class!”

Two facets emerge from these examples: relatability to the Geometry teacher by also having a disability (albeit a learning one, not a physical one), and encouragement to excel through support and an elevated standard of expectation. The latter will be explored further in the next theme.

*Family.* Within the theme of the Role of Relational Support, all but one of the participants spoke to varying degrees of positive family support they received in their pursuit of a college degree in education. In particular, George and Jennifer indicated it was expected from their families that they would successfully go to college. In George's words, "Both my parents came from middle-class backgrounds. You know, where education was valued, and it was like, 'Duh. Of course you're going to graduate and you're going to go on to college.'" Education careers of some kind also ran in the family for both George and Jennifer, the latter whose parents had come to the states when she was a child:
It was an expected thing. My mom was a nurse in Mexico, so she had – not a degree from a university - but she had some kind of higher education. My dad, the same thing. So it was an expected thing that I was going to graduate and I was going to get good grades...

Pedro, a first-generation college graduate, also echoed this sentiment: "Oh yeah. I mean, nobody got a college education in the first place, so for me just to be there was something very special..."

On the other hand, Pilar, the other first-generation college graduate in the study came to the states with her husband and children as an adult, speaking not a word of English. As stated earlier, Pilar took the initiative to learn English and attain certification in ELL in order to become an advocate for herself, her kids and, as a teacher, for the kids of other immigrant parents:

I had a family - a mother that I needed to attend because she was sick, and a husband that was not feeling good about me leaving the home in the afternoon to go to school... And my mother was always, “You're crazy, you can't do that. You need to take care of your kids,” you know... And it was very hard, because I remember my kids, my husband, and my relatives trying to say, “You are so...because you are wasting your best years. So and so is getting married this weekend, we have this other party, and you're always looking at those books Saturdays and Sundays... And everything was hard for me because I didn't have anybody to call and ask for help.

In a sense, the teachers and colleagues that persuaded Pilar to go to college were her surrogate family, at least when it came to offering her the support necessary to persevere in her decade-long pursuit of a degree. Pilar did not appear to hold any resentment towards her family, though, for their positions on the value of a postsecondary education. She provided a unique explanation as to why this apathy towards educational advancement exists among many Latino parents:
Parents – if they are like my parents, they're not going to care really. Because for us [Latinos], it's “Go find a job in a factory, as long as you're producing money and bringing an income home, you're fine. Why do you have to go to school and be someone? You know, you're killing yourself. Look at your kids. They're unattended.” And if they're going through the same thing, I know where they're coming from. They're not going to be supportive of their kids going to school.

Pilar's comment suggested that many Latino parents, particularly first-generation immigrants simply struggling to survive financially, need further education in expanding perceptions beyond immediate struggles and seeing the long-term benefits of higher education to the family as a whole; the researcher will elaborate upon this further when discussing the need for institutions (i.e., schools) to build parent capacity in this regard.

Community. Within the theme of the Role of Institutional Support, several participants spoke to the lasting impact that relationships with community groups outside of the milieu of education had on them. Delfina spoke several times of her counselor’s referral to LULAC as a key catalyst that compelled her to “start thinking about college seriously.” Both George and Pedro attributed much of the success at Pinnacle Middle and High to the relational and material resources that had been provided to teachers and students by a local Latino community center that was one of the charter’s partners. These individuals were fortunate to be geographically situated in areas with nearby Latino advocacy and support groups; however, not all Latinos can say they are as fortunate.

Several participants also spoke to the lasting impact of individuals within the community that motivated them to persevere through various obstacles they faced. In particular, Pedro spoke about a clergyman who set an example for him that he wanted to emulate himself as an adult:

I had great influences outside of the school. A church group - Catholic church group. I would go to the youth groups and… those guys, in particular, were
thinking college. And I talked with the priest there, and the way he lived was a different way of living... And my mind was like, “Hey, this guy's organized.” We're eating as a family here... And, in my mind, I'm thinking, “You know, I really want something like this in the future with my family.” And he pushed education – the priest - so that was very influential to me.

In this case, the clergyman in question was not so much an educator mentor as a lifestyle mentor; Pedro was fortunate enough to have made the connection at a young age that there is a direct correlation between education and the lifestyle one desires to lead, a connection that can be attributed largely in part to the mentorship of the aforementioned priest.

Finally, Jennifer in particular spoke to the vital role community must play in ensuring that one’s neighborhood schools are effectively serving their clientele. As demographics continue to change in our country, many school districts are finding that they are ill-prepared for the challenges these changes pose. If schools cannot develop effective partnerships with the communities they serve, perhaps the community needs to step up to create the relational rapport necessary to meet the needs of its changing student population. Jennifer spoke to a specific example from her youth when her father rose to such an occasion:

It wasn't until I was in fourth grade when there was a distinct switch in the community, and there was an influx of Hispanics that moved in, to the point that the school wasn't prepared for it. They didn't have... any form of help for the kids, because they just weren't prepared. It was literally within a summer. There were families that moved in all together, and there was this need, because these kids didn't know any English....

At the time, it appeared that the school in question did not have the cultural capital (Anderson, 1996; Enwefa et al., 2002; Valenciana et al., 2006) needed to serve this growing population, nor did they acknowledge the wealth of cultural capital waiting to be
tapped in the surrounding neighborhood. Jennifer’s father recognized this problem early on and took action:

And my dad was involved in the PTA at that point, and he started going in for an hour at a time, and helping the students. So he kind of started the English language learning stuff… as this parent helper… [the school] talked about how there was a need and he was the only one that could help. Like I said, the new people that were coming in… their parents were in the same position. They didn't know English, so they couldn't help. And those of us that had been in the district for at least five years, those parents could help, but there were only like four, so it was whoever could do it.

One could argue that parents such as this exist and are often underutilized in many schools that are struggling with the impact of changing diversity on learning and school culture; implications for practice for enriched partnerships between community advocates and community schools will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

The Role of Institutional Support

Increased Student Expectations. Four of the six participants spoke of dissatisfaction as students with the mediocre level of performance expected of their teachers and, consequently, of them. One constant emerged through these discussions; regardless of the level of expectation, each of the participants took the initiative to demand more of themselves.

Delfina, in particular, cited a specific educator who was willing to go above and beyond the professional expectations set for her by the district, thus instilling a high level of expectations for the students in her care:

He was just really intuitive with the students. I just remember him...not just as like academic-wise, but he just-you could tell he cared about everybody. And would stay after and help people if they needed help in science... always willing to stay extra. And now that I'm a teacher, I know that – I mean, you don't really think about it at the time – they don't get paid to stay after. You know. They don't get
paid to do that extra work. And so, I think it was just the fact that he...that he cared.

Although Delfina readily admitted that science was never a strong subject, she nonetheless acknowledged that she applied herself more so than she had before because her individual success was of clear concern to her teacher. Not only was this a life lesson for her general academic success, but it was one that is now tantamount to her own practice as an educator.

Ironically, the culture of low expectations that many of the participants perceived among some of their PK-12 teachers proved to be a catalyst for them to consider education as a profession. Both George and Pedro made comments to the effect of, “I could do a better job.” George, a social studies teacher, recalled a specific History teacher who elicited such a response:

    She was doing an okay job, but I kept thinking… The way she was teaching was just dull and just dry, and I was like, “Good God! I could do better than this.” You know, seriously! This is really cool stuff! It should be taught really cool, with energy and with passion, and she's making it dry and boring… And I thought, “Why can't I have this in the classes I really love?”

George spoke further with regards to what building and/or district leaders can do to motivate teachers to demand professional excellence of themselves and, in turn, academic excellence of their students. The need for professional autonomy and trust was, in George’s mind, one of the most motivational components to encouraging higher expectations:

    Mr. Morales (pseudonym) is… like a perfect administrator, somebody who gives you the freedom to do what you feel is best in the classroom, and [someone] who backs you up when it comes to discipline. And setting that standard… if administrators can do that, I think we'd retain a lot more teachers. It's so heavily bureaucratic in districts, and teaching at - doing my student teaching at [a nearby
suburban district] I saw this, where you just don't have that much freedom as a teacher to do what you want…it's kind of stifling...

Both George and Jennifer expounded upon concerns that their students, urban on one end and suburban on the other, were often leaving high school at an academic level that was deficient for the rigorous expectations ahead of them in the postsecondary realm. Jennifer specifically spoke at length with regards to what building and/or district leaders can do to motivate students to demand academic excellence of themselves. Schools can offer a litany of advanced courses, and intrinsically-motivated students like Jennifer will seek out such challenges with vigor. Such courses, though, are essentially worthless if students perpetuate a culture of low expectations by ignoring them in lieu of easier classes that might bolster their grade point average or class rank, but not necessarily their academic postsecondary preparation:

You can graduate by just getting by, by taking the basics... but yet as a district we expect fifty percent to go to college but we don't expect fifty percent of them to take the advanced level classes, which sets them up to fail, I think. That's why those students can't write a true paper in college. That's why they don't have the work ethic to read the chapter on their own and take the notes... I think it's this - most school districts... want to have it both ways. They want everybody to graduate by making everything easy, but they also want everybody to go to college without being prepared.

Finally, the need for teachers to have the full support and respect of their leaders is also paramount for teachers to feel professionally validated and supported. Teachers must earn this respect, however; as Delfina pontificated, mediocre teachers can breed contempt among students (particularly the strong ones) that is counterproductive to learning predicated upon excellence:

My 7th grade teacher was just so rude and she was not very nice. And we did a lot of... I remember copying definitions out of the book. And I don't know, I just have
a thing about copying and copying and copying… To me, that's… it goes back to
the seat work stuff, you know? Like, to actually do things instead of just copying
something down. I mean, you might not even be able to read it, and you're still
copying it, you know?

Conversely, the need for teachers to have the full support and respect of their students is
just as essential. In particular, Jennifer spoke to the lack of respect on the part of some
students as a major impediment to teachers trying to bolster academic expectations in
their classrooms for students who have the drive and desire to be challenged. (On a side
note, this perceived lack of respect was one of the reasons why Isabel did not initially
consider a career in PK-12 education.) Ironically, though, Jennifer attributed her
grounded perspective on teaching to the cumulative negative encounters with
disrespectful students she observed as a student:

I was the student who wanted to do the work, took the AP classes, took the
advanced classes. But I, like any other student, was in a mixed class where you
had the students that weren't interested, that were rude to the teacher... I went into
teaching with open eyes. This might sound horrible, because a lot of teachers go
in and they're like, “I'm going to change the world and I'm going to touch every
student that comes through my classroom,” and then they go home crying the first
year they teach because they had the kid who called them a bad word or flipped
them off.

