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Crossing Literacy Fronteras: Latino Immigrant Families' Literacy Practices In and Out of School

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Karisa Jessica Peer

2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Crossing Literacy Fronteras: Latino Immigrant Families' Literacy Practices In and Out of School

by

Karisa Jessica Peer

Doctor of Philosophy in Education
University of California, Los Angeles, 2014
Professor Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Chair

This ten-month ethnographic study examines how four Latina immigrant mothers and their young children employed literacy practices within and beyond a two-generation program. Two-generation programs generally serve marginalized families by instructing them on school-based language and literacy practices. This study approaches literacy from sociocultural (i.e., what people do with literacy) and multimodal perspectives (i.e., print, visual, oral, media, and online literacies). The study examines a) the kinds of school-based literacy practices—or aspects of them—that mothers took up in out-of-school contexts; b) the kinds of out-of-school-literacy practices—or aspects of them—that mothers brought to the school site; and c) the continuities and discontinuities of literacy practices across contexts. Data was collected through observations, ethnographic interviews, document analysis, and video. Findings reveal that in out-of-school contexts, some of the school-based literacy practices learned at Nuestra Comunidad were replicated, and/or modified, while others were not taken up. The varying ways that mothers took up school-based literacy practices was most often influenced by participants' cultural values

related to language and literacy and their purposes or goals for engaging in particular literacy activities. The study also found that when mothers employed out-of-school literacy practices at Nuestra Comunidad they were met with resistance due to conflicting ideologies regarding appropriate language and literacy activities and curricula. Mothers still brought in their out-of-school literacy practices in clandestine manners or had to modify their practices. When focusing on marginalized groups, traditional family literacy research has either a) privileged school-based literacy practices and their replication in the home setting; or b) emphasized the cultural and linguistic wealth of marginalized families' home literacy practices but highlighted the *differences* between these practices and those employed and valued in school (Auerbach, 1989; Gadsden, 1998, 2001). This study looks beyond the simple replication of literacy practices from school to home and vice versa. Rather, this research provides insight into the rich literacy practices that Latino families engage in throughout the many contexts of their lives by highlighting the complex ways in which literacy practices move across spaces.

The dissertation of Karisa Jessica Peer is approved.

Frederick Erickson

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Ana Celia Zentella

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles
2014

DEDICATIONS

To my grandmother, Ana Rita Segarra Irizarry; cousin, Jazmin Toro; and mother, Maria Amelia Segarra Peer and countless other strong women whose blood, sweat, tears, laughter, singing, and dancing have helped their children *seguir adelante*.

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"Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity."

I begin with the words of Nigerian author and prolific speaker, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. As she eloquently states, we live in a society in which the media as well as other educational, political, religious, financial, and social structures create stories about and for the marginalized. As the United States continues to become more socially and economically polarized, those in power—and those losing power—tend to blame the most disenfranchised groups. The group I work with—Latin@ immigrants—many of whom are undocumented—frequently want to stay under the radar because of fear of deportation. The women who agreed to be in this study shared that they wanted their voices and actions to be represented in educational scholarship. They wanted their stories to empower, humanize, and to repair broken dignity. I am honored to have met Yolanda, Beatriz, Rosa, Elena, as well as their spouses, in-laws, and their children (José, Juliana, Sylvia, Nancy, Marcia, Diego, and Pablo). This research would not have been possible without you. Thank you for opening your homes to me. Thank you for your sincerity and warm embraces. I will never forget the year I spent with all of you. I would also like to thank the staff at Nuestra Comunidad for welcoming me into their classrooms.

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VITA

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CHAPTER 1

I Want to Live in America: The Pressure for Immigrants to Assimilate

Immigrants' ability to assimilate to "American" linguistic and cultural practices has been valued in the United States for generations because assimilation is viewed as the key to economic and social mobility (Hill, 2008; Schmidt, 2007). The Oxford dictionary (2013) defines assimilation as the "absorb[tion] and integrat[ion] [of] people, ideas, or culture into a wider society or culture." A second definition refers more to the body or any biological system and its ability to "absorb and digest food or nutrients." Both of these definitions include the word absorption; that is, the process of being consumed into a larger body. The idea of absorption translates to the extent to which immigrants are expected to assume American cultural practices. Recent immigrants are regularly instructed to soak in mainstream "American" (i.e., White middle-class) linguistic and cultural practices and dispose of their "un-American" practices to ostensibly hasten and ensure their comfort, happiness, and success (Cole, 1998; Crawford, 2005; Myers & Pitkin, 2011).

In the current era—marked by chronic unemployment and uncertainty in regards to the United States' status in the global economy—assimilation is seen as a process necessary for the common good and prosperity of all Americans (Hanes, 2013). Deviations from U.S. mainstream practices are viewed as impediments to the nation's well being. One of the groups most frequently targeted as refusing and/or failing to assimilate into American culture quickly enough are Latin@ immigrants (see, for example, Huntington, 2004).

Two-generation programs are one type of intergenerational intervention geared towards assimilating Latino immigrant families into dominant U.S. cultural and linguistic practices.

These programs simultaneously educate parents—particularly mothers—and their young

children. While their children (ages 0-5) take early childhood classes, mothers attend courses in the same building. English as a Second Language (ESL) and family literacy courses are critical elements of two-generation programs. In ESL classes, mothers are taught Standard U.S. English—specifically grammar and vocabulary. In family literacy classes, the staff generally instructs mothers on literacy routines and strategies—such as shared reading, phonemic awareness, and asking open-ended questions (Auerbach, 1989; Gadsden, 1998, 2001). These language and literacy practices mirror those traditionally employed in White, middle-class households and those valued in the school system, as well as in U.S. society at large (Gee, 2000). Two-generation programs tend to present these school-based language and literacy practices as the most important and, at times, the *only* means of effectively leading Latino immigrant families towards social and economic mobility (Crosnoe, 2010). In such a context, the replication of mainstream practices is considered the most effective way of achieving assimilation into U.S. society.

Educational scholarship has also focused on marginalized families' assimilation of dominant practices (Reyes & Torres, 2007). For instance, in the field of literacy research, one body of literature has examined the replication of school-based literacy practices when families are in out-of-school contexts (Auerbach, 1997). Another body of research has looked at how out-of-school literacy practices are incorporated and valued in the school environment (see, for example, Heath, 1983; Lareau, 2003; Valdés, 1996). Because literacy scholarship has mostly honed in on the replication of literacy practices from one setting to the next, there has been an emphasis on the *differences* between home and school practices (Orellana et al., 2012). In other words, researchers have examined how literacy practices look the same from one context to the next and they have not found much replication. Absent from the literature is research that

examines how individuals actively take up (i.e., replicate, modify, and/or abandon) language and literacy practices. If we wish to gain a greater awareness of how Latino families' are employing literacy practices across contexts, it is imperative to look at *both* the continuous and discontinuous ways in which they take up these practices.

Study Design

To gain better insight into the continuities and discontinuities that were evident in Latino families' take up of literacy practices across settings, I undertook a ten-month long ethnographic study that examined four Latino immigrant families' language and literacy practices both inschool (i.e., a two-generation program called Nuestra Comunidad¹) and out-of-school (e.g., homes, parks, grocery stores). Although my research questions centered on *literacy*, it was also important to incorporate how families engaged in, with, and through language and how these language practices intersected with their literacy practices (Heath, 1983; Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). Therefore, I also capture how language practices traveled across contexts.

In order to examine both the similar and dissimilar ways in which my participants employed in-school and out-of-school literacy practices across spaces, I adopted a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural research approaches literacy as a repertoire of changing practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Because repertoires of practice may vary and shift, literacy practices should be thought of as toolkits that we wish to build upon (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) and/or expand (Orellana, Reynolds, & Martinez, 2011). Departing from the view that literacy is an internal and cognitive process that is fixed and follows a certain continuum, my research views literacy as a practice that may replicate, modify, and/or disappear based on

-

¹ The two-generation program has been assigned a fictitious name. Pseudonyms will be utilized throughout this document to protect the anonymity of the individuals involved.

particular socially-situated and context-embedded factors (Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003).

I also utilize the idea of multimodal literacy in this study because it complements the sociocultural perspective. If we think of literacy as context-embedded and socially situated, then how can we limit our definitions of literacy to print? Multimodal literacy includes print literacy (e.g., books, newspapers, signs, labels), as well as visual literacy (e.g., photographs, paintings, images, graphic novels), online literacy (e.g., Internet, emailing, social networks), and media literacy (animation, videos, film, advertisements, television). Oral language (e.g., banter, storytelling, word play, narrative, etc.) will also be examined in this study, since some research has found that oral language facilitates literacy development, especially in young children (Snow & Goldfield, 1982; Heath & Branscombe, 1986; Michaels & Cazden, 1986; Miller & Mehler, 1994). A multimodal approach to literacy is more applicable and relevant to families living in the twenty-first century. The world is becoming increasingly globalized and diversified; hence, families are going to employ a plethora of literacy practices—beyond print—inside and outside of classrooms. It is imperative for researchers and practitioners to gain a greater understanding of these practices.

Study Overview

The study explored how four Latina immigrant mothers and their young children who attended a two-generation program that I call "Nuestra Comunidad" took up literacy practices across contexts (i.e., within and beyond the confines of the Nuestra Comunidad program). My central research questions were:

1. What kinds of school-based literacy practices—or aspects of them—do mothers take up in out-of-school contexts?

- 2. What kinds of out-of-school literacy practices—or aspects of them—do mothers employ at the school site?
- 3. What continuities and discontinuities are evident in the take up of literacy practices across contexts?

These questions are at the root of this study because they move past literacy research's tendency to look at *only* the transference and assimilation of literacy practices. The focus of this research is to examine the complex ways in which mothers may simultaneously replicate, modify, and/or discard literacy practices when moving between and across contexts. In other words, the study's questions reflect its sociocultural approach to literacy. The questions acknowledge the fact that linguistic and cultural practices are fluid and may remain the same, change, and/or disappear based on socially situated and context-embedded factors (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003).

Study Contributions

As previously mentioned, most extant scholarship has focused on Latino immigrant families' ability to replicate school-based literacy practices at home (see, for example, Byrne, et al., 2009) or how their out-of-school literacy practices are recognized, valued, and utilized at school (see, for example, Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Heath, 1983; Ogbu, 1982; Osborne, 1996). By only examining how in-school or out-of-school literacy practices are duplicated upon their arrival to a new setting, such research sets itself up to emphasize difference because there are very few practices that are mirrored in their entirety as they travel across contexts. Cultural practices are fluid and it is unlikely for them to remain unchanged as they move (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Hence, by only looking at replication, such scholarship misses the opportunity to search for possible reasons that contribute to both consistency and variation. In other words, I ask critical questions such as: How did school-based literacy practices travel across out-of-school

contexts? What transferred, changed, and/or was abandoned and why? Conversely, what did out out-of-school literacy practices look like at the school site? Again, what transferred, changed, and/or was abandoned and why?

Another innovative part of my research was that it approached Latino immigrant families as active agents (Orellana, 2007). Therefore, I looked at how *people* elected the types of inschool and out-of-school literacy practices they took up and/or employed in particular settings. A large body of literacy scholarship has made literacy, particularly reading and writing skills, their unit of analysis. By positioning print-based literacy skills as a focus in their research, these scholars look at literacy as a neutral process (Street, 1997) not influenced by social interaction. In contrast, my research makes my participants the focus of this study to highlight how the movement of literacy practices is an active process (Gee, 2001). This study will aid practitioners, researchers, and policy makers in the field of education by providing insight into the power of approaching Latino immigrant families' movement of literacy practices as an active process that is both continuous and discontinuous.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature: Overview

I know it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize (bell hooks, 1994, p. 168).

Understanding family literacy as social practice has helped us to appreciate the way in which power relations, including those having to do with gender, social class, ethnicity, ability and age, are reflected and preserved through the word - spoken, printed, and enacted. When families interact with each other, and with/in other social institutions, some literacy practices carry more weight, or 'cultural capital', than others, and function to empower or disempower people (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p. 132).

I begin this chapter with the words of bell hooks, Paolo Freire, and Donaldo Macedo. These scholars highlight how language and literacy can serve as tools that either empower or subjugate marginalized groups. In the United States, dominant language and literacy discourse has generally disempowered disenfranchised populations—such as Latin@ immigrants—because typically there is a one-size-fits all approach to what is considered a valuable language or literacy practice. In other words, there is a ubiquitous notion that in order to achieve economic and social "success" in the U.S., one must absorb and replicate mainstream White middle-class language and literacy practices (Collins, 1999; Zentella, 2005) because these practices are the ones taught in the school system as well as valued in most institutional and social contexts. Does extant academic research on Latino immigrant families mirror this tendency of privileging the replication of mainstream White middle-class language and literacy practices? I argue that no matter how neutral researchers may be in their approach to scholarship, undoubtedly, their conceptual framework will influence the types of research questions they ask as well as their units of analysis.

The first part of this chapter will provide a chronological description of the types of conceptual frameworks that language and literacy researchers have elected to use in their studies

as well as the academic fields that have contributed to the formation of these lines of thought.

Although the study focuses primarily on families' literacy practices, I also explore how language plays a role in the formation and employment of families' literacy practices. In other words, an individual cannot be socialized into literacy practices without the use of language and vice versa.

Since my research centers on families with young children, I then review early literacy studies that make Latino families their unit of analysis. I discuss the tendency for such scholarship to maintain a print-based focus and to examine Latino families' ability and/or willingness to replicate school-based practices at home. Next, I look into how the majority of early literacy research on Latino families has not addressed the ways in which multimodal literacy practices move across contexts in both continuous and discontinuous manners. Lastly, I delineate how my research builds from extant early literacy research and moves towards a multimodal, multilingual, and socio-culturally rooted study.

The Multiple Lenses of Language and Literacy Research

Cognitive theories.

A researcher's conceptual framework is shaped by the literature that he or she adopts from one or more fields of study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). In language and literacy research, scholars initially approached their studies from a perspective heavily influenced by cognitive and developmental psychology. For instance, in the field of linguistics, when researchers initially sought to study language acquisition and development, they drew from psychology research, which described the process of acquiring and developing language as innate (Labov, 1972). Literacy research also grew out of the work of cognitive and developmental psychology (Wasik & Hermann, 2004) and generally portrayed literacy development as an internal, autonomous, and

neutral process. With such an emphasis placed on the internal process of language and literacy development, power dynamics or hierarchal structures were not taken into account.

Social constructivism.

In the 1970s and 1980s, language and literacy research took a different turn. In both fields, certain researchers began to look at how outside factors had an impact upon one's ways with words. Scholars in the fields of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics started to highlight that "although language exhibits internal structures and principles that are uniquely linguistic in nature, language is *not a self-contained system* impervious to the social worlds of its speakers—it is thoroughly interpenetrated by those worlds" (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002, p. 545). Within this social constructivist framework, literacy scholars also shifted their unit of analysis from the individual to "activity settings and socially situated practices" (Razfar & Gutiérrez, 2003, p. 38).

However, many researchers influenced by social constructivism privileged mainstream ways of engaging with language and literacy. In other words, most social constructivist scholarship privileged dominant White middle-class Discourse (Gasdsen, 2008). Gee and Lankshear (1995) define Discourses (with a capital D) as "ways of thinking, believing, acting, interacting, speaking, listening, valuing (sometimes, too, reading and writing) at appropriate times and places with appropriate objects so as to signal membership in a particular social group" (p. 11). The power of using a social constructivist framework to examine how human beings' interactions influence their learning was drowned out by scholarship privileging dominant Discourses and emphasizing differences between marginalized groups' language and literacy practices and those employed by the mainstream.

Language and Literacy Scholarship Take a Turn: Another Way of Approaching Variation Language socialization research.

Language socialization research changed much of the way in which language was approached in some strands of linguistic and educational scholarship. Language socialization research asserts that linguistic communities are formed when novices are socialized into a group's cultural practices. Thus, children learn to use the linguistic codes of their communities in culturally specific ways (Zentella, 2005). Schiefflin and Ochs (1986)—pioneers of language socialization research—conducted work with children and families in Samoa and Papua New Guinea; they found that the ways in which children were socialized through language and to language are dependent on a community's cultural and social practices. Moreover, Schiefflin and Ochs (1984, 1986) discovered that different orientations (e.g., child versus situation centered socialization processes) resulted in different norms for the social conduct of speech (i.e., to whom children should speak, about what, as well as how, when, where, and why). However, this tends to create fixed categorizations of certain groups' practices and does not highlight withingroup variation.

More recent language socialization research, particularly on Latin@ communities, has painted a richer and more nuanced portrait of how Latino immigrant families socialize children into and through language (Baquedano-López & Hernández, 2011). Norma González's (2005) multi-year ethnographic study of Mexican families who live on the Arizona/Mexico border found that participants' use of language varied in relation to their audience, context, and mood. González elucidates the importance of research that emphasizes the existence of one's participation in a plethora of speech communities and cultural practices. Furthermore, González's scholarship supports other research (Baker, 2011; Valdés, 2001), which stresses the

need to examine the social context (e.g., street, nursery, school, local community) of linguistic practices and to acknowledge the within- and between-group variation that could occur. Ek's (2010) research similarly disrupts homogenous views of Latin@ ELs' linguistic practices. She elucidates the isolation and shame that Central American adolescents in her study felt when using voceo², due to the overwhelming pressure—as ethnic and linguistic minorities— to become "Americanized" and "Mexicanized". Ek's work makes us aware that the privileging of certain linguistic practices may change from one setting to the next. For instance, Mexican Spanish may be devalued in some institutional spaces but in a context that is primarily Mexicanspeaking, other dialects of Spanish may be viewed and treated with less prestige.

Zentella's (1997) decade-long ethnography on Puerto Rican youth in a New York City barrio also challenged stereotypical and simplistic views of Latin@ linguistic practices. She observed the multi-dialectical repertoires of her participants as consisting of (but not limited to) varieties of both Spanish and English (i.e., Standard Puerto Rican Spanish, Popular-or-Non-Standard Puerto Rican Spanish, English-dominant Spanish, Puerto Rican English, African American Vernacular English, and Hispanicized English) that "shifted depending on where they were, who they spoke to, and their purpose for speaking. Not only did language-choice shift but the syntax, lexicon, and the ways in which they expressed themselves in order to convey meaning also changed depending on audience and context" (p. 55). Zentella elucidates how individuals who may identify as pertaining to the same ethnic or racial groups can adeptly move in and out of multiple and varying linguistic communities.

In sum, language socialization research challenges static and homogenous views of linguistically marginalized populations, such as Latin@ immigrants. Rather, language

² Voceo is the second person singular pronoun vos instead of tú, which is characteristic of their Central American Spanish.

socialization literature captures how individuals belong to linguistic communities that are *communities of practice* or "groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do" (Wenger, 1998). In this manner, language socialization scholarship envisions linguistic communities as flexible, expansive, multiple, and dynamic. Such research contends that individuals can and do actively choose to communicate in distinct as well as in overlapping registers (i.e., a variety of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting) within *and* between speech communities (Baquedano-López, 2003; Zentella, 2005). Instead of assuming that individuals and/or groups will take up and employ language and literacy practices in the same ways, language socialization research looks at the fluid movement of language and literacy practices across settings and cultural practices.

Sociocultural literacy research.

There was also a marked shift in literacy research from the 1980s to the present.

Influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) work, this literature adopted a sociocultural approach to literacy—which contends that literacy, like language, is a cultural practice into which one is socialized (Duranti & Ochs, 1997; Gee, 2001). Researchers who adopt a sociocultural perspective think of literacy as a repertoire of changing practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Because repertoires of practice may vary and shift, socioculturally influenced literacy scholars propose that literacy practices and activities should be thought of as toolkits that we wish to build upon (Moll et al., 1992); and/or expand (Orellana et al., 2011).

Around this time, various ethnographies of families emerged, which challenged the idea that marginalized students' lack of academic progress, particularly in reading and writing, was due to cultural deprivation (Valencia & Solórzano, 2004) or deficits in families' literacy skills or

knowledge (see, for example, Ada & Zubizaretta, 2001; Heath, 1983; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Dickinson & Tabors, 2002; Paratore, 2002; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Rogers, 2003; Taylor, 1993; Taylor & Gaines, 1998; Valdés, 1996). Rather, these studies sought to provide rich descriptions of families' language and literacy practices. For instance, Heath's ethnographic study (1983) in the southeastern United States examined Black and White working-class families' ways with words at home and at school. In documenting these families' language and literacy practices, Heath captured cultural differences. That is, Black and White working-class families' ways with words differed from each other as much as they did from the middle-class Black and Whites who held power in the schools and workplaces of the region. Therefore, Heath's study elucidated how cultural practices as well as social class can impact the types of language practices that families develop and employ throughout their lives.

Lareau's ethnographic study (2003) centered on how Black and White middle-class, working-class, and poor families took up and employed language practices. Her research highlights how middle-class parents, regardless of race, engaged in a process of "concerted cultivation" designed to draw out children's talents and skills, while working-class and poor families relied on "the accomplishment of natural growth," in which a child's development unfolded spontaneously—as long as basic comfort, food, and shelter were provided. According to Lareau, each of these approaches to childrearing brought its own benefits and drawbacks.

Heath (1983) and Lareau's (2003) research both draw attention to the ways in which children are socialized. They highlight how language and literacy socialization are shaped by practices, values, and beliefs that vary across communities in different racialized and class contexts. However, Heath and Lareau identified and analyzed mostly *differences* between mainstream and marginalized families' ways with words. In fact, most sociocultural research on

marginalized families—whether in a deficit or asset-based light—has highlighted differences between home and school language and literacy practices (Hull & Schulz, 2001).

Sociocultural research on Latino families has followed this same pattern (see, for example, Carillo, 2004; Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991; Guerra, 1998; Moll et al., 1992; Valdés, 1998, 2001). Therefore, there is a lack of research that looks at similarities and dissimilarities of literacy practices across contexts. One of a handful of studies to look at both continuities and discontinuities of in-school and out-of-school literacy practices was de la Piedra's (2011) qualitative study about Mexican transnational mothers' literacy practices. The mothers in de la Piedra's study lived in and frequently crossed the U.S./Mexico border. One case in the study described the ways in which a bilingual mother and her daughter read and shared information about school-related activities. They also spent time developing common interests by reading magazines and looking up information on the Internet. Piedra observed how the mother and daughter shared intergenerational literacy experiences in both languages.

Perry et al.'s (2008) qualitative study examined how Latino immigrant families incorporated school-based interactive literacy activities into their existing home literacy practices. They found that Latin@ parents appropriated school-related literacy activities into their existing repertoire when they believed it would aid their children in academic success. At the same time, parents modified school-related literacy activities to reflect their existing cultural beliefs and practices.

Instead of focusing on only differences between marginalized families' out-of-school literacy practices and those employed in schools—De la Piedra and Perry et al. look at the continuities (what transfers) *and* discontinuities (what does not). However, both studies looked at the unidirectional movement of literacy practices. Research is needed that examines the multi-

directional movement of families' literacy practices across spaces (e.g., home to school and vice versa).

The Role of Dominant Language and Literacy Discourses in Scholarship and Policy

The privileging of mainstream language and literacy practices directly impacts the ways in which marginalized groups are treated in academic literature and in education policy. As discussed in chapter one, in the U.S., linguistically marginalized groups are made to believe that non-standard dialects and/or other languages stand in opposition to their ultimate success (McGroarty, 2008). Standard U.S. English has become the "prestige" language of the United States. The concept of prestige in sociolinguistics is closely related to that of prestige or class within a society. Generally, there is positive prestige associated with the language or dialect of the "upper" classes, and negative prestige with the language or dialect of the "lower classes". The concept of prestige is also closely tied to the idea of the standard language; the most prestigious dialect is likely to be considered the standard language. Other languages and non-standard varieties of English are positioned as "abnormal" and "un-American" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998; Schmidt, 2007) and, in essence, *inferior* (Delpit, 1993; Gee, 2004; Jaffe, 2003; Wiley, 2005; Zentella, 2005).

The privileging of dominant language discourses extends to the literacy field. Street (1997) among other New Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars noted that in literacy research as well as society at large, the major way of thinking about literacy is captured by the *autonomous* model. The autonomous model views literacy in a reductionist manner in which it can be taught in similar ways across varying contexts in a value-free form, regardless of different learners' experiences and needs (Larson and Marsh, 2005).

Therefore, within this framework, literacy is viewed as a neutral process—if the learner

fails to master dominant literacy discourses, the blame is placed on the individual or on his or her family. Researchers and education stakeholders who have ascribed to an autonomous model of literacy at times may highlight a deficit within the family or position them as culturally deficit because they fail to adopt and implement school-based literacy practices. Many supporters of the autonomous model of literacy believe that a lack of mainstream literacy skills can be "fixed" through family literacy programs, which indoctrinate marginalized families' with schooled and middle-class values and forms of literacy. Marginalized families, such as Latin@ immigrants, are viewed as lacking the educational background and cognitive skills that are required of formal schooling, which is used as a way to explain why so many of them 'fail' in the school system (Street, 1997; Gadsden, 1996). Currently, this deficit discourse persists in the guise of intervention, which claims to be strengths-based (Auerbach, 1995).

In contrast, the *ideological* model does not view literacy as an autonomous (i.e., internal, neutral, devoid of context) process. Rather, the ideological nature of literacy is emphasized; which is to say that literacy is a phenomenon that is inextricably linked to people's ideas, manner of thinking, social interactions, and cultural practices. New Literacy Studies scholar, Brian Street asserts that an ideological model views literacy "not just as a single, unitary phenomenon attached to formal education, but as a variety of social practices" (Street, 1997, p. 210). Despite the ideological model's attempts to broaden standard definitions of literacy—most scholarship has continued to narrowly define literacy as a discrete set of reading and writing skills, which are acquired through formal schooling.

The privileging of dominant language and literacy discourses, outlined in the previous section, also shapes educational policy and the ways in which Latino immigrant families' literacy practices are viewed and treated in U.S. schools. Latin@s, among other groups, have

experienced marginalization because of their language and literacy practices and their growing numbers make the resulting educational and social problems a major national concern. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, in 2011 there were 51.9 million Latin@s living in the country; thirty six percent were born in other countries (Pew Research Center, 2013). This number does not account for the number of undocumented Latin@ immigrants who have come to the United States calculated to be circa 8 million (Pew Research Center, 2010). Latin@s make up such a large segment of the student population, in places such as California, where this study was conducted, that Latin@ English Learners (ELs) make up 84 percent of the 1.3 million English learners in the state (California Department of Education, 2013). Considering the rapid increase of Latin@ ELs in American classrooms, one would assume that a priority among policymakers would be to address their academic and social progress in schools (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). Yet, federal, state, and local language policy has generally *not* been created nor implemented based on Latin@ immigrants' linguistic and academic needs (Cummins, 2000; Gutiérrez, 2002; Wiley, 2005). In California, for example, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recently filed (2013) a lawsuit again the Department of Education, claiming that it has "failed its obligation to give English-learning students legally required help" because "an estimated 20,000 students are receiving no help or inadequate services as they work to learn English to keep up academically at the same time" (Blume, 2013).

In fact, language and literacy policies tend to be rooted in deficit-based ideologies and research. Reductive measures around language and literacy practices are usually taken to promote economic and social "success." For instance, the tendency to think of language as an internal and developmental process both shapes and impacts language policy in U.S. schools

(see, for example, Lillie et al., 2010; Peer & Pérez, 2011). Rather than taking structural and systemic inequities into account (Valencia & Solórzano, 2004), language policy—more often than not—places primary responsibility on the *language learner* if he or she fails to master Standard English "quickly" enough or is unable to "catch up" academically (Orellana & Gutiérrez, 2006; Wiley 2005). English-only policy that is driven by language ideology calling for the rapid acquisition of Standard English—even at the risk of losing one's first language (Santa Ana, 2004)—has spread all over the United States (e.g., California's Proposition 227, Arizona's Proposition 203, and Massachusetts' Question 2). English-only legislation has resulted in a push towards "normalizing large numbers of linguistically and culturally diverse children and the social and cultural practices in which they engage" (p. 4). These policies tend to remain fixed on an "obsession with the question of English-only versus bilingual education" (Gándara & Gomez, 2009) while ignoring pressing social and pedagogical issues. One of the groups most affected by such policies are Latin@ immigrant youth and their families.

Literacy policy in schools has also historically taken a reductive approach, particularly in relation to marginalized groups' out-of-school literacy practices. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), for instance, required students to reach certain proficiency levels in reading and writing in English. Proficiency in print-based literacy skills was centered on White, middle-class cultural and linguistic norms and practices (Meier et al., 2004). As a result, many schools enacted policies enforcing the adoption of scripted English-only curricula that emphasized discrete literacy skills (e.g., reading fluency). Consequently, home literacy and language practices that did not match up to those valued in schools were looked down upon and often framed as impeding students' progress in reaching NCLB proficiency requirements (Foley & Voithofer, 2003). More recently, Race to the Top legislation has similarly put pressure on schools to meet

certain literacy criteria; however, the focus has shifted to providing students with skills that will purportedly prepare them as strong competitors in our globalized and technologically centered economy. In order to achieve this goal, Race to the Top created national standards (i.e., Common Core) for the 46 states that elected to receive federal educational funding. One of the most visible changes in literacy curricula has been that students are expected to read more non-fiction, because it is considered by many experts to be the key to success in college or the workplace (Matthews, 2012). Such an emphasis may ignore the needs of marginalized students, such as English learners, because researchers have found that ELs learn language and literacy skills through meaningful context that they can relate to (see, for example, Gee, 2001). Furthermore, reminiscent of No Child Left Behind, students in the Race to the Top era are expected to demonstrate literacy knowledge on standardized tests, which are ripe with questions privileging the dominant discourse. Much of the syntactical and lexical structure of questions found on Race to the Top's standardized tests continue to perpetuate a climate in which marginalized students, such as Latin@ immigrants, are expected to quickly absorb and consume mainstream knowledge and abandon other abilities and skills not acknowledged or valued by the educational system. Educational scholar, Diane Ravitch (2013) fears that the Common Core Standards "will cause a precipitous decline in test scores, based on arbitrary cut scores, and this will have a disparate impact on students who are English language learners, students with disabilities, and students who are poor and low-performing."

Scholarship in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and language socialization, as well as socioculturally influenced studies could help education stakeholders make more informed decisions regarding language and literacy policies in U.S. schools. Such research provides a perspective of variation and change as the *norm* rather than as something socially deviant,

inferior, or taboo (Lippi-Green, 1997). My study answers the call for such research because it examines the multitude of factors that impact Latin@ immigrant families' adoption and employment of language and literacy practices across time, space, and group. Moreover, my research approaches language and literacy as practices that are fluid, socially situated, and context-embedded. These practices are taken up in both continuous and discontinuous ways that reveal each parent's participation and personal tailoring of the ways of speaking, reading, and writing they are exposed to in their educational program.

In sum, going beyond previous scholarship that has customarily privileged dominant language and literacy practices or emphasized the home-school mismatch, my study uses a multimodal, sociocultural, multilingual approach that highlights continuities and discontinuities of literacy practices across contexts. The next section of this chapter will discuss the specific ways in which Latin@ families with young children have been portrayed in family literacy and early literacy scholarship. Lastly, I will delineate how I build upon extant early literacy research that focuses on Latin@ families.

Family Literacy Scholarship

The role of the family in young children's literacy learning has not always been emphasized in schools. In fact, much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were characterized by a belief that literacy instruction should be left up to the "experts" (i.e. teachers) and that parents should assume a hands-off approach (Wasik & Herrmann, 2004). The publication of the Coleman Report (1966) altered this manner of thinking because it claimed that family background (e.g., socioeconomic status, level of education) is more predictive of students' academic success than measured differences in school (Coleman, 1966). The Coleman Report also highlighted how marginalized students' academic performance trailed behind that of

their White, middle-class peers—particularly in reading and writing. In hopes of narrowing this achievement gap and understanding the ways that students acquire literacy at home, a flurry of research on *family literacy* ensued at the K-12 level (Wasik & Herrmann, 2004). The term *family literacy* refers to literacy beliefs and practices among family members and the intergenerational transfer of language and literacy skills (Wasik, 2004, p. 3).

Family literacy practices have also been a topic of interest in early childhood scholarship, beyond the classroom (Gadsden, 2008). Unfortunately, similar to literature at the K-12 level, the rich literacy practices of marginalized families have been largely absent from early literacy research (Anderson, Anderson, Freidrich, & Kim, 2010; Auerbach, 1989, 1997; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001). In fact, certain strands of early literacy research *perpetuate* deficit stereotypes of marginalized families' literacy practices (e.g., National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Sénechal, 2011; Vandermaas-Peeler, Nelson, Bumpass, & Sassine, 2009). This deficit framework particularly affects Latin@ children, who account for about one in four children younger than age 5 in the United States (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). Absent from most early literacy scholarship is the fact that Latin@s are a diverse group (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Zentella, 2005) and come from families with a wide array of linguistic and literacy practices (Moll et al., 1992; Moll, Sáez, & Dworin, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002).

Units of analysis in early literacy studies on Latino families.

A majority of family literacy research has emphasized the mother's role as her child's first teacher (Nutbrown & Hannon, 2003). Turbiville and Marquis (2001) suggest that early literacy researchers focus on mothers due to more convenient access to them, as well as their level of comfort in working with women. This trend has been replicated in much of the early literacy research on Latino families (Auerbach, 1989, 1997). Auerbach (1989) and Gadsden

(2008) note that even fewer studies have looked at how siblings, grandparents, and extended family members have acted as key players in young Latino children's literacy learning. However some research has incorporated other family members into their unit of analyses, such as Volk and de Acosta's (2005) ethnographic study examining how older Puerto Rican siblings mediated their younger siblings' literacy learning, and Olmedo's (2005) work on how Latino grandparents' storytelling facilitated young children's literacy learning—most early literacy scholarship on Latino families has centered on mothers. The practices covered have also been limited; Cairney (2003) notes that "relatively few studies have provided a detailed description of literacy practices within a wide range of families" (p. 91). One exception is Chung's (2006) dissertation study, in which she observed Latina immigrant mothers in an adult ESL classroom, interviewed them about their learning experiences, as well as observed them at home while interacting with their children. Chung was also able to interview the women's young children, and observe their behaviors with their mothers and siblings. Unfortunately, Chung's (2006) study is not the norm. In sum, the early literacy field could benefit from researchers who move their unit of analysis away from the nuclear family and include a broad range of literacy activities (which will be discussed in the next section).

