

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Parents Helping Parents: Latino Parents and College Knowledge

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5gx2w0fm>

Author

Kwek, Jessica Rose

Publication Date

2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Latino Parents and College Knowledge: Parents Helping Parents

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

by

Jessica Rose Kwek

2015

© Copyright by
Jessica Rose Kwek
2015

ABSTRACT

Latino Parents and College Knowledge: Parents Helping Parents

by

Jessica Rose Kwek

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Mark Kevin Eagan, Co-Chair

Professor Wellford W. Wilms, Co-Chair

The purpose of this qualitative action research project was to work with Latino parents of recent high school graduates to develop a series of workshops to be presented to Latino parents of elementary school children. Latino parents of elementary students benefited from culturally sensitive materials, explanations, support, and examples from recent experiences given by those Latino parents of recent graduates. The connection that participants had with parents who have gone through the process had a positive impact on the learning process. They were able to work with the parents of younger children to demystify the college application process and help parents to feel that it is all within reach.

This model can serve as a guide to school leaders in search of innovative ways to involve parents at all levels. Parents are a crucial part of the education of their children. Teaching Latino parents to advocate and ask questions was a critical part of this model. Parent facilitators felt that

they had equipped the parent learners with the desire to learn more and the confidence to ask the right questions. They learned to be advocates of the education of their children.

Keywords: Latinos, parents, college knowledge, parent involvement, college

The dissertation of Jessica Rose Kwek is approved.

James Stigler

Eugene Tucker

Mark Kevin Eagan, Committee Co-Chair

Wellford W. Wilms, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents who worked hard to make a better life for my parents in this country. They paved the way for my parents, and now for me, to make a difference in this world. With the strength of my grandparents behind me, I feel my mission is to inspire.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Dedication	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
Acknowledgments	x
Vita	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem.....	3
Scope of the Study	5
Research Design.....	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Introduction.....	8
Latinos and Higher Education	9
Underrepresentation in Higher Education	10
The Role of Latino Parents’ College Knowledge and Students’ Access to Higher Education	12
Existing College Outreach Program and Interventions	15
Parent Involvement Literature	18
Barriers to Parent Involvement	19
Connecting to Latino Parents.....	21
Effective Methods of Engaging Latino Parents	22
The Important Role of Administration	23
Successes.....	24
Conclusion	26
CHAPTER 3: METHODS	28
Introduction.....	28
Overview of the Research Design.....	29
Site	30
Participants.....	31
Parent Facilitators	31
Data Collection Methods	32
Transcription of Workshops	34
Data Analysis Methods.....	35
Role Management	37
Credibility and Trustworthiness.....	38
Ethical Issues	38
Significance.....	39

CHAPTER 4: PARENT FACILITATORS	41
Introduction.....	41
Demographic Information of Parent Facilitators	41
The Action Research Cycle	43
Pre-Workshop Development: Identifying Key Topics	44
Parent Involvement in School.....	45
Working as a Team with the Teachers and Counselors.....	46
Classes and A-G Requirements	46
Stratification of the Educational System.....	47
Financial Aid and Scholarship.....	47
Motivating Children to Do Their Best.....	49
Emphasizing the Role of Grades and GPA.....	49
Hearing from Parents	50
Responding to Parent Questions	52
Summary of Workshops	52
Roldan Elementary School	52
Southside Elementary School	53
River View Elementary School	54
AR Team Meetings after Each Workshop.....	54
Development of Parent Facilitators During Workshops.....	55
Adding Student Speaker	56
Providing Examples of Transcripts.....	57
Increasing Advertising Efforts.....	58
Secondary Findings.....	61
Improvement of Presentation Techniques	61
Growth in Confidence.....	62
Reflection on the Overall Experience	63
Summary.....	64
 CHAPTER 5: PARENT LEARNERS	 66
Demographic Data of Parent Learners.....	66
Primary Findings.....	67
Growth in Understanding How to Pay for College.....	67
Navigating Stratification in Higher Education	69
Increased Resourcefulness and Navigational Capital.....	71
Parents Learn Strategies for Putting Children on College Prep Path.....	72
Community of Learners	78
Secondary Findings.....	78
Summary.....	79
 CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	 80
Discussion of the Findings.....	80
Changes and Modifications.....	83
Impact of Workshops on Parent Learners.....	84
Interpretation of the Findings.....	86
Empowering Parents	87

Amount of Information Shared	87
The Role of the Administrator	88
Recommendations for Educators	90
Suggestions for Further Research	91
Limitations	92
Concluding Remarks	93
APPENDICES	95
REFERENCES	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Topics to Cover As Mentioned in the AR Team Meeting #1	45
Table 2: Paired Samples T-Test Results – Paying for College	68
Table 3: Paired Samples T-Test Results – Different Systems in CA	70
Table 4: Paired Samples T-Test Results – College Prep Path	74

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my committee members, Drs. James Stigler and Eugene Tucker, for their support during the process of conducting research and completing this dissertation. I would also like to thank my committee co-chairs, Drs. Kevin Eagan and Wellford “Buzz” Wilms, for their timely and thorough assistance with revisions and suggestions as I completed this project. They were willing to meet with me several times and helped me to keep going and find motivation when I struggled. I also owe thanks to Dr. Diane Durkin for helping me with my writing, especially the literature review. I also owe much gratitude to Dr. Cindy Kratzer for pushing me to stay focused while managing a high school and completing this research. I could not have completed this research without the support of these professors.

I would like to thank my friends and colleagues for being patient with me as I completed this program and this important research. With the completion of this paper, I give you back the time that you deserve.

Finally, I want to thank my family – my mom and dad, especially. As far back as I can remember, you have always pushed me to do my best. I am so thankful for your undying support and encouragement. I owe my success and accomplishments to your upbringing and the values you taught me. I am passionate about my work because of how you inspired me. You taught me that I could do anything I put my mind to, no matter how crazy anyone thinks of the idea. Thank you and I love you.

VITA

2002 B. A. Spanish and Linguistics
University of California, Los Angeles

2005 M.Ed. Education
Single Subject Teaching Credential – LOTE Spanish
University of LaVerne
LaVerne, CA

2003-2009 Spanish Teacher and Activities Director
El Segundo High School
El Segundo Unified School District
El Segundo, CA

2008 – 2009 Administrative Services Credential
California State University, Long Beach

2009 – 2011 Assistant Principal - Activities
Fountain Valley High School
Huntington Beach Union High School District
Fountain Valley, CA

2011 – 2013 Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Guidance
Westminster High School
Huntington Beach Union High School District
Westminster, CA

2013 – present Principal
El Rancho High School
El Rancho Unified School District
Pico Rivera, CA

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Latinos are underrepresented in higher education yet are one of the fastest growing populations in California and the United States. Although more Latinos are going to college than ever before, they are overrepresented at two-year institutions and do not graduate at comparable rates to their White peers (Dolan, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012; The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). Latino parents have high aspirations for their children, even when their children are still in elementary school, and they play an integral role in their children's academic achievement (Medina & Luna, 2000; Rodriguez, 2003; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002; Torrez, 2004). However, schools struggle to engage Latino parents and to help them to guide their children to postsecondary opportunities. Although schools have tried to engage parents through informational workshops about college, these interventions are not often successful due to the lack of culturally-relevant strategies school administrators could use to engage Latino parents (Tierney, 2002; Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005; De Gaetano, 2007)

Latinos are the largest minority group in the U.S., comprising 14% of the total population in 2005 (NCES, 2007). College graduation rates for Latinos remain among the lowest of all ethnic and racial groups (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009), and Latinos are overrepresented at two-year institutions (Dolan, 2009; The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). Only 28% of Latinos graduate from high school in California with having successfully completed the courses needed to enter the University of California system, compared to 45.5% of White students and 68.5% of Asian/Pacific Islanders (“California Postsecondary Education Commission closed its doors...,” 2011).

Latinos struggle to complete college for a variety of reasons. For example, the lack of

proper academic preparation has left Latinos vulnerable and stuck in remedial gatekeeper courses when first entering college (Young, Lakin, Courtney, & Martiniello, 2012). Adelman (1999) found that the high school curriculum is one of the most important factors in determining successful completion of a bachelor's degree in his landmark longitudinal study examining the factors that contribute to the successful completion of a bachelor's degree. For example, Adelman (1999) found that taking Advanced Placement courses is strongly correlated with completion of a bachelor's degree, more so than college access. Moreover, a rigorous high school curriculum has a greater impact for Latino and African American students on their chances of completing a bachelor's degree. In 2006 in *The Toolbox Revisited*, Adelman (2006) confirmed his original findings: "The academic intensity of the student's high school curriculum still counts more than anything else in precollegiate history in providing momentum toward completing a bachelor's degree" (p. xviii).

Aside from curricular adjustments, high schools have attempted to address the issue of college readiness by focusing efforts on preparing students for college by providing additional support. Over the past 20 years, more college preparation programs have targeted college access and postsecondary preparation (Tierney et al., 2005). Programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Puente, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP), "I Have a Dream," Upward Bound, and Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) were born to specifically to provide college preparation for underrepresented groups. Sponsored by state and federal government, educational institutions, and even schools themselves, these programs have significant allocated resources to allow underrepresented groups access to the dream of college (Tierney et al., 2005). College

preparation programs, either targeted or school-wide, seek to engage students while in school (mostly high school) and improve their chances of accessing higher education.

Most college preparation programs focus on school-based approaches with interventions rooted in the school day and after school (Camara & Echternacht, 2000). They seek to enhance and supplement the academic and curricular programs of the school. Most college preparation programs focus on counseling, academics, and social activities (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002), and many programs do not include extensive involvement of parents (Jun & Tierney, 1999). There is limited data on which programs work (Coles, 1993; Gándara, Larson, Mehan, & Rumberger, 1998; Perna & Swail, 1998; Tierney et al., 2005), and we know that most programs lack proper funding and staffing (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). In college preparation programs, parent engagement is a critical component of the preparation of underrepresented students, yet many programs rarely reach out to parents in effective ways (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

Parent involvement and support is one of the strongest predictors of college success (Fann, Jarsky, & McDonough, 2009a; Horn, Chen, & Adelman, 1998; McDonough, 1999; Medina & Luna, 2000; Rodriguez, 2003; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Although Latino parents have high aspirations for their children, they lack the resources of other ethnic and racial groups in terms of access to college information (McCallister, Elians, & Illich, 2010; Perna & Titus, 2005; Torrez, 2004). Latino parents are often inaccurately perceived as uninvolved and uninterested in their child's education (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Jackson & Remillard, 2005). These erroneous perceptions are often the result of cultural differences; therefore, eliminating barriers and shaping outreach in culturally-relevant ways will help administrators reach Latino parents (De Gaetano, 2007; Tierney et al., 2005).

The Problem

Schools struggle to effectively engage Latino parents and assist them in guiding their children to postsecondary opportunities (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). Latino parents require a welcoming environment that connects them to the school (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Tornatzky et al., 2002). One possible solution is to create sustainable parent leadership roles and encourage parents to teach each other about the educational pipeline (Downs et al., 2008). When schools use community resources and find ways to connect with parents through means that relate to them culturally, parents are more involved and become advocates for their children (Auerbach, 2004).

Research shows that culturally-relevant (De Gaetano, 2007), community-based approaches to Latino family involvement are sustainable over time (Auerbach, 2004; Cline & Necochea, 2001; Downs et al., 2008). Developing Latino parents as leaders through a community-based, empowerment approach is effective in improving student achievement and parent involvement in their child's education (Aspiazu, Bauer, & Spillett, 1998). Community-based efforts have proven to be effective in engaging parents through large-scale efforts (Thigpen, Freedberg, & Frey, 2014). Schools need to find ways to engage Latino parents and reinforce their high aspirations for children starting in elementary school (Auerbach, 2004).

In order to connect with Latino families, researchers recommend that administrators and schools honor the ways in which Latino parents are already involved in the education of their children and use those ways as a springboard for future involvement efforts (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Schools can create a supportive environment by working to create a more welcoming atmosphere and begin by reaching out to parents (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

When schools affirm cultural identities and make them part of involving parents in the school, they see success in involving Latino parents (De Gaetano, 2007; Tierney, 2002).

Latino parents are more likely to be involved and participate when they are able to participate in their own language (Auerbach, 2004a; Tierney, 2002). Simply translating the traditional college information workshops for Latino parents is not enough to increase college access for Latinos (Fann, Jarsky & McDonough, 2009b; McClafferty, McDonough, & Nunez, 2002). Schools cannot assume that parents will get involved if they are reaching out to them in passive ways such as a letter home about a workshop or traditional back to school nights (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Schools need to be explicit about communicating the necessity of parent involvement to Latino families and they must be proactive about finding alternative ways to tell Latino parents that involvement is crucial for their child's success (Tierney, 2002).

Scope of the Study

In this qualitative action research project, I worked with Latino parents of recent high school graduates to develop a series of workshops to be presented to Latino parents of elementary school children. Latino parents of elementary students benefited from culturally-sensitive materials, explanations, support, and examples from recent experience given by those Latino parents of recent graduates. I expected that the connection participants would have with parents who have gone through the process would have a positive impact on the learning process.

Through the workshop development process, the parents whose children have gone on to college ("parent facilitators") developed the curriculum for the workshops and create a process that is sustainable over time. The workshops were designed to provide the parents whose children have not yet gone through a college search process ("parent learners") with college knowledge that will help them to support their children as they navigate the educational pipeline

and pursue higher education. I worked together with the parent facilitators to develop a protocol and system that can be used by other district and site leaders to grow successful community-based, culturally-relevant parent education programs in similar districts.

The following research questions guided my study:

1. What changes and modifications do Latino parent facilitators make to the curriculum and presentation as they implement a college knowledge workshop for parents of elementary school children in their own community?
2. After participation in a series of parent workshops, what changes do parent learners report in their understanding, behaviors, and attitudes about supporting their children to plan and prepare for higher education?

Research Design

The study took place in an urban school district in Los Angeles County, California, that serves 9,200 students. Ranch Unified School District (RUSD) is located in a community that is over 90% Latino. It is a unified district, serving students in preschool through grade 12, with one comprehensive high school. The population of RUSD is 97% Latino, and 82% of all students receive free or reduced lunch. According to Dataquest, only 7% the parents in the district (91% reported) have completed college.