Building Capacity. Bolstering expectations of students and parents, however, is a
lofty aspiration unless institutions use their collective resources to bolster the capacity of
each group to meet these expectations with some degree of authenticity. Two facets
within this theme emerged from the research: the role of academic preparation in
postsecondary success and the role of financial education in postgraduate success.
Undergirding both of these facets was the need for institutional support (Stanton-Salazar,
1997) at the secondary level through the provision of various funds of knowledge and
guidance that could better bridge the transition to postsecondary education and beyond.

George elucidated upon the need for both secondary and postsecondary
institutions of learning to reach out to students in their secondary years. He also
suggested PK-16 institutions partner with one another, if necessary due to insufficient
human and/or material resources, to ensure they are challenging students with the
necessary coursework to be academically prepared for the rigors that lie ahead. It is
impossible to build such capacity, though, if Latino students or other disadvantaged
populations do not perceive that they are capable of going beyond the basics, if you will.
A mindset of mediocrity can perpetuate itself for generations if left unchecked, if another
generation is not given that added encouragement, as George alluded to and Jennifer
articulated:

I would venture to say that our advanced level classes don't have a lot of our
Samoan population of students in them, don't have a lot of our African-American
students, don't have a lot of our Hispanic students in them. It almost seems like,
“Well, if you can just get by that's good enough 'cause, darn it, you're here and
that's good enough.”

Ultimately, as Jennifer further articulated, it is necessary for all of the cogs within the
secondary educational machine to work in tandem to curb generational trends of
mediocrity and the perpetuation of low expectations due to the perception that one is not
good enough to at least try:

I think it's a roundabout thing. I think partially it's the counselors, partially it's the
teachers, seeing a student that's got the intellect or the drive and saying, “You can
do this, you can do it!” Sometimes it just takes looking at the student and saying,
“You can do this. This is not above your understanding; stick with it and you'll be
fine.” And part of it is the administrators, saying, “You should not just take basic
English. If you have a certain GPA you really need to be thinking about the... advanced classes. There really isn't a reason for you not to be doing that.” I think it comes from the teachers.

The previous quote thus accentuates the need for added institutional support (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) through the provision of funds of knowledge, particularly in the myriad of institutional obstacles that one must assiduously navigate simply to walk in the door of most postsecondary institutions. Pedro, a first-generation college graduate and educator, gave one simple response that many Latinos or other disadvantaged populations might echo: "I don't remember teachers mentioning college to me."

For those Latino students who are actively considering a postsecondary education in their high school years, the information they receive from guidance counselors (whose professional namesake encapsulates the social capital components of advocacy and guidance) is often spotty at best; Jennifer reflected on two instances that adversely affected both her future husband and a younger brother:

I think counselors, for the most part... fail students. For example, my husband was offered a full-ride scholarship to one of the Ivy League schools through debate... All he needed was to fulfill the requirements. He had a fantastic ACT score, took the SAT... But... they required at least up to a calculus math class. And it was something that you just don't... no one told you. No one said, “Hey, by the way, you might want to...whatever.” My brother's a good example. He was going to be done with Spanish I and II, he wasn't going to take anymore, and [now] he's learning that a lot of the colleges that would give him a scholarship for soccer Division III expect him to have up to Spanish III. So I feel like the counselors should be providing that information, because a lot of students wouldn't have the know-how or the foresight to do it themselves.

Jennifer also spoke to the need for counselors to work with students as soon as possible on long-term planning that compels them to envision the comprehensive impact in adulthood of the choices they make now. Had she been better informed in her high school
years on public versus private college costs, salary potential for her chosen profession, and the ramifications of going to college in another state, she "would have chosen a lower-cost, lower-tuition school."

Ultimately, there must be a reciprocal partnership between schools and parents in order for students (particularly first-generation college students) to not feel as if they are on an island in their quest to seek a postsecondary education. As Pilar alluded to earlier, such partnerships are difficult to forge with parents who do not see the long-term value of an education due to short-term (and, one could argue, short-sighted) concerns, particularly those of family and finances. Cesar Chavez Elementary, where Pilar and Delfina worked, was one of five schools in the district that had shunned grade-level education and social promotion in favor of true standards-based education; the hope was to address remedial skill concerns for many of their students in a proactive manner that would put them on a leveler playing field in their middle and secondary years. However, as Pilar said, the work cannot be truly effective if parents are not informed enough to assist:

I'm feeling very frustrated because the parents are not educated to know how to help them. We're doing this SBS [standards-based system] thing – and no matter how hard teachers work here, if we don't have the parental support, which is something that I feel is not being addressed fully – it's not going to work...

Parents must be informed as transparently as possible as to what is going on in their student's schools. Conversely, they also must be held more accountable for ensuring that learning does not end the minute students exit the building, and for ensuring that students come to school with an attitude towards the institution that is conducive to learning:
I feel parents are not being – they are not being held responsible for their kids' education. I think we need to start by teaching parents how to be parents. And then the whole school system is going to change. We're going to start seeing results coming from the home. Don't blame it on teachers. We do what we can; but there's only so much we can do. Parents need to be involved. And I bet they'd like being involved... It's just that, they don't know how to. And they're not being responsible because nobody's making [them]...

The aforementioned quote brings the discussion of the role of institutional support back to the critical need for Latino student academic expectations to be greater if more Latinos are to progress to a postsecondary education, much less a degree as an educator themselves.

*Cultural and Socioeconomic Awareness and Validation.* One can ascribe the discrimination many Latinos face in PK-12 institutions of learning to mere racism. Beyond the repression for some of the ability to speak Spanish at school, only one participant cited an overt instance of ethnic discrimination encountered by an educator in his PK-12 student career. Most discrimination occurred under the surface, if you will, at the hands of other students or youth within the community. Nonetheless, several of the participants spoke to the need for added cultural and socioeconomic awareness and sensitivity on the part of all educators, an outcome that cannot occur unless educators step beyond their comfort zone, particularly in the realm of bilingual education. Students should never feel ashamed to be Latino, or feel ashamed to be an educated Latino, yet these sad realities manifested themselves on too many occasions in the participants' experiences as both PK-12 students and educators themselves. Each participant also cited situations in which added educators of Latino descent could benefit fellow educators, students, and the community in expanding their awareness and validation of Latino culture and its unique folkways.
George, a young man of partial Latino descent, went to Pinnacle High School convinced he would instantly be able to connect with each of his students simply because he spoke their language and shared many of their cultural customs and traditions. He was forewarned by his first principal that he should be prepared for some degree of culture shock, and even then acknowledged that he still struggled at times with the variations he encountered in his students, particularly the first-generation immigrants from Mexico. In line with LatCrit theory, George had recognized there is no such thing as a "one size fits all" Latino of Mexican-American descent:

...It's also a region factor. Most of the kids that come here, their families are from Northern Mexico: Chihuahua, Sonora, Coahuila... and my family's from Puebla, which is south. And there's a huge difference. In terms of dialects... culture, what they do, what they eat, what music they listen to...it's just such a big difference, it is like a culture shock. Went to Mexico this past summer to visit family, and it's awesome but... it's more like here. It's more like suburban America for me because... they are upper-middle class.

In addition to regional differences, George posited, educators must also be aware that there are stark differences in social behavior as well as the value of education between first-generation and second-generation Mexican-Americans. Three of the participants noted that these differences that often lead to discrimination (both intentional and inadvertent) within the population. Jennifer recalled the tension that often arose at her high school between immigrants and "Americans":

I saw when I was at the high school level that those that were [Latino] tended to be new immigrants. And what I have found is that a lot of the new immigrants take offense to other [Latinos] not being cliquey and not just talking to the [Latinos]. They'll make comments like, “Why are you talking to them?”
Isabel also recalled an instance in her early years in El Paso where peer pressure from immigrant boys, sadly, made her feel ashamed to be a young, educated Mexican-American:

One of the programs that I worked at in El Paso, and it was called the Youth Services Bureau. And it was supposed to help kind of disadvantaged youth... We would go... to different rec centers and had different activities... One time, [I] was going into the center, and there were some Mexican-American boys. And they'd go, “Oh you think you're too good.” And so, sometimes it seems like it's not so much somebody else putting pressure, but within... Yes. Sometimes it's more that. That you know, in the school, like I said, it wasn't somebody else saying you know, “You all aren't any good,” but it's more that pressure within that circle. And it was so unfortunate, because it's like, “What are you doing hanging around this pole light, you know? Why don't you do something...?”

This apathetic attitude toward the value of education was echoed in Pilar's comments regarding her family's lack of support in her efforts to become proficient in the English language and, subsequently, to pursue a postsecondary degree in education.

Bilingual education, or at least the ability to speak Spanish within PK-12 institutions, generated oppressive actions towards many participants in their PK-12 student career that could easily be construed as overt discrimination through the repression of one's language. Although this may well have been the case in some of these situations, Isabel suggested that the fear of the unknown generated by this language barrier was of greater import:

As a child, it was kind of oppressive as far as our ethnic background, because at that time we were not to speak Spanish. So it was kind of a repressed thing, you know... “Let's not speak Spanish...” It was kind of like, “Deny who you are...” And you know, that language is a big part of a young person... we were actually disciplined if we were heard in the playground speaking Spanish... I think it went back to the number of teachers that maybe did not speak Spanish and wanted to make sure they understood what was being said...
George went to preschool in Mexico learning both English and Spanish, as his father would always talk to him in English while his mother and her family spoke to him in Spanish. Upon returning to the states to a Catholic school for Kindergarten, George encountered similar issues of oppression not only for himself, but for his Spanish-speaking mother:

In Kindergarten, I got in trouble several times... and the teacher (who was a nun...) pulled my mom aside and told her to stop speaking Spanish to me, because she thought I just didn't understand what she was saying. And it wasn't that; I just didn't care. I remember thinking that clearly. It was like, “No, I understand what she's saying, I just don't pay attention.”... I think maybe she just honestly thought that I was lacking in my English skills. And that because my Mom was just speaking in Spanish to me; that I think that's what that was. And maybe it was just her – this Nun's educational training, you know – I think she was just trying to encourage English being spoken at home. Which I can understand that, as an educator now, but at the same time it came across as pretty rough.