Although my dissertation research focuses on how mothers and children engage in literacy practices at Nuestra Comunidad (since they were the only family members that qualified for enrollment in the program), my out-of-school observations highlight the ways in which my participants interact around literacy with other family members as well as with people in their community. Therefore, in out-of-school contexts, I was able to document how siblings, grandparents, sisters-in-law, and family friends engaged in specific and varied literacy practices with the participants in my study. Moreover, I did not view my participants as bound to a certain

identity—such as a mother assuming the role of the teacher and the child as the learner. Rather, I examine my corpus of information in a manner that emphasizes variety and fluidity across groups, roles, and spaces.

Privileging of dominant print literacy skills and activities.

My survey of the literature has revealed that, despite calls for more socioculturally informed empirical studies (Auerbach, 1989; Gee, 2001; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001), the majority of early literacy research on Latino families narrowly assesses their ability to adopt school-based White middle-class literacy beliefs and practices. For instance, many White middle-class families adhere to the idea that one of the most effective methods of fostering young children's early learning is to expose them to as many spoken words as possible. Hart and Risely's (1995) longitudinal research is one of the most commonly referenced studies citing the benefits of parent-child talk. In the Hart and Risely study, over a three-year period, a team of researchers went to 42 families' homes and recorded a full hour of every word spoken between parent and child (ranging from seven months to 36 months of age). They found that children whose families were on welfare heard about 600 words per hour; working-class children heard approximately 1,200 words per hour; and children from professional families heard 2,100 words. Moreover, Hart and Risely asserted that by age 3, a less affluent child would have heard 30 million fewer words in his home environment than a child from a professional family. The researchers also cited long-term effects of parent-child talk. They claimed that the children in the study who heard a greater number of words from their parents or caregivers before they were three, later tested with higher IQs and performed better in school.

Newer research has reified the mainstream idea that exposure to spoken language is necessary to promote children's developmental and academic progress. Stanford professor Anne Fernald conducted a study (2013) testing twenty 18-month-old children from affluent homes and twenty-eight children from low-income households by showing them two simple pictures (e.g., a dog and baby). Through exclusively vocal commands, such as "where is the dog?" or "where is the baby?" researchers in the study used video recording and measured the child's eye movement in response to the prompt. Researchers recorded how fast children moved their eyes towards the correct picture. Six months later, Fernald ran follow-up tests to track the children's progress. She concluded that at "eighteen months children from wealthier homes identif[ied] pictures of simple words they knew... much faster than children from low-income families" (Rich, 2013). By age 2, the study also found, affluent children (households with average annual income per capita was \$69,000) had learned 30 percent more words in the intervening months than the children from low-income homes (median income per capita \$23,900). The new findings reinforced earlier research, such as Hart and Risely's (1995) study, showing that professional parents speak to such a greater extent to their children that their children heard 30 million more words by age 3 than children from low-income households.

These statistics do not take language proficiency or contextual factors into account.

Rather, the emphasis lies in children's ability (or inability) to meet a specific task, which is rooted in dominant language and literacy practices (e.g., associating images with words in English). Consequently, a great deal of early literacy scholarship, such as the studies cited above, portrays marginalized families, particularly Latin@ immigrants as "unskilled parents in need of interventions [that would enable them] to teach their children the [literacy] skills deemed appropriate in U.S. schools" (Saavedra, 2011, p. 289). In fact, a majority of early literacy research on Latino families centers on mothers' interactions with their young children around topics such as letter-sound recognition (Durand, 2010), shared book reading (Boyce et al., 2004;

Janes & Kermani, 2001; Melzi & Caspe, 2005; Rodriguez, Hines, & Montiel, 2009), and vocabulary development (Quiroz et al., 2010). Many of the studies that focus on booksharing have measured the frequency of Latina mothers' utterances in relation to school-based literacy practices, such as the ability to ask open-ended questions, use less structuring, and introduce high-level concepts into conversations (Eisenberg, 2002; Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim & Johnson, 2005; Laosa, 1980; Melzi & Caspe, 2005). Inevitably, such research fails to capture the context-embedded and socially situated literacy practices that Latina mothers engage in with their young children. Furthermore, early literacy studies seem to overemphasize the importance of Latina mothers' participation in literacy activities traditionally viewed as nurturing, such as bedtime stories (Heath, 1983) and/or booksharing. Ramdas (1990) asserts that such research promotes an ideology in which "literacy [is] [synonymous] with domestication rather than the empowerment" of marginalized communities. Chicana feminist scholar, Saavedra (2011) problematizes this tendency and urges early literacy scholars to destrenzar (i.e., unbraid and unravel) research questions that solely focus on the mother's role in fostering young children's print literacy. Rather, researchers should ask questions that capture the varied ways in which families actively adopt, modify, and/or reject dominant literacy practices in relation to their own repertoires of practice (Perry, Mitchell, Brown, & Brown, 2008).

The early literacy field has also generally failed to capture nuanced and on-the-ground accounts of "the way[s] in which the multiliteracies of life interact and shape each other and about the people who use them" (Cairney, 2003, p. 91)—particularly Latino families (Perry et al., 2008). Nonetheless, there are a few scholars (e.g., Compton-Lilly, 2007b; Dyson, 2008; Flewitt, 2011, Pahl, 2009) who *have* incorporated the concept of multiliteracies into their research. Multiliteracies refers to multimodal forms of communication (New London Group,

1996, p. 64) as well as to the wide array of linguistic practices (e.g., hybrid languages, dialects, registers, etc.), which are reflective of globalization patterns and indicate the pressing need for a more expansive definition of what constitutes "literacy" (Gee, 2001; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Street, 1997).

For instance, Barrueco, López, and Miles (2007) incorporated parents' singing and oral storytelling into their analysis of parents' print-based literacy practices during their children's first year of life³. Furthermore, in addition to her examination of 37 Latino families' (mostly Mexican immigrant, some Chicanos, and a handful from Nicaragua) traditional print-based literacy activities with their preschoolers (e.g., learning their ABCs, letter-sound correspondence), Billings (2009) explored how the parents in her study engaged in oral storytelling around topics in their personal lives; they told stories that were invented, traditional, or from familiar books. Boyce et al. (2010) introduced an intervention to 75 Latino families (all of the mothers were immigrants, identifying themselves as Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicana, but most of the children had been born in the United States) in a Utah Migrant Head Start program in which participants engaged in oral and written storytelling. However, the authors placed greater importance on the written form because they deemed that is was more aligned to academic expectations (p. 345).

Other researchers have captured a wider array of multimodal literacy practices employed by Latino families. Many of these scholars highlight how Latino families' various forms of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005)—such as linguistic capital (e.g., oral histories, visual art, music, poetry)—shape their literacy practices. This was demonstrated in Compton-Lilly's (2007a) case study of two Puerto Rican mothers and their kindergarten-aged children in a mid-sized city in the

³ According to the researchers, this was a nationally representative sample of nine-month old infants and families (*N* =10,498). There were 2,170 Latino families in this study and they were not disaggregated by factors such as nativity, English language proficiency, or country of origin.

northeastern United States. She examined print literacy practices (e.g., parents and children reading and writing together), as well as multimodal forms of literacy, such as puppetry and role-playing. Volk and de Acosta (2001) also conducted an ethnographic study of families of Puerto Rican kindergarteners in a working-class area of a large city in a Midwestern U.S. state. The researchers observed that in the families' homes "playing Nintendo games, reading the paper, doing homework, watching television, cooking, talking, and babysitting" (p. 206) could occur in the same room at the same time. Furthermore, in their observations of the families in multiple settings (e.g., home, school, church, Sunday school), the researchers discovered that families used, applied, and/or combined literacy practices learned in one context to another context.

Similarly, Rodriguez's (2006) ethnographic study of seven Dominican families in New York revealed that families engaged in reading and writing practices and activities that were school-related (e.g., homework), as well as literacy practices and activities that were deeply embedded in their lives (e.g., paying bills, writing money orders/checks, reading religious texts). Additionally, the families integrated multi-media literacy (e.g., video games, Internet, television) into their daily routines and practices.

It is important to note that in-depth ethnographic studies, such as those highlighted above, provide a more expansive and varied view of Latino families' literacy practices because such work elucidates how different family members use multimodal types of literacy in different contexts and for different purposes. This literature stands in stark opposition to scholarship that focuses on documenting Latino families' successful employment of school-based, print-based literacy at home. With the advent of globalization and the widespread use of technology, many families worldwide have incorporated online (e.g., Internet, email) and media (e.g., television, film) literacy into their daily practices (Korat & Or, 2010). Yet, for the most part, the early

literacy field has limited itself to print-based notions of literacy—particularly mothers' booksharing with their children. Latino families' employment of multimodal literacy practices has only been captured in a small body of early literacy research. Even some of this research seems to privilege print literacy (e.g., Boyce et al., 2004).

Concluding Thoughts

In this work, I view literacy through a context-embedded and socially situated lens. For instance, I take sociopolitical factors into account in my examination of Latino immigrant families' engagement with literacy. I investigate how their socioeconomic backgrounds, immigration status, family dynamics, and a plethora of other factors shape their take up of literacy practices across settings.

I also explore various *types* of literacy practices—such as online (e.g., Internet, emailing, social networks), media (e.g., animation, television, films), and visual (e.g., photographs, paintings, images, graphic novels) literacies. Furthermore, I hone in on oral language since many researchers have found that oral language facilitates literacy development (Cooper, Collins & Saxby, 1992; Dyson & Genishi, 1994). By looking at this wider range of practices, I represent more accurately what the families in my study did around literacy, instead of departing from a narrow deficit framework.

Ethnographic research in the early literacy field (e.g., Rodriguez, 2006; Compton-Lilly, 2001; Volk and De Acosta, 2007) that paints nuanced and varied portraits of the ways in which Latino families (who are a heterogeneous group) engage in literacy practices were the foundations of this study. Specifically, I investigated: Which individuals engage in which kinds of literacy practices? What kinds of literacy practices are evident (e.g., print, visual, online, media literacies)? Where do these individuals engage in literacy practices (e.g., school, home,

church, park, laundry mat, restaurant, grocery shopping)? When do they engage in literacy practices (e.g., morning, nighttime, after a nap)? With whom do they engage in literacy practices (e.g., mothers and fathers, fathers and children, older sibling and mother, store clerk and mother)? How do these literacy practices move across contexts (e.g., school to home, home to school, home to the market, park to school)? Why do some of these practices travel while others do not? For example, why are some stories and games played at home not played in public spaces, and why do some booksharing practices taught at Nuestra Comunidad fail to appear at home? The following chapter will delineate the ways in which I investigated and analyzed these questions.

CHAPTER 3

Methods Overview

As highlighted in the previous chapter, there is a dearth of early and family literacy research that approaches families' literacy practices as socially situated and context-embedded (Auerbach, 1997). Even less scholarship examines the literacy practices of Latino families and their young children from a sociocultural perspective (Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011; Saracho, 2007). My dissertation aims to bridge this gap in the literature by utilizing a sociocultural framework informed by a multimodal perspective on literacy. This ten-month long ethnographic study examines the literacy practices employed by four Latino families and their young children in a two-generation program, as well as in out-of-school settings (e.g., at home, in parks, grocery stores, laundry mats, etc.).

Background of the Site

Nuestra Comunidad is one of a dozen two-generation programs in Los Angeles. This non-profit organization's mission statement is that it "prepares families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life through two-generation learning." The organization provides free social services and educational programs (i.e., English as a Second Language, parenting education, mental health support, family literacy, computer training, early childhood classes, as well as nutrition) to low-income families with children ages 0-5. Nuestra Comunidad's website explains that their "programs successfully increase literacy levels, educational outcomes and the emotional well-being of both generations." Nuestra Comunidad currently serves over 100 parents and 112 children each year—the majority of families are recent Latin@ immigrants (mostly from Mexico, several from Central and South American countries—

such as Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, and Venezuela). Data provided by Nuestra Comunidad's website reveals that:

91% of the 100 children in the program lived in poverty

61% of the 72 parents⁴ did not graduate from high school

47% of parents had less than a 9th grade education

71% of parents spoke a language other than English at home

28% of families lived in a household with multiple families because of economic hardship.

I found out about Nuestra Comunidad through an acquaintance that works for a non-profit that collaborates with Nuestra Comunidad to acquire funding for grants. I had sent an email to colleagues and friends voicing my interest in finding a two-generation program where I could conduct my dissertation research. My acquaintance got in touch with Linda, the executive director of Nuestra Comunidad, and informed her that I was a graduate student who was particularly interested in the impact of two-generation programs. I met with Linda to provide her with a summary of my research goals and methodology. Since my pilot study consisted of primarily "fly-on-the-wall" observations, Linda immediately granted me access to a year's worth of biweekly observations. During our initial meeting, I communicated that I might be interested in conducting another study at Nuestra Comunidad during the 2011-12 academic year and that this second year of research would be used for dissertation purposes. Although Linda knew that she would be retiring after the 2010-2011 school year she agreed to let me conduct my dissertation research at the site with the stipulation that I receive IRB approval prior to my second year of research. Moreover, at the beginning of my pilot study, Linda immediately put me

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⁴⁴ At the time of the study, there were 72 mothers who attended the morning program at Nuestra Comunidad. This morning session was the period that I focused on in my dissertation study. The afternoon program served 28 mothers and was aimed at women who had lived in the United States for a longer period of time than those in the morning session. Most of the mothers who came for the afternoon session were brought to the United States as children (Jamie, personal communication, February 10, 2012).

in contact with Jamie, Nuestra Comunidad's family literacy coach. Jamie had worked at Nuestra Comunidad for almost two decades. Her duties included coordinating and teaching the family literacy class every Friday, as well as organizing a family literacy class held once a month on Saturdays. Linda made Jamie my contact person because she knew that she would be at Nuestra Comunidad for the duration of my study.

In order to recruit participants for my dissertation study (2011-12), I provided Jamie with an introduction/recruitment letter, which she distributed to all of the incoming Nuestra Comunidad families (i.e., those who had never enrolled in Nuestra Comunidad prior to the 2011-12 school year). It is important to note that in my selection of participants I decided to use theoretical sampling, which refers to the process of selecting "incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs" (Patton, 2001, p. 238). Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe theoretical sampling as an iterative sampling process that is based on emerging theoretical concepts. This sampling approach has the goal of developing a rich understanding of the dimensions of a concept across a range of settings and conditions. In other words, a goal of this study was to develop theories and concepts that were connected to, grounded in, or emergent from real life events and circumstances; hence, it was preferable to elect participants based on certain criteria as opposed to random sampling. The recruitment letter delineated the inclusion criteria for my study, which were:

Mothers had to be first-time participants in the Nuestra Comunidad program (for the incoming 2011-12 school year). This helped me gauge the mothers' literacy practices (prior to their initiation in the program) and track the ways mothers' practices remained the same and/or shifted during their time at Nuestra Comunidad.

- Mothers had to have at least one child in the program between the ages of two and six. It is more likely that children who are at least two years old will be more verbal and exhibit a greater number of observable behaviors linked to literacy than younger children.
- Because I was focusing on mothers who were recent immigrants in this study,
 participants had to be Spanish dominant and at beginner English language proficiency
 levels. At Nuestra Comunidad, women are divided into beginner and intermediate
 English as a Second Language (ESL) classes; the study's participants were mothers in the
 beginner classes.

About a week after Jamie had distributed my introduction/recruitment letter to new Nuestra Comunidad mothers, I held an in-person information session with about ten mothers that were interested in participating in the study. I told them I was conducting a study to simply observe how they interacted a) in their ESL and family literacy classrooms; and b) with their children at Nuestra Comunidad as well as with their families and community in out-of-school settings. I told them I was not looking for any specific type of behavior or activity, so they could feel free to interact in the ways they normally did in their daily lives. I took a poll to determine their language of preference for the meeting; the mothers chose Spanish. After the meeting concluded, I met with the mothers who were still interested in participating in my research to determine whether or not a) they and their children met the study's inclusion criteria, and b) were willing to make the year-long commitment to be observed on a bi-weekly basis at Nuestra Comunidad as well as twice a month in out-of-school settings. Following the individual meetings, seven mothers agreed to participate in my dissertation study.

In order to figure out which of the seven mothers met all of the criteria, I utilized a spreadsheet that included relevant information about all of the new participants at the

organization—such as language(s) spoken at home, number and ages of children, and time spent living in the United States. Four women out of the initial seven fit all of my inclusion criteria. These families (mothers and children) were given about two weeks to decide whether or not they wished to participate in the study. All four mothers signed the consent forms and their children verbally agreed to participate in the study. Since the children were very young (between ages 2 and 6), I attained verbal consent from them. All of the mothers in my study were native Spanish speakers as well as recent immigrants to the United States; therefore, at their request, the recruitment and consent forms were provided in Spanish.

Rationale for Methods

A large body of early literacy research consists of quantitative studies, which approach family literacy from a cognitive framework (e.g., studies that administer evaluations of young children's literacy skills before and after mothers receive exposure to an intervention, such as formal training in booksharing strategies) (Orellana & Peer, 2012). At the other end of the spectrum, many qualitative studies in the early literacy field have examined families' literacy practices through the use of case studies, ethnographies, and in-depth interviews (Anderson, 2010). Most of these studies focus on print-based literacy in home or school settings (Wasik, 2004). The early literacy field is in need of research that particularly looks at marginalized families' literacy practices—particularly Latin@s—in multiple contexts and in multimodal forms (Reyes & Torres, 2007) because such scholarship could shed light on how to better serve young students and their families.

Since my goal was to highlight the socially-situated and context embedded nature of literacy, an ethnographic design was optimal for this study. Ethnography enabled me to "watch what happen[ed], listen to what [was] said, ask questions, [and] collect...data" (Hammersley &

Atkinson, 1995, p. 1). Therefore, I was able to broaden my observational lens rather than maintain a narrow focus and miss out on unexpected yet critical information that a questionnaire or tests could not capture. Ethnographic research also goes hand-in-hand with the study's sociocultural framework because such scholarship "investigate[s] social and cultural patterns and meanings in communities, institutions, and other social settings" (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p.1).

In order to challenge research that highlights mismatches between marginalized communities' home and school literacy practices, the families (rather than literacy practices) were the focus of this study as I followed them and participated in the multiple contexts of their daily lives. Orellana (2007) asserts that sociocultural ethnographers "can identify multiple ways in which settings overlap, align, complement, or collide with each other, with what effects.

[They] can also consider how...participants understand and experience both continuities and disjunctions, and how their interpretations in part shape the contexts for their own development" (p. 134).

My research followed participants from the school site into the surrounding community, including (and especially) their homes. I investigated how my participants' literacy practices "overlap[ped], align[ed], compliment[ed], or collide[d]" with one other across contexts. For example, how did participants take up the literacy practices that they learned at Nuestra Comunidad and apply them to their own lives (e.g., letter writing to older children's teachers, children improvising songs in Spanish to tunes they learned at school in English)? In what ways did participants find that the literacy practices (e.g., booksharing) conflicted with other cultural practices or values? In what instances did literacy practices that mothers take up overlap or collide with those their young children adopted? Thus, my research approached literacy practices

as processes of cultural change and continuity; I argue that these processes do not merely happen to individuals. Rather, individuals actively forge their own literacy practices and elect which practices to include or discard from their literacy toolkits. In sum, the combination of a sociocultural framework and an ethnographic research design helped me carry out and analyze research in a manner that did not essentialize or oversimplify the multimodal literacy practices taken up by seemingly "similar" Latin@ participants.

Description of the Methods Employed

The methods employed in my dissertation study were a) participant observation, b) ethnographic interviews, c) videotaping, and document analysis, as explained below:

Participant observation.

Participant observation was one of the key methods that I employed in this study, which required immersing myself in the social setting of Nuestra Comunidad, in order to become more familiar with staff members, mothers, and children. My goal was to make the participants feel at ease so that they could authentically participate in their cultural practices without feeling pressured to act in a particular way or say the "right" things. I emphasized to participants that I was not judging their actions; rather, I was merely observing interactions. In order to "break the ice," I provided a bit of information about my personal, professional, and educational background. Since a great number of my observations took place at Nuestra Comunidad, when non-participants (i.e., other mothers, staff, volunteers) had questions about why I was sitting in on their classes and/or taking field notes, I explained that I was a student watching interactions take place. It was important to be honest about my presence at Nuestra Comunidad because in order to capture authentic behavior one must build trust.

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⁵ I will further explain how I maintain a balance between "insider" and "outsider" status in the positionality section of this chapter.

Conducting observations in out-of-school settings (e.g., running errands, going to the park, home visits), also required immersing myself in the social interactions that took place. For instance, if families were eating and offered me a place at their table, I joined them. Certain scholars, such as sociologists and anthropologists, employ participant observation as a research tool to discover the nature of social reality by understanding the actor's perceptions, understandings and interpretations of that social world. Since literacy practices are ingrained into our everyday lives—participant observation allowed me to hone in on literacy practices that other researchers might not capture due to a lack of time and/or participants' distrust.

Throughout this ten-month study, I was constantly aware of and negotiated the roles of both participant and observer. I had to retain a level of objectivity in order to represent the families' literacy practices to the best of my ability; however, the families and I also connected on other levels. It is difficult to follow four families for almost a year and not make personal connections with them.

Observations consisted of taking field notes at Nuestra Comunidad as well as in out-of-school settings. After each observation, I spent time journaling my inferences, personal observations, reflections, hunches, and emotional reactions from the field notes (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 115-116). My journaling took place in a separate notebook because I did not want these perspectives and ideas to intervene with the field-note taking process. Lastly, every week I wrote analytic memos as a means of remembering particular analyses and focusing future data collection and coding to explore ideas that I included in the memos. The following section will provide more extensive details of my in-school and out-of-school observations (e.g., frequency of observations, locations, etc).

Nuestra Comunidad observations.

At the beginning of the program's school year (September 2011), I began observations at Nuestra Comunidad. These observations lasted from the moment mothers walked onto the site (8:30 a.m.) until all of the morning sessions were over (approximately at noon). Four mothers were observed once a week in their Beginner ESL class. During the ESL class, I looked at the kinds of literacy practice that mothers engaged in—both those that were being passed on during instruction (e.g., decoding of English text, vocabulary words, verb conjugations) as well as literacy practices that were not a part of the ESL curriculum (e.g., letter-writing, side talk, translation of what the instructor said). On Fridays, all four mothers were observed in their family literacy classes. I focused on the types of literacy practices that mothers engaged in—both those included in the curriculum (e.g., making family tree albums, booksharing strategies with young children) as well as those not included (banter, storytelling, texting, sharing music, selling Avon, doing homework, etc.).

In my observations, I decided what counted as a literacy practice by drawing from the idea of multiple literacies, which goes beyond a traditional reading and writing definition of literacy to include the ability to process and interpret information presented through various media (Street, 1997). I documented when families processed and interpreted information across contexts through mediums such as television, art, music, and storytelling in addition to print. As stated in the previous section, while observing, I took extensive field notes; also, in order to document information that could not be fully captured through handwritten notes (e.g., process of a child creating artwork), I videotaped participants with their permission (which will be discussed later on in this chapter).

Out-of-school observations.

In mid/late August 2011—once the participants in the study were selected and confirmed—I conducted initial home observations. Extensive field notes were taken during these observations. I also asked mothers questions as they came up. Once the Nuestra Comunidad school year commenced, out-of-school visits consistently took place, with each visit lasting between three to four hours. Out-of-school visits totaled approximately 465 hours over ten months; each family was observed approximately 115 hours in out-of-school contexts. It is also important to note that mothers' and children's literacy practices were observed in transitional spaces—namely when they left the program and for several hours afterwards because I walked or rode in the car with them as soon as the school day was over. Weekly out-of-school observations rotated between households (i.e., observing two of the four mothers one week and the other two mothers the following week). I advised mothers to engage in their regular routines (e.g., grocery shopping, going to the park, washing clothes at the laundry mat, visiting with friends, etc.), rather than try to engage in literacy practices that might not be part of their everyday activities. Although I explicitly shared with the mothers before they began the study that I was only observing families' interactions—at first many of them engaged in literacy practices that mirrored the school-based literacy practices they had learned at Nuestra Comunidad. During interviews that followed, Rosa and Yolanda shared that even though I told them that I was not looking for or valuing certain practices over others—my background as a teacher made them feel as though they were being evaluated on whether or not they replicated school-based literacy activities in out-of-school contexts. The participants eventually settled into their daily activities and routines. It was in this context that I was able to see continuities and discontinuities that were evident in the families' employment of literacy practices across settings.

I examined mothers' and children's literacy practices immediately after the program day concluded, in order to see how they translated what was just learned at Nuestra Comunidad to other settings and/or activities (e.g., walking to their homes, performing daily chores, approaching storytelling and vocabulary building skills). Just as important, I kept an eye out for literacy practices that might not have been taught at Nuestra Comunidad but were still salient in the families' routines. Thus, the purpose of the out-of-school visits was to observe school-based literacy practices (e.g., booksharing, engaging the child in simple educational activities) as well as literacy practices that might not be completely understood or acknowledged by educational institutions but are often connected to cultural and social practices (oral narratives, word play, banter, analysis of religious text, etc.).

Ethnographic interviews.

Structured interviews are generally initiated and led by the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2005). Unwittingly, such a framework places the researcher in a position of power. On the other hand, ethnographic interviewing takes place in neutral settings, open-ended questions are asked, and the participants decide which way the conversation should go. For instance, instead of having a list of prepared questions, I would casually ask mothers questions that revolved around more general topics such as what they thought about their ESL class. The mothers shared their thoughts and sentiments and asked me questions in return. Since the purpose of my research was to delve into families' literacy practices through participant observation—my goal was for them to authentically share information about these practices. For this reason, I chose to conduct ethnographic interviews.

Videotaping.

About a month and a half into the study, after building a strong rapport with the participants, I began videotaping. Videotaping was used to capture key, typical, and/or reoccurring literacy practices so that I could look at them more closely while reducing and analyzing the corpus of information. Ultimately, my goal was to capture a representative sample of literacy practices for each family through video.

I used my iPhone to videotape participants because it was a less obtrusive means of gathering information than a camera with a tripod. Many of the mothers had mobile phones out during classes—so utilizing my iPhone for recording purposes aided me in blending in rather than being a distraction from the mothers' regular routines and activities.

Description of Participants

The following table provides basic demographic information for the four participating families.

Table 3.1

Four Participants' Demographic Information

Name ^a	Age	Country	Region	Level	Marital	Time in	Yearly	Name(s)	Other
		of origin		of ed.	status ^b	U.S.	income	ages of	kids
								children at	
								Nuestra	
								Comunidad	
Yolanda	29	Mexico	Rural	9 th	S	7 yrs.	3,000	José,	Juliana
								age 2	age 10
Rosa	24	Honduras	Urban	6 th	M	4 yrs.	16,000	Marcia,	Eduardo ^c
								age 3	age 6
Elena	27	Mexico	Rural	9 th	M	10 mos.	4,000	Diego,	N/A
								age 2;	
								Pablo,	
								age 4	
Beatriz	44	Mexico	Rural	9 th	M	17 yrs.	14,000	Nancy,	Sylvia,
								age 3	age 18

Note. All of the names in this table and throughout the document are pseudonyms.

^b M=married; S=single

^c He lived in Honduras with Rosa's parents.

I conducted one structured interview (see Appendix A for the interview protocol) with the mothers prior to the time that formal classes began at Nuestra Comunidad in order to get an idea of their educational experiences in their home country, a bit of background on their children, and their thoughts about education in the United States. The following pages background information garnered from these interviews.

Yolanda.

Yolanda was 29 years old and a single mother of two children. The father of her children left the family when her youngest child was six months old and they did not know how to contact him. At the time of the study, her two-year-old son, José was enrolled in the toddler classroom at Nuestra Comunidad while Yolanda took ESL, parenting, and family literacy classes in the same building. Her daughter, Juliana was ten and in the fifth grade. Yolanda was born and raised in a small town in Michoacán, Mexico. She had to drop out of school after the ninth grade to help her parents because of economic problems. She had lived in the United States for seven years at the time of the study. She said that she enrolled at Nuestra Comunidad to channel her two-year old son's energy positively. Yolanda shared with me that she believed schools in the United States are better than Mexican schools because there is no corporal punishment and parents have time to be more involved in kids' lives. However, she had several positive memories of school in Mexico. For instance, Yolanda was on the honor roll throughout her ninth grade year and remembers it proudly. She wanted her kids to have the freedom to go to school and pick their own careers. She informed me that in Mexico her parents worked a lot and could not spend a lot of time with her, but her mom taught her the value of being on time. Some traditions that she had kept from her childhood/early adulthood in Mexico were cooking meals at home everyday (usually her town's recipes) and passing on scary stories that her grandmother used to tell.

Rosa.

Rosa's home country was Honduras. She grew up in a small town and spent her childhood and adolescence living in public housing. Rosa dropped out of school after sixth grade. She had a six-year old son in Honduras that she had to leave behind with her mother because she did not want him to be endangered when she crossed the border into the United States. Her daughter, Marcia was born in California. At the time of the study, Marcia was three years old and enrolled in the preschool classroom at Nuestra Comunidad. Rosa and her husband had been living in the United States for four years when I conducted the study. The reason that Rosa joined Nuestra Comunidad was to learn English and improve her skills for the labor market (she had been unemployed for three years). Rosa thought schools in the United States were better than in her home country because in Honduras teachers just put information on the board and if you got it, great, and if not, tough luck. However, she had positive memories of school in Honduras—it was a time when all the girls her age could be kids and spend time with one another. She loved the social aspect of school and dating. Rosa wanted her children to have a better life than she did; she also wished for them to become good people ("buenas personas"). Her parents taught her to always stick with the truth ("andar con la verdad") and they helped her with her homework when she was in school. Some traditions that she had kept from her home country were cooking Honduran meals at home and teaching her daughter punta—a popular Honduran style of dance. Rosa associated school with education, learning, and growth/maturity.

Elena.

Elena was born and raised in a medium sized town in Jalisco, Mexico and moved to California about eight years ago (2005). In 2008, she had to go back to Mexico because she was undocumented so her four-year old son (Pablo) was born in California but her youngest son

(Diego) was born in Mexico. Elena and her sons lived in Mexico (and her husband stayed in California working in construction but visited her every couple of months) until the issue with her visa was resolved. About ten months before we met, Elena's visa was approved so she and her sons were able to return to California. Elena lived in her father-in-law's house with her spouse and two kids (as well as her sister-in-law, mother-in-law, and father-in-law). Their house was in danger of going into foreclosure at the beginning of the study; this was a constant source of worry for Elena. Elena could not attend school in her home country for consecutive periods of time because her parents had to work multiple jobs due to economic difficulties and in order to pitch in Elena eventually had to drop out (i.e., ninth grade). Ideally, her parents wanted her to stay in school but this was not possible due to their economic reality.

Elena joined Nuestra Comunidad because a friend from her hometown in Jalisco (and now her neighbor in the United States) had attended the program for five years and loved it. This friend informed Elena that Nuestra Comunidad's early childhood curriculum prepares kids for elementary school and it differs from other schools because parents can also attend. Elena thought schools in the United States were better than in Mexico because children learned to speak two languages. Among her positive memories of school in Mexico, she recalled how teachers paid attention to students and wanted them to do well. Similar to Yolanda, Elena wanted her kids to have the freedom to go to school and be able to have the flexibility in electing their own careers. She joked about school being about waking up early and being in a rush to get there on time. She remembered how her parents in Mexico worked a lot and did not spend much time with her. As a result, Elena conscientiously made an effort to spend one-on-one time with her two children. Elena shared that her parents taught her the value of working at marriage and

having a close-knit family. One of Elena's primary goals was to make sure that her children spoke Spanish. Elena associated education with learning and progress.

Beatriz.

Beatriz was from a small town in Jalisco, Mexico. She dropped out of school after the ninth grade because her family could not afford for her not to work. Beatriz's parents wanted all of their children to attend school but their economic reality stood in stark opposition to those wishes. Beatriz had an 18 year-old daughter who was a senior in high school named Sylvia. She also had a three-year-old daughter, Nancy, who was in the preschool classroom at Nuestra Comunidad. At the time of the study, Beatriz had lived in the United States for almost 20 years much longer than any of the other participants. She became a part of Nuestra Comunidad because she heard it would give her the opportunity to learn English while Nancy was enrolled in preschool classes. She thought schools in the United States were better than those in Mexico because they had more resources, such as counselors, computers, and tutors. Beatriz had many positive memories of school in Mexico—she enjoyed learning by listening, seeing, and singing. She tried to incorporate these multiple strategies of learning with Nancy. In Mexico, Beatriz's dad was primarily concerned with working in the fields but her mother instilled the value of school; in fact, graduating from the sixth grade was a non-negotiable for her mother. Beatriz's mother wanted her children to be literate so that they would not be ignorantes. ⁶ Beatriz wanted the best ("lo máximo") for her kids. In one of our interviews, she shared that she would take from her own pot (i.e., sacrifice herself), look for resources, ask for help—whatever it took— to provide an education for her children. If her daughter had the grades go to college, she would push her to do so. Beatriz believed the whole family should be involved in a child's educational

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⁶ In Spanish, ignorante could be translated in the literal sense to mean *ignorant*. Yet many people use the word *ignorante* to signify a lack of etiquette as well as knowledge.

trajectory. Some traditions she had kept from Mexico were cooking (e.g, sopes), instilling values of respect for elders, and expressing sentiments that come from the heart. Beatriz believed that learning two languages in the United States (English and Spanish) was ideal. Beatriz associated schooling with education, progress, and ease in one's endeavors.

My Role as a Researcher

In this study, I was both an insider and an outsider. I could relate to Nuestra Comunidad staff because of my background as a teacher and as an early childhood program coordinator. These professional experiences helped me converse with teachers and staff about early childhood pedagogy. I also maintained insider status because I could readily communicate with the mothers in the Nuestra Comunidad program due to the fact that I grew up speaking Spanish. Differences between Honduran, Mexican, and Puerto Rican dialects are often a topic of conversation that my participants initiated because they enjoyed the exchanges of words (e.g., guineo versus plátano versus banana). My knowledge of Spanish helped me pick up on Yolanda, Beatriz, Elena, and Rosa's jokes as well as engage in their daily banter. Such instances of informal conversation made the participants more comfortable; as time went on they seemed to stop filtering their behavior around me (e.g., use of curse words, gossip, side talk).

Despite many commonalities with my participants, there were several areas where I was an outsider. I speak Spanish and am half Puerto Rican; yet, this background does not guarantee that I will be able to relate to the families simply because I identify as "Latina." In other words, Latinas are a very diverse group; there are differences in dialect, food, and in many of our traditions. To assume that all Latinas are one entity is unrealistic and patronizing.

