Espacio Iluminado: An Empowerment Model of Latino Parent Involvement Located in the Third Space

by

Kathleen Scheehl Brotherton

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Linda C. Caterino, Chair
Ray R. Buss
Christina Weber

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ABSTRACT

Parent involvement in their children's education has been a frequently sought after and highly regarded component in education that has repeatedly been identified as a significant influence that contributes to children's success in school. Historically, Latino parent involvement has been markedly low in the United States. Researchers' interest in Latino parents' involvement in their children's education has been spurred by this low level of involvement coupled with reports of significant differences in educational achievement between Latino students and students of other ethnic backgrounds. Perceptions of self-efficacy and role construction have been identified as motivators for parent involvement. The purpose of this action research study was to examine the relationship between the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program as a nontraditional Latino parent involvement opportunity and parents' perceptions of self-efficacy and role construction as it pertains to supporting the education of their children. The foundation of the program was developed utilizing Third Space Theory (Bhabha, 1994) to generate a framework that had the potential to serve as a model for future parent involvement programs that validated the knowledge of diverse cultures and discourses and encouraged a mediation of the two. Participants' ratings of *Role Construction* and *Self-Efficacy* were significantly improved after their involvement in the parent program. Participants also felt strongly that the program was personally valuable and useful. Future direction might include a longitudinal study to track academic progress of children of the participants.

DEDICATION

"The only thing of importance, when we depart,
will be the traces of love we have left behind."
— Albert Schweitzer

To the incredible people in my life

My Husband Mark
A strong and wise soul who has been by my side every step of the way. You are my best friend and soulmate! I cherish you and I love us together! May we always encourage each other to be the best we can be.

My Mother, Susan
For believing that I could and making this journey possible. You are a pillar of strength and love. I love you. Thank you.

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For instilling in me your incredible work ethic and perseverance, your consciousness and compassion for others, and hopefully, your uncanny ability to see "ahead of the curb."

My Mother, Geraldine
For always listening to me and giving me unconditional love. I appreciate you. Thank you for encouraging me and being proud of every little thing I do.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

As the sun illuminates the moon and stars,
so let us illuminate each other.
~unknown

Parent involvement in their children's education has repeatedly has been shown to have a positive effect on student academic achievement (Epstein, 2001). Becher (1986) found a high level of association between parent involvement and increased academic performance, as well as overall cognitive development. After a review of several research studies in the area of parent involvement, Henderson and Mapp (2002) contended that

> the evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a significant influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more. (p. 7)

Additionally, other research studies have associated parent involvement with lower rates of behavior problems (Lee, 1993), decreased likelihood of high school truancy and high school drop-outs (McNeal, 1999), increased college aspirations, (Cabrera & Steven, 2000), as well as increased college enrollment rates (Horn, 1998). In a study evaluating the effects of family and school capital on student's academic achievement, Parcel and Dufur (2001) found that parental involvement in school had a positive impact on academic outcomes for children.

Parent involvement has been a term that encompasses a broad range of programs and events that encourage parents to be involved in their child's education. It has even been defined in national legislation (e.g., No Child Left Behind, NCLB, 2002) as

> the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:
>
> - that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
> - that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education;
> - that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making to assist in the education of their child." Education. Title IX (20 U.S.C. 7801 et seq.) as cited in Ferguson, 2009, p. 3.

This definition of parental involvement defined the parameters by which schools might implement programs, activities, and procedures to involve parents, but did not include suggestions for involving parents who are less accessible or from culturally diverse backgrounds. Nor did the definition take into consideration the unique perceptions of the needs and values associated with parent involvement based on cultural and ideological differences. For example, common parent involvement opportunities offered by schools, such as parent meetings and parent advisory councils, have historically been utilized primarily by white, middle-class parents, but have not been very successful in attracting Latino parents (Vasquez, Pease-Alverez, & Shannon, 1994). The U.S. Department of Education (2003) named ethnicity as a predictor of parent involvement, citing that 82% of Caucasian students' parents attended school events compared to 64% of Latino parents. In addition, 32% of Latino and 31% of African American students had parents that volunteered at their child's school compared to 50% of Caucasian parents. Another predictor of parental involvement in education in recent literature is socioeconomic status (SES). Griffith (1998) found that parent involvement was significantly lower for low-income parents, language minority parents, and parents with personal and/or adjustment problems than for the majority culture, middle class

socioeconomic parents. However, the descriptors that defined what parent involvement looked like in Griffith's study and other similar studies focused on traditional forms of parent involvement such as attending parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, and involvement in school-based activities (Baker, Kessler-Sklar, Piotrkowsky, & Lamb Parker, 1999; Carter & Wojtkiewicz, 2000; Fan & Chen, 2001; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000; Lopez, Rodriguez, & Sanchez, 1995). Traditional forms of parent involvement opportunities conflicted with findings from ethnographic studies that showed that parent involvement can be viewed as encompassing a variety of attitudes, priorities, and behaviors beyond the limited scope of traditional parent involvement offerings at schools (Moll & Greenberg, 1992). Interpretations of what constitutes parent involvement were often defined by teachers and administrators and included the schools', teachers', and administrators' agendas, as well as their own visions of schooling (Auerbach, 2007; Lareau, 1994; Ordonez-Jasis, 2010; Sil, 2007). Thus, there has been a tendency for teachers and administrators to view parent participation in a different light than minority parents do (Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2012). Consequently, school personnel may have viewed parents' lack of participation in traditional activities as parental indifference or disinterest in their child's education (Garcia Coll et al., 2002). Similarly, any of those same parents may have felt that their suggestions, perceptions, and contributions were often dismissed by school personnel, leading to feelings of distrust, lack of appreciation, or lack of valuing (Lareau, 1989; Rodriguez-Brown, 2010; Valdes, 1996). Susan Auerbach (2001) argued that parent involvement in education was a socially constructed phenomenon that reflected privileged white, middle class values−the values and the expectations of teachers and school administrators. Similarly, Lopez

(2001) contended that, “parent involvement has become a privileged domain signified by certain legitimate acts” (p. 417). Examples included chaperoning on field trips and more visible forms of involvement such as volunteering in the classroom (E. Auerbach, 2001). Because parent involvement had been limited to privileged and narrowly defined events, and teachers placed such a high value on school-based involvement, parents who had been less visible in the school were frequently considered to be apathetic regarding their child’s education (Gandura, 1995; Moles, 1993). These types of assumptions perpetuate a deficit view of thinking regarding minority and lower socioeconomic families (Valdes, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). Further, it was widely unacknowledged that traditional forms of parent involvement offered by the school were a reflection of broader social inequalities that affected students (Auerbach, 2007). Brown (1989) contended that lower socioeconomic status (SES) parents may need to work and are not as available to volunteer in the day or may be hourly employees who cannot take off work without a financial consequence. The U.S. Department of Labor reported among married-couple families in the U.S, both the husband and wife were employed in 48.0% of families; in 19.8% of married-couple families only the husband was employed, and in 7.1% of married-couple families only the wife was employed (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). This trend may limit many parents’ abilities to participate in traditional, more visible ways of being involved with their child’s education. Schools’ tended to devalue the resources of lower SES and minority families tended to limit parents’ involvement opportunities and constrained relationships between schools and families (S. Auerbach, 2001; Laureau, 1989, 2003; Laureau & Horvat, 1999).

Historically, research in the area of parent involvement has focused predominantly on the fundamental relationship between academic achievement and parents' involvement with their children's school (Grolnick, Kurowski, Dunlap, & Hevey, 2000). However, recent research has begun to examine parent involvement in a cultural variational context, focusing on examining the factors related to parent involvement as they related to sociodemographic and cultural variables (Garcia-Coll et al., 2002). This approach was a departure from the "one-size-fits-all" traditional approach to parent involvement and moved in the direction of looking at parent involvement through a lens that took local sociocultural contexts into consideration. A report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2003) emphasized the importance of this focus, where findings showed that Latino parents were significantly less likely than Caucasian parents to participate in traditional school parent involvement opportunities such as attendance at general meetings, volunteering in the classroom, or serving on school committees. Romo and Falbo (1996) found that many Latino parents experienced a feeling of dissonance toward U.S. schools and therefore were less likely to become involved in traditional, more visible parent involvement opportunities.

Researchers interested in parent involvement have begun to pay particular attention to connecting parents from culturally diverse backgrounds with nontraditional opportunities for parents to be involved with schools (Galindo & Medina, 2009; Paredes, 2010). Contemporary scholarship has discredited the myth that parents from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds do not care about their children's education and have begun to illuminate the ways in which these parents do support their children's academic progress. Their support may have been less visible, but they have been shown to have

high aspirations for their child's success in school (Clark, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Lopez, 2001; Meyers, Dowdy, & Patterson, 2000; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995; Solorzano, 1992). Additionally, a study from the Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities that focused on ethnic and racial disparities in education revealed the importance of creating ways for Latino parents to be involved that valued the language and culture of parents, as well as validating and recognizing the knowledge gained from life experiences that equipped parents to support their children's education (American Psychological Association, 2012). In recent studies, Paredes (2010) and Ramirez (2010) identified the need to develop meaningful home-school collaboration as an important area of focus for school improvement where changes were required to improve the educational experience.

Situational Context

The setting for this study was a large public school district in a suburb of a large Southwestern city. The school district has 72,016 students and is comprised of the following ethnicities: 44.6% Caucasian, 42.4% Hispanic, 4.7% African-American, 4.5% Native American, 1.4% Asian, 0.6% Pacific Islander, and 1.8% multi-ethnicity (Mesa Public Schools internal data, 2016). According to district data, there has been an increase of Hispanic students enrolled in the district, with a 3.6% increase since 2010, and at the same time there has been a decrease of Caucasian students enrolled in the district, with a decrease of 5.3% since 2010 (Mesa Public Schools internal data, 2016).

Improving Latino student achievement has been a significant focus for the school district as a whole. District data has revealed evidence of a growing achievement gap between Caucasian and Asian students as compared to Latino and other minority students

in the district. Achievement gaps occur when one group of students, categorized by race, gender, or ethnicity, perform better than another group and the difference in average scores between the two groups is statistically significant (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011).

Unfortunately, since the creation of public schools in the United States, it has been a national trend that minority groups have experienced disparate school outcomes in achievement compared to their nonminority peers (Howard, 2010). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) explored the achievement gaps between Latino and Caucasian students using data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) study to identify patterns and changes in these gaps over time. The study, *Achievement Gaps: How Hispanic and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress,* provided a detailed portrait of Hispanic and Caucasian academic achievement disparities and described how students' performance has changed over time at both national and state levels (NCES, 2011). According to the data collected from NCES, trends in NAEP mathematics and reading scores increased for both Latino and Caucasian students from 2003 to 2009. The achievement gap between Caucasian students and low SES and Latino students who qualified for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and those who did not narrowed in fourth-grade mathematics achievement, as well as in fourth and eighth-grade reading achievement. These findings offered a small sense of encouragement, but the overall achievement gap between the two groups remained. The Latino population currently represents the second largest ethnic group in the United States, comprising 16% of the nation's population, and is projected to continue to grow (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2010). Researchers have identified common social factors

that have contributed to the Latino achievement gap, which have included language barriers, limited parental education, poverty, discrimination, and residential instability (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

After recognizing a need to provide parent involvement opportunities for Latino parents specifically, the school district in my context created the Superintendent's Latino Parent Council in 2013 as an opportunity for Latino parents to voice their concerns about how the school district can better support Latino families and students. The council meetings were scheduled throughout the school year in various school locations around the district. Parents had the opportunity to have a conversation with the district superintendent and other district staff at these meetings and to discuss issues of concern among parents attending. They were also given the opportunity to propose solutions to those problems. Unfortunately, these events were not well attended by parents. For example, a recent Superintendent Latino Parent Council had five parents and eight district and school staff members in attendance.

Considering that parent involvement has been shown to be a factor that is significantly related to academic achievement and that Latino parents tend to underutilize parent involvement opportunities offered by schools, there appears to be a need to examine the nature of the existing parent involvement activities and to consider broadening these opportunities to attract and involve more minority families in ways that are meaningful to them.

According to Glenn (1988), "Formal schooling…presents pictures or maps of reality that reflect, unavoidably, particular choices about what is certain and what is in question, what is significant and what is unworthy of notice" (p. 8). In this regard,

opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education should be thoughtfully considered by school administrators and faculty with the emphasis being placed on validating the knowledge, strengths, and perspectives of the families they serve. The types of parent involvement opportunities and parent support that schools provide can communicate to parents what knowledge the school values. Similarly, when children see their parents involved with the school or supporting learning activities, it can send a message that school is an important investment of time and energy (Davis, 2000).

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH GUIDING THE PROJECT

Researchers have examined parental involvement and, more specifically, Latino parent involvement and its effect on academic achievement (Tinkler, 2002). In this chapter, I have presented a review of the literature that supported and shaped this action research study. The theoretical frameworks of parent involvement, role construction, self-efficacy, and Third Space Theory are discussed. I also present substantial literature and perspectives that provided the framework and structure for the program, including examples of Latino parent involvement programs that helped provide a framework and structure for the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. Role construction and self-efficacy were examined as motivators for parents to be involved in their child's education. Third Space Theory was the platform for creating a space when parent empowerment was the focus, and Latino parents' perceptions were listened to and validated. I proposed that the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program could influence parents' perceptions of self-efficacy and parents' role construction as it pertained to supporting their children's learning.

Latino Parent Involvement

Researchers have examined parental involvement and its positive effect on academic achievement. Parents' involvement in their children's education has repeatedly been identified as an important influence that contributes to children's success in school (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Epstein, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1996; Kellaghan, Sloane, Alverez, & Bloom, 1993; Valdes, 1996). A meta-analysis of 52 studies revealed a strong positive correlation between parent involvement and academic achievement and

other positive academic outcomes including decreased rates of behavior problems, decreased absences from school, and higher aspirations for educational success (Jeynes, 2007). Jeynes confirmed these results in a follow-up analysis, finding strong positive correlations between academic achievement and parent involvement in all students from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade.

Low parent involvement in schools has been found to be prevalent among Latino parents (Carrasquillo & London, 1993). As a whole, Latino parent involvement in schools in the United States has been described as low to even nonexistent in some cases (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Researchers' interest in Latino parents' involvement in their children's education has been spurred by this low level of involvement coupled with reports of alarming differences in educational achievement between Latino students and students of other ethnic backgrounds (DeBlassie & DeBlassie, 1996). Because of the overwhelming evidence of the benefits of parent involvement and the documented lack of visible involvement of Latino parents, schools began to create parent involvement programs specifically for Latino parents (Pollock, 2010; Riggs & Medina, 2005; Ginsberg, 2007; Sobel & Kugler, 2007). Unfortunately, many of these programs were created with a one-sided approach that focused on educating parents and making up for their perceived *inadequacies* when it came to supporting their child's education (Murillo et al., 2010). Crozier (2001) argued that a large part of the problem of low Latino parent involvement was that many schools viewed minority and low-income families from a deficit perspective. Murillo et al. contended that a deficit perspective of minority families promoted the development of parent involvement programs at schools that took on a *subtractive* stance of *educating parents* where assimilation goals were the primary focus.

For example, *Generacíon Diez* was a program that focused on making up for what was assumed to be deficits within the Latino community, such as classes that focused on social skills or skill-based classes (Riggs & Medina, 2005). This type of program implied that Latino parents needed to have a certain skill set before they were adequately able to participate in their child's learning (Murillo et al., 2010). These types of programs also indirectly suggested that Caucasian parents possessed adequate parenting skills whereas Latino parents did not. Moreover, schools tended to provide parent involvement opportunities that "treated all parents as if they had the same needs or the same experiences as white, middle-class parents" (DeGaetano, 2007, p. 146).

Efforts from many schools to increase Latino parent involvement have frequently been unsuccessful. Many educators made attempts to involve Latino parents in the educational process, but, according to Christie (2005), ended up telling the parents what they should do to help their child or to help the school instead of listening to parents' ideas, perspectives, and needs when it comes to helping their child experience success in school. Murillo et al. (2010) stated that Latino parent involvement programs should be based on mutual respect, partnership, and tolerance. Historically, what has often been overlooked was how to provide opportunities for Latino parents to be involved in their child's education in ways that are both empowering and affirming to Latino parents.

De Gaetano (2007) suggested that a way to begin to involve Latino parents may be through an attempt by the school to engage Latino families in a dialogue about the realities of their lives and to acknowledge their ideas and values. *The Cross Cultural Demonstration Project* was a Latino parent involvement program focused on Latino parents' everyday lives, beliefs, and values. Researchers had received a three-year federal

grant to work with two schools to improve the educational achievement of English Language Learners. The schools were selected based on administrator interest and high percentages of English Language Leaners. The program was created expanding on Dewey's belief that all people possess expertise and abilities that can be recognized by focusing on, valuing, and developing the know-how and experiences of the people in that context (Cuffaro, 1995). Researchers used parent workshops that were designed to engage parents in discussions focused on self and family, community, and the school setting. The project also included teacher training. The parent and teacher workshops occurred concurrently, but in a parallel manner. The topics for the parent workshops were developed by presenting potential topics to Latino parents during parent meetings that were conducted both in Spanish and English. The ideas and values of the parents at the meetings were used to create the agendas and topics for the future workshops. These planning meetings were held during the school day, and childcare was provided to children who were not yet school age.

The participant pool for the *Cross Cultural Demonstration Project* was selected by invitation. All of the parent participants in the first research site were of Latino descent, and the site had mostly Latino parents participating except for one Caucasian mother who was married to a second-generation Puerto Rican man. Ample time was given to parents at each workshop to discuss their personal schooling experiences, interests, and concerns relating to supporting their children's learning (De Gaetano, 2007). Ideas or take-home activities were given out at each session for parents to use with their children at home. Through the workshop topics, parents' ideas and experiences were listened to and validated (De Gaetano, 2007).

Researchers found that after participating in this program, parents increased their social and knowledge capital about schools and became increasingly more comfortable in the school, even volunteering in classrooms. The researchers found that Latino classroom volunteering rates steadily increased at the research sites during the program. Another key finding was that some parents became more analytical of what they observed when they volunteered in the classroom, alluding to a higher sense of self-efficacy when it came to supporting their children's education (De Gaetano, 2007). These results suggested that parental self-efficacy, which involved seeing oneself as a person with the ability to influence their children's educational experience through advocacy, was enhanced through participation in this parent involvement opportunity.

Non-Traditional Latino Parent Involvement Models

Parent involvement and family engagement have been gaining more visibility as necessary structures for supporting learning (Auerbach, 2009; Paredes, 2010). School administrators committed to taking steps toward more equitable, culturally responsive, and collaborative schools are beginning to provide Latino parents empowering opportunities to be involved in their child's education (Fruchter, 2007; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002; Noguera, 2001; Olivos, 2006). Empowerment models of parent involvement have been platforms for social justice where steps have been taken not only to increase student achievement, but also to reach out to parents to improve school-family relationships in the Latino community (Auerbach, 2007; Furman & Shields, 2003; Hoff, Yoder, & Hoff, 2006). Empowerment in this context was defined as an "ongoing intentional process centered in the local community involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation through which people lack an equal share of

valued resources to gain greater access to and control over those resources" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p. 23). Emphasizing community and family engagement in schools has become increasingly recognized as a way to create more equitable, culturally responsive, and collaborative educational systems (Fruchter, 2007; Jordan et al., 2002; Noguera, 2001; Olivos, 2006). In the following section, I will describe a few examples of these types of programs.

Empowering Parents for Community Uplift. The Empowering Parents for Community Uplift program was an example of an empowerment model of parent involvement (Auerbach, 2009). This school sponsored program was held in the Los Angeles Unified School District and was developed by Principal Richard Zavala. Zavala started the program in an attempt to resolve the low to non-existent parent involvement in his school. His passion for empowering Latino parents and giving them a validated voice in the school community was the foundation for the project. This passion for empowering parents in the education of their children reflects a broader ethical commitment to social justice and uplift.

The school was a low achieving school that served 900 mostly Latino students. As part of this program, parent workshops designed around parents' and teachers' perceived needs and interests functioned as a bridge between the needs of the parents and the school staff. With the goal of putting parents in control over time, Zavala took a less directive role in the program and encouraged parent-led events with Zavala as more of a supportive member. This approach to parent involvement resisted constructs that offer restricted, predefined opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education and provided opportunities for parents to be productive, active members of the school

community who shaped and influenced schools (Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).

Home visitation program. Another example of an element of an empowerment model of parent involvement with a slightly different approach was a home visit program initiated by Assistant Principal Young in the Los Angeles Unified School District. With similar demographics to Zavala's school, Young encountered similar problems of low parent traditional involvement. Young's outreach was an example of providing opportunities for power and decision-making to be shared among schools and parents (Auerbach, 2009). Taking cues from parents, Young began to incorporate home visits as an outreach attempt for parents who did not feel comfortable at the school. Most of Young's teachers were involved in visiting over 300 families. According to Young, the home visits resulted in building better understanding and relationships between teachers and families. Teachers reported that they were better able to understand and appreciate the lives of their students and parents felt that there was a sense of collective responsibility for the education of their children. This program was an opportunity for teachers and parents to engage in an authentic dialogue where both voices were heard and appreciated. Both programs created opportunities for parents to articulate their dreams and goals for their children, communicate their needs, and develop relationships between the school and the home (Auerbach, 2009).