In retrospect, George attributed the nun's actions as being of good faith in promoting the development of his proficiency in English. Conversely, he also acknowledged that it was moments like these that made him realize he was somehow different from his peers in a way that made him almost ashamed to be a Latino at times during his youth.

Many public PK-12 institutions extol the benefits of full immersion for ELL students to the satisfaction of their constituents, many of whom believe we should not be spending extra taxpayer dollars for "those people," if you will. However, as the principal of Pinnacle High School stated, ELL students of Level 1 proficiency in English simply cannot succeed in that environment without some type of safety net. Jennifer recalled a similar struggle as a child:

Yeah, I was four... back then, it was a sink or swim... I was in the classroom, it was preschool, and it was: you've gotta learn it, observe it, or you just won't learn it. And I had a little bit of help to begin with, because there were two other girls
whose parents were [Latino], so they knew some Spanish. They weren't fluent in it, but they were enough that I could speak to them and they could help me out. And then again it was, “Okay, here's the stuff – learn it.” And it was a little difficult at home because my mom didn't know English; my dad did, but he was working two jobs. I had to learn it at school.

Isabel, the most experienced educator of the participants, spoke of the "pendulum" that she has observed in schools regarding bilingual education. As she noted on several occasions, not all students with Spanish surnames speak Spanish, nor do all students require instruction to some degree in Spanish. Ultimately, Isabel advocated a very common-sense approach to bilingual education: "We'll address it if we need to, but we won't force everybody to do this."

The fear of the unknown that many participants alluded to regarding the language barrier was also cited by Pedro in a recollection from his youth of an instance when he was punished for what was perceived by the teacher to be a language barrier, but in fact was a learning disability that would not be properly diagnosed until decades later:

I had a teacher in... second grade, who... I didn't understand what she was telling me. She goes, “Mmmmmm-mmm-mmm,” and I go... I said “Yes?” She just hit me with a ruler on the hand... Cause I understood English; I don't know why I didn't understand her. She just hit me in the hand.

Pilar also cited misunderstood "discipline" instances where fellow educators simply dismissed well-intentioned students as being disrespectful. Had these educators been able to identify with the cultural norms of these students, they might have considered the possibility that their actions might be quite the opposite:

I have teachers here, upper-grade teachers, that come to me, totally offended with the student and saying, “Can you please ask him to show some respect when I'm talking to him, because he's not even looking at me in the eye and he's just avoiding me. But then, this is a norm at home. We are not supposed to look in the eye because it's daring, it's disrespectful. And if they're not aware of what the
culture is, how can be they be identified? How can they understand where the student's coming from? The behaviors? They're just making more angry, you know, the students... No. He was just ashamed...

Regardless of the deficit in cultural awareness - generational differences, language barriers, or cultural norms - Pilar identified a significant consequence of such short-sightedness. Contempt for students will, in more cases than not, foment contempt for educators and education in return.

Two participants spoke either of themselves or others as being ashamed of their Latino identity during their middle and secondary years, years when these individuals started to notice they were "different." When looking back at his middle school years, a time when every Latino epithet possible was being uttered by some of George's peers, he recalled the "embarrassment of when you're in a public place with your Mom, and she's speaking to you in Spanish..." This was merely a proverbial speed bump for George, though, as his ethnic pride grew with age. Isabel, however, cited two students who worked actively to repress their Latino background, as they were students in a building that was over 95% White. Although issues of race and ethnicity were quite transparent to Isabel in her interview, she nonetheless recognized the need to mentor and support these two young men, regardless of the perceived resistance they put up:

So what I do try, is to show, you know, that it's okay. My one student that I have... sometimes he kind of wants to deny his background... I don't know what's going through his mind. And so what I try and do is try and put my experiences and say, “This is where I came from,” and show that it's okay. And I have his brother...I'll see him in the hallway, and when I say, “Hola” - because I say “Hola” to all, whether I've had them in class or not - he'll just completely ignore me. But if I say “Hello,” he'll say “Hello.” And it's almost like, you know, “I don't want to speak any Spanish,” and yet their Mom doesn't know English... it's just that he doesn't want to show, “Hey, yes I am! I am of Mexican descent... This is who I am, and I am proud..."
These students were fortunate to have a Latino mentor like Isabel to inculcate some degree of ethnic pride in them in a community that was virtually devoid of racial or ethnic diversity.

It is certainly copacetic for Latino students to know that they are different from their majority peers, so long as subordination is not what defines such differences. Perspective is not just a byproduct of one's education, but also of one's upbringing and unique cultural and ethnic folkways and mores. Both Jennifer and Delfina spoke to the profound power Latino educators can have by inculcating a sense of ethnic pride in their students through their unique perspective towards a curriculum that is traditionally derived and taught from an Anglicized point of view:

...I think being from a different culture... anybody other than “you are American” – I think would have given the opportunity to bring out different perspectives of history. Because I talk to students about history and they're like, “Man I never knew that...” and I'm like, “Yeah, because it's not in your history books, because it's from the American perspective.” And if you have that teacher, I think, they'll still teach the curriculum, but they can insert those little things. I think the other place where that might have been seen more would maybe be in an English class. From a literature perspective, maybe reading Latin American stories, short stories... because as teachers we work with what we know, and being of a different culture allows you to grab from different things.

As a Spanish teacher, Jennifer included studies and research of Chicano artists in her curriculum not only because it was of interest to her, but also because it was timelier and more accessible for some students. Moreover, such studies allow all students, regardless of their race or ethnicity, to see successful Latinos in professional roles, leadership roles, and roles that one might consider as "heroic." Delfina commented about the imperative need for students to see people of all races and ethnicities in positions where their actions clearly had a profound impact on others:
I think... what we do here at this school – but I know it's not like this at every school, especially in the suburbs where there are few Mexican-Americans – we make a point to study [Latinos]. Like, we have a hero every year, and it's - I think the hero's been a [Latino] a couple of times. We try to go, we do all...we did Buck O'Neil, Cesar Chavez... you know, we do Black History Month, but we also have a time where we study Mexican-Americans, and I think that's important to let them know, these people did this...

Clearly, the ability to see fellow Latinos in positions of power and success can serve volumes to motivate young Latinos to take the steps necessary to follow their proverbial footsteps. In turn, exposure to these role models can perhaps mitigate some of the shame some Latino youth (such as the student Isabel profiled in her interview) feel towards their heritage.

The need for added socioeconomic awareness and validation on the part of all educators is also of importance to all socioeconomically-disadvantaged students, irrespective of their race or ethnicity. Pedro spoke reverentially about a decades-old program in Venezuela called El Sistema that uses the orchestra as a vehicle to reach out to young people as early as their toddler years through an intense study of music and dance. In a sense, the orchestra becomes not only an extended family through membership, but also a comprehensive opportunity for experiential learning that instills the power of education in impoverished students through music. As Pedro explained:

But one of the things he [founder Dr. Jose Abreu] talks about is the poorest countries suffer from... being poor. And the rich people, or rich countries, suffer from being too rich... And he goes, “But they're both lacking spiritual poverty, no matter where they're at.” And so, that draws me back to what my philosophy, and where I want to go... is these kids, these families, these communities. We need to start at a very early age, 2, 3 years old. Musically, dance, whatever it may be the case – an intense study, practice from a very early age with highly qualified teachers to help them in different areas...
Not all the passion in the world, however, pays for the exorbitantly rising costs of a postsecondary education. Poverty, whether "spiritual" or actual, was cited by all but one participant as having perhaps more to do with the shallow pool of Latino educators as any issues of race and ethnicity. George, who was fortunate to have his entire education paid through his efforts and his family's backing, readily acknowledged that the lack of financial assistance was one of the biggest detriments to a postsecondary education he had observed with students. Jennifer had also observed similar circumstances in both her life and the lives of fellow Latino students:

It was not expected – my parents were not going to pay for college for me. And most of the [Latino] students that you talk to, they say, “My parents aren't helping me. I'm on my own.” Whereas, most American families that I know – friends or families that I know – the parents either mention that they would have liked to have paid or did help pay in some way, shape or form. And most of the Hispanic families that I have seen, they just say “You're on your own.”

When asked to probe further on her beliefs as to why this was the case, Jennifer's response attributed much more of the blame to socioeconomic means and family size than to a perceived lack of disregard for postsecondary education on the part of her parents:

I think first of all, it's a matter of means... There was no way they could financially, ever, pay for all four of us to go to college. On my husband's side, there's only two of them. It's a little bit easier to pay for the college of just two students, two kids. So I think that's – as a means of practicality, the larger family can't do that. Because then you're playing favorites. “I'll pay for yours but not for yours.” So it's kind of one of those like, “Well none of you guys are getting any money, so good luck!”

Both Isabel and Jennifer cited socioeconomic obstacles they had to overcome that resulted from issues of poverty in their families. Isabel was unable to attend a closer school because no bus transportation was available, and her mother had no car with
which to take her to school. Jennifer assumed more responsibilities at home because her parents worked time-demanding jobs to support her family. Isabel and Jennifer were commendable in that, although these challenges forced them to "become adults very quick," as Jennifer mused, they both nonetheless made the best of the situation and persevered towards their goals in spite of these challenges. Educators, however, would be remiss to recognize that these two women may be the exception, not the rule. Jennifer gave an example as to how the hindrances of poverty can defeat even the strongest soul:

Is it the race or the socioeconomic status? It's a little bit of both; sometimes you find it more with one than the other. But it's just...it's the support. It's being able to provide the support... One of my [advisory period] kids was talking about how he wanted to go to college, but he needed the money to go to college and he didn't have a car, but he needed a job to get a car... it's this roundabout way where they just feel like...I can't.

All of the six participants were successful PK-12 educators who, throughout their PK-12 student experiences, maintained an "I can" attitude towards the pursuit of a postsecondary education and, eventually, the pursuit of a degree in education. Chapter Five will delineate the researcher's findings from collective data analysis on what PK-16 educational leaders can do to bolster educational persistence and bring more "I can't" Latino youth into the fold.