Moreover, I wish to approach culture as fluid, not as static and fixed. Therefore, I viewed

my participants as being a part of many cultural practices and I did not expect all of them to engage in particular behavior or routines simply because they are Latin@s.

To that end, I made an effort to be transparent with my participants about my personal background—(e.g., the experiences of being half Anglo and half Puerto Rico descent) and how this has helped me not think of my identity as neatly fitting in a box that can be checked off. I was also transparent about my educational background and professional aspirations. This honesty gave my participants an opportunity to be open about their own experiences in the educational system as well as personal difficulties and triumphs (e.g., border crossing, finding employment, their love lives). Ultimately, my honesty garnered the participants' trust and respect and I was able to establish more of a connection with them. This trust extended to other family members. The four mothers in my study openly told their husbands, older children, and extended family members about my background. Consequently, these individuals seemed more at ease in engaging in everyday practices and sharing information about themselves. Even in public spaces (e.g., grocery stores) when I was observing and writing information in my notebook—the mothers informed employees that they knew well that I was a student conducting a study—and that they could be themselves around me.

Lastly, it often took a while to gain children's trust—especially as a visitor in their classrooms and home. I made an effort to engage in informal conversation with the kids in this study. I asked them how their day went at school, what cartoons they enjoyed, their favorite toys, etc. The children slowly warmed up to me and eventually initiated communication.

Data Reduction and Analysis

Data analysis.

I had a very large corpus of information (field notes, ethnographic interviews, documents, and 200 hours worth of video) collected over ten-months in various contexts. In order to analyze such a sizeable amount of information, I decided to categorize and interpret it in several ways. Because I approach literacy from a sociocultural lens—that is, what people do with literacy—Farr's (1994) categorization of family literacy domains (i.e., religious, commercial, state or legal, educational, and family or recreational) among Mexicans in Chicago was particularly helpful. Orellana et al.'s (2003) study of various Mexican families in the Chicago metropolitan area expanded on Farr's domains to include religious, commercial, state or legal, educational, family or recreational, community, financial, and medical. I used Orellana et al.'s extension of Farr's model for my own categorizations. Please see chapter 5 (Tables 5.1 through 5.4) for examples of the ways in which I organized each family's out-of-school literacy practices using these domains. This initial framework allowed me to see the functional and social uses of each families' out-of-school literacy practices and how they compared with Farr and Orellana's families in Chicago.

In order to answer my research questions concerning the movement of multimodal literacy practices across contexts, I needed another way to organize my data, one which would highlight how families employed visual, online, print, media and oral literacies. A starting point was to simply create tables of each family's literacy practices divided into ten categories (i.e., inschool as well as out-of school print, visual, media, online, and oral literacies). I created an exhaustive list of examples of each family's multimodal literacy activities under each of these ten categories. For example, out-of school online literacy activities, for one family could be looking for recipes, emailing family, looking for information that could help mothers with their

ESL homework, going on Facebook.

The most unique part of this study was that it examined the movement of literacy practices across contexts. I needed an analytical tool that would help me examine the continuities and discontinuities of literacy practices as they moved across contexts, individuals, and/or groups. Gallimore and Goldenberg's (1993) analytical framework, activity-setting analyses, which they used in their study of low-income Mexican and Central American immigrant families in Los Angeles was particularly helpful because it aided me in painting a richer picture of who, what, where, when, why, and how families engage in particular literacy activities across contexts. Gallimore and Goldenberg's five activity settings dimensions are 1) how specific literacy practices are shaped by the nature of participants' relationships; 2) their cultural beliefs; 3) the task operations and demands—that is the activity itself, plus the necessary tools used to accomplish the task; 4) scripts of conduct (i.e., the forms of participation); and 5) the purposes or goals that participants bring to the situation (Gallimore and Goldenberg, 1993).

Activity settings dimensions helped me look at key literacy practices and then at any literacy activity or event⁷ that represented that practice. A literacy practice, for instance, would be reading to children but a literacy activity would be a mother with her two-year old and her six-year old looking on in a book in English that comes from school, as well as their purpose for doing homework versus the same activity with a different purpose and different participants. Even a small change in one of the five activity settings dimensions can make it a different activity. It is important to note that activity settings analysis, despite being a helpful analytical tool, is imperfect, like all other analytical tools. Because it is impossible to capture all literacy activities and represent them as they exactly occurred or how participants interpreted them,

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⁷ In this paper, literacy activity and literacy event are used interchangeably since I draw from Barton and Hamilton's (2000) definition of a literacy event as any activity in which literacy has a role.

activity settings analysis should be thought of as a tool that facilitates analysis but requires the ethnographer's broader lens.

The next three findings chapters include numerous tables and analyses that utilize activity settings to reveal how these five factors—particularly cultural beliefs and purposes or goals—played a major role in the ways that families actively took up literacy practices across contexts (and the continuities and discontinuities that arose from this movement).

CHAPTER 4

Overview: Movement of In-School to Out-of-School Literacy Practices

Schools expect a 'standard' family, a family whose 'blueprints for living' are based on particular notions of achievement. They have little understanding about other ways of looking at the world and about other definitions of success. In order to understand how school failure comes to be constructed in the United States for and by newly arrived groups, one must have an understanding of the worlds from which these individuals come (Valdés, 1996, p. 5).

Guadalupe Valdés' groundbreaking ethnography, Con Respeto, was published nearly a decade ago. Valdés observed ten working-class, Mexican immigrant families living in a semirural area near the U.S.-Mexican border, to gain insight into their ideologies around schooling and the ways in which they engaged in educational practices across contexts. One of her findings was that family intervention programs were "designed to address key shortcomings or 'deficits' in students in order to assist them in succeeding in the school environment" (pp. 30-31). Sadly, almost twenty years following Con Respeto's publication, immigrant families continue to be viewed in a manner in which their value is linked to their adeptness and speed at assimilating mainstream notions of success. Most importantly, schools and researchers fail to acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the ways in which human beings interpret and apply what we are taught or our individual definitions of success. We each see the world through different lenses based on a multitude of factors—such as our values and goals, emotional wellbeing, routines, resources, and the people who surround us. In order to take these factors into account, it is imperative for educational research to hone in on the *movement* that takes place when individuals engage in learning. Value must be placed on both out-of-school and in-school learning practices. This chapter builds on Valdés' work by highlighting the ways in which families take up what they learn in a school context, particularly *literacy practices*, and what that looks like when they adapt it to out-of-school settings.

In order to answer my first research question—What school-based literacy practices—or aspects of them— do mothers take up in out-of-school contexts—we begin by asking: What school-based practices were taught at Nuestra Comunidad and why? The first section of this chapter will therefore a) provide background on the teachers who taught mothers in the Nuestra Comunidad program, b) describe their ideologies around language and literacy, c) discuss how those ideologies intersected with expectations and requirements connected to funding and grants, and d) illustrate the types of literacy practices that the teachers employed in their classrooms.

Next, I will show which of these literacy practices mothers took up in out-of-school contexts and examine the continuities and discontinuities that were evident in the take up of literacy practices across contexts due to factors such as the types of participants involved and how their cultural values, task operation and demands, forms of participation, and purposes and goals came into play (see Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993).

Harriet: Nuestra Comunidad's Beginner ESL Instructor

To gain a better awareness of the literacy practices mothers were exposed to at Nuestra Comunidad—my observations focused on the learning and interactions that took place in different teachers' classrooms where literacy was a central component. Specifically, I conducted my study in Harriet's beginner English as a Second Language (ESL) class and in Jamie's family literacy classroom. My participants all attended the beginner ESL course that was taught by Harriet from Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. After having taught ESL for over thirty years at an adult center housed at the local city college, at the time of the study, Harriet had been an ESL instructor at Nuestra Comunidad for three years. She was also the cofounder of an ESL literacy council that had been up and running for 15 years. The organization assigned volunteer groups to different locations (e.g., elementary schools, libraries) where they

taught adults to read. Harriet had a master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language

(TESL). She was originally from New Jersey and about 65 years old. She described herself as

middle class, married, and had no children. At the time of the study, Harriet was battling cancer.

During the time of my study, Harriet did not miss any of her classes—even while undergoing

radiation therapy. During interviews, she discussed the love she had for her job and how

connecting with the mothers was a source of healing during her cancer treatment.

Harriet had taken some beginner Spanish classes in her youth but stated that she could

not comfortably communicate with the mothers in their home language. According to Harriet,

her Spanish language skills did not negatively impact her ESL class because "Spanish should be

limited; mothers are here to learn English. Sometimes it's necessary to use the native language to

have students understand and to get clear communication across but it should be minimal."

These stated ideologies regarding Spanish language use were also reflected in my observations

during her ESL teaching. The following vignette reveals how Harriet addressed the use of

Spanish in her classroom:

Description. At the beginning of class, Harriet's goal is to introduce the vocabulary

words rarely, usually, and never to her beginner ESL class.

Transcript. Harriet: (to Yolanda)- Anna rarely sees her mother. What does rarely

mean?

Yolanda: ¿Realidad⁸?

Harriet: (not acknowledging her response in Spanish)- Never? Once a year? So does she see her

mother sometimes? Fifty percent of the time?

Yolanda: Fifty.

Harriet: No. Rarely means almost never.

⁸ Realidad means reality in Spanish.

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Yolanda leaves classroom for about twenty-five minutes.

Harriet: Rosa- when you take your son to the park, what does he *usually* like to do?

Rosa: ¿Cómo se dice columpio⁹? Another mom tries to help her.

Harriet: Let her do it herself. Eventually, Harriet skips Rosa and doesn't give her time to come up with a sentence on her own.

Harriet's vocabulary lesson reveals certain tensions regarding the use of Spanish in her classroom. When asked what *rarely* means, Yolanda problem solves to come up with a word in Spanish (*realidad*). It is unclear whether Harriet's sparse knowledge of Spanish or her belief that an ESL teacher's duty should be to maintain a strict model of English language immersion was responsible for overlooking Yolanda's response. Regardless of the motive, Yolanda was not entirely discouraged and attempted to answer Harriet's second question (i.e., Does rarely mean never, once a year, sometimes, fifty percent of the time). When Harriet responded to Yolanda's *second* answer with a "no" and did not explain why, Yolanda left the room.

It is difficult to know whether or not Yolanda's departure was circumstantial or related to the way Harriet responded to her feedback. Regardless, the scenario brings up the question: How would have incorporating students' responses in Spanish led to a more authentic and deeper learning experience in Harriet's classroom? For instance, a discussion of cognates and false cognates could have emerged from Yolanda's response. This was a potentially teachable moment that students could have applied and utilized in many aspects of their lives. In fact, it is a skill that many mothers were observed employing in out-of-school contexts.

In the second example, when Harriet asked Rosa what her daughter usually likes to do at the park, she was expected to answer in a complete sentence in English and use the word *usually*. In that classroom, Rosa's background was not taken into consideration. At the time of the study,

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⁹ Rosa asked in Spanish, "How do you say *swing*?"

she had only lived in the United States for four years, her husband worked 18-hour days; her only interaction with others was at the market, laundry mat, and with her three-year old daughter at home. These were environments in which everyone spoke her native language. Rosa wanted to learn English literacy skills—that is the very reason she had enrolled in the Nuestra Comunidad program. However, Rosa shared that she felt the only way she could answer the question presented to her in English was to first problem solve in Spanish. She still attempted to answer Harriet's question with the help of other mothers because it was part of the vocabulary that she would be tested on in class—even with her limited exposure to English. Armed with the assistance of other mothers and provided with the flexibility to use her first language to aid with language production in her second language, Rosa's affective filter, (i.e., a mental block, caused by affective factors) would have been lowered (Krashen, 1985, p. 100). In other words, Rosa would have received comprehensible input and most likely have been able to produce comprehensible output. Yet, in Harriet's class an answer had to be given in English. Mothers were discouraged from helping one another in their native language (i.e., statements such as, "Let her do it herself" were constantly heard). Rather, mothers were expected to figure out problems in a language they did not know but were trying to learn on their own. Over the course of this ten-month study, I recorded Harriet telling students phrases such as, "No Spanish", "English only", English, please," "English, English, English" approximately 750 times. These admonitions made clear the importance of English-only but may have not helped the students learn the English they were there to learn. Harriet had the best of intentions—she had been trained to immerse her students in the English language and felt this would help them adjust to their new lives in the United States—where Standard U.S. English was valued. She felt that not learning English and depending on Spanish would place the mothers at an economic and social

disadvantage.

There was also disparity between how Harriet viewed her teaching practice and the actual teaching that I observed. When asked to describe what distinguished her class from other ESL classes, Harriet shared:

My classroom is flexible. I like to have structure but I also see communication as an important part of language that they need to learn. My class is listed as a lecture but I see it as a participatory space where students work with one other. I model and then let students practice and experiment with language skills. I give them the opportunity for small group work. I present information but students practice using it.

However, dialogue during Harriet's class mostly followed a pattern similar to this example:

Harriet: Are the calculators on the table? No, they are not.

Mothers: (in unison) No, they are not.

Harriet: Are the rulers on the table? Yes, they are.

Mothers: (repeat in unison)- Yes, they are.

Harriet: Make sure everyone repeats the question and repeats the answer.

Mothers: Make sure everyone repeats the question and repeats the answer.

This short dialogue illustrates the emphasis on repetition and teacher-led activities that characterized the ESL lessons. Students were often expected to parrot phrases and vocabulary. They did not have a lot of small group time because a majority of class was spent with Harriet introducing a concept in the workbook unit, students repeating what she said, and then being expected to fill out the answers on their own. She came around to assist them while they answered their workbook questions—often providing answers without accompanying explanations. Although Harriet had a good self-awareness of her ability to model certain vocabulary and grammar concepts—was there really enough time for students to ask questions and "experiment with language" given the amount of repetition that took place during class?

Regarding her students' experiences beyond the classroom, Harriet acknowledged the importance of language experimentation and oral communication in mothers' out-of-school lives. She stated that she wanted mothers to be able to ask and answer questions based on what they were being asked in different settings, and acknowledged the primacy of their oral needs since based on surveys conducted by Nuestra Comunidad, out-of-school, mothers engaged in oral communication 75 percent of the time; whereas, their reading and writing was limited. Harriet assumed that "Most [of] [the] [mothers] wouldn't write essays unless they later went on to take high school classes; at most, maybe they will get to a paragraph." Although her goals for students' writing in her beginner ESL class varied by their oral language level and familiarity with print literacy skills—how might her long-term expectations for these students (i.e., writing a paragraph) affect her pedagogical practice? When asked to define literacy, Harriet posited that is was "the ability to read, write, speak and compute." Her literacy goal for mothers who knew how to read and write was to help them with phonetic skills. With those who were non-literate, Harriet had the mothers hear and say words; she eventually helped them read and write them. Nonetheless, Harriet revealed that she "preferred a phonetic approach (Interview 6/9/12)." Harriet placed greater value on print-based literacy.

Her focus on print-based literacy was further highlighted when asked, "What are the most important literacy skills mothers should know?" Harriet emphasized that the mothers in the program should have a strong command of *functional literacy*—such as the capacity to read, understand, and fill out basic forms (i.e., writing their first and last name, address, etc). It is important to note that Harriet asked me to clarify *which* kinds of mothers I was referring to in my question—"mothers, in general, or the mothers enrolled in the Nuestra Comunidad program." Therefore, she differentiated what literacy would mean for Latina immigrant mothers versus

mothers already indoctrinated in American school-based literacy practices. What would Harriet's answer have been if Nuestra Comunidad participants were more assimilated into mainstream literacy practices or if their race or class were different? How do these preconceptions affect teachers' goals and expectations of their literacy skills, abilities, and practices?

The privileging of print-based literacy extended to Harriet's beliefs regarding *family literacy*. In one of our interviews (6/8/2012), I asked what she thought were the most important literacy skills that mothers should transfer to their kids, and she responded, "Being able to recognize letter-sound relationships, helping children write their names, and reading to kids so they get to enjoy being read to in a variety of forms." How might her classroom practice be strengthened by utilizing a multimodal approach to literacy? For instance, how could mothers' intricate use of media, online technology, and visual literacies, which they employed in out-of-school settings, contribute to authentic exchanges of language, literacy, and knowledge in Harriet's ESL classroom?

When asked to define literacy and discuss its role in the mothers' lives, Harriet immediately drew on Cummins' (2000) idea of language transference, "I think part of literacy in a second language depends on literacy ability in their first language because most literacy skills transfer." In practice, it was not apparent that Harriet's teaching drew on those skills. For instance, mothers' rich knowledge of cognates was not incorporated into her lessons because she focused on establishing an environment of complete English immersion. Although Harriet's intention was to help mothers learn English by providing them with as much English as possible in her ESL classroom, her approach seemed constraining. In another interview, Harriet stated that mothers should develop their children's love of literacy by reading to them "in Spanish or English, it does not matter"—yet she maintained a separation of these languages in her

classroom because her view of an effective ESL classroom was one in which language use should not be mixed (Interview, 6/9/12). Her ideology towards language and literacy sometimes conflicted with her pedagogical practices because despite her good intentions and hard work—widespread, yet somewhat dated notions regarding effective language teaching and learning, guided her teaching practices.

Funding and grants played a major role in the types of literacy practices and evaluations that took place in Nuestra Comunidad classrooms. Nuestra Comunidad had primarily received funding for the past couple of decades through private donors and foundations but the organization began tapping into federal and state funding (i.e., LAUP, Early Head Start, Head Start, Even Start, First 5 LA) a few years before this study. Each of these funders had similar definitions of literacy and how to effectively implement a family literacy program, i.e., there was an emphasis on the development of school-based literacy practices—such as phonemic awareness in the English language, mothers' engagement with their children while reading books aloud, and modeling prescriptive literacy strategies. The funders also wanted to ascertain that mothers and their children had a certain number of books in their homes. It was quite apparent that the funders' ideologies around literacy were embodied in the types of assessments and surveys that mothers and their children had to complete at Nuestra Comunidad. For example, part of the requirements that Even Start set forth in distributing funding was that mothers take the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) exam. CASAS is a test in English that measures a broad range of adult literacy skills and their application in domains including consumer economics, government and law, occupational knowledge, community resources, and health. The level of difficulty was based on performance; in other words, if you got one question right, a harder question would follow. For instance, the first question would have a picture of a

bathtub and students would have to pick if it was a: a) desk, b) sofa, c) bathtub, or d) floor. If they picked the correct answer, the next question would show the number 4:00. Students were expected to identify is 4:00 stood for a) four cents, b) forty, c) four hundred, or d) four o'clock. If answered correctly, the third question would be more difficult, and so forth. At Nuestra Comunidad, mothers who tested at lower levels were evaluated on their ability to name objects in English based on pictures. More advanced students had to read a passage and answer reading response questions. There was pressure for mothers to show improvement over the course of the year on this bi-yearly evaluation because their performance was directly linked to Even Start funding. Undoubtedly, teachers may also have responded to this test pressure by instructing in ways that privileged memorization and repetition.

Jamie: Nuestra Comunidad's Family Literacy Coach

Jamie, the family literacy coach had been an early childhood teacher for 14 years before she worked at Nuestra Comunidad for about 10 years as an administrator. During the time of the study, she was teaching family literacy as well as overseeing the early childhood education program. Jamie also had experience working with bilingual and dual language learners, teaching at UCLA extension in the early childhood education department, and training early childhood teachers in workshops across the state. She was born in Iowa, moved to Pennsylvania at the age of 12, and relocated to Los Angeles when she was 13 years old. At the time of the study, Jamie was in her mid forties. Her husband was Chicano and she had two college-aged children. She also described herself as middle class.

Jamie began learning Spanish in 1996; she took classes, practiced, and began using it as a preschool teacher. According to interviews, Jamie was inspired to learn Spanish well because she wanted to communicate with parents in order to strengthen their relationships. She also wished

"to get to know the perspectives of her students without a translator, avoid less than deeper conversations, and hear their voices in their own language (Interview, 06/19/2012)." Jamie shared that once she learned Spanish it was exciting to actually understand what her students were saying. She made it a point to view language as an exchange process—when she did not know a word in Spanish, her students would help her problem-solve. Conversely, when her students did not know words in English, Jamie would help them problem-solve. Ofelia Garcia's concept of the emergent bilingual comes into play in the environment Jamie set up in her classroom (Garcia, 2011). Jamie viewed herself and her students as being on a level playing field—they were *all* emergent bilinguals.

Jamie's ideology around family literacy was more nuanced. She ideally wanted to integrate mothers' first language, personal stories, immigration experiences, and out-of-school activities and interests into the family literacy curriculum. In fact, she often utilized mothers who had been in the program for a year or more to model what they did at home for the other mothers. She emphasized to parents that reading in out-of-school contexts in their home language was preferable because their comfort in Spanish would make reading a more enjoyable experience for their children. At the end of the school year, Jamie utilized a ten-week literacy curriculum with new mothers called the Latino Family Literacy Project (LFLP), which was started by author Katie Del Monte. LFLP was created because Del Monte noted the lack of adequate family literacy resources and/or curriculum specific to the Latino community. She believed that Latin@ parents would greatly benefit from exposure to and access to bilingual books, and in particular to children's books where they saw themselves and their culture being represented. LFLP incorporates a large array of bilingual literature into a family literacy curriculum. In a reflective essay, Jamie shared:

Over the years [the] [Latino] [Family] [Literacy] [Project] has become a valuable resource to our program... Each parent creates [her] own family book. Parents become *authors* and *illustrators* of their own family story to document their life history, family experiences, hopes and dreams, all of which they then share with their children at home. ... Using their creative skills, parents use colored card stock, paper, gel pens, markers, photographs and other materials to generate their own unique book that tells their family's story... They work on the pages of their family book using photos and writings... They share their favorite pages—including a family tree, poems, stories, songs, traditions, etc.

...I begin each class by having parents write in a journal about a topic related to the books they will read in the class. Some parents have lived here long enough to create roots but others have only recently arrived, and are still coming to grips with the ramifications of leaving family and friends behind, altering their way of life, removed from cultural, familial practices... In sharing their personal journeys in class some begin to cope with trauma and emotional upheaval that all the changes in their lives have put them through. It provides them an opportunity to gain an understanding of their experience emigrating from one country to another and of the acculturation process. More and more I see this course as a bridge between cultures, helping our parents and their families as they transition from one life to a new one...under a new sun. It is an empowering curriculum.

In contrast to the ESL classroom—where mothers' cultural and linguistic practices were not weaved into the curriculum, Jamie's reflection demonstrates her firm belief that in order to foster authentic literacy practices, it is imperative to provide parents with *bridges* between contexts and environments. Jamie espoused and enjoyed implementing the LFLP curriculum because it provided a space for parents to use their creative skills to showcase their personal experiences. According to Jamie, the family tree scrapbooks were a means for parents to engage in oral storytelling and print literacy with their young children.

Jamie also noted that the acculturation process was messy and that many families were learning how to navigate their way in this country. She was very conscious of the cultural continuity and change that the Latino immigrant families experienced, especially in the first few years in the United States. Other revealing ideas about literacy, experience, and voice were sprinkled throughout her reflective essay:

[LFLP] help[s] parents establish a regular reading routine at home and to instill of love of literacy. It helps parents connect to books in a meaningful way and acts as a jumping off point to create authentic literacy practices in the home. But more than that it has become a vehicle through which our families experience a strong and deep connection to literature that speaks to them. It gives Latino parents the ability and self-esteem to take difficult first steps to establish their own "voice" based on the experiences and learning they have obtained from the culture they come from.

This statement demonstrates several of Jamie's assumptions regarding Latino immigrant families' literacy practices. In her view, the LFLP curriculum will help parents *establish* a regular reading routine at home and *instill* a love of literacy in families' homes. Moreover, according to Jamie, LFLP *gives* Latin@ parents "the ability and self-esteem to take difficult *first steps* to establish their own 'voice' based on the experiences and learning they have obtained from the culture they come from." By electing to use the words establish, instill, and gives—Jamie exposes a belief that the Latino immigrant parents in her program do not initiate and maintain regular reading practices at home and that they do not possess a love of literacy. She believes that a curriculum that connects to their culture has the power to change parents' practices and perspectives.

How could a ten-week curriculum have such profound effects on mothers' ideologies towards literacy? Most importantly, Jamie's statement shows a privileging of print-based literacy and the presupposition that parents need assistance in making their perspectives, opinions, and experiences heard in literacy-based contexts. Based on my interviews and observations, families engaged in a plethora of multimodal literacy practices prior to being exposed to the LFLP curriculum that demonstrated a love of literacy. For instance, mothers engaged in elaborate arts and crafts projects related to oral histories they recounted with their children. They discussed characters, plot, and had their kids make predictions when they watched movies or television. Mothers and children looked up directions, translations, and information needed for their

everyday lives on their Smartphones. Jamie's statement overlooks the importance of the multimodal and *authentic* literacy practices families employed in out-of-school contexts. Rather than framing families as needing a "jumping-off point", perhaps Jamie could thoroughly investigate and integrate families' extant literacy practices to a greater degree. It is also true that the parents themselves, if asked about reading at home, also understood the question to be limited to print matter.

Many researchers in the fields of linguistics think of language as a continuum (see for example, Garcia, 2011; Orellana et al. 2012); that is, the ways in which we view and use language change throughout our lifetimes. When we are six years old, our language production is quite distinct from when we are teenagers. When we are middle-aged, the manner in which we speak shifts again. Moreover, during each of these life stages, our speech is context-embedded and socially situated. Such a framework is beneficial when analyzing literacy practices. The ways in which we engage with literacy—when thought of as multimodal practices—are both continuous and discontinuous. For instance, stories we are drawn to and recount shift (based on factors such as age, the context and audience that surround us). The information we look up online and the books we elect to read also changes (even though we often go back and re-read previous ones). Thus, the "jumping-off" point in our literacy development is when we start using and interpreting language—it is not when we start formal schooling. Literacy is comprised of oral, print, visual, media, and online practices. To credit a curriculum as having the power to establish families' literacy practices and instill a love of literacy fails to acknowledge the wide array of literacy practices they engage in throughout their lives and the emotions they attach to them.

Jamie also communicated to me in our interviews that she felt it was imperative to pass

on school-based literacy practices to marginalized populations. In other words, she thought it was a disservice to *not* expose Latino immigrant families to the literacy practices that they would encounter in the U.S. schooling system (e.g., asking open-ended questions, developing phonemic awareness in English). In some ways, Jamie's ideologies in passing on these school-based practices to immigrant Latino families through her teaching practice reflected her desire to help prepare Latino families for the demands of U.S. classrooms, but in others they reified and reinforced the mainstream school-based literacy practices that were privileged by the organization's funders (i.e., Even Start, First 5 LA, LAUP). Nuestra Comunidad was under pressure to meet certain requirements—in the form of both curriculum and evaluations—in order to qualify for funding. For example, both the funders' and Jamie's ideologies overlapped in regards to "proper" literacy practices, which they viewed as linked to the number of books families had in their homes. Head Start and Even Start required mothers to fill out surveys at the beginning and at the end of the year, which included a question regarding the number of books they kept at home and number of library visits (see Appendix B). Jamie had a generally positive reaction to the required surveys that mothers had to fill out. She shared, "I like how they ask about number of books and their frequency of reading. I don't like the checklist as much as conducting interviews because you get more of a holistic view of their literacy practices." Although Jamie knew that checklists could not capture the full range of families' out-of-school literacy practices, she still subscribed to mainstream literacy ideologies that funders enforced through their surveys and evaluations. She explicitly taught mothers how to access "high quality" books on a regular basis during family literacy class. She did this by helping them create libraries at home, through weekly book prizes and checking out books from the Nuestra Comunidad or public library.

Jamie, like the funders, believed that children should be read aloud to regularly. For instance, when the family literacy class met, every Friday, mothers would walk in and fill out reading logs (for example, see Appendix C), which were posted on the whiteboard for everyone to see. In order to receive a weekly prize that was connected to literacy (e.g., free children's books, construction paper, crayons, markers, music CDs, books on tape), mothers were required to fill in how many hours they read to their kids that week. Another way that Jamie tried to meet the funders' requirements of read alouds is that she tried to develop the mothers' self images as readers. In one of our initial interviews, Jamie shared, "Early literacy research says that kids need certain behaviors and a knowledge base to develop their own interest and identity as readers. If parents see themselves as literate readers, they're more likely to do it frequently and well" (Interview, September 3, 2011). Furthermore, the funders and Jamie both felt that it was imperative for children to be exposed to and taught school-based literacy strategies before kindergarten. Jamie modeled some specific school-based literacy practices related to reading fictional texts. These practices included how to select books thoughtfully and intentionally, establish a reading routine and offer repeated book reading experiences to their children, how to "properly" hold a book, read children the title and author of the book, ask both recall and openended questions, help children make connections between books, to their own lives, and to the world around them, and lastly how to raise and lower their voices to engage children's interest while reading.

Jamie also taught mothers school-based reading strategies to use while reading non-fiction text. For example, mothers were instructed in how to ask specific questions about illustrations that would pique their child's interest (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how questions), naming objects, and making text-to-text, text-to self, and text-to-world connections.

At times, Jamie would divide mothers into small groups to read an assigned section of a children's newspaper (e.g., Scholastic® magazine) and develop an activity to reinforce the learning contained in the text. Some sample topics in the magazine were identifying names of colors, animals, and days of the week. Each group of mothers then made a short presentation in which they "taught" the activity to the rest of the class. Although Jamie attempted to incorporate the mothers' cultural practices (such as nursery rhymes, riddles, and songs from their home countries) into her fiction and non-fiction literacy lessons, the majority of class time was spent on modeling and guided practice of how to implement school-based reading strategies.

School-Based Literacy Practice of Reading Aloud in Out-of-School Contexts

There were a plethora of school-based literacy practices that mothers engaged in out-of-school settings (e.g., singing nursery rhymes, practicing letter-sound recognition, helping kids write out their names, building home libraries, playing vocabulary word games, asking openended questions during book sharing, listening to educational songs on CDs (e.g., José Luis Orozco), and reading aloud to children. However, the specific ways in which they took up school-based practices varied from mother to mother *and* across contexts. Both continuities and discontinuities were evident. For instance, Nuestra Comunidad stressed the belief that reading aloud to young children promoted school readiness, incited children's interest in print literacy, and fostered academic success. The family literacy coordinator modeled how to read to children in a way that modeled what they would encounter in elementary school classrooms. The manner in which my participants took up teaching these school-based literary conventions (e.g., plot, settings, differentiating characters) and literacy strategies (e.g., predicting, questioning) was *both* similar and distinct across households and settings. Activity settings analysis helped me disentangle such continuities and discontinuities by comparing and contrasting *who participates*

in the literacy activity of out-of-school reading aloud to children and to what capacity; the *cultural*¹⁰ *values* the participants brought to the practice; *the task operations and demands*—that is the activity itself, plus the necessary tools used to accomplish the task; the *forms of participation*; and the *purposes or goals* that participants bring to the situation.

Table 4.1 displays the similarities and differences evident in Elena and Beatriz's households around the take-up of the school-based practice of reading aloud to one's children. Table 4.2 will then compare and contrast Rosa and Yolanda's take up of reading aloud to their children in out-of-school contexts. I chose to compare two families in one table and the other two in a separate table because the mothers grouped together had more similarities that I wished to unpack with greater depth in my analysis.

Table 4.1

School-Based Practice of Read Alouds When Out of School: Elena and Beatriz

Activity Dimensions

Name of mother

	Elena	Beatriz
Participants	Elena, Diego (2) ^a , Pablo (5)	Beatriz, Nancy (3), Sylvia (18)
Cultural values ^b	a) School-based literacy practices most important preparation; b) Reading parent-led	a) School-based literacy practices good school preparation; other literacy practices as important; b) Reader should be ideal model (Beatriz's house-Sylvia)
Task operation and demands	Book, ability to decode text in English; ask questions in English/Spanish	Book, TV show or movie, ability to decode text in English; ask questions in English/Spanish
Forms of participation	Elena sits between her kids on couch, reads library book, acts out plot, raises/lowers voice, models literary conventions/ literacy strategies. If any one of them does not know English word help one another	Beatriz cooks dinner; Sylvia reads with Nancy/act out story. Beatriz calls out to know what English word means; Beatriz asks Nancy questions about plot. All three talk about TV show/connection to the book

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¹⁰ I define culture as a practice rather than as static traits given to ethnic groups. I draw from Gutierrez and Rogoff's definition of cultural practices as "People's varied participation in the practices of dynamic cultural communities can be distinguished from membership in ethnic groups, which often is treated in an all-or-none, static fashion. Individuals participate in varying and overlapping ways that change over their lifetimes and over historical change in a community's organization and relationships with other communities."

	Elena	Beatriz
Purposes/goals ^c	a) Reading helps Elena and sons	a) Sylvia bonds with Nancy; b)
	learn English vocabulary,	Beatriz learns English, Sylvia
	American traditions; b) All can	explains/introduces
	participate/ collaborate at similar	vocabulary/comprehension skills;
	EL level	c) Connects Nancy's love of
		shows with the book

Note. ^aNumbers in parentheses refers to children's ages.

As seen in Table 4.1, in Elena's household the participants involved in reading aloud were Elena and her two young children in the program. In Beatriz's home—her three-year old, Nancy and her eighteen-year old daughter, Sylvia were the main participants; Beatriz purposefully took on a more background role.

As stated in Table 4.1, I inferred mothers' cultural values around the literacy practice of reading to children in out-of-school contexts from interviews, observations, and informal conversations with them. A cultural value that both mothers shared was that they believed that the school-based practice of reading aloud to their children was an important preparation for elementary school, echoing the explicit message of their family literacy program. In one of our interviews, Elena detailed how Jamie's family literacy class reinforced her belief that reading to one's children was a central component of their literacy development and future academic progress:

La clase de Jamie me enseñó como la lectura y la escritura se desarrollan con el tiempo. He aprendido a involucrar a mi esposo y a proponernos a dedicar mas tiempo leyendo y escribiendo con nuestros hijos porque es la manera principal de asegurar sus éxitos en la escuela.

['Jamie's class taught me how reading and writing develop over time. I have learned how to involve my husband and how we can dedicate more time to reading and writing with our children because it is the main way to assure their success in school'].

Clearly, Elena had embraced Nuestra Comunidad's teachings that parents should spend a concerted amount of time reading and writing with children because it is the *principal* means ("manera principal") of ensuring their academic success. Beatriz held similar sentiments

^{b,c} I inferred participants' cultural values and purposes/goals from observations, interviews, and our informal conversations.

regarding the benefits of reading aloud to young children. Yet, Beatriz thought other forms of interaction around literacy were just as important:

Es muy importante leer con los niños pequeños porque les ayudará en el futuro. Si leo con Nancy mientras está pequeñita, ella puede aprender cosas de antemano que tendrá que saber en la primaria—como aguantar un libro, quien es el autor, y cual es el título de cada libro. Pero hay otras maneras de enseñar la lecto-escritura, por ejemplo, con música. Nancy aprende viendo dibujos, bailando, y cantando. Sí... hay varias otras maneras de aprender la lecto-escritura.