The workshops served the parent learners at three different elementary schools, Roldan Elementary, Southside Elementary School, and River View Elementary School. The parent facilitators were parents of recent high school graduates from the only comprehensive high school in RUSD, Ranch High. Parents were recruited through connections with counselors, the AVID program and those involved in previous years at Ranch High.

I used a qualitative action research design for this study. Since the goal of this study was to understand the process of developing the curriculum with a group of parents and implementing a series of workshops that will be a sustainable change in the culture of the community, a qualitative action research approach was the most appropriate and most adequately and accurately captured the feelings and perceptions of these parents, both learners and facilitators.

I chose *action research* because the members of the system were not only subjects of this study but also participants in this study (Coghlan & Brannick, 2007). The collaborative nature of this project and the concurrent actions required an action research cycle. The process of involving the parent facilitators in the action research cycle represented a strength of this study and provided an opportunity for us, as a team, to explore the effectiveness of the intervention.

The ultimate goal of this action research project was to create a sustainable, community-based parent education series that empowers Latino parents of high school graduates to become leaders in their community and work with future parents of young children. The data and findings from this project were gathered to inform educational leaders about how to empower Latino parents and what types of workshops they could be offering parents of elementary school Latinos. This information will inform administrators and teachers as to what they can specifically address when approaching parents of first-generation Latinos in elementary school to prepare their children for college.

In Chapter Two, I start by citing relevant research that guided the research questions of this study. Then, in Chapter Three, I outline the research methods. Chapter Four focuses on the first research question and the data gathered that relates to findings on the parent facilitators. Chapter Five focuses on the findings related to the parent learners and the effect the workshops

had on their behaviors. Finally, Chapter Six summarizes the results and discusses their implications for school leaders and school communities. School leaders can look at this process as a model if they are seeking to involve more Latino parents in the educational process.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Parent information workshops fail because attendees sit and passively listen (Tierney, 2002). Latino parents require a welcoming environment that connects them to the school (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Tornatzky et al., 2002). One possible solution is to create sustainable parent leadership roles and encourage parents to teach each other about the educational pipeline (Downs et al., 2008). In this qualitative action research project, I developed a district-approved intervention that empowered Latino parents of high school graduates to become facilitators in their community and then work with parents of younger children. This intervention, a product the district can implement, supports the parents of elementary school children as they prepare for high school and postsecondary opportunities. This intervention is necessary because Latinos continue to be underrepresented in higher education (Dolan, 2009; NCES, 2003 2007; O'Connor, Hammack, & Scott, 2010: *The Campaign for College Opportunity*, 2013).

In this chapter, I discuss the history of the problem of underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education. I then examine various pre-college outreach programs and interventions, specifically those for Latino students and other underrepresented groups. Next, I review the importance of parents in preparing students for college and their role in academic achievement; I then support the argument to target parents in this action research project. At the crux of my study is the decision to target suitable parents and work with them as facilitators in this action research project. This choice is supported by the research on effective Latino parent engagement strategies (Auerbach, 2004a, 2004b; Downs et al., 2008).

Latinos and Higher Education

Latinos are one of the most underrepresented groups in higher education (Dolan, 2009; NCES, 200, 2007 2012; The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). Latinos are the largest U.S. minority group, comprising 38% of the population in California in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2010). In the United States, between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, the Hispanic population grew by 43% – compared to the total population growth of 10% – comprising 16% of the total population of the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2010). Latinos are expected to become the majority in California within the next 40 years (Pitkin, John, Myers, & Dowell, 2012). Continued college-going underperformance (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; NCES, 2007; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009) places Latinos and the nation at risk, particularly as the importance of a college education increases (Young et al., 2012).

In California, only 55% of Latinos graduate from high school (Young et al., 2012). Further, Latinos are not graduating from high school ready for college (Wiley, Wyatt, & Camara, 2010). Only 28% of Latinos graduate from high school in California having successfully completed the A-G requirements necessary for admission to the University of California system, compared to 45.5% for White students and 68.5% for Asian/Pacific Islanders (CPEC data online). Nationwide, only 17.8% of Latinos were considered college-ready for the class of 2009. Of the Asian students, 42.7% were college-ready and 38.2% of the White student were college-ready (Wiley et al., 2010).

The lack of proper academic preparation has left Latinos vulnerable once in college and stuck in remedial gatekeeper courses (Young et al., 2012). For Latino students, entering college directly after completing high school increases their chances of completion of a bachelor's degree and closes the gap with their White peers from 22.2% to 16.4% (Adelman, 2006).

Latinos are more likely to attend low-performing, under-resourced schools that do not offer a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum (Dolan, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002). Latino students are disproportionately attending segregated schools and are more likely to have a less-challenging curriculum (Young et al., 2012). One of the keys to success in college is a rigorous high school curriculum (Adelman, 2006).

Underrepresentation in Higher Education

As a result of this underpreparedness, Latinos are underrepresented in institutions of higher education and are not obtaining degrees at acceptable rates (Dolan, 2009). In California, Latinos comprised 52.7% of the more than six million students enrolled in K-12 education during the 2012-13 school year (Ed-Data online, 2014). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 report, 11% of Latino adults have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 39% of White adults. Although enrollment in college has increased for Latinos in California since 2000, they mostly enroll in California community colleges (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). In 2006, 56.2% of Latinos enrolled in postsecondary education were enrolled in a two-year institution and 36.4% were enrolled in a four-year institution (NCES, 2012). The majority of Latinos who enter higher education start at the community college level (Dolan, 2009; Young et al., 2012) and have low transfer rates to four-year institutions (Young et al., 2012). Latinos are overrepresented in two-year institutions, even when they qualify to attend four-year institutions (O'Connor et al., 2010; The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). Of college-qualified students (i.e., students who qualified to attend four-year institutions), 37.9% of Latino students started at a two-year institution, while only 25.4% of White students made that same choice. Of those same students, 62.6% of the White students transferred and only 55.8% of

the Latinos transferred. Of those entering the two-year institutions, 37.5% of White students completed their bachelor's degree and 26.3% of Latinos completed their bachelor's degree (O'Connor et al., 2010).

Overall, while young adults are going to college more than ever, the gap between Latinos and Whites has increased (Dolan, 2009). From 1974 to 2006, the percentage of young adults who ever attended a postsecondary institution has increased nationwide from 63.4% to 77.6% (NCES, 2012). Although enrollment for Latinos was higher in 2006 relative to 1974, the Latino-White enrollment gap has increased: in 1974 the difference was 5% and in 2006 that gap was 14% (NCES, 2012). Latinos have reduced college enrollment and completion rates in part due to a deficiency in academic skills (Young et al., 2012).

While Latinos do not enroll in institutions of higher education at the same rate as their White peers (Dolan, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2010), we know that families have high aspirations for their children (Medina & Luna, 2000; Rodriguez, 2003; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Torrez, 2004). The underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education exists for a variety of reasons, many of which are rooted in family dynamics, including the lack of parental knowledge on the steps needed to get to college (Gándara, 2002; Gándara et al., 1998; Kao & Tienda, 1998). Financial concerns also leave parents in the dark and fearful of the burdens they may be taking on if their children go to college (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003; Fann, Jarsky, et al., 2009b; Kao & Tienda, 1998; McCallister et al., 2010). Poor curricular choices (Torrez, 2004), about which parents have limited knowledge, leave Latinos at a disadvantage when they are hoping to enter postsecondary institutions. College enrollment rates are higher for students who participate in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum in high school (Adelman, 1999, 2006; Alexander & Eckland, 1977; Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Perna, 2000). Parents who have

knowledge of college-preparatory curriculum can better advise their children (Torrez, 2004).

In the landmark longitudinal study that explored the factors that contribute to the successful completion of a bachelor's degree, Adelman (1999) found that the high school curriculum is one of the most important factors in determining successful completion of a bachelor's degree. In general, Latinos lack access to schools that adequately prepare them for higher education (Perna, 2005). Taking Advanced Placement courses is strongly correlated with the completion of a bachelor's degree, more so than college access (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). Moreover, a rigorous high school curriculum has a greater impact for Latino and African-American students than White and Asian students on their chances of completing a bachelor's degree (Adelman, 1999). Completing one course beyond Algebra II in high school more than doubles the chances of successfully completing a bachelor's degree (Adelman, 1999). In 2006 in *The Toolbox Revisited*, Adelman confirmed his original findings: "The academic intensity of the student's high school curriculum still counts more than anything else in precollegiate history in providing momentum toward completing a bachelor's degree" (p. 8). Yet Latino parents have little knowledge of these benefits and the impact they have on their children's future (Torrez, 2004).

The Role of Latino Parents' College Knowledge and Students' Access to Higher Education

Tied to the lack of access to rigorous high school curricula is Latino families' lack of knowledge of the steps involved to go to college (Gándara et al., 1998; Gándara, 2002; Kao & Tienda, 1998). Latino families suffer from lack of information, not lack of values when it comes to helping their children to be successful in higher education (Brown et al., 2003). The lack of college knowledge has been linked to Latino parent resistance to higher education due to the fear of the unknown (Auerbach, 2004b). Families want to support their children's academic abilities

and have aspirations for them to go to college, but they lack the information and experience to guide them through the process (Medina & Luna, 2000; Rodriguez, 2003; Torrez, 2004). Their fears often paralyze them into not allowing their children to pursue higher education when work opportunities can provide more financial stability (Harklau, 2013). Latino parents and students often have high aspirations and even have specific career goals in mind, yet they do not understand the academic steps needed to achieve those goals (Jones & Velez, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Tornatzky et al., 2002)

This lack of parent knowledge can be linked to the fact that teachers and the school are highly respected in the Latino culture (Olivos, 2009). Parents often trust that the school administration and teacher have the best interest of their child in mind when making decisions (Olivos, 2009; Tinkler, 2002). Thus, Latino parents are typically not involved in curriculum choices while their children are enrolled in middle and high school; they allow the school to make these decisions for their children and often do not understand the importance of a college preparatory curriculum (Torrez, 2004).

Schools understand that Latino parents lack knowledge and thus attempt to educate them by providing college workshops. However, simply translating the traditional college workshops presented to parents of high school students into Spanish is not enough to reach the Latino parent community (Fann, Jarsky et al., 2009b). Linguistically and culturally diverse, Latinos need access to the information about college and financial aid in order to increase access to higher education in ways that are not traditionally presented (Auerbach, 2002; Fann, Jarsky, & McDonough, 2009; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002). Latino immigrant parents need specific information about college life, safety, and the financial benefits. Perhaps most important, many Latino parents need to be educated on the role of immigrant status in higher education,

specifically about information for students who are not citizens (Fann, Jarsky et al., 2009b).

Lack of information leads to fear of college for many Latino parents.

One of the most prominent fears for parents (and students) in the Latino community is the financial burden college seemingly presents (Antonio, 2002; Brown et al., 2003; Kao & Tienda, 1998; McCallister et al., 2010). Latinos typically do not understand financial aid and financing college, especially for those who are qualified to attend four-year institutions (O'Connor et al., 2010). Many Latino families often do not even consider college because of its rising cost and their limited understanding of the system (Brown et al., 2003). Furthermore, Latino parents often overestimate the cost of college (Antonio, 2002) and are less likely than White parents to save money for college or seek information about financial aid (O'Connor et al., 2010). Yet Latino students benefit most when parents inquire and take action about financial aid (O'Connor et al., 2010). Of Latinos entering in postsecondary institutions, 43% reported taking at least one remediation course, costing them more money and putting them at higher risk of dropping out of college (Aud et al., 2011).

McCallister, et al. (2010) found that over two-thirds of parents of students in grades four through eight believed that their children would receive some sort of academic scholarship only to learn that this is not a reality when it is time to apply for college. Many Latino families do not understand the true cost of education and sources of financial aid because they are first-generation and have not attended higher education in the U.S. or been educated on the financial aid system (Brown et al., 2003; McCallister et al., 2010).

In summary, parents are the most important source of information for Latino children to help them gain access to college, yet they are often the source of inaccurate information such as its cost (Antonio, 2002; Post, 1990). Colleges do not often reach out to Latino parents using a

culturally-relevant approach which further contributes to a growing information gap (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). Reaching out to families early on in the educational pipeline will help them be more prepared when they enter high school through both academic preparation for the student and college knowledge preparation for the parents (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

Existing College Outreach Program and Interventions

Over the past 20 years more college preparation programs have targeted college access (Tierney et al., 2005). Programs such as AVID, Puente, GEARUP, I Have a Dream, Upward Bound, and MESA were born to specifically provide college preparation for underrepresented groups. Sponsored by state and federal government, educational institutions, and even schools themselves, these programs have received significant resources to attempt to allow underrepresented groups to have access to the dream of college (Tierney et al., 2005). College preparation programs, either targeted or school-wide, seek to engage students while in school (mostly high school) and improve their chances of accessing higher education. Most college preparation programs focus on school-based approaches, with interventions rooted in the school day and after school (Camara & Echternacht, 2000). They seek to enhance and supplement the academic and curricular programs of the school.

Most college preparation programs focus on counseling, academics, and social activities (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002), and many programs do not involve extensive involvement of parents (Jun & Tierney, 1999). There is limited data on which programs work (Coles, 1993; Gándara et al., 1998; Perna & Swail, 1998; Tierney et al., 2005), and we know that most programs lack proper funding and staffing (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). In college preparation programs, parent engagement is a critical component in preparation of underrepresented students, yet many programs rarely reach out to parents in effective ways (Tierney &

Auerbach, 2005).

College preparation programs are common today and have existed in the United States for several decades. In the 1960s, the federal TRIO programs, Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services were created to target historically underrepresented groups in higher education (Swail, 2000). College outreach programs have had positive effects on students' educational outcomes; specifically, programs that target students who have low ambition have the highest effect on educational outcomes (Domina, 2009). Early outreach programs would have better effect if they targeted non-educationally-motivated students (Domina, 2009).