Summary

The study design, data collection methods, conceptual underpinnings, research questions, and process of data analysis have been discussed in Chapter Four. In addition, a description of each school setting and a brief profile of the six participants were presented. In Chapter Four, the CRT/LatCrit strategy of counter-storytelling was employed so as to comprehensively glean the unique nuances of each participant’s voice,
as well as to cultivate the themes that emerged from data analysis. Discussed in Chapter Five are the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis. Additionally, presented in Chapter Five are the implications for practice and recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This collective case study examined the perceptions of PK-12 Latino educators (specifically, those of Mexican-American descent) regarding their personal experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how those perceptions may have positively or adversely impacted their consideration of education as a career. Through data analysis of the elementary and secondary “headwater” (Solorzano et al., 2005), the researcher sought to determine ways in which transformative PK-16 educational leaders can fashion authentic strategies to bolster the future recruitment of talented Latino students. The data were triangulated via member-checking (through feedback from the research subjects of transcribed data), rich and thick description (through the comparison and analysis of individual interviews and field observations), clarification of researcher bias, and the presentation of negative or contrary information (Creswell, 2003). From the data, two themes emerged with one clear constant: the Role of Relational Support and the Role of Institutional Support. The theme of the Role of Relational Support included three subthemes: a) Educators, b) Family, and c) Community. The theme of the Role of Institutional Support included three subthemes as well: a) Increased Student Expectations, b) Building Capacity, and c) Cultural and Socioeconomic Awareness and Validation.

A summary of the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis are discussed in Chapter Five. Furthermore, the implications for practice and recommendations for future study are discussed. A guiding element undergirding these
discussions was the use of counterstories to allow the participants to tell their own story in vivo. By allowing the unique voice of each participant to emerge, the researcher aspired to meet Solorzano and Yosso’s (2001) pedagogical function of “teach[ing] others that, by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone” (p. 475). Although two of the participants may not have been on the margins of society, per se, they all nonetheless presented narratives that challenged “the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems” (Solorzano & Yosso, p. 80). Through a collective case study approach, the researcher was able to obtain and use the language, or voice, of the participants (Creswell, 2003), thus facilitating the empirical goal of understanding the perceptions of the participants regarding their PK-12 student years via an in vivo emphasis on their personal voice to present the data.

Summary of Findings

The overarching question guiding this qualitative inquiry was, “How might the PK-12 student experiences of successful PK-12 educators (including the presence or lack thereof of Latino educators as role models) have impacted their educational aspiration and persistence and, eventually, their decision to opt for PK-12 education as their career of choice?” To this end, the study was viewed through a dual lens of critical race and Latino critical theory and the lens of social capital theory. According to Delgado Bernal (2002), the five tenets of CRT “come together to offer a unique way to approach educational research and to move researchers and educators into spaces of moral and critical practice” (p. 110). Those tenets, as established previously, are: a) the centrality of
race and racism, b) the challenge to dominant ideology, c) a commitment to social justice and praxis, d) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and e) an historical context and interdisciplinary perspective. LatCrit, as established previously, honed the tenets of CRT to Latinos specifically through four functions: a) the production of knowledge, the advancement of transformation, the expansion and connection of Latino struggles, and the cultivation of community and coalition (Valdes, 1998). Finally, the use of the social capital lens, as established previously by Stanton-Salazar (1997), accentuated the imperative nature of institutional support through: a) the provision of various funds of knowledge, b) bridging, c) advocacy, d) role modeling, e) emotional and moral support, and f) evaluative feedback, advice, and guidance. In the absence of opportunity to accumulate these varying forms of social capital, Latinos may struggle to “exercise greater control over their lives and their futures” (Stanton-Salazar, p. 10).

The following two themes related to the perceptions of PK-12 educators on their PK-12 student experiences emerged as data were analyzed: the Role of Relational Support, and the Role of Institutional Support. Within the context of this study, as derived from the conceptual underpinnings, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1) What are the perceptions of PK-12 educators of Latino descent regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how might those perceptions have impeded or facilitated educational aspiration and persistence?

2) Do Latino educators believe that their presence in PK-12 educational institutions can further mitigate negative perceptions of the efficacy and
potential of Latino youth not only for themselves, but also for those of different races and ethnicities?

3) How can PK-16 educational leaders inform and implement transformational strategies to bolster future recruitment of Latino educators?

The researcher summarized the data that were presented in Chapter Four addressing each research question. In addition, interpretations of the data were guided by the literature review.

*What are the perceptions of PK-12 educators of Latino descent regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how might those perceptions have impeded or facilitated educational aspiration and persistence?*

Over the course of the data analysis, consensus emerged among the participants that both negative and positive perceptions of their various experiences as PK-12 students (and now PK-12 educators) played a significant role in their educational aspiration and persistence, both during their student years and later as educators themselves. Regardless of the obstacles participants may have encountered, however, one thing was for certain: the advancement of education beyond high school was never in doubt for any of these intrinsically-motivated individuals. Moreover, the desire to encourage similar aspiration and persistence in their students was an underlying constant that permeated the responses of each and every participant.

Of the myriad of issues that were discussed in the review of literature regarding negative perceptions of the profession regarding status, power, and opportunity, multiple participants accentuated two issues: financial issues and the inability to use one's primary language without feeling ostracized (Gordon, 2005). Regarding the former, George described himself as an "anomaly" in that he never had to get student loans to get through
college. Most of the other participants, however, alluded to debt as a concern for themselves and for others considering education as a profession. Pedro, in particular, estimated that he would be nearly seventy years of age before his student loan obligations were met, a reality he described as "depressing... fatiguing... and draining."

As noted in the review of literature, the inability to use one's primary language and the frustration with educators who are unprepared (or unwilling) to work with ELL students may deter Latinos from considering a career in education (Gordon, 2005). Both Isabel and George encountered such circumstances in their youth. If an educator did not speak Spanish, as Isabel recalled, Latino students were compelled to "deny who they are." Isabel viewed race quite transparently, however, and handled these moments in her youth with great resilience. George, on the other hand, acknowledged it was moments like his encounter with the Catholic nun that made him realize he was somehow different from his peers in a way that made him ashamed in his youth to hear his own mother speak Spanish in public. The intentions of these educators may have been noble, but they nonetheless left a detrimental impression on both of these participants.

Of the myriad of issues that were discussed in the review of literature regarding positive perceptions of the profession regarding status, power, and opportunity, each of the participants espoused Olivia and Staudt's (2003) assertion that Latino educators consider the social justice implications regarding access to knowledge for their marginalized students that may have been overlooked in their own schooling. To this end, each participant modeled Valenzuela's (1999) notion of additive schooling in their pedagogy, using practices that validated and celebrated Latino students' culture and language as a strength, not a deficit that one must overcome to assimilate within
majoritarian (Huber et al., 2008) norms. Moreover, each participant made a concerted effort in their pedagogy to reduce stereotype threat by: emphasizing optimistic educator-student relationships, challenge over remediation, valuing multiple perspectives, serving as role models, nonjudgmental responsiveness, and building self-efficacy in all of their students (Steele, 2009). Finally, it was explicitly clear that each participant employed authentic caring - that is, practices which liberate and move students "toward realizing their humanity through self, familial, and community critical reflection" (Romero, 2009, p. 221). Pilar captured the essence of a social justice pedagogy encompassing these practices in the following quote:

> It's like, even though I know my disadvantage, and I'm very aware of my...you know, lack of English – my students are the first thing I have in mind here. Even though I'm having a bad day... I'm having a tough day... I have a lot of e-mails to respond to... I take the time... Because they are individuals. They are going through what I went through. And they need the support, they need the patience, they need the help. And I'm trying to give them as much as I can.

Much like critical race researchers, each participant refused to remain silent in order to "give strength and empowerment [to their students] in a society determined to cling to established habits of repression" (Taylor, 2009, p. 12) toward their marginalized students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic means.

*Do Latino educators believe that their presence in PK-12 educational institutions can further mitigate negative perceptions of the efficacy and potential of Latino youth not only for themselves, but also for those of different races and ethnicities?*

In the review of literature, Villegas and Lucas (2004) noted that the presence of minorities in professional roles "challenges the myth of racial/ethnic inferiority that many White youngsters internalize about people of color" (p. 73). Only one participant, Pedro,
explicitly echoed this assertion; as he stated, "[Students] haven't seen any educators as Latinos. I mean, instead of seeing them in the restaurants and doing all these other things, you know, having an educator would bring a different light to how they view Latinos."

Additionally, both Jennifer and Delfina spoke to the profound power Latino educators can have by inculcating a sense of ethnic pride in their students through their unique perspective towards a curriculum that is traditionally derived and taught from an Anglicized point of view.

Ultimately, issues of cultural awareness and sensitivity proved to be of greater import to the majority of the participants than the race or ethnicity of an educator. Educator role models were cited of various races, ethnicities, and genders; irrespective of these factors, these participants cultivated relational support with their Latino students. These educators affirmed the assertion by Kohli (2009) that "[e]very child deserves to have an education where their cultural identity is acknowledged and respected. School staff must be culturally sensitive in order to cultivate and nurture positive self-images of their students" (p. 245).

Students should never feel ashamed to be Latino, or feel ashamed to be an educated Latino, yet these sad realities manifested on too many occasions in the participants' experiences as both PK-12 students and educators. Underlying each instance was an imposition of majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008) on a marginalized population, whether it be those on the margins due to their race or ethnicity, those on the margins due to their socioeconomic limitations, or those dealing with both impediments to the accumulation of social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). As cited in the review of literature, such majoritarian stories have only served to foment racist nativism (Huber et
al.), thus perpetuating institutional practices that are disadvantageous to Latinos and others along the margins of society.

*How can PK-16 educational leaders inform and implement transformational strategies to bolster future recruitment of Latino educators?*

The level of social justice and advocacy that emerged in the data analysis of the pedagogy of the collective cases confirmed an assertion from Gomez et al. (2008) that was made in the review of literature:

"Teachers of color... may be more aware... of unjust schooling practices experienced by... people of color, may be more likely to hold dimensions of a social consciousness...and be more aware of how... schools operate to maintain a system of unequal outcomes [which] often correlates with students' ethnic background and social class" (p. 268).