The home visitation program along with the Empowering Parents for Community Uplift described above were part of a case study that examined the educational leaders' efforts to create opportunities in their schools that provided opportunities for meaningful family engagement. All schools in the case study were classified as Title I schools and

were located within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Findings included a definitive focus on and ethical commitment to serving disenfranchised Latino families. Each of the programs emphasized an empowering and respectful approach to Latino parent engagement that created increased opportunities for meaningful family involvement (Auerbach, 2009).

Committee for Latin Parents (COPLA). COPLA was created as a result of actively involved Latino parents' interest in including more Spanish-speaking parents in the schooling process (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). The key goal of COPLA was for Latino parents to listen to and learn from one another about school and learning-related issues. The group focused on holding discussions about communicating with the school, strategies for helping their children with their homework, the general workings of the school system, such as accessing local resources, and the rights and responsibilities of parents as they pertained to their children's education. With the focus being on the child, parents shared their experiences, learning from each other. They also used experienced COPLA parent members, as well as community guest speakers to educate less experienced or newer COPLA members, increasing the individual group members' feelings of self-efficacy when it came to supporting the education of their children and being a holder of knowledge in the school system (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). In this way, parents were empowered to share their experiences and knowledge in a valued and respected forum. Six key features of COPLA that created its identity as an empowerment model of parent involvement were: mutual respect between parent participants; addressing needs that were unique to their situations; continuous critical reflection that allowed the program to evolve to meet situational needs; holding the child at the center of

their work; an egalitarian model of interaction that allowed for shared power between the school and COPLA; and continuous dialogue that allowed for conversations to be held beyond immediate situations (Degado-Gaitain, 2001). Implications from the research suggested a need for schools to offer ways for underrepresented parents to be involved in nontraditional opportunities for engagement that are meaningful to the parents, not just the school (Delgado-Gaitain, 1991).

Parental Motivations for Involvement

How to involve more parents in their children's education through parent involvement opportunities has been a formidable task for schools. Understanding parents' motivation to be involved in their children's schooling process has been considered a first step in creating a successful parent involvement program (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) developed a model of the parental involvement process including specific motivations that parents had for becoming involved in their child's education. This model was created as a result of the examination of parental involvement in families whose children were determined to be at-risk for academic failure and has been used in numerous studies with minority populations, specifically focusing on the factors that motivated parents to become involved. The model was composed of five levels including motivational constructs for parental involvement, types of parent involvement, student perceptions of the learning mechanisms parents use during involvement, student attributes conducive to achievement, and outcome measures of student achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Although the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model outlines five

sequential levels of parental involvement, the focus of this study advocates for further exploration of parental motivations for involvement located in level 1 of the model.

Level 1 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model of parent involvement identified two significant motivators for parent involvement. These included:

> parental role construction for involvement (parents' beliefs about what their role is in their child's schooling) and parents' sense of self-efficacy for helping their children succeed in school (parents' beliefs about whether or not their involvement is likely to positively influence their children's education). (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2011, p. 412)

The details of their model have been provided in Figure 1.

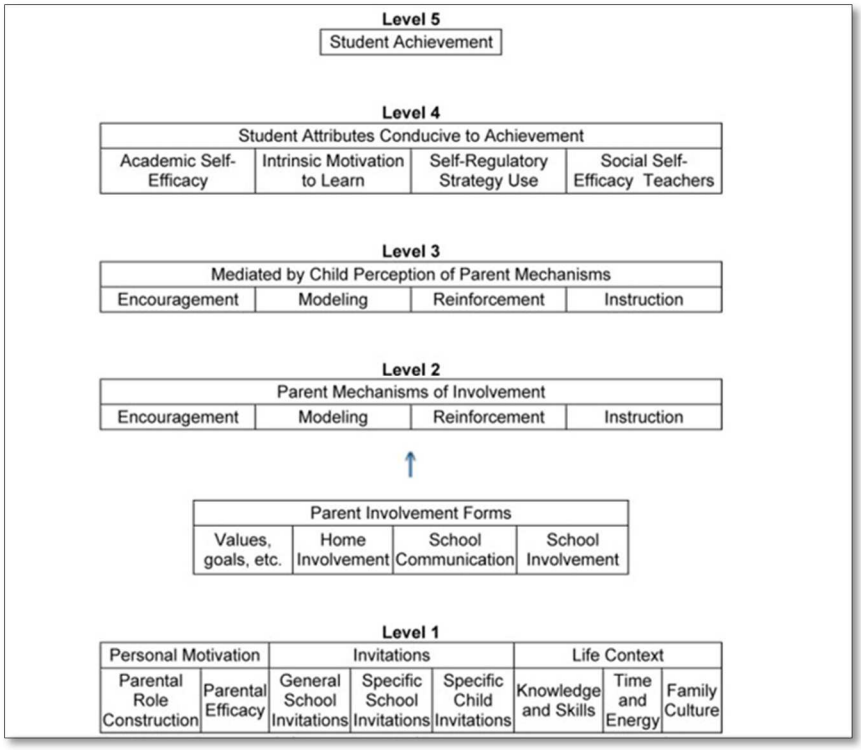


Figure 1. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parent involvement. Adapted from http://www.vanderbuilt.edu/Peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html from Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 2005.

Role construction. The literature on parent involvement suggested the way parents defined their roles and responsibilities in their children's education varied and

was influenced by their cultural and socioeconomic status (Laureau, 1989; Lightfoot, 1978; Van Galen, 1987). Parental role construction for involvement has been defined as,

> parental values, beliefs, goals, and expectations for the child's behavior, parental beliefs and behaviors related to responsibility for the child's day to day education, and parental beliefs and practices related to responsibility for common conflicts or major decisions in the child's education. (Reed, Jones, Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2000, p. 4)

The ways in which parents defined that their role had a direct influence on the levels and types of involvement in which parents engaged when it came to their children's education. Situated in role theory (e.g., Biddle, 1986), parents' role construction for involvement assumed that parents developed ideas of how much and in what ways to be involved in their children's education based on their ideas and those of important others, such as family members and friends (Walker et al., 2011). Role construction is considered to be a motivator for involvement because it can help parents to anticipate and realize their personal role in a host of different education-related activities that may contribute to their child's academic achievement (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).

Additionally, role construction has been shown to influence academic achievement because a parents' sense of his/her role construct delineates which activities he or she believes they should participate in as it relates to supporting their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Considerable attention has been given to Latino parental role construction and parent involvement (Walker et al., 2005). Valdés (1996) asserted that how Latino parents perceived their involvement in school came into conflict with the school's image of what constituted a "good" parent. Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991) argued that some teachers perceived Latino parents as not caring about

their child's education. To the contrary, Trueba and Delgado-Gaitan (1988) found that Latino families had a genuine interest in their child's education, but that expectations and ideas for the role of the parent often differed from the school's ideas and expectations. The researchers found that Latino parents defined their role in their child's education to be that of providing support and meeting basic obligations. According to Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), Latino parents saw that their essential role in their child's education was to support the acquisition of "buena educación" or good manners and to know their culture and their expected role within their culture. Valdés (1996) concisely described *una persona bien educada* (a person with education) in the context of Latino perspective of school success, to be educated as a whole being in relation to your family and community, including roles that one should play in life and rules of conduct that includes both morals and values. In general, Latino parents showed their support for the school by attending parent-teacher conferences, open house events, and festivals, but did not necessarily believe that it was their place to volunteer in their child's classroom or to initiate contact or communication with the school (Valdés). Reese et al. (1995) maintained that although Latino parents held high expectations for their children's educational achievement, they believed that involving themselves in the teaching role related to school content would have been disrespectful to the teacher's role and expertise. Some observed examples of Latino parents' support for their children's education within this role construct included emphasizing the value of education, encouraging respect for others, monitoring school work, and having conversations with their children about school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Reese, 2002; Trusty, Plata, & Salazar, 2003). Other examples of parent involvement included parental aspirations for their

children's academic and future vocational achievements (Huss-Keeler, 1997). Given the contrast between Latino role construction for involvement and the traditional forms of parent involvement opportunities offered by schools in the United States, there appeared to be a critical need to bridge the divide and provide involvement opportunities that merged the two (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) was an example of a Latino parent involvement program that purposefully bridged the divide between school and Latino parent role construction through collaboration between school and parents. The PIQE program originated in San Diego County in 1987 as an effort to improve low academic achievement and to decrease the dropout rate among Latino students (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). The PIQE program was designed to offer parents a platform for considering their beliefs and practices as it pertained to supporting their children's education, as well as to gain an understanding of what was required for success in school. The program consisted of eight 90-minute sessions (six content, one orientation, and one graduation) and focused on information about the educational system, how to interact with the school and teachers, and how to help their children at home. Chrispeels and Rivero studied PIQE's effects on parents' perception of their roles in their children's education, feelings of self-efficacy on supporting their children's education, and parents' perception of the school invitations, as well as opportunities for parent involvement before and after participating in the program. The findings revealed that parents increased their participation in their children's education in the school, as well as at home, and expanded their perceptions and ideas for being involved. The researchers found that Latino parents' understanding of their role can sometimes limit their involvement, but

can be transformed through purposeful, collaborative efforts between Latino parents and school, as exemplified in the PIQE program.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy theory is the personal belief that a person has the ability to successfully achieve an outcome they wish to attain (Bandura, 1997). Perceived capability or self-efficacy has been phrased as a belief, or a *can do* and has been a major determinant of intention and future action (Bandura, 2006). It has been shown that a stronger sense of efficacy for involvement has been associated with higher rates of parent involvement, whereas a weaker sense of efficacy has been related to lower rates of parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). As an example, if parents believed they would make a difference by helping with homework or attending a parent-teacher conference, then he or she was more willing to participate in that activity. A higher level of self-efficacy allows parents to conceptualize their contributions to their child's education as an educational partnership with the school, resulting in better school outcomes for children (Walker et al., 2005). Researchers interested in Latino parent involvement have underscored the importance of self-efficacy in determining what role parents felt they should have in their child's education (Walker et al., 2011). Okagaki, Frensch, and Gordon (1995) reported that Latino parent self-efficacy beliefs tended to be higher in parents who had children who were experiencing success in schools and lower with parents who had children who were doing poorly in school. Garcia Coll et al. (2002) found that self-efficacy increased among Latino parents as a result of parent outreach efforts initiated by schools, including sending home information in both Spanish and English, events held at the school for Latino parents, and providing bilingual education for students at the school. As a result of this focused outreach, Latino parents had higher

perceptions of feeling welcomed at school, felt that they were valued members of the school community and believed they were valued participants in their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Walker et al., 2005).

Reed and colleagues (2000) best illustrated the relationship between parental self-efficacy and role construction. The researchers found that parents' concept of their role in their child's education was directly linked to their self-efficacy. In other words, when parents felt it was their role to be involved in their children's education, then their personal beliefs about their ability to have a positive effect on their child's education increased, resulting in more active parent involvement (Reed et al.)

Chicago Parent Program (CPP) was an example of a parent program offered to African American and Latino parents of young children. The program, located in urban Chicago, was developed as an active effort to increase minority parent engagement in the education of their young children. A key feature of the program was that the parent participants helped develop the topics for the program (Gross et al, 2008). This consortium included seven African American and five Latino parents from various neighborhoods in the Chicago area. The parent group advised the creators of the program on how program faciliators could demonstrate strategies to Latino parents that were representative of their culture, values, and lifestyles (Gross, Garvey, Julion, & Fogg, 2007). The topics covered included: the idea of child-centered time; the importance of family routines and traditions, praise and encouragement; and a variety of behavior management techniques (Gross et al., 2007). Focusing on parental self-efficacy, the researchers found that 50% of participants in the program reported "greater improvements in perceptions of parenting self-efficacy" (Breitenstein et al., 2012, p.

484). Researchers who examined the parental self-efficacy construct found that self-efficacy was related to various patterns of role construction (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997). The authors concluded that the findings provided support for parent programs which were designed in partnership with parents. These programs were effective tools for working with culturally and economically diverse groups of parents (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997).

Third Space Theory

Howard (2010) examined the importance of building a comprehensive understanding of race and culture to improve educational outcomes for all children and to specifically decrease the achievement gap between minority and majority cultures in the United States. A major theme in Howard's work was the importance of promoting educational equity and excellence for all children. The Theory of Third Space can be viewed as a tool or platform for creating a space where educational equity is the focus for supporting academic achievement for groups, not just the dominant culture.

The Theory of Third Space introduced the concepts of *hybridity* and *third space* in the discourse surrounding culture and post-colonial ideas (Meredith, 1998). Hybridity in this context was "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of *in-betweenness,* the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 258). Bhabha (2004) applied this Theory of Third Space and hybridity to situations where there were unequal forces of cultural representation, such as in schools and classrooms. Third spaces have been thought of as in-between, hybrid spaces where seemingly oppositional first and second spaces work together to create new knowledge and discourses (Moje et al., 2004).

In his book, *The Location of Culture* (2004), Bhabha argued that hybrid spaces or third spaces provided opportunities for representation from different discourses (e.g., parent and school discourses; school life and home life discourses) where identities and culture have been negotiated within a new context. In the third space, both discourses are privileged, and both are given equal opportunities to be heard. Bhabha (1994) viewed third spaces as opportunities to empower the people who participate in them. Soja (1996) argued that third spaces must be open to equal dialogue between the two opposing groups and warned that a third space must be kept "radically open…for its interpretive shifts and strategic power to be grasped and practiced (p. 107)." In the school setting, Gutierrez (1995) viewed third spaces as being in the realm of classroom discourse, focusing on the potential hybrid space of the classroom where the child's home experiences were valued in the school setting.

Parent involvement in the Third Space. Hybrid identifications in the space of Latino education referred to the process by which alternative identities were created in a new space where dominant mainstream cultural practices and Latino histories, lived experiences, and cultural practices were negotiated (Murillo et al., 2010). Darder (1995) reasoned that all minority groups of people lived in a hybrid situation because their histories and cultural practices were being formed and reshaped in the framework of deficit views, forced assimilation, and marginalization. Recently, scholars have applied various methodologies to highlight Latino subjectivity and hybrid identities in their work (Murillo et al., 2010). Third Space Theory was an example of how this type of methodology was used as a tool for educators and educational institutions to draw upon

the experiential knowledge of both the researcher and the participants, instead of reinforcing hierarchy and dominant power relations.

Maniotes (2005) examined literary third space in a classroom where students' life experiences merged with the curriculum as students used these experiences to understand and contemplate literature discussions in the classroom. Maniotes found that including students' life experiences and knowledge improved classroom learning, and at the same time, validated student learning experiences in the classroom setting. However, there has been little research to date that has applied the Theory of Third Space to Latino parent involvement opportunities.

Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, Alvarez, and Chu (1999) viewed third space as a bridge between family or home discourse and school discourse with new meanings developed as a result of the negotiation of the two. This view of third spaces created opportunities for parents to share their experiences and knowledge where historically they had been silenced in the school setting (Moje et al., 2004).

Because families in different communities have widely different life experiences, needs, and backgrounds, it was important that parent involvement programs grew organically from the perspectives of the parents themselves. Athananses and Heath (1995) emphasized the importance of identifying the knowledge and experiences from the participant's perspective, rather than imposing the ideas and values of the participant from an outsider's perspective. In terms of this dissertation, the concept of *third space* was operationalized as the space where knowledge from the first space (home) and knowledge from the second space (school) were merged into a third space (Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program) where knowledge from the first and second

space were shared and validated to form a new understanding and a novel discourse surrounding meaningful parent involvement in the school. Meaningful parent involvement in the context of this study was referred to as parent involvement that was temporally and culturally situated, where meaningfulness was defined through mediated understandings of what was construed as valuable knowledge and practice to best support parents and their efforts to aid their children's learning as perceived by parents involved in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program.

Action Research

Although action research is more a methodology than a specific theory, action research served as a framework for this project. According to Stringer (2014), action research is "a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1). Reason and Bradbury (2001) described action research as living inquiry that brings together action, reflection, theory, and practice in a collaborative manner in practical pursuit of resolving issues of concern to people and their communities. Fenstermacher (1994) asserted that knowledge created from participating in and reflecting on action research studies was bound contextually to the setting and the participants. Together, transformative mixed methods and action research methods were used to provide comprehensive answers to research questions, as well as comprehensive solutions to practical problems that frame this study (Ivankova, 2014).

Mixed methods research has become a popular research design due to its ability to examine research problems comprehensively (Ivankova, 2014). According to Mertens (2003), mixed methods research frequently lends itself to a transformative and

emancipatory stance where the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allows historical and contextual realities to be considered. Mertens argued that transformative mixed methods approaches can illuminate hidden inequitable power relationships and can influence the work toward social justice. Thus, mixed method action research in a transformative-emancipatory framework was considered to be the approach best suited to resolve the identified local problem of practice of low Latino parent involvement in my school. A goal of this action research project was to produce practical knowledge that contributed to the overall well-being of the participants involved and to, most importantly, illuminate the voices of the participants and bring about social change.

Cahill (2007) stated that it is the people being researched who know the most about their situations. Historically, many research projects that have been conducted with minority groups have developed by the outsider or researcher formulating the conclusions without seeking the perspectives of the people who were the experts in their own lives. It was through this awareness of myself as an outsider that I realized the importance of entering the project and navigating through the project with a primary focus on valuing the voice and contributions of the participants.

Intervention

This study addressed the concerns found in research relating to the prevalence of low Latino parent involvement and deficit views of minority groups by providing Latino parents a space to voice their perceptions of their needs, share their strengths, and mediate new understanding when it came to assisting in the education of their children.

What emerged from the findings of current research in the area of Latino parent involvement was an empowerment model of Latino parent involvement that valued an in-

between space in which the knowledge of the school and the parents was validated. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program was a five-week long program that included four parent involvement sessions that emphasized topics pertaining to Latino parent involvement. The original topics for the program sessions were predetermined and were selected by review of commonly used topics in other empowerment models of Latino parent involvement programs described above. With the importance being placed on empowering Latino parents and due to the collaborative and emancipatory nature of this project, the topics of focus for the program were subject to change or modification based on the outcomes of the reconnaissance cycle parent and teacher focus groups. Four potential topics were presented to parents in the reconnaissance phase. Suggested topics included: (a) supporting learning at home, (b) accessing district-provided parent resources, (c) advocating for your child: school and teacher communication, and (d) entering the field: volunteer opportunities. One topic was addressed at each of the first four sessions. The fifth and final session was a celebration of completion of the program as well as an active planning period for presenting or representing the findings, based on the parent's perspectives, to the school principal or school district board members, or any other audience the parent participants deem important to share their knowledge with. This session was crucial for the empowerment process and dismantling of existing power relationships between dominant and minority cultures.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Taken together, the larger, situational, and personal contexts suggested a purpose statement and research questions that guided the study. The purpose of this action research study was to examine the relationship between the Espacio Iluminado Parent

Engagement Program as a nontraditional Latino parent involvement opportunity and parents' perceptions of self-efficacy and role construction as it pertained to supporting the education of their children. The foundation of the study was developed utilizing Third Space Theory (Bhabha, 1994) to generate a framework that had the potential to serve as a model for future parent involvement programs that validated the knowledge of diverse cultures and discourses and encouraged a mediation of the two. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program was a nontraditional parent involvement program that is located in a mediated third space that incorporated knowledge from both the first space (Latino parents) and second space (school) to create a third space (mediated understanding between the first and second spaces). The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the program on parent involvement, parental self-efficacy, parental role construction, and program utility as determined by the research participants.

Five research questions were formulated to assess the efficacy of the parent engagement program, Espacio Illuminado Parent Engagement. They are as follows:

1. How do parents' perceptions of self-efficacy relate to their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program?
2. To what extent do parents' perceptions of self-efficacy change as a result of their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program?
3. How do parents perceived role construction change as a result of their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?
4. To what extent is parents' role construction changed as a result of their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?

5. How, and to what extent, do parents view the utility of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?

Chapter 3

METHOD

Research Design

This action research study was conducted utilizing a sequential, transformative mixed methods design (Greene, 2007; Ivankova, 2014). A mixed method research design integrates both qualitative and quantitative data collection in a research study (Creswell, 2014). Action research has been defined as a practical inquiry that focuses on an identified problem of practice in a local context (Richardson, 1994). To answer the research questions, a sequential Qual → Quan + Qual mixed methods of inquiry was utilized and included two chronological strands (Ivankova, 2014).

This design began with a qualitative exploration of the topic of Latino parent involvement in a reconnaissance cycle through the use of a parent focus group and a teacher focus group. The purpose of using this design was to gather qualitative data in an exploratory cycle that would be used to create the topics of focus for the intervention cycle. During the parent focus group, parents were presented with potential topics for the intervention. Parents were given the opportunity to discuss the topics with me and other participants. Given their perspectives and values, participants communicated whether they thought the topics would be useful or not. The participants also had the opportunity to share ideas for topics that were not originally presented as possible choices.