While examining program effectiveness, many college outreach programs can be considered unnecessary because they are voluntary. Most students who participate are educationally-motivated and likely would have done well even if they had not participated in such a support program (Domina, 2009; "Reports Highlights," 2005). Upward Bound, for example, focuses on tutoring high school students who come from underrepresented groups by providing them with a support system ("Upward Bound Program," 2014). In Upward Bound's 2005 report, researchers found that program participation was most beneficial for students who had low expectations of their postsecondary plans. Findings also showed that participation in Upward Bound had minimal effect on students' academic preparation for college and academic achievement ("Reports Highlights," 2005). However, early interventions, such as those starting in eighth grade, are more effective than later interventions because student academic behaviors change more prominently in those educational years and the level of parent involvement is higher when children are younger (Domina, 2009).

All college preparation programs have the same goal: to increase enrollment for

underrepresented groups (Domina, 2009). Take, for example, the TRIO program Talent Search which provides students with academic, career, and financial counseling, the goal being to increase enrollment in and completion of postsecondary education by targeting disadvantaged youth and including workshops for families (“Talent Search Program,” 2014). Talent Search students were more likely to enroll in postsecondary education when compared to non-participants (Constantine, J. M., Seftor, N. S., Martin, E. S., Silva, T. & Myers, D., 2006). Parents were not as involved in the Talent Search program as they were in programs such as AVID, GEARUP, and Puente.

The AVID Program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) cites the goal of increasing access to college, particularly a four-year institution (AVID website, 2014). Parent involvement is listed as a component but is not a foundational support. The AVID program can be implemented in elementary and middle school, with some key components such as its social aspect and support system – having been cited for its success. The parent component, though mentioned, is sometimes non-existent (Shaughnessy, 2005; Swanson & Others, 1993).

Of all of the preparation programs examined here, GEARUP has one of the largest parent components (Tierney et al., 2005). GEARUP is a program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education (“Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs [GEAR UP],” 2014). Although parent involvement and educating parents are indicated as possible components of the GEARUP program, they are not requirements. Many schools that capitalize on the parent involvement component of GEARUP, however, find that it enhances their program (Domina, 2009).

The Puente program has shown the most success with working with parents and

considers parents an essential component (Gándara, 2002). The Puente program is designed as a college preparation program as well as a form of parent education (Grubb, Lara, & Valdez, 2002). Parents have an important voice in the Puente program and are brought into the school on a more frequent basis when compared to other pre-college outreach programs (Gándara, 2002). Counselors have frequent, regular interactions with parents and family members through workshops and one-on-one counseling sessions (Grubb et al., 2002). The program also emphasizes the importance of having bilingual counselors so that they can communicate with families in their native language and build a positive rapport with parents and students (Grubb et al., 2002). Parents are viewed as partners in the education process and schools seek to involve parents through a culturally-relevant framework as part of the Program (Tierney, 2002). Gándara (2002) found that the most significant differences between Puente and non-Puente students were seen in college preparation, attitudes towards school, college aspirations, and actual percentages of students attending a four-year institution. For example, 74% of Puente students reported completing the A-G coursework required to attend a four-year institution in California compared to only 62% of non-Puente students. In reference to college-going outcomes, 84% of Puente students attended college compared to 75% of the non-Puente students. Of the Puente students, 43% enrolled in a four-year institution compared to 24% of the non-Puente students (Gándara et al., 1998; Gándara, 2002).

Parent Involvement Literature

Research has provided abundant evidence linking parent involvement to academic achievement, especially for low-income students (Ascher, 1988; Baker & Soden, 1998; Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Chavkin, 1993; Epstein, 1996; Fan & Chen, 2001; Floyd, 1998; Inger, 1992; Peterson, 1989; Thigpen et al., 2014). Parents play a key role in college readiness through their

support (Leonard, 2013; Martinez & Klopott, 2005). However, school-centered approaches to parent involvement are not effective when reaching out to Latino parents (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Researchers have emphasized the critical importance of increasing parent and student knowledge about navigating the educational pipeline and understanding the steps it takes to get to college better (Auerbach, 2002, 2004; Gándara, 2002; Torrez, 2004). Parents serve as an important resource for students when it comes to college information and support, yet parents are often the source of misinformation about the cost of college, financial aid, and other pertinent information (Antonio, 2002; Post, 1990). Latino parents are often armed with inaccurate beliefs about college, misconstruing college as a threat and thus discouraging their children to pursue higher education (Auerbach, 1999, 2003). Schools often fail to reach out to Latino parents and students in culturally-relevant ways that are effective in increasing access to higher education (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005).

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Latino parents often avoid coming to school for various reasons, ranging from linguistic barriers to shame to feelings of alienation (Auerbach, 2006; Gandara, 1995; Gregg, Rugg, & Stoneman, 2012; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Language is one of the most significant barriers to Latino parent engagement; often parents receive translation through their children and they miss information (Tornatzky et al., 2002). Latino parents have work schedules, childcare, and transportation needs that conflict with their ability to get involved in their child's school in a way that satisfies the school's idea of involvement (Gandara, 1995; Valdez, 1996). Furthermore, schools tend to marginalize Latino parents by not validating their culture, failing to accommodate such needs as needing childcare at events, and creating a less than welcoming

environment (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Tornatzky et al., 2002).

Schools and Latino parents have differing views of what it means to be “involved” in their child’s education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Tinkler, 2002). Most school administrators view homework help and attendance at school events, usually associated with White, middle-class parents, as valid parental involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). School staff do not realize that when Latino parents feel that their child is motivated, they tend to take a more hands-off approach and offer moral support when it is needed (Auerbach, 2006; Jones & Velez, 1997). The role of Latino parents in providing support for their children as they prepare for college is “fundamentally different” than the role of Asian or White parents (Auerbach, p. 287, 2006). Higher socio-economic status (SES) students rely more on their families and parents for support and their parents serve as their role models (McDonough, 1997). Latino parents often offer encouragement and *consejos* (advice) for their children as they are motivated to attend college (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Auerbach (2007) coined this type of support as “moral capital” when compared to economic, cultural, and social capital. Immigrant Latino parents felt that the moral capital was their greatest contribution to their child’s education. Educators must learn to respect the parents’ contribution of moral support as an important part of preparing for higher education (Auerbach, 2006).

Traditional ways of thinking about parent involvement such as PTA (Tornatzky et al., 2002) and family science night (Barton, Drake, Perez, Louis, & George, 2004) are not necessarily effective in helping Latino parents to learn more about college. It is important for schools to understand the culturally different ways that Latino parents are involved in the education of their children (Auerbach, 2004; De Gaetano, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Tierney et al., 2005).

Connecting to Latino Parents

Latino parents are often inaccurately perceived as uninvolved and uninterested in their child's education (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Jackson & Remillard, 2005). These erroneous perceptions are often the result of cultural differences; therefore, understanding barriers and shaping outreach in culturally-relevant ways will help administrators reach Latino parents (De Gaetano, 2007; Tierney et al., 2005). Schools are not recognizing the power of the socio-cultural capital that Latino parents provide through their close relationships with their children in order to foster academic achievement (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Jones & Velez, 1997; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Valdez, 1996). An awareness of the various lenses through which to view parent engagement in schools helps schools and administrators improve outreach to parents. Traditional descriptions of parent involvement are not effective in increasing social capital for Latino students and their parents (Barton et al., 2004). When schools use community resources and find ways to connect with parents through means that relate to them culturally, parents are more involved and become advocates for their children (Auerbach, 2004).

Schools often fail to take into account the importance of the family and social network for Latinos (Auerbach, 2006, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Kiyama, 2010). Latino families' social networks are critical for their growth (Kiyama, 2010; Valdez, 1996), and families will often base decisions on what they learn from their social networks (Kiyama, 2010). An understanding of the dynamics of parent-child roles for Latino families will help schools effectively engage parents so that they can learn more about the educational pipeline and start talking to their children about higher education (Auerbach, 2006). Even the most motivated Latino students will not enroll in college if they do not have strong moral support

from their family (Auerbach, 2006). Finding innovative ways, such as making college tours accessible to Latino parents, can improve parent engagement (Dougherty, Nienhuser, & Vega, 2010): “One of the most rewarding and important outcomes of the cultural approach to parental involvement was the growing sense that parents were becoming more aware and active about social issues that affected them and were feeling more empowered to act” (De Gaetano, 2007, p. 159).

Effective Methods of Engaging Latino Parents

As stated earlier, traditional ways of presenting college information to parents are not effective in reaching Latino parents (Auerbach, 2002; Fann, Jarsky, & McDonough, 2009; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002). Latino students and families, as compared to White students and families, are overly-dependent on school personnel when it comes to information about college (Cabrera & Nasa, 2001; Ceja, 2001; Fund, 2004; Horn, Chen, & Chapman, 2003; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Since schools often fail at connecting with Latino parents due to the differing views of what it means to be involved (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Tinkler, 2002), it can help administrators to understand that Latino parents feel validated when they learn from each other and hear the experiences of their peers (Kiyama, 2010).

Research shows that culturally-relevant – that is connecting to the audience in a way that they can understand the content in their own cultural context (De Gaetano, 2007) – community-based approaches to Latino family involvement are sustainable over time (Auerbach, 2004; Cline & Necochea, 2001; Downs et al., 2008). Developing Latino parents as leaders through a community-based empowerment approach is effective in improving student achievement and parent involvement in their child’s education (Aspiazu et al., 1998). Community-based efforts that start by engaging a group within their own community have proven to be effective in

engaging parents on a larger scale, such as across a district (Thigpen et al., 2014). Auerbach (2004) recommends that schools find ways to engage Latino parents and reinforce their high aspirations for children starting in elementary school. “If college preparation programs began partnerships with parent engagement programs at elementary and middle schools, they could cultivate a base of students who came to high school with more college knowledge and better academic preparation” (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005, p. 46).

The Important Role of Administration

School principal leadership is a critical to involving parents (Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006; Thigpen et al., 2014) and the principal plays a crucial role in making parents feel welcome at the school (Sebring et al., 2006; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). Often parent involvement programs that are community-based are not directly supported by the administration at the school site and they are not sustainable (Downs et al., 2008). However, one of the key elements to sustainable success of parent education programs is the support and involvement of school site administration (Auerbach, 2009, 2010; Downs et al., 2008; Thigpen et al., 2014). Lack of involvement from school administrators, counselors, and teachers sends a strong message to families that the school is not interested in them participating or being involved (Downs et al., 2008).

In order to connect with Latino families, researchers recommend that administrators and schools honor the ways in which Latino parents are already involved in the education of their children and use those ways as a springboard for future involvement efforts (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991): “Parent volunteers should be given as much responsibility for the program as possible in order to facilitate community ownership and the long-term success of the program”(Downs et al., 2008). Schools can create a supportive environment by working to

create a more welcoming atmosphere and should begin by reaching out to parents (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). When schools affirm cultural identities and make them part of involving parents in the school, they see success in involving Latino parents (De Gaetano, 2007; Tierney, 2002).

Further, parents are more likely to be involved and participate when they are able to participate in their own language (Auerbach, 2004a; Tierney, 2002). Simply translating the traditional college information workshops for Latino parents is not enough to increase college access for Latinos (Fann, Jarsky, et al., 2009b; McClafferty et al., 2002). Schools cannot assume that parents will get involved if they are reaching out to them in traditional ways such as sending home a letter or flier (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Latino parents will not understand the importance of participation nor that the school is making a few suggestions of involvement (Tierney, 2002).

Successes

Auerbach (2004) found success in engaging Latino parents by using a community-based approach. The Futures & Families program (F&F) sought to increase parental college knowledge, increase family social networks, and improve parental communication with their children about college. Workshops were presented over three (sophomore through senior) years by the school's bilingual community liaison. The liaison was highly-valued and a critical component to link parents, staff, and students. Meetings were created in response to parent needs and involved informal presentations, hands-on workshops, guest speakers (Latinos), panel discussions, and small group discussion. The F&F meetings were the primary source of college knowledge for nearly all the parents involved. The secondary source was their high-school age children.

Parents felt that the personal testimony of guest speakers, which involved stories of

success, was one of the most valuable aspects of the program. Parents heard from parents of Latino college students who were quite honest with the parent participants about their fears and misconceptions about higher education. It was the personal testimony about paying for college that gave them hope as they prepared to send their children to college. Hearing from people who came from their community and had similar struggles helped parents to feel that college was within reach.

Parents felt empowered through the information they received as participants in the F&F program. These meetings presented parents with the unique opportunity to build a college-relevant social network with parents like them. Parents felt that the meetings allowed them to provide more support for their high-school age children as they prepared for college. As a result, Auerbach (2004) made specific recommendations for engaging Latino parents: start early (as early as elementary school), deliver workshops in the parents' language (small and personal workshops are better), invite guest speakers of similar backgrounds, reinforce basic information in a variety of ways, tailor workshops to the needs of Latino parents, give parents the opportunity to meet in smaller groups with school and college representatives, help parents through the college planning process as a group and recognize the barriers to college access for Latinos, and encourage parents to learn about educational inequalities.

In a rural community, Downs et al. (2008) developed an effective, efficient, and sustainable college knowledge program for Latino parents called Parents Teaching Parents (PTP) which involved parent volunteers who developed a college and career preparation curriculum for other parents within an isolated rural community. Participants were families whose children attended a small junior/senior high school of less than 400 students. School administrators played a key role in the recruitment of eight key, highly-motivated parent volunteers of varying

education levels who served as the leaders of the workshops (Downs et al., 2008).

Much time was spent on the planning of curriculum to be delivered in both English and Spanish. Many parents were apprehensive about presenting the six-week curriculum – at first. Some parents were more comfortable than others to deliver the material. Over the course of the sessions, the workshops evolved to more of a pot-luck format and parents started bringing food and engaging in rich discussion. At the end of the six-week course, parents recognized their ability to take over the delivery of the program and a true community-based, sustainable program was born. They no longer had to rely on any outside agencies or professionals.

Downs et al. (2008) also developed several recommendations for future programs that mirrored the recommendations of Auerbach (2004). Programs should be culturally-appropriate and meet the needs of the community. Additionally, specific content should be developed in collaboration with the parent leaders and parent leaders should be given significant responsibility.