['It is very important to read with small children because it will help them in the future. If I read with Nancy when she is young, she can learn things beforehand that she will need to know for elementary school—how to hold a book, who is the author, and that there is a title for every book. However, there are other ways of teaching reading and writing, for example, through music. Nancy learns by looking at drawings, dancing, and singing. Yes... there are many other ways to learn reading and writing'].

Beatriz's quote elucidates that she clearly acknowledged the importance of adopting the school-based practice of reading aloud to one's young child; yet, she was also quite attuned to her child's interests. Beatriz noted that her daughter was also able to acquire literacy skills through mediums that she enjoyed during her leisure time in out-of-school contexts—such as drawing, dancing, and singing. Beatriz felt that reading aloud was one of numerous ways to foster her child's literacy skills.

Another distinction between these two mothers' beliefs regarding reading aloud to one's children is that Elena thought that parents, particularly the mother, were a child's most important teacher; Beatriz believed that whoever could best model school-based practices in a household—in her case, she believed Sylvia held that role—should be the person to primarily work with young children around literacy.

What was required to complete the task of reading aloud to the children was also similar yet diverged across households. Both mothers used books from the Nuestra Comunidad library and mostly read in English. However, Beatriz played a DVD or television show of the book while it was being read. Sylvia and Nancy usually read *Dora the Explorer*, *Go Diego Go, Handy*

Manny, or Barney because Beatriz knew that it made the characters come to life in another way for Nancy since she loved the television show and was familiar with the characters. Both readers in both households (i.e., Elena and Beatriz's daughter-Sylvia) could decode text in English as well as ask questions in English and Spanish—since Spanish was the children's first language.

The forms of participation in literacy differed in these two homes: every weekday after lunch, Elena called her two sons over to the living room to tell them it was time to read together. She sat on the couch in between Pablo and Diego and read a book *she* chose from the school library; she was the one who asked questions, acted out stories, as well as raised and lowered her voice for dramatic effects. Although there was some collaboration in figuring out vocabulary, particularly with Elena's five-year old son in the program, the activity was primarily driven by Elena. At Beatriz's house, Sylvia seamlessly incorporated her sister into the reading of the book. Beatriz let Nancy choose books from the Nuestra Comunidad library that Nancy was familiar with and voiced interest in reading. During the read alouds, Sylvia and Nancy each took on the role of the characters, while Nancy picture walked (i.e., recounted the plot by only using the illustrations, since she could not read print yet) through the story. While they were involved in this activity, Beatriz called out if she wanted to know what a word meant. Beatriz also participated by asking Nancy questions about the plot of the book. Beatriz, Sylvia, and Nancy all participated in comparing and contrasting the book with the versions shown on DVD or television.

Some goals for participating in the school-based practice of reading aloud with the children were similar across the two households, such as spending quality time with one another and bonding with the young children. Sylvia was busy with high school and this read aloud activity was one of the only occasions when she could spend time with her young sister on a daily

basis. At Elena's house, reading benefited the mother and her two children because all of them learned new English vocabulary by helping one other. Sylvia also assisted her mother and sister in learning new words and concepts in English. Lastly, during the read alouds, Nancy was able to connect her love of certain television shows to books.

Table 4.2 School-Based Practice of Read Alouds When Out of School: Yolanda and Rosa

Activity Dimensions Name of mother

	Yolanda	Rosa
Participants	Yolanda, José (2) ^a	Rosa, Marcia (3)
Cultural values	a) Young children's interest in reading is naturally developed; b) Reading should be	a) Young children's interest in reading is naturally developed; b)
	initiated and employed by child	Reading every day is important for
		academic development; b) Reading initiated by child but adult-led
Task operation	Book in Spanish; José and Yolanda ask	Book in English; Rosa asks questions
and demands	questions in English and Spanish	in Spanish
Forms of participation	José grabs books stacked next to TV. Then drags small plastic chair into kitchen where mom preps lunch. Announces, "¡Ven!¹¹;" so he can "read" to her. Does picture walk of book(s). She asks him questions about characters, colors, favorite parts.	Marcia pulls book out while watching TV; Rosa asks her if she wants to read it together and casually asks questions about book's plot, illustrations, connections to own life.
Purposes/goals	a) José initiating reading helps foster <i>authentic</i> interest in the activity; b) Yolanda enjoys engaging in natural conversation with her son around the topics of the books.	a) Rosa is able to practice English reading skills; b) Rosa believes reading aloud to her daughter everyday will ensure her academic success by increasing vocabulary and communication skills.

Note. aNumbers in parentheses refers to children's ages.

As seen in Table 4.2, in Yolanda's household, the participants involved in reading aloud were Yolanda and her two-year old son, José. In Rosa's home, she and her three-year old daughter, Marcia were the principal participants. As with the participants highlighted in Table 4.1, I inferred Yolanda and Rosa's cultural values around the literacy practice of reading to children in out-of-school contexts from interviews, observations, and informal conversations with them.

Rosa and Yolanda both shared values that differed from those of their classmates, when it

¹¹ Ven is the Spanish word for "come here."

came to reading aloud to their children. While Beatriz and Elena felt that reading should be initiated and employed by older individuals (i.e. in Elena's household she led reading; in Beatriz's home, Sylvia read to Nancy), Yolanda and Rosa both contended that *children* should initiate reading because it led to a more authentic interest in literacy. They shared the view that children should initiate read alouds because interest in literacy is something that develops naturally rather than something that can be coerced or artificially constructed by adults. However, Rosa and Yolanda differed in their views as to who should take the lead in reading activities once their child initiated the time for read alouds. Rosa felt that it was important to make the actual practice of reading aloud and asking questions about the book more adult-led. She agreed with Nuestra Comunidad's philosophy that parents are a child's first teacher and therefore should model school-based literacy practices. In one of our interviews, Rosa revealed:

En la clase de Jamie, he aprendido como leer a mi hija—nosotros somos nuestros hijos primer maestros. Antes de llegar a Nuestra Comunidad, sólo llevaba a Marcia al parque pero no le leía libros. Ahora le leo, hablo con ella, y le hago preguntas del libro.

['In Jamie's class, I have learned to read with my daughter—we are our children's first teachers. Before arriving to Nuestra Comunidad, I only used to take Marcia to the park but I did not read her books. Now I read to her, I ask her questions about the book'].

Thus, Rosa had adopted Nuestra Comunidad's view that adults, particularly parents, play a major role in the development of children's literacy skills by actively executing read alouds.

Yolanda painted a different picture of her out-of-school read aloud activities:

Cuando he tratado de iniciar la lectura con José, se sienta por diez minutos. Por más de eso, no se queda quieto. Pero cuando a José le interesa a leer, él agarra el libro, mira los dibujos, mira los colores, y se anima. Es porque *él* quiere leer—especialmente *Tomás el tren*.

['When I have tried to initiate reading with José, he sits for about ten minutes. For more time than that, he cannot sit still. But when José is interested in reading, he grabs the book, looks at the drawings, looks at the colors, and he is encouraged. It is because *he* wants to read—especially *Thomas the Train*'].

This mother gives José the space to initiate and employ his own read aloud routine because she knows that trying to force her active two-year old son to engage in prescriptive reading time frames was unrealistic. By having the freedom to pick his own books, lead picture walks, and explain them to his mother— José was actually able to engage in literacy activities for longer than a coerced ten minutes.

What was required to complete the task of reading aloud to the children was also similar yet diverged across households. Both mothers, like Elena and Beatriz, used books from the Nuestra Comunidad library. Rosa could not afford to buy books and she did not go to the public library with Marcia because she said that the school already took her daughter there twice a week. Yolanda intermittently bought books for José and took him to the public library once every couple of months. Thus, both mothers relied on the school library as their primary source of books for read alouds at home. Rosa mostly read Marcia books that her daughter picked out, which were mostly in English. José always picked his own books and they were mostly in Spanish.

Regarding the forms of participation, José knew that when he wanted to read, he could easily access books next to the television set. He would grab one or two books and drag a small plastic chair into the kitchen while Yolanda prepared lunch for them. The two-year old called out "¡Ven!" (i.e., Come here), so that she would sit next to him in one of the dining room chairs. He would open the book and said, "¡Mira!" (i.e., "Look!"), to "read" to her. José pointed out the names of the characters and/or objects in the book and their basic actions (e.g., "Mira carro rápido¹²"). Yolanda asked José questions in English and Spanish about the books' characters, colors, and his favorite parts. At times, she replicated and/or modified certain strategies drawn from the Nuestra Comunidad family literacy class (e.g., text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world

¹² In Spanish, this translates to: "Look! Fast car!"

connections, recall questions). For instance, Yolanda highlighted parts of the book that she could personally identify with (e.g., the main character in a bilingual book written by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman called, *Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita habla dos veces*—a story of a young girl at the crossroads of the English and Spanish-speaking worlds). José thoroughly enjoyed when his mother related to the characters in the books they read together because she was his closest companion and he was truly interested in listening to her stories and experiences.

Yolanda felt that it was important for read aloud time to feel like a conversation. If certain questions would not flow with the questions or insights that *José* initiated, then Yolanda would save those for another time. For instance, one of the strategies learned at Nuestra Comunidad was to make text-to-self connections with literature. Ideally, Nuestra Comunidad, proposed that students should be exposed to basic recall *and* higher level learning questions with each reading session. Some mothers, such as Elena, ensured that every read aloud followed Nuestra Comunidad's recommendation of asking varied questions. Although Yolanda had learned a plethora of school-based read aloud strategies, which I observed her employ throughout the ten-month study, she determined *which ones* to apply *when*. Yolanda's main goal was for José to authentically be interested in reading and that he initiate and set the tone for their read aloud time together. This mother shared in our interviews that she acknowledged that José was only two-years old and that it was unrealistic for her to force him to sit still and read a book that she selected on her own. Rather, Yolanda gave José the opportunity to pick what they would read, as well as where, when, and for how long.

Some forms of participation that were evident in Rosa's out-of-school read aloud activities were similar to those seen in Yolanda's household. Rosa also left children's books out next to the television where Marcia, her daughter, could easily grab them. Marcia would come

home from school and turn the television on to watch Dora the Explorer or Handy Manny. While watching, Marcia would grab a book and look at it during commercials. Rosa would sit next to her and if she wanted to read it together. However, at this point, while the television was still on, Rosa generally read the book aloud and casually initiated questions about the book's plot and illustrations, as well as how it connected to their lives¹³. Although the books were picked out by Marcia and were of interest to her because they centered on topics such as animals and television shows, Rosa took the lead in the actual reading and discussion of the book. Rosa's read-alouds were distinct from Yolanda's because her purposes and goals were different. Rosa viewed readalouds as an opportunity to practice her English. She did not have much exposure to the English language because her friends and the places she frequented were primarily Spanish-speaking. Rosa wanted to read a text that was at a similar level to her English language abilities and Marcia's children's books provided an optimal opportunity to practice her skills. The read alouds also enabled her to spend quality time with her daughter. Lastly, unlike Yolanda, Rosa subscribed to the notion that adult-led read-alouds directly contributed to children's future success in reading at higher levels. Her daughter took on a more background role in read alouds—mostly listening to the story and answering questions that Rosa asked her.

In sum, of the four participants, Elena and Rosa subscribed the most to Nuestra Comunidad's mainstream literacy philosophy: Reading should be parent-led because parents, especially mothers, were children's first teachers. Yolanda and Beatriz adapted this philosophy to fit their own needs and beliefs. Yolanda strongly felt that her son should initiate read alouds because it would genuinely pique his interest in literacy, while Beatriz maintained that the person to best model the English language (i.e., her older daughter) should take the leading role in

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¹³ The specific ways in which media literacy, particularly television-watching, played a role in families' literacy practices, as well as how these practices compared to Nuestra Comunidad's beliefs regarding the role of television as a learning tool, will be further discussed in chapters five and six.

reading to her younger daughter. Although there was overlap in the ways in which all of the participants took up the school-based literacy activity of reading aloud to one's children, they each actively molded the activity in order to fit in with their values and goals.

School-Based Visual Literacy in Out-of-School Settings: More Than Meets the Eye

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the central activities in Jamie's family literacy course was the creation of scrapbooks. Mothers were given ten weeks to finish and present them to one another. The pages of the scrapbook consisted of photos and artwork as well as text in Spanish and English. Mothers engaged in visual and print literacy with this activity. The order of the scrapbook was a title page, family tree, photos of each child with their favorite qualities, a tradition from the mother's childhood or lyrics of their children's favorite song, and a letter to each child.

Visual literacy activities taught at the school site, like the print based activity of reading aloud, were taken up in both continuous and discontinuous ways by the four participants. The following pages will compare Elena and Rosa's use of the scrapbook in out-of-school contexts, first displayed in a table. Then I include photographs from their scrapbooks and unpack the continuities and discontinuities of how they utilized the scrapbooks in out-of-school settings.

Table 4.3 School-Based Activity of Scrapbooking When Out of School: Elena and Yolanda

Activity Dimensions	Name of mother		
	Elena	Yolanda	
Participants	Elena, Diego, Pablo, husband	Yolanda, José	
Cultural values	a) Scrapbooking is part of the family	a) Scrapbooking not tradition in	
	tradition and dates back to Elena's	Yolanda's family. Doesn't feel at	
	grandparents.	ease creating/adding to it	
Task operation	Arts and crafts materials; Photos; Large	Completed scrapbook	
and demands	table		
Forms of	Elena and her two children sit at dining	Yolanda leaves completed scrapbook	
participation	room table, adding photographs/text of	out for José. He looks on his own.	
	recent family events. Pablo cuts shapes,	Sometimes compares photos of	
	Diego helps mom with words she doesn't	scrapbook to those on mom's	
	know in English; She helps with Spanish.	Smartphone to identify people in	
		photos. Asks mom who people are	
		and she tells him family stories.	
Purposes/goals	a) This activity will help pass on family	a) Scrapbooking is a great way for	
	tradition of scrapbooking to children; b)	families to discuss their past, present,	
	Fun way for children to connect print to	and future	
	photos/illustrations; c) Family adds pages to		
	scrapbook to document important		
	milestones; d) Scrapbooking great way for		
	families to discuss past, present, and future		

Elena's Scrapbook

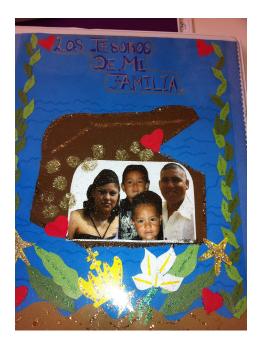


Figure 4.1. Elena's title page.



Figure 4.2. Elena's family tree.

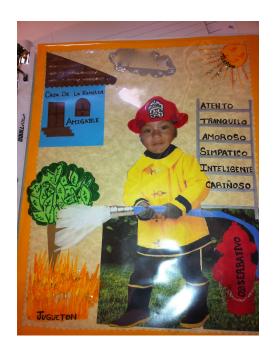


Figure 4.3. Favorite qualities of Pablo.



Figure 4.5. Tradition: Elena's first communion.



Figure 4.4. Favorite qualities of Diego.

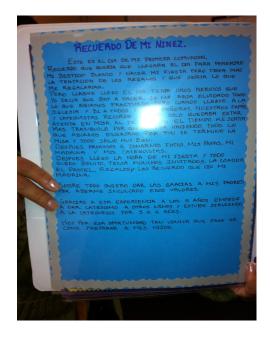


Figure 4.6. Narrative: Elena's first communion.

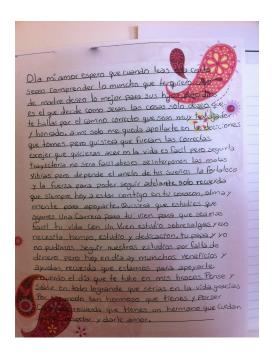


Figure 4.7. Letter to Pablo.



Figure 4.9. Elena presents book in class.



Figure 4.8. Letter to Diego



Figure 4.10. At home Diego & Pablo with book.

Yolanda's Scrapbook



Figure 4.11. Yolanda's title page.



Figure 4.13. Favorite qualities of José.

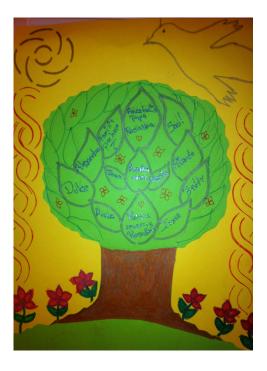


Figure 4.12. Yolanda's family tree.



Figure 4.14. Favorite qualities of Juliana.

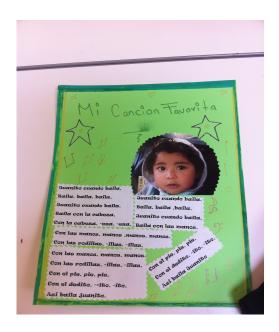


Figure 4.15. José's favorite song.



Figure 4.17. Yolanda presents book in class.



Figure 4.16. Juliana's favorite song



Figure 4.18. At home José grabs scrapbook.

Elena's family in Mexico did not have a lot of money and were from a rural area. One fun and inexpensive hobby that this family engaged in during their free time was creating artwork as well as arts and crafts. Scrapbooking was one of their favorite pastimes. Elena felt at ease with the assignment because she had engaged in similar activities revolving around visual literacy since she was a child. As a result, she worked ahead of the other mothers on sections of

the scrapbook. Most of the mothers waited to complete the scrapbook during class but Elena took hers home and finished it two weeks before the rest of the class. Many mothers asked her to draw family trees and other images because they admired her artwork. They inquired about positioning photos in certain areas because they trusted her eye for detail. Figures 4.1 through 4.8 have been provided to show Elena's artistic prowess.

Yolanda felt more at ease with other types of literacy practices and activities, such as online literacy (which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter). She did not enjoy creating artwork and it was not a family tradition. Yolanda's personal lack of interest in visual literacy, combined with her belief that José's literacy activities should be initiated by him, led her to leave the scrapbook out in an accessible place where he could grab it. Sometimes José brought the scrapbook over to Yolanda (in the same way he initiated read alouds) and asked her to tell him about the people in the photos. Yolanda would then sit with him and recount stories about their family history as well as traditions she enjoyed in Mexico. One of her favorite stories was describing a yearly tradition that took place during her childhood in Michoacán, Mexico. On September 15th and 16th, a castle was burned to celebrate Mexican independence. Her town threw a big festival and hundreds of people from neighboring towns came to attend the event. During the storytelling, José always drew a picture of the castle and used his mother's drawing in the scrapbook as a model for his inspiration. José enjoyed hearing the story and would ask her to tell it to him nearly every week. Other pages that particularly interested José were of Juliana's and his favorite songs (see Figure 4.15 and 4.16). If José began singing the lyrics, Yolanda joined him; while they sang, she pointed to the lyrics in the scrapbook and he looked at them.

Elena worked on the scrapbook independently during the ten weeks that Nuestra Comunidad assigned for its completion. However, after presenting the scrapbook at school,

Elena brought it home. Her husband and two sons volunteered to help her add new pages highlighting important life events—such as birthdays, holiday festivities, and quinceañeras.

Similar to Yolanda, one of Elena's reasons for engaging in scrapbooking in out-of-school contexts was because it provided a nice platform for discussing family history, current milestones, as well as looking towards the future. Scrapbooking also had more personal and sentimental value for Elena because it had been a tradition in her family for generations. Thus, this school-based activity naturally overlapped with an existing family practice—thereby making the activity easier to implement in out-of-school contexts. Elena's main goal was for her family to use the scrapbook to develop artistically; her other goals were to have them connect print and visual literacy through a fun activity as well as engage in language learning (i.e., Elena helped her sons with Spanish words and they helped her with English words).

In sum, it becomes clear how the mothers' personal traditions, values, goals, interests and experiences shaped the ways in which they took up the school-based scrapbooking activity.

Elena enjoyed scrapbooking even before the activity was introduced at Nuestra Comunidad. As a result, she spent a considerable amount of time building upon the school-based activity in out-of-school contexts. Her sons and husband saw her passion for the activity and they also participated because of their personal interest in visual art. Because of their ease around visual literacy activities, these other family members volunteered to add to the scrapbook. Yolanda, on the other hand, felt more confident in areas in which she had prior knowledge—such as oral and online literacy activities. She gave José open access to the scrapbook (which was designed as an activity combining print and visual literacy) and extended the activity into one that promoted oral literacy. José initiated visual literacy by drawing pictures of the stories his mom recounted. Thus,

Yolanda also extended the school-based literacy activity of scrapbooking but did so emphasizing her own strengths and interests.

Another example of visual literacy rooted in school-based practices taught at Nuestra Comunidad that extended to all of the homes was posting artwork, particularly children's art on the walls of the home. I have included each household's posted artwork below:



Figure 4.19. Rosa's art wall.





Figure 4.21. Yolanda's art wall.



Figure 4.22. Beatriz's art wall.

Rosa's art wall (see Figure 4.19) was located in her kitchen. Due to a lack of wall space, she usually put up just one of Marcia's self-selected art pieces at a time. Rosa did not create art on her own but she shared that she was proud of Marcia's artwork and that she felt she was quite a talented artist. Elena's art wall (see Figure 4.20), which was in an area near the front door, most closely modeled the walls in the students' classrooms at Nuestra Comunidad. Because she had almost two feet in length of free wall space, Elena put up her children's artwork chronologically and added new pieces each time they came home with new creations. As previously stated, Elena's family had a history of experiences in the visual arts. Because of this interest in the visual arts, Elena eagerly posted as much of her children's artwork as possible. Yolanda's art wall (see Figure 4.21) combined photographs, flowers, and her children's artistic creations. Yolanda even utilized the fireplace area to extend the "wall". She was able to adapt the concept of an art wall to the actual space of her living conditions. Yolanda was very supportive of her son and daughter's work and put up as much as space allowed.

Beatriz placed great importance on visual literacy. During one of my observations, while Nancy was drawing, Beatriz noted, "Nancy aprende viendo y creando dibujos. Yo le pregunto lo que dibuja y nosotras escribimos juntas lo que dibujó—un gato, nuestra familia, algo que aprendió en la escuela..." (i.e., "Nancy learns by looking at and creating drawings. I ask her what she drew and together we write out what she drew—a cat, our family, something she learned at school..."). However, Beatriz did not have any space for the type of art wall suggested by Nuestra Comunidad. In fact, the only space that Beatriz had for posting anything was on the refrigerator. This became her art wall—a space for posting photos and religious relics—because these were the most important visual images Beatriz felt her family needed to make accessible to everyone. All of Nancy's artwork was on loose pieces of paper she kept in a folder on the dining

room table at all times. Her family looked through the folder before, during, and/or after meal times. Although there was no art wall in Nuestra Comunidad's sense of the term, the placement of the folder provided a daily reminder for the family to discuss what Nancy had drawn. In sum, we once again see that all of the mothers took up this school-based activity of putting up an art wall in a way that was consistent with their values, goals, and resources.

School-Based Oral Literacy Practices in Out-of-School Contexts

Most oral literacy practices taught at Nuestra Comunidad centered on singing nursery rhymes in English and Spanish, memorizing English riddles, reading aloud from ESL workbooks, and learning lyrics to bilingual songs in the family literacy class. Mothers in this study were observed employing these school-based oral literacy practices in out-of-school contexts to varying degrees. Again, the mothers' values and goals played a central role in the manner in which they implemented school-based activities in out-of-school contexts. For example, in the first couple of weeks of school, Jamie gave each mother a copy of *De Colores* and Other Latin American Folk Songs for Children, which was a book that came with a CD of José Luis Orozco's 14 music. All of the mothers in the study played the CD in out-of-school contexts. For instance, Yolanda and her son listened to it in the car and at home. José often asked her to play specific songs, such as De colores, Buenos días, and La araña pequeñita. They sang the songs together and her son asked about the meaning of the lyrics. Similar to her read aloud philosophy, Yolanda felt that the explanation of song lyrics and accompanying connections to her own life should be initiated by her son in order to instill a meaningful interest in oral literacy activities.

Elena did not have a CD player at home but had learned many of the songs included in

¹⁴ José Luis Orozco is a renowned musical composer from Mexico. He is most known for his bilingual songs geared towards young children.

the book during her childhood. She would sit on the couch next to her children, pointing to the lyrics of the book while they sang together. As with the read alouds, she felt that oral literacy should be adult-initiated.

Since her childhood, Rosa enjoyed all kinds of music, especially punta—a genre of music that was quite popular in her native country of Honduras. She knew the lyrics of some pop songs in English as well as many types of Spanish songs from other countries—such as salsa, merengue, bachata, and norteñas. Because of Rosa's love of music—just as in the case of Elena's love of visual literacy—it was natural for her to want to incorporate the José Luis Orozco CD, which was filled with songs from her own childhood, into her daily life. Marcia shared her mother's love of lyrics and music. There was not a calculated decision as to who would initiate the daily listening of the Orozco CD. Rather, that CD was played and sung consistently because of Rosa and her daughter's interest in music. They did not view playing and singing the songs as homework or a chore. Music also played a central role in Beatriz's household. There was a large collection of music, which included CDs bought for Nancy, Sylvia, Beatriz's husband, and herself. As in Rosa's household, these CDs varied in genre. There was English R&B, (e.g., Usher, Beyonce), Spanish Rock (e.g., Mana), and music for young children (e.g., Barney and Friends) and something was usually playing. Whenever you walked in, someone in the family was singing along to music. The José Luis Orozco music was welcomed but not played everyday because there was only one CD player and all the family members had to share it. Sometimes Sylvia (Beatriz's eighteen-year old daughter) would play the Orozco CD, look through the book, and sing along with her younger sister, Nancy. Sylvia told me that she enjoyed the book and music because it reminded her of her childhood. Beatriz and her husband also shared the same

sentiments. Nancy would rotate between various CDs but the José Luis Orozco CD seemed to be one of her favorites.

Another school-based, oral literacy activity that was taken up in out-of-school contexts by all of the mothers in the study, to varying degrees, was a song called *Open, Shut Them*. All of the Nuestra Comunidad early childhood teachers and children sang this song before eating breakfast or lunch. The purpose of the song was to help children learn to wait for everyone to be ready in order to start eating. The lyrics were:

Open shut them, open shut them. (*Open and shut your hands*).

Give a little clap, clap, clap (Clap).

Open shut them, open shut them (*Open and shut your hands*).

Put them in your lap, lap, lap. (Pat your legs).

I observed all four of my participants and/or their children sing this song in out-of-school contexts. Beatriz and Elena sang the song with their children before dinner on almost a daily basis. They both communicated with me in informal interviews that they liked the melody and felt it was a great way to get children to start eating at a certain time. Rosa and Yolanda waited for their children to sing the song on their own; sometimes they would even join in. All of the mothers and children knew the song because they had heard it so frequently at the school site. In some cases, the song's use extended beyond Nuestra Comunidad's walls and was used in different ways. During one of my home visits, I observed Elena's two-year old son, Diego begin to sing the *Open, Shut Them* song while his mother and older brother were cutting fruit. He opened and shut the refrigerator door to the beat of the song, then opened and shut a lunch box to the same rhythm. For Diego, the entertaining part of the song was being able to open and shut various objects within reach. Elena told me she encouraged his singing of the song because she liked that he was applying what he had learned in school to out-of-school contexts in creative ways.

In one instance, during lunch at school, Diego opened and shut his lunch box to the rhythm of *Open, Shut Them* while his class sang the song. His teacher admonished him because she thought he was playing around and being disruptive. However, this two-year old was actually making different vocabulary connections in a new language (i.e., rather than simply assuming that open and shut them were limited to one's hands, Diego was able to understand that one can open and shut many types of objects). He had experimented with this connection at home and it felt natural for him to repeat a similar action at school. Unfortunately, the teacher was not aware of how Diego applied this school-based oral literacy activity to other contexts because her experiences with him were limited to the school site. Teachers are overburdened with large numbers of students, providing differentiated learning, and often having to deal with issues on a moment-by-moment basis. It is difficult to see the bigger picture within these constraints. This example shows the contribution of scholarship that documents the flow of literacy practices *across* contexts and providing teachers with the time, support, and space to make these connections and connect to the families in their classrooms.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter began by highlighting the types of literacy practices that were valued and taught at Nuestra Comunidad. The two focal teachers in this study, like the mothers, had particular literacy and language practices that they personally valued. Some of this valuing was rooted in Harriet and Jamie's educational backgrounds, their ideologies about Latino immigrant families, definitions of literacy, and pressure from funders to adopt specific pedagogical practices and evaluations. Despite the teachers' varying values and ideologies, pressure from funding agencies seemed to deeply affect the types of curricula they taught and the time they dedicated to certain units of study. As a result, literacy practices taught at Nuestra Comunidad

were generally mainstream literacy practices; that is, the literacy practices most often employed in and valued by White, middle class households and in the U.S. schooling system.

The subsequent part of the chapter addressed the ways in which mothers employed mainstream literacy practices in out-of-school contexts. There were both similarities and differences that became clearly evident across contexts and between households. For instance, Elena took up the most literacy practices and emulated many of them exactly as the ways in which they were taught at Nuestra Comunidad. She had an elaborate art corner where every piece of work that her children made was posted. Elena did all of her ESL homework on a daily basis. She even created a notebook with English vocabulary words that she did not know. Elena, per Nuestra Comunidad's instructions, limited her children's TV watching and went to all of the Saturday family literacy classes. Why did Elena choose to implement so many of Nuestra Comunidad's prescriptive literacy practices in out-of-school contexts? Much of her adoption of these practices and activities can be attributed to her home life and access to social and monetary capital. Elena's husband was fluent in English and had gone to U.S. schools since the age of 10. As a result, he helped Elena and his two young children navigate through literacy and language practices that were highly valued in U.S. schools—such as knowledge of Standard American English, reading fluency and comprehension, and playing educational games. Although she lived well below poverty level, in comparison to other families in the study, Elena was financially better off. She lived in a large house with her children owned by her in-laws. Each of the children had their own room. They had a large dining room, play room, and a space where they could easily do arts and crafts. Elena's goals and cultural values also played a major role in her adoption of school-based literacy practices. She believed that the school-based practices learned

at Nuestra Comunidad were in direct alignment with the future financial and personal success of her children. In an interview, she shared:

En Nuestra Comunidad, yo aprendí como involucrar mi marido en el proceso de lectura y escritura... También aprendí como la lectoescritura se desarrolla desde el tiempo que los niños son muy pequeños. Mayormente aprendí como dedicar más tiempo a leer y escribir con ellos. No sabía cómo leerles y hacerles preguntas apropiadas. Ahora convertí ese tiempo de lectura con ellos a un tiempo especial—tienen que ir al baño de antemano para que se puedan sentar y concentrar.

['At Nuestra Comunidad, I learned to involve my husband in the reading and writing process... I also learned how literacy development begins from the time children are very young. Mainly, I learned how to dedicate more time to reading and writing with them. I did not know how to read to them or ask them appropriate questions. Now I make reading time special—they have to go to the bathroom beforehand so they can sit and concentrate'].

Other mothers, such as Beatriz, also subscribed to the school-based literacy practices taught at Nuestra Comunidad. Beatriz made certain to complete her daily ESL homework, she had Sylvia or her husband read aloud to Nancy daily, and she helped Nancy write her name and label the objects that Nancy drew. However, Beatriz did not have the financial or social capital that Elena enjoyed. Her husband was unemployed; at times, they could not afford food and had to ask help from neighbors or distant relatives. All three family members shared one bedroom; consequently, there was not a lot of space to do many of the activities that were observed in Elena's household. However, Beatriz and her family *made* time and space because they thought it was important to adopt school-based practices in order to ensure Nancy's future success. Moreover, Beatriz modified school-based practices, such as visual literacy activities to fit her and her family's lifestyle, values, and goals. At times, these coincided with those espoused by Nuestra Comunidad.

Although Rosa's time was quite occupied with financial and personal issues (e.g., finding a tenant to rent their extra room in order to cover their expenses, looking for a job, marital

issues, depression, and isolation), she still made time to read to her daughter daily because like Elena, she subscribed to Nuestra Comunidad's belief that mothers were children's first teachers. Therefore, she attended school daily, talked to her daughter constantly; however, she also engaged in many literacy practices that were not taught or valued at Nuestra Comunidad. Some of these out-of-school practices will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter. Yolanda, was the parent who modified school-based practices in out-of-school contexts to the greatest degree. She did not subscribe to Nuestra Comunidad's suggestions that literacy activities should be adult-driven; rather, she gave José the space to initiate multimodal literacy practices in out-of-school contexts.

This chapter has focused mostly on the ways in which print, visual, and oral school-based literacy practices were taken up by mothers in out-of-school contexts. Media and online literacy activities were not explicitly taught at Nuestra Comunidad because of the emphasis on print literacy. The next chapters will discuss the continuities and discontinuities that were evident in the employment of families' out-of-school literacy practices when applied to in-school settings, with a particular focus on media and online literacy practices.

CHAPTER 5

Overview: Out-of-School Literacy Practices

Literacy activities are woven into the ongoing stream of family life (Farr, 1994, p. 97).

Children learn that their involvement with literacy extends to and includes many people and many goals (Fagan, 1995, p. 261).

I begin this chapter with two quotes written by prominent scholars—Marcia Farr (1994) and William T. Fagan (1995). Similar to Valdés, these researchers' observations about families' out-of-school literacy practices ring true to this very day, almost twenty years later. Farr notes the importance of looking at the ways in which Mexicano¹⁵ families' literacy activities in Chicago are *deeply embedded* in their everyday practices. In his study of ten and eleven year-olds in Southern California, Fagan found that authentic involvement with literacy had more to do *with the people around them as well as their goals or purposes* for engaging in a particular literacy activity. I would extend Fagan's argument to say that all family members, not just children, are more likely to participate in literacy activities that involve the people and practices that pique their interest.

My second and third research questions look at the types of out-of-school practices that mothers brought to the Nuestra Comunidad school site. Because Nuestra Comunidad's literacy ideologies and routines were deeply embedded into daily classroom practices, it was difficult for families' out-of-school literacy practices to be openly employed at the school site. I felt that a chapter should be dedicated to illustrating the wide range of multimodal out-of-school literacy practices that families engaged in before delving into a discussion of how these practices looked once they got to the school site. In order to unpack how these literacy practices were woven into families' daily lives, I needed to be aware of the physical artifacts linked to literacy that families

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¹⁵ Mexicano families are those of Mexican origin.

used in out-of-school contexts (e.g., homes, cars). Farr (1994) and Orellana et al.'s (2003) family literacy domain frameworks helped me organize and categorize these literacy artifacts. Since my study examined literacy as a *practice*, I then used activity settings analysis to analyze the ways in which families interacted with these artifacts out of school. Activity settings analyses aided me in unpacking the similarities and differences that were evident within and across the four households because they required honing in on who participated in certain literacy activities with particular artifacts, as well as their cultural values, task operation and demands, forms of participation, and purposes/goals in engaging with the artifacts.