The teacher focus group was held after the parent focus group. This was done intentionally so that the parent participants could have the opportunity to have a voice in the topics before they were presented to the teachers. The effort to keep the parent participants as the majority voice in the project was intentional throughout each phase of

the project. The topics were presented to the teachers, and the teachers were given the opportunity to contribute ideas from an educators' perspective on the topics. The teacher focus group participants also were given the opportunity to weigh in on their thoughts surrounding parent in involvement in general.

Quantitative data in the intervention cycle were gathered, and then the qualitative data were collected and used to elaborate, explain, or confirm the quantitative results (Ivankova, 2014). Data from the quantitative and qualitative measures from the intervention were examined for their complementarity with the purpose of achieving a deeper understanding of the results through triangulation (Greene, 2007). Complementarity in research refers to the combination of different types of data and individual perspectives to help enhance the credibility of the outcomes in a research study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative data consisted of information gathered from semi-structured interviews, transcriptions from both teacher and parent focus groups, four end-of-session open-ended questionnaires, and a research journal. Quantitative data included a pre- and post- intervention questionnaire.

Setting

The setting for this study was a Title I public elementary school in a suburb of a large southwestern city. The school has a diverse population of students that is comprised of 52% Latino students, 23% Caucasian, 18% Native American, 3% African-American, 2% Asian/Islander, and 2% identified as two or more ethnic backgrounds. In all, there are 26 teachers employed at this school with their experience ranging from three years to over 25 years. The school receives Title I funding with 81.6 % of the students qualifying

for free and reduced lunch (Mesa Public Schools internal data, 2016). Evident at the school are recurring patterns in the varying levels of student achievement, parent involvement, and quality of parent-school relationships. A review of sign-in sheets of school sponsored events during the course of the previous school year revealed that Latino parent involvement has been low compared to the level of Caucasian parent involvement at the school. These patterns of incongruence seemed to remain constant year after year, as the status quo was reinforced by the nature of using traditional types of parent involvement and communication strategies that have been historically utilized in school systems to support student success.

Opportunities for parent involvement at the school included the school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), School Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC), an annual Title I informational meeting, Academic Awareness Night, Meet the Teacher, as well as various academic focused events such as Science Fair, Family Reading Night, Reading Under the Stars, and Math Night. The school hosts an annual Fall Festival as a fundraising opportunity for the school and holds multiple assemblies throughout the year that focus on holidays and historical events. The school's parent handbook includes an invitation for parents to volunteer or visit the school. The handbooks are distributed to parents at the annual Meet the Teacher night at the school prior to the start of the school year. Although there are Latino parents that serve on both the School Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC) and Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), the same three Latino families have continued to serve on the committees and few new Latino parents have joined.

Participants

A purposive sequential sampling strategy was utilized for both the reconnaissance and intervention cycle of the study. The primary goal of purposive sampling was to focus on particular characteristics of the targeted population to answer the research questions (Patton, 1990). All participants in the reconnaissance and intervention cycle were parents of children that attend the elementary school. The school was chosen because I was employed as a teacher at the school.

Reconnaissance cycle participants. Two focus groups were held as part of this information gathering cycle. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather ideas and information from the participants in the local context of where the research was being conducted. The focus groups were seen as an opportunity to gather local ideas, values, and knowledge to aid in the creation of the intervention and to ensure that it was reflective of the participants' perceptions of their needs and desires.

Parent focus group. The first focus group targeted a purposive sample of Latino parents who had least one child in grades one through six attending the school. For the purpose of this research, parent ethnicity was determined through a questionnaire. The total number of participants in this group included thirteen parents. The participants were asked to participate only if they spoke English fluently. Parents who did not speak English as their primary language were excluded from the sample due to the concern that interpreting results through translation may present a threat to validity as it may be more difficult to understand intention and feeling since the facilitator only spoke English. Presentations were in English because I needed to understand presentations and speak with parents myself. Fluency in English was determined by the participant's own

assessment at registration. The participant sample pool was generated using the Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE) Home Language Survey that parents complete when registering their child for school. This form is mandatory and all parents complete it as part of the school registration process pursuant to A.R.S §15-756(A). The participant list for invitation was gathered using a true random number generator found on https://www.random.org. Parents were recruited to take part through an invitational flyer (see Appendix A). In all, there were 12 female parent participants and one male participant. One of the female participants was the grandparent and guardian of the child who attended the school. The remaining participants were the biological parents of the students. See Table 1 for parent focus group participant demographic characteristics.

Table 1

Parent Focus Group Participant Demographic Characteristics

	%	#
Gender		
Male	7.7	1
Female	92.3	12
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	0	0
Latino	100	13
African American	0	0

n = 13

Teacher focus group. The second focus group consisted of ten teachers in grades one through six and included one facilitator and me. All members of the teacher focus group were volunteers. All teachers staffed at the school in grades one through six had an

equal opportunity to participate. Teachers were invited to take part through an invitational flyer (see Appendix B). Two rounds of invitations were delivered to teachers via teacher mail to achieve a focus group of ten teachers. There were eight female participants and two male participants in the teacher focus group. All teachers in the group had taught a minimum of five years. See Table 2 for teacher focus group participant demographic characteristics.

Table 2

Teacher Focus Group Participant Demographic Characteristics

	%	#
Gender		
Female	80	8
Male	20	2
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	90	9
Latino	0	0
African American	10	1

n = 10

Intervention cycle participants. The participants in the innovation cycle included 15 Latino parents who had at least one child who attended the school in grades kindergarten through six. Table 3 shows the makeup of the participant group by gender, ethnicity, employment, age, and education level. When participants were invited from the purposive, random selection pool, the invitation flyer was addressed to all parents living in the home of the primary contact for the student. For example, if a student's mother and father both lived at the primary contact's residence, then both of their names were written on the invitational flyer.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were of Latino ethnicity and who spoke English as their primary language. The sample for the innovation cycle was selected from student registration forms. Parents who do not speak English fluently will have the opportunity to participate in future iterations of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program after the study has concluded. From the sample, 20 parents were randomly selected to participate. The sample pool of participants was gathered using a true random number generator found on https://www.random.org. Consent was obtained through a consent letter for the parent innovation participants. Parents were invited to take part through an invitational flyer (see Appendix C).

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Intervention Participants

	%	#
Gender		
Male	7	1
Female	93	14
Ethnicity		
Latino	100	15
Age		
25 - 34	47	7
35 - 44	53	8
Employment		
Homemaker	40	6
Currently unemployed, looking for work	6.7	1
Employed	46.6	7
Self-Employed	6.7	1
Education		
Preschool – grade 8	6.7	1
Some high school, no diploma	6.7	1
High school, diploma	53.2	8
Trade school, certificate	6.7	1
Some college	20	3
Bachelor's degree	6.7	1

n = 15

Co-facilitator. To diminish the experimenter effect, which will be discussed further in the section concerning validity, a co-facilitator was employed to facilitate the innovation in partnership with me. I purposively selected the co-facilitator. The co-facilitator was both a Latina parent who had several children who have attended or were currently attending the school. She was also employed by the school as the attendance secretary. The rationale for purposively choosing her was that she had experiences both

as a parent of children who attended the school and experiences as a member of the school staff. These experiences put her in a unique and valuable position to understand the complexities of both the school and home spaces. She was also a familiar face to parents who entered the office, as she was the first point of contact when parents visited the school. The co-investigator demonstrated her willingness to participate by signing an informed consent form.

Researcher Role in the Study

Herr and Anderson (2015) argued that including the researcher's stance in any social research project is a crucial step in identifying and confronting any researcher bias that may occur. This position has been referred to as a researcher's *positionality*. Essentially, "positionality as a researcher means asking the question, who am I in relation to my participants and my setting?" (Herr & Anderson, 2015 p. 37). It was important to point out that positionality requires a vast amount of reflection and analysis to identify a researcher's relationship to the research project. Herr and Anderson (2015) also argued that the poorest action research studies are conducted by researchers who are practitioners in the setting who fail to fully acknowledge their positionality and the potential implications of this stance. On the other hand, the researchers reasoned that some of the most powerful action research studies were those where researchers accounted for their own, as well as their participants' changes in understanding and positionality throughout the research project.

Herr and Anderson (2015) claimed that when a researcher was also an insider in a research setting, he or she must be conscious and effortful about recognizing and accounting for the lens or perspective from each outsider and insider stance. In addition,

researchers may experience shifts in perspectives as the insider and outsider perspectives are meshed through collaborative work between the researcher and the participants (Herr & Anderson, 2015). With thoughtful attention to this positionality, researchers have overcome this problematic stance by recognizing their positions in the research project and being reflective of the lens through which they were viewing the project. Herr and Anderson suggested that researchers keep a research journal to help reflect and record their experiences to help identify their positions and avoid bias.

This research project involved a teacher/researcher studying the outcomes of a program in her setting. Prior to the start of the project, my understanding, as the researcher, was that I was positioned as the researcher as a mix of an insider (teacher of the school) and outsider (researcher). Upon reflection after the completion of the study, the insider status as a teacher became evident when the second space or school knowledge was shared, but the outsider status was more complex than first thought. Not only was I an *outsider* in my role as a researcher, but as a non-Latino, non-parent I was positioned as even more of an outsider than I first realized. This realization was important to address implicit bias on the perception of the reality of the participants' lives as it relates to their experiences supporting their children's learning and their experiences with the school. I approached each session with this reflective stance and was positioned to be aware of checking my own experiences with schooling as to create an uninterrupted platform for the participants to not only share the realities of their experiences with the session topics in the program, but also to share how those experiences have impacted the way that they support their children's education.

Based on the reality of very different experiences in the U.S. education system, I recognized that I did not view school in the same way as the participants did. This was an important reflection on my part so that I could be aware of any unobserved bias that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program was designed to be a collaborative endeavor between the first (home) and second (school) spaces with the intention to form a space where including traditionally excluded perspectives added a complete picture to address the perceived problems and validate the knowledge of the parents in the school community with all voices being heard to the same extent. The exclusion of the participants' perspectives and knowledge or a failure to recognize positionality would only serve to maintain existing power relationships.

Instruments

Quantitative data collection. The quantitative data included parent pre- and post- intervention questionnaires.

Pre- and post- intervention questionnaires. Quantitative measures consisted of pre-and post-intervention questionnaires. The pre- and post- intervention questionnaires were identical, with both including 40 questions. The questionnaire took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The survey instrument software program Qualtrics was used to construct the survey. After the design of the survey had been completed, the survey instrument was downloaded into Microsoft Word format so that it could be printed and manually distributed to the parents participating in the study. The decision to print them instead of having the participants complete them online was made due to the lack of accessible computers during the program sessions.

Three constructs were addressed in the questionnaire, including parental self-efficacy, parental role construction, and utility. Content validity of the construct items was determined by two critical friends, a school administrator and a first-grade teacher colleague. Critical friends are often used in action research studies. They have been defined as trusted people, usually colleagues, who examine and take the time to understand fully the components of a study and who pose challenging questions or offer a different perspective to increase the validity of the research project (Costa & Kallich, 1993). The process included each rater categorizing each questionnaire item into one of the three constructs. There was 100% agreement as to which constructs each item fell under. Five items focused on demographics, whereas the remaining 35 items focus on three constructs, including perceptions of self-efficacy, beliefs regarding role activities, and utility of ways to support learning.

Reliability of pre-post intervention questionnaire. The items in the parental self-efficacy and role construction constructs were derived from the *Parental Role Construction and Self-Efficacy Scales* (Walker et al., 2005). Activity beliefs items from the role construction construct and the items from the self-efficacy construct from the scale were incorporated into the questionnaire. The result of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test for the pre-intervention questionnaire (n = 14) yielded acceptable reliabilities for the role construction items about activity beliefs, as well as perceptions of self-efficacy. The analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha score of $\alpha = .74$ as the score for the role construction activity beliefs construct in the survey instrument and an alpha score of $\alpha = .78$ for the perceptions of the self-efficacy construct. These scores indicated a good

overall rate of internal consistency for two of the constructs. The result of the reliability test for the utility construct on the pre-intervention questionnaire (n=14) was $\alpha = .75$.

The pre- and post- intervention questionnaire employed a 6-point Likert-type response format in which respondents were asked to rate their agreement regarding their perceptions of parental self-efficacy, perceptions of role construct, and knowledge of innovation topics and participants' perception of utility. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 24 pertained to the knowledge of innovation topic construct and its perceived utility. Items 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, and 21 related to the self-efficacy construct. Items 8, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33, 34, and 35 pertain to the role construction construct. The levels of agreement are described on a continuum; one end is anchored by a strong disagreement, the other by a strong agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Higher scores indicated a stronger agreement to the statement; lower scores indicated lesser agreement with the statement. Sample questions included, "I make a significant difference in my child's school performance" and "I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn." See Appendix D for a complete list of questionnaire items.

Qualitative Data Collection

Information from qualitative data can be useful in revealing participants' experiences, behaviors, and feelings with respect to the study (Ivankova, 2014). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative data provides rich insight into research participants' perceptions of their experiences that may be unarticulated in other data collection tools. Qualitative data can be equally useful in identifying barriers and facilitators of change, as well as informing future iterations of research innovations

(Ivankova, 2014). Qualitative data were collected during teacher and parent focus groups and through semi-structured interviews at the end of the project.

Parent focus group. The parent focus group was conducted as part of the reconnaissance cycle. I developed the 12 focus group prompts. Two critical friends, my colleagues, were used to review the prompts for relevancy. The critical friends found the prompts directly related to the desired outcome of gaining an understanding of the topics that participants felt were important to include as part of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program. Sample items from the parent focus group prompts included, "How does the school ask you to be involved?" and "What do you feel your role is in supporting your child's education?" See Appendix E for the complete list of prompts.

Teacher focus group. The teacher focus group was conducted as part of the reconnaissance cycle. I developed the teacher focus group prompts. The same two critical friends were used to review the prompts for relevancy. The critical friends determined that the prompts were relevant for a teacher focus group. There were eight teacher focus group prompts. Sample items from the parent focus group prompts included, "How important do you feel that parent involvement is for your students?" and "How does the school ask parents to be involved?" See Appendix F for the complete list of prompts.

Research journal. A research journal was used to record observations, reflections, and positionality throughout the research study. Dragon Naturally Speaking was utilized to help capture immediate thoughts and feelings during the course of the study. I wrote entries in the journal after each of the program sessions.

End-of-session questionnaires. The end-of-session questionnaires were developed in part as a reflection and evaluative tool and were used at the end of each

innovation session. They also provided study participants an opportunity to create a goal to implement a strategy or an idea discussed during the session. The purpose of goal setting was to document elements of the session that parents deemed useful or of importance. Goal setting allowed parents to make an action plan to implement an idea they found interesting from the content of the session. End-of-session questionnaires were printed on two-part carbonless paper to allow the co-investigator to keep a copy of the responses as documentation of the session occurrence, as well as for a reflection tool to be discussed at the beginning of the next session. Participants were encouraged to take the other copy home as a reference document for their personal use. Sample items included, "Please tell what was helpful or not helpful during today's session." and "My Goal: *Setting Goals: Try out an idea discussed at today's session!*" For a complete list of questions see Appendix G.

Semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews of seven randomly selected participants were conducted after the intervention occurred. The semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview protocol consisting of 19 open-ended questions. Sample questions included, "Do you feel that the program helped you support your child's learning at home? Why or why not?" and "Do you feel that your ideas were validated during the sessions? In what ways?" For a complete list of semi-structured interview questions, see Appendix H. Demographic information for the interviewed participants can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Description of interviewed participants

Parent number	*Gender*	*Education*	*Employment*	*Sessions attended*
1	*Female*	High school, diploma	Employed	*4*
2	*Female*	High school, diploma	Homemaker	*5*
3	*Female*	Some high school, no diploma	Employed	*5*
4	*Female*	High school, diploma	Homemaker	*5*
5	*Male*	Trade school, certificate	Employed	*5*
6	*Female*	Some high school, no diploma	Homemaker	*5*
7	*Female*	Preschool – grade 8	Employed	*5*

n = 7

Validity of the correlation of semi-structured interview questions and the constructs they fit into was determined through the use of critical friends. The critical friends included three colleagues in my learning scholarly community. Each colleague was given the semi-structured interview questions and asked to categorize them into one of the three constructs or label them as problematic (not pertaining to any construct). Results of this reliability exercise revealed that all three colleagues categorized the interview questions into the same constructs. Questions 1, 2, and 9 were not determined to pertain to any of the constructs. These questions were created by the researcher to establish rapport. Table 5 shows the interview question number and the associated construct.

Table 5

Reliability Results for Constructs of Interview Questions

	Construct			
	Self-Efficacy	Role Construction	Utility	Other
Item #	11, 12, 13	3, 4, 8, 14, 17, 18	5, 6, 7, 9 10, 15, 16	1, 2, 19

Procedure

Institutional Review Board (IRB) exemption status was obtained and the IRB determined that the protocol was considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1). See Appendix I for the IRB exemption status form. A district application to conduct research was submitted to the district's research and evaluation department and was approved. School site approval to conduct research was obtained during the IRB approval process.

Participants in the intervention group used the following process to create a unique identifier known only to them to secure their anonimity. The first three letters of their mother's first name and the last four digits of their phone number was the formula used for the unique identifier. For example, Sar 4567 would be the identifier if the participant's mom's first name was Sara and their phone number was (623) 555-4567.

Reconnaissance cycle. Two focus groups were conducted as part of the reconnaissance phase. In this information gathering cycle, the parent focus group targeted a select group of self-described Latino parents who have children who attend the school in first through sixth grades.

Parent focus group. The total number of participants in this group included thirteen parents, one co-facilitator, and the co-investigator. A focus group is a group discussion in which participants are gathered to discuss and explore an identified problem or focus of a research study (Ivankova, 2014). A focus group format can be useful in initiating an exchange of viewpoints, feelings, and experiences surrounding an identified focus (Ivankova, 2014). For the purpose of this study, focus groups were used in the reconnaissance cycle to help access the scope and depth of the identified problem and to explore the experiences and views of stakeholders within the research context (Ivankova, 2014).

The purpose of the parent focus group was to discuss issues of personal interest or concern regarding Latino parent involvement in school. The co-investigator and co-facilitator guided discussions on local perceptions of Latino parent involvement and suggestions for topics to be included as part of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program. The parent focus group took place at the end of the school year and lasted 90 minutes. It was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Each parent participant received compensation of $25.00 at the end of the focus group as a recognition of the time they gave toward the project. The selected parents were invited to take part through an invitational flyer (see Appendix D). If needed, there was a possibility of up to two follow-up efforts via telephone to confirm their interest. There were no more than two attempts to recruit participants in the parent focus group. Consent was obtained through a consent letter for parent focus group participants. If ten participants were not recruited in round one, then random selection would reoccur until ten participants were recruited. However, a second round of recruitment was not needed.

Teacher focus group. The teacher focus group targeted ten teachers in grades one through six, and included one co-facilitator, and me. Teachers volunteered to participate in the focus group. If there was a need, there would be up to two follow-up efforts to recruit teachers. However, follow-up was not needed. Consent was obtained through a consent letter for the teacher focus group participants. The purpose of the 90-minute teacher focus group was the same as the Latino parent focus group. The discussion concentrated on the local perception of the assumptive problem of Latino parent involvement, ideas for improvement, and suggestions for topics to be included as part of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program. The outcomes of the teacher focus group represented the second space (school) as part of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. Teachers were not individually compensated for their complete participation in the focus group. However, at the end of the focus group a raffle was held and participating teachers were eligible to win a $50 Visa gift card. Each teacher had an equal opportunity to win the raffle with a one in ten chance of winning. The focus group was audio recorded and transcribed. The audiotape was destroyed after transcription was complete. See Appendix F for the complete list of teacher focus group prompts.

Co-facilitator meeting. The co-facilitator meeting occurred in the summer before the next school year and lasted for two hours. The meeting included an overview of Third Space Theory and the format of the sessions. The topics for the sessions were also discussed. In addition, a collaborative effort was made to identify presenters to represent the second space (school) knowledge during each session. The meeting was an opportunity to make logistical decisions regarding childcare, meeting rooms, refreshments, name tags. Reminder flyers were created for each of the sessions.

Intervention cycle. The intervention cycle included five 90-minute sessions. Each session concentrated on a topic pertaining to parents supporting their children's learning and educational experience, except for the last session that focused on the dissemination of the knowledge shared during the first four sessions. These topics were determined by a review of the literature, specifically previously established Latino parent involvement programs, and were subject to change or modification based on the outcome of the focus groups. See Table 6 for a list of the original session topics.

Table 6

Original Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program Topics.

Session	Topic
1	Supporting Learning at Home
2	Accessing Resources in the School and Community
3	Parent Involvement
4	Advocating for Your Child's Needs at School
5	Next Steps – Sharing our Knowledge

All of topics except one were validated by the outcomes of the parent focus group. The original topics that were presented to the participants in the parent focus group during the reconnaissance cycle included *Advocating for Your Child's Needs in School.* An analysis of the parent focus group transcripts revealed that this topic was not of interest to the parents. Instead, the parents expressed an interest in having a topic that focused on problematic behaviors at home. See Table 7 for the revised session topics.