To this end, two of the participants in particular spoke of their ongoing struggle with, as Pedro stated, "fighting a system that is not working." For example, Pedro lauded the Teach for America program as an excellent alternative means of alluring highly-qualified teachers (including Latinos) to schools with high poverty and minority populations. However, as he further espoused,

“After the two years [teachers are required to stay], those people go because they realize that they are fighting a system that is not working…. They get some incredible training, and they come through the schools and more stuff is being thrown at them that [had] nothing to do with what they were doing to help.”

The leaders in these institutions may not have been overtly aware of adversarial conditions that discounted the humanistic concerns that are paramount to educators with a high degree of social justice and advocacy. Nonetheless, such concerns cannot be ignored if one desires to recruit such individuals for future vacancies.
As conjectured in the review of literature, according to Nunez and Fernandez (2006), “[o]utreach is critical to recruit the diverse population[s] we support, including those who might not necessarily see themselves reflected in the teaching position or might not think they have the means to do it” (p. 51). Outreach does not necessarily connote a specific recruitment program, as Jessica stated when reflecting on her high school years, but a conscious effort by educational leaders to provide a reasonable level of relational and institutional support to their Latino students during the PK-12 years if those students are ever to consider education as a profession, not an institutional entity they must “fight” to secure the necessary support to succeed and thrive:

I was always very frustrated with the imbalance of administrative and financial and community support… [I went] into teaching knowing I was going to have to fight… Especially since I was an assistant debate coach… I knew I couldn't be surprised by certain things because I knew them going in, but those were also reasons for me to kind of question whether or not I was willing to fight the fight, or to at least deal with it.

This mentality of fighting the system, whether perceived or legitimate, was a factor for some participants regarding their decision to pursue education as a career in the first place. In Jennifer’s case, “I swore off teaching until my second year in college... I said I didn't want to teach, didn't want the students, didn't want to deal with the work.” Conversely, Isabel began her career as an adult educator and only considered PK-12 education once economics compelled her hand; she did not initially want to deal with the discipline issues that might hamper her desire as an “agent” to teach people who “really wanted to learn and really wanted to know what [she] had to say.” Ironically, Mexican-educated Pilar was the only one for whom the system allured to a career in education, albeit during her time as an adult paraprofessional in an American school.
Pedro was the only participant of the six who decided to become a PK-12 educator at a young age to begin this pursuit at the onset of college. Teaching was clearly a second choice for the remaining participants, George and Delfina, who respectively considered law school and criminal justice before entering their postsecondary education programs, almost by default as George recollected: “And I thought, ‘Eh...I can do it.’ Started taking education classes and I thought, ‘Okay, I like it enough,’ and I just went through it.” As Richardson and Watt (2005) conjectured, educational leaders must do a better job of educating young people that education can be a career that “fits their skill sets, interests, and future goals” (p. 487). Otherwise, young Latinos like the Georges and Delfinas of the world may never cultivate the desire to become educators themselves during the formative years. Such missed opportunities only foment the professional epidemic (Rodriguez, 2009) that has deterred talented young Latinos from filling PK-12 educational vacancies across the country, individuals whose CRT/LatCrit-minded social justice pedagogy could act “as a sort of disinfectant [to] dispel some widely-held misconceptions about people of color” (Litowitz, 2009, p. 308) by placing “the lived experiences of Students of Color at the center of the teaching... enterprise” (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 335).

Conclusions

Merriam and Associates (2002) conjectured that qualitative research should be viewed as an in-depth exploration of “how individuals experience and interact with their social world [and] the meaning it has for them” (p. 4). Within the qualitative paradigm, collective case studies allow for intensive analyses and descriptions of multiple cases (i.e., subjects) and processes that are “bounded by time and activity” (Creswell, 2003, p.
15). Through such studies, general researchers aspire to gain a deeper understanding of situations and meanings for those involved (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam & Associates; Stake, 2006). Furthermore, the CRT/LatCrit lens hones in the researcher’s focus to “how large contextual factors [e.g., race/ethnicity, power, and oppression] affect the ways in which individuals construct reality” (Merriam & Associates, p.4), whereas the social capital lens hones in the researcher’s focus to the ways in which “structures in society reinforce the current distribution of power” (Merriam & Associates, p. 327).

Qualitative research thus allows the researcher “to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 11) through multiple forms of inquiry that can assist the researcher in “captur[ing] multiple realities that are not easily quantifiable… [through a] holistic approach to information collection in [a] natural setting” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 72). Qualitative research is predicated on the assertion that meaning is socially constructed by individuals via interaction with their world; conversely, there are multiple interpretations of reality. Accordingly, the following conclusions are based on the study’s findings of the perceptions of PK-12 Latino educators regarding their personal experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how those perceptions may have impacted their consideration of education as a viable career option.

The Role of Relational Support

The Role of Relational Support which fosters the educational aspiration and persistence necessary to attain a postsecondary degree, much less a degree in education, was the first overarching theme identified using the data set and predetermined data codes. Three subthemes were also identified as important components of the Role of
Relational Support: Educators, Family, and Community. The first conclusion, as it relates to determining ways in which transformative PK-16 educational leaders can bolster the future recruitment of talented Latino students (specifically, those of Mexican-American descent), is a fundamentally simple one: relationships matter.

As delineated in the review of literature, Latinos have a unique conundrum. They must expand their social networks in a manner that can enable them to make the transition from high school to college (Saunders & Serna, 2004). However, they must do so while reconfiguring their existing relationships and social ties (Saunders & Serna) without alienating those in their family or community who may not share the same beliefs on the efficacy of a postsecondary education. Pilar’s story resonates above the others in this regard. By doing so, these individuals will be better equipped to secure the relational resources needed to “secure goods [e.g., an education] and forms of support that facilitate the accomplishment of goals – within a particular institutional context organized by hierarchical relations of power and privilege” (Stanton-Salazar, 2004, p. 25). For first-generation Latino college students in particular, such relational resources (and the social networks that accompany them) can cultivate in these students not only "the skills and knowledge to qualify for and consider college, but also [the skills and knowledge to develop] a college-going identity" (Saunders & Serna, 2004, p. 148-149). Moreover, this social capital must be extended to the families of first-generation students to build upon the moral support, or apoyo, that most Latino parents offer to their children (Auerbach, 2006). Although apoyo is invaluable from an aspirational perspective, the research suggested that young Latinos must have more tangible and practicable relational support.
from the triumvirate of educators, family, and community members in their PK-12 years if they are to transcend their aspirations into reality.

Ultimately, relational support for the participants was predicated on one simple tenet: each participant had significant role models and mentors in their PK-12 student years that affirmed Latino "cultural values such as familismo (importance of family), personalismo (the preference for personal over impersonal relational styles), conflanza (trust), respeto (mutual respect), and dignidad (care for the dignity of each person)" (Gardella et al., 2005, p. 42). Moreover, the role models profiled were all individuals who expected the exceptional in the participants during their youth, even if they did not initially see the potential for academic and educational excellence in themselves. The manifestation of the Role of Relational Support via the synergy of educators, family, and the community is depicted below in Figure 1:

![Figure 1: The Role of Relational Support through the Synergy of Educators, Family, and Community](image)

The synergy of these three factors also demonstrates how effective educational leaders should make every effort possible to inculcate a culture of authentic caring
(Romero, 2009) in their institutions, thus liberating and moving students "toward realizing their humanity through self, familial, and community critical reflections" (p. 221). From a leadership standpoint, effective leaders must employ the moral dialogue (Shields, 2004) – both internally and externally in their institution – that is paramount to acknowledging, validating, and adapting to the unique cultural perspective towards education that Latino students and educators bring to the table. By doing so, leaders are more likely to embrace the notion that “[d]ifference becomes not something to fear, or to avoid, but part of the rich fabric of human existence with which we interact on a daily basis” (p. 166). Effective leaders also cannot discount the inestimable value of Latino mentors in educator roles, particularly for first-generation students like Pedro, who affirmed the assertion by Carrington and Tomlin (2000) that Latinos “need to see that their own people, from their own background, are there… [to] show them what they can do” (p. 145) and, in turn, to boost their confidence and enthusiasm for learning (Dee, 2004). Should such Latino educators not be available in the applicant pool, educational leaders at the very least must employ and educate individuals who have the cultural and socioeconomic awareness necessary to validate and respect their Latino students.

The Role of Institutional Support

The Role of Institutional Support was the second overarching theme identified using the data set and predetermined data codes. Three subthemes were identified as important components of the Role of Institutional Support: Increased Student Expectations, Building Capacity, and Cultural and Socioeconomic Awareness and Validation. The second conclusion relates to determining ways in which transformative PK-16 educational leaders can bolster the future recruitment of talented Latino students.
(specifically, those of Mexican-American descent). Institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) must fully utilize not only their trained faculty and staff, but also the familial cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) and extrafamilial networks (Portes, 1998) available to them through both neighborhood families and the community at-large. By doing so, agents can authentically generate the valued resources (e.g., an education) that Latino youth must acquire to attain a postsecondary degree, much less a degree in PK-12 education.

Institutional support is an iterative structure rooted in the organizational culture of the institution, a culture often predicated upon archaic majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008) that no longer apply to the population the institution now serves. As Bolman and Deal (2003) conjectured, culture "embodies accumulated wisdom from those who came before us. As a process, it is constantly renewed and recreated as newcomers learn the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves” (p. 244). If educational leaders are to foster the institutional support necessary in promoting an authentic commitment to educating an increasingly diverse population, they must ensure their espoused values are commensurate with the underlying beliefs of their institution (Schein, 1992) on both on an instrumental and symbolic level (Tierney, 1998). Once this is accomplished, a culture of shared leadership can be cultivated, thus fostering a community of authentic caring (Romero, 2009) conducive to increased expectations for students, building capacity, and improved cultural and socioeconomic awareness and validation. This iterative structure of institutional support is visually represented in Figure 2:
Figure 2: The Role of Institutional Support as an Iterative Structure

Ultimately, all of the institutional support in the world is for naught if the pool of talented Latino youth with the potential for excellence as PK-12 educators is shallow at best. PK-16 educational leaders (particularly those at the middle and secondary levels) have an ethical imperative to identify and duly scrutinize both tacit and explicit "policies that marginalize Latinas/os in the educational arena [by] limiting, rather than moving forward, Latina/o educational and societal advancement" (Gonzalez and Portillos, 2007, p. 261). The counterstories of the participants revealed many examples of tacit or explicit institutional policies that fomented cultural deficiency (Rolon, 2002) or deficit thinking (Kohli, 2009) as delineated in the review of literature - namely, subtractive schooling through the invalidation of Latino culture and/or language (Valenzuela, 1999), underrepresentation in advanced courses, and overrepresentation in remedial courses (Gonzalez et al., 2003). Furthermore, based on the counterstories that emerged, one might
infer that many Latino youth with the potential for excellence as Latino educators may never realize that potential unless PK-12 educational leaders strive to eliminate a culture of low expectations (Kohli, 2009) for Latino youth deeply rooted in the majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008) of many educators. Such dismissive pedagogy appears to still be quite prevalent, particularly in districts that service large socioeconomically-disadvantaged Latino populations.