Starting With the Basics: Family Literacy Domains and Artifacts

Farr's (1994) study of Mexicano families' literacy practices in Chicago led to her development of the concept of family literacy domains. She was inspired to create these domains because she noted most previous family literacy research focused on the literacy activity itself, rather than integrating the ways in which social practices and institutional structures influenced the formation and employment of the literacy activity.

Farr's domains consisted of areas that played central roles in the lives of the Mexicano families in her study: the church, commerce, the state/law, education, and family/home. Orellana et al. (2003) utilized Farr's domains in their research on immigrant families' translating and paraphrasing practices in Chicago and Los Angeles. They added in three other domains—community, financial, and medical—which were relevant to their research. I utilized all eight of these family literacy domains (i.e., religious, commercial, state/legal, educational, family/recreational, community, financial, and medical); they helped me organize my corpus of information to determine what artifacts were consistent across households by domain and those that might be found in one family's household but not in others. On the next few pages, Tables 5.1-5.4 provide

a detailed list of the artifacts observed in Elena, Beatriz, Yolanda, and Rosa's households; they are categorized by each of the eight literacy domains.

Table 5.1.

Elena's Household: Family Literacy Domains (Farr, 1994; Orellana et al., 2003)

Religious	Commercial	State/Legal	Educational	Family/recreational	Community	Financial	Medical
Statues/	Product	Social	Library	Movies (e.g., small	Christmas	Electricity	Medicine
paintings	Information	security	books (e.g.,	town festivals in	tree lighting	and gas	for kids
of Virgin	For food	letters	Thomas the	Mexico)	invite (city	bills	
Mary			Train,		hall)		Doctors
	Grocery		pirates, bugs)	Cooking books		Mortgage	pamphlets
Bible	receipts				Invitation to	payments	
			Family lit	Photographs of kids	walk around		Medi-Cal
Religious calendar	Avon TM catalogs		handouts	(e.g., diploma and medal for attendance)	Rose Bowl (healthy	Car bills	letter/cards
with			Coupons for		heart event)	Bank	Nutrition
images of			literacy	Newspapers in English		Statements	pamphlets
Saint			program	(weekend Pasadena	Invitation to		
Martín de			(number of	edition)	Libreria	Car	Medi-Cal
Porres			minutes for		Pintoresca—	insurance	(kids cards;
			pizza at end	Toys: Fire trucks,	(schools	payments	salary
Saint			of month)	trains, buses, tool kit	provide		reports
Martín de					connection to	Costco	every 3
Porres			Family tree	Table games: Let's Go	community)	cards	months)
prayer			album	Fishin'TM, puzzles,			
cards				Memory Game [™] ,		Union fees	
			Pencils,	Loteria TM		for	
			Crayolas,			husband's	
			markers			job	
				Coloring books for kids			
			Stickers				
			(e.g.,	Blocks (woods/plastic)			
			Christmas)				
			G .1 . 1				
			Scholastic				
			pamphlets TM				
			Kids' class				
			work				
			EGI				
			ESL				
			workbook/				
			CDs				
			Toy with				
			alphabet				
			letters				
			Field toin				
			Field trip permission				
			slips				
			sups				
			Save-the-				
			dates for				
			field trips/				
			Meetings				

Table 5.2.

Beatriz's Household: Family Literacy Domains (Farr, 1994; Orellana et al., 2003)

Religious	Commercial	State/Legal	Educational	Family/ Recreational	Community	Financial	Medical
Virgin of Guadalupe images/prayer cards Bible Images of Holy Family Guardian angel prayer	Coupons from old newspapers (toys for Nancy, Papa John's Pizza) Receipts from supermarket Avon™, crystal store, Zapatos de Andrea catalogs	WIC coupons (milk, veggies, cheese, eggs) Food bank app	Collects magazines for school (have to find images that start with certain letters) Library books Kids' books from yard sales Paperwork in fam lit class Family tree album Pencils, crayolas, markers Scholastic TM pamphlets Parenting class handouts Sylvia's report cards (K-12) Binder of Nancy's pre- emergent literacy (scribbles, drawings) ESL books, CDs Sylvia's final exam schedule for high school California State	Recreational Family movies (Selena, Rio, Pete's Dragon) Television (reality shows in English, Bilingual cartoons—e.g. Franny's Feet, Angelina Ballerina) Cook books (some from library) WIC recipes Table Games: Jenga TM , Monopoly TM , puzzles, Loteria TM Photographs (e.g., family, school) Music CDs Newspapers (e.g., El sol de Nevada interview with Sylvia-immigration march) English newspapers (Pasadena Star) English, Spanish magazines	Invitation to Jackie Robinson health meeting (free flu shots, health screening) School district parent infomeeting reminder	Credit card statements Electricity and gas bills Bank statements	Medical Medical pamphlets Medi-Cal letters/ cards
			California State University, Northridge parking permit	magazines helped Sylvia learn print literacy when younger			

Table 5.3.

Yolanda's Household: Family Literacy Domains (Farr, 1994; Orellana et al., 2003)

Religious	Commercial	State/Legal	Educational	Family/Recreational	Community	Financial	Medical
Bible	Product labels	WIC	Kids' books	Movies (Boots and	Invitation to	Electricity	Medicine for
		coupons	from yard	Boots, Cars,	Jackie	and gas	kids
	Receipts from	(milk,	sales	Tinkerbelle, Thomas	Robinson	bills	
	Ross,	vegetables,		the Train, Mickey	health		Medi-Cal
	supermarket	cheese, eggs)	Markers	Mouse, and	meeting—	Car	letter/cards
				educational videos)	free flu	insurance	-
	Avon catalog	Food bank	Paperwork in		shots, health	P 1	Emergency
	0 111	application	family lit class	Appointment	screening	Food	Medi-Cal for
	Coupon labels	M-4: C-1	F:1 4	calendar	T	receipts	Yolanda
	on cereal boxes	Medi-Cal—	Family tree album	Television	Invitation to	Dahraittan	
	to get points for schools (if you	kids' cards; salary reports	aibuiii	(Quinceañera,	museum	Babysitter bill	
	buy a product	every 3	Pencils	American Idol,	Invitation to	UIII	
	are helping	month)	1 chens	novelas, news, PBS	free concerts		
	cancer	monun	Crayolas	kids—Sesame Street,	nee concerts		
	association)	Medi-Cal	Ciayolas	Elmo)	School		
	ussociation)	paperwork	Scholastic [™]	Emilo)	district		
		paperwork	pamphlets	Juliana's flute books	parent		
			PP		information		
			Parenting	Cooking books	meeting		
			course	Ü	reminder		
			handouts	WIC recipes			
			Older	Zingo TM game			
			daughter,	5			
			Juliana's	Children's			
			report card	photographs (given to her from school—			
			Juliana's	e.g. José planting			
			school	seeds, older daughter			
			calendar	playing flute)			
			ESL books	Parenting magazines from doctor (how			
			ESL CDs	much fruit kids need to eat, cold remedies)			
			Kids' school				
			work (e.g.,	Spanish magazines			
			video box with	(e.g., poetry,			
			2013 calendar;	philosophy)			
			photos of José				
			with emergent	Horoscopes			
			writing;				
			tablecloth with				
			pine cones for				
			Christmas)				

Table 5.4. Rosa's Household: Family Literacy Domains (Farr, 1994; Orellana et al., 2003)

Religious	Commercial	State/ Legal	Educational	Family/Recreational	Community	Financial	Medical
Bible	Product labels	WIC	Books from	Movies (e.g., Bambi,	Booklet of	Electricity	Medicine for kids
	(cereal, corn,	coupons	fam lit (e.g.,	Alpha y Omega,	events in	and gas	(ibuprofen,
Painting of	beans, salsa)	(milk,	animal books)	Kangaroo Jack,	parks,	bills	acetaminophen)
Baby Jesus		vegetables,		Dora)	museums,		
	Coupon labels	cheese,	Kids books		Zumba	Phone bill	Medi-Cal—kids
Jehovah	(Macy's,	eggs, juice)	from yard	Television (novelas	classes, kids		cards and letters
witness	Payless,		sales (e.g.,	(e.g., Cuidado con el	classes)	Food	to report every 3
pamphlets	JCPenney's)	Food stamps	Eric Carle's	ángel), Spanish news,		receipts	months for salary
on door			Have You	soccer games, PBS			
	Pizza deal		Seen My Cat?)	kids—e.g., Sesame		Western	Medi-Cal
	coupons on		-	Street, Elmo)		Union	appointment
	door		Family tree			money-	reminder
	D :		album	Radio with punta		grams to	
	Receipts from		3.6.1	(traditional		son in	Magazines from
	supermarket,		Markers	Honduran) music		Honduras	dentist,
	CVS, Vons)		D 1:	MIIO ;		each	pediatrician,
	A		Paperwork in	WIC recipes		month	women's health)
	Avon,		family lit class	Dl4 l ((depends	T41-1
	Armando Dupre,		Pencils	Photographs (e.g., Honduras, few given		on month—if	Tooth brushing chart
	bedsheet		1 chens	from school)		doing well	Chart
	catalogs		Erasers	Hom school)		\$100-	Book called El
	catarogs		Liuseis	Horoscopes in		\$150; if	camino hacia una
			Crayolas	newspaper		not so	vida saludable
			Crayonas	пеморирег		well, \$60-	Basada en las
			Scholastic TM	Jump rope,		\$70)	Guias
			pamphlets	Twister TM , Just		4.4)	Alimenticias para
			F F	Dance Kids TM —			los
			Parenting	favorite activities			Estadounidenses16
			class handouts				
			(e.g., child				
			development)				
			School				
			calendar				
			ESL				
			workbooks				
			ESL CDs				
			Marcia's				
			school work				
			(e.g., photos				
			that are				
			decorated)				

¹⁶ The Road Towards a Healthy Life (based on U.S. health guidelines).

Tables 5.1-5.4 clearly reveal that some literacy artifacts were found in all four households while others were only found in one or two of them. For example, in the *religious domain*, all of the families in the study had bibles in their homes. Each of them (except in Yolanda's household) also had religious images of Catholic holy figures (e.g., Elena's family had a devotion to San Martín de Porre, Beatriz worshipped the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Rosa's husband prayed to the image of Baby Jesus). The specific ways that families engaged with religious literacy artifacts are discussed later in this chapter (see Table 5.5).

The literacy artifacts that related to the *commercial domain* also showed some overlap across families, e.g., product labels and receipts were observed in all of the participants' households. Variation was evident across households in the types of receipts and coupons that were visible. For instance, Beatriz and Rosa had pizza coupons posted to their refrigerator because they ordered pizza at least once a week. Yolanda collected the top of cereal boxes because her daughter's school participated in the Box Tops for Education program; each box top earned 10¢ for her daughter's school. Another similarity across households in the commercial literacy domain was that all of the families had catalogs in their homes, particularly Avon. The role of Avon catalogs as a literacy tool—in both in-school and out-of-school contexts—will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

In the *state/legal domain*, all of the mothers had documentation related to The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This program provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, as well as nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. As mentioned previously, all of the families in my study lived well below poverty level (see Table 3.1). My

participants were among nearly 9 million people who received WIC benefits each month in the United States.

Lastly, I observed social security documentation in only Elena's household because everyone in her family had green cards, which allowed them to be eligible for those federal benefits. According to an interview with Elena, social security cards were a symbol of newfound freedom for her. Elena had come to the United States to join her husband whom she had met and married in Mexico. He was originally from the same Mexican town but her husband had gotten his green card after coming to the U.S. at the age of ten. However, Elena could not get a visa so she came to the U.S. in 2005 without papers (i.e., undocumented). Two years after Elena immigrated, her son Pablo was born in California. In 2008, Elena was deported and took Pablo (who was one year old at the time) with her to Mexico. Her husband stayed in California working as a contractor but he visited her every couple of months. He had to save money for several years so that he could pay for an immigration lawyer. In 2009, Elena and her husband had another son (Diego) who was born in Mexico. In early 2010, the green cards for Elena and Diego were finally approved, allowing her and her sons to return to the U.S. to reunite with her husband. Elena talked about the sense of relief that getting green cards and consequently social security cards represented to her family.

None of the other mothers had social security cards because they were undocumented. They told me that their children who were born in the states had social security cards—which they kept them in their rooms, private files, or closets. The social security cards were not mere literacy artifacts; they carried much deeper meanings for each of these families. For instance, Rosa shared that she had mixed feelings about what the social security card meant to her. She was glad her daughter, Marcia, did not have to worry about being undocumented and could receive

benefits from being a U.S. citizen. Yet, the card also reminded her of the young son she left back in Honduras with her parents. Rosa had to cross the border with the help of *coyotes*¹⁷—much of the journey was done on foot in treacherous terrains and she did not want to endanger her son during this difficult trek crossing the border. Rosa was glad that this journey gave her an opportunity to come to the United States. Yet, like many of the other mothers in this study, Rosa felt that social security cards were a physical representation of a divide between them and their young children. The divide separated those who received basic benefits and felt secure about their future from those who did not.

There were also similarities and differences evident in the *educational domain*. Library books and ScholasticTM pamphlets were visible in all of the participants' homes—mostly borrowed from the Nuestra Comunidad library or given as gifts by the program. In addition, Beatriz, Yolanda, and Rosa's households had books purchased from garage sales. In all four households, the Nuestra Comunidad scrapbooks, discussed in chapter four, were stored in accessible places. All of the participants displayed their children's artwork and schoolwork; markers, crayolas, and other writing tools were observed in all four households. The mothers also all kept their ESL workbooks and accompanying CDs in areas where they could work on them (e.g., kitchen counter, desk, dining room table). Beatriz and Yolanda, who both had older children hung student report cards and school calendars on their refrigerators with magnets.

In the *family/recreational domain*, all of the mothers, except Rosa, had cookbooks. Artifacts connected to media literacy were observed in all of the participants' homes. For instance, every family had movies that one, a couple, or every family member watched. All of the households, except Elena's, had televisions and a set of programs that were viewed on a regular basis. All of the households had a least one table game and/or board game. In Rosa's household,

¹⁷ A coyote is a person who helps undocumented immigrants navigate through the land and cross the border.

Marcia had more active "toys" such as jump ropes and dance games. I will discuss the role of media and games further on in the chapter (see Tables 5.6 and 5.7).

As for the *community domain*, most of the community literacy artifacts that were observed in Elena's household were connected to recreational or leisurely activities. Elena had invitations for the annual Christmas tree lighting at city hall, flyers reminding her to visit the new local public library, and an invitation to join a walk group that exercised at a college football stadium close to her home. Rosa's links to the community, like Elena's, were recreation-based (see Table 5.4). Because she was an avid dancer and wanted to take Zumba classes to get back into shape, she kept a booklet of coupons for special discounts on Zumba classes, and also for amusement parks, museums, and children's recreational courses (e.g., swimming, painting).

Beatriz's literacy artifacts in the community domain were a bit distinct from Elena and Rosa's households because they revolved around her family's medical and educational needs (as opposed to leisure). She mostly kept flyers handed out by Nuestra Comunidad staff, which advertised free health screenings and vaccines. Another literacy artifact that provided a clue into Beatriz's connections to the community was an invite to a school district parent information session (see Table 5.2). This meeting focused on the needs of high school students, like her daughter Sylvia, who were applying to college and needed information for graduation prerequisites, high school exit exams, how to finance college, and application fees. Beatriz stated that she was an advocate for her daughter and other children of Latin@ immigrants. She wanted to make sure that they received adequate information and communication regarding their children's higher education because it was the key to their success.

Yolanda's literacy artifacts in the community domain (see Table 5.3) overlapped with those of the other three mothers. These artifacts emphasized links to the community via medical,

educational, and social/recreational programs/activities. For instance, Nuestra Comunidad's invitations for complimentary medical visits and health screenings at local community centers were found in Yolanda's car and home. Yolanda, like Beatriz, had an older daughter. Juliana was in fifth grade and was going to attend middle school at the local public school the following year. Several flyers posted in various areas of her apartment detailed the dates, times, and locations of district informational meetings regarding local middle schools.

Literacy artifacts in the *financial domain* both overlapped and diverged among the families in this study. Electricity and gas bills were seen in all of the households; however, other artifacts were pertinent specifically to each family's needs. For instance, Elena and Yolanda were the only two households with cars—they both had car insurance statements. Elena's family was a bit better off than the other households. Her family had documentation revealing mortgage payments for the home (all of the other families rented apartments), also had credit card statements, which showed that their balances on the cards were paid in full. Beatriz's family, in contrast, lived in extreme poverty because her husband was unemployed, suing his boss for wrongful termination. They too had credit card and bank statements, which showed that they were behind on payments. Yolanda worked as a cook at Red Lobster and also lived paycheck to paycheck; as a single mother estranged from the father of her children, she could afford food, a babysitter when she had to go to work at night, utility bills, and a car that got her to and from work (see Table 5.3, Financial Domain). Rosa lived on her husband's salary because he wanted her to be home to raise their daughter. His very low wages only covered basic expenses (i.e., utilities, food, and phone) (see Table 5.4). A unique artifact seen in Rosa's household was Western Union money grams. Because she had to leave her son behind in Honduras when she came to California, she wired her parents between 60 and 150 dollars every month to help out

with his food and basic necessities.

A similarity in all of the households in the *medical domain* was that they all had Medi-Cal¹⁸ documents (e.g., letters, cards, salary reports) and medicine for their kids. Rosa and Beatriz's households had the greatest number of medical literacy artifacts. Beatriz collected nutritional and medical pamphlets for her younger daughter because she had learned they were helpful when she was raising Sylvia more than ten years earlier. Rosa had certain health problems so she wanted to take ownership of understanding them. She had a book called *El camino hacia una vida saludable (i.e. The Road Towards a Healthy Life)*, and free dental, gynecological, and pediatric health pamphlets and magazines in English and Spanish. Rosa wanted to maintain control of her health and wished for her daughter to be strong and healthy from a young age.

Dividing artifacts by domains is useful because as Farr states, "Viewing literacy activities as occurring in broad domains within the lives of family members allow[s] for a more social, and less individual perspective (Farr, 1994, p. 95). Even after the publication of Farr's model, when discussing literacy artifacts, most scholarship continues to simply document the presence of predetermined literacy artifacts (particularly books) in families' homes (see, for example, Lindsay, 2010). In fact, the number of books in one's household has repeatedly been correlated to children's academic achievement. One recent quantitative study (Evans et al., 2010) found that "Growing up in a home with 500 books would propel a child 3.2 years further in education, on average, than would growing up in a similar home with few or no books," (p. 9). Educational practitioners frequently buy into this same type of thinking. For instance, as mentioned previously, one of Nuestra Comunidad's funders, Head Start, created a family literacy survey requiring mothers to report the number of books in their homes. Does counting the number of

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¹⁸ Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health care program. This program pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources.

books really provide valuable information regarding families' literacy practices? Simply having a book in your home does not mean that the people who do (or do not) use it, their cultural values, the ways in which they use the book, and their purposes or goals will be congruent with mainstream practices and objectives.

Farr's domains are innovative because they provide researchers with a model in which they are able to expand their lens and create a list of a range of literacy artifacts divided into a wide set of domains that are socially oriented (e.g., medical, family or recreational). In other words, these categories help researchers look for any artifact in the home that can fit into these domains, instead of narrowly searching for predetermined artifacts. However, there are some limitations with Farr's model. First, with any kind of model that uses categories, information that does not fit into the domains is overlooked. Moreover, ethnographic scholarship aims to document *interactions* and Farr's model is just a sheer listing of artifacts. We can build on Farr's literacy domains to a more action-oriented perspective and ask: How did families *use* these artifacts? A reliance on physical artifacts to gauge families' literacy practices fails to show us *who* used the artifacts, *what* they did with them, *where* or *when* the artifacts were utilized, and *why* the families felt it was important to have or use the artifact. These questions are not usually educational stakeholders and researchers' central focus because the presence of literacy artifacts in the home generally takes center stage.

What Counts? Families' Out-of-School Religious Literacy Activities

Table 5.5 indicates that all of the families had bibles in their homes. If one were to base their perception of families' literacy practices on book-counting, the bible would just be another tally to determine the specific number of books in their home. Yet, the more important question would be: How was the bible used? Who read it? When and where was it read? What were the

individual or group's cultural values towards the bible? What was the purpose and goal in having a bible in one's home? In order to answer these questions, I used activity settings analyses to determine the most salient ways in which families engaged with different religious literacy artifacts (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5

Use of Religious Artifacts

Activity Dimensions	Households					
•	Elena	Beatriz	Yolanda	Rosa		
Participants	Elena, husband, Pablo, Diego	Beatriz, Nancy	Yolanda, Juliana, José	Rosa's husband, Marcia		
Cultural values	a) Important for whole family to show God appreciation attending mass, reading bible, saying prayers; b) Family had special devotion to Saint Martín de Porres: he was patron saint of hometown in Mexico and champion of the poor.	a) Beatriz felt it was important to show God appreciation reading the bible and saying prayers; b) Virgin of Guadalupe: statue/image most prevalent in household because she was a figure Beatriz had grown worshipping in Mexico.	a) Yolanda felt it was more important to show you were a good person through your actions than acts of religious devotion (e.g., reading bible, attending mass).	a) Rosa felt it was more important to show you were a good person through your actions than acts of religious devotion (e.g., reading bible, attending mass); b) Her husband felt it was important to read the bible and say prayers to show appreciation to God and get help in times of trouble.		
Task operations and demands	Catholic Bible in Spanish; Saint Martín de Porres prayer cards, statue	Virgin of Guadalupe paintings, statue, prayer cards; Catholic bible in Spanish	Christian Bible in Spanish	Baby Jesus painting, Catholic Spanish bible		
Forms of participation	The adults in the family took turns reading bible each night. Talked about what passage meant	Beatriz knew many bible stories by heart so she made them into vivid stories to	Yolanda did not go to church. She rarely read the bible. If she did-it was to look up a parable relating	At times, Rosa's husband read bible stories to Marcia. She would ask him questions		

	Elena	Beatriz	Yolanda	Rosa
	to them while kids sat quietly. Also said nightly prayer to San Martín de Porres—had images of him, kids knew devotional prayers by heart and took lead in reciting.	pique Nancy's interest. She also used prayer cards to pray to Virgin of Guadalupe. Nancy and Beatriz also recited a prayer to their guardian angel before bedtime. Her older daughter and husband did not participate in any religious routines.	to a message she was trying to relay. For example, she was talking to José or Juliana about being patient. She looked up the story of when Jesus said that in heaven the first on earth shall be last in heaven and the last will be first.	about the stories. They also prayed to painting of Baby Jesus.
Purposes/goals	Elena and her husband believed that praying and going to church would unify the family and help instill a sense of compassion and morality in the young children's lives.	Beatriz stated that praying and going to church helped her get through rough times—particularly the economic uncertainties they faced.	Yolanda thought religion's purpose was to help people be ethical/moral. She did not feel bound to reading religious text or going to church.	Rosa's husband felt praying and reading the bible helped when one was going through hard times. He felt it was also important to show gratitude for one's blessings.

As seen in Table 5.5, there were similarities and differences in the people that participated in religious literacy activities across households. In Elena and Beatriz's case, both mothers were the main proponents of establishing and carrying out religious literacy activities. However, additional family members who participated in religious literacy activities were different in these two households. In Elena's home, all of the family members, including the children, were involved in bible reading, praying to saints, and going to church. Beatriz's husband and her older daughter were not religious practitioners but it was important for Beatriz to instill religious values and routines for her younger daughter, Nancy. As a result, Beatriz and

Nancy engaged in religious literacy practices together. Although Sylvia, her older daughter, took a lead role in Nancy's education—particularly in print literacy—she was not involved in this area of religious literacy.

Yolanda and Rosa both stated they were more spiritual than religious. They felt that true religion was a reflection of your actions; that is, how you treat those around you. When Yolanda engaged in religious literacy activities—it was to prove an ethical point to her older daughter, Juliana and/or to her younger son, José. Rosa did not participate in religious literacy activities; rather, her husband took the lead in reading the bible and praying with their daughter, Marcia.

As with previous activity settings analyses, I inferred the mothers' cultural values around religious literacy activities in out-of-school contexts from interviews, observations, and informal conversations with them. There were continuities and discontinuities in the cultural values that the mothers and other family members ascribed to religious literacy. None of the mothers mentioned that the primary objective for engaging in religious literacy activities (e.g., bible-reading, praying) was to foster literacy skills. Rather, the emphasis in the value of these activities was instilling moral values in children and establishing a sense of gratitude in their daily lives.

Elena and her husband shared that it was important for the whole family to show God appreciation by attending mass, reading the bible, and saying prayers. The family was especially devoted to Saint Martín de Porres, a Roman Catholic saint, because he was the patron saint of their town in Mexico. They prayed to this saint because even though they were a bit better off financially than the other mothers in the study—they still lived well below poverty level and Saint Martín de Porres was known as a champion of the poor. The family felt that their prayers to him during these hard times would be heard. Saying prayers and reading the bible gave them hope that there was a higher purpose for their struggles and that ultimately God loved and would

take care of them.

Beatriz also felt it was important to show God appreciation by reading the bible and saying prayers. She was Catholic but did not attend mass because she had to work every weekend cleaning houses. Beatriz also had a special religious devotion—but to the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of all Mexico. Beatriz had indigenous ancestry in Mexico and the Virgin of Guadalupe, portrayed as a mestiza, played a special role in her life while she was growing up. Beatriz felt it was important to pass on this devotion to her youngest daughter, Nancy. She did not force religion upon her eighteen-year old daughter, Sylvia, because she felt faith had to be an individual's private journey once he or she was an adult.

As already mentioned, Yolanda and Rosa asserted that it was more important to be a kind and considerate person than read the bible, say prayers, or go to church. Yolanda was a single mother and lived on her own. Her children were not exposed to religious text or prayers unless Yolanda's mother, a practicing Catholic, was visiting from Mexico.

Rosa's husband was the only adult in the household who read religious texts and said prayers. He indoctrinated his daughter, Marcia, in these religious literacy activities because he felt that they were a way to show God appreciation and to gain strength to deal with difficult times in one's life.

Some of the items that were used to participate in religious literacy practices in each household were similar but others were different. All of the households had Catholic bibles in Spanish—except Yolanda who had a Protestant Spanish bible. Elena and Beatriz kept devotional prayers cards and images of their respective favorite Catholic figures in their homes. Rosa's husband had a large painting of baby Jesus that he and Marcia knelt in front of as they recited prayers (e.g., Our Father).

There were also certain similarities and differences across the four households in the ways in which they engaged in religious literacy activities. Elena, Beatriz, and Rosa's husband recited prayers and read the bible on a regular basis, whereas reading the bible in Elena and Rosa's houses was adult-driven and connected to print literacy, Beatriz orally recited the stories from the bible and actively enlisted her young daughter's participation. Beatriz made the characters come to life through her storytelling abilities (e.g., creating suspense, using different voices for each character). Nancy began to learn these stories by heart, as well as prayers to her guardian angel and the Virgin of Guadalupe. Gradually, Nancy began to participate in these religious activities as much as her mother.

Rosa's daughter, Marcia, asked her father questions about the bible stories he read; Elena's children were quieter during bible reading but led their family in prayer recitations to Saint Martín de Porres. Their favorite story of Saint Martín de Porres was that a group of mice infested the monastery's collection of fine linen robes. These were linens they specifically kept to distribute to community members who were ill. Saint Martín resisted the other monks' plans to lay poison out for the mice. He decided to catch one of the mice and ask him why he and his companions were doing so much harm to property that belonged to the sick. He told the mouse he would not kill him, but to assemble all his friends and lead them to the far end of the garden. He promised that he would bring them food everyday if they left the wardrobe alone. Martín then led a mouse parade toward a small new den. Martín and the mice kept their word; the closet infestation was solved for good.

Yolanda was the only mother who rarely participated in religious literacy activities, although she shared that sometimes she looked up biblical passages that were parables relating to a message she was trying to relay to her children. For example, one day, she was talking to José

or Juliana about being patient. To prove her point, she looked up the section in which Jesus said that in heaven the first on earth shall be last in heaven and the last will be first, which is a popular expression in Spanish.

Regarding the purposes and goals for engaging in religious literacy activities, Elena, Beatriz, and Rosa's husband were primarily driven by the need to show God gratitude as well as asking for strength during more challenging times in their lives. Elena and her husband believed that praying and going to church would unify the family and help instill a sense of compassion and morality in the young children's lives. Elena told me that in Mexico she lived in extreme poverty but she felt that there was more of an emphasis on being a good person and helping others. She wanted her children to gain that same awareness in the United States; religion was a great means of doing so. Yolanda also believed that religion's purpose was to teach people to be more ethical and moral. She believed the most religious act was being a kind and good person. She did not feel bound to reading religious text or going to church; she felt you could teach children these values by modeling them. In sum, my participants' religious goals and cultural values largely shaped their choices in the religious artifacts they collected and/or used as well as the ways in which they engaged in particular religious literacy activities.

Role of Game-Playing in Families' Literacy Practices

The similarities and differences in the families' use of literacy artifacts in the religious domain were also evident in other literacy domains—particularly in the family/recreational domain. Table 5.6 highlights the ways in which each household engaged in literacy activities in the family/recreational domain, specifically with games.

Table 5.6 Use of Family/Recreational Artifacts (Games)

Activity Dimensions

Households

Activity Dimensions	Households				
	Elena	Beatriz	Yolanda	Rosa	
Participants	Elena, Diego, Pablo, Elena's husband	Beatriz, Nancy, Sylvia	Yolanda, José	Rosa, Marcia	
Cultural values	a) Games, particularly Loteria, provided means of spending quality time with family; b) Loteria was family tradition played in Mexico, brought to U.S.; c) Loteria way of helping children not lose their Spanish language	a) Games, particularly Loteria, provided means of spending time with family; b) Gameplaying taught Nancy rules/basic etiquette (e.g., turntaking, how to gracefully win/lose); c) Loteria way of helping children not lose their Spanish language	a) José should initiate game-playing because it should be piqued by his interest; b) Way for José to keep learning Spanish and English because Yolanda encouraged biliteracy	a) Games should be active; b) Important to play games that everyone was interested in; c) Rosa and Marcia enjoyed dancing together because it was a family tradition;	
Task operations and demands	Let's Go Fishin', puzzles, Memory Game, Loteria	Jenga, Monopoly, Loteria, puzzles	Bilingual Zingo ¹⁹ board game	Jump rope, dance games (e.g., Just Dance Kids, Twister)	
Forms of participation	The family played games in the late afternoon, when Elena's husband got home. Loteria was usually the game they most played as a family. Pablo and Diego played Let's Go Fishin',	Nancy and Beatriz's favorite game was Loteria. When Sylvia got home from high school, three of them often played. Sylvia was usually the card caller. Beatriz	Yolanda left game out in an accessible place for José to grab. Yolanda joined if he wanted to play. He liked being first one to call out tiles that matched images on cards.	Marcia often grabbed the jump rope, Twister, or dance games after they got home from school. She jump roped alone; Rosa joined in playing dance games on Wii ²⁰ (e.g., Just	

¹⁹ *Zingo* is a variation of *Bingo*. The first player that fills his or her card wins the game. ²⁰ The *Wii* is a home video game console released by Nintendo.

	Elena	Beatriz	Yolanda	Rosa
Purposes/goals	matching game, and with puzzles on their own. Loteria game, Diego, the two-year old, was usually the cantor (i.e., card caller). Rest of family played along; Elena and her husband helped children with pronunciation of certain words a) Way for children to learn patterns; b) Children could learn Spanish vocabulary with games like Loteria	a) Way for Sylvia to practice her Spanish because English only high school; b) Beatriz could teach Nancy Spanish vocabulary in	a) Yolanda bought game because cards/picture tiles were in English/ Spanish so promoted bi- literacy for her & José; b) Yolanda liked José could	a) Games such as Twister. a) Games such as Twister a) Games such as Twister promoted learning of colors; b) Just Dance Kids helped Rosa and her daughter learn the words to English songs such Wheels
		a fun way from a young age	learn/practice image/word recognition, image/word matching, vocabulary, memory.	on the Bus and The Alphabet Song.

In order to provide the reader with a greater understanding of the literacy activities that were evident when families engaged in game-playing in out-of-school contexts, it is important to first provide some description of the games that families played together. Therefore, in this section, I will first discuss *the task operations and demands* (i.e., what was required to complete the task of game-playing) that were similar and distinct across the four households. As highlighted in Table 5.6, Beatriz and Elena's households both mostly played *Lotería*, a Mexican game similar to Bingo. The first step in this game is for every player to choose a *tabla* (i.e., a board with a randomly created 4 x 4 grid of pictures with their corresponding name).

There is also a deck of 54 cards, each with a different image that potentially matches the player's *tabla*. To start the game, the *cantor* (i.e., the caller) randomly selects a card from the deck and announces it to the players by its name. The players with a matching image on their board mark it off with a marker (traditionally small rocks or beans are used). To finalize his or her win, the first player with four markers placed in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row shouts "¡Lotería!"

Elena's household also played the *Memory* game, in which cards are laid out facedown on a grid. The players take turns flipping pairs of cards over. On each turn, the player first flips one card over, then a second. If the two cards match, the player scores a point; the two cards are removed from the game, and the player gets another turn. If they do not match, the cards are turned back over. The objective is to match more pairs of cards than the opposing player by remembering where each card was located. *Let's Go Fishin'* was another game that was popular in Elena's house. This game comes with a rotating plastic pond in which fish move up and down as they circle, as well open and close their mouths. The players have to catch as many of these fish as they can with small plastic fishing rods.

Monopoly was popular in Beatriz's household. Monopoly is a game developed in the United States in which players move around the game board buying or trading properties, developing their properties with houses and hotels, and collecting rent from their opponents—the ultimate goal is to drive the other players into bankruptcy. Jenga, another game often played in Beatriz's house, focuses more on motor skills. Players first stack 54 wooden blocks in a tower. They then take turns pulling each block out of the stack without letting the tower collapse. The person who removes the last block without ruining the tower wins the game.