Table 7

Revised Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program Topics.

Session	Topic
1	Supporting Learning at Home
2	Accessing Resources in the School and Community
3	Parent Involvement
4	Supporting Behavior at Home
5	Next Steps – Sharing our Knowledge

Timeline and compensation. Table 8 below lists the dates for the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. As depicted in Table 8, there was a scheduled two week gap between sessions in the middle of the project. The scheduled gap was intended to allow parents time to try out some of the ideas and reflect on the information presented during the first two weeks of the project. In appreciation of the participants' time, parents in the program were compensated a total of $20.00 per session with a total possible compensation amount of $100.00. A bonus of $10.00 was given if parents attended all five sessions. If needed there would have been one makeup session to present missed information due to an absence. There was only one participant who missed any sessions. The participant alerted me in advance of a pre-planned trip with her husband that was scheduled the same day as Session 4. Prior to the start of Session 5, I gave the participant the handouts and information from the session that she missed.

Childcare. Childcare was provided for children of the participants to eliminate logistical concerns regarding participant attendance in the program. Two school staff

members provided childcare services during the program sessions. Childcare was offered for children ages three through twelve. See Appendix J for the childcare invitational flyer, including activities and themes for each session.

Table 8

Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program Timeline

Session 1: Tuesday, September 20
Session 2: Tuesday, September 27
Two Week Session Break
Session 3: Tuesday, October 18
Session 4: Tuesday, October 25
Session 5: Tuesday, November 1

Session format. Each session followed a similar format and included opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing from the perspectives of the first space (Latino Parents), second space (school) and third Space (mediated understandings of the first and second spaces). Each session included an opportunity for reflection and goal setting. Although teachers were not physically present to represent the second space (school), the facilitators (a teacher and a school staff member) and/or a community guest speaker represented their perceptions and knowledge gathered from the teacher focus group and school resources related to the topics. This knowledge was considered static in this study. Future expansions of this project may grow into a context where negotiations of both spaces are included in the same space. Figure 2 illustrates the specific format for each session in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. Each session with the

exception of the last session followed the format illustrated in Figure 2. The final session was used as a time to create a list of best practices that were illuminated throughout the sessions. Participants also discussed next steps for the dissemination of the knowledge that was generated during the sessions.

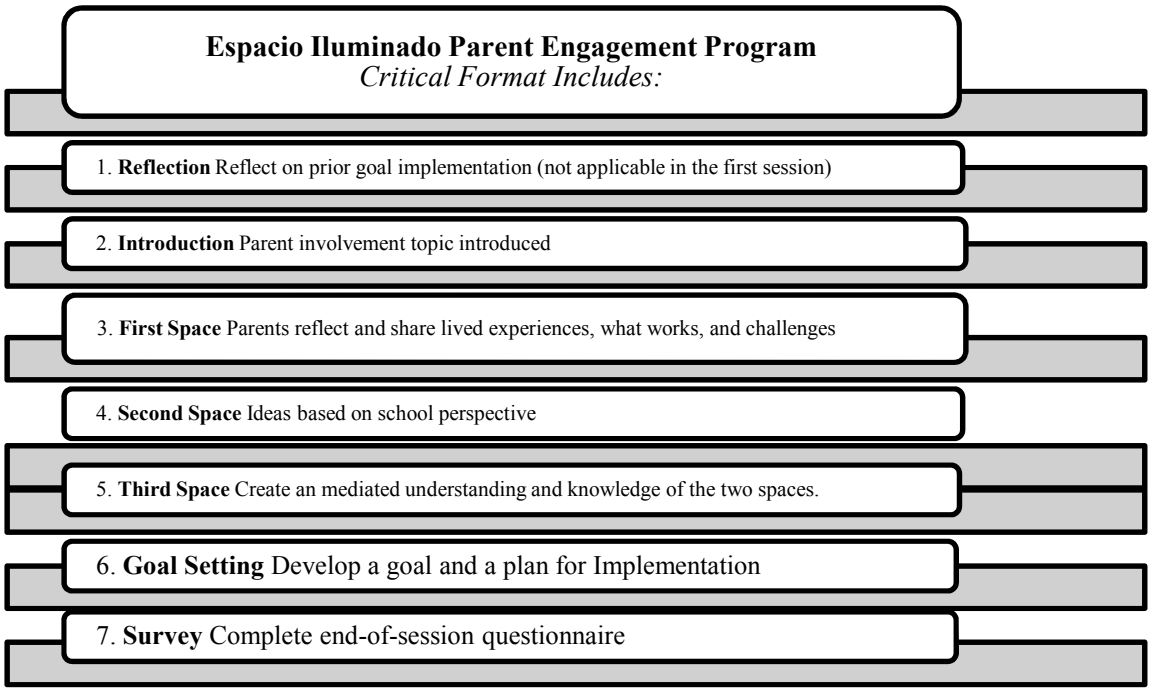


Figure 2. Critical format for Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program sessions.

*Reflection***.** At the beginning of each session, with the exception of the first session, the participants were invited to review their progress on the goal they created during the previous session. The co-facilitator and I guided the participants to discuss successes and challenges that occurred, as well as questions they still had on the topic. During Session 1, the participants were introduced to the program and completed the pre-intervention questionnaire. At the end of each session, participants were also asked to formulate a personal goal relating to their involvement in their child's education based on

the content and discussion during that session. This goal was articulated in a dedicated space at the end-of-session questionnaire.

Introduction and first space. I introduced the weekly topic for the session. Parents were encouraged to share their lived experiences, knowledge, and feelings on the topic. The co-facilitator and I were there to facilitate the discussion, but the participants were the ones sharing the information during this step. This step was considered knowledge from the first space. As the participants contributed to the discussion, I wrote their ideas on a large piece of chart paper that was affixed to the wall. A great emphasis was placed on guiding the discussion as an interaction between the parents, not just a reporting out session. For example, when a parent described an experience with the topic matter, I would ask if other participants had the same experience. This appeared to help the discussion take on a conversational format.

Second space. I presented the information and ideas based on teachers' perspectives gathered from the teacher focus group or other teacher resources and sometimes included a guest speaker from the school or community to help expand on the session topic. For example, the school counselor was a guest speaker at the session when the topic of accessing school and community resources was the focus. Table 9 illustrates the session topics and special speakers for each of the sessions. All of the guest speakers were Latino, with the exception of the school counselor.

Table 9

Session Presenters and Topics

Session	Topic	School/Community Speaker
1	Supporting Learning at Home	Parent as well as PTO board member
2	Parent Involvement	PTO President & Parent Volunteer
3	Accessing Resources for Families	Computer Lab Technician & School Counselor
4	Supporting Behavior at Home	School Counselor

Third space questionnaire. The third space questionnaire was used for the participants to discuss the information presented during the session and to create a personal goal for implementation before the next session. The participants were given green and yellow circle shaped stickers and were invited to place green stickers next to the ideas on the scribed chart of things they found interesting and thought they might like to try. The participants were invited to place yellow stickers next to anything on the list that they had questions about. After the stickers were placed, the end-of-session questionnaire was distributed. Each participant created a goal that was written on the end-of-session questionnaire. Given the information presented from both the parent participants and the guest speakers and school knowledge, participants were encouraged to bridge the two group knowledges to construct a way to support their children's learning as it pertains to the session topic. As stated earlier, the end-of-session questionnaires were printed on two-ply carbonless paper. The participants took one copy home with them as a reference document and I kept the second copy so the participants

could reflect back on them during the next session. Participants used their code instead of their names to ensure anonymity.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected during the reconnaissance cycle and qualitative and quantitative data were collected during the intervention cycle.

Parent focus group. The parent focus group was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The audio recording was destroyed after transcription. Transcriptions from the focus groups were initially analyzed using open coding to identify ideas and concepts that emerged from the focus groups.

Teacher focus group. The teacher focus group was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The audio recording was destroyed after transcription. Transcriptions from the focus groups were initially analyzed using open coding to identify ideas and concepts that emerged from the focus groups.

Pre- and post-questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to all participants in the study. The pre-intervention questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the first session. The post-intervention questionnaire was administered at the end of the last session. All participants completed the post-intervention questionnaire.

End-of-session questionnaires. The end-of-session questionnaire was administered during the last ten minutes of each session at the end of each of the first four sessions. The questionnaires were coded using open coding to identify ideas and concepts that emerged from the items.

Semi-structured interviews. Seven participants were randomly selected to participate in post-intervention semi-structured interviews. Interview participants were

chosen using a random number generator accessed on www.random.org. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. Semi-structured interviews are common in mixed methods action research studies and are an effective method for exploring the participants' perception of their experiences, including the relevance and usefulness of the intervention (Ivankova, 2014). The purpose of the interviews was to uncover any unarticulated data from the questionnaires and to provide a deeper understanding of the participants' perception of their experiences in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. The conversations were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. I completed all of the interviews. The time and place for the interviews was subject to the needs and desires of the participant and were sometimes conducted in the participant's home or at the school depending on participant preference. Two of the interviews were conducted in the participant's home. The remaining four were conducted at the school.

Research journal. I entered written records of observations and reflections in a research journal throughout the reconnaissance and innovation cycles. The research journal was used to record shifts in positionality, observations, and reflections. Open coding was initially used to illuminate themes in the entries.

The research design for the study was a mixed method design in which two sets of preliminary qualitative data were collected: parent focus group transcribed audio and teacher focus group transcribed audio. During the intervention cycle, quantitative data in the form of pre-and post-intervention questionnaires was collected. Qualitative data during the innovation cycle included semi-structured interviews, end-of-session questionnaires, and the research journal of the investigator. See Table 10 for a depiction of the study components and the type of data collected for each component.

Table 10

Data Sources and Type of Data

Instrument or Data Source	Data Type	Time Line
Reconnaissance Cycle		
Coded transcriptions from teacher focus group	Qual	May
Coded transcriptions from parent focus group	Qual	May
Intervention Cycle		
Pre- and Post- Intervention Questionnaire	Quan	September & November
End-of-session surveys	Qual	September – October
Research journal	Qual	May – November
Semi-structured interviews	Qual	November – December

Data Analysis

The qualitative and the quantitative data were analyzed and triangulated to answer the research questions. Herr and Anderson (2015) contend that triangulation, or the inclusion of multiple data sources and multiple perspectives, guards against a simplistic view of the data that can create a self-serving or one-sided analysis of the data. The philosophical reasoning behind this approach comes from the philosophy of pragmatism, or the view that reality is complex, and there are multiple avenues to knowledge and understanding (Johnson & Gray, 2010). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argued that the pragmatic approach is fitting for researchers who are attempting to resolve practical issues through their work where the functional value of the work is of utmost importance.

Each of the three constructs from the pre- and post- intervention questionnaire was analyzed using a paired sample *t*-test, as well as descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were collected, analyzed, and coded using an online computer application designed for analyzing qualitative and mixed methods research data. In vivo coding was used to illuminate embedded themes in the qualitative data. Assertions were made based on the themes.

Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data.

Reconnaissance phase. Quantitative data was not collected during the reconnaissance phase of the research project.

Intervention phase. The pre-post intervention questionnaire was administered to the intervention cycle participants to gauge their self-perceptions of role construction and self-efficacy prior to the intervention and then after the intervention was complete. The pre-post intervention questionnaire process allowed for the examination of changes in perceived self-efficacy and perception of role construction over the course of the project. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using a paired sample *t*-test. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, are provided for the three constructs comprising the survey. The constructs assessed participants' perceptions of: (a) self-efficacy as it relates to supporting their children's learning, (b) role-construction as it relates to being involved in their children's education, and (c) the utility of the program. This analysis allowed for interpretations and analysis of the effectiveness of each of the components of the program. The data were examined from the pre-post intervention questionnaire to develop an understanding of how participants' perception of

the three constructs were altered through participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program.

Qualitative data.

Reconnaissance phase. The qualitative data included coded and analyzed transcriptions from audio recordings for both the parent and teacher focus groups. The data were analyzed using magnitude coding (Saldaña, 2013) to identify agreement or disagreement of proposed topics for the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. According to Saldaña (2013), magnitude codes can be used to nominally represent data from qualitative sources. The coding of the transcription of the focus groups included using a plus (+) and a minus (-) symbol to indicate agreement or absence of agreement on the presented potential topics for the program.

Intervention phase. The data from all qualitative sources in this study were analyzed using in vivo coding. In vivo coding is often used in research studies where the participants' voice is honored and illuminated (Saldaña, 2013). Second level analysis included "themeing the data" where themes were created as an "outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection, not something that is in itself code." (Saldaña, 2013, p. 175). According to Turner (2016), the use of participants' language as codes mitigates the tendency for a researcher to impose their own meaning onto the text which can prove to be problematic when interpreting the data. The codes that emerged from the In vivo coding exercise were then grouped and categorized into themes. Through this analysis themes were illuminated and assertions were made. As a final step in the analysis, I compared to the results of the quantitative analysis for each of the three

constructs assessed in this study with the themes and assertions that emerged from the qualitative analysis to examine complementarity from the mixed-methods data.

The qualitative semi-structured interviews and end-of-session questionnaires followed a semi-structured and open-ended protocol that initiated conversation and responses that pertained to the following research questions. The data from the semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, producing approximately four hours of audio files and 24,505 words of text. Information on word count and total times for each of the interviews can be found in Appendix K. In addition, all participants (n = 15) completed end-of session questionnaires at the end of each of the first four sessions. I collected a total of 59 end-of-session questionnaires.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

To understand the relationship between participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program and parents' sense of self-efficacy, role construct and parents' feelings about the utility of program and the topics presented, qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed. Chapter 4 consists of the analysis and results of the quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the reconnaissance and intervention phases of the study. Overall, the analysis and results are organized by five research questions and segmented by type of analysis.

Results

Research question 1. ***How do parents' perceptions of self-efficacy relate to their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program?***

Themes and assertions emerged from qualitative data collected from journal entries and semi-structured interviews. Table 11 displays the themes, theme-related components, and assertions that relate to the self-efficacy construct from the semi-structured interview questions.

Table 11

Themes, Theme-Related Components, and Assertions for RQ1

Themes and Theme-Related Components	Assertions
Supporting Learning at Home 1. Hearing some of the opinions and the conversations with the other parents, what they do, it helped me to say, "Okay well maybe, just like I said, maybe I can try this now and it would help better." Yes, I really did. I felt it was very helpful. 2. I learned that you have to be with your children, you also have to work with your children one on one because before I would just ask them, okay, you did your homework, okay, fine. 3. I sit down, makes sure it gets done, she signs it, then I get home and I check it, then I do spelling and I do math facts with them, or go through their math to kind of help with that, taking some of the pressure off of her.	Participating in the program gave parents a feeling of efficaciousness in regards to providing support to their children with their at-home learning.
Involvement with School Activities 1. Also, with the volunteering. I tried to volunteer for the fall festival. Any time I had, even if it's 30 minutes, I came into Ms. W's class. She didn't know I was coming in. That's another part that I didn't know. You can just drop by anytime. I did, and I was like, "Do you have anything I can do?" She's like, "Yes, please, thank you!" 2. At first it was kind of hard. You don't know how to juggle it [volunteering]. You don't know who to ask. Especially as a single mom with working full time. It was difficult. 3. It was my goal. I wrote down that I would come eat lunch with my kid and I did it. 4. Prior to this program, I have participated in nothing at this school. 5. They feel almost more like it's a family. Like, "Oh, Mom's here," so it's a family. We see the teachers and we give them hugs, and we say, "Hi." even to past grades. It's really cool.	Participants better understood the ways they could be involved at their child's school. Participants felt that volunteering was something they personally could do and acted on that feeling.
Belief that you can make a difference 1. I think you gave us the confidence of feeling comfortable among the group, and feeling welcome, and feeling free to say what we thought, and how we raised our kids, or how we're raising our kids trying to help them. 2. That would be my selling point would be, "You're going to learn how to be a part of their education, and you're going to be able to be part of that growth in your kid." 3. You know, you can make a big change in your child's education and in their life, because like I said, my husband was like, "What's David telling you?" I'm like, "Because it's Tuesday and today we have to go." He's like," I guess he likes it too. He must be having fun." I'm like, "Well yeah because there's a group of kids, so the parents were meeting together and the kids are doing their own activities and they're enjoying it too." I think it's a message that I think it would be very awesome for future generations too, and future groups of parents maybe wanting to participate in this. I really think that they would benefit.	Participants' level of confidence that they as individuals can make a difference in their child's education by being involved was enhanced.

Assertion 1. Participating in the program gave parents a feeling of efficaciousness in regards to providing support to their children with their at-home learning. During the first session of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program, parents were given the opportunity to share their strategies for helping their children with their homework. After the sharing between the participants occurred, a parent in the school community presented additional ideas for helping children at home with their homework. This parent was a Latino parent of quadruplets who attended the school. Although the participants and the presenter shared strategies, I scribed their ideas on a large chart paper so that they could be referred back to when parents were making their goals for idea implementation on their end-of-session questionnaires and goal writing forms. The participants seemed to value the discussion among one another. Parent 2 expressed this sentiment when she stated,

> Hearing some of the opinions and the conversations with the other parents, what they do, it helped me to say, "Okay well maybe, just like I said, maybe I can try this now and it would help out better." Yes, I really did. I felt it was very helpful.

Her statement implied a personal belief that she could be successful at the ideas that were discussed in the sessions, a sense of confidence and feelings of self-efficacy.

Other participants who were interviewed provided specific examples of how they implemented the strategies that were discussed at home. Parent 4 stated, "I learned that you have to be with your children, you also have to work with your children one-on-one, because before I would just ask them, okay, you did your homework, okay, fine." Another participant stated, "Now I sit down, makes sure it gets done, she signs it, then I get home and I check it, then I do spelling and I do math facts with them, or go through their math to kind of help with that, taking some of the pressure off of her."

The parent surmised that the help that she believed that she could provide her child with his or her homework would alleviate some of the stress of it on her child. This was a specific example of the belief that she could make a positive impact on her child when she assisted in the homework routine. Parent 6 reported that the sharing of ideas helped her to make homework support a priority for her at home. She stated,

> I would ask them, are you done? Of course, they would say, "Yeah", but then I would take a look at it and they weren't done. Now after the program, during the program, I learned from hearing everyone's opinions and what to do so she now gives homework priority, you do your homework then comes everything else. This way now I'm more on top of it and I'm being more responsible with my kids.

Assertion 2. Participants better understood the ways they could be involved at their child's school. Participants felt that volunteering was something they personally could do and acted on that feeling. Parent 1 acknowledged that knowing how and when to get involved at the school was difficult. She shared the following insight from her experiences with her past attempts at volunteering, "At first it was kind of hard. You don't know how to juggle it. You don't know who to ask. Especially as a single mom with working full time. It was difficult." Participating in the program gave program participants examples of ways to be involved in the school even if they could not physically be on campus or had a limited amount of time due to busy work and home schedules. Parent 2 said, "It was my goal. I wrote down that I would come eat lunch with my kid and I did it." I saw this parent in the office when she was signing in to eat lunch with her child. She told me that she was meeting her goal for the class. For parent 5, the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program was the first time he was physically involved at the school. He shared, "Prior to this program, I have participated in nothing at

this school." Another parent spoke about the feeling that volunteering gave her as well as her children stating, "They feel almost more like it's a family. Like, "Oh, Mom's here," so it's a family. We see the teachers and we give them hugs, and we say, "Hi." even to past grades. It's really cool."

During the session that focused on involvement, parents discussed not only ways that they have been involved in the past with their child's education, but also discussed barriers to getting involved and how some parents have overcome them. The presenter for the involvement session was a Latino parent with two children who attended the school and who was also the PTO board president. She discussed that involvement can take many different forms. She promoted PTO membership, but also discussed her experiences prior to being involved with the PTO board at the school. She shared that when she could not attend events due to her busy schedule, she would ask the teacher to send things home for her to cut out or prep for classroom activities. From the discussion between the participants, I scribed a list of ideas for being involved.

Assertion 3. Participants' level of confidence that they as individuals can make a difference in their child's education by being involved was enhanced. Providing a space in the program for parents to discuss ways to be involved in their child's education that included ideas for a departure from more traditional ways of involvement, gave parents a feeling of confidence that they could be an active part of their child's education in meaningful ways, even if it was not in the form of dedicating time to PTO or spending numerous hours on the school campus.

Parent 2 stated,

> I want to learn more, do more research, see how I can help and be a part of the community. Like I said, I feel like I can make a difference in my daughters' education, but not only my kids, but also other kids, and other parents, and if I can make that bond stronger in any way, then I want to do that, I want to be a part of it.

Parent 3 declared personal feeling of usefuleness of the program and spoke about how he would share that feeling with other parents at the school, "That would be my selling point would be, "You're going to learn how to be a part of their education, and you're going to be able to be part of that growth in your kid."