Accordingly, PK-16 educational leaders should heed the suggestion of multiple participants that outreach to Latino youth should begin proactively during the formative years of middle school and secondary school, not reactively once (or if) these youth go to college. Research in the review of literature affirmed several participant's assertions that educational leaders should offer encouragement and incentives to consider teaching (Peterson & Nadler, 2009) through authentic programming that respects and validates the motivational variations between Latinos and their majority peers (Olivia & Staudt, 2003). Otherwise, the number of Latino youth who view a PK-12 educational career "as a prestigious career option with opportunities for supportive interaction with other students and faculty" (Ramirez, 2009, p. 21) will remain grossly disproportionate to the demographic shift outside the educational milieu.

The conclusions, based on the study findings, illustrate the cumulative effect of a PK-16 educational leader’s actions in further facilitating the acquisition of social capital necessary for talented Latino youth to pursue a postsecondary degree in PK-12 education. The cumulative actions of transformative educational leaders via the conduits of relational support and institutional support are thus represented below in Figure 3:
Figure 3: Conclusions Based on Study Findings

Much like the metaphorical onion (Begley, 1999) delineated in the review of literature, the core of this paradigm is the self, where personal values are the leader's initial source for guidance, however laden they may be with biases and imperfections (Brown, 2004). Ethical leaders must acknowledge that the needs of Latino youth are often strikingly divergent from their majority peers. Conversely, as opposed to the employment of difference-blind institutionalism (Larson & Ovando, 2001), leaders must adopt a philosophy of additive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) for all disadvantaged youth, including Latinos, if more of these individuals are ever to persist to the postsecondary milieu, much less pursue a career in PK-12 education.

Limitations

As Heppner and Heppner (2004) posited, “all studies have limitations” (p. 340). Furthermore, as Merriam (1998) conjectured, “case studies can oversimplify or
exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (p. 42). Nonetheless, one must be attentive to these limitations in order to design as rigorous a qualitative case study as possible (Heppner & Heppner).

Assertions of generalizability could have been enhanced by stratifying the population before selecting the sample to better reflect the true characteristics of the desired population (Fowler, 2002). However, a sample of this size was not practical to the study at-hand. Moreover, as Merriam and Associates (2002) posited (and the researcher affirmed), small samples are often “selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p. 28).

Consequently, the researcher followed the guidelines as posited by Creswell (2007) for naturalistic generalizations, focusing on six cases (i.e., subjects) from which rich, thick description was gleaned so as to cultivate an “adequate database [for] readers [to] be able to determine how closely their situations match, and thus whether findings can be transferred” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 29). Undergirding all of this process were the criteria of sufficiency and saturation (Merriam & Associates; Seidman, 2006); as Seidman articulated, “‘Enough’ is an interactive reflection of every step of the interview process and different for each study and each researcher” (p. 55).

The use of interviews as a central data collection instrument also poses certain limitations. For one, interviews are limited as the information is indirectly filtered and may be biased by the presence of the researcher (Merriam, 1998), especially if the researcher does not have enough distance “to ask real questions and to explore, not to share assumptions” (Merriam, p. 87). Secondly, participants may be reluctant to tell of
certain incidents. As Carrington and Tomlin (2000) espoused, "They may feel that there would be a loss of face in recounting such events to their mentors or other staff; the act of recounting may be avoided because it would be distressing in itself; and they may be reticent to give details of unprofessional conduct to an 'outsider'' (p. 150). In addition, the use of counterstories as part of the interview protocol can be somewhat problematic. As Litowitz (2009) argued, storytelling places more emphasis on the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of narration that can lead in any direction: “If one set of narratives can make us more sympathetic to people of color, it stands to reason that a different set of narratives can make us less sensitive” (p. 303). Ultimately, as Seidman (2006) espoused, “If the researcher’s goal…is to understand the meaning people in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry” (p. 11), so long as the interviewer has the capacity to produce knowledge through his interaction with each conversational partner (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The use of CRT/LatCrit as one of the conceptual frameworks of the study also poses certain limitations, specifically the essentialist notion that CRT/LatCrit researchers simplistically treat all people of color similarly (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2003; Trucios-Haynes, 2001). Taylor (2009) expanded on this notion, positing that the framework "can be accused of lacking coherence, since oppressed people are rarely monolithic, and their narratives reflect a wide range of experiences” (p. 12). It is thus imperative that CRT/LatCrit scholars view race as a fluid and dynamic concept (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal) and that "one’s identity is not based on…race, but rather is multidimensional and intersects with various experiences” (Delgado Bernal, p. [143])
The researcher focused exclusively on educators of Mexican American descent, thus attempting to construct community among all Latino subgroups (Trucios-Haynes) by expanding the knowledge base on one subgroup in particular, as opposed to making sweeping (and perhaps invalid) generalizations about the Latino population as a whole.

Finally, if one is to pursue a critical approach to research, it is imperative to appraise one’s personal values before proceeding in order to "check [one's] own biases" (Fink, 2006, p.20) within the context of the study as well as the biases reflected in the literature and the character of data and data collection. Rather than trying to eliminate these biases, it is also imperative that “the qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). Rubin and Rubin (2005) expanded on this assertion when noting, “Interviewers are not expected to be neutral or automatons… [but they have] to be self-aware, examining… biases and expectations that might influence the interviewee” (p. 30). Finally, the CRT/LatCrit researcher should aim for some modicum of equilibrium in his or her positionality. As Litowitz (2009) espoused, “The outside perspective is valuable in the first place because it provides check and balance against the views of the insiders; so that what results is an overall balance between inside and outside. And that is our goal – a balanced view” (p. 307).

Implications for Practice

The implications of this research for practice affect educational leaders across the PK-16 spectrum. Irrespective of one's level, the study findings indicate the paramount need for support on both a relational and institutional basis in order for Latinos (and other marginalized populations) to academically persist at the level of rigor necessary to
successfully pursue a postsecondary education, much less a degree in PK-12 education. These findings supported the emphasis by Bourdieu (1986), Lin (2001), Portes (1998), and Yosso (2005) of the need for Latino youth to accumulate at least as much (if not more) social capital as their majority peers, given the deficit of social capital they often bring to the table. With the cumulative accretion of social capital comes the enhanced ability to secure resources through durable social networks that allow these youth to access information, influence, and social credentials while reinforcing and recognizing their Latino identity (Lin). Moreover, the more substantial the deposit of social capital, the more likely it will be that these youth will have the "instrumental and emotional support [necessary] to navigate through society's institutions" (Yosso, p. 79).

The study findings also suggested a need for heightened critical collaboration among PK-16 educational leaders as well as with the people they claim to serve, including Latino youth who may not have yet been compelled to expect the exceptional in themselves due to the perpetuation of subtractive schooling (Venezuela, 1999) practices in their educational institutions. While compiling the review of literature, only a handful of truly authentic collaborative efforts to this end were identified, namely the Puente project in California, the Futures program in California, and the GEAR UP program in Texas. All three programs identify Latino youth with the potential for academic excellence in the middle or secondary years. All three programs expose Latino students of similar ambitions to one another to reduce intragroup achievement stress (Lopez, 2005) and require modest, local, and inexpensive to the current system rooted in majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008). Moreover, each program entails minor institutional changes that could significantly bolster Latino participation and achievement.
in postsecondary education (Weiher et al., 2006) while providing both students and parents added social capital to navigate the often-convoluted transition process from PK-12 to postsecondary institutions.

Ultimately, no program or policy will bolster the recruitment of talented Latino youth to the PK-12 educational ranks unless such programs and policies are predicated upon an authentic commitment to diversity in PK-12 institutions. As Schuhmann (1992) asserted, future "language used to refer to ethnic minorities in schools... must reject such terms and concepts of the past as remediation and language deficient" (p. 103). Three of the five sites the researcher visited in this collective case study - Pinnacle Middle, Pinnacle High, and Cesar Chavez Elementary - were schools with large Latino populations, including significant numbers of Level 1 ELL students. Nonetheless, through an authentic commitment to diversity on the part of the leaders of these institutions, the vast majority of the educators under their guidance modeled in their practice an genuine respect for and validation of the unique cultural (and socioeconomic) qualities that these youth bring to school each day. Conversely, both of these buildings were amongst the highest performers in the urban core of this Midwestern city on the state's yearly assessments. In the end, students will inherently raise or lower themselves to the expectations set for them. It is the sincere hope of the researcher that more institutions will infuse the relational and institutional support necessary for Latino youth to rise in the PK-12 educational ranks at a rate greater than is currently the case in the United States as a whole.
Recommendations for Future Study

The results of this study should contribute to the current body of research and literature on the relationship between the experiences of current PK-12 educators as students themselves in the PK-12 milieu, and how those experiences may have positively or adversely impacted their consideration of education as a career. Given the increase in the Latino population projected between now and 2050 (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009), the need exists to identify talented Latino youth as early as the middle years who have the potential to be future PK-12 educators. Again, the researcher does not imply that a Latino student cannot receive the same quality education from a non-Latino educator; the in vivo counterstories of the participants consistently suggested otherwise. Nonetheless, as several of the participants posited, the support of a Latino educator during the PK-12 years can serve volumes for many students in developing their social and cultural identity as a Latino learner (Quiócho & Rios, 2000), thus bolstering their self-image (Kohli, 2009) and intrinsic motivation to academically persist. Moreover, the presence of Latino mentors for non-Latino students can reduce stereotype threat (Steele, 2009) and dispel preconceived notions of Latino achievement (Kane & Orsini, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2004).