Conclusion

When students (and parents) plan to attend college early in the educational pipeline, they are better academically prepared to enter college when they graduate from high school (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000a, 2000b). The level of parental involvement is directly related to children being academically prepared for college (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000a, 2000b).

In order to address the critical role of Latino parents in preparing their children for higher education, schools must engage parents in unique and creative ways that move away from the traditional ways of middle-class communities. Successful outreach to Latino parents should be culturally-relevant and community-based (Auerbach, 2004a; Cline & Necochea, 2001; De Gaetano, 2007; Downs et al., 2008).

This study aimed to address the underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education by reaching parents early in the academic pipeline through a community-based sustainable approach that fosters leadership in the Latino community. I worked with parent leaders in the community who have personal experience in preparing their Latino children for postsecondary opportunities so that they can share their stories with their fellow community members. This creation of a social network has proven to be effective in reaching Latino parents (Cline & Necochea, 2001; Kiyama, 2010).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative action research project was to develop and refine an intervention that empowers Latino parents of children who have gone to college to become “facilitators” of the process for those who follow. These parents become leaders in their community as they work with parents of younger children and thus help close the gap between Latino children and college.

These knowledgeable parents and I created and refined a two-hour workshop to deliver to the parent “learners” at three different elementary schools in their own Latino community. Together we identified and refined the successful components of parent-developed and parent-facilitated workshops. The development of such parent facilitators has been proven to be effective in community-based parent involvement efforts, specifically in the Latino community (Aspiazu et al., 1998; Auerbach, 2004b; Cline & Necochea, 2001; Downs et al., 2008; Thigpen et al., 2014). However, we know little about the process of developing parent leaders in the Latino community, nor the potential effect on parent learners. The following questions guided my study:

- 1. What changes and modifications do Latino parent facilitators make to the curriculum and presentation as they implement a college knowledge workshop for parents of elementary school children in their own community?*
- 2. After participation in a series of parent workshops, what changes do parent learners report in their understanding and behaviors supporting their children to plan and prepare for higher education?*

Overview of the Research Design

To investigate the process of developing a curriculum with parent facilitators in the Latino community, this project employed a qualitative action research cycle. As defined by Coghlan and Brannick (2007), this cycle includes the following crucial steps:

1. “Systematically generating and collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective or need;
2. Feeding the data back to relevant others;
3. Conducting a collaborative analysis of the data;
4. Planning and taking collaborative action based on the diagnosis; and,
5. Jointly evaluating the results of that action, leading to further planning” (p. 73).

We repeated the cycle twice. As a team, we analyzed data from each iteration of the workshop to improve the content and delivery of the workshop. The process of involving the parent facilitators in the action research cycle provided an opportunity for us, as a team, to explore the effectiveness of the intervention. This action research cycle allowed us the opportunity to refine the process.

Qualitative methods such as observations and interviews enabled me to capture the knowledge and behaviors of parent facilitators and parent participants as they worked with each other to become informed members of the school community. Interviewing is the best method to use when working with a few select individuals (Merriam, 2009) and trying to capture their change in knowledge and the workshop effectiveness: “Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam, p. 88, 2009). Interviews and observations represented effective strategies for understanding the

process of change and perceptions of parent learners during the workshops, as well as that of the parent facilitators as they developed, refined, and implemented the program.

To assess changes that parent learners reported in their understanding and behaviors supporting their children to plan and prepare for higher education, I administered a pre- and post-workshop questionnaire for all parent learners. Quantitative analyses of these questionnaires provided evidence of the extent of knowledge gains and changes in self-reported behaviors from the parent learners that could be attributed to the workshops. The research questions of this study, therefore, require a qualitative action research design, with a minor pre- and post-assessment of learning.

Site

This study required a school district with a predominantly Latino population and the Ranch Unified School District (RUSD) was an ideal setting for this action research project. The district has 9,000 students and is comprised of eight elementary schools, three middle schools, one continuation high school, and one comprehensive high school.

The population of the RUSD community and the district is 97% Latino. State statistics show the parent education level in RUSD to be 2.33 on a scale in which 1 represents “not a high school graduate” and 5 represents “graduate school”. In comparison to other districts in California, RUSD is in the middle as far as parent education level. Compared to surrounding communities and populations, RUSD has a comparable population to many other districts that would be able to utilize an intervention like the one in this study. I had access to this district and discussed this project with the superintendent and the principals of three elementary schools; they all felt that the goals aligned with the work they want to do with parent involvement.

Participants

Parent Facilitators

The parent facilitators for the study included six Latino parents with children who have recently started attending college or who have successfully graduated from college. Other than being Latino, there was no educational or demographic requirement to be a parent facilitator for this study. The criteria for parent facilitators were based on their willingness to act as a facilitator of the workshops and their commitment to educating parents in the community. The parent facilitator volunteers had at least a minimal baseline understanding of the behaviors to support their children to plan and prepare for higher education. I sought parents who were bilingual so that we could deliver workshops in both English and Spanish. I was able to recruit one English-speaking parent and five Spanish-speaking parents. I explained the purpose of the project and distributed a small interest card that asked for basic demographic information. I collected the interest cards and contacted these parents via telephone to follow up. I was targeting parents who wanted to be part of a community effort.

There were many opportunities for me to recruit parent facilitators for this study. I reached out to counselors, the AVID Coordinator at Ranch High, and a former GEARUP coordinator to identify potential parent facilitators who now have children enrolled in or graduated from college.

Parent Learners

The parent learner population selected included parents of Latino children enrolled in RUSD elementary schools: Roldan Elementary School, Southside Elementary School, and River View Elementary School. Parents of any elementary school-age child in the district were welcome at the workshops, but recruitment focused on the three elementary schools where the

workshops took place. I worked with the principals of these three elementary schools to recruit parents to attend the workshop using means that they have found successful at other parent events such as fliers, phone tree, and word of mouth. I distributed a flier to the principals to use and reiterated that this is a voluntary, yet useful, workshop for parents of elementary school children. I also created posters for them to post at the high traffic areas for parents to see.

Data Collection Methods

This qualitative action research study used a variety of data collection methods – interview, observation, and questionnaire – to answer the research questions. During the curriculum development process, I acted as a participant observer and recorded all Action Research Team (AR Team) meetings.

After recruiting the six parents to serve as parent facilitators, we had a series of three meetings to design the curriculum. To develop the curriculum, we began by examining the work of McDonough and colleagues that focuses on how to increase college enrollment by increasing efforts at the site level. We explored the nine principles essential to building college culture (McClafferty et al., 2002):

- College Talk
- Clear Expectations
- Information and Resources
- Comprehensive Counseling Model
- Testing and Curriculum
- Faculty Involvement
- Family Involvement
- College Partnerships
- Articulation

To further review the research, we considered a recent work from Conley and Seburn published in *Postsecondary Play: The Role of Games and Social Media in Higher Education* (2014), which focuses on transition readiness and the shift from high school to college. The

focus is to teach parents and students how to access the information necessary to have a successful transition from high school to college (Conley & Seburn, 2014).

At each workshop, I administered pre-questionnaires (Appendix A) to all of the parent learners in attendance in order to gauge their knowledge and behaviors. The main purpose of the pre-questionnaire was to understand what knowledge and confidence parent learners brought with them to the workshop so that we could see if they had gained knowledge through the workshop: What aspects of college preparation did they feel are most important before the workshop? What behaviors do they feel support their children in preparing for college before participation in the workshop? At the end, I administered an identical post-questionnaire to measure knowledge and behavior changes: How did their knowledge of behaviors to support their children change as a result of the workshop?

Within a week of the workshop, I followed up with a short interview with five to seven parent learners via telephone (Appendix B). These follow-up questions probed deeper into answering the second research question: *After participation in a series of parent workshops, what changes do parent learners report in their understanding and behaviors supporting their children to plan and prepare for higher education?* The post-questionnaire alone would be useful, but following up with parents within one week of the workshop allowed me to gather data on any changes in behavior. The questions were focused on self-reported changes in behavior of the parent learners and understanding of supporting their children as they plan and prepare for higher education. I also asked two questions about workshop delivery, which helped me answer the first research question: *What components of the workshops were most helpful? What can we do in the future to improve the workshop?* The data from these interviews were shared with the parent learners to help in the planning of the next workshops in the action research cycle.

Transcription of Workshops

At the end of each workshop, the AR Team used the guiding questions to collect data from the parent facilitators. We asked which specific behaviors they felt had changed and what they found most useful about the process of delivering a workshop. I asked if they had any suggestions for the next workshop(s) and what we could improve upon. I asked how they felt about presenting to their peers and their impressions of the pre-/post-questionnaires. I asked what they thought about their role as a facilitator. The results from the AR Team meeting helped me better understand the process of cultivating parent learners in the Latino community. I assumed the role of a participant observer (Stringer, 2004) to collect and record the data for this action research project. I used observation protocols (Appendices D & E) with guiding questions and interviews with the parent facilitators and parent learners to collect data for this study.

To understand the process of cultivating parent facilitators in the Latino community as they develop, refine, and implement a program to enhance postsecondary knowledge and support for other parents, I conducted observations and engaged in the questioning of parent facilitators at various points in the process. I conducted observations at the site of the workshops for each workshop to document the delivery of the workshop. I used the series of questions outlined in the observation protocol to collect data. I also used a guiding question protocol with the parent facilitators to gather their thoughts and feeling about the process at various points (Appendix C). The questions guiding the protocol focused on the first research question to understand the process of developing a program to enhance secondary knowledge and support for other parents. For example:

- What are parent facilitators doing during the curriculum development process?
- How comfortable are they with the material?

- How do they interact with each other and with the facilitator?

In order to capture the changes that parent learners reported in their understanding and behaviors related to postsecondary opportunities and how they can support their children to plan and prepare for higher education, I interviewed parents and conducted observations.

Data Analysis Methods

The collection and analysis of the data in this action research study are interdependent. The timely analysis of data is a crucial component in the iterative process of the intervention's design, implementation, and evaluation. Data collected was reviewed by the AR Team within one week of collection and was used to inform the intervention (i.e., workshops); ongoing analysis was critical to the workshop's design and delivery.

I used a digital recording device to capture the interview and AR Team discussion data. After *verbatim* transcription by an outside source, I analyzed the recorded interviews upon completion of each data collection looking for patterns and themes related to parent learners' changes in behavior. The data collected from the action research group was examined for patterns and themes related to how they felt about their facilitator role and the development and implementation of the workshops. In considering the work of Auerbach (2004) and Downs et al. (2008), I looked for the point at which parents felt that they could take over the delivery of the program and felt confident to work with their peers: *At what point did they feel a sense of ownership? What were they doing that made them feel empowered to help other parents?* I also looked for changes in perceptions by parent facilitators: *When did they feel confident in front of their peers?* I performed member checks with the parent facilitators after the interviews which gave them an opportunity to correct or add information to the interview (Stringer, 2004).

To analyze the data collected from the interviews, observations and AR Team meetings, I

prepared for analysis by organizing the raw data. I used a computer program to transcribe the recorded data from interviews and Team meetings and typed all notes from the observations. I then read through all the data to get a general sense of the information and reflect on the meaning of the statements captured. I started recording my initial thoughts of the data at this point in the analysis then began the coding process which helped me organize the data into segments in order to make sense and bring meaning to the data collected.

The data collected from interviews with parent learners and observations of the workshops were examined for patterns and themes related to confidence, self-reported behaviors related to postsecondary opportunities, and how parents can support their children to plan and prepare for college. I looked for specific themes such as understanding the role of parents in curriculum planning (Torrez, 2004) and the importance of math in college preparation (Adelman, 2006). I examined all interviews for themes and patterns related to the components of the workshops that were most effective, as well as the effectiveness of the presenters. Timely analysis of data helped inform the iterative process. AR Team members then met within one week of the workshop to refine the curriculum for the next iteration.

The data from the pre- and post-questionnaires and follow up interviews with parent learners were used to inform the content of the subsequent workshops and to check that the workshops were having an impact on parent learners. The majority of the questions in the questionnaire were Likert-like items based on a scale. I used a t-test for paired samples in order to measure the impact of the intervention. I provided descriptive analysis of data for the independent and dependent variables of this study; I indicated the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores. I presented the results in tables and interpreted the results of the t-test – this helped me draw conclusions from the results as they related to the research questions. The t-tests

allowed me to compare means on each measure before parents experienced the intervention and after the intervention.

After collecting data from pre- and post-questionnaires and interviews of parent learners, I met with the parent facilitators to reflect and refine the curriculum before our next workshop. Ultimately, the goal was to create an intervention that could be used by principals and district personnel to empower Latino parent. That being said, the content of the workshops was important, and identifying the content that reached parent learners was an equally significant outcome of this action research project.

Role Management

A concern in my study was bias because I was implementing this intervention in my district and with potential future parents. Given my role as principal of the only high school in my district, it was important for me to clearly define my role as a researcher in this project. I also utilized a counselor (not an employee of the district) to assist me in training the parent leaders to further separate me from the process and to more clearly define my role as a researcher. However, it was important that I was involved and represented a figurehead because the principal plays a crucial role in making parents feel welcome at school (Sebring et al., 2006; Warren et al., 2009); the leadership of the school principal is a key to involving parents (Sebring et al., 2006; Thigpen et al., 2014). By using my district elementary schools in this action research project, I was able to monitor the role of the principal and discuss that as an important component in considering replicating this intervention in other districts. My role as a researcher was clearly defined, but my role as a principal was an important one not to ignore.

I performed member checks to curb my biases in order to understand from the participants if they interpreted the data in the same way I did. Additionally, I triangulated data by

examining responses from the pre- and post-questionnaires, interviews, and observations in order to ensure that my bias was not represented in the interpretation of data. Due the amount of data I collected, I think was wise to use direct quotes to confirm or contradict my biases as I examined results.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The data collected as part of this action research project was credible and trustworthy. To ensure this, I used standardized protocols in data collection and standardized coding procedures in data analysis. In addition, I performed member checks after each set of interviews with the parent facilitators. I also triangulated data from the various sources, interviews, observations, and pre-/post-questionnaires. I used systematic methods of data analysis to ensure that I asked all of the participants the same questions and that there was a thorough analysis of data.