Research question 2. ***To what extent do parents' perceptions of self-efficacy change as a result of their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program?***

Descriptive statistics. Table 12 contains the descriptive statistics for the self-efficacy subscale on the pre- and post-intervention questionaire. The nine-item subscale mean on the pre-intervention questionnaire was 36.07 and increased to 39.64 on the post intervention questionaire. The participants showed a 3 point increase in the area of participants' perceptions of self efficacy as it pertains to supporting their childrens' learning.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for the Self-Efficacy Subscale on the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaire

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Self-Efficacy	36.07	4.53	39.64	5.15

Note. Items were 6-point Likert scale questions. Items ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree to* 6 = *strongly agree.* The subscale contained 9 items.
(n = 14)

Paired samples t-test. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare participants' perceptions of self-efficacy before and after the intervention. There was a significant difference in the scores for *Self-Efficacy* on the pre-test ($M = 36.07$, $SD = 4.53$) and scores for Self-Efficacy on the posttest ($M = 39.64$, $SD = 5.15$); $t\ (13) = 2.47$, $p < .05$. These results suggested the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program had a significant effect on changing parents' perceptions of self-efficacy. Specifically, the results suggest that when parents are engaged in a non-traditional parent engagement program that emphasizes their ideas, experiences, and perceived strengths and needs, then self-efficacy increases.

Research question 3. ***How do parents' perceived Role Construction change as a result of their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?*** Table 13 displays the themes, theme-related components, and assertions that relate to the role construction from the semi-structured interview questions.

Table 13

Recognition of Perceived Personal Role Constructs

Themes and Theme-Related Components	Assertions
Recognition and Integration of Cultural Role Constructs or Expectations 1. In Hispanic culture Mom really does just take care of the house, and it takes so much time in the day, and there's so much responsibility to it. 2. She was a very strict mother. I thank her for that, but when it came to the school homework and that part of it, I felt that I was alone. Now my two younger sisters, I started here in fifth grade when we came [from Mexico]. My sisters started in first grade. My two younger sisters started first grade. 3. Especially being part of a Hispanic culture, I think a lot of parents don't realize how much you can do, just getting close to your child and getting close to school, and actually learning how you can help them. 4. I did change because at the beginning as I was more worried about being the wife, being the mom as to I had priorities to do at home, I would do my things at home and then the kids would just sit down and do their homework whichever way they wanted to, whenever they wanted to. Now I make sure they're really doing their homework. 5. A lot of women have changed, and it has changed a little bit, but I do feel like that's a lot of where it grows apart. Simply with my parents, or with my ex-husband's parents, they're more Hispanic than we are, in the sense of they lived in Mexico longer, they're stronger in their traditions, so my mother-in-law would, every night sets out her husband's work clothes, then while he's at work she sets out his clothes for when he comes home from work, and it's like, "Oh my God, to go that ex ... I mean, you've already done everything, and to still pick out his clothes?" I'm like, "Whoa, at some point you kind of have to give them some responsibility," even though they're bringing home the money.	Participants recognized and began actively resolving the perceived role construct conflicts between Hispanic and United States mainstream role expectations.
Evidence of Change of Role Construct for Supporting Learning 1. Yes, my level of participation changed after the program. I've already seen a big change in myself. Because I've seen how important it is, how it impacts the kids, how they really do feel more support when they see you there. 2. I'm like, oh my God, this all will be good for me. Helping me raise my kids the way that I hope to. Not so much like how I was raised. 3. What it made me do was ... When I started [the program] I would just let him you know he comes home from school and like I said I think the very first week I said I let my dude just do "him." You just got off work, this is school, and school is work. You just got off work, take a break, go play your game, or hang out for an hour or two with your friends and then come back and do your homework, because that's what I want to do. Now, after this, as soon as he gets home, he does his homework, in his own space, with his homework caddy, I don't know if he uses it or whatever, but it's there. He actually took over his sister's room	Participants saw their role in their children's education in a different way after completing the program. The ways in which they supported their children's education changed.

Table 14

Articulated Perceptions of Culture and Role

Themes and Theme-Related Components	Assertions
Culture and Values 1. As Hispanics, we come into the United States because we want a better future for ourselves and our kids. 2. We want a better future for our kids. We try to build that, and we try to be a part of our community.	Participants desire a better life for their children and believe that being involved will make a difference.
Culture and Perceived Barriers 1. It's not that people don't want to learn English. It's that they don't have the tools necessarily or the time. If we could embrace it and bring it in and bring maybe bilingual people to explain it like you did in your program. 2. We don't come with the language, we don't come with the education, but because of the language barrier, we're still torn apart, and we're still pulled apart. 3. We don't come with the tools because of the places we're coming from. 4. Well, sometimes kids getting bad grades isn't a lack of the parents wanting to be involved. It's a lack of knowledge. It's a lack of education. It's a lack of language communication. It's hard to understand, because you don't want to see your kid fail. 5. I think a lot of us, because of the way we grew up, we held a lot of stuff in, culture, emotional. We held a lot in because we grew up with our parents' culture saying, "You have to know Spanish; don't forget it." At the same time, we're growing up in America where you have to know English, so you're stuck playing both parts. A lot of us grew up not speaking out. I think a lot of us were afraid of speaking out to our parents and saying, "This is how we feel." 6. It was kind of hard because I was so involved with the restaurant, and I didn't participate as much in his schools as I would have liked. Now I enjoy having the opportunity … My mom was a seamstress for furniture. She did sofas and loveseats and all that. She was always working. She would leave the house like at 5:30 in the morning. Yeah, do house chores and stuff like that. But my struggle as a kid, and I still remember it, it was because I had no one to go to and ask help about homework because my mom didn't speak any English at the time. She couldn't help us with the homework. I was learning the language at that time. A lot of times we, I had a cousin that she was born and raised here. She was a year or two years older than me. I would tell my mom, "I can't do my homework because I'm not understanding it." It was in English, so first of all I didn't know what it was saying. 7. I felt very alone. I would cry. 8. A lot of the language barrier is a problem. I just see myself, or see myself as their kids too when they're struggling. It's hard when you're home and you're expected to have some sort of support, and there's none there for you because …it just isn't there.	Despite the strong desire to be involved in their children's education, participants felt that there were many barriers that impeded their involvement and feelings of being a part of the school community.

Assertion 1. Participants recognized and began actively resolving the perceived role construct conflicts between Latino role constructs and United States mainstream role constructs. All the participants who were interviewed after the program spoke about their roles as parents and how those roles are different in Latino and the dominant culture in the United States. The participants alluded to the struggle of straddling two cultures' role expectations. Parent 6 acknowledged the marginalization she felt being a Latino in the United States and how she felt it affected her involvement,

> All my life I've lived here. I've been living, I was taught and raised to live according to the system of this country, knowing that I have to be a good citizen, and with respect. Hispanic people, we have a lot of … our culture is very rich in tradition and family and union. At the same time, I think it takes a lot for us to come up forward. I don't know why. I've talked with my two younger sisters. I think it's just the way the community has just stayed back, or like we don't get involved much. I don't know if we're afraid of speaking out of being pinpointed, "Oh because you're Mexican, you do things this way. Because you're Mexican, you guys do this." I feel like that is kind of like a little bit of the fear that's out there, that we don't get involved.

Participant 1 commented, "In Hispanic culture Mom really does just take care of the house, and it takes so much time in the day, and there's so much responsibility to it."

Other participants reflected on their own parent role in Latino culture and how they were actively mediating the two culture's role expectations for them as Latino parents that live in the United States. Parent 3 said,

> I had to learn that, "Okay, yes I am Hispanic, but I'm also living in America, and I'm a mom, and I am working full time, so I need to make my family help me so that I can have time to help them," with homework, and school projects, and things like that, because if you don't then what happens is you rely on your older kids to help the younger kids, and I feel like that takes away from that bond or communication between the parent and the child, and it separates the school aspect so as kids get older, the parents aren't as involved in their schooling, and I feel that that's where we're breaking. Our families break in education.

Creating an empowerment program for Latino parents utilizing the framework from Bhabha's (2004) Third Space Theory, parents were given the opportunity to speak about the realities of their own lives. The space that was created in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program allowed parents to come to individual understandings of the personal strengths and challenges they faced as they reflected on being involved in their child's education.

Assertion 2. ***Participants saw their role in their children's education in a different way after completing the program. The ways in which they supported their children's education changed.*** After the program, parents seemed to take a more active role in supporting their children's education. Parent 5 reflected on his expectations for homework completion prior to the start of the program and then after completing the program. He explained,

> What it made me do was ... When I started the program, I would just let him you know he comes home from school and like I said I think the very first week I said I let my dude just do "him." You just got off work, this is school, and school is work. You just got off work, take a break, go play your game, or hang out for an hour or two with your friends and then come back and do your homework, because that's what I want to do. Now, after this, as soon as he gets home, he does his homework, in his own space, with his homework caddy, I don't know if he uses it or whatever, but it's there. He actually took over his sister's room.

Assertion 3. ***Participants desire a better life for their children and believe that being involved will make a difference***. The evidence of this assertion confirms the current research in Latino parent involvement as discussed in Chapter 2, namely that Latino parents care very deeply about their children's education and have high hopes and expectations for their futures. Parent 3 professed that, "As Hispanics, we come into the United States because we want a better future for ourselves and our kids." Latino parent sentiment for family and supporting their children was a salient message throughout the

program. Accessing and sharing resources in a parent involvement program that focused on the perceived needs and strengths of the participants themselves provided a starting point for accessing the resources available to help parents support their children's education.

Assertion 4. Despite the strong desire to be involved in their children's education, participants felt that there were many barriers that impeded their involvement and feelings of being a part of the school community. Although the participants spoke and understood English, language emerged as a prominent barrier to being involved. Parent 1 confirmed this during her interview, but also touched on the responsibilities and roles that females have in the Latino culture,

> I think language is a big part of the problem, but they're busy. They've got a lot to do. These parents right there they are it. They have to provide for their family and do all that and then come and cook and clean and do homework and learn English, after work.

Another parent saw the differing cultural roles in a different light. She implied that even after living in the United States for 30 years, she felt marginalized in her community because she was Latino,

> Being Hispanic and being raised, and now raising my kids, in the same way I was raised, trying to make it better also, I think that your program was great. I would like to see it next year. You know why? Because I think it's making … There's still a barrier, I think, between Hispanics and, I don't just want to say Anglo community, but the rest of the American community. Why? Because we're minority, and we, for some reason, even though we are … I've been here for more than 30 years, you know?

Parent 2 stated,

> We don't want to just, we don't like struggling. We also want to learn. Obviously, it's hard for us to learn but we try. Actually, I say "Hi.", to several parents and they say "Hi.", but then she says there're some that will just look at me, like not responsive.

In contrast, Parent 5 said that he wasn't raised with the same role constructs as what he saw with the other program participants. However, he did acknowledge the differing role constructs between the two cultures,

> The funny thing is at my house we're not traditionally Hispanic in the way that a lot of the other parents are. You know like my cousins and stuff like that when they were growing up they grew up in the way that I see traditional Hispanic parents and families growing up. We did ... My mom's White. My wife is White. My dad didn't want Hispanic kids, he wanted American kids. We didn't learn Spanish we didn't learn *Dia De Los Muertes*, we didn't learn a lot of Hispanic culture and stuff like that so we grew up, Yeah, it was American culture and American stuff. I've been in the neighborhood a long time and growing up around my cousins and stuff like that they did, that was traditional Hispanic ways and stuff like that. My cousins would have connected more to these parents in the group.

The program provided a space for participants to reflect on their personal role construction, to value them for what they meant to them as part of their culture, and to begin to develop strategies for integrating their ideas for supporting their children's education, that were shared by the participants and presenters, and to develop goals that were personal to them and the reality of their lives and values.

Research question 4. ***To what extent is parents' role construction changed as a result of their participation in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?***

Descriptive statistics. On the 12-item subscale that assessed participants' perceptions of *Role Construction*, the mean pre-test score was 52.17. The participants showed a 3 point increase of the percentage score from the pre- to post test appraisal with a post-test mean of 55.37.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics for the Role Construction Sub Scale on the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaire

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Role Construction	52.71	5.66	55.57	5.36

Note. Items were 6-point Likert scale questions. Items ranged from *1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.* The subscale contained 12 items.
n = 14

Paired samples t-test. A paired samples *t*-test was conducted to analyze *Role Construction* which measured participants' beliefs on their perceived role as it pertained to their children's education. There was a significant difference in the scores for *Role Construction* on the pre-test ($M = 52.71$, SD 5.66) and scores for role construction on the post-test ($M = 55.6$, SD 5.36); $t(13) = 2.48$, $p < .05$. These results suggested that the intervention also had a significant effect on changing parents' views of their role in their child's education.

Research question 5. ***How, and to what extent, do parents view the utility of the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?***

Descriptive statistics. The final subscale of the pre-and post- intervention questionnaire measures participants' perceptions of utility as it pertained to their participation and the content of the Espacio Iluminado parent engagement program. The subscale contained 14 items. The participants began with an initial mean of 73.50 and

increased to 84.79 on the post- intervention questionaire, an increase of more than eleven points.

Table 16
Descriptive Statistics for the Utility Sub Scale on the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaire

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention	
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
Utility	73.50	7.54	84.80	7.05

Note. Items were 6-point Likert scale questions. Items ranged from *1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.* The subscale contained 14 items.
(n = 14)

Paired samples t-test. A paired samples *t*-test was conducted to analyze the *Utility* construct that measured participants' beliefs on the overall utility of the intervention, specifically usefulness and knowledge of the intervention topics and program itself. There was a significant difference in the scores for the utility subscale on the pre-test (*M* = 73.50, *SD* 7.54) and scores for role construction on the post-test (M = 84.80, SD 7.05); t (13)= 5.10, $p < .001$. These results revealed a significant change in participants' knowledge of intervention topics and their perceived utility of the program.

Themes and assertions from semi-structured interviews.

Table 17

Perceptions of Utility

Themes and Theme-Related Components	Assertions
Utility of Subject Matter 1. The program was very accepting of everybody. It was taking in everybody's thoughts and process. 2. The homework one. That was very helpful. 3. We actually tried out a lot of the things we said about the homework. My sister and I both, because she's the one that watches them, she's kind of like my husband, so we sat down, we talked a plan out. She's doing three home works at one time, so it's hard for her, so I said, "Okay, well then how do we divide this. How can we both make it work for both of us," so she does the homework. 4. I felt like they were helpful to me. A lot of the homework help especially, because we're a mess. Especially when we get home from school. It's constantly chaos. Then we always end up doing homework at night, right before bed. So I could relate to a lot of the people in there, but I'm not very outspoken, so I don't say what I think out loud. But I'm thinking it in my mind. It really did help. The homework helped mostly. Just knowing that there's are other resources out there besides the school help. 5. Overall I think it was such a great experience. For me, having kids at the school and having school age students. I think there are so many resources out there now for any parent if they need to use them. I don't feel right now that there's anything else I could add to make it any better. 6. Appreciate that [homework caddy] because I try to have everything for them but it wasn't always probably altogether now with the homework caddy, she says everything is there. They have no excuse to say we don't have something. 7. Really think they [program topics] were useful. Like I said, some of those may have been areas that I may have been doing a little different with the kids. 8. The tools that they need to learn it. A lot of the moms don't know how to use a computer, don't know how to navigate stuff, or even their phones, something as simple as one of our new phones, our iPhones, a lot of people don't know how to use it. Sitting in a classroom like that and being taught how to go through the process to get there, I think is going to be very helpful for all of us, even for me. 9. The subject matter was on point.	Participants felt the topics that were discussed as part of the program were useful and applicable to their daily lives. Participants felt they gained knowledge about accessing and utilizing available resources.
Feelings of a worthwhile time investment 1. Just, I'm very grateful to have been a part of it. I really feel like it's made a difference in my life and in my kid's life, and I hope that it's made a difference in other lives and that it can continue. 2. You are, and I feel like you are so approachable. You're so outgoing and I think they sense that. From what I saw in there, they were so comfortable. 3. I loved it. I looked forward to doing it. I even talked about it at work. Yeah. I have to be ... You said be honest I called it Mexican Mommy Club. 4. Yeah I would and I would hope that more dads would go, seriously. 5. The speakers, the guests they did their thing they helped a lot and you, you did a great job. 6. I enjoyed having the opportunity to come and participate in this. I found it very interesting.	Participants looked forward to the program sessions and felt that they were a worthwhile investment of their time.

Table 18

Desires for Program Extension and Validated Voices

Themes and Theme-Related Components	Assertions
Desires for Program Extension 1. Maybe putting more time into that or creating another program where, every month, parents come in and learn the new things that our kids are learning, and how they're learning it, the tools. I know they went through that website where it teaches what is being taught. 2. I really, really hope that it's something that can continue, and I know you were talking about the funding. Our community and our people are so strong that even if we had to do PTO stuff and try to raise funds for it, I'm sure people would be all for it, because I feel like it's that important for us for our kids. 3. Like we heard towards the end, everybody's like, "We got it. There has to be a continuation." 4. Yeah, I remember a lot of people were saying that we should have more [sessions]. 5. I would love to see the program again. If you have it again, I would love to participate in it again. 6. I would like to be involved in the future. What do you call it? An outreach spokesperson for the males.	There was a salient desire to continue the program at the school to include new groups of teachers and parents in future programming.
Validated Voice 1. I was honored. Honored that you would consider me to be a part of the program that my input or my thoughts on all of the program mattered. It was very touching. 2. I think everybody felt comfortable to the point where everyone did start speaking out and everybody felt like they were being heard. 3. With your program, I saw, and I thought to myself, "We were finally able to let that go." I think we finally felt like we were being heard, everything we were holding in was finally being let out. I saw, and I felt, comfortable seeing that, because it was like, "Finally, I'm not stuck with this anymore. I'm able to let it go." 4. With this program, everybody's took that weight off that shoulder. We were finally being heard, we were finally able to tell somebody the way we felt. Everybody felt the same way, felt comfortable and said, "Finally. I'm not the only one." Even they didn't speak it out, they felt like they let it go because someone else said it. 5. I talked about it at work and then I don't know what am I trying to say ... The other people that I worked with were like wait what, you're in a ... I called it a focus group and I said this focus group that I'm a part of, but it's all Hispanics and I'm the only guy there. They were like, "What do you do in there?" I said, "I think I'm making a difference I don't know." 6. I wanted to contribute a lot during the sessions because I knew that there was going to be what it was and we don't know this and we don't know that and I do know this and I do know that and I wanted to be able to just plug stuff in.	There was a feeling that the participants' voices were being validated and listened to in the program and that their voice was making a contribution to the community.

Assertion 1. Participants felt that the topics that were discussed as part of the program were useful and applicable to their daily lives*. Participants felt they gained knowledge about accessing and utilizing available resources.* The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program topics were initially derived from an extensive review of researched empowerment models of Latino parent engagement programs across the country. The topics were then presented to a focus group of parents who had children who attended the school. The focus group participants expressed their opinions about the topics in relation to the perceived utility for them as parents of children in the school. One topic was changed during the focus group. Instead of having a session that discussed advocating for your child's needs, the focus group participant consensus was that a session that focused on supporting the behavior of their children was added. Although the revised topic was not brought up during the interviews, all interview participants felt that the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program was a useful and applicable program in their daily lives. Parent 6 stated, "That was the first thing I thought, and then I started thinking, okay this is really cool because it's focused on resources and homework help and volunteering at the school." Parent 2 also expounded on the value of the topics, except for the behavior management topic. She reflected,

> Everything from opening up communication, learning, the volunteering, how you can volunteer, how you can be a part of your kid's future, their education, how you can make a difference, how nothing's set in stone where you can come in and give your ideas, then follow through with them on how it is that you implement your ideas, how you can have a say in that how you can make a change, basically.

Accessing school and community resources, supporting learning at home, and ways to be involved in your child's education were three of the four topics presented in the program. During the session on supporting learning at home, the parent presenter

discussed the idea of having an organized space that contained supplies such as pencils and paper in a dedicated space reserved for completing at homework at home as one strategy. For the session, I created "Homework Caddy" as a take-away tangible item for participants to help support their children with their homework. The Homework Caddy proved to be very useful for parents and students. Parent 6 stated, "I appreciate that because I try to have everything for them, but it wasn't always probably altogether now with the homework caddy, she says everything is there. They have no excuse to say we don't have something."

Assertion 2. Participants looked forward to the program sessions and felt that they were a worthwhile investment of their time. After an analysis of the sign-in sheets for each session, it was revealed that there was only one participant absence. Table 19 shows the attendance rate for each of the five sessions. The participant who was absent during the fourth session notified me in advance of her absence. She stated that she had a trip planned with her husband that could not be rescheduled. There were also incentives to attend all of the sessions. In addition to the compensation for attending each session, parents were given a bonus of $10 if they attended all five sessions. Child care was also provided to eliminate any logistical concerns related to the ability to attend the sessions. The child care providers provided structured age appropriate games and crafts for the children. During the last session, the children put on a play for the parents before the potluck began. Participant 1 mentioned how much her son enjoyed coming to the child care during the sessions.