Yolanda only owned *Zingo*, which like *Loteria*, was a version of Bingo. In this game, there is a *Zingo* "machine", which randomly spits out picture cards in English. Children have

Zingo boards filled with a random assortment of images with Spanish labels that potentially correspond to the English picture cards. Players place the picture cards on top of the images on their tables that match up. The game can also be played where the picture cards are in Spanish and the corresponding names on the tiles are in English. There are eight double-sided Zingo cards and 72 picture tiles.

Lastly, Rosa and her daughter played more active games such as jump rope, Just Dance Kids, and Twister. Just Dance Kids is a video game in which players dance to popular children's songs in English (e.g., Alphabet Song, Bingo). The lyrics to the songs are printed at the bottom of the screen, so players have the choice of whether they wish to sing along. The players who can most accurately copy the dance moves that are modeled by the characters on their television screen get more points. Twister is played on a large plastic mat that is spread on the floor or ground. The mat has four rows of large colored circles with a different color in each row, i.e., red, yellow, blue and green. A spinner is attached to a square board and is used to determine where the player has to put their hand or foot. The spinner is divided into four labeled sections: right foot, left foot, right hand and left hand. Each of those four sections is divided into the four colors (red, yellow, blue and green). After spinning, the combination is called (e.g., "left hand blue") and players must move their matching hand or foot to a circle of the correct color. Due to the scarcity of colored circles, players will often have to place themselves in unlikely or precarious positions, eventually causing someone to fall. A person is eliminated when they fall or when their elbow or knee touches the mat. There is no limit to how many can play at once, but more than four is a tight fit. In sum, these are the games that I observed participants playing in out-of-school settings.

Who participated in game-playing within and across households was similar and also

varied across households. Elena's whole family played *Loteria* together, while the boys sometimes played other games on their own. In Beatriz's home, she participated in playing *Loteria, Jenga*, and *Monopoly* with both her younger and older daughter but her husband was not involved in these activities. Yolanda and José principally played *Zingo* together because Juliana, her ten-year old daughter, felt that she was too old to play games. In Rosa's household, she would play *Just Dance Kids, Twister*, and jump rope with her daughter because they usually played afterschool when her husband was still working. He engaged more in media literacy with Marcia, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

Certain similarities were evident in the participants' cultural values around out-of-school game-playing. For instance, Elena and her husband felt that playing games was an ideal means of spending quality time with one's family. Beatriz also shared that game-playing was a way for her to spend quality time with her two daughters. In our interviews, Elena and her husband emphasized the importance of playing games that taught children about their Mexican heritage and fostered native language development. The following vignette illustrates this family's cultural values around playing *Loteria*:

Description. After her husband gets home from work—Elena, her husband, and their two sons (Diego, 2 and Pablo, 5) gather in the living room. All four members of the family are about to play *Loteria* together. Elena stands close to the table; her husband is seated on the couch facing the game. Diego assumes the role of the *cantor* (i.e., caller). Figure 5.1 is a photograph of the *Loteria* game (i.e., cards and board). Figure 5.2 shows the two children, Diego and Pablo, playing *Loteria*.



Figure 5.1. Lotería cards and boards.



Figure 5.2. Diego and Pablo playing Lotería.

Transcript. Diego: ¡Usico²¹!

Elena: Ah, tienes el músico. [Oh, you have the musician.]²²

Husband: ¿Dónde está? Pues, déjalo donde lo ves. [Where is it? Well, leave it where you see it.]

Diego: No. Trella. [No. Trella.]

Elena: Allí... Tienes la estrella. [There... You have the star.]

Diego: *In announcer voice-* La estrella. [The star.]

Elena: ¿Pablo, tienes una estrella? [Pablo, do you have the star?]

Pablo: No. [No.]

Elena: ¿Diego, tienes la estrella? [Diego, do you have the star?]

Diego: Si. [Yes.]

Elena: Pues, cámbiele aquí. [Well, change it here.]

²¹ Diego is attempting to pronounce the word músico (i.e., musician) in Spanish. Since he is two years old and experimenting with language production, he says $\dot{u}sico$.

22 I have placed the English translation of the Spanish dialogue in this vignette in brackets.

Diego: ¡Bera! [Bera!]

Elena: La calavera. ¿Diego, tienes la calavera? [The Skull. Diego, do you have the skull?]

Diego: No. [No.]

Elena: ¿Pablo, tienes la calavera? [Pablo, do you have the skull?]

Pablo: No. [No].

Elena: Síguele, Diego. ¿Y ese? ¿Qué es? [Keep going, Diego. And that one? Which is it?]

Pablo: Coo coo roo coo. He makes the sounds of a rooster.

Elena: El gallo. ¿Tienes el gallo...Diego o Pablo? [The rooster. Do you have the rooster...

Diego or Pablo?]

Elena: *To Diego-i* Que es éste? [What is this one?]

Pablo: ¡Yo la tengo! ¡Yo la tengo! [I have it! I have it!]

Diego: El pollo. [The chicken.]

Elena: They all laugh together, including Diego- No, amorcito. Es el cotorro. [No, love. It is the

parrot.]

Elena: ¿Tienes el cotorro? [Do you have the parrot?]

Husband: To Pablo-¿Qué es éste? [What is this one?]

Pablo: La pera. [The pear.]

Elena: La pera. Elena helps Diego and she points to each card. [The pear.]

Elena: La rana. ¿Tienes la rana? [The frog. Do you have the frog?]

Diego: ¡No!¡Es un froggy! [It is the froggy!]

Elena: Pues, es un froggy. No es la rana. *Elena smiles*. [Well, it is the froggy. It is not the frog.]

Discussion. The vignette elucidates how *Loteria* was a way for Elena's family to engage in a literacy activity that was deeply embedded in their cultural and linguistic practices. She and

her husband had played *Loteria* since their childhood in Mexico and had brought this tradition to the United States. Because *Loteria* cards included the name of the pictured character—the family used the cards to teach their children Spanish vocabulary words. Diego—at two years old—had played *Loteria* so frequently that he could readily identify the names of the objects on each card. Even though he could not fully pronounce the words because of his young age, the family gave Diego the opportunity to be the card caller. His brother, mother, and father aided his language and literacy production by pronouncing the entire word after Diego announced them (e.g., if he said úsico, Elena would say *músico*²³). Moreover, the children applied the English they learned in school to the game (e.g., Diego says the English name for the word frog when he sees the illustration on the playing card).

Loteria was also a means for the family to impart important life skills to the children. For instance, when Diego took on the role of the *Loteria* card caller, he learned that it was fine to make mistakes (e.g., he identifies one of the cards as a chicken instead of a parrot) and that it was not the end of the world (i.e. his family and he jovially laughed and he was provided with the information needed). Diego and Pablo also learned how to follow rules as well as leadership skills through *Loteria*.

Beatriz also played *Lotería* because this game helped her younger daughter learn common Spanish words such as *el gallo* (the rooster), *la araña* (the spider), *la escalera* (the stairs). *Lotería* also exposed Nancy to more unusual words, linked to historical references such as *el apache* (the Apache) and *el gorrito* (the bonnet). Yolanda played *Zingo* with her son, José, because she also felt that games were an optimal way to help her and her son develop their bilingual skills. In her case, however, the game was composed of bilingual words. Through *Zingo*, Yolanda and José were able to learn common English and Spanish vocabulary—such as

²³ Músico is the Spanish word for musician.

numbers (*uno*, i.e., one; *cinco*, i.e., five), verbs (*dice*, i.e., said; *tener*, i.e., have) conjunctions (*y*, i.e., and) and pronouns (*ellos*, i.e., they).

There were also some distinctions in the participants' cultural values around gameplaying. For instance, Beatriz thought that Nancy could learn rules and basic etiquette (e.g., turntaking, how to gracefully win/lose) by playing games at home. This reflected Beatriz's overall
emphasis on instilling a sense of propriety in her children. Yolanda, on the other hand, focused
on getting José to initiate all literacy-related activities—including game-playing. Rosa's main
cultural value regarding playing games was that games should be active rather than passive.
Since Rosa and her daughter played games almost every afternoon, Rosa believed that they both
should find the games interesting.

There were similarities in the ways that Elena and Beatriz's households engaged in gameplaying. For example, when the whole family wanted to play *Loteria* together, both families
would wait for all family members to come home. Before that time, Elena's children would
usually play other games with each other. When Elena's family played *Loteria*, the children
mostly took on the role of the card caller. Sylvia, Beatriz's older daughter, was usually the caller
because her mother wanted her to model the role for Nancy. At Yolanda's house, they only
played *Zingo* if José grabbed it from near the television stand. Similar to Elena's household, José
enjoyed being the caller, while Yolanda would help him with words he could not pronounce.
Rosa's daughter, Marcia, played jump rope on her own most of the time. However, they both
played *Just Dance For Kids*, on the Nintendo *Wii* that the family had received as a gift and
would take turns seeing who earned more points when executing their dance moves. They both
sang along to classic American children's songs such as *The Wheels on the Bus* and the *Alphabet Song* because they had both learned those songs at Nuestra Comunidad.

In terms of the purposes or goals that participants seemed to bring to their game-playing, there were also similarities and dissimilarities. In our interviews, Rosa revealed that she and her daughter played games primarily as a ways to have fun and engage in activities they both enjoyed (e.g., dancing and singing). Other mothers shared that their goals for engaging in gameplaying were also shaped by school-based beliefs and practices. For instance, all of the mothers stated that language learning was one of their goals when they played games. Elena and Beatriz used the games as a way to incite a love of the Spanish language in their children. Elena and Yolanda both liked how certain games fostered print literacy skills in their children. In Elena's case, her children learned to match words with their *Loteria* images. Yolanda believed that *Zingo* was a fun way for her son to learn and practice word and image recognition, matching, spelling, vocabulary, and to exercise his memory. Yolanda and Rosa used games as another way to foster bi-literacy for themselves and their children. As I observed with activity settings analyses in the religious domain, there was some overlap in the employment of recreational/familial literacy activities employed across households; however, each person actively molded the activity to fit in with their cultural values and goals.

Role of Television-Watching in Families' Literacy Practices

An artifact that was present in all of the participants' households is the television. As seen with the other artifacts that were discussed in this chapter, there were both similarities and differences in the participants' interactions around television. Table 5.7 provides the activity settings for the families' out-of-school literacy activities centered on television-watching.

Table 5.7

Use of Family/Recreational Artifacts (Television)

Activity Dimensions			Households
	E1	D 4 .*	X7.1.

Activity Dimensions	T	Housenoids			
	Elena	Beatriz	Yolanda	Rosa	
Participants	Principally Diego and Pablo together; rarely Elena and her husband (alone and together)	Beatriz, Nancy, Sylvia, husband (alone and together)	Yolanda, José together; Juliana alone	Marcia and Rosa's husband; Rosa alone	
Cultural values	a) Television is not an educational activity and primarily a waste of time and should be limited; b) There is less interaction between family members when they spend time watching TV than when engaged in other activities, such as shared reading or arts and crafts.	a) Television captivates child's interest in learning language and facts in interesting/ innovate manner; b) Television way for family to spend quality time together talking about programs/ making connections to their lives	a) Television captivates child's interest in learning language and facts in interesting/ innovate manner; b) Interactive television-watching should be initiated/employed by child b) Through television learning could occur when done both independently and with others	a) Television- watching opportunity for her daughter to engage in educational activities; b) Television- watching way for daughter and her husband to spend quality time together	
Task operations and demands	One television in living room (parent controlled). Clifford, Thomas the Train in English (children); cooking shows in Spanish (Elena); soccer games in Spanish (husband)	One television in living room (children and adults have access). Dora the Explorer in Spanish and English, Diego in Spanish and English, Barney in English, Super Why in English scientific shows on KLCS/PBS in English, reality shows in English (e.g., American Idol) and Spanish (e.g., Q' Viva) (whole family)	One television in living room, another television in bedroom (children and adults have access based on schedule). Cars in English, Mickey Mouse in English, shows on the Disney Channel (José and Yolanda); Spanish soap operas (Yolanda); MTV2, reality shows in English (Juliana)	One television in living room, which also functioned as their bedroom (children and adults have access). Dora the Explorer in English and Spanish, Diego in English and Spanish (Marcia and Rosa's husband); Spanish soap operas (Marcia and Rosa); soccer games in Spanish (Rosa's husband)	
Forms of participation	a) Children watched their favorite	a) Beatriz and Nancy got	a) José watched shows in English on	a) Marcia watched	

	Elena	Beatriz	Yolanda	Rosa
Purposes/goals	children's shows together once a week for thirty minutes in English while Elena cooked lunch; b) Elena watched cooking shows in Spanish once in a while when the children were asleep and her husband worked the night shift; c) Husband watched soccer games in Spanish on the Telemundo channel when Mexican national team played a) Television was a rare treat for kids when they behaved; b) Form of leisure for husband who loved watching soccer; c) Elena enjoyed cooking so learned new recipes with television show on PBS	home together from school and watched children's shows in English and Spanish together on the bed; b) When Sylvia and her father got home, the family watched both children's shows as well as reality shows together in English and Spanish. a) Way for Beatriz and Nancy to learn English together; b) Beatriz uses TV as tool to teach Nancy school-based language and literacy practices c) Form of leisure and fun for family	the Disney channel everyday after he got home from school- alone and with his mother; b) Juliana watched music videos (e.g., Justin Bieber) in English alone when she got home from school; c) Yolanda watched Spanish soap operas when children were sleeping. a) José could learn English vocabulary and grammar through Disney shows that interested him; b) Way for Yolanda and José to engage in conversation with one another; c) Soap operas at night were a time for Yolanda to decompress and a source of conversation with the other mothers—they talked about plot, settings, characters, etc. d) Juliana loved music and popular	television while Rosa did chores around house. When husband got home, he watched children's shows in English and Spanish with daughter; b) Rosa watched Spanish soap operas when her husband was working and Marcia napped in the late afternoons; c) Husband watched weekend soccer games on Telemundo channel in Spanish. a) Television was a way for Marcia's dad and her to bond because he worked so many hours; b) Watching cartoons was a means for Rosa's husband to engage in discussions with his daughter about bilingual vocabulary words and grammar; c) Nightly soap operas were a time for Rosa to decompress; source of

Table 5.7 shows resemblances and divergences of the family members who participated in out-of-school television-watching across the four households. For instance, Elena's two sons were the most frequent television watchers in her home. Elena and her husband independently watched television shows related to their personal interests but generally rarely watched TV.

In contrast, all of Beatriz's family engaged in television-watching every afternoon and/or evening. Television-watching was part of their daily routine and they actively discussed and analyzed shows together. Yolanda's children did most of the television-watching in her household. She watched television if she had time on the nights she was not working as a cook at a nearby restaurant. Rosa's husband and her daughter mostly watched bilingual cartoons together after he got home from work. When there was time while her husband was working and Marcia napped in the afternoon, Rosa would try to catch an episode of her favorite Spanish soap opera. When her husband had time off from his job as a gardener and a soccer game was on television, he would watch it.

The mothers' cultural values towards television-watching were also simultaneously similar and different across the four households. Elena's attitude towards television-watching was quite similar to the ideology espoused by Nuestra Comunidad staff. She did not think television was a literacy tool; rather, she saw it as a waste of time that detracted from engaging in what she believed to be more interactive and meaningful educational activities (e.g., reading books together, scrapbooking, playing board games). Elena thought television was an activity that made people retreat into themselves and stifled communication.

Beatriz believed that television was just as important as book-reading in fostering language and literacy skills. She also asserted that television was a fun way to teach Nancy school-based literacy skills such as discussing plot, characters, and asking predictive and open-

ended questions. Thus, Beatriz thought that television was an asset to learning rather than something that should be eliminated.

Yolanda similarly believed that television programs for children frequently integrated visuals and music and that they could naturally captivate young children's interest in learning language, interesting facts, as well as reading and writings skills. Furthermore, Yolanda appreciated that television was a way for her family to come together and engage in learning practices. As was evident with other literacy practices, Yolanda felt that using television as a literacy tool should be child-led. The following vignette exemplifies Yolanda's cultural values around the out-of-school literacy practice of television-watching:

Description. Yolanda and José returned to their apartment after Nuestra Comunidad classes were over for the day. Yolanda made tacos in the kitchen while José went to the living room and turned on the television. He changed the channel with the remote control until he found the Mickey Mouse show on the Disney Channel. Once he found the show, he ran into the kitchen to get Yolanda to join him in the living room.

Transcript. José: ¡Ven! [Come!]²⁴ (to Yolanda).

Yolanda: ¿Qué quieres? [What do you need?].

José: ¡Ven! [Come!].

Yolanda: ¿Quieres un boli? ¿Fresas? ¿Jugo? [Do you want a Popsicle? Strawberries? Juice?].

José grabs her hand and takes her to the living room, motioning for her to sit on the couch next to him. He walks over to the television and looks for a book, returning with a book about Mickey Mouse.

José: ¡Ven! ¡Ven! ¡Mira Mickey, Donald, Pluto! [Come! Come! Look at Mickey, Donald, Pluto!]. *He points at each of the illustrations of the characters in the book and then at the TV.*

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²⁴ The English translation for the Spanish dialogue is provided in brackets.

Then he points at Pluto taking a bubble bath on TV.

Yolanda: Si, mira... se baña como tú. [Yes, look... he takes a bath like you].

José: Se baña. [He bathes]. *José runs and grabs soap from the bathroom.*

Yolanda: Si. Siempre Mickey y Pluto se bañan con jabón. [Yes. Mickey and Pluto take baths with soap]. *José points at Yolanda, then at Mickey and Pluto in his book and on the TV. He then pretends he is lathering up with soap.*

Yolanda: Yo también. Yo siempre me baño con jabón. Y también Mickey... Y Pluto... y tu también [Me too. I always bathe with soap. And Mickey...And Pluto...And you too]. *She pretends to lather while José flips through his Mickey book while watching the Mickey Mouse show on TV*.

As was highlighted previously with the examples of read-alouds and game-playing, Yolanda provided José with the freedom to initiate literacy activities around television-watching. He elected the show he wanted to watch, frequently chose a book that connected to that show, asked questions, pointed out observations, and made comments about the book. As evidenced with the vignette, children's televisions shows often centered on teaching children lessons crucial to their overall development—such as hygiene. Yolanda shared in an interview that television helped initiate José's interest in topics such as showering, brushing one's teeth, taking turns, and basic etiquette.

Rosa, like Beatriz and Yolanda, felt that television was an asset that could be used for learning, particularly English vocabulary and grammar. Rosa also valued that watching television was a special time that her husband and daughter could spend together learning language, about the world, and each other. He was not home a lot because he worked far from home, so watching-television was a special time to bond with his daughter. The following

vignette highlights the rich learning and bonding that took place during Rosa's husband and her

daughter spent time watching television together:

Description. Rosa's family lived in a one-bedroom apartment. They rented out the

master bedroom because they could not afford the apartment on their own. Their living room

also functioned as their bedroom and this was where the television set was located. On this

particular afternoon, Marcia sat cross-legged on the bed. Her father was seated next to her in his

favorite chair. Rosa was at the kitchen table filling out MediCal paperwork but could see the

television from that spot. Marcia changed the channel to watch *Dora the Explorer*.

Transcript. Dora the Explorer tells the viewer, "When you see what you see, yell it out

to me." Text and images of vocabulary words appear throughout the show. An image of the

ocean flashes on the screen.

Marcia's father: Es un *island*. [It's an island].

Marcia: No papí. Es un *sea*. [It's the sea].

Dora the Explorer sings and confirms Marcia's response.

Marcia's father: Ay, tú ganastes. [Ah, you won].

Marcia and her dad clap together to beat of the music. With every other beat Dora says one of

the vocabulary words for the episode (e.g., sea, island, bridge, and kingdom).

Dora the Explorer: Say backpack.

Marcia and her father: (in unison)- Backpack.

An image of a backpack appears then multiple numbers of backpacks. The viewer is asked to

point to the number that shows the number of backpacks on the screen. Marcia's dad makes this

into a game—who can guess the number first. Three backpacks appear first.

Marcia's dad: Tres. [Three].

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Marcia: Tres. Three! Six backpacks appear.

Marcia: Seis. [Six].

Marcia's dad: Six. Seis.

The vignette clearly reveals that Marcia's father used the *Dora the Explorer* show as a means of working with his daughter on English and Spanish vocabulary, as well as the numerical system. The *Dora the Explorer* show became a jumping off point from which father and daughter could co-create games that built excitement around topics that could be considered mundane.

Lastly, an important activity setting to hone in on was the mothers' purpose and/or goal for participating in the out-of-school literacy activity of television-watching. Again, there were similarities and dissimilarities in the mothers' purposes and/or goals. For example, Elena and her husband's purpose for watching television was to immerse themselves in topics of interest (in her case: cooking; in his case: soccer). Because Elena subscribed to Nuestra Comunidad's idea that young children should be involved in more educational and interactive activities, she only allowed Pablo and Diego to watch television once a week if she thought they had good behavior. Thus, Elena used it as a rare reward for her children. The other three families all saw the educational potential of television—some for themselves and others for the family as a whole. Beatriz, like Yolanda and Rosa's husband, purposefully used television as a way to teach schoolbased literacy practices to the children. Yolanda and Rosa both used time spent watching Spanish soap operas as a way to decompress from the stress in their lives. The manner in which some of these literacy activities around television transferred to the school site will be discussed in the next chapter.

Concluding Thoughts

The objective of this chapter was to provide readers with a rich description of my participants' out-of-school literacy practices. I began by using Farr (1994) and Orellana et al.'s (2003) family literacy domain frameworks, which call for a listing of all literacy artifacts present in families' homes and subsequently categorizing them into eight literacy domains (i.e., religion, commercial, state/legal, educational, family/recreational, community, financial, and medical). Examining artifacts in this manner was useful for this study because the presence of a wide array of literacy artifacts in each of the families' homes quickly became evident. Some literacy artifacts that were clearly visible in the four households were bibles, MediCal documents, Avon catalogs, as well as an assortment of books and magazines borrowed from or donated by Nuestra Communidad. Other artifacts, particularly those in the financial (e.g., credit card or bank statements, mortgage payments) and community domains (e.g., social security cards) were observed in some households but not in others. Since this was an ethnographic study, I also had the opportunity to conduct observations and interviews, which enabled me to gain a better understanding of why such variation occurred. For instance, based on my ethnographic interviews I found that in only Elena's household, adults and children had social security cards. None of the other mothers in this study had social security cards because they were undocumented and they kept their children's social security cards hidden in private places because of the value that they ascribed to them. Such pertinent information might have been overlooked if I had only chosen to rely on the family literacy domains for my analysis. Simply looking at artifacts could not tell me who used these artifacts, what they did with them, as well as where, when, why and/or how people used them.

In order to address these multilayered types of questions, in the final part of this chapter, I

used activity settings analysis (Gallimore and Goldenberg, 1993) and unpacked the families' use of a) religious artifacts, b) games, and c) television (because these were among the most common kinds of artifacts that I observed in all four households). Gallimore and Goldenberg's (1993) framework divides literacy activities into five integral components (i.e., who participates, their cultural values, task operations and demands, forms of participation, and purposes/goals). This analytical tool helped me decipher similarities *and* differences that were apparent in the families' engagement with religious artifacts, games, and television because its five categories provided a convenient way to visually assess which information overlapped and/or diverged (e.g., between family members and across households).

Moreover, through this analysis, I found that out of the five activity setting categories, cultural values as well as purposes or goals most greatly influenced how my participants used particular literacy artifacts. For example, as stated previously, all four families had bibles in their homes. However, the ways in which they used the bible converged and diverged with one another; their cultural values or goals for reading the bible often shaped the ways in which they approached bible use. For instance, none of the families read bibles with the explicit intent of teaching their children discrete literacy skills (e.g., phonemic awareness). Rather, according to interviews, Elena and Beatriz firmly believed that the bible's primary function was to provide people with comfort and strength during difficult times. These mothers routinely read bible passages with their young children, with the hope that their kids would eventually pick up on these same beliefs. Rosa and Yolanda, on the other hand, did not feel that bible-reading was a necessary practice to employ on a regular basis. These two mothers felt that religion was an institution that helped people develop a greater sense of ethics and morality. They felt that being a kind and generous person was of greater importance than participating in religious practices.

Rosa's husband was the adult figure who read the bible with his young daughter because he had similar beliefs to Elena and Beatriz regarding the bible's role in fostering a sense of hope in humanity. Yolanda only read the bible if she wanted to refer to a specific passage that supported an ethical lesson she wanted to relay to her children. Although all of the families engaged in literacy activities, to some degree, when they used these religious artifacts (reading bible passages, discussing plot, memorizing prayers, reciting prayer cards)—fostering literacy skills through the use of religious artifacts was not one of their stated goals. Rather the cultural value of engaging in and passing on religious and/or ethical principles primarily drove how the individuals in this study used their religious artifacts—in similar and dissimilar ways.

Comparable patterns emerged in my analysis of the families' game-playing practices. For example, all of the families acknowledged that a major goal in playing games was to develop language skills. In Rosa's case, both she and her daughter practiced English by singing along to mainstream American childhood tunes such as the *Alphabet Song* and *The Wheels on the Bus*. Yolanda and her son fostered their Spanish and English vocabulary by playing a bilingual game similar to *Bingo* called *Zingo*. Elena and Beatriz's families played a popular game in Mexico also likened to *Bingo* called *Loteria* because it helped their young children learn Spanish words that they could use in school and in everyday conversation (e.g., *la estrella*- the star, *las escaleras*-the stairs). There were also clear differences evident in the participants' cultural values around game-playing such as Yolanda's belief that children should initiate these types of activities or Rosa's assertion that games should be both educational and active. Similar to the use of religious artifacts, it was apparent that the participants' goals and cultural values greatly influenced the types of games the played as well as the activities they engaged in while playing these games.

Television was another artifact that all of the participants in this study used in similar and distinct ways. Moreover, it was apparent that the participants' goals and cultural values around television greatly influenced the activities they chose to engage in while they watched TV. For instance, Beatriz, Yolanda, and Rosa all used television as an opportunity to engage in learning activities with their children, e.g., discussing and summarizing plot, making predictions, teaching vocabulary words. All three of these mothers also utilized television as a way to develop English and/or bilingual skills. Elena's cultural values and goals around television-watching were distinct from the other participants. She firmly subscribed to the idea taught at Nuestra Comunidad, which was that television-watching was not an educational activity and that her children's time could be better spent reading or involved in family traditions (such as creating arts and crafts). Her primary use of television was to intermittently reward her children for their behavior so that they could relax and be entertained. In sum, television, like all of the other artifacts discussed in this chapter, was used by the participants in similar and divergent manners. The families' use of their televisions was most greatly influenced by their cultural values and goals for watching television—some of these involved engaging in literacy activities while others did not. The next chapter will address the ways in which Nuestra Comunidad's cultural values and goals impacted how families employed these out-of-school literacy practices at the school site.

CHAPTER 6

Introduction: Movement of Out-of-School Literacy Practices to Nuestra Comunidad

In chapter 4, I examined the ways in which mothers took up and transferred school-based literacy practices to out-of-school settings. I found that mothers moved many of these in-school practices (e.g., reading aloud to children, creating a family tree scrapbook) to out-of-school contexts. The transfer of the practices was greatly influenced by various factors—particularly participants' cultural values, as well as their goals or purpose for wanting and/or needing to participate in literacy activities. Chapter 5 then described the plethora of *out-of-school language* and literacy practices that the families engaged in when in out-of-school contexts. These included the use of religious artifacts, watching television, and playing games such as *Loteria*. This chapter will now address how *out-of-school language* and literacy activities (e.g., playing games like *Loteria*) made their way to the *school site*.

Most previous research has emphasized the mismatch between home and school language and literacy practices. If I were to follow this line of thinking in my research, I could simply say that many of the families engaged in literacy practices, such as *Loteria*, at home but these practices were not evident at Nuestra Comunidad. Such a cursory analysis prevents us from looking more deeply into the detailed ways in which literacy practices are moved from one context to the next. Perhaps we should also ask: What skills or knowledge learned from out-of-school practices, such as watching shows like *Dora the Explorer*, transferred to the school site? What aspects of these practice made their way to Nuestra Comunidad; which did not; and why? Therefore, this chapter examines the types of out-of-school literacy practices that families brought to Nuestra Comunidad in different forms. By taking on this lens, I acknowledge that one context is not entirely void of another, since *people* are catalysts and active agents in the

movement of language and literacy practices. When individuals and groups travel across contexts—they carry certain ideas, ideologies, and skills sets with them. Each context they encounter can shape and impact the ways in which they interpret and apply language and literacy practices within and between contexts. In this chapter, I will use vignettes, interviews, and activity settings analyses to answer my second and third research questions. In sum, I will unpack the varying ways in which families employed out-of-school literacy practices at the school site, as well as the continuities and discontinuities that were evident with this movement of practices.

Impact of Ideologies on Movement of Out-of-School Literacy Practices to School Site

As highlighted in chapter 4, the teachers' curricula and pedagogical practices were greatly influenced by their ideologies regarding language and literacy. These teachers were also affected by pressure from the administration for their students to meet certain criteria, which were directly linked to the program's funding. Harriet's class time was generally spent teaching directly from the English as a Second Language workbook because in her ESL teacher training and professional experience she had learned it was the best way for students to learn English. Students spent most of the class independently filling out answers to workbook questions and parroting vocabulary words and verb conjugations. The workbook units were mostly centered on topics that were not a part of the families' everyday lives (e.g., ice skating, fishing). Moreover, Spanish was not encouraged in Harriet's classroom. In fact, Harriet discouraged its use in her classroom because she felt English immersion would help mothers in a new country where they would predominantly encounter English. She dedicated her life work to helping mothers learn English as quickly and efficiently as possible because she felt it would help them acclimate better to life in the U.S.

Harriet's students were required to fill out ESL goals and reach specific benchmarks set forth by funders on their end-of-unit workbook exams. Every morning, she posted a schedule on the board; her focus was to get through it as efficiently as possible. Because of her stringent classroom management and curricular protocols, many of the out-of-school literacy practices that mothers engaged in when in out-of-school contexts had to be employed in a covert manner.

Jamie was more open to incorporating mothers' cultural and linguistic practices into her curriculum. However, this was mostly done in the form of adopting a culturally relevant curriculum (see chapter 4's discussion on the Latino Family Literacy Project). She encouraged mothers to speak in Spanish and asked them for help when she did not know a word. Jamie mostly taught her family literacy course in Spanish, which helped mothers focus on the curriculum rather than on translating the information. Yet, Jamie still ascribed to many dominant White, middle-class ideologies and practices in the area of literacy. She felt that it was imperative for families to learn these dominant language and literacy Discourses because they would be valued and privileged in their children's future schools. Jamie believed that if families were not exposed to mainstream language and literacy practices—they would be at a disadvantage. Her curriculum primarily centered on teaching mothers how to implement schoolbased reading and writing strategies in their homes (e.g., read alouds, pre-emergent scribbling, singing nursery rhymes). Mothers were able to share how they implemented and adapted these school-based strategies in out-of-school contexts. However, there was not a lot of time, if any, for mothers to incorporate out-of-school literacy practices which were not derived from schoolbased practices (e.g., Lotería) into Jamie's class.

How Did Mothers Employ Out-of-School Literacy Practices at School?

Despite the fact that the school generally subscribed to, as well as routinely enforced dominant literacy practices, mothers *did* bring out-of-school literacy practices to Nuestra Comunidad in varying ways. The following section of this chapter will describe what these practices looked like when they were moved to the school site.

Functional literacy practices.

Mothers were quite aware of Nuestra Comunidad's disciplined schedule and their prescriptive curriculum. They were careful about which out-of-school literacy activities they would implement in the classrooms during class time. Out-of-school functional literacy practices were one of the most salient activities that were observed at the school site because mothers could engage in these practices and still feign completing required coursework. Three of the most frequent out-of-school functional literacy activities to make their way to Nuestra Comunidad revolved around a) the use of Avon catalogs, b) letter writing, and c) flyers.

Avon.

Avon is an American company that manufactures and distributes beauty, household, and personal care products. It is the fifth-largest beauty company in the world; Avon has 6.4 million representatives, most of which are women (Kowitt, 2005). The company's principal ways of advertising its products are via door-to-door sales and brochures. The company has training centers where sales representatives learn about Avon products and helpful sales techniques. Avon employs independent sales representatives, which means their employees do not have to adhere to a fixed quota or schedule and can work out of their homes.

Because many of the mothers in the Nuestra Comunidad program had young children,

Avon was an ideal means of making extra money due to the time flexibility. Yolanda, Beatriz,

and Rosa were all Avon sales representatives. Elena's husband discouraged her from selling Avon because he wanted her to spend time as much time as possible with the children since he worked so many hours. Mothers brought their Avon catalogs everywhere because there was usually a potential buyer in their community circles (e.g., friends, acquaintances, family, coworkers, local business employees). Some of these clients were monolingual, so the mothers had Spanish and English Avon brochures. Yolanda, Beatriz, and Rosa all shared that prior to attending Nuestra Comunidad, they only used Avon catalogs as a means of showing clients products in order to make money.

After these mothers joined the Nuestra Comunidad program, they eventually brought their Avon catalogs and brochures to the school site. The ways in which they initially used Avon catalogs in out-of-school contexts were both replicated and modified while at the school site. Mothers exchanged Avon catalogs during their English as a Second Language and family literacy classes with the initial intent of selling products. However, the exchanges had to occur with discretion—particularly in Harriet's English as a Second Language class—because her curriculum and class objectives were clearly delineated and she checked whether students were on task in her class. Although Jamie was more open to the possibility of incorporating culturally relevant activities into her curriculum, she did not view Avon catalogs as potential tools that facilitated mothers' language and literacy development. In order to make their Avon exchanges more discreet, Rosa and Yolanda shared that they initially pretended that they were completing their course work. In Harriet's class, the mothers would look at Avon catalogs together under the table while they pretended to be working on the ESL workbook, which sat opened up to the page that Harriet wanted to focus on for the day. When mothers were interested in buying a product and did not know what a certain word meant in the description of the product, they would look

up words in the dictionary or their Smartphones under the table, as well as ask other moms for the meaning of unknown words. This occurred in a covert manner because the teachers would have assumed that the mothers were off task, although mothers were engaged in rich collaborative language and literacy activities, which they felt were more relevant to their everyday lives than decontextualized workbook units centered on fishing and ice skating.

Figure 6.1 shows a sample page taken from an English Avon brochure that the mothers brought to class.



Figure 6.1. Sample Avon catalog page.