The study could serve as a model for PK-16 educational leaders seeking to bolster the racial and ethnic diversity of their teaching pool not just for Latinos, but for other racial or ethnic groups who have been historically marginalized by an American educational system stubbornly predicated upon majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008). The challenge is for both PK-12 and postsecondary institutions to first acknowledge that they must work collaboratively to sever the predominant institutional mindset "that
Latina/o children are not interested in education or are incapable of succeeding in an academic setting” (Zalaquett, 2006, p. 36). Schools such as Pinnacle Middle, Pinnacle High, and Cesar Chavez Elementary have already found innovative ways to foster academic success for Latino youth that many other schools would dismiss as unteachable. PK-16 educational leaders must start with success stories like this as a foundation for new norms, policies, and practices in the American educational system that can better reflect the changes in national demographics.

It is also recommended that future researchers identify other subgroups under the Latino umbrella to determine if similar perceptions exist across the diverse Latino spectrum (Trucios-Haynes, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the researcher honed the focus to Latino educators of Mexican-American descent. It would be interesting to determine if similar results could be gleaned from similar studies of different national or regional subgroups (e.g., Cuban, Dominican, Central American, South American).

Moreover, it would be interesting to see enhanced variations in the results by further refining research to include only first-generation Mexican-American college students; only 33% of the participants fell into that category. Future researchers could also make comparisons across rural, suburban, and urban domains. Additionally, future researchers could hone in on the role of gender in cultivating the authentic caring (Romero, 2009) relationships that all of the participants spoke of when reflecting on their PK-12 student days. Two-thirds of the participants in this study were female; might the results have been different in any way if all were female or if all were male?

Finally, it is also recommended that future researchers might swim a little deeper into the educational headwater (Solorzano et al., 2005) by honing the focus to potential
Mexican-American educators that are still in middle or secondary school. Granted, the research of underage subjects requires significantly more diligence and protocol to pass through institutional review. Nonetheless, it would be compelling to capture the *in vivo* stories of the experiences and perceptions thereof of one's PK-12 education (and the accumulation or lack thereof of relational and institutional resources) as it is unfolding during these formative years, as opposed to the reflective approach of current PK-12 educators that was employed for this study. By doing so, future researchers may be able to also consider the role of *peers* in relational support, and how that additional cog to the circle of relational support may be either conducive or unfavorable to educational persistence toward a postsecondary education. Although the depth of the responses may not be as mindful as those gleaned in this study given the age and limited worldview of the subjects, they would nonetheless add another perspective to consider.

Ultimately, when viewed from the LatCrit lens, it is the researcher's intention that the findings of this study could someday be used in tandem with similar studies of other Latino subgroups. By doing so, perhaps educators can someday negate the brutally honest position of CRT researcher Ladson-Billings (2005) that "[w]e insist that prospective teachers demonstrate that they can be successful with a diverse group of students, [yet] we demonstrate no such success in our own professional lives" (p. 231). Perhaps academia can do its part to initiate and cultivate the development of a holistic Latino identity that will allow all Latinos to develop lasting coalitions that can translate social justice dogmatism and academic research to pragmatic and systemic changes in PK-16 educational institutions.
Concluding Overview

This collective case study examined the perceptions of PK-12 Latino educators (specifically, those of Mexican-American descent) regarding their personal experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how those perceptions may have positively or adversely impacted their consideration of education as a career. The findings of this inquiry suggested a need for relational and institutional support during the PK-12 years (particularly in middle school and high school) in order to cultivate the intrinsic self-image (Kohli, 2009) as a Latino learner that is paramount for these students to academically persist through an American educational system entrenched in majoritarian norms (Huber et al., 2008). Through individual interviews and observations, one constant permeated the pedagogical essence of each educator profiled: the desire to inculcate in their students the same degree of apoyo, or support, that they either had as a PK-12 student or aspired to have due to scant deposits of social capital themselves during those formative years.

The data revealed a compelling need for future longitudinal studies of the PK-12 student experiences of current PK-12 educators in other subgroups, first-generation educators specifically, and perhaps Latino youth currently on the PK-12 pipeline so as to ascertain factors or patterns that can help PK-16 educational leaders address the professional epidemic (Ramirez, 2009) of the inverse growth of PK-12 Latino educators relative to the American population as a whole. Furthermore, the study found the timely need for PK-16 educational leaders to identify both overtly and covertly oppressive institutional structures, policies, and practices (Solorzano et al., 2005) that inhibit talented Latino youth from considering a career in PK-12 education.
Finally, based on the findings, a simple answer emerged to the question, "How might the PK-12 student experiences of successful PK-12 educators (including the presence or lack thereof of Latino educators as role models) have impacted their educational aspiration and persistence and, eventually, their decision to opt for PK-12 education as their career of choice?" The pedagogical philosophy of each participant in the study was a direct byproduct of both the positive and negative experiences each faced as a PK-12 student. Regardless of the deposits of social capital that were offered to these young people in their respective schools, each educator had the internal drive and ambition to succeed in the system that many now "fight." Moreover, each participant was indubitably an agent of social change and justice. They were consummate advocates for all of their students, particularly those who may not be receiving the relational and institutional support needed to translate their aspirations to reality, those stuck in the headwaters of PK-12 education (Solorzano et al., 2005), those who have yet to visualize the vast ocean on the horizon and its limitless potential...

"I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward... Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true."

--- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"
APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

1. District Gatekeeper Permission for Educator Participation Letter
2. Administrative Permission for Educator Participation
3. Letter of Informed Consent - Educator Participant
4. Informed Consent Form - Educator Participant
District Gatekeeper Permission for Educator Participation Letter
< Name of District>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>

I would like to request your permission to invite applicable educators in your school district to participate in a research study entitled: Investigating the Headwater: An Examination of the PK-12 Student Experiences of Mexican-American PK-12 Educators to Promote Authentic Educator Recruitment Strategies. I am examining the perceptions of PK-12 Mexican-American educators regarding their personal experiences as PK-12 students, and how those perceptions may have positively or negatively impacted their consideration of education as a profession. The information gathered should be beneficial to secondary and postsecondary educational leaders responsible for bolstering the recruitment of highly qualified Mexican-Americans (as well as Latinos from other subgroups) into PK-12 education positions of all types. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

For the study, a sampling was selected of educators of Mexican-American descent who are currently employed in a PK-12 educational institution. I am seeking your permission as an administrator of the < Name of District > School District to contact the principals and applicable faculty of several school buildings for the purpose of inviting educators who fit this criteria to participate in this study. One or two educators from your district will then be chosen for an on-site observation and two individual interview sessions. A copy of the interview protocol and informed consent forms are attached for your review.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. The participants may withdraw from participation at any time they wish without penalty, including in the middle of or after completion of the interview. Participants' answers and the building's identity will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. The researcher will not list any names of participants, or their corresponding institutions, in his dissertation or any future publications of this study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about participation either by phone at (816) 914-3087 or by electronic mail at jayhawk95@comcast.net. In addition, you are also welcome to contact the dissertation advisor for this research study, Dr. Barbara Martin, who can be reached at 660-543-8823 or by email at bmartin@ucmo.edu.

If you choose to allow me to contact educators in your district regarding participation in this study, please complete the attached permission form. A copy of this letter and your written consent should be retained by you for future reference.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jason M. Morton
Doctoral Candidate
Administrative Permission for Educator Participation

I, _____________________________________________, grant permission for school buildings in my district to be contacted to identify and contact educators willing to participate in the study Investigating the Headwater: An Examination of the PK-12 Student Experiences of Mexican-American PK-12 Educators to Promote Authentic Educator Recruitment Strategies conducted by Jason M. Morton, doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

By signing this permission form, I understand that the following safeguards are in place to protect faculty choosing to participate:

- All participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point before culmination of the study.
- All responses will be used for dissertation research and for potential future journal publications.
- All identities and affiliations will be kept confidential in all phases of the research.
- An on-site researcher observation will take all or part of one (1) school day prior to the first interview, which will take approximately one (1) hour to complete.
- The second interview will be either on-site or by phone and will take no more than one (1) hour to complete.

Please keep the consent letter and a copy of the signed consent form for your records. If you choose to grant permission for educators in your school district to participate in this study, please complete this Administrative Permission for Educator Participation Form, seal it in the enclosed envelope, and return to Jason Morton as soon as possible.

I have read the material above, and any questions that I have posed have been answered to my satisfaction. I grant permission for educators in my district to be contacted and invited to participate in this study.

Signed: _______________________________ Date: __________________

Title/Position:

___________________________________________________________

School/District:

___________________________________________________________

Please return to: Jason M. Morton, 4012 S. Adams Ave., Independence, MO 64055
Home Phone: 816-350-7972  Cell Phone: 816-914-3087
Email: jayhawk95@comcast.net
Letter of Informed Consent - Educator Participant

[Date]

Dear (Educator Participant):

Thank you for considering participation in a research study titled *Investigating the Headwater: An Examination of the PK-12 Student Experiences of Mexican-American PK-12 Educators to Promote Authentic Educator Recruitment Strategies*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are an educator of Mexican-American descent who graduated from a four-year college and is currently working in a PK-12 educational institution.

The information gathered should be beneficial to secondary and postsecondary educational leaders responsible for bolstering the recruitment of highly qualified Mexican-Americans (as well as Latinos from other subgroups) into PK-12 positions of all types. Your participation has been approved by [the district gatekeeper] of [the employing institution].

**PURPOSE**
The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions of PK-12 Mexican-American educators regarding their personal experiences as PK-12 students, and how those perceptions may have positively or negatively impacted their consideration of education as a profession. The researcher will use a case study approach to examine the studies' constructs.

The following questions guide this qualitative study:

1) What are the perceptions of PK-12 educators of Latino descent regarding their own experiences as students in the PK-12 milieu, and how might those perceptions have impeded or facilitated educational aspiration and persistence?

2) Do Latino educators believe that their presence in PK-12 educational institutions can further mitigate negative perceptions of the efficacy and potential of Latino youth not only for themselves, but also for those of different races and ethnicities?

3) How can PK-16 educational leaders inform and implement transformational strategies to bolster future recruitment of Latino educators?