She stated,

> You know, you can make a big change in your child's education and in their life, because like I said, my husband was like, "What's [our son] telling you?" I'm like, "Because it's Tuesday and today we have to go." He's like, "I guess he likes it too. He must be having fun." I'm like, well yeah because there's a group of kids, so the parents were meeting together and the kids are doing their own activities and they're enjoying it too." I think it's a message that I think it would be very awesome for future generations too, and future groups of parents maybe wanting to participate in this. I really think that they would benefit.

Table 19

Attendance Rates for the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program (n =15)

	Number Attended	Percent Attended
Session 1	15	100%
Session 2	15	100%
Session 3	15	100%
Session 4	14	93%
Session 5	15	100%

An analysis of the semi-structured interviews suggested that participants saw the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program as an opportunity that made a positive difference in their lives and the lives of their children. Participant 5 remarked, "I loved it. I looked forward to doing it. I even talked about it at work." During an interview at Participant 6's home, she confessed that she would definitely recommend the program because,

> I got a lot of help from it, resources, opinions, how to work, what strategies to use, I would definitely like to now share that with other parents because just how they were struggling before starting the program but now found a way to better help or better understand certain things or where to go.

I made a concerted effort to help the participants feel comfortable in the program. Each session began with an active ice breaker game. The games focused on getting participants

to share about their families, dreams, aspirations, hobbies, and experiences in an active and fun way. As part of the critical format of the program, illustrated in Figure 3, considerable time was given during each session for participants to share their experiences as it related to the program topics. Participants were intentionally given ample time to reflect on their prior goal implementation and sharing their lived experiences, what works and challenges when it came to the topic of focus for the session. The participants were also given extensive time to discuss the information and ideas shared so that they could choose an idea to try out. Participant, 4 indicated, "I love to learn things from other people. Everybody share your knowledge. It's just so cool."

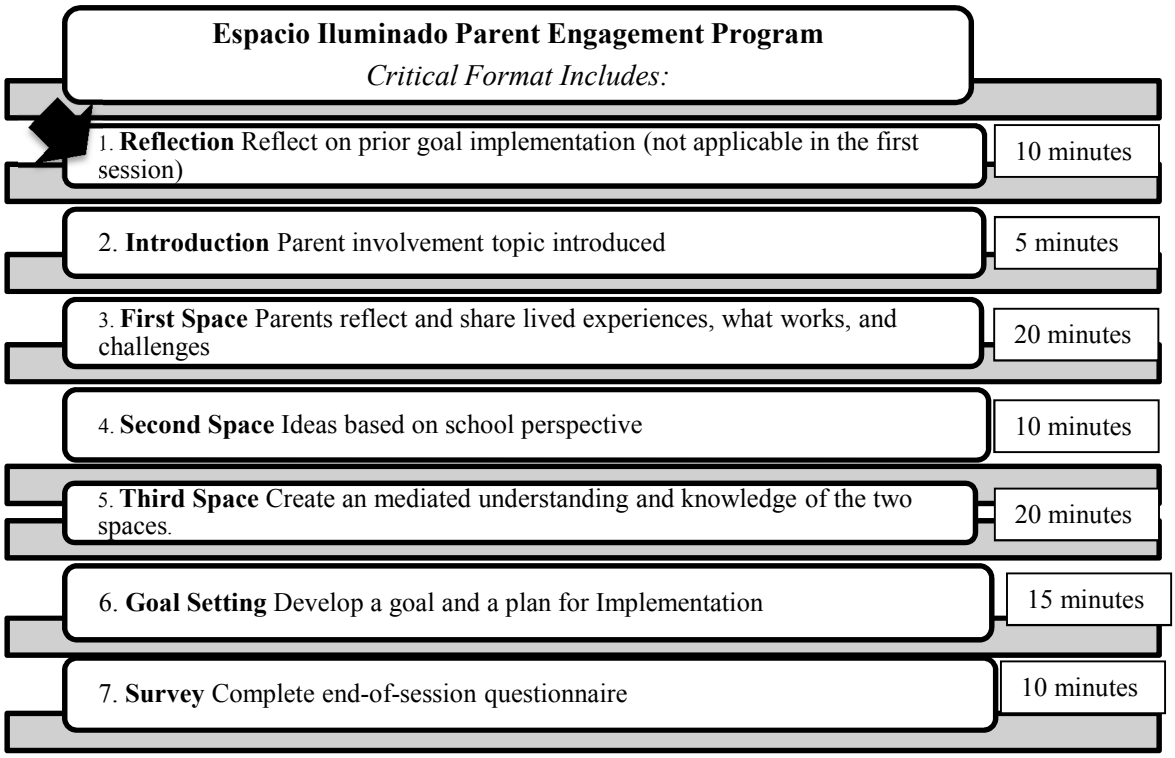


Figure 3. Emphasis on First Space with Parent Sharing for Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program.

Assertion 3. There was a strong desire to continue the program at the school to include new groups of teachers and parents in future programming. The theme of having the program continue in some form was repeated throughout the interviews. There was a sense that the participants did not want the knowledge generated in the program to be contained to just the participants in the group. There seemed to be a desire to share the knowledge and the experience of the program with, not only other Latino parents in the school, but with the teachers and other non-Latino parents as well.

> Maybe putting more time into that or creating another program where, every month, parents come in and learn the new things that our kids are learning, and how they're learning it, the tools. I know they went through that website where it teaches what is being taught.

The following quotes reflected these sentiments. Participant 5, the lone male, expressed an interest in getting more males involved, where Participant 3 was interested in participating in an assembly designed to recruit new participants, saying, "I feel comfortable if you were to have an assembly and talking to a new group of parents." She also stated, "One thing I would like to see is maybe not only Hispanics, but maybe sometime even having American parents, Caucasian parents be in the program so they can also listen to how we [Hispanic parents] want to learn."

Assertion 4. There was a feeling that the participants' voices were being validated and listened to in the program and that their voice was making a contribution to the community. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program was designed to be an empowerment model of a Latino parent involvement program. The program was built on Third Space Theory with a concerted effort being placed on validating the desires, perceived needs, desires, and strengths of the participants. Lists of best practices were created from the parent participants and the community or school speakers. At the

end of each session, each participant was given several green and yellow circle stickers to mark the ideas with a green sticker for best practices that they found valuable and might try as a goal and mark the ideas that they found confusing or still needed more information about with the yellow sticker. Participants would create their goals and write them down on their end-of session-questionnaires. Any ideas marked with a yellow sticker were then brought up to the group for more discussion, again putting the value back on the participants. Participant 4 remarked,

> Getting to hear other women talk about how they felt, like when they were talking about being overwhelmed, and when schools on break and then they go back to school how it's a relief that they're going back to school. I feel like, in those instances, I almost want to make another group for them as support, because I felt that way at one point in my life, and it was because I was so overwhelmed because of the way we were raised and were brought up, our culture.

Participant 2 held, "I felt like somebody's listening to what we, as parents, are doing at home with our kids, too." While Participant 6 admitted, "Your program, this program was to help the community, help everybody speak out and get help to be a community. That's what this was so the program is making parents feel good, great, you're being heard." Participant 3 stated, "I was honored. Honored that you would consider me to be a part of the program that my input or my thoughts on all of the program mattered. It was very touching.

An analysis of the end-of-session questionnaires for all of the program sessions revealed that 100% of participants (n = 15) found the session helpful to them as a parent. When asked if there was anything else that they wished would have been discussed at the session, one participant commented that she wished that we would have talked about how to help her child who struggles with reading.

Findings from Research Journal. The research journal was utilized as a qualitative data source for recording observations, outcomes of sessions, and researcher positionality. The following descriptions were derived from my researcher's journal, where I recorded notes from the events and discussions from each of the five sessions as well as an analysis of the end-of-session questionaires.

Session 1 Supporting Learning at Home. The topic for the first session was Supporting Learning at Home. Before the participants left, homework caddies were given to each parent participant to take home. A picture of one of the caddies is located in Appendix L. The participants collaboratively created a list of best practices for supporting their children's learning at home. Examples included, using a homework caddy for supply organization, starting homework immediately after school, and establishing a consistent homework routine. Appendix M depicts the complete list of ideas that were generated during the first session.

An analysis of the end-of-session questionnaires revealed that 100% of participants (n = 15) found the first session to be helpful to them as a parent. When asked if there was anything else that they wished would have been discussed at the session, one participant commented that she wished that there was an English language class available for the parents at the school.

Session 2 Getting Involved. The second session topic focused on parent involvement. After the participants shared their ideas and experiences on the topic, a Latino parent in the school community presented her ideas and experiences. After the sharing occurred, the participants worked together to create a list of best practices for getting involved in their child's education. Examples from the list included, helping their

children with their homework, reading to children at school, and utilizing the school district app. Appendix N depicts the ideas that were generated from the second session.

Session 3 Accessing School and Community Resources. The topic for Session 3 was Accessing District and Community Resources. After the participants shared their ideas and experiences on the topic, the school counselor shared a plethora of resources that were available to parents in the community. The participant created best practices list included ideas such as, joining the local chapter of Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts and attending classes from the district sponsored "Parent University." Appendix O depicts the ideas that were generated from the second session.

An analysis of the end-of-session questionnaires for Session 3 revealed that 100% of participants (n = 15) found the session helpful to them as a parent. When asked if there was anything else that they wished would have been discussed at the session, no participants commented that there had been a desire for something different.

Session 4 Supporting Behavior at Home. The fourth session topic focused on *Supporting Positive Behavior at Home.* Examples of best practices for the supporting behavior at home session included, prepping school outfits for the whole week or the night before, be consistent, follow through, and use positive reinforcement for acknowledging good behavior. Appendix P depicts the ideas that were generated from the fourth session.

An analysis of the end-of-session questionnaires for Session 4 revealed that 100% of participants; one absentee (n = 14) found the session helpful to them as a parent. There were not any comments on topics of discussion that the participants felt should have been an addition to the ideas presented at the session.

Session 5 Sharing our Knowledge. The last session was a planned departure from the routines of the first four sessions. After a review of the last session's goals was discussed, I shared a compilation of the best practices and tips to the participants that was created throughout the sessions. The ideas generated during the last session included, creating a pamphlet in Spanish and English about what was shared at the sessions and holding a joint assembly for teachers and parents with the purpose of sharing the program with teachers and other parents. Appendix Q depicts the complete list of the participants' ideas.

After completing the post-intervention questionnaire, the participants congregated in the school gymnasium for a potluck where they all contributed food dishes and refreshments. The children who participated in the child care for the program presented the parents with a play. I was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a card of gratitude for the project. A photograph of the card can be found in Appendix R.

Additional findings. In addition to the findings described in this chapter, additional qualitative themes were illuminated during the semi-structured interviews. Thorough analysis of the data revealed two additional thematic findings that emerged from semi-structured interviews. These themes were deemed important findings worthy of reporting and discussing due to the high prominence in most of the semi-structured interview transcripts. Table 20 below depicts these themes and the assertions derived from them. The first additional finding referred to invitations from the school to be involved. The second finding pertained to the feelings associated with being a part of a group with which a person identifies. This finding has been labeled as *Social Identity* in the table below.

Table 20

Additional Thematic Findings

Themes and Theme-Related Components	Assertions
Invitations from the School 1. Because first, with pre-school, I kind of felt left out, because I wouldn't involve myself and the teacher wouldn't really reach out as much, so when the teacher does reach out I feel like that opens up that opportunity for us. 2. Being invited, or being told, "We're doing this. Would you like," or, "If there's anybody that wants to participate." I always try for the field trips, to be there, but I didn't feel like it was as much volunteering as I would like to do, so now I try to do the fall festivals, and it gets to be a lot but it's fun, and somehow, we get the energy to do it. 3. Being invited and involved helps open doors to meeting other family members. I've had several parents ask if my girls could have play dates, and I'm very over-protective, so I'm like, "No. I don't know you, so no," but this helping know their lifestyle, know a little bit more about them kind of helped open those doors. Now, before I was really, really pushing to move out of the area, and now I'm like, "I kind of like it here now," not because of the neighborhood, because of the people that make the neighborhood, the families and that they have the same values and goals as I do.	Explicit invitations to be involved from the school are motivators for involvement.
Social Identity 1. I enjoyed it. I think the sharing that we have there was helpful for a lot of us, all of us, because just like I shared my ideas, it may have helped somebody else. Then the other people's ideas helped me to understand, okay, maybe what I'm doing is not working very well, but maybe if I try what she's doing or what she's tried with her kids, it can help me in a better way with my kids. I think that was very productive as a parent. 2. I think too, it was probably exactly that we felt comfortable being together, being as a group, that we could continue bringing more and more … ideas, just being together. 3. I felt very comfortable in the group to where we were able to express our ideas and basic things like what we do at home with our kids and everything. It was very nice that we all felt that confidence of speaking out, you know? 4. Exactly. I really liked participating even though it was my first time like I said, ever being in something like this in the school. It made me feel really good. 5. They're happy with it; it's great. I think that the program really helped our age era feel comfortable. 6. Finally, there is something just for us. 7. I haven't [formed any new relationships] outside of it, but while I'm here at the school if I see the parents then, yeah. I acknowledge them now. I feel like we have common things. 8. So that's really good that he's [the school…principal] trying to help in taking interest in trying to help out the Latino community. 9. I got to know a lot of parents I didn't know. I knew a couple of them. They would already say hi to each other. 10. Everybody was letting out what we had in ourselves because of what we grew up with and what we had to grow up doing.	There was a sense of belonging to a social group that they could identify with and related to.

Assertion 1. Explicit invitations to be involved from the school are motivators for involvement. Although this study did not examine the impact of specific invitations for parents to be involved in involvement activities, a major predictor of involvement as noted in Figure 1 are parents' perceptions of being invited to participate when they feel that their participation and contributions were valued and welcomed by the school (Walker et. al, 2005). Participant 1 professed,

> Being invited makes you feel that you're going to be welcome to come and participate. You're being invited to come. It's maybe the district or the schools may put it that way, "We're having this." It makes you feel like, "If you want to come, fine. If you don't then … Yes, if you're invited." To me, it's like when you invite someone to your home, to your house, you want them to feel welcome, right?

This theme is important to illuminate because it may have implications in future research with empowerment models of Latino engagement programs given that many programs are not highly utilized by Latino parents.

Assertion 2. There was a sense of belonging to a social group that they could identify with and relate to. Participants in the program felt that they had a connection with the other participants. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program became a place for community social networking where the group participants felt that they had many common beliefs and experiences to each other. Participant 2 remarked about her interpretation of the group's feelings,

> Because everybody got to see, and that's what I would hear. Everybody would say, "I see that I'm not the only one." That's what I used to hear. Everybody used to say, "Now I know I wasn't the only one going through it." I think a lot of us felt that way. We kind of knew that that's the way we grew up, and nobody talked about it. We wouldn't talk about it, because it was just different.

The opportunity to share experiences contributed to the feelings of comfort in the group

as reflected in a comment from Participant 6, “Now I think I see it in the other people that were in our group that they now feel comfortable. They let that weight off their shoulder, and now they feel like they can talk. I feel, like now, I'm somewhat free, because I let everything go. This is great.” Participant 4 commented, “I would now like to share that with other parents so they won't keep on feeling maybe how they were feeling, how I was feeling before the program, alone.”

Summary of the Results

The paired-samples *t*-tests were conducted to evaluate how participants’ perceptions and ratings on the three constructs of *Self-Efficacy, Role Construction,* and *Utility* were related as compared to one another. There were three constructs that reached significance. Qualitative findings supported these findings and illuminated the voices and values of the participants as it related to the session topics and the realities of their lives.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this action research study is to examine the relation between the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program as a nontraditional Latino parent involvement opportunity and parents' perceptions of self-efficacy and role construction as it pertained to supporting the education of their children. The study reveals that the intervention supports a significant increase in self-efficacy, role construction, and utility for each of the three constructs. The foundation of the study is based on Third Space Theory (Bhabha, 1994) to generate a framework that has the potential to serve as a model for future parent involvement programs that validates the knowledge of diverse cultures and discourses and encourage a mediation of the two. A desired outcome of the program is to create a new and joined body of knowledge of ways that parents can support their children's education that did not privilege the knowledge, perceptions, and ideas of the school over the parents.

Recognizing that along with the problem of low Latino parent involvement in a school where Latino students represented the majority population of children at the school, there is also a lack of involvement opportunities that considered the perspectives and ideas of the Latino families. Moreover, historically in the United States, schools have the tendency to devalue the resources, knowledge, and perspectives of minority families leading to constrained relationships between these families and the school along with low parent involvement (Auerbach, 2001; Laureau, 1989, 2003; Laureau & Horvat, 1999). There are no opportunities at the school that reflect the knowledge, values and the perceived needs and desires of the Latino community. In response, a Latino parent

involvement program that utilize Third Space Theory is designed to create an opportunity for Latino parents to share their lived experiences and ideas that are validated in the school setting. Walker et al. (2005) identifies personal role construct and self-efficacy as motivators for parents to become involved in their children's education.

In this section, outcomes related to research and theoretical foundations guiding and informing this project are discussed in relation to the findings. Information about lessons learned, implications for practice, directions for future research and study limitations are also discussed. I suggest the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program is an important antecedent to authentic, collaborative, and mutually respectful and meaningful relationships between Latino parents and the school.

Complementarity of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

To utilize mixed methods in studies, researchers can "make use of all available data (both qualitative and quantitative) to build a rigorous, cohesive set of conclusions" (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008, p. 81). According to Greene (2007), there are five motives for selecting a mixed methods research design to achieve a better understanding of the social phenomena being studied. These include triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion. This transformative mixed methods study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve complementarity of the data. The transformative mixed method approach is used to illuminate inequity through power relationships between dominant and minority groups in a way that it could be used as a means to advance toward dismantling them. According to Mertens, Bledsoe, Sullivan, and Wilson (2010), the use of transformative mixed methods "suggests the need for community involvement, as well as the cyclical use of

data to inform decisions about next steps, whether those steps related to additional research or to program changes" (p. 199). Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data showed complementarity for all of the defined research constructs, including self-efficacy, role construction, and program utility and illuminate the next steps for the future of the program. With respect to complementarity, the quantitative data show increases in self-efficacy, role construction, and utility of the intervention. Similarly, the respondents indicate that they grew in terms of self-efficacy and role construction. Further, their responses about the program indicate its usefulness and benefits in terms of increases in various types of parent involvement.

Outcomes Related to Research and Theory

Role construction. The quantitative and qualitative role construction data results exhibit complementarity and demonstrate that participants' perception of role as it pertains to their involvement in their child's education changes significantly. In the area of role construction, the participants demonstrated a significant change in perceived role construct after their participation in the program. An analysis of the post-intervention semi-structured interviews further substantiates the change of perception of role construction. Examples of direct application of ideas presented during the sessions are evident in the interview transcriptions. Participants communicated that not only did they believe that it is their role to support their children's learning, but, they also have begun to actively engage in the activities that they believe support their children's learning. For example, participant responses to role construction questions in the interviews reveal that some participants have already dedicated special areas in the home and specific times to homework completion.

In relation to beliefs about the role participants thought that they should play in their children's education, participants communicated that although they had a strong desire for their children to do well in school, they felt that there are barriers that keep them from meeting role expectations for parents in the United States.

Valdes (1996) concisely describes *una persona bien educada* (a person with education) in the context of Latino perspective of school success to be educated as a whole being in relation to the family and community, including roles that one should play in life and rules of conduct that include both morals and values. This belief was reflected in the interviews when participants were asked about their dreams and aspirations for their children. The respondents asserted that in addition to doing well in school, being a good person or a good citizen is also a desired outcome for their children. Although participants place value on school success, they also feel there are barriers that prevent them from supporting their children's learning, specifically naming lack of knowledge about subject matter, language barriers, and perceptions of separation from the school community. Parents' responses to the post -interview questions indicated that some of the suggestions and ideas presented in Espacio Illuminado have already helped them to overcome some of these perceived barriers. For example, some feel that the school acknowledges their thoughts and feelings and believe that their input is important enough to be heard in the school setting, reducing the feelings of separation between themselves and the school.

Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) argue that the importance of being involved and knowledgable about the school system is an area that can be significantly effected in the short term through culturally sensitive parent engagement programs. Given the tools to be

involved in a parent involvement program that creates a space for sharing between parents in the community, parents in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program were able to envision their role in their children's education and act on ways that they felt that they personally could be involved in supporting their children's education, directly affecting their perceived role construct.

Role construction and social identity theory. Studies show that roles are developed and influenced by the values, goals, and expectations of social groups to which people feel they belong (Walker et al., 2011). Rooted in social theory, Bandura (2011) suggests that the goals and expectations that comprise role construction directly influence future actions and become motivators and regulators of behavior. Studies show that role definitions are associated with several sources, such as social class (e.g., Lareau, 1989), national culture (e.g., Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990), or affiliations such as nationality, political affiliation, and even sports teams (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). However, Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that Social Identity Theory encompasses the idea that the social category that one identifies with, provides a definition of who one is. According to the researchers, these categories of affiliation significantly influence the perceived roles and behaviors of the individual in the group. In this sense, Social Identity Theory may explain the effect on participants' perceived role construction in this study.