As you can see above, there are words (e.g., advance, technique, treatments) in this ad that might present some difficulty for English learners who are at beginner levels. However, the mothers in this study were determined to problem solve words they did not know and were able to find creative ways with which to do so. For instance, during one of my observations, Yolanda was working on translating the vocabulary that appears in Figure 6.1. She mentioned that she was able to use Spanish cognates to help her find the English meanings. For instance, she

thought technique sounded like the Spanish word *técnica* and advanced sounds like *avanzado*. Yolanda then looked at her Spanish/English dictionary to pleasantly find that her hunches were correct. Another mother in the program (who was not one of the four focal mothers) was looking through an Avon catalog at eye creams and realized she did not know the meaning of the word *creamy*. Beatriz was trying to sell her these products and they looked up the Spanish definition and description of the word creamy in her Spanish/English dictionary. Beatriz kept a separate notebook where she logged in useful translations of these Avon vocabulary words with accompanying Spanish translations. A technique that Rosa used in helping her translate English words in the Avon catalog was to compare and contrast the words in the Spanish versus the English brochure.

Yolanda, Rosa, and Beatriz revealed that trying to learn as many vocabulary words in English as possible from the Avon catalogs helped them advance their English language and literacy skills (e.g., ability to translate and describe objects). They also all maintained that Avon catalogs helped them learn to read in English more than their ESL workbooks because they wanted to learn vocabulary related to the Avon products since an increased understanding of product contents could help them increase their number of sales.

Avon catalogs were one of many mediums that elucidated the rich ways in which literacy practices can be replicated and modified when traveling from one context to another. The vocabulary learning among mothers that took place as a result of the exchange of Avon catalogs at Nuestra Comunidad extended to other settings. The mothers in my study used words such as *price*, *buy*, and *cost* (that they had learned through vocabulary exchanges and searches at school while looking at Avon catalogs) in out-of-school contexts such as the grocery store and pharmacy. Furthermore, mothers used Avon catalogs to engage in school-based literacy activities

with their children in out-of-school contexts. For instance, Rosa and Beatriz's daughters had to complete homework assignments in which they had to cut out pictures of objects that started with certain letters (e.g., the letter *b*). Rosa and Beatriz helped them with this homework activity by looking through their Avon catalogs with the girls and finding objects that started with *b* such as *brush*, *brows*, *blue*, *blush*. As is evident with this example, Avon catalogs were used as literacy tools and to participate in literacy activities across in-school and out-of-school contexts in both continuous and discontinuous ways.

Letter writing.

All of the mothers in the study, at some point, used class time to write handwritten letters. As with Avon catalogs, letter writing was a more feasible out-of-school literacy activity to employ in Nuestra Comunidad classrooms because mothers could pretend they were completing class work while they wrote their letters. According to the mothers in this study, writing letters in Spanish was an vital way of a) keeping in touch with loved ones and b) taking care of important matters in English (e.g., letters to teachers, landlords). For instance, all of the mothers in the study wrote letters to their families in Mexico and Honduras. Beatriz did not have Internet access at home or on her phone and her financial situation prevented her from buying calling cards. In order to maintain a connection with her family in Michoacán, Mexico—she wrote letters and mailed them out on a weekly basis. Beatriz used class time to write these letters because it was a quiet space where she did not have to focus on taking care of household chores or engaging with her children. The ESL and/or family literacy classes afforded one of the few times in Beatriz's day where she could quietly contemplate different aspects of her life and choose what she wanted to share in the letters she sent to her family in Mexico. Yolanda began writing letters at home every afternoon but could not finish them in one sitting because she worked the late

afternoon and night shift at a local restaurant, so she usually brought these letters to class with her the next day in order to complete them. Rosa and Elena informed me that they also brought letters to class because it was one of the few times in their day where they could sit down and think.

Mothers stated that they engaged in letter writing during Nuestra Comunidad classes because it was an opportunity to get help from one another. Beatriz, at times, had to write letters in English to her eighteen year-old daughter's high school teachers. Sylvia was graduating high school that year and Beatriz wanted to make sure that she was on track in her high school classes. Beatriz wrote the teachers letters to check in on Sylvia's academic progress as well as to ascertain whether she had completed core requirements to increase her chance of attending state universities. Beatriz often asked the other mothers in her ESL and family literacy classes for aid when she did not know how to spell certain words or with verb tenses (e.g., will be absent). Yolanda also wrote letters to her daughter's fifth grade teachers. She felt it was helpful to elicit help from other mothers because her main objective was to clearly communicate important messages to her daughter's teachers (e.g., figuring out due dates of projects, issues with testing, questions about report cards).

One of the main reasons Yolanda wrote letters across in and out-of-school contexts is because they were the only way she could communicate with her boyfriend who at the time of the study was incarcerated. They agreed to write each other weekly letters, which averaged anywhere from five to ten pages in length, making letter-writing a time consuming process. These letters included Spanish sayings, poems, and words of endearment and longing. Yolanda liked writing letters to her boyfriend at home as well as at school because she could utilize various sources of inspiration in each setting. At home, she looked through books of poetry and

at her Smartphone for different ways to express her love. At school, she asked other mothers about their favorite Spanish love poems and sometimes would incorporate them in her letters. She also frequently included lyrics of her favorite Spanish melodies—such as the Mexican rock group Mana's hit, *Vivir sin aire*²⁵. This song, as well as many others that were included in Yolanda's letters, used metaphors to represent longing for a lover that is absent from one's life (e.g., ¿Cómo pudiera un pez nadar sin agua? ¿Cómo pudiera un ave volar sin alas? ¿Cómo pudiera la flor crecer sin tierra? ¿Cómo quisiera poder vivir sin ti?²⁶). Yolanda's said that she could empathize with the song because of the physical separation that kept her apart from her partner. Letter writing was a way to bridge that gap and bring them closer under those circumstances. As a result, letter-writing felt like a necessity and Yolanda consciously spent time writing letters regardless of her location.

Rosa's letters also provided solace and a means of establishing a line of communication with her family in Honduras. Her parents took care of her son in her small hometown because she could not cross the border with him when she first came to the United States. Rosa called her Honduran family once a month with a calling card but these conversations usually revolved around wiring money to help out with her son. Rosa expressed herself candidly in the individualized letters that she created for her son, mother, and father. She asked her son about his friends, schoolwork, and living with his grandparents. She communicated wishes of trying to bring him to the United States so he could meet his sister and reunite with his father. These carefully crafted letters opened windows so that her family in Honduras could put together a better picture of her life in the United States and how important of a role they continued to play in her life. The letters were filled with stories about learning English, her daughter's likes and

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²⁵ In Spanish, *vivir sin aire* means to live without breathing.

²⁶ In English, these lyrics translate to: How could a fish swim without water? How could a bird fly without wings? How could a flower blossom without soil? How could I want to be able to live without you?

dislikes, as well as pictures of their life in California.

Elena also wrote letters to her family back home in Mexico. Her husband's family was all in California but she had left her entire family behind in her hometown. The most consistent way that they communicated was through letter writing and calling cards since Elena did not own a Smartphone or a computer. Elena and Rosa—like Beatriz and Yolanda—used class time as an opportunity to sit down, gather their thoughts, and try to bridge the physical distance that separated them from their loved ones through the words and sentiments that they expressed in their letters.

Condolence letters were also written in Nuestra Comunidad classrooms as well as during breaks between classes. Mothers in the program thought of each other as friends on whom they could rely during difficult times. For instance, one of the other mothers in the program, Cristina had a baby who was sick with the flu and his condition had significantly worsened. He was put in the intensive care unit and she had to miss a couple of weeks of Nuestra Comunidad classes. Elena led the mothers in coming together to write Cristina a letter sending her family well wishes. Cristina's son eventually recovered and she shared her gratitude for the other mothers' thoughtfulness and love during this turbulent time in her life. The staff at Nuestra Comunidad was supportive of writing such letters because they knew the mothers were a support system for one another. Jamie allowed mothers to work on these letters for short periods of class time. Harriet encouraged the writing of these letters but during classroom breaks because her priority was for mothers to learn English. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I ask readers to consider how an incorporation of these literacy activities could add more depth to the language and literacy learning that took place in Nuestra Comunidad classrooms. Also, how might teachers reconstruct their views of such practices and deem them relevant and as something to build upon

rather than restrict or eliminate?

Another powerful example that I observed in which letter-writing was an integrated part of the mothers' lives and a way of aiding their mental and physical well-being occurred when one of the mothers in the program, Juanita, had a miscarriage while five months pregnant. Juanita was physically quite ill and depressed; she could not bring herself to attend Nuestra Comunidad classes. Rosa was one of Juanita's closest friends. She spoke to the other mothers and they wrote Juanita a condolence letter filled with poetry, humor, some of their own experiences with miscarriage, and messages of hope and strength. They passed the letter along to each other under the table during class time and openly wrote their contributions during class breaks. After it was completed, a group of the mothers went to Juanita's house to hand deliver the letter. Juanita was overwhelmed at the beauty and love that exuded from the words that the mothers shared with her. She eventually made her way back to Nuestra Comunidad and recounted that a major factor in her return was the mothers' written words of encouragement. Such a simple act reveals how the power of literacy extends beyond rigid and prescribed practices. In this sense, literacy is utilized as a way of reading and making sense of the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987) and even more: Language and literacy sometimes offers hope and survival.

Flyers.

Class time also provided an ideal space for mothers to handle personal and business matters. One of the most salient out-of-school literacy activities that mothers brought to Nuestra Comunidad was the creation of simple handwritten flyers, which were used for renting out rooms in their homes. All of the mothers in this study shared their houses or apartments with other families. Beatriz's family resided in Elena's live-in garage. Rosa's family rented a small one-

bedroom apartment. In order to pay lower rent—Rosa, her husband, and daughter stayed in the living room so they could rent out the master bedroom. In their neighborhood, apartment sharing was a common practice because most families lived well below the poverty level (e.g., Yolanda's annual income was 3000 dollar per year). The most popular means of renting rooms was posting flyers on telephone poles and signposts. I accompanied Yolanda and Rosa on a regular basis while they put up their rental flyers because people would rip off each other's flyers from the posts in order to make space for their own. As a result, the flyers had to be constantly replaced if one wanted to gain a fair chance of renting a room. Figure 6.2 provides an example of a flyer that Rosa started writing in her home and completed during ESL class.

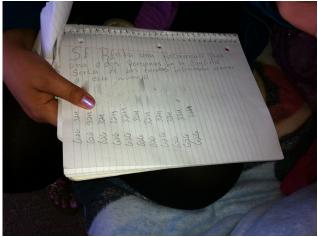


Figure 6.2. Rosa's room rental flyer.

The flyer said, "Se renta una recámara para una o dos personas en la calle Victoria—cerca de las tiendas. Interesados llamar a este número xxx-xxx-xxxx" (i.e., "A room is being rented for one or two people on Victoria Street, near the stores. If interested call this number xxx-xxx-xxxx"). The number was repeated about ten times on the bottom, on tails that could be torn off by interested persons.

As was evident in their letter writing, moms put together flyers during class because they did not have time to complete them in out-of-school contexts and/or they used class time as an

opportunity to draw from other mothers' knowledge of Spanish and English vocabulary and grammar. For instance, mothers helped one another come up with words and phrases they could use with the intent of encouraging people to call and inquire about renting a room. Rosa enlisted Yolanda's help in wording her rental flyer because Yolanda had various years of experience as a creator and consumer of these flyers. In fact, Yolanda had found her current apartment through flyers. The format that mothers used in their flyers closely resembled the example provided in Figure 6.2. They usually listed how many rooms were being rented, the number of people that could move in, the location of the apartment, and a contact number.

In sum, the out-of-school language and literacy activity of creating flyers extended to the school site partly because the mothers had more time and could enlist one another's help. However, there was a sense of urgency associated with the use of flyers. If the mothers did not rent the rooms, they risked losing an affordable place to live, as well as the possibility of having to sacrifice basic needs—such as food and utilities (e.g., gas, water, and power). Regardless of whether or not they were admonished for taking up class time while they finished their rental flyers, this was an activity that had become a part of the families' livelihoods. Creating flyers represented more than a literacy practice—it was an integrated and necessary activity in the families' daily lives, which consequently extended across in-school and out-of-school contexts.

Multimodal literacy practices.

The first section of this chapter focused on print-based literacy practices that transferred to varying degrees from out-of-school to in-school settings (i.e., Avon catalogs, letter writing, and flyers). The last two sections of this chapter will highlight how mothers engaged in out-of-school *multimodal* language and literacy practices at the school site. I begin with how families transferred the out-of-school literacy practice of television-watching to Nuestra Comunidad. The

final part of the chapter will unpack the innovative ways in which mothers' use of Smartphones crossed out-of-school and in-school boundaries.

Media literacy: Television-watching.

As highlighted in chapter 5, all of the participants utilized television as an instrument that was a fundamental part of their literacy toolkits. Beatriz shared the rich manners in which she engaged in media, online, and oral literacy practices with her young daughter in out-of-school contexts:

Nosotras vemos a Dora y Diego. Me gusta ver esos programas con mi hija en inglés. Ella me dice lo que las palabras significan. Si ella no sabe, yo lo busco en el diccionario y se lo digo. También vemos al canal KLCS porque te enseña muchas cosas — como animales construyen sus nidos y los tipos de animales que salen por la noche. Y Barney... yo pensaba que no enseñaba nada, pero nos enseña de cómo ser respetuosos y como aprender de otras culturas. Nancy y yo hablamos de lo que estamos aprendiendo mientras miramos al programa.

We watch Dora and Diego. I like to watch those programs with my daughter in English. She tells me what the words mean. If she doesn't know, I look it up in the dictionary and then tell her. We also watch a channel called KLCS because it teaches many things—like how animals construct their nests and types of animals that go out at night. And Barney... I thought that it did not teach anything but it teaches us how to be respectful and how to learn from other cultures. Nancy and I talk about what we are learning while we watch the show.

Beatriz's quote highlights how television-watching, contrary to many education stakeholders' misconceptions, actually provided a time for Beatriz and Nancy to foster school-based bilingual literacy skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, summarizing plot, questioning, discussing the themes of shows), as well as a jumping point for discussions about science, socialization practices, and learning about other people's cultural practices.

The school did not provide a space for families to replicate their out-of-school television-watching practices but I wondered whether and how the skills and knowledge that grew out of television-watching translated to the Nuestra Comunidad environment? In Beatriz's family's

case, Beatriz and her daughter applied a great deal of TV vocabulary to school-based literacy activities—in both written and spoken form. For instance—Beatriz, her husband, older daughter (Sylvia), and Nancy watched a show every week called *Super Why*. The show followed four friends—Alpha Pig with Alphabet Power, Wonder Red with Word Power, Princess Presto with Spelling Power, and Super Why with the Power to Read—collectively known as the Super Readers. The Super Readers used fairy tales to solve problems in their everyday lives and invited viewers to come into the pages of a magical storybook world and help them. Beatriz and her family followed along as the Super Readers read a story, talked with the characters in that story, played word games, and related the story's lesson to the problem they were trying to solve. Sylvia and Beatriz's husband helped translate the English words that were unfamiliar to Nancy and Beatriz. Beatriz, an avid storyteller, made connections between the fairy tales and her childhood in Mexico. Beatriz's family extended the show's theme and learning opportunities to other settings. They regularly looked for "super letters" in grocery stores, signs, or in places where the now familiar symbols might pop up.

At Nuestra Comunidad, I observed Nancy talking to other children about "super letters" and many of her classmates also watched the show and made similar links. The power of media literacy, in this case, extended to the school site. Rosa and Beatriz's daughters frequently talked about facts and bilingual words they learned in their favorite television shows *Dora the Explorer* and *Diego*. José made explicit links between his favorite Mickey Mouse shows and books at school. For instance, in the example provided in the previous chapter, José made a connection between how Pluto takes baths and how his mother and he bathed. Later that school year, I observed two-year old José looking at a book in his classroom called *Maisy Takes a Bath* and he made further connections between Maisy, Pluto, and his family taking baths. Television-

watching provided the impetus for these connections because José was a visual and auditory learner. He could spend more time simultaneously making links between books and television programs than merely sitting on his mother's lap and having a book read to him. Unfortunately, such practices were not acknowledged or utilized at Nuestra Comunidad. Teachers did not actively integrate children's knowledge that emerged from television-watching into the curriculum. Instead, students were disciplined for discussing topics that on the surface appeared to be unrelated to school assignments and activities. How could a curriculum that integrated media literacy at the early childhood level have added more to students' language and literacy practices?

At Nuestra Comunidad, media literacy was also not incorporated into the mothers ESL and family literacy curriculum. The use of literacy practices that arise from watching animation, videos, film, advertisements, and television, which were evident in the families' homes and other out-of-school contexts, were not drawn from nor utilized in classrooms by the school staff. However, as in the functional literacy practices highlighted in the first part of this chapter, mothers engaged in media literacy in their classrooms in clandestine manners. I observed Yolanda and Rosa using their Smartphones to watch and discuss YouTube videos that they found entertaining (e.g., music videos, clips of their family parties) or had learned information from (e.g., how to sell Avon products, tips in how to draw certain objects with their children). Beatriz, Rosa, and Yolanda also engaged in discussions about the plots and characters of their favorite films and television shows (e.g., novelas, American Idol) in order to de-stress from their hectic lives. These conversations would quietly happen at their classroom workstations because the discussions were discouraged by the teachers rather than utilized to foster language and literacy skills.

The rich learning that took place in my participants' households through watching television contrasted sharply with Nuestra Comunidad's ideologies regarding the use of media in the home. During one of my observations, one of the Head Start personnel came to give a lecture that focused on the detrimental effects of television-watching. He communicated to parents that television is a waste of time because it is normally used as a way to get children "to sit down and be quiet." He further stated that "television-watching should be limited to two hours or less" because mothers should spend time engaging in "meaningful and educational activities" with their children (Observation, 3/9/2012). How could looking at the various ways in which these families employed media literacy practices (secretly in-school and openly out-of-school) have changed this mainstream perception of the detrimental effects of television-watching?

Online literacy: Smartphones.

In out-of-school contexts, most of the participants in my study used Smartphones as a way to expand their linguistic and literacy repertoires. The four mothers also brought some of their out-of-school Smartphone language and literacy practices to the school site. As was evident in the example of media literacy, the mothers generally had to modify and/or abandon many of their Smartphone language and literacy practices when they were at school. When asked to compare her Smartphone usage in out-of-school versus in-school settings, Rosa shared:

En la noche cuando estoy viendo televisión me pongo a buscar muchas palabras que no sepa en el diccionario en mi teléfono. También uso ese diccionario en el salón... pero abajo de la mesa porque no le he dicho a la maestra que lo estoy usando. Va a pensar que estoy usando mi teléfono para textear.

At night, while watching television, I look for many words that I don't know in the dictionary app that's on my phone. Also, I use that dictionary in the classroom...but under the table because I haven't told the teacher that I am using it. She will think I am using it to text.

Rosa was determined to engage in language and literacy practices that she could employ as easily and efficiently as possible. She was busy balancing different aspects of her life (e.g., ESL and family literacy classes, child care, child's school needs, household chores, working at the local bakery, U.S. cultural practices). Rosa viewed the Smartphone as an ideal and convenient way to access knowledge and information because this portable device could be easily carried across contexts at any time of the day. One of the numerous ways that she used her Smartphone was to look up unfamiliar English words, which built upon her daily practice of television-watching. Rosa eventually began to naturally integrate her Smartphone with watching television to learn additional English words via her Smartphone. This language learning was not part of an assignment but rather something Rosa wanted to engage in on her own. When Rosa tried to extend the practice of using her Smartphone to figure out English words in her ESL class at Nuestra Comunidad, she was hesitant to do so because Nuestra Comunidad staff disapproved of any type of phone usage in class. The following vignette took place in the mothers' beginner ESL class and reveals that Rosa's perception of her teacher's disapproval was undoubtedly based on her witnessing Harriet's resistance to the use of technology in her classroom.

Description. Every morning, students in Harriet's ESL class would work as a whole class to answer questions in their workbooks. This class centered on *ing* and *ink* rhyming patterns.

Transcript. Harriet: Take out a piece of paper and write down the words I say. Wink, kink, mink, ink, rink. What is a rink? What is a rink? Anyone?

Blank stares...Dead silence

Yolanda: (Raises her hand)- Yo lo puedo buscar en mi diccionario (raises her Smartphone and smiles). In dictionary. Look (raises phone).

Harriet: (Shakes her head no). No, no. Not necessary. We don't need to use that. We need to

think.

The use of Smartphones as language and literacy tools was neither utilized nor accepted by Harriet because she wanted students to learn through print and books. There was a misconception that online tools (e.g., language dictionaries) made mothers too reliant on technology, which prevented mothers from "thinking" (i.e., problem solving and figuring out English vocabulary and grammar on their own). However, Harriet telling students to simply "think" about the meaning of the word *rink* did not foster their learning. No scaffolding was provided that might have been able to aid them in figuring out the answer—this was of particular importance given the word *rink*'s cultural distance from the mother's lives.

Through my observations and interviews—it became clear that Smartphones did not impede families' thinking; rather, Smartphones facilitated learning and information-seeking in both in-school and out-of-school contexts. It is important to note that although all of the mothers did not personally own Smartphones, they had some access to Smartphones in school and/or out of school. Using activity settings analysis, Tables 6.1 through 6.4 and the subsequent discussion describe and analyze the continuities and discontinuities that were evident in each family's use of Smartphones across contexts.

Table 6.1

Yolanda's Use of Her Smartphone As a Literacy Tool In School and Out of School

Activity Dimensions	Context	
	Out of School	In School
Participants	Yolanda, José (2) ^a , Juliana (10)	Yolanda, other mothers in ESL classes
Cultural values	Smartphones can help her problem solve, learn English in efficient, meaningful ways (e.g., DMV, market, text sister, help with kid's homework), connect via social media, seek information of interest.	Smartphones can help her/other moms problem solve, learn English in efficient, meaningful ways; Greater interest using Smartphone as bilingual language/literacy tool than decontextualized ESL curriculum.

	Out of School	In School
Task operation and Demands	Smartphone, knowledge of apps (e.g., Facebook, Tango, WhatsApp), online dictionaries, search engines, Navigation).	Smartphone, knowledge of Internet (e.g., online dictionaries, search engines, Wikipedia) English; ask questions in English/Spanish.
Forms of participation	Uses Smartphone as information-seeking device. E.g., Daughter has questions about homework, son has to learn colors in English/Spanish—finds free apps or online search engines. Also way to socialize.	During ESL class, mothers expected to fill out workbook. Mothers not allowed to use Spanish or Smartphones in classroom. Yolanda models/teaches moms how to use Smartphone, online dictionaries, search engines.
Purposes/goals	 a) Smartphone as reference; does not have to rely on others; b) Portable=can always access; c) Way for kids to independently access knowledge. 	a) Enjoys helping others; b) Can use Smartphone as reference; shares that it is empowering because doesn't rely on teacher as sole source of information.

Note. ^aNumbers in parentheses refer to children's ages.

Table 6.2
Rosa's Use of Her Smartphone As a Literacy Tool In School and Out of School

Activity Dimensions	ons Context	
	Out of School	In School
Participants	Rosa, husband, daughter	Rosa, other mothers in ESL classes
Cultural values	Smartphones can help her problem solve, learn English in efficient, meaningful ways (e.g., pharmacy, market, doctors, help with daughter's homework), seek information, connect with family and friends	Smartphones can help her/other moms problem solve, learn English in efficient, meaningful ways; Greater interest using Smartphone as bilingual language/literacy tool than decontextualized ESL curriculum, way to communicate with her husband over urgent needs during class
Task operation and demands	Smartphone, knowledge of online dictionaries, search engines	Smartphone, knowledge of Internet (e.g., online dictionaries, search engines) in English and Spanish; asks mostly Spanish questions
Forms of participation	Uses Smartphone as information- seeking device. E.g., Questions about MediCal card/coverage for her daughter's dental appointment. Also way to	During ESL class, mothers expected to fill out workbook. Mothers not allowed to use Spanish or Smartphones in classroom as resources. Rosa models/teaches moms to use Smartphone, online

	Out of School	In School
	socialize (e.g., texting)	dictionaries, search engines; also learns from more experienced Smartphone users (e.g., Yolanda)
Purposes/goals	a) Smartphone as reference; does not have to rely on others; b) Portable=can always access; c) way to connect to others because isolated	a) Enjoys helping others; b) Learns more about Smartphone capabilities with other moms; c) Can use Smartphone as reference; d) shares that she appreciates that it is an information tool that she can access without waiting for teacher's help

Table 6.3

Elena's Use of Her Smartphone As a Literacy Tool In School and Out of School

Activity Dimensions	Context	
	Out of School	In School
Participants	Elena, sister-in-law, sons (Diego and Pablo)	Elena, other mothers in ESL classes
Cultural values	Smartphones can help her get information for children's homework because no computer at home. Smartphones and technology more relevant for younger generation	Smartphones can help her/other moms problem solve, learn English in efficient, meaningful ways. Some interest using Smartphone as bilingual language/literacy tool but prefers pen and paper learning (e.g., ESL workbooks)
Task operation and demands	Smartphone, online dictionaries, search engines	Smartphone, knowledge of Internet (e.g., online dictionaries, English and Spanish search engines, Wikipedia); ask questions in English/Spanish
Forms of participation	Elena's sister-in-law only person at home who owned Smartphone. Elena only asked her to use Smartphone when her children had homework assignments that required information-seeking and no time to go to library. Sister-in-law helped kids and Elena observed and noted steps	During ESL class, mothers expected to fill out workbook. Mothers not allowed to use Spanish or Smartphones in classroom as resources. Elena has minimal experience with Smartphones because doesn't own one so she observes how other moms (e.g., Yolanda) use them for information-seeking (e.g., media, vocabulary words)
Purposes/goals	a) Important to learn basic uses of Smartphone to help children with homework assignments	a) Important to learn basic uses of Smartphone to help children with homework assignments; b) Perception that everyone else knows how to use Smartphones in her class

Out of School	In School
	so she should learn as well

Note. aNumbers in parentheses refer to children's ages.

Table 6.4

Beatriz's Use of Her Smartphone As a Literacy Tool In School and Out of School

Activity Dimensions	Context	
	Out of School	In School
Participants	Beatriz, Sylvia (18) ^a , Nancy (3)	Beatriz, other mothers in ESL classes
Cultural values	Smartphones are an easy way to access language and literacy tools for younger generation. Smartphones convenient way to communicate with schools via email and websites. Smartphones provide quick online access to organizations and government agencies.	Smartphones can help her/other moms problem solve, learn English in efficient, meaningful ways; Greater interest using Smartphone as bilingual language/literacy tool than decontextualized ESL curriculum
Task operation and demands	Smartphone, knowledge of Internet search engines, educational games for young children	Smartphone, knowledge of Internet (e.g., online dictionaries, English and Spanish search engines, Wikipedia); ability to ask questions in English/Spanish
Forms of participation	Older daughter is only person in family who owned Smartphone so taught Beatriz and father how to use Smartphone to find important information (e.g., phone numbers/addresses to locations she had to visit, login to see her report card). Older daughter taught younger sister how to find videos on YouTube of favorite cartoons and Nickelodeon website for school-based literacy games.	During ESL class, mothers expected to fill out workbook. Mothers not allowed to use Spanish or Smartphones in classroom as resources. Beatriz knew how to search the Internet on the Smartphone because her older daughter taught her. She modeled/taught some of the other moms (e.g., Elena) about how to use certain search engines and which websites were helpful in certain areas.
Purposes/goals	a) Smartphone as reference;does not have to rely on others;b) Portable=can always access;c) No computer so only means of accessing Internet at home	a) Enjoys helping others; b) Can use Smartphone as reference; shares that it is empowering because doesn't rely on teacher as sole source of information

Note. ^aNumbers in parentheses refer to children's ages.

How did participation in the mothers' use of Smartphones replicate, modify, and/or

change when moved from out-of-school to in-school contexts? Tables 6.1 through 6.4 reveal that there were parallels, modifications, and clear departures in the ways that mothers used Smartphones out of school and in school.

For instance, out of school, there were variations in who participated in Smartphone use with the mothers. In Yolanda's household, the adults and her two children were deeply involved in the use of Smartphones. Rosa and her husband used Smartphones out of school but her daughter was not given permission to use their phones. Elena did not own a computer or a Smartphone. Her only access to the Internet at home was borrowing her sister-in-law's Smartphone who lived with them. Beatriz's eighteen-year-old daughter, Sylvia was the only member in their household who owned a Smartphone. Sylvia was in high school and frequently needed Internet for her school assignments. Her family also did not own a computer; therefore, with the money Sylvia earned from her afterschool job, she bought a Smartphone. Sylvia had primary control over the phone because she used the money from her job to pay for its monthly service—although she gave the rest of her family time to use it.

This fluid use of Smartphones across family members was not evident at school. Because Nuestra Comunidad did not approve of the use of Smartphones during class, all of the mothers either used their Smartphones alone or with the other mothers in a hidden manner. Furthermore, children were not involved in Smartphone use at Nuestra Comunidad because their early childhood classrooms did not incorporate them in the curriculum. The only time children were observed using Smartphones was when mothers were getting ready to leave school and their children played with online games. For instance, while Yolanda chatted with other mothers at the end of the school day, José often played with an app on Yolanda's Smartphone called *Toddler Cars*, which had animations of common vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, airplanes, and fire trucks).

Whenever José tapped on each vehicle on the Smartphone screen, it made a realistic sound.

Yolanda and José sometimes talked about the different kinds of vehicles he had seen on the app on their quick walk to their car after classes ended.

The cultural values that mothers ascribed to the use of Smartphones in school and in outof-school contexts showed variation as well as similarities. In out-of-school contexts, most of the mothers thought of Smartphones as problem-solving tools, information-seeking devices, and a way to connect to family and friends. In short, in out-of-school contexts, most of the mothers thought of Smartphones as tools that could make their lives easier. Elena was the only mother who was an exception to this line of thinking. She did not think Smartphones or technology were as instructive as traditional learning methods (pen and paper workbook exercises, repetition, memorization). While all of the other mothers relied on their Smartphones as a source of information-seeking and communication, Elena preferred to resolve issues (e.g., problems with government paperwork) via telephone calls on her landline. She looked up information for her classes and for her children at the local library (which was located less than a mile from her house). Another factor that influenced this type of thinking was that Elena did not have her own Smartphone or a computer with internet access at home, she thought that non-technological methods were easier than relying on people such as her sister-in-law for "quick" information via Smartphones.

In school, the cultural values ascribed to the use of Smartphones were generally congruent among the four mothers. Yolanda, Beatriz, and Rosa all believed that Smartphones could help them problem solve and learn English words in more efficient and meaningful ways than learning from a workbook with decontextualized thematic units with which they could not relate. Beatriz explicitly discussed how she could not learn the vocabulary in the units because

there were many words she would never use in her everyday life (e.g., rink, ice skating). Elena was the only mother in this study who preferred pen and paper workbook exercises and audiotapes to learning English through free online ESL programs and dictionaries. Again, she shared that her preference to traditional methods of ESL learning was due to the fact that she knew should could not afford a Smartphone and did not have Internet at home. She wanted to master ways of learning that she could easily access. Regardless of context, mothers deferred to learning methods and ways of communication that were the quickest and most available and efficient for them and their families.

In out-of-school contexts, there was more variation in the task operation and demands of Smartphone use. For instance, Yolanda was the most comfortable of the four mothers in her use of Smartphones. Out of school, Yolanda used her Smartphone's online search engines (Google, Yahoo). She (as well as other mothers) preferred Yahoo because it offered Yahoo en Español (i.e., Spanish). Yolanda also had a vast knowledge of iPhone apps that helped her keep in touch with her family and friends, such as Facebook, Tango, WhatsApp, and Viber. All of these apps had instant messaging functions that allowed her to communicate with her loved ones in real time through online chatting. Yolanda also used Navigation, a Smartphone GPS app, in out-of-school settings to help her get from one place to the next. Therefore, Yolanda's use of the Smartphone knew no bounds—she used it in each and every context of her life. To varying degrees and frequencies in out-of-school settings, the other three mothers in the study primarily limited their use of Smartphones to online dictionaries and/or search engines.

In school, the task operation and demands were more uniform among the four mothers.

This was due to the restrictive environment within which they engaged in Smartphone use.

In Harriet's ESL class, mothers used their Smartphones most often as a reference tool for English vocabulary and grammar that they did not know. In Jamie's family literacy class, mothers looked up information pertinent to class discussion—such as where to buy or borrow books that Jamie brought into class for them. They also used class time to search for information, which was relevant to pressing issues in their lives. For instance, Rosa looked up MediCal office hours because there was a problem with her paperwork. Lastly, mothers used Smartphones as communication tools in class—they texted family and friends to keep in touch with them. All of the mothers in this study primarily used Spanish to text their loved ones. One exception was that Yolanda texted her younger sister in English because she told me that her sister thought it was a good way for Yolanda to practice reading and writing in English (her younger sister had come to the states in her teenage years and was fairly fluent in spoken and written English). Similar to letter writing, class time was one of the only moments that mothers had in their lives for decompression. Moreover, many of the activities they started at home had to be transferred to Nuestra Comunidad because of a lack of time to complete them. Most of these activities were linked to literacy and language practices. The act of looking up information on one's Smartphone is a functional literacy practice that helps mothers and that they could transfer to their children. Mothers' information-seeking on their Smartphones' search engines at school also exposes them to extended prose.

The mothers' forms of participation in out-of-school Smartphone use were more varied than at the school site. Yolanda and Rosa both used their Smartphones to help them learn and communicate with others in English; for example, they accessed their online dictionaries in places such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and the local market. Since Beatriz and Elena did not own Smartphones, their out-of-school use was more limited than that of the other two

mothers. Beatriz used her daughter's Smartphone to look up information related to personal or business matters (e.g., phone numbers and addresses of government agencies). Her daughter took the lead in helping her parents and sister benefit from the Smartphone's access to information and leisure. For instance, Sylvia helped her mother and father log in to her school's website via her Smartphone so they could see her twelfth grade report card. Sylvia also "favorited" her sister's most cherished television shows on her phone and allowed Nancy to play educational games on the Nickelodeon website (e.g., Nick Jr. Coloring Game) while she did her homework.

Elena intermittently asked to borrow her sister-in-law's Smartphone, which was the only Smartphone in the home. She observed and took notes while her sister helped her sons find information for certain homework assignments on her Smartphone (e.g., facts about Diego's favorite animal- the lion). Since she was not its owner, Elena did not readily have access to or feel comfortable with constantly asking to borrow her sister-in-law's Smartphone. Moreover, in the middle of the study, Elena's sister-in-law moved to Northern California to attend an early childhood education teacher preparation program. Elena's Smartphone usage was significantly reduced and she continued to use non-technological means of communication and information-seeking sources in her life. At times, her friends would show her emails, YouTube clips, or interesting news reports on their Smartphones in out-of-school settings (e.g., parties, park).