As mentioned before, I used an outsider to aid in training parents to ensure that they were not overly influenced by me. At the same time, I had a colleague review my data so to challenge my assumptions and ask questions of my results; this ensured that my bias was not present in my interpretation of results and conclusions.

Ethical Issues

My study is susceptible to reactivity – that is, parents (both facilitators and learners) telling me what they think I wanted to hear. I anticipated that this would be the most serious issue of credibility concerned with my study. I addressed that concern by implementing a protocol encouraging parents to be as honest as possible. I also practiced interviewing and listening so to learn how to build rapport and encourage honest responses.

Parents may have been influenced by each other in this study. They may have felt the need to not only say what they thought I wanted to hear, but also say what they thought their

peers wanted to hear. All of the parents essentially live in the same community and may know each other. There may have been a sense of competitiveness or other dynamics that may have influenced them. I decided to use interviews and observations with parent learners, and chose one-on-one interviews to ensure that parents were not influenced by each other. I designed my questions in a way that would not lead parents, yet would describe their perceptions and feelings. By modeling my interview questions after measures that have been tested, I hoped to address any concerns of credibility.

The obvious ethical issue I needed to address in my study was the dual role I had as the principal of Ranch High School (the only comprehensive public high school in the district and community) and the principle investigator. I had minimal contact with the parent learners before the onset of this study due to my role as the principal of the high school. However, there may have been parents of older children or who had relatives in the district and thus would have been familiar with my role, thus feeling influenced or apprehensive about participation. It needed to be made clear to parent participants (both facilitators and learners) through a memorandum that I was the principle researcher and my role as principal was separate. All results were confidential and pseudonyms were used to protect participants.

Significance

The data from my study can be used to inform school districts of the characteristics of successful community-based parent empowerment efforts which can be used to appropriately and effectively engage Latino parents in supporting their children in pursuit of postsecondary learning opportunities. The results of this study will show the process of developing, refining, and implementing a program to enhance postsecondary knowledge and support for other parents.

The goal of this action research project is to develop a process that other schools and

districts can use to educate parents in the community by working with parent facilitators. This “plan, do, check, act” process helped me to develop a process that was effective in engaging parents in the community and can so then be used by other districts and schools.

CHAPTER 4: PARENT FACILITATORS

Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative data from the AR Team meetings of the parent facilitators. The purpose of this AR Team was to develop a curriculum and a presentation for a college knowledge workshop to be administered at three different elementary schools. This investigation sought to address the following research questions:

1. *What changes and modifications do Latino parent facilitators make to the curriculum and presentation as they implement a college knowledge workshop for parents of elementary school children in their own community?*
2. *After participation in a series of parent workshops, what changes do parent learners report in their understanding, behaviors, and attitudes about supporting their children to plan and prepare for higher education?*

The current chapter highlights common themes from the transcripts of the AR Team meetings to address the first research question. The findings reflect the process of development and the process of making changes to the curriculum and presentation methods.

Demographic Information of Parent Facilitators

There were a total of six parent facilitators who participated in the AR Team. These parents developed and delivered workshops at three different elementary schools in the RUSD throughout the action research cycle. All parents were Latino and lived in the community. Below I describe each of the parents who were part of the AR Team.

*Maria Vasquez*¹ has two children, a son, age 14, and a daughter, age 18. Her daughter is enrolled at the local community college and graduated from Ranch High School. Her two

¹ To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for all participants.

children have very different personalities and she talks about this often. Her daughter is more reserved and quiet; her son is very social and involved in school activities. He is currently the freshman class president. Maria is a stay-at-home mom who volunteers regularly at Southside Elementary School, even though her children have not attended that school in many years. Maria speaks only Spanish and knows a lot of other parents in the community through her connections at Southside Elementary School.

Tammy Serrano is a single mother with three children. She has an older son who is 22 years old and is currently unemployed. He did not attend college and went straight into the workforce after graduating from Ranch High School. Her older daughter is currently a freshman at UC Riverside and received enough financial aid to cover her tuition and living expenses. Like her older daughter, her youngest daughter is in the AVID program at Ranch High School. She is currently a junior and also plays on the girls' water polo team. Tammy was the only parent facilitator who did not speak Spanish. She conducted the English workshops on her own. She regularly participated in the AR Team meetings, even when they were mostly conducted in Spanish.

Anita and Carlos Rivera have three boys who are now enrolled in college, one graduating during the action research project. Their oldest son graduated from Cal State Long Beach during data collection. The younger two sons both attend college in Washington State and play soccer for their respective schools; both received athletic scholarships. Their middle son, Chris, signed a contract with Major League Soccer while we were completing our final AR Team meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Rivera are very dedicated to the school and community.

Alonso Moreno has three daughters who have all graduated from Ranch High and are now enrolled in college. Two of his daughters attend UC Irvine and one daughter is studying at

UCLA. Mr. Moreno has been very involved in the school district for several years and continues to volunteer, even though his daughters are graduated and now in college. He was involved in the School Site Council and the District Advisory Council for seven years.

Elia Garcia is the mother of five children who all attended Ranch High. The youngest is a freshman at Ranch High and the other four are enrolled in college or have graduated from college. She has one child studying at Arizona State, another son studying at Cal State Bakersfield, one child at Santa Monica College, and one son who graduated from UCLA.

The Action Research Cycle

As an AR Team, we met a total of three times before our first workshop with parent learners. The first official AR Team was on October 20, 2014, the second on October 27, 2014, and the third on November 11, 2014; all Team meetings were held at Ranch High School. The first workshop was held at Roldan Elementary on November 17, 2014. After the first meeting, I provided coffee and *pan dulce* upon the parents' request. This added a social element to the group.

We began the first AR Team meeting by having each parent introduce himself or herself, talk about his/her children, and discuss something that he/she believed helped parents who have children in elementary school to prepare their children for college. The meeting was conducted in Spanish for the most part.² Tammy Serrano is the only parent who does not speak Spanish although she understands it. I took time to translate, as necessary, and explain content.

The second AR Team meeting was focused on how we should present the information and I started it by asking parents this question. We talked about how sharing stories can be an effective way for parents to hear the material.

² Regardless of which language each parent used in interviews or meetings, they were all translated into English.

The third AR Team meeting was a practice run of the workshop. I had provided the Team with a presentation to review, then we decided who would speak at which point of the presentation. We went through each slide, with parents being able to clarify questions and flush out details for the presentation; we practiced as a team. On the Spanish-speaking team, each parent was assigned a different topic, with Alonso selected to serve as the master of ceremonies. Because Tammy was the only English-speaking presenter, she facilitated that entire presentation.

The fourth and fifth AR Team meetings were different. The Team took the time to discuss what went well and what we wanted to change for the next workshop. We discussed findings from the pre-/post-questionnaires and follow-up interviews. The parents made suggestions for future workshops as outlined in the findings below.

Pre-Workshop Development: Identifying Key Topics

The first three AR Team meetings were dedicated to the workshop development process. We started by discussing topics that parent facilitators felt would be most effective to focus on, then we spent the majority of the first meeting brainstorming and sharing of stories. The most pertinent topics that emerged from the first meeting are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Topics to Cover As Mentioned in the AR Team Meeting #1

	<i>Alonso</i>	<i>Maria</i>	<i>Carlos</i>	<i>Anita</i>	<i>Tammy</i>
Get involved as a parent	X	X			
Team: Counselors, Teachers & Parents	X	X	X	X	
Classes to take / A-G requirements	X	X			
School System	X	X			
Financial Aid & Scholarships	X	X	X		X
Community Service		X			
Push your child & insist on studies/ homework			X	X	X
Grades & GPA			X	X	X
Value in hearing from other parents	X	X			

*Elia was not present for AR Team Meeting #1.

Parent Involvement in School

Two parents, Alonso and Maria, felt that parent involvement in school is something that should be addressed in the workshops with the parent learners. Alonso recommended that parents be involved in the school by attending parent meetings and serving on committees. He expressed that this helped his daughters to know he was involved: “They knew that if they did something bad we would know. It helped them to put effort into school and they started to compete against each other in Student of the Month and things like that.” He also shared that he wanted to make sure to emphasize that parents should get involved with and build a relationship with their child’s guidance counselor.

Maria agreed with Alonso; she shared her stories of helping at the schools her children attend, particularly at Southside Elementary School. She felt that being involved at school is very important: “My husband would say, ‘Don’t you have to do anything?’ But, yes! It is important for our children to see that their parents are involved.” She also felt that she, personally, gained a

lot by being involved. Maria added that, like Alonso, being involved at school helped keep her children focused.

Working as a Team with the Teachers and Counselors

Four of the five parents present at the first AR Team meeting discussed the importance of creating a team partnership with teachers and counselors. This, they felt, should be a point of emphasis with the parent learners at the workshop. Carlos said, “I think that everyone is a team: the teachers, the parents, and the counselor.” The parents felt that this essential lesson would help parent learners in the future. They recognized that these parents will have young children and much of the factual information that will be shared at the workshop will perhaps change in five to ten years, but this lesson of working as a team is timeless.

Echoing this sentiment of working as a team with school personnel, Alonso emphasized, “When they enter middle school, involve yourself with the counselors because it is very important. Many parents never meet their kid’s counselors, and they are the ones that... the counselors and the recommendations of teachers, are the ones that recommend to the students so that they can take other classes.” The concept of working as a team was a major theme emphasized throughout the workshops because all parent facilitators felt that it was important.

Classes and A-G Requirements

The facilitators also discussed the importance of emphasizing the classes students must take to enter a four-year university. Alonso had previously attended the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) classes and had learned about the A-G requirements³: “The parents have to understand that it isn’t enough to just attend school. They have to take certain classes to be able to have a career or to take these classes to get to university.” Maria agreed that the A-G

³ A-G requirements are the courses that students must take in each subject area to be eligible to attend a state university in California (UC or CSU).

requirements should be explained to the parents. Both these parents felt that giving learner parents the information would help them monitor their child's progress as they enter high school. Equipping the parents with the tools to effectively monitor their children emerged as a priority for the AR Team.

Stratification of the Educational System

At the first AR Team meeting, the parents briefly discussed the different educational systems and how to emphasize this with parents. Alonso was the first to bring up this discussion: "Us parents that come from other countries, we don't know the educational system here. So, we must try and understand it and how things work here." The parents agreed that explaining the school system to learner parents would be valuable and we discussed the differences among four-year institutions and the community college system. They also felt that parents need to understand the K-12 system and how different people at the school, such as the counselor, can be a resource; this point was key because parents of many RUSD students attended school in other countries, so the system – on both district, state, and federal levels – is very different. The parent facilitators felt that understanding the system would help parents navigate it more effectively.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

The parent facilitators agreed to share information and their personal experiences about paying for college with the parent learners, but they were concerned about sharing too much information that might confuse workshop participants. Parent facilitators expressed concerns that the parent learners would be intimidated by hearing too much information or not getting the information they needed from the workshop. At our first team meeting, when we started talking about financial aid, Maria said, "That is going to scare them. They are going to think they can't afford college." At one of the last team meetings before our first workshop, Elia commented,

“Yes, we [the facilitators] aren’t from a bank...[sic] to tell them where the money to pay for school is. We aren’t a financial institution.” The facilitators wanted to make sure that the parents received necessary information, but were not scared or intimidated by it. They wanted the parents to trust them, but also to understand that the AR Team members were not the experts on financial aid.

As an AR Team, we spent a significant amount of time discussing the various stories of the parent facilitators and how to incorporate them into the presentations. The parent facilitators felt that emphasizing saving for the future was an important topic. At our last meeting before our workshop at Roldan Elementary, Elia said:

I can also talk about the importance of saving money. One thing that I noticed in my personal experiences is that good grades, homework, and sports teach you discipline, but I forgot to tell them that it is also important to start saving for school.

The parent facilitators said that they wanted to give the parent learners a basic understanding, based on their own personal testimonies, so that they could begin to save and be able to consume information about financial aid in the future.

Even the parent facilitators had their concerns about their own practices when it came to saving for college. Maria expressed her concern at the post-workshop AR team meeting that she had not saved enough money:

It is like we are sowing the seed. I think that is what we can do at that age, elementary. When I was first here, the teachers would tell me I needed to start saving money for my kids. And I was just thinking there was a lot of time left. Now look. Here I am with nothing saved.

She felt that sharing her story with the parent learners would inspire them to start saving and not make the same mistake.

Motivating Children to Do Their Best

The facilitators wanted to discuss various parenting issues with the parent learners. At the first AR Team meeting they talked about how to push and motivate children through sharing some of their personal experiences with the group. Three of the five parents present had input on this topic and wanted to make sure that we shared this with the parent learners. Carlos said, “I say that when one has children, it doesn’t matter if they get upset. You have push kids. They will get mad at you. They are going to turn around and hate you, but you gotta’, you gotta’ push.” He emphasized that parents have to push their children and not be afraid if they get upset. His wife Ana shared that she involved teachers in the efforts to push her children: “Sometimes the kids listen more to the teachers than parents, so we always tell the teacher, ‘Could you push them?’” This was an important emphasis to impart upon the parent learners, that they are empowered, both with their child and with the school. The parent facilitators wanted to help the parent learners be better parents and motivate their children, even while they are still young.

Carlos felt that parents should push their children to keep them out of trouble: “And you keep them tired so that they don’t hang out in the streets. They come home and crash.” The idea of sharing with parents the different benefits for pushing and motivating their children added depth to this topic for the parent facilitators. They shared stories and realized that they had something in common: they were all parents who were always *pendiente* – on the lookout – and on top of what their children were doing.

Emphasizing the Role of Grades and GPA

The parents discussed and shared the importance of grades and GPA. Anita said, “It is important to note that the first year a student enters high school they need to start getting good grades.” This is a shift for a lot of parents because grades in elementary and middle school are

very different: students move on even if they do not pass. In high school, a student has to retake classes when they do not pass.

Because understanding GPA is such a huge shift, the parent facilitators wanted to emphasize grades so that the parent learner could be aware of what to look out for when their children enter high school. The facilitators wanted to emphasize the importance of grades to help the parents better understand the A-G requirements. The facilitators felt strongly that parents needed to understand that their son or daughter must receive a grade of C or higher to have the class count towards the A-G requirements.