The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program is a program specifically designed for Latino parents in the same school community. Feelings of social identity or affiliation to the group may be reinforced by providing a space for participants to share the realities of their lives and their experiences relating to supporting their children's education. Because the program focuses on sharing and authentic contributions instead of

prescribing remedies to perceived problems based on an outsider's perspective, participants actively define their roles in supporting their children's education as it pertains to a group that had similar experiences which are derived from the same dynamic context of school and cultural experiences.

Self-efficacy. The quantitative and qualitative self-efficacy data results exhibit complementarity and demonstrate that participants perceive self-efficacy as it pertains to their involvement in their children's education changed significantly after their participation in the program. An analysis of the post-intervention, semi-structured interviews further substantiates the change of perception of self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is defined as the personal belief that one can achieve a desired outcome as a result of his or her effort or actions. In terms of parent involvement, self-efficacy theory suggests that parents will actively pursue involvement activities when they feel that the outcome of their involvement will have a desired effect on their children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Bandura (1997) argues that self-efficacy is socially constructed and is influenced by experiencing personal success, but can also be influenced by hearing about the successful parent involvement experiences of similar others, as well as verbal persuasion from people in a social group.

Given that role construction and self-efficacy are socially derived and are influenced by the social groups with whom individuals identify, the increase in perceptions of self-efficacy are attributed to the fact that the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program is designed to include ample time for sharing between program participants. The participants have the opportunity to hear about success stories centered

on parent involvement from individuals with whom they identify with and as a result of this vicarious experience, their own feelings of self-efficacy are influenced.

Another factor that may help to explain the increase in the participants' perceptions of self-efficacy is the goal setting activity that occurred at the end of each session. Participants reported that some of their goals for becoming involved were realized during the course of the program. One participant exclaimed, "It was my goal. I wrote down that I would come eat lunch with my kid and I did it." Creating explicit, as opposed to vague, goals for oneself is a motivator for future action and behavior (Bandura & Shunk, 1981). Goals that can be acted on in reasonable amounts of time and are attained or mastered have a direct influence on enhancing perceptions of self-efficacy (Bandura and Shunk). In particular, the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program, parents reflected on their written goals at the subsequent sessions.

Overall, participants reported in the interviews that they felt knowledgeable about the ways that they could be involved at home and at the school, and confident that they would be successful in their attempts. Listening to and engaging in conversation with others on the topic of involvement helps parents' experience involvement success vicariously as they hear about others' experiences, allowing them to visualize themselves participating at a successful level in their children's education. The end-of-session goal setting may influence feelings of efficacy as the participants' goals for involvement are short-term and easily accomplished so that participants felt successful in their attempts.

Utility. An important component of any parent involvement program is the parents' perceptions of its usefulness and its applicability to their lives. Items on the questionaire for the *Utility* construct focused primarily on the knowledge of session topic

information gained from participation in the program whereas the semi-structured interview items relating to the utility construct focused on the utility of that knowledge and the usefulness of the program in general. Participants felt that the topics that were discussed as part of the program are useful and applicable to their daily lives. Participants also felt that they gained knowledge about accessing available resources, but also found the tangible resources, such as the homework caddy useful as well. Overall, there was a strong desire to continue the program at the school and include new groups of parents in the program.

During the last session of the program, the participants stated their ideas for the next steps after the completion of the program. The suggestions from the participants included holding future meetings in Spanish, creating a pamphlet in Spanish and English about what is shared during the program, holding an assembly for teachers and parents, creating a video about the program, holding meetings with teachers and Latino parents, sending home monthly involvement tip sheets for parents, and adding a comments and suggestions box for parents in the school office. There was a desire from the participants for teachers and administrators to be included in the sharing with the understanding that teacher-parent relationships may be able to be enhanced. Feelings of utility are also reflected in the high attendance rate of the participants (see Table 13). As alluded to in some interviews, the child care that was provided along with children's spoken desire to attend the sessions also contributes to the high attendance rates, but compensation is only mentioned once in the interviews as a motivation for participation in the program. In general, the participants reported feeling welcomed and felt that participation in the program was a worthwhile investment of their time.

Specific invitations. Additional themes relating to the motivators linked to parent involvement emerged in the analysis of the participant interviews. Level 1 of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) model of parent involvement identifies two significant motivators for parent involvement. These include parental *role construction* for involvement and parents' sense of *self-efficacy* for helping their children succeed in school (Walker et al., 2011, p. 412). Another influential factor in parents' decisions to become involved is the parents' perceptions of invitations from the school to become involved (Epstein, 1986). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggest that overtly welcoming invitations to parents to become involved convey that parents' involvement is useful and desired and may be a contributing factor to involvement. Although this construct is not a focus of this study, participants voiced the importance of being directly invited to participate in the program as an important contributing factor to their involvement in the program. The details of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model have been provided in Figure 4.

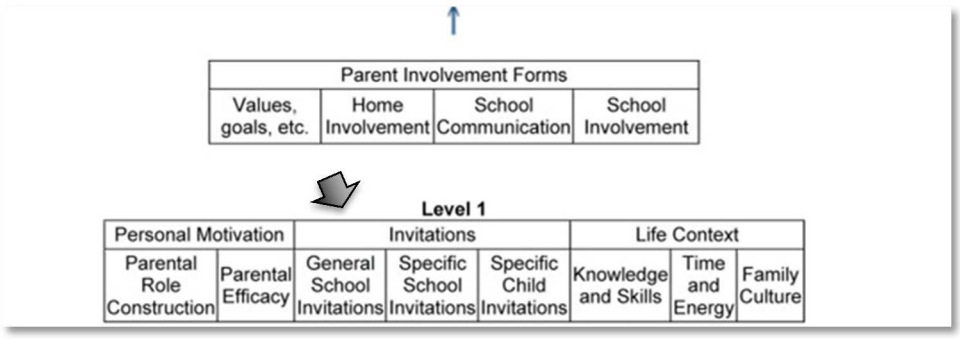


Figure 4. Partial Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of parent involvement. Adapted from http://www.vanderbuilt.edu/Peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html from Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 2005.

Third Space Theory. Historically in the United States, minority families are positioned in inferior roles in school systems, where the values, knowledge, and traditions are modeled on the dominant culture (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010; Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008). As explained in Chapter 2, many Latino parent involvement programs in the past viewed Latino parents through a deficit lens, focusing on the assimilation of Latino parents into the dominant culture, instead of placing emphasis on sharing the knowledge and experiences of the Latino community. However, empowerment models of Latino parent involvement programs that yield important changes in parents' perception of role construction and self-efficacy take the parents' views and perceived needs into consideration when designing the programs. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Programwas created for Latino parents as an empowerment model of a nontraditional parent engagement program that values and gives voice to the parents' lived experiences, ideas, perspectives, and perceived needs. The foundation of this innovative program is created on the theoretical perspective of Third Space Theory. Bhabha (1994) defines third spaces as when two seemingly opposing cultures come together in a free space where ideas, values, perception, and knowledge are listened to and valued at the same level. For the purpose of this research project, the two spaces are defined as Latino parents in the first space and their children's school as the second space. The third space, as Bhabha refers to as a *free space,* is the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program. Third Space Theory is situated in postcolonial discourse where fixed notions of signs and symbols that represent the views of the dominant culture are challenged (Moje et al., 2004). Third spaces allow for new

knowledge creation and understandings when the two spaces are joined in a non-threatening and welcoming space.

In this project, illumination of participant knowledge and experiences is an important component because, in postmodern terms, the knowledge of minority communities is subjugated knowledge compared to that of the school (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Subjugated knowledge rarely is heard at a level that would influence policy or change on a grand level, for instance to effect school policy change.

Empowerment and validated voice. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program is a first step in resisting dominant culture ideology and practice by illuminating issues and sharing ideas that have historically been overlooked by school administrators. The following narrative describes an immediate outcome of the program that may be able to be attributed to this resistance. An impromptu meeting was scheduled with the school principal a few days after the conclusion of the Espacio Iluminado program with three program participants and one additional Latino parent from the school community. The purpose of the meeting was to voice these particular parents' dissatisfaction of the entry fee to the school's annual fall festival. For the school's community, the fall festival was an annual event that was looked forward to with anticipation and excitement each year. At the time of this project, the school's PTO decided to charge a flat fee of $10.00 per person at the entrance instead of asking parents to pay for tickets that would allow them to participate in the activities at the festival. Charging a $10.00 flat fee may have been easier from an accounting perspective, but in the eyes of the Latino parents meeting with the principal, it would only serve to exclude families that could not afford the entry fee for each family member. One parent participant asked if the principal "would feel bad

when all the little poor Latino kids from the community were hanging on the chain linked fence outside of the festival, unable to join their White friends." They also took the initiative to discuss what they felt was unfair judging of the pumpkins for the annual school pumpkin decorating contest. As a long-standing annual tradition, every year in fall the school held a school-wide pumpkin-decorating contest. There were several categories in which children could potentially receive an award, such as scariest, funniest, or most creative pumpkin.. The Latino mothers brought to the principal's attention that the recipients of these awards, for the most part, are Caucasian children, primarily the children who had parents as judges. The Latino parents complained that there should be a Latino judge or judges for the contest to make it more equitable. The principal's response to these complaints was well received. He listened to what they had to say and ensured them that he would take definitive steps in the future to ensure equal representation and access for all children and their families in school events.

I was not aware that these parents had held this meeting with the principal when he approached me the following morning on the school playground and spoke animatedly about making the needed changes to ensure access and equity in the school. In regards to the costly entrance fee for the fall festival, donations were collected from staff members to help pay for families that could not afford the $10.00 per family member. Looking to the future, a plan was discussed to consider lower income families when planning the following year's festival fee system. Sliding fee scales and a move back to the old ticket system were noted as options. When discussing the annual pumpkin-decorating contest, the principal admitted that intentions have always been good when holding school-wide events at the school, but the unseen danger was in doing things, in the same manner, year

after year, because that is how they have always been done. He expressed that now that these inequities were being illuminated, he could see where there was an unequal representation of Latino parents in other areas of school functioning, such as the parent advisory board and the school PTO. The following month, the school principal invited a Latino parent to join the school SIAC committee (parent advisory board).

This example suggests that this type of organic resistance is an outcome of the empowerment that these parents feel after having their voices and opinions validated in the school setting. This type of resistance to the dominant culture's ways of conducting the business of a school is a way to illuminate issues of inequity where they may have been otherwise overlooked by the school, so that school administrators and stakeholders can address issues of concern that could be potentially damaging to building respectful and collaborative relationships with families (Kozleskie & Thorius, 2013).

Key Components Associated with Previous Research in Parent Involvement. The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program was designed by utilizing key components that have been proven to be important components in empowerment models of Latino parent involvement programs. Including these components in this program may be a contributing factor to the important results of the study. For example, in the *Cross Cultural Demonstration Project*, participants were given ample time to discuss their personal experiences, interests, and concerns relating to supporting their children's education. In the Espacio Iluminado Program, the majority of the time is also spent focusing on parents' personal experiences, interests, and concerns. A primary goal of the *Committee for Latin Parents (COPLA)* was for parents to learn from one another. Community guest speakers were also utilized as part of the information sharing

component of the program. Not only did I include community guest speakers, but I also included speakers who are Latino and who have experiences with the topic they are presenting. In addition, the *Chicago Parent Program* was another parent program that determined the topics for each session based on what the participants felt was important to them to discuss. For the Espacio Iluminado program, I relied on reconnaissance focus groups to help refine the topics for the program sessions.

Lessons learned. As a result of this study, I can apply the lessons I have learned into my practice and research projects in the future. The most important lessons pertain to: (a) the study design choice, and (b) the responsibility behind conducting social research.

With any social justice endeavor, where "achieving liberating, sustainable, and democratizing outcomes" (Greenwood, 2002, p.125) is a goal, there is an ethical demand for researchers to create projects that provide for authentic collaboration between the researcher and the participants. For this reason, action research, as well as transformative mixed methods are reliable vehicles for validating voices that are not generally heard at the school level. Action researchers are concerned with issues of social justice and have centered their research on resolving them (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The incorporation of the reconnaissance focus groups for the creation of the program topics and the utilization of the Critical Format (see Figure 3) of the program sessions was designed to provide an opportunity for the validation of knowledge and ideas of the parents and the school. The qualitative methodology of the study gives life to the statistical outcomes from the quantitative analysis.

For example, the dialogue, descriptions, and narratives that emerge from the qualitative data sources are crucial to understanding the true effects that the program had on the participants. I believe that in social research, answering research questions that can explain *how* and *in what ways* deepens not only the contextual significance of the project for the participants and program stakeholders, but also reveals new findings or connections in the research that may be evident from completing a solely quantitative study.

Delgado-Gaitan (1993) argues that it is imperative for researchers to recognize their privileged role in a research study. I have learned throughout this endeavor that with privilege there is a form of power and responsibility. As a social researcher, I have the power to validate the voices of a historically marginalized community. This power could easily be taken for granted or misused if I do not listen to the ideas and values of the project from the Latino community.

Habermas (1971), a proponent of positivistic research, argues that knowledge and self-interest are inseparable. He suggests that action research will always be polluted by the power relationships that are already in place, and therefore truth claims cannot be valid. However, Habermas does eventually refute his claim that objective research is the only path to truth, recognizing that *emancipatory* research, as in the case of this project, orients the researcher to have the self-interest of examining ideology, power, and practices in a social structure instead of unconsciously reinforcing power relationships and deeply embedded social order (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The emancipatory nature of this project helped me as a researcher to become aware of my position in the project as an

outsider to the knowledge of the participants. My work throughout this project is steeped in self-reflection and careful maneuvers to ensure that participant voice is the loudest.

Limitations of the Study

As with any research study, this action research project has some limitations that warrant consideration. The utilization of a random purposeful selection sample and the fact that the direction and content of the study is subject to the immediate dynamic context of the participants in the reconnaissance and intervention cycle limits the transferability of the results. The noteworthy limitations include three threats to validity including experimenter effect and length of study. Another notable limitation to the study is the exclusion of Spanish speaking participants.

Experimenter effect. The experimenter effect is identified as a threat to a study's external validity when the personality, energy, and effort put forth by the researcher excessively influences the participants. When this occurs, the researcher may be unintentionally affecting the outcome of the study causing another researcher to obtain different results if they replicated the study (Smith & Glass, 1987). Because I was the researcher in this study in a school where I have taught for ten years and had connections with some of the participants in the program (including as a previous teacher of some of the participants' children), there is no way to avoid this limitation. Thus, participants may have felt an obligation to please me by providing socially desirable responses. The nature of this study is for a practitioner to find a perceived problem in their workplace context. This requirement alone presents the beginning of a chain of unavoidable influence as the *action* in the *action research project* is founded on personal convictions

of need (Herr & Anderson, 2015). These convictions are either confirmed by participants and action ensued or they are adjusted to fit the desires of the participant group.

As stated in in Chapter 2, to limit the impact of the experimenter effect, I utilized a co-facilitator for each of the sessions. She is a parent of children who have attended the school and she also works at the school. She was the co-leader of each of the sessions during the course of the program. Including a co-facilitator was an attempt to provide a link to the community because I am not a member of the community or the culture.

Length of program duration. The length of the intervention is also a limitation to this study. Although all measured constructs in the study yielded statistically significant outcomes, the extent to which *self-efficacy* and perceptions of r*ole construction* may develop more deeply if more time was allotted for the study. Similar empowerment models of Latino parent involvement programs that are reviewed in chapter 2 range in length from six weeks to ongoing throughout the school year. The participants do not mention that they wished the program could have been longer, however limiting the sessions to four specific content sessions and one reflection session may have affected the ability to understand how and in what ways perceptions of role and self-efficacy are manifested.

Language exclusion. Parents who did not speak English as their primary language were excluded from the sample due to the concern that interpreting results through translation may have presented a threat to validity as it may be more difficult to understand intention and feeling because the facilitator only spoke English. In addition, some of the presenters only speak English. The decision to present in English was important because I needed to understand the presentations and speak with parents

myself. This limitation can be avoided in future iterations of this program by including Spanish speaking participants and the appropriate translation services needed for full participation of all participants in the program. In addition, a facilitator can be trained and I would have the confidence that they could deliver the program in the way that I designed it.

Implications for Practice

As previously mentioned, the knowledge of the second space or the school is viewed as static for the project. Acknowledging and understanding the dominant power relationships between the school and minority communities, I decided that having a live representation of the school knowledge by including teachers or administrators may have the unintended influence of silencing the Latino parents in the program.

Reflecting on the high participation levels of the parent participants at each of the sessions, I feel that the decision to leave out school staff is important, at least for the initial iteration of the project. The school principal asked to observe a session and expressed a desire to welcome the parents and thank them for coming. I chose to include him at one of the final sessions of the program. After he had spoken to the group briefly, one participant stood up unprompted and communicated her feelings about the value of the program. There were a few other participants that noted the same feelings of the worth and personal value of the program from their perspective. I feel that this communication is an important first step to integrating the two spaces.

Realizing that the integration of the school and the Latino parent spaces should be handled delicately so that no one voice was louder than the others, the last session was dedicated to a focus on the next steps for the dissemination of the information,

knowledge, and experiences that were shared in the group to the school or other parents or any other desires or ideas the parent participants have in mind for the future of the program. Reflecting on my research journal notes and transcripts from the semi-structured interviews, it is clear that there is a strong desire to continue the program in the future for a new group of parents. Equally as strong is the desire to share the knowledge with the teachers and administrators and to involve them in future meetings.

Social identity and the risk of sustained exclusion. Whereas Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), may be a factor that contributes to the program's successful outcomes, there are concerns regarding the necessity to extend or to evolve the program to integrate the parents and the school staff. Without taking this next step in truly representing third space mediation, I propose that there will be sustained marginalization of Latino parents from within the school community.

Callero (1985) suggests that although role identities are a set of expectations for behavior that can be influenced by a group with whom one identifies or belongs to, these social group identities may lead to in-group versus out-group thinking as members of the social group work to maintain their identities in relation to the group. For example, comparisons may result in stereotypical identities of the in-group and the out-group that favor the in-group and position the out-group in a less positive light (Hogg et al. 1995). Bhabba's (2004) Third Space Theory emphasizes active mediation between two groups in a free or third space, which has the presumed effect of eliminating in-group versus out-group thinking. In this regard, an important outcome of this study, is the notion that providing a parent involvement program that emphasizes parents' ideas and concerns, and validates their knowledge and lived experiences in the school setting is only a first

step toward the long-term goal of breaking the cycle of sustained marginalization within the school community. Researchers who engage in emancipatory social research should consider the long-term outcomes of short-term interventions in communities where the dismantling of power relationships is the goal and where the effects of the research can have the unintended outcome of sustaining or increasing marginalization.

Implications for Future Research

The Espacio Iluminado model offers an easy way for schools to implement a model of a Latino parent engagement program that focuses on empowering Latino parents by validating their lived experiences and knowledge as it pertains to supporting their children's education. A review of literature in the area of parent involvement revealed that parent participation is influenced by the school's perception of parental backgrounds and the roles that school administrators and teachers expect them to play based on dominant cultural understandings (Auerbach, 2002). This is particuluarly problematic when organizations that innovate or fund parent involvement oportunties for minority parents take on a subtractive stance to involvement opportiunities where minority parents are viewed as lacking the necessary tools and knowledge to support their children's education (Barten, Drake, Perez, St.Louis, & George, 2004; Vincent, 2001). The Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program is a resistance to a subtractive or deficit method of parent involvement programming, but it is only a first step to an authentic collaboration that is truly located in the realm of third space.

Bhabha (2004) asks his readers to consider rethinking the parameters that define community, citizenship, nationality, and social groups. Espacio Iluminado is the *beginning* of redefining the school space as a community and a social group where all

voices are authentically heard and the knowledge and experiences of all parents are validated and shared in the school setting. True third spaces represent a protected place, where two seemingly conflicting groups come together in a open space where mutual respect and equal opportunities to create and share new realities and understandings that will serve to benefit all (Kozleskie & Thorius, 2013). In this regard, my next research question would be, "What is the relation between parent involvement and parent and school staff knowledge mediation located in the third space?"

In addition to studying the impact of including teachers and administrators in the expansion of Espacio Iluminado, future research in different locations should include studies that explore similar models of parent involvement offerings that are contextually bound and driven by the research participants. In general, participants are very positive about their experiences with the program. Evidence from this study suggests that this program may be a starting point for increasing Latino parent involvement in schools and perhaps for increasing involvement with other minority groups within the school context.

Future research on this program may include examining the program's long term effects on rate of volunteering at the school and the academic achievement of their children.

Conclusion

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the relation between the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program as a nontraditional Latino parent involvement opportunity and parents' perceptions of self-efficacy and role construction as it pertains to supporting the education of their children. The study results revealed that the intervention fosters significant increases in the areas of self-efficacy, role

construction, and utility of the program. The foundation of the study was developed utilizing Third Space Theory (Bhabha, 1994) to generate a framework that has the potential to serve as a model for future parent involvement programs that validated the knowledge of diverse cultures and discourses and encouraged a mediation of the two. This program has the potential to reshape how, and in what ways, the school interacts with parents and how the parents interact with the school. Drawing on resources from the school community, as well as the wealth of knowledge that already exists within the Latino community, parents can feel empowered to support the education of their children in the ways that they feel would be the most beneficial.