At school, the forms of participation varied based on the mothers' experience with Smartphones. Yolanda took a lead role in teaching mothers about online search engines showing them her favorite online English/Spanish dictionaries, as well as describing iPhone apps they should download to make their lives easier (e.g., Navigation, WhatsApp for free international texting). Rosa and Beatriz also felt fairly comfortable with using Smartphones as language and

²⁷ To "favorite" a video is the act of bookmarking it in a favorites list so a person can access it more easily in the future.

literacy tools. They both helped teach Elena how to use search engines and online dictionaries but primarily during classroom breaks because they needed time to verbally show her steps and explain instructions. Elena observed how other mothers used Smartphones as information-seeking and communication devices but generally stayed on task in her ESL and family literacy classes. She preferred looking at the hard copy of a dictionary rather than online versions. As in out-of-school contexts, Elena preferred written and oral forms of communication and problem-solving. Despite the fact that Elena quickly learned online literacy skills with her classmates' help, she knew computers and Smartphones were not affordable or conveniently accessible to her across all contexts.

As they moved across settings, the mothers' purposes and their goals for using Smartphones were both similar and different. Yolanda's primary purpose for using her Smartphone in out-of-school contexts was that it enabled her to find solutions to problems in her daily life through Google, Wikipedia, to keep in touch with others, to help her kids with answers to their questions, and to communicate with others. Yolanda truly felt empowered by the device and shared that it was helping her learn English in more authentic ways than in class. She communicated this love of technology as a learning tool with her children and taught them how to use the Smartphone as a literacy and language tool at an early age.

Rosa's primary goal in out-of-school Smartphone use was that it provided an efficient and convenient way to seek important information—such as questions about MediCal coverage for her daughter's dentist appointment. Because Rosa was isolated with her daughter during out-of-school hours, she also used her Smartphone to text acquaintances as well as her husband while he was at work. This meaningful literacy activity helped Rosa not feel as lonely in a country where she felt no one knew her on a deeper level.

Elena revealed that her only purpose for engaging in Smartphone use in out-of-school contexts was to find information for her children's homework (e.g., facts about their favorite animals). She only used the Smartphone if her sister-in-law was at home, while she lived there. If there were other ways to access the information, then Elena would prefer to do so in a non-technological way (e.g., visit the local public library). Lastly, Beatriz's primary purpose in using her daughter's Smartphone was because it was a convenient and efficient information-seeking device; the Smartphone was also her only access to Internet at home because, like all of the other families in this study, her family could not afford a computer.

At Nuestra Comunidad, the mothers' purposes and goals in using Smartphones centered on both immediate and long term use. Yolanda, Rosa, and Beatriz enjoyed taking on leadership roles because it made them feel like experts in technology. They took pride in being able to show other mothers how to navigate search engines and to guide them in accessing helpful free online ESL programs. Furthermore, these three mothers enjoyed using Smartphones because they did not have to always rely on the teacher as the sole source of information and this made them feel empowered. In fact, Yolanda shared that utilizing the Smartphone as a literacy and language tool in school could aid her and the other mothers in taking learning into their own hands rather than on relying on the teacher as the sole source of information. Although Elena was more hesitant in Smartphone use, she still wanted to learn so she could help her sons with technology. Elena acknowledged that technology was important for her sons' generation and she wanted to gain a better grasp of it; yet, she was realistic and aware of the fact that she did not have regular and easy access to Smartphones in out-of-school contexts.

In sum, Smartphones played important roles in mothers' in-school and out-of-school lives. In out-of-school contexts, Smartphones were generally used as information-seeking

devices, English language learning, and a means of communicating with others. The extent of Smartphone use, however, depended on mothers' cultural values and purposes/goals for using a Smartphone as well as their financial situation. As a result, some mothers—such as Yolanda—used their Smartphones more than others (e.g., Elena). Nuestra Comunidad's ideology played a more central role in Smartphone usage at the school site. The mothers' use of Smartphones played a peripheral role at Nuestra Comunidad because they were not regarded as critical language and literacy learning tools. Rather, Smartphones were viewed as a distraction and/or a barrier to "real" thinking.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has focused on the ways in which mothers transferred out-of-school literacy practices to the school site. Traditionally research has simply assessed whether or not language and literacy practices are *replicated* from one context to another. My research moves past this tendency and hones in on how these practices may be transferred to other contexts in different forms. Although the out-of-school language and literacy practice of television-watching was not a part of the Nuestra Comunidad curriculum or incorporated into teaching practices—mothers and their children still used the knowledge they had gained though this out-of-school practice and applied it to in-school activities. Part of the reason why these out-of-school language and literacy practices looked different at Nuestra Comunidad was because families had to come up with ways to employ the activities in covert manners.

There seemed to be a double standard: Mothers were willing to try, implement, and adapt school-based literacy practices in out-of-school settings; however, the school did not allow for mothers to openly employ and incorporate their multimodal out-of-school literacy practices at the school site. Nuestra Comunidad's exclusion of families' out-of-school literacy practices was

the result of the privileging of mainstream ideologies regarding "appropriate" language and literacy practices and/or time constraints arising from the employment of rigid curricula. Finally, we are left with two critical questions: What would it mean for schools to place more value on families' ever-evolving language and literacy practices? How might education stakeholders' views and interpretation of families' linguistic and literacy practices be transformed if they were to examine these practices as potentially changing in form—rather than disappearing—as they move from one context to the next (e.g., in school to out-of-school and back to in-school)?

CHAPTER 7

Putting It All Together

Language is political. That's why you and me, my Brother and Sister, that's why we sposed to choke our natural self into the weird, lying, barbarous, unreal, white speech and writing habits that the schools lay down like holy law. Because, in other words, the powerful don't play; they mean to keep that power, and those who are the powerless (you and me) better shape up—mimic/ape/suck—in the very image of the powerful, or the powerful will destroy you—you and our children (Jordan, 1989).

June Jordan's words ring true to this very day. Normative language and literacy practices dominate our society—and mastery of these mainstream, school-based practices provide the key to "success." We expect everyone—particularly immigrant populations—to assimilate to these practices as quickly as possible. The value that we ascribe to individuals in American society usually lies in their ability to "mimic, ape, and suck in" what is considered valuable—that is, the language and literacy practices of those in power.

Immigrants to the United States, such as my participants, are not passive recipients of the cultural, linguistic, and literacy practices they encounter in this country. Rather, they *actively* choose what practices they want to incorporate into their lives, the extent to which they employ them, and in which scenarios they elect to use them. My research has highlighted the importance of examining ways in which individuals actively transport multimodal literacy practices and cultural practices across contexts. Rather than adopting mainstream views of literacy, which usually define literacy as a set of internal, cognitive skills relating solely to print—this study draws on Barton & Hamilton's (2000) definition of literacy practices—that is, what people *do* with literacy. Literacy, like language, is not employed in isolation or a vacuum. What we do, who is around us, our cultural values, our economic reality, and our purpose or goals greatly impact the ways in which we navigate and the manner in which we embody literacy. As a result,

we cannot think of literacy in a one-dimensional way (i.e., print) because literacy is embedded into every environment and facet of our lives (e.g., oral, visual, media, and online mediums).

My first research question asked: What school-based literacy practices—or aspects of them— do mothers take up in out-of-school contexts? One of my findings was that Nuestra Comunidad staff had clear definitions and expectations of mothers' language and literacy progress. At times, these ideologies clouded and/or consumed mothers' out-of-school language and literacy ideologies and practices when they were at the school site. For instance, every six weeks, mothers were required to write down their ESL goals. One of the moms shared with me that their ESL teacher, Harriet, had to approve their goals before they could post them on the classroom walls. Figures 7.1-7.4 reveal some of these goals.



Figure 7.1. Beatriz's ESL goals.

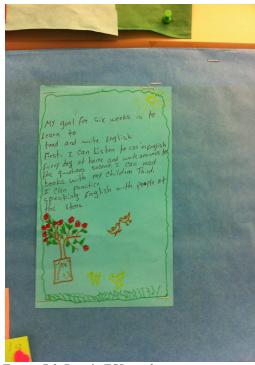
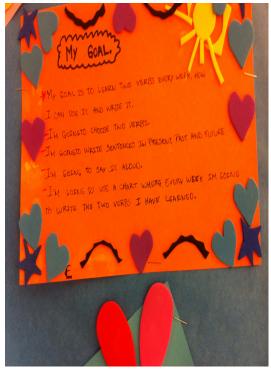
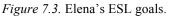


Figure 7.2. Rosa's ESL goals.





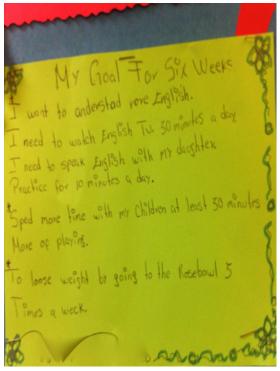


Figure 7.4. Yolanda's ESL goals.

The lists highlight very structured ESL goals. For instance, Beatriz aimed to write three new words, five times every night; she also wished to get more practice writing. Rosa planned to listen to English CDs at home and write answers to the questions in her ESL workbook. She also wanted to read with her children and practice speaking English at the store. Elena wished to learn two verbs every week—by picking two of them, writing them in past, present, and future sentences, saying them aloud, and creating a chart to keep track of the verbs she was learning. Yolanda's goal was to understand more English by watching English television for half an hour a day, speaking English with her older daughter, and practicing for ten minutes a day. She was the one in this group who also included personal goals of spending time playing with her children and exercising three times a week to lose weight. These goals, which were clearly posted for all to see, had to be checked and approved by the ESL teacher. This begs the question—to what extent were these Harriet's goals for her students and to what extent were these goals that the mothers had set for themselves? Based on observations as well as interviews with the mothers,

these goals seemed to be more influenced by school-based ideologies of "appropriate" language and literacy practices than by what the mothers actually *chose* to do in school and out-of-school.

Another finding in this study was that deficit-based language and literacy ideologies influenced some of the teachers' expectations of their students—particularly the *long-term* goals they had for the mothers. As stated in the fourth chapter, Harriet believed that in the future the mothers would, at most, be able to write a paragraph in English. Her opinion was based on the mothers' writing in her class—a space where the women were discouraged from accessing or utilizing their first language to help them with second language production. Although Harriet had the best of intentions in immersing mothers in English, her rigidity did not allow for her to understand their wide range of linguistic and literacy practices and abilities in their first language—perhaps her opinion would have been drastically different.

Jamie, the other instructor in this study, *did* actively incorporate mothers' first language into her curriculum. One of Jamie's assignments had mothers write a letter to each of their children in their home language. Each of the mothers' letters to their children in the program is included below with an accompanying translation.

Elena's letter to Diego.

Diego,

-

Ola²⁸ mi amor. Espero que cuando tengas esta carta en tus manos, comprenderás las palabras. Solo quiero decirte que seas alguien en la vida, que tengas estudio para que seas importante en tu vida, que logres tu sueños—lo que tu quieras ser. Siempre te voy a apollar, siempre y cuando sean decisiones buenas y que tengan sentido. Tú no te detengas. Lucha para lograr lo que quieras pero honradamente y no acosta de alguien más. Yo sé que lo que te propongas, lo lograrás por tu modo de ser. Desde chiquito lo hacías y espero que lo seguirías haciendo y que no tengas obstáculos en tu trayectoria. Solo quiero lo mejor para ti y tu hermano. Doy gracias a dios por tenerte a mi lado, y por tener salud. Deceo que tengas éxitos, salud, amor, y bienestar. Quisieras veas que tenga un carácter difícil, pero recuerda que yo siempre te querré y recuerda que tienes

 $^{^{\}rm 28}$ The letters were transcribed exactly as written by the mothers.

una familia con quién contar y un hombro en quien llorar cuando tengas ganas. Que dios te bendiga y cuídate mucho. Quien te quiere mucho y te ama—tu mama. Diego,

Hello my love. I hope that when you have this card in your hands, you will understand the words. I only want to tell you to be someone in life, to be educated so you can be important in your life... that you realize your dreams—what you want to be. I will always support you, always and when they are good decisions and make sense. Do not delay. Strive to reach what you want but honestly and not at others' expense. I know that whatever you set your mind to, you will accomplish it because of your way of being. Since you were little you did this and I hope that you will keep doing it and you don't have obstacles in your trajectory. I only want the best for you and your brother. I thank God to have you at my side and for good health. I wish for you to have success, health, love, and well-being. Perhaps you may think I have a difficult character, but remember that I will always love you and remember that you have a family you can count on and a shoulder to cry on if you feel the need. May God bless you and take care. Who loves you very much—your mother.

Beatriz's letter to Nancy.

Nancy,

Por medio de esta carta quiero expresarte parte del gran amor que siento por ti ya que la otra parte te lo demuestro. A aun eres pequeña y tu vida apenas comienza, algún día pueda leer ésto. Pero el día que tú logres comprenderla te darás cuenta del significado de mi grande y inmenso amor que va mas allá de lo que te puedas imaginar. Tú has llegado a nuestras vidas, y de ese momento tus huellas se han quedado plasmadas, proyectándonos mucha alegría, ternura, paz, y esa luz necesaria que resplandece el diario vivir de nuestras vidas. Recuerdo tu imagen tierna y delicada pero llena de esplendor. Eres alegre, coqueta, te gusta jugar, bailar, y exploras lo adecuado para poder convivir. Como te das cuenta, tu vida comenzó del nuevo día; conforme vas creciendo, tus habilidades van resaltando muy por ensima de todo—transmitiéndonos buena vibra y dejándonos grandes satisfacciones.

Nancy,

Through this letter I would like to express the great love I feel for you as I also show you in other ways. Even though you are young and just starting out your life, one day you will be able to read this. But the day you are able to understand it, you will realize the great significance of the immense love that I have for you, which goes beyond understanding. You have come into our lives and from that moment, your footprints have remained imprinted, projecting so much love, sweetness, peace, and that necessary light that brightens the daily living in our lives. I remember your sweet and delicate presence but full of splendor. You are cheerful, outgoing, you also like to play, dance and you explore what is appropriate to coexist. As you know, your life began from a new day; as you keep growing, your abilities stand out above all else—transmitting good energy and leaving us with great satisfaction.

Yolanda's letter to José.

Carta para mi hijo, José:

Bendito el día que llegaste a mi vida para llenarla de felicidad y amor. Gracias por ser mi hijo-un gigante entre pequeños y gracias por ser fuerte en los momentos en que te sientes mal. Nadie te va amar como yo te amo, hijo. A ti nadie te va a cuidar como yo. Eso ni dudarlo, José. Sobre todo nadie pero nadie dedicará cada segundo para ser tu amiga, tu confidente, y te dará alas para que puedas volar en tus sueños de mañana. Por eso y por muchas cosas mas, te amo José—tu eres como una luz. Gracias por ser parte de mi vida, por demostrarme tu amor, y gracias por estar en mi vida, gracias por dejarme ser un pedacito de tu corazón. Eres el niño mas lindo y amoroso que existe. Eres inteligente y agradable. Eres todo para mi, hijo mío. Eres el regalo mas bonito que "Dios" me a dado. Gracias por acerme reír cuando menos me lo espero. Tu amor me da fuerzas para seguir adelante. Estoy feliz de ser tu mamá. Eres mi tesoro mas preciado. Besos para mi niño hermoso.

Letter to my son, José:

Blessed be the day that you came into my life to fill it with happiness and love. Thank you for being my son-a giant among men and thank you for being strong in the moments you don't feel well. No one will love you how I love you, son. No one will take care of you like me. You do not have to doubt that, José. Above all else, no one, not anyone, will dedicate each second to be your friend, your confidante, and will give you wings so that you can fly towards your future dreams. These are the reasons, and many more, that I love you, José—you are like a light. Thank you for being a part of my life, for showing me love, thank you for being in my life, thank you for allowing me to be a small piece of your heart. You are the most beautiful and loving boy that exists. You are intelligent and kind. You are everything to me, my son. You are the most beautiful gift that "God" has given me. Thank you for making me laugh when I least expect it. Your love gives me strength to keep moving forward. I am happy to be your mother. You are my most valuable treasure. Kisses for my beautiful boy.

Rosa's letter to Marcia.

Carta a mi princesa,

Querida hija te escribo esta carta para decirte todo lo que as significado para nosotros. Tú eres una bendición de Dios. Te cuento paso a paso desde que salí embarazada de ti. Me acuerdo que cuando no sabia que estaba embarazada creí que estaba empachada y tu papi me sobaba la barriga hasta que fui a la clínica y me dieron la buena noticia que estaba embarazada. Después a los meses me mandaron hacerme un ultrasonido y que crees, me dijeron que era una niña. No sabes que me puse muy feliz y desde que supe de tu existencia soy muy feliz porque tu existes y luego cuando naciste ese día fue muy feliz para mi y para tu papi. Sabes cuando estabas en el hospital cuando naciste, tu papi te cortó el ombligo y luego te llevaron para una camita y hasta otro día te llevaron conmigo. Deseo que por toda la vida seas feliz, saludable, y que todos tus sueños se hagan realidad.

Letter to my princess,

My dear daughter, I write you this letter to tell you how much you mean to us. You are a blessing from God. I will tell you, step by step, from when I knew I was pregnant with you. I remember when I did not know I was pregnant and I thought I was bloated and your father rubbed my belly until I went to the clinic and they gave me the good news that I was pregnant. After a few months they sent me to get an ultrasound done and what do you know, they told me that you were a girl. You do not know how happy I got and from the time I knew of your existence I am very happy because you exist. When you were born that day was a very happy day for your father and me. Did you know that when you were in the hospital when you were born, your father cut your umbilical word and after they took you to a bed? It was not until the next day that they brought you to me. I hope that for your whole life you will be happy, healthy, and that all of your dreams become reality.

Contrary to Harriet's expectations concerning the mothers' writing in English—the words and sentiments expressed in these letters showed depth and clarity, logical organization, and substantive explanation of specific points. Moreover, their words in Spanish were poetic and powerful—revealing aspirations for themselves and their families. The letters also include complex figurative language such as metaphors, similes, and personification. Stylistic writing was evident throughout the letters. For example, mothers used repetition for emphasis of ideas or sentiments; they also used diminutives to express affection.

These letters clearly challenge ubiquitous misconceptions of Latino immigrant families' unwillingness and/or inability to engage in school-based educational practices. Each of the letters reveals how every mother in this study aspired—first and foremost—for their children to do well in school (i.e., "que sea[n] alguien" or "to be someone"). However, their definition of success, as Valdés (1996) found in her study, was also linked to embodying and employing a sense of morality. Success for many of these families was not rooted in simply reproducing a system in which the primary goal was to make money—rather it was a *combination* of financial success and personal values.

The mothers' cultural values and overarching educational goals often shaped the decisions they made regarding the types of linguistic and literacy practices they chose to engage

in throughout various contexts. These decisions were based on a complex process of cultural continuity and change that they experienced on a daily basis. Prolific scholar and poet, Gloria Anzaldúa, wrote about this journey. Anzaldúa believed that "to survive the Borderlands [one] must live sin fronteras,²⁹ be a crossroads." The mothers and their children were constantly crossing invisible and physical borders—particularly in the way they defined and enacted literacy and language practices.

Implications

Traditionally, deficit-based research examines the ways in which *school-based* language and literacy Discourses are mirrored in out-of-school settings. Asset-based researchers often look for the ways in which marginalized families' *out-of-school* language and literacy practices are utilized in schools. Despite their distinct orientations—both asset- and deficit-based research focus on the *replication* of practices from one context to the next, thereby narrowly examining whether marginalized families and schools' language and literacy practices match *or* mismatch.

My dissertation moves beyond these "match" versus "mismatch" theories and focuses on the continuities *and* discontinuities that are evident as people transfer language and literacy practices across contexts, as well as *why* these continuities and discontinuities may occur. Such a framework is informative to early and family literacy research because it approaches marginalized families' language and literacy practices from an innovative perspective: one in which replicating, modifying, and/or discarding certain practices is an inherent part of what happens as people move within and across various communities of practice (Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003).

My research also shows the need to look beyond literacy artifacts to the content of actual literacy practices. One cannot fully or accurately capture the wide scope of these practices by

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²⁹ Spanish word for *borders* or *boundaries*.

only relying on data, such as logging the number of books in a family's home (see, for example, Evans et al., 2010) or counting the number of minutes parents read aloud to their children (see, for example, Fernald, 2013). By using an analytical framework such as activity settings analysis (Gallimore and Goldenberg, 1993), my research examines language and literacy as multilayered practices. That is, by looking at who participates in a literacy activity, the participants' cultural values, what is required for them to complete the task, the different forms of participation, and their purposes/goals for participating in literacy activities—I was able to create a detailed and multidimensional portrait of the families' repertoires of linguistic and literacy practices (Orellana et al., 2012). In other words, my study shows the power of approaching families' language and literacy practices as toolkits that they build upon throughout the course of their lives. This repertoire of practice framework positions participants as active agents in their take up of language and literacy practices—they do not passively and mindlessly absorb language and literacy practices. Rather they actively choose what to replicate, modify, and/or reject.

One of the practical implications of my research is that by looking at continuities and discontinuities, schools can learn ways families take up school-based literacy practices in order for educators to create a more effective and relevant curriculum. For instance, Nuestra Comunidad teachers instructed the families in my study in how to engage in certain school-based language and literacy practices. The families employed these school-based practices in out-of-school contexts—such as reading books aloud, scrapbooking important moments, and singing mainstream English children's songs. However, the ways in which each of the families took up and employed these practices in out-of-school contexts varied. Education stakeholders should hone in on how families' goals and cultural values affect their take up of school-based literacy practices. Conversely, schools can also learn the out-of-school literacy practices families engage

in and how to better integrate these into the classroom. For example, Smartphones and television played central roles in many of these families' literacy practices outside of school. Yet, Nuestra Comunidad did not capitalize on their knowledge. Early childhood teachers and administrators can potentially utilize, adapt, and apply the theoretical and analytical frameworks used in this study (e.g., searching for multimodal literacy practices, approaching literacy practices as socially situated and context-embedded) to their work with young students and their families. Asking the who, what, where, when, why, and how questions can provide practitioners with powerful information that they could potentially use in order to leverage marginalized families' language and literacy practices in school-based activities as well as develop a greater understanding of the families' ways with words in other social and cultural contexts.

Limitations/Future Research

A limitation of the study is that activity settings analysis, despite being a helpful analytical tool, is imperfect, like all other analytical tools. Because it is impossible to capture all literacy activities and represent them as they exactly occurred or how participants interpreted them, activity settings analysis should be thought of as a tool that facilitates analysis but requires the ethnographer's broader lens.

Also, although I included other family members (e.g., siblings, grandparents, spouses) in my out-of-school analyses—given that Nuestra Comunidad was a two-generation program specifically serving mothers and their young children—my research was mostly limited to examining the ways in which mothers and their young children employed literacy practices across contexts. Early and family literacy scholarship is in need of a greater number of studies that examine the "collaborative nature of Latino families...[which] extends beyond...parents and includes relatives and non-relatives, adults and children, siblings, cousins, and peers, all at varied

levels of literacy ability and with differing beliefs about literacy and how it is learned" (Volk and de Acosta, 2001, p. 216). In particular, educators would benefit from research that examined the details of literacy—from spelling to grammar to a variety of short and long texts—in family life. For instance, an ethnographic study on the use of Avon as a tool that fosters language and literacy skills in various marginalized communities could provide greater insight into how families use artifacts embedded in their daily lives in multiple ways.

Moreover, I did not examine how gender played a role in my participants' take-up and employment of literacy practices within and across settings. For instance, what similarities and/or differences were evident in the types of language and literacy practices participants took up across contexts? Were males, for instance, more likely to engage in certain types of multimodal literacy activities (e.g., online literacy) while females engaged in others (e.g., visual arts)? Where did their literacy practices overlap? In sum, the early and family literacy fields are in need of scholarship that looks at similarities and differences between male and female literacy socialization.

More in-depth examinations of the use of technology and media in families' literacy practices—particularly intergenerational aspects of it—would be of great benefit to the field of early childhood education and literacy scholarship writ large. Future studies could look at how young children engage with Smartphones as language and literacy tools and examine the ways that multiple generations of family members interact with Smartphones and with each other when using these gadgets. Lastly, ethnographic studies are needed that hone in on the complex ways in which a wider range of immigrant populations engage in multimodal literacy practices across contexts.

Final Thoughts: Looking Beyond Cultural Reproduction and Embracing Variation

My personal and professional experiences have inspired me to push my research beyond simplistic caricatures and to paint more nuanced and multifaceted portraits of literacy practices—particularly of those employed in Latino immigrant communities. Similar to my participants, my journey in gaining literacy skills did not follow a "typical" or "developmentally appropriate" trajectory. Because I was born with a congenital cataract and by the age of two had lost complete vision in my right eye, print-based literacy was a struggle. I would often lose my place, skip or transpose words, and had difficulty comprehending text because of my tracking issues.

Furthermore, I was naturally right handed but could not see the words from that angle—so I had to learn to write with my left hand.

Despite this struggle with reading and writing, my mother's oral storytelling abilities piqued my interest in the art of storytelling. Her uncanny ability to turn the simplest experience or event into one which would have you at the edge of your seat, made me want to eventually be able to read other people's stories as well as write my own—despite my initial difficulties. In fact—some of my earliest and most cherished memories are of my mother carefully constructing vivid, Dickensian tales of her childhood in Puerto Rico and her lone arrival to New York City at the age of fourteen. Her tales of navigating the subway system alone from the Bronx to Manhattan, working as a cashier at JCPenney's without knowing a word of English, staying up nights with her older sister learning inglés, and seeing the Beatles live in concert—filled our house with warmth, laughter, and timely moralejas³⁰.

If it had not been for this out-of-school experience, which was not part of the traditional early literacy curriculum, I might have been turned off from school completely. As Gee (2001)

³⁰ A *moraleja* is a Spanish word that is usually used to describe a lesson learned by a character(s) in fables or in oral storytelling (Yosso, 2005).

argues, these oral storytelling traditions were not only entertaining but they were central to my own literacy development (for example, oral storytelling fostered my knowledge of literary conventions—such as point of view, plot, style, setting and theme—as well as my ability to predict, question, summarize and retell stories) (Ada, 1988; Gee, 2004; Huerta-Macías, 1995; Purcell-Gates, 1996).

Two decades later, as an early childhood program coordinator and later as a fourth grade teacher who worked with primarily Latino immigrant communities—parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other family members repeatedly shared with me that they participated in a wide variety of literacy activities with their families. For instance, many engaged in oral literacy practices such as dichos³¹, banter, storytelling, jokes, and word play; these practices appeared to directly contribute to my students' reading comprehension (e.g., text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections³²) as well as their ability to express their opinions about the stories we read. The families shared that they engaged in literacy activities, which both included and went beyond traditional print and speech. For instance—families utilized photographs, paintings, Internet, emailing, social networks, animation, videos, film, advertisements, and television as a means of engaging in literacy because they were a part of the families' lives. Hence, literacy activities seemed to emerge authentically from the families' personal belongings as well as their everyday activities and personal interests.

However, my students and their families' literacy practices were often disregarded at the school, district, state, and federal level due to policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Because there was a great deal of pressure for children to achieve proficiency in reading and

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³¹ *Dichos* are popular sayings in the Spanish language.

³² Text connections occur when the reader makes a personal connection from the text with something in their own life, another text, or something occurring in the world. There are three types of text connections: text-to-self (T-S), text-to-text (T-T), and text-to-world (T-W).

writing—language and literacy practices that did not directly prepare them to reach a certain level of proficiency were not encouraged. The schools that I taught at utilized scripted literacy curricula, which narrowly defined print-based literacy knowledge and skills. Reading fluency and phonemic awareness often trumped other literacy practices utilized by families and communities in out-of-school settings (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 2000; Wiley, 2005).

Similarly the out-of-school literacy practices that the four families in my study employed were generally unutilized and even admonished at Nuestra Comunidad. Funders expected these Latino immigrant families to make a certain amount of progress in the English as a Second Language courses and to engage in school-based literacy activities, routines, and practices. The measure of such progress was administered through surveys and examinations. The types of questions that funders asked on family literacy surveys, as well as their expectations regarding the mothers' progress in their Nuestra Comunidad ESL classes clearly showed that funders favored and expected mothers to assimilate to dominant language and literacy ideologies and practices.

Although the teachers' personal ideologies regarding language and literacy practices also came into play and there was variation in the ways in which they ran their classrooms— Nuestra Comunidad staff generally had to adopt prescriptive curricula and pedagogical practices that enforced the use of Standard U.S. English and White, middle-class literacy activities and routines. The teachers at the two-generation program wanted the best for the mothers in their program—they felt that the best way for mothers to achieve social and economic mobility in this new country was to expose them to the mainstream linguistic and literacy practices that were valued by the "majority" as essential for success. This motivated the teachers in the study to

show up everyday and to put in a great deal of time and energy exposing mothers to dominant practices that their families would constantly encounter. As a result, dominant literacy and language ideologies and practices were clearly enforced and took precedence over families' out-of-school literacy practices. For instance, some out-of-school literacy practices, such as playing *Loteria*, did not make their way to the school site because there was no time or value placed on them by the staff. There were still many instances in which mothers executed out-of-school language and literacy practices at the school site. However, the mothers generally had to employ these practices in covert ways (e.g., hiding their Smartphones under the table, pretending they were doing their ESL classwork).

Many of the school-based literacy practices that families learned at Nuestra Comunidad *did* travel with them to out-of-school contexts, such as reading books aloud together, creating culturally-relevant scrapbooks and singing children's songs in Spanish (e.g., José Luis Orozco's classics) and English (*Open, Shut Them*). In fact, families were more open in adopting a wide range of multimodal literacy practices; whereas, the school mostly stressed the adoption and employment of print literacy skills, routines, and activities.

The families authentically engaged in rich learning experiences in out-of-school contexts, which were convenient as well as interested them. For instance, Yolanda used her Smartphone as a tool to learn English vocabulary in multiple settings (e.g., grocery store, Department of Motor Vehicles). Elena and her family played *Loteria* to ensure that the children continued to learn Spanish vocabulary while growing up in the United States. Beatriz and her daughter watched television and actively engaged in media and oral literacy, as well as implemented school-based literacy strategies (e.g., discussing plot, asking open-ended and recall questions). Rosa and her daughter played Wii TM dance games to learn English vocabulary and engage in an activity they

both thoroughly enjoyed. In out-of-school settings, there was a wider range of literacy practices evident because restrictive language and ideologies were not enforced in the way that they were at the school site. Mothers were open in their willingness to explore multimodal types of activities that promoted literacy skills and engagement. What would it look like if schools were as open to learning about and incorporating families' out-of-school literacy practices—particularly in early and family literacy programs?

At the beginning of this chapter, I drew upon June Jordan's insightful words: "The powerful don't play; they mean to keep that power, and those who are the powerless (you and me) better shape up...in the very image of the powerful, or the powerful will destroy you—you and our children." However, I have hope in America and in the growing critical awareness of educators in our schools. Rather than becoming enablers of the dominant power structures that seek to replicate institutional and systemic injustices in our society—there is still hope that we can challenge these hierarchies. Like the mothers and children in this study, who actively navigate their learning—educators must resist the urge to simply indoctrinate and assimilate immigrant populations. By viewing language and literacy as fluid and changing over the course of our lifetimes, educators and families can work together to ensure that we are progressing as a society that values diversity in thought and fluidity in cultural and educational practices.

APPENDIX A

Initial Interview Protocol

Preguntas para la entrevista con las madres (14 de septiembre de 2011)/ Interview questions with mothers (September 14, 2011)

- 1) ¿Cuánto tiempo has estado en los EEUU?/How long have you lived in the United States?
- 2) ¿Cuánto tiempo has estado en CA?/How long have you lived in California?
- 3) ¿De qué país eres? ¿Vienes de la ciudad, del campo?/What country are you from? Did you grow up in an urban/rurul area?
- 4) ¿Cuántos hijos tienes? ¿Cuales son sus edades?/How many children do you have? What are their ages?
- 5) ¿Por qué se matriculó en Nuestra Comunidad?/Why did you enroll in Nuestra Comunidad?
- 6) ¿Cuáles son sus primeras memorias de la escuela?/What are your first memories of school?
- 7) ¿Cómo es la educación parecida y/o diferente entre su país de nacimiento y de aquí en los EEUU?/How is the educational system similar and/or different in your home country versus in the United States?
- 8) ¿Cuál fue el rol de su familia en la educación suya?/ What role did your family play in your education?
- 9) En su opinión, ¿Qué es el rol de la familia para la educación de sus hijos?/ In your opinion—what is the family's role in a child's education?
- 10) ¿Cuáles son sus metas para sus hijos en el futuro?/ What are your goals for your children in the future?
- 11) ¿Qué son algunas costumbres, tradiciones o actividades educativas que has traído de su país a los EEUU?/ What are some customs, traditions, or educational activities that you have brought from your home country to the U.S.?
- 12) ¿Cuáles son tres palabras que vienen a su mente cuando piensas de la palabra/What are three words that come to your mind when you hear the word:
- a) escuela?/school?
- b) alfabetismo?/literacy?

) ¿Qué piensas del rol del idioma de inglés y del español en las escuelas estadounidenses?/ hat do you think of the role that English and Spanish play in U.S. schools?	

APPENDIX B

Head Start Survey Questions

- 1) ¿De qué manera prepara el ambiente en casa para apoyar el aprendizaje de sus hijos? Nombre los materiales que usted ha puesto en práctica con ellos. Por favor dé ejemplos específicos. [In what way do you prepare a home environment that supports your children's learning? Name materials that you have put in place for them. Please list specific examples].
- 2) Describa como apoya el aprendizaje de sus hijos cuando interactúa con ellos (jugando, leyendo, escribiendo, y dibujando). [Describe how you support your children's learning when you interact with them (playing, reading, writing, and drawing].
- 3) Describe la forma en la que usted interactúa son sus hijos en el desarrollo de sus habilidades de lenguaje. Por favor de ejemplos específicos. (Cuando lo escucha y cuando habla con él). [Describe the way in which you interact with your children in language development. Please provide specific examples. (Both listening and speaking with him].
- 4) ¿Quién mas en su hogar está involucrado en el aprendizaje de su hijo? ¿Qué hace con su hijo? [Who is most involved in your child's learning in your home? What does he/she do with your child?].

APPENDIX C

Sample Nuestra Comunidad Reading Log



Figure C1. Nuestra Comunidad reading logs.

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