Before you make a final decision about participation, you must know how your rights will be protected:
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR EDUCATOR PARTICIPANT

● Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. If later you do not wish the data you provided to be used, inform me; your wish will be honored before culmination of the study. Your refusal to participate will have no adverse consequences. For any questions about your participation in this research, please contact me at 816-914-3087 or by e-mail at jayhawk95@comcast.net. You may also contact my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Barbara Martin, at (660) 543-8823 or by e-mail at bmartin@ucmo.edu.

● As an interview participant your name and answers will remain confidential; only my dissertation supervisor and I would have access to identifiable data. Any materials identifying specific individuals, district, or school will be kept locked and destroyed three years after the completion of this project. Data collected from the school participants will be coded for qualitative analysis, and summarized for reporting. Results may be published in Dissertation Abstracts and in professional journals at any time, protecting your anonymity and confidentiality.

● Your control as to which interview items you choose to answer ensures that there will be no identifiable risk for you greater than that encountered in your everyday life. The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if injury or discomfort results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities in the unlikely event that participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with this research. In such eventuality, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-3735 to obtain a review of the matter and receive further information. Ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

● This research has been preauthorized by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. If you have further questions regarding research participants’ rights, please contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm.

If you elect to participate and make your professional perspective count as part of this study, please review the Informed Consent form at your earliest convenience and return it to me, signed and dated. Keep this letter for future reference, if you wish. The on-site researcher observation will occupy all or part of one school day, followed by an interview of approximately one hour in length. A second interview of no more than one hour in length will be arranged later either on-site or by phone. A self-addressed stamped envelope has been provided or you may scan and e-mail your signed Informed Consent to me at jayhawk95@comcast.net. Your participation is very valuable. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason M. Morton
Doctoral Candidate
University of Missouri-Columbia
INFORMED CONSENT FROM EDUCATOR PARTICIPANT

I, _____________________________________________, agree to participate in the study Investigating the Headwater: An Examination of the PK-12 Student Experiences of Mexican-American PK-12 Educators to Promote Authentic Educator Recruitment Strategies conducted by Jason M. Morton, doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri-Columbia. I understand the following:

- My participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point before culmination of the study.
- My responses will be used for dissertation research and for potential future journal publications.
- My identity and affiliation will be kept confidential in all phases of the research.
- An on-site researcher observation will take all or part of one (1) school day prior to the first interview, which will take approximately one (1) hour to complete.
- The second interview will be either on-site or by phone and will take no more than one (1) hour to complete.

Please keep the consent letter and a copy of the signed consent form for your records. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the attached signed consent form, seal it in the enclosed envelope, and return to Jason Morton as soon as possible. Please to be sure and include contact information so interview plans can be made and communicated to you.

I have read the material above, and any questions that I have posed have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signed: ________________________________________ Date: ________________

Title/Position: ________________________________________________

School/District: ________________________________________________

Contact Information:

Phone _____________________ (circle one) WORK HOME CELL

Best time for contact: _________ E-mail:________________________________________

Please return to: Jason M. Morton, 4012 S. Adams Ave., Independence, MO 64055
Home Phone: 816-350-7972  Cell Phone: 816-914-3087
Email: jayhawk95@comcast.net
APPENDIX B

*Educator Participant Interview Protocol*

*On-Site Observation Form*
Educator Participant Interview Protocol

Participating Educator: ______________________________

Date: ____________________          Start Time: ____________________

Introduction:
Good afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions focusing on your experiences as a PK-12 student and perceptions of your PK-12 school career. My name is Jason Morton, and I will be conducting the interview. In order to ensure accuracy, I will be audio taping the interview.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. If you want to follow-up on a question or give an example, feel free to do that. I want this to be more of a conversation between professionals.

Our session will last about an hour and we will not be taking a formal break. Please let me know if you need to leave the table for any reason. Let’s begin by finding out more about each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening Questions: 5 min.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Tell me your name and your position within the school.</td>
<td>Learn about participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you had any previous experiences in other schools or districts? If so, at what levels and for how long?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Introductory Questions: 5-10 min.               |                      |
| 3. What compelled you to consider a career in education? | Q1                  |
| **Probes:** At what age did you realize you wanted to be an educator? Were others in your family supportive of your career choice? |                      |
Transition Question: 5-10 min.

4. Tell me a little about your experiences as a PK-12 student of Mexican American descent.

   *Probes: What were the demographics of the schools you attended? Describe the diversity of the student and teacher populations.*

Key Questions: 10-15 min.

5. What were the main obstacles (if any) that you faced before graduating from high school?

   *Probes: Were other Mexican Americans or other Latinos in your high school facing similar obstacles? Describe how these obstacles might have been different (if at all) from students of other races or ethnicities.*

6. Describe your level of preparedness for a postsecondary education.

   *Probes: Do you believe you were academically prepared? Do you believe you were prepared to apply for and transition to a college setting? What tools were you and your family provided to make this transition successfully?*

7. As you moved on to a postsecondary education, what further obstacles (if any) did you face before graduating?

   *Probes: Were other Mexican Americans or other Latinos in your college or university facing similar obstacles? Describe how these obstacles might have been different (if at all) from students of other races or ethnicities.*

Key Questions: 10-15 min

8. Looking back at your time as a PK-12 student, what positive experiences did you have that made education an attractive career option?

9. On the other hand, when looking back at your time as a PK-12 student, what negative experiences did you have that made education an unattractive career option?

10. Looking back at your time as a PK-12 student, can you recall a particular teacher or other educator that left a lasting positive impact as well as one who left a lasting negative impact on you?

[160]
11. Had more Latino educators been present in your PK-12 schooling, describe how (if at all) their presence might have had an impact on you.

   *Probe: In your mind, how might the presence of more Latino educators have had an impact on non-Latino students and colleagues?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions: 10-15 min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Describe the diversity of educator candidates in your collegiate educator preparation program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Probes: If candidates in your program were not very diverse, how might leaders in the program improve that deficiency in their recruitment efforts?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Overall, there is a national deficit of qualified Latino educators in schools. Describe what approach you would advise an educational leader to take in order to attract more Latinos to the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Many educators of all races and ethnicities leave the profession within a few years. Again, what might you advise an educational leader to do in order to retain qualified Latino educators for the long term?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ending Question: 5-10 min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Is there anything else you would wish to tell me that I have not asked?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1, Q2, Q3
APPENDIX C

On-Site Observation Form
On-Site Observation Form

Date: __________________________

Beginning Time: _____________    Ending Time: _____________

Setting(s): ________________________________________________________

Participant(s): _____________________________________________________

Observations:
APPENDIX D

University of Missouri – Columbia Institutional Review Board Approval
Dear Investigator:

Your human subject research project entitled INVESTIGATING THE HEADWATER: AN EXAMINATION OF THE PK-12 STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN PK-12 EDUCATORS TO PROMOTE AUTHENTIC EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES meets the criteria for EXEMPT APPROVAL and will expire on February 07, 2012. Your approval will be contingent upon your agreement to annually submit the "Annual Exempt Research Certification" form to maintain current IRB approval.

Exempt Category:

45 CFR 46.101b(2)

You must submit the Annual Exempt Research Certification form 30 days prior to the expiration date. Failure to timely submit the certification form by the deadline will result in automatic expiration of IRB approval.

**Study Changes:** If you wish to revise your exempt project, you must complete the Exempt Amendment Form for review.

Please be aware that all human subject research activities must receive prior approval by the IRB prior to initiation, regardless of the review level status. If you have any questions regarding the IRB process, do not hesitate to contact the Campus IRB office at (573) 882-9585.

Campus Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX E

Data Codes
## Data Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Educator Participant 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Educator Participant 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Educator Participant 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Educator Participant 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Educator Participant 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>Interviews with Educator Participant 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>Interviews with Educator Participant 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>Interviews with Educator Participant 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>Interviews with Educator Participant 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>Interviews with Educator Participant 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO1</td>
<td>Field Observation of Participant 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO2</td>
<td>Field Observation of Participant 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO3</td>
<td>Field Observation of Participant 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO4</td>
<td>Field Observation of Participant 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO5</td>
<td>Field Observation of Participant 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETCON</td>
<td>Settings/Contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAL</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEL</td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


P. E. Leonard (Eds.), *The values of educational administration* (pp. 51-69). London: Falmer.


Peterson, P.E. & Nadler, D. (2009). What happens when states have genuine alternative certification? We get more minority teachers and test scores rise. *Education Digest, 75*(1), 57-60.


programs: A review of the research literature. In W. Tierney, Z. Corwin, & J
Colyar (Eds.), Preparing for college: Nine elements of effective outreach (pp. 13-

retrospective and prospective analysis. Yearbook for the National Society of the
Study of Education, 103(1), 70-104.

attendance and the state of Texas GEAR UP program. Review of Policy Research,
23(5), 1035-1051.

Weiss, R.S. (1994). Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview

Wilberschied, L., & Dassier, J. (1995). Increasing the number of minority FL educators:
Local action to meet a national imperative. The Modern Language Journal, 79(1),
1-14.

Yosso, T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of
community cultural wealth. Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 8(1), 69-91.

Education, 5, 35-47.

Journal of College Student Retention, 6(3), 301-324.
VITA

Jason M. Morton was born in Kansas City, Missouri, to Robert and Beatrice Morton. He graduated in 1991 from Lincoln College Preparatory Academy in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1995, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Middle/Secondary English Education from The University of Kansas – Lawrence. He later earned a Master of Science in Educational Leadership from The University of Kansas – Edwards Campus in 2004, followed by a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri – Columbia in 2011.

Jason’s work experiences thus far have encompassed many roles. He began his career as a secondary English teacher in the rural 1-A town of Drexel, Missouri. He is currently employed at the Fort Osage R-I School District in Independence, Missouri, as a secondary English teacher, District ELA (English Language Arts) Instructional Facilitator, and Assistant Director of Summer School. Research interests include critical race, Latino critical, and social capital theories as they pertain to best practices in the milieu of PK-12 leadership not only for Latino students, but for all racially, ethnically, or socioeconomically marginalized populations.

Dr. Morton currently resides in Independence, Missouri, with his wife, Tracey Morton, and their two children, Nathaniel (Nate) and Avery.