However, without actively including the school in future programming or expansions of the program, there is the risk that the project only serves to reinforce deficit views or the continued marginalization of the Latino community. It is essential that school staff becomes involved in the sharing and mediation of knowledge to form new understandings during future iterations or expansions of the program so assimilation efforts are not unconsciously sustained. Recognizing the importance of the initial strategy of viewing the dominant space as static, planning for and implementing the active inclusion of both spaces will be a crucial next step for the program's success.

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APPENDIX A

FLYER FOR PARENT FOCUS GROUP

Whittier Elementary School

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A LATINO PARENT FOCUS GROUP
We need you!

What: You have been selected to take part in a one-time focus group with other Latino parents!

Why: Help create a Latino parent involvement program at Whittier that reflects the ideas and values of Whittier families!

Babysitting will be available and will be provided by Whittier staff members.
Pizza will be provided for the children.

Payment: In appreciation for your time, you will receive $25.00 at the end of the focus group.

Dinner will be provided for parents by OREGANO'S PIZZA BISTRO

When: Wednesday, May 4, 2016
Where: Whittier Elementary School Room # 209
Time: 5:30 – 6:30 pm

For more information, or to volunteer for this focus group, please contact:

Kathleen Brotherton
Whittier Elementary School
at
(480) 221 - 1430
Email: **ksbrotherton@mpsaz.org**

Whittier Latino Parent One-Time Focus Group
Please send this form back in the attached envelope to confirm your spot by April 29th!
I am interested in attending the Latino Parent Focus group!

Name:_____
Phone Number: _____
Address:_____
Name and age of child(ren) that will need babysitting service _____

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, Arizona State University

APPENDIX B

FLYER FOR TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

You have been randomly selected to participate in a teacher focus group.

Whittier Elementary School

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

Let your voice be heard!

Who: I am looking for volunteers to take part in a focus group to help create a Latino parent engagement program at Whittier!

What: participate in a one-time focus group at Whittier Elementary School with other teachers at Whittier.

In appreciation for your time, you will have the opportunity to enter a raffle to win a $50.00 Visa Gift Card!

Dinner will be provided by OREGANO'S PIZZA BISTRO

When: Tuesday, May 10th, 2016
Where: Whittier School Library
Time: 3:30 – 4:30 pm

For more information, or to volunteer for this focus group, please contact:
Kathy Brotherton
(480) 221 - 1430
Email: **ksbrotherton@mpsaz.org**

Please RSVP by Friday, April 29th, 2016

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, Arizona State University

APPENDIX C

FLYER FOR INVITING INNOVATION PARTICIPANTS

Whittier Elementary School

PARENTS NEEDED FOR THE ESPACIO ILUMINADO PARENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

What: You have been randomly selected to take part in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement Program!

Why: Participate in a parent involvement program for exclusively Latino parents that was created by Latino parents from our school! Discuss topics such as homework, accessing school and district resources, volunteering, and more!

Babysitting (ages 3-12) will be available and will be provided by Whittier staff members. *All Whittier staff members supervising children have fingerprint clearance cards pursuant to ARS 36-883.02.*

We pay you to come! In appreciation for your time, you will receive $20.00 at the end of each session ($100.00 for all five sessions).

If you attend all five sessions, you will receive a $10.00 bonus at the end of the last session for a total possible amount of $110.00 for attending all five sessions.

Refreshments will be provided at each session.

Your participation will include five sessions at will occur at Whittier School from 4:30-6:00.

Session 1: Tuesday, September 20, 2016	Session 3: Tuesday, October 18, 2016
Session 2: Tuesday, September 27, 2016	Session 4: Tuesday, October 25, 2016
Two Week Break	Session 5: Tuesday, November 1, 2016

Program will be conducted in English only.

For more information, or if you have questions, please contact:

Kathleen Brotherton at **(480) 221 - 1430**

Email: **ksbrotherton@mpsaz.org**

Please send this form back to school office or your child's teachers in the attached envelope to confirm your spot by September 1st! I am interested in participating in the parent engagement program!

Name:_____

Phone Number: _____

Address:_____

Name and age of child(ren) that will need babysitting service _____

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, Arizona State University

APPENDIX D

PRE–POST QUESTIONNAIRE

Espacio Iluminado Parent Questionnaire

Please indicate how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement. Please only answer for your experiences at this school.

1 I know about volunteering opportunities at my child's school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

2 The school lets me know about meetings and special school events.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

3 I have the time and energy to attend school events.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

4 I have the time and energy to volunteer at this school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

5 The school staff provides me with ideas for supporting my child's learning.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

6 The types of parent involvement opportunities that this school offers are interesting to me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

7 I know how to help my child do well in school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

8 A student's motivation to do well in school depends on his or her parents.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

9 I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

10 I make a significant difference in my child's school performance.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

11 I know how to help my child get good grades in school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

12 I have the skills to help out at my child's school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

13 I know how to help my child with his or her homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

14 I understand what my child is supposed to do on his or her homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

15 I know what kind of help my child needs on his or her homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

16 I know how to find assistance if I can't help my child with his or her homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

17 I have enough time and energy to help my child with his or her homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

18 I have the skills to help my child with his or her homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

19 I know how to effectively communicate with my child’s teacher.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

20 I feel comfortable contacting the school to discuss matters pertaining to my child’s education.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

21 I feel comfortable talking to my child's teacher.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

22 I know how to advocate for my child's learning needs.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

23 I know about district resources that are designed for parents.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

24 I know how to access district resources for parents.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

25 I believe that it is my responsibility to volunteer at the school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

26 I believe that it is my responsibility to help my child with homework.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

27 I believe that it is my responsibility to explain tough assignments to my child.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

28 I believe that it is my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

29 I believe that it is my responsibility to make the school better.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

30 I believe that it is my responsibility to talk with my child about what they are learning at school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

31 It is my job to make sure homework gets done.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

32 I believe that learning is mainly up to the teacher and my child.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

33 I rely on the teacher to make sure my child understands their assignments.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

34 I exchange phone calls or notes with my child's teacher for more things than just behavior.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

35 I make it my business to stay on top of things at school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please fill out the demographic information below.

Gender ❑ Male ❑ Female ❑ Other	**Ethnicity** ❍ African American ❍ Latino/Hispanic ❍ Caucasian ❍ American Indian/Alaska Native ❍ Asian ❍ Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander ❍ Other
Level of Education ❍ Preschool to Grade 8 ❍ Some High School, no diploma ❍ High School, diploma ❍ Trade School, certificate ❍ Some College ❍ Bachelor's degree ❍ Master's degree or beyond	**Employment** ❍ Homemaker ❍ Currently unemployed, looking for work ❍ Employed ❍ Student ❍ Military ❍ Retired ❍ Unable to Work ❍ Self Employed
Age ❍ 18-24 ❍ 25-34 ❍ 35-44 ❍ 45-54 ❍ 55-64 ❍ 65-74 ❍ 75-84	***Thank you!!***

APPENDIX E

PARENT FOCUS GROUP PROMPTS

1. What does your child like about school? What do you like about your child's school?
2. Do you feel welcome at your child's school?
    a. If yes, what does the school staff do that shows you that you are welcome?
    b. If no, what could the school do differently that would make you feel welcome?
3. How do you support your child's learning?
4. What do you consider to be the parent's role in a child's education?

    Schools talk about the importance of "Parent Involvement" or "Parent Engagement." Schools use these terms to mean several different things. Some of the main ways parents are "involved"—or participate are by:

    • Volunteering in the classroom or at school events or activities;

    • Attending school events such as Orientation, Open House, Family Nights and meetings about your child such as parent-teacher conferences;

    • Working with your child at home on homework, reading to your child, preparing them for school;

    • Being a part of a group that advises the school or helps make decisions such as the school site council.
5. How does the school ask you to be involved?
6. What do you feel your role is in supporting your child's education?
7. How does this work for your family?
8. What kind of school activities do you like to attend?

9. What topics are you interested in discussing as it pertains to how you can support child's education?
10. What would you like to do to help your child in their schooling but don't know how to do?
11. What kind of things has the school done that helped you to help your child more at home?
12. Discuss the importance of the following topics as they pertain to supporting your child's learning in terms of very important or not important at all.
    - Supporting children's learning at home (i.e. homework)
    - Accessing district resources designed to support parents
    - Advocating for your child and communicating with the teacher and the school.
13. Is there anything else you would like us to know about what is important to you as a family about your child's education?

APPENDIX F

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP PROMPTS

Espacio Iluminado Teacher Focus Group Prompts

1. What does parent involvement or parent engagement look like to you?
2. *Schools talk about the importance of "Parent Involvement" or "Parent Engagement." Schools use these terms to mean several different things. Some of the main ways parents are "involved"—or participate are by:*
3. How important do you feel that parent involvement is for your students?
4. How does the school ask your parents to be involved?
5. Do you feel that this works for every family? Why or why not?
6. Are there ways that you can think of that the school could get more parents to become involved? In what ways?
7. Discuss the importance of the following topics as they pertain to supporting your students' learning in terms of very important or not important at all.
    a. Supporting children's learning at home (i.e. homework)
    b. Accessing district resources designed to support parents
    c. Advocating for your child and communicating with the teacher and the school.
    d. Parent involvement activities for parents offered by the school
8. Are there any other topics that would be important to address when designing parent involvement opportunities?

APPENDIX G

END-OF-SESSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Espacio Iluminado End-of-Session Questionnaire

Session ____





1. Was the topic discussed at today's session helpful to you as a parent?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

2. Please tell what was helpful or not helpful during today's session.

3. My Goal: ***Setting Goals: Try out an idea discussed at today's session!***

4. To achieve my goal, I will:

5. This goal is important to me because:

6. Was there something else you wished we would have discussed or done today?

APPENDIX H

PARENT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about you and your family.
2. What are your dreams and aspirations for your children?
3. What has been your history of participating in school events or volunteering at Whittier?
4. Has this changed or do you think this will change in the future? If so, in what ways?
5. How do you feel about participating in the Espacio Iluminado Parent Engagement program?
6. Were the topics discussed during the program useful to you as a parent? In what ways?
7. Do you feel that your ideas were validated during the sessions? In what ways?
8. Do you feel that is it your role to be involved in your child's education? In what ways?
9. Did you form new relationships with the other parent participants in the program? If so, can you tell me about them?
10. Would you recommend this program to other parents? Why or why not?
11. What were the goals that you set at the end of each session? Were you able to meet your goals? In what ways?
12. Do you feel that the program helped you support your child's learning at home? Why or why not?
13. Do you believe you have the skills to help your child act with good behavior at home? If so, in what ways?

14. Do you communicate more with your child or your child's teacher about school differently after participating in the program? If so, in what ways?
15. Do you feel that you have a better idea of the resources available in the district or school to support your child's learning? What resources are of interest to you?
16. Were there topics you were hoping that would be covered that were not? Which ones?
17. Do you see yourself volunteering more at the school in the future? Why or why not? If so, in what ways?
18. Would you like to be involved in some form with this program for a new group of parents next year? Why or why not? In what ways?
19. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience?

APPENDIX I

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Linda Caterino Kulhavy
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
480/965-7524

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Espacio Iluminado Latino Parent Engagement Program
Investigator:	Linda Caterino Kulhavy
IRB ID:	STUDY00003653
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Teacher Focus Group Prompts, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Espacio Iluminado, Category: IRB Protocol; • Parent Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Teacher Flyer, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Teacher Focus group consent form, Category: Consent Form; • Parent Focus Group Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Parent Consent Form for Intervention, Category: Consent Form; • End-of-Session Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Starkey Approval for IRB (1) (4).pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Parent Intervention Group Flyer, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Parent Recruitment Script, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Parent questionnaire, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Parent Focus Group Flyer, Category: Recruitment Materials;

Linda.Caterino@asu.edu

Dear Linda Caterino Kulhavy:

On 1/21/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 1/21/2016.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Kathleen Brotherton
Ray Buss
Kathleen Brotherton

APPENDIX J

CHILD CARE FLYER



9/20, 9/27, 10/18, 10/25, 11/1

ESPACIO ILUMINADO PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Child Care provided in room 103

Mrs. Cobb and Daisy Sanchez will provide child care during the **4:30 pm – 6:00** pm meetings on the dates above. Please bring children to room 103. We may do activities in other rooms but will start and end in Room 103.

nputer Lab/ craft activities, Win it in a Minute fun on 9/20

Library Activities: Read books & enjoy movie time with treats on 9/27

Playground fun: Fix and pack a picnic and enjoy playing on 10/18

Halloween art, activities, treats & games on 10/25

Perform a play on school stage. Practice roles and perform on 11/1

ESPACIO ILUMINADO PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM: CHILD CARE PLANS

APPENDIX K

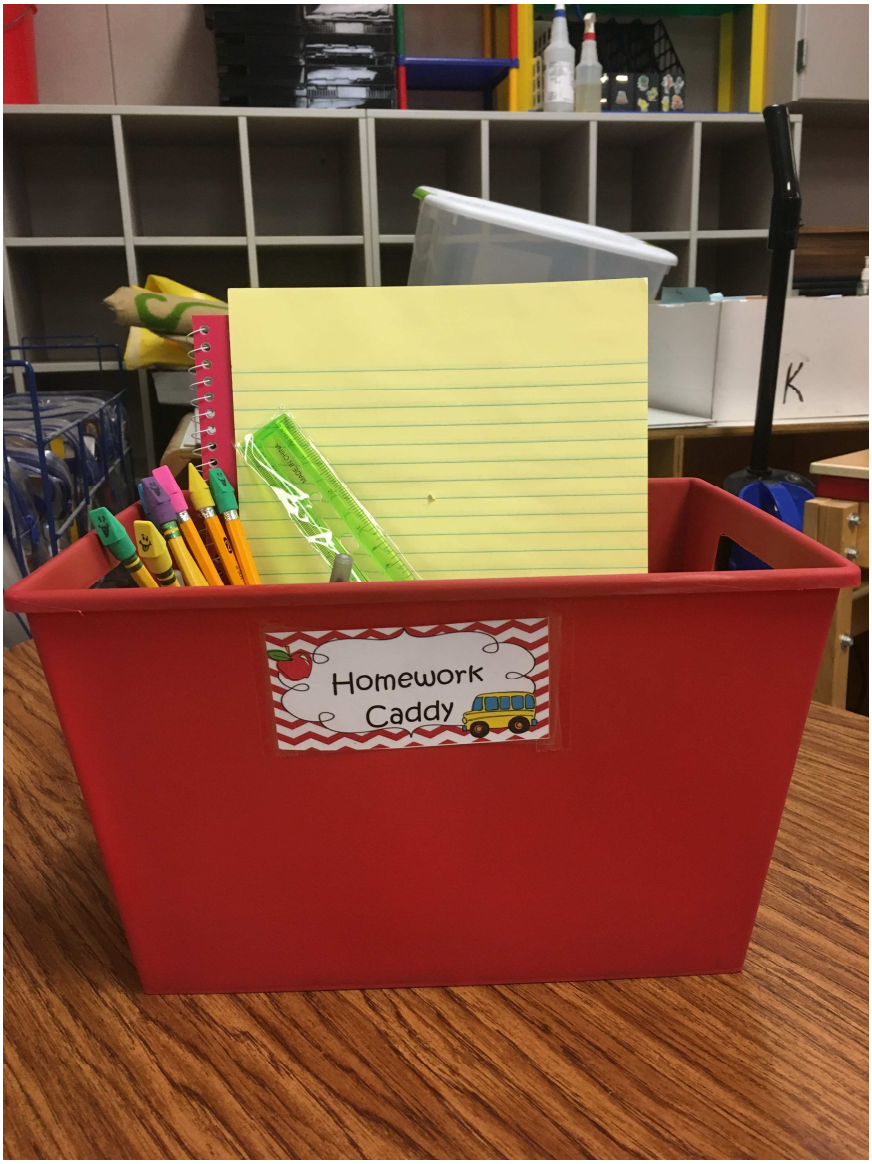
DESCRIPTION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Description of Semi-Structured Interviews

Data Source	Word Count	Minutes
Participant Interview #1	4282	38:50
Participant Interview #2	1821	19:41
Participant Interview #3	3121	23:30
Participant Interview #4	3272	25:28
Participant Interview #5	6459	1:03:02
Participant Interview #6	5550	43:23

APPENDIX L

PHOTO OF HOMEWORK CADDY


Homework
Caddy

APPENDIX M

SESSION 1: IDEAS FOR BEST PRACTICES AND TIPS – SUPPORTING LEARNING AT HOME

Ideas for Best Practices and Tips – Supporting Learning at Home
Homework Caddy
Start homework right after school
Establish a consistent homework routine
Try helping your kids with homework one at a time
Create a specific homework station, desk, or area
Have a schedule – follow it
Provide a pre-homework snack
Use a timer
Create a folder with helpful resources in it – alphabet chart, number lines, etc.
Math Websites - https://www.khanacademy.org/ Discoveryeducation.com Ask.com FactMonster.com
"Mathway" Math Application
Have children start homework and complete all of it except leave items they have questions on for parent to help with when they get home from work
Parent reviews the homework with the child after it is complete.

APPENDIX N

SESSION 2: IDEAS GENERATED FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Ideas for Getting Involved in Your Child's Education

Apps – "Learning Potential" and the school district app
Help your child with their homework – homework support
Volunteer in the classroom – you can pick up tips to help your child by being there
Get involved in activities – seeing parent involved is motivating for the child
Volunteer to prep work at home, make copies at school, help with holiday events
If you can't come into the school, take things home to cut out, prep, etc.
Start a "Read Day" where Spanish speaking parents and other parents can read to children in their native languages
Ask your child about the "pros" and "cons" of their school day
Ask the school to send out "Ways to Get Involved" flyers to parents in the beginning of the year
Have lunch with your child
Attend an occasional PTO meeting – you can bring your kids!

APPENDIX O

SESSION 3: IDEAS FOR ACCESSING RESOURCES IN OUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Ideas for Accessing Resources in Our School and Community
Join Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts
My Child's Ready – a free program for parents
District sponsored Parent University
YouTube Videos
Talk to the teachers or the school counselor
Sign your child up for tutoring
Sign up for after school activities or sports
For Spanish speaking parents – district translation button
Local public library culture passes
Parent Portal
Moby Max program – get login information from teacher
School counselor resources
Country Report help on teacher websites (6^{th} grade)

APPENDIX P

SESSEION 4: IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEAHAVIOR

Ideas for Supporting Positive Behavior
Healthy Homestyles website
Escalante Community Center
Prep/layout school outfits for the whole week or the night before school
Be consistent and follow through
Use a calendar
Use positive reinforcement, “I like the way you…”, “You must feel proud or yourself for…”
Set with and stick with routines
Set boundaries
Create a family schedule together
Create family rules together
Discuss pros and cons about your kid’s day

APPENDIX Q

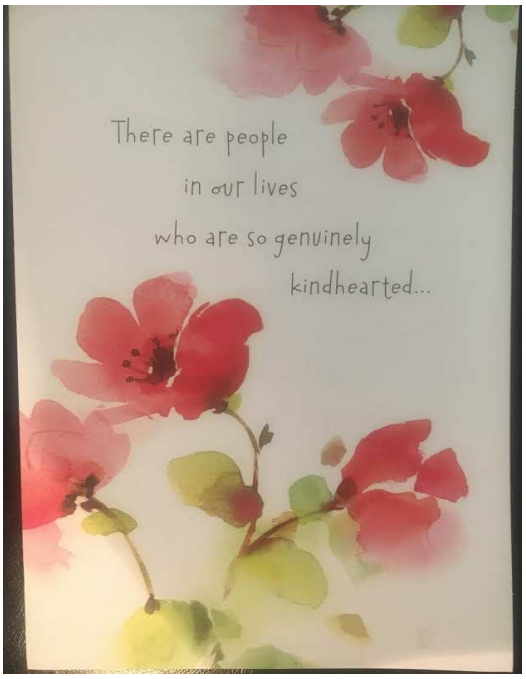
SESSION 5: IDEAS GENERATED FOR SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Participant Ideas for Sharing Knowledge (n = 15)

Idea Presented	Number of participants who agreed with the idea
Hold meeting is Spanish	6
Create a pamphlet in Spanish and English about what was shared – best practices to be involved	15
Hold joint assembly for teachers and parents – participants talk about how it helped them and an opportunity to introduce the program to other parents	15
Create a video in English and Spanish about the program	6
Hold a meeting or meetings with teachers to build relationships between teachers and parents	10
Send home a monthly tip sheet in English and Spanish about meeting topics and other help tips	9
Add a comments and suggestions box for Latinos in the school office	3

APPENDIX R

PHOTO OF THE THANK YOU CARD



Kathy,

What you have done for the Latino Parent Inv. Program is amazing. Helping to make a community together is fabulous. Everything you provided was more than enough but the way that you should you cared, is without words.