Hearing From Parents

The parent facilitators discussed that hearing from other parents was going to be an important component of the workshops. Three of the parent facilitators emphasized the importance of parents hearing from other parents and that it needed to be a powerful component of our workshop. Tammy shared this when she went to UC Riverside for her daughter's orientation, – other parents spoke to them and she felt that this was a positive interaction. She tied it in with our workshops: “They see us and we are just parents. If they can do it, then I can do it too.”

Alonso felt that parents would feel more comfortable discussing this issue with other parents: “I feel like they are going to feel more comfortable with other parents giving them the information. Not a teacher. It will intimidate them.” I also shared with them that it was the workshop plan, i.e., that they would present all of the information at the workshops and I would just be present as an observer and a resource.

At first, the parents were apprehensive about presenting to their peers; however, after we discussed the importance about hearing from other parents, the facilitators felt that it was

important to present to their peers. Even Carlos, one of the more confident parents said, “I can talk about anything right now, but when I see a classroom full of people I am going to be stuck in neutral.” By sharing his fears with the other parents, they were more at ease. Even the most confident of the parents of the group had his fears and this helped the facilitators to bond.

Tammy suggested talking about personal experiences. At the second AR Team meeting, she said, “I think talking about personal experiences would be good. You know, the stories, you know, and then all the information that we know.” The personal connection to the parents was an important component in the eyes of the parent facilitators.

Alonso suggested using a PowerPoint presentation for the method of presentation to guide the facilitators. At the second AR Team meeting, the parents helped build the PowerPoint and its content. It was at the third meeting that we reviewed the presentation with a draft of the PowerPoint. We went through the presentation two times so that the parents felt comfortable with the information, and we practiced in both English and Spanish.

At the second AR Team meeting, we discussed addressing parents in both English and Spanish. When asked which language he would prefer to use in addressing the parents, Carlos said, “Well, in Spanish, especially talking in front of people, I can lose my English there.” Alonso also expressed more comfort addressing the group in Spanish and, after some discussion, Tammy suggested splitting into two groups, one using English, the other using Spanish.

We also discussed how to break up the groups and how to present. The parents felt that it depended on the number of parents. The AR Team expressed concern that not enough parents would show up and they were interested to see how many parents would arrive at the workshops. Maria said, “Personally, it would disappoint me to not see people at the meetings.”

The parent facilitators wanted to create the best presentation for the parent learners. They discussed their fears, how to present, and how to best reach the parents that attended. They were concerned with the possibility of only a few parents attending and wanted to reach as many parents as possible. Their goal was to find significant ways to connect with other parents because they felt that the parent-to-parent connection was a powerful way to empower Latino parents in their community.

Responding to Parent Questions

During the first two AR Team meetings the parents asked a lot of clarifying questions. This continued throughout our meetings even after we had the workshops. They would ask me questions about our school, classes we offer, and different systems in place. Carlos said, “There are going to be questions we will not have the answers to and we can turn it over to you.” Later in the second AR Team meeting he said, “The finances, we turn to you.” The parents had a fear that they would not have all of the answers. It seemed that they wanted to be better prepared to answer questions for parents based on their line of questioning.

Summary of Workshops

Roldan Elementary School

The first workshop took place at Roldan Elementary on Monday, November 17, 2014, at 6:00 pm in the school library. We had another room ready in case we needed to divide the group into two rooms. The parent facilitators arrived at 5:15 pm to prepare before the workshop as decided at the last AR Team meeting. When I arrived, four parent facilitators were already there, discussing and reviewing how they were going to present. The other two parents arrived shortly after I arrived. They were dressed nicely and were taking their role very seriously. Maria, who

always had her hair pulled back in a hat, had her hair down and was clearly ready to be a parent leader for the evening.

Six parents attended the workshop, three English-speaking parents and three Spanish-speaking parents. Due to the small number of participants, we divided the group and had both sections stay in the same room but in different areas. We did not project the PowerPoint on the screen; rather, we shared the handouts with the parents, and the facilitators used that as their guide throughout the presentation.

As predicted by the Spanish-speaking facilitators, the English presentation finished before the Spanish presentation. The English presentation finished within 30 minutes and the rest of the time was used for questions and answers. The English-speaking parents asked me questions, but the Spanish-speaking parents did not.

Southside Elementary School

It was raining the evening of the workshop at Southside Elementary School. The workshop took place in the cafeteria at 6:00 p.m. and the parent facilitators were there by 5:15 p.m. to begin preparing. We also provided childcare through the district for this workshop to give parent learners the chance to enjoy the workshop without their younger children. One recent college graduate, Amy, joined us for the evening, and I provided an example of two different transcripts for the parents to discuss. These changes were based on changes suggested in the previous AR Team meeting.

There were a total of 13 parent learners in attendance at the Southside workshop, four English-speaking and nine Spanish-speaking. We divided the groups, just as we did at the River Elementary workshop. Amy sat with the English group; she planned to sit with the Spanish-speaking group as well, but she spent the majority of the time with the English-speaking group

answering their questions after the presentation.

River View Elementary School

Our final workshop was at River View Elementary on Monday, December 15, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria. Amy attended along with another local community college student, Katie. Amy sat with the Spanish-speaking group and Katie sat with the English-speaking group. There were a total of seven parents present: three English-speaking and four Spanish-speaking.

AR Team Meetings after Each Workshop

The AR Team meeting after the Roldan Elementary workshop was one week after the workshop after I had conducted some of the follow up interviews on the phone. All the facilitator parents were present and felt very good about the workshop. When I asked them if they wanted to change anything about the presentation, Carlos said, “Everything is perfect. How is your homework going?” They were more concerned with the recordings and if they were helping my project. Alonso asked, “Have you listened to the tapes?”

Even with their concerns for the data collection, they were able to make suggestions and changes for the next presentation. They wanted to change some of the presentation techniques by adding examples of good and bad transcripts for the parents to review; they wanted to add a student speaker and improve advertising efforts.

The AR Team meeting following the Southside workshop was a bit different. The English-speaking parent facilitator, Tammy, was there before the rest of the parents, and we began reflecting in English. The Spanish-speaking parents continued the meeting after Tammy had to leave. A good portion of the meeting was spent sharing stories and discussing personal questions that the facilitators had. Discussion centered on community college reimbursement programs and the quarter system versus the semester system at four-year universities.

The parents came to the conclusion that they did not have all the answers but that they wanted to teach parents to have the courage to ask questions. Elia said, “Letting them know that they need to go and ask these questions because many times when we go to talk to counselors, they don’t know what questions to ask. When we don’t know, we don’t know.” Maria added, “The most important thing is that we give them a base, a key.” The facilitators wanted to be a resource to parents and to give them enough knowledge and information to begin asking questions.

The parents did not wish to change anything for the next workshops other than to add an additional student speaker so that each group had a speaker for the entire session. We discussed the addition of the transcripts; parents expressed more confidence in the process and again discussed advertising efforts that affect attendance at the workshops.

For the final AR Team meeting, Tammy needed to meet with me separately due to her work schedule. I met with her one-on-one the same morning as the AR Team meeting and interviewed her. The other parents attended in the evening on December 22, 2014. They shared their experiences in a group format. A large portion of the meeting, again, was dedicated to personal stories. The Riveras discussed their son’s upcoming contract with Major League Soccer, and Elia shared some concerns about her son who is a freshman. They also discussed one parent in the Spanish-speaking portion of the workshop who was aggressively asking questions, even of the student guest. The parents talked and supported each other throughout the meeting.

Development of Parent Facilitators During Workshops

Throughout the various AR Team meetings after the workshops, the changes that the parents wished to make were based around the following themes: adding student speakers, reviewing transcripts with the parent learners, and increasing advertising efforts to attract more

participants. Parents also discussed changes in presentation techniques and their growth in confidence over the course of the action research cycle was evident.

Adding Student Speaker

At the AR team meeting after our first workshop, Carlos made the suggestion to have a student speaker: “It would be good to have a student in English and Spanish.” He did not elaborate on why he thought this would be a good idea, but the other parents agreed and briefly discussed the possibility of bringing their own children. However, none of the children of the parent facilitators were available.

Maria suggested bringing in an outside facilitator to add to the discussion about the difference between a two-year and four-year college, having someone in mind who was recommended to her by one of the teachers from Southside. We discussed this in detail at the end of the AR Team meeting following the Roldan Elementary workshop but the parents felt having a student speaker was more important and they did not want the outside person to be limited or to take away from the presentation from parents. Anita reminded the group, “That is why it is called Parents-to-Parents.”

After the second workshop, Tammy mentioned that she really enjoyed having Amy, a recent graduate from Yale and also a graduate of Ranch High School, with her during the workshop at Roldan Elementary. She felt that Amy was able to speak to the college application and personal statement in a more personal way: “She was very knowledgeable.” Tammy commented that her daughter did most of the college application process at school so she did not know the entire process. She said, “She [Amy] knew more on that, the personal statement and stuff. She was a lot of help.” This information informed our process and led to the addition of another student speaker at the final workshop at River View Elementary.

At the final AR Team meeting, all parents agreed that the student speakers were an important component of the workshops. Tammy said, “Having the girls from college and the graduate, that really helped. I liked that.” Tammy felt that they added to the presentation and provided additional information that she was not able to share from her perspective as a parent. Maria agreed that they helped a great deal: “They have gone through that already and their perspective is different from that of a parent. It is good.” Alonso said, “I think the girls helped a lot. In our case, she spoke and explained a lot. It is good to get a student’s perspective.” The students brought a different perspective that provided additional information for parents, especially when it came to discussing their experiences with financial aid and the application process. They were able to share information about the personal statement, as well.

Providing Examples of Transcripts

Alonso suggested adding examples of the transcripts for parents to review after our first workshop: “We need to show examples because people have no idea what it is.” He suggested sharing a really good example and one that has some F’s so that parents could learn to read and understand GPA. He wanted to make sure I covered the names and did not share personal information: “So maybe two. One with good GPA and the other below the average, or almost going to graduate with the minimum.”

At the second workshop at Southside Elementary the transcripts were a new addition and the parents had the chance to review the transcript of a high-achieving senior and a senior who had failed classes and had to retake them. The parents were still getting used to this new addition to the workshop. Tammy wanted more time to look over the transcript in order to prepare for the next workshop. After the second workshop, Alonso expressed uncertainty as to whether reviewing the transcripts helped the parents: “I don’t know if it helped parents or not to

see the difference between a good and bad student. But I think it does help for them to see what it looks like.” He really wanted them to be able to read the transcript, as a parent, and know what they were looking for. He said that he wanted them to be able to identify the GPA and class rank so that they could notice those features when they viewed their own child’s transcript in five or ten years. The parent facilitators felt that the transcripts helped them to see what they should be looking for when their children get to high school.

Increasing Advertising Efforts

As mentioned at the previous AR Team meeting before the first workshop, the parents were concerned with the low number of parents who attended these workshops. They wanted to ensure that parents knew about the workshops and were able to attend. Maria made several suggestions based on her relationships at Southside Elementary where both her children attended and where she still volunteers weekly. She shared with the group that she had taken the initiative to create a large poster in addition to the fliers that I had created to give to the principal. She shared: “I just put ‘To Help the Future of Your Child.’ I didn’t put anything about university because I know parents.” She explained that if she put anything on the poster about planning for university or college, parents would not come; “They are going to think there is a lot of time before they need to worry about it. So I put about planning for your child’s future today.” Elia agreed, “That way it catches your attention and makes you approach.” The parents were concerned that parent learners would not attend workshops because they felt college was so far in the future and thinking about it while their children were young is a waste of time.

The parent facilitators felt that the parent learners were discouraged from attending due to the age of their children. Some parents who attended the workshops had high school-age children. The parents with elementary school-aged children were not as likely to attend. Tammy

said, “I think we could have had more [parents], but, like I said, I think they think that since their kids are little... they don’t understand that in the blink of an eye that their kids are going to be in high school and it is going to be time for them to go.” We had a parent leave the second workshop because he said that his son was too young to start talking about college or his future. The parent facilitators were looking for creative ways to entice parents now so that they could share the info for them to be prepared for the coming years.

More parents attended the workshop at Southside Elementary despite the rain. However, even with increased advertising efforts at Southside, the number of parents was still low based on the expectations of the parent facilitators. We discussed that if it had not been raining, we probably would have had more parents attending. Maria said, “Like the workshop says, we are parents, not professionals. But even them just being interested enough to come to the workshop is a win. We had more parents that we did at Roldan.” The parent facilitators expected more parents to attend and briefly discussed future efforts to attract more parents. Maria commented, “Maybe calling parents would solve the issue.” There was a strong sense from the AR Team that they wanted to reach more parents.

The facilitators had interest in making the workshops meaningful so that parent learners connected with each other and with the content. Maria said, “When Alonso suggested that we stand up to present, I told him we should sit so that we could be face to face and make it more informal.” Elia also commented, “The parents always feel good because they see parents that have done it. It becomes possible. They can see our results. Parents, even in the few, do get motivated.” The parent facilitators wanted to connect with the parent learners so that they felt comfortable and interested in learning. They wanted that connection to give the parent learners the opportunity to learn and grow.

To attract more participants, the Team suggested trying a different time of day and of the school year for future workshops. Carlos commented, “Making them on Mondays at 6 p.m., people are stuck in traffic, picking up their kids, running errands. They have to struggle to come. If we did it on a Saturday from noon on, people want to sleep in a bit.” Elia suggested that “Maybe in March would be better”; she felt that the time of year, November and December, was very busy for parents with the holidays.

The facilitators felt that focusing on college and using that word in particular in advertising might deter parents. Parents have trouble making the connection. “Also when we talk about college and the kids are in elementary, parents can’t see the point in going,” said Anita. Her husband concurred, “They think they still have time.” Elia agreed, “Many parents say, ‘Well, I don’t even know if he is going to go to college. He is lazy.’” They were concerned that the parents did not feel the need to learn more about college due to these mental barriers.

Team members were not able to come up with any solid solutions, but a few ideas were discussed. Tammy shared: “Maybe if we, if we think about different topics. A couple more different topics just to, so they get, like they want to know about it. They get interested more.” Maria felt the need to motivate parents: “I think we need to find a way to make parents go. Something that catches their attention or motivates them to come. Something.” The facilitators felt that if we continued the workshops, we should entice parent learners with different marketing strategies, to find ways to reach parents to encourage them to attend. This seemed to be the biggest obstacle. The content of the workshops was solid and the parents who attended were very positive; but, getting the parents that needed to be there was the biggest challenge.

Secondary Findings

In addition to the major changes the parent facilitators made to the workshops throughout the process, there were other findings that helped in the development of the workshops that could assist other schools interested in pursuing this model. The parents spent time discussing presentation techniques and learned from the mistakes they made at the workshops. There was a clear growth in confidence throughout the AR Team meetings. By the last meeting, Team members clearly displayed greater confidence and interest in helping parents vis-à-vis at the first meetings when they were apprehensive and nervous about speaking to a group. Parents also discussed the strong possibility of continuing the workshops in the future at RUSD and their reflection on the process could help other schools and districts to learn about how to implement a similar model.

Improvement of Presentation Techniques

At the Team meeting after our workshop at Roldan Elementary, Anita expressed concern about her own ability as a presenter as soon as she walked in the door. My first question to the group was whether there was anything members would like to change for next time; Anita quickly responded, “I would like to change something,” and then laughed and pointed to herself. For her portion of the presentation at Roldan Elementary, Anita had prepared by writing down what she wanted to say to the parent learners, and she attempted to read from her notes the entire time. Her husband Carlos said, “She wrote everything she was going to say, but she was all over the place and she couldn’t read it.” Anita felt she hadn’t performed well and was considering leaving the group. Alonso chimed in and said Anita did a fine job, even asking me if she sounded okay on the tapes. Other parents were supportive of Anita, even sharing that they were nervous as well. Maria shared that she grew more confident over time and was more at ease

presenting.

Carlos went on to discuss the role of Alonso as master of ceremonies and how this worked well: “Something that also worked well was that the master of ceremonies was the leader of the group. He took us step by step over what we were going to talk about and the topics we would address.” The parent facilitators agreed that having an MC was an important part of a smooth presentation at the workshops.

Growth in Confidence

Over time, the parent facilitators grew more confident as presenters and facilitators in the community, even after just one workshop. Carlos joked, “We can do the whole LA County!” They were able to discuss various components of the workshops and make decisions as parent facilitators after the first workshop. At the second workshop, even with new components such as the transcripts and the student speakers, the confidence of the parents in their roles as facilitators continued to grow. From my observations of the workshops, I noticed that parents displayed more confidence in the way they began them: they would recommend where to have the parents sit and even began assisting in distribution of handouts and surveys. They began to take ownership of the workshops by the second session.

Anita felt more confident at the second workshop: “I told my husband that this time I did it well. I felt like I did a better job.” Elia agreed, “I felt better too; however, sometimes I get confused.” They felt that the confidence they gained in presenting to the other parents at two other workshops helped them to be more comfortable and confident.

At the final workshop at River View, we had one parent learner who “attacked” the group with a lot of questions that seemed hostile. When we talked about our nerves, Carlos said, “Good thing we got that parent at the third workshop, right? If we had gotten him at the first

workshop, he would have probably eaten us alive.” This is evidence that the confidence of the parent facilitators grew. By the last workshop, they overcame obstacles and were not intimidated.

Some parents were nervous. Anita was very nervous and discussed her nerves at the AR Team meetings a couple of times. She was not alone in these feelings. Tammy said, “I was very nervous, but I thought I did okay.” Maria was also nervous and commented, “Yes, [I was nervous], but then you can’t shut me up.” Elia agreed that she was nervous as well. She said, “The first was probably the worst, but the rest were fine.”

Overall, the AR Team felt confident that the parent learners liked connecting with other parents. Anita said, “Parents seem to feel more at ease with us. They could identify or take inspiration from us. They think that if we could do it, all in different ways, then we can do it.” The parent learners energized the facilitators. When they got feedback from them that they liked connecting with other parents, it helped the facilitators to feel more confident in their role as leaders in their community.

Reflection on the Overall Experience

I talked to the parents about continuing the workshops in the future and, based on their comments, they were willing to be part of the future process. Tammy said, “I think we should continue it.” Carlos said, “Our children are where they are because they went through here. You have to give back.” We even discussed options of times and days that would allow us to continue the workshops.

When asked to discuss the process we used to create the workshops, the parents suggested the same process for schools looking to re-create this model. Carlos felt that the process we had created worked well: “The same thing that we did: meetings to prepare the presentation. Two or three meetings before like we did to decide which topics we wanted to talk

about. Also, having each parent pick a topic to speak about worked well.”

In reflecting on their overall experience, parent facilitators felt that they grew through the process in different ways. Tammy felt it was a unique experience. She said, “It was a good experience for me. Something I never did before.” They felt a sense of pride in participating in something different to help the community grow. It was a new experience that gave them confidence.

Overall, the parents were pleased with the process. For the most part, they did not want to change anything and were satisfied with the changes they had already identified and integrated into the program. Tammy commented, “I don’t think I want to change anything.” The only changes they wanted to make were related to attracting more parents to attend the workshops

Elia commented on the research she did to prepare for the workshops. They all took their roles seriously and owned the material that they presented to the parents. They did not want to appear to be unprepared. They shared with the parent learners that they were not professionals but they wanted to share the most accurate information. Elia said, “What I liked the most is that we were prepared.” The extensive research she did to prepare and her comments about knowing more now illustrated that she was able to teach the material to other parents.

Summary

The parent facilitators took their roles seriously and wanted to make sure to connect with the parent learners to make them feel at ease. Their main goal was to give the parents knowledge and confidence to begin asking the right questions. Their confidence grew and they became more of team throughout the process, a “family,” as Elia said at our last meeting.

The parent facilitators made three major changes throughout the Action Research process: 1) they added student speakers to the workshops, 2) they added transcript examples, and

3) they strove to improve advertising efforts in order to increase the parent participation. At each AR Team meeting, the parents were concerned with the questionnaires and the audio recordings. They wanted to know if the workshops were helping the parents; this was a primary concern.

The parents felt very positive and empowered working with other parents to assist them. This was such a fulfilling experience for them that they were willing to continue. Even in the weeks and months since the data collection process, they continued to check in with me to see how the project was progressing. Involvement in this project helped them see the value in helping other parents. They enjoyed being part of the solution. In the end, they realized the power they have as parents in the community. Alonso said it best, “We are few, but... powerful.”

CHAPTER 5: PARENT LEARNERS

This chapter presents findings from quantitative and quantitative data from the pre- and post-questionnaire distributed to 26 parent learners who attended one of three workshops, as well as the follow-up interviews conducted with parents who agreed to participate. The questionnaire investigated the extent to which parent learners reported changes in their knowledge and perceptions about supporting their children to plan and prepare for higher education. The follow-up interviews provided an opportunity to ask questions to parents a week or more after the workshop to understand more about how parents' perceptions had evolved. Together, the quantitative and qualitative data contribute to the discussion of the changes in behavior that the parent learners experienced.

Demographic Data of Parent Learners

Parent facilitators developed and delivered workshops at three different elementary schools in the RUSD throughout the action research cycle. The first workshop took place at Roldan Elementary School and six (6) parent learners attended. The second workshop was held at Southside Elementary School and thirteen (13) parents attended. The final workshop was at River View Elementary School where seven (7) parents attended. All respondents were Latino and had at least one child in their household who was age ten or younger with children ranging in age from 1 to 27 years old. Several of the 26 parents who attended the workshops had children who were either in high school or in college. Almost all parents who attended the workshops indicated that they would be interested in participating in follow-up interviews. I called each parent at least three times and had a parent call, as well, to try to reach parents. After several

attempts to reach parents, I was able to conduct a total of eight follow-up interviews.

Primary Findings

The predominant findings that emerged after analysis of the quantitative data from the pre-and post-questionnaires and the qualitative data from the follow-up interviews include:

- parent learners' changes in college knowledge
- a new understanding of how to pay for college
- recognition of the importance of initiating contact with the school/counselor/teacher
- connections with other parents
- acknowledgement of the need for greater attention to school/homework
- confidence with respect to helping their students make progress toward applying to and enrolling in college.

The analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from parent learners revealed three major findings. First, parent learners understood how to pay for college as a result of the workshops. Second, parent learners gained navigational capital, the idea that they understand who within the school system they must interact with in order to ensure their child stays on the college path, as a result of participating in the workshops. Finally, parents gained knowledge of ways to prepare their son/daughter for college as a result of participating in the workshops. These findings are evidenced by the data from the pre- and post-questionnaires as well as by the follow-up interviews

Growth in Understanding How to Pay for College

Based on the post-questionnaire, parent learners reported a better understanding of how to pay for college after participating in the workshop. Prior to the workshop, the 26 participants had an average score of 4.0 when responding to the statement, "I understand how to pay for

college,” using a scale of 1.0 to 6.0, 1.0 being “disagree” and 6.0 being “agree completely.” After participation in the workshop, participants’ average score was 5.4. The results attained statistical significance ($t=4.33$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that the workshop increased participants’ understanding with respect to how they may assist their children in paying for college.

Table 2: Paired Samples T-Test Results – Paying for College

Question	Variable	Group (n)	Mean	Sig (2-tailed)
10	I understand how to pay for college.	Pre- (26) Post- (26)	4.000 5.423	.000

After attending the workshops, parent learners understood that there is a path when it comes to financial aid planning and that path includes saving for college. In a follow-up interview, one parent from River Elementary said, “I know that there is a way to go. There shouldn’t be any obstacle; it just really means we think though about like student loans and saving for Ellie, we shouldn’t have to get a loan. That was what that I got from the workshop.” This parent’s comment suggests that she is now able to envision a potential path forward and recognizes her role in saving for her daughter’s college education.

The parents who attended the workshops said they felt more confident about their knowledge of the steps to pay for college after hearing from the parent facilitators. When asked precisely what made them more confident, another parent from River Elementary said:

You guys told me all the steps needed to apply [for financial aid], how to ask for help, how find the colleges that my son may want, or not want, to go to, but that he should apply to anyways in case he doesn’t get in. That way, he has options to keep studying.

Similar to Auerbach (2004), in these workshops, the personal testimony about paying for college

gave the parent learners hope and they felt that college was within reach.

According to the follow-up interviews, parents reported that they gained knowledge about paying for college even though it was a small part of the presentation. One parent from Southside, after hearing from a student speaker who received an academic scholarship to Yale and did not have to take out loans, said, “I realized that sometimes I don’t even need to take out loans. Sometimes the college might have the right program for them. Depending on the grades and everything, they can even pay for my daughter’s education.” Similarly, another parent from River View gained knowledge and felt more confident to navigate the resources:

I know, you know, even the little tiny scholarships that people give here and there, that I was not aware [of]. That is something new that I picked up from there. Financial aid, scholarships, you know, the different activities that student should be in at school that will help them get all these different scholarships, that I didn’t know.”

Results from the interviews provided evidence that the parent learners understood the basics about paying for college and that they needed to start saving for college while their children were still young. The goal of this topic was to provide parents with the information they needed to feel confident and ask the right questions when it is time for their children to enter college. Based on the follow-up interviews, it was evident that the parents learned enough to know that there are options when it comes to paying for college.

Navigating Stratification in Higher Education

The literature on navigation stratification in higher education reveals that many Latino families do not even consider college for their children because of their limited understanding of the system (Brown et al., 2003). Educating Latinos about the different types of higher education institutions in California is crucial because Latinos are overrepresented in two-year institutions even though many more qualify to attend four-year institutions (O’Connor et al., 2010; The

Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). The parent facilitators agreed that educating parents about the school system was important. Alonso stated:

Now I will speak a little bit about how we, us parents, mostly come from other countries. Because of this, we don't know the school system here. It is a bit different from what we studied in our countries.

Sharing their personal experiences allowed the facilitators to connect with the parent learners. The parent facilitators wanted to share information about the school system that they learned over the years through attending parent workshops and through their experiences with their children.

Based on the post-questionnaire, the parent learners reported a better understanding of the different systems of higher education in California. Prior to the workshop, the 26 participants had an average score of 4.8 when responding to the statement “I understand the difference between the different systems of higher education in California (community, CSU & UCs),” using a scale of 1.0 to 6.0, 1.0 being “disagree” and 6.0 being “agree completely.” After participation in the workshop, participants’ average score was 5.7. The results attained statistical significance ($t=3.73, p < 0.05$), suggesting that the workshop increased participants’ understanding with respect to the different systems of higher education in California.

Table 3: Paired Samples T-Test Results – Different Systems in CA

Question	Variable	Group (n)	Mean	Sig (2-tailed)
8	I understand the difference between the different systems of higher education in California (community, CSU & UCs)	Pre- (26) Post- (26)	4.808 5.654	.001

Parent learners attributed gains in understanding about the differences between types of institutions in California to the presentations at the workshop. In a follow-up interview, one

parent learner from River View mentioned that the workshops gave him the confidence and the knowledge to keep an eye out in the news for information about the systems of higher education in California:

In fact, it kind of triggered something where I am becoming more vigilant and just trying to get more research on it. You know, this weekend, I was trying. I actually saved the article in case you are interested; I can send it over to you. They were talking about how the UC system are preparing for college education, etc. It has given me more of an awareness to get information on that. It was good. It was very informative.

The workshops gave him the confidence and the knowledge to be more resourceful in learning how and where to search for information. Another parent talked about doing college trips and career discussions with her daughter. This is valuable because, in the future, the information will change. Relying on information from the workshop will not be enough. The parent facilitators were able to instill a sense of understanding and interest for more information to support their children.

Increased Resourcefulness and Navigational Capital

One of the most significant findings was the idea of parent learners gaining *navigational capital* from attending the workshops. Navigational capital is the idea that they understand with whom within the school system they must interact in order to ensure their child stays on the college path. When responding to the question “I understand how teachers, counselors, and parents work together in high school to prepare students for college,” before the workshop, they responded with an average score of 5.12. After their workshop, their average score was 5.70, proving to be statistically significant. ($t=2.76$, $p < 0.026$)

After the workshops, the parent learners reported that they understood that they must contact the school and speak to teachers and counselors when their child is not having academic success. On the post-questionnaire, Question 20 asked “What should you do if your child is not

receiving good grades? What steps do you take?” Every parent who responded to Question 20, a total of 15 out of 26 respondents, indicated that they should contact the school and speak to teachers and/or counselors. Parent learners gained this knowledge by hearing from the parent facilitators that the most important partnership in their child’s education was with the school, teachers, and counselors. This increase in knowledge was also supported by what the parent learners reported in the follow-up interviews.

Parent learners emphasized that they planned to make direct contact with counselors in the follow-up interviews. They even utilized the word “team” that the parent facilitators emphasized. One parent from River Elementary said, “What I am going to try and do is make more time to have conversations with his counselor. Actually, this week I am going to go speak with the counselor so that we can work together in order to be a team. I want him to show me how to be a team and help [my son] get into college.” This new confidence to reach out and set up a meeting with the counselor is a huge gain. Developing a relationship with the counselor will allow her to further support her child.

Another parent from Southside said, “I feel like now, with my middle one, I will be more in contact with the teachers and the counselors. Then they can help me. I also realized I need to know the counselors. I need to know more of the teachers and the principal.” After participating in the workshop, the parent learners reported a new understanding of how and why getting involved and staying in contact with the resources available at the school site can benefit them. It basically took someone saying “You can and should talk to the school,” to give the parents the confidence to know that they should advocate at the site level for their children.

Parents Learn Strategies for Putting Children on College Prep Path

Parent learners gained overall college knowledge as a result of participating in the

workshop. Particularly, they gained knowledge of what they need to know to prepare their children for higher education. Based on the quantitative data, they came to the workshops knowing the importance of grades/GPA, SAT/ACT scores, and what courses their child/ren should take in order to attend a four-year university. They demonstrated the most gains with respect to their knowledge about the importance of sports, clubs, community service, homework, and having a schedule.

Prior to the workshop, 24 participants had an average score of 4.96 when responding to the statement “Sports are important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.” After participation in the workshop, participants’ average score was 5.63, indicating a statistically significant gain ($t=3.39$, $p < 0.05$). When responding to the statement “Clubs are important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university,” the pre-questionnaire average was 4.50. After participation in the workshop, participants’ average score was 5.63, which represented another statistically significant gain ($t=4.37$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, when responding to the statement “Community service is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university,” the pre-questionnaire average was 5.17. After participation in the workshop, participants’ average score was 5.79. The post-test for this item was also significantly higher than the pretest ($t = 2.28$, $p < 0.05$). Across these three measures, the data suggest that the workshop increased participants’ understanding of the various components of college knowledge that are important in preparing their children for postsecondary education.

Other areas in which parents made significant gains between the pre- and post-questionnaire included having a schedule and completing homework. When responding to the statement “Having a schedule is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university,” the pre-questionnaire average was 5.33. After participation in the workshop, participants’

average score was 5.92, which represented significant growth ($t = 3.08, p < 0.05$). In addition, when responding to the statement “Completing homework is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university,” the pre-questionnaire average was 5.67. After participation in the workshop, participants’ average score was 5.96 ($t = 2.60, p < 0.05$). The results of all these areas attained statistical significance, suggesting that the workshop significantly contributed to gains in parents’ understanding of these concepts.

Table 4: Paired Samples T-Test Results – College Prep Path

Variable	Group (n)	Mean	Sig (2-tailed)
I understand the importance of grades in high school.	Pre- (26)	5.423	.175
	Post- (26)	5.731	
Sports are important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	4.958	.003
	Post- (24)	5.625	
Activities are important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	4.875	.075
	Post- (24)	5.458	
Clubs are important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	4.500	.000
	Post- (24)	5.625	
Grades/GPA are important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	5.625	.088
	Post- (24)	5.958	
Community service is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	5.167	.032
	Post- (24)	5.792	
SAT/ACT is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	5.708	.083
	Post- (24)	5.958	
Having a schedule is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	5.333	.005
	Post- (24)	5.917	
Completing homework is important in preparing my son/daughter for college/university.	Pre- (24)	5.667	.016
	Post- (24)	5.958	

Parents learned that monitoring their children when it came to homework and other academic activities is important for helping them become college-ready. This new knowledge encouraged them to change their behaviors after participating in the workshops. When asked about specific behaviors in follow-up interviews, some parents talked about monitoring their children more when it comes to homework and other school-related activities:

I am telling you that I have been trying to personally change and speak more with her. Like I was saying, because for example, in my daughter's case, she always wants to do her homework while watching television. I have been telling, "Honey (Mija), first you have to do your homework then you can watch TV because you can't do both at the same time. I want you to concentrate and study because one day you are going to go to college."

Parents made the connection that doing homework is important in preparing their student for college. This parent even made changes to behavior after the workshop from learning from other parents about the importance of homework.

Another parent from Southside felt that her behavior changed in that she paid more attention to homework: "I have changed in that I pay a little more attention to their development and their homework, also their exams." Similarly, another parent thought of looking beyond the walls of the school to assist her child with homework and other studies: "What I was thinking is looking for places where she can learn more things beyond school. Also have her dedicate more time to her studies, her homework, and applying herself more so that school will be easier in the future." Both of these parents are paying more attention to homework and considering homework's role in preparing for high school and college. The workshops helped them to see homework in a different light.

Considering other academic behaviors, another parent from River Elementary thought about taking her children to the community library to promote academic behavior: "I'm planning to take them more to the community library and spending more time with them, let's say

bringing more books. During the week are trying to do more activities.” The workshop seems to have shown her the importance of reading with her child and this prompted her to think of changing her behavior. These are the behaviors that we aimed to alter as part of the parent workshops. We wanted parent learners to think of their child’s future in everything they do, even with a trip to the community library.

In looking at the importance of sports and other activities, parents learned that their child’s participation in them can help when applying for college. One parent emphasized that hearing the importance of sports and other activities made her think of getting her child involved in outside activities:

Well, one thing that really stood out to me was that the student, I forgot what her name was, but she was sharing that, you know, being in sports and being involved in different activities helps out a lot when applying to college. Colleges will look at all that. You know? It actually... I started to think more about it. I want to get my daughter involved in more activities outside of what she is doing right now.

This change in perception is important in this research. Parents began to branch out and think of getting their children more involved to better prepare them for college. The process of thinking about the college path is important. The parent facilitators targeted the thought process when creating the workshops. The fact that the parent learners are now thinking about their children’s futures shows the impact of the parent workshops.

Parents Report Greater Confidence about College Pathways

The confidence gained by hearing from other parents proved to be a huge asset for the parent learners. One parent learner said, “So then I guess that helped me because it gave me a little bit more confidence to maybe go to the school and be a little more in touch with the teachers.” The level of confidence gained allowed this parent to find the courage to contact her child’s teacher and set up a conference to discuss her failing grades.

Another parent from River View felt a sense of confidence from hearing from parents that had gone through similar experiences: “What I liked most was that I felt more confidence because we were in a group, and... we were having a conversation parents-to-parents. These are people that already went through it and have had good results.” They were able to connect because of their similar backgrounds. The parent facilitators were able to better help them understand “the system” and how it works so that the parent learners felt more confident as advocates for their children.

In the follow-up interviews, the concept of speaking more to their children was a noted behavior change. Other behaviors noted not mentioned in the questionnaire were the discussion of goals with their children and visits to colleges. One parent from Roldan Elementary shared her new experience talking about goals with her daughter: “I was having conversations with her as far as like goal-setting, just in general as far as, we’ve been looking at different careers.” She also shared her plan to take her daughter to visit colleges: “Definitely taking Ellie to the certain colleges; it’s something that we talked about after the workshop. She is excited about that. That’s a positive.” This change in behavior, speaking to their children more, is shown also in the reaction of her daughter. The parent reported that her daughter has shown more excitement and interest in establishing goals. The actions and behaviors of the parents are having an impact on the motivation of their children.

Another parent from River View commented on guiding her daughter and establishing rules: “[One thing] I am working on with my daughter is that I want to start guiding her with what I learned at the workshop. I need to lay down the rules and teach her that first comes school and then playing or doing other things.” These new behaviors, e.g., the parent learners talking to their children about their future, establishing rules and looking ahead, show great promise for

their children. The parent facilitators wanted the parent learners to begin talking to their children. Based on the follow up interviews, the workshops seem to have had an impact on these parents in these areas.

Community of Learners

Parents felt a positive connection with other parents and liked hearing from parents that went through similar experiences. This sense of a *community of learners* was built as a result of this parent-to-parent connection. Seven (7) different parents commented on the discussions with other parents in the follow-up interviews. One parent from Southside said, “I am just glad that you guys had somebody there that actually went through that and let us know.” Another parent from River View commented, “I liked the whole parent-to-parent interaction. I thought that was pretty cool. That is not something you see all the time.” The parents were able to see how this connection with other parents was unique, as compared to other connections at school with teachers and administrators. The connection with other parents was low-stakes and not intimidating so that they could open up and ask questions that they might be afraid to ask of an administrator. As we know from the research, when parents connect with other parents, they learn better how to be involved and advocate for their children.

Secondary Findings

In follow-up interviews, three (3) parents from three different workshops mentioned taking their children to the library and reading to them more after participation in the workshop. In a follow-up interview, one parent at Roldan Elementary said, “I’m planning to take them more to the community library and spending more time with them, let’s say bringing more books.” Another parent from River View emphasized more reading with her son: “I want him to be able to like reading more because it will be easier for him when he gets there [high school].”

After our first workshop, the parent facilitators decided to add a college student to the presentation. In the follow-up interviews, four (4) parents commented on this addition. They felt that the college student added to the presentation. One parent from Southside said, “I think what really helped was in the English workshop that you had the college student. She really like, she really opened my eyes and helped me feel more comfortable, like, if she could do it, then my kid could do it.” As they related to the facilitators, the addition of the student made the parent learners feel that college was within reach when they were able to discuss their fears with someone that made them comfortable.

Summary

The data reveal that there were changes in parent knowledge and understanding after participation in the parent workshops. Parents better understood and felt confident about paying for college. They gained navigational capital and were more prepared to work with the school team, counselors, teachers, and administrators in order to help their child to be successful. They felt more confidence and felt part of the community of learners.

Schools and districts can learn from the process of developing the workshops and the changes in behaviors of the parent learners. This culturally-relevant model can be used by other schools and districts to develop similar resources for parents. The process proved to be successful in teaching parents about college knowledge, connecting parents with other parents, and empowering parents within their own community to be a resource for each other in the path of preparing their children for future opportunities.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This final chapter summarizes the results and discusses their implications for school leaders and school communities. I also discuss the relationship to previous research, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research. School leaders can look at this process as a model if they are seeking to involve more Latino parents in the educational process.

As illustrated in Chapter 1, the goal of this action research project was to understand the process of developing and implementing a college knowledge workshop by parents in their own community. Additionally, this study sought to discover if these workshops changed the perceptions, behaviors, and knowledge of the parent learners. This type of approach was necessary because research shows that culturally-relevant (De Gaetano, 2007), community-based approaches to Latino family involvement are sustainable over time (Auerbach, 2004; Cline & Necochea, 2001; Downs et al., 2008). Most schools struggle to effectively engage Latino parents and assist them in guiding their children to postsecondary opportunities (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). This action research project is a solution to this problem because it shows how workshops, led by parents in the community, are effective in demystifying college knowledge for parents of younger children.

Discussion of the Findings

Based on the two research questions, the findings are divided into two major categories: findings about the development of parent facilitators during the action research process, and findings about the changes in behaviors and perceptions among the parent learners as a result from participation in the workshops. I also discuss the pre-workshop development process.

The parent facilitators made three changes during the action research cycle: 1) addition of a student speaker; 2) addition of sample transcripts for parent learners to review; and, 3) suggestions for changes in parent recruitment efforts. The parent learners understood how to pay for college, they gained navigational capital, and they gained knowledge of ways to prepare their son/daughter for college as a result of participating in the workshops. Parent learners gained confidence and found more ways to put their children on the college path as a result of participating in the workshops. Their perception of their role as a parent to prepare their son or daughter for college shifted after the workshops.

We see, from these findings, that three overall themes emerged: 1) the exposure to the data was important in the AR Team meetings; 2) a mindful administrator is important in this process; and, 3) the parents, both learners and facilitators, felt empowered.

Pre-Workshop Development

From the AR Team meetings held before the workshops, I was able to understand the process of workshop development with parent learners. Giving the parents time to talk and share stories proved to be important in workshop development. I held a total of three meetings before the first workshop. The first two meetings were focused on brainstorming and helping the parents to understand which topics they would present to the parent learners at the three workshops. The parents also spent a significant amount of time sharing stories and getting to know each other.

The parent facilitators decided to present information to parent learners on the following topics: parents getting involved in school, working as a team with teachers and counselors, required classes/A-G requirements, understanding the school system, financial aid, grades/GPA, and motivating your child. They decided to use a PowerPoint presentation to guide them as they

presented. The Spanish-speaking parents elected to each choose a topic to focus on for the presentation. Since there was only one English-speaking parent, she did the entire presentation on her own. The topics that the parents decided to focus on are aligned with the research and reflect the gaps in knowledge that the literature recognizes.

From the literature we know that the underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education exists for a variety of reasons, many stemming to the lack of parental knowledge of the steps necessary to get to college (Gándara et al., 1998; Gándara, 2002; Kao & Tienda, 1998). Latino parents fear the unknown (Auerbach, 2004b), especially when it comes to financial aid. Parents fear that they will be taking on a huge burden when it comes to financing college (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003; Fann, Jarsky, et al., 2009b; Kao & Tienda, 1998; McCallister et al., 2010). Parent learners explained in their interviews how they appreciated learning from other parents, and they would take with them the knowledge and skills. Previous research shows the importance of equipping parents with the right knowledge to be able to advise their children when it comes to curricular choices (Torrez, 2004).

The parent facilitators emphasized forming a team with the school during the workshops in order to empower the parent learners to reach out to the school. We know from the research that Latino parents typically rely on the school to make curricular choices for their children (Torrez, 2004). They shy away from coming to the school to ask questions because, in the Latino culture, the school and teachers are highly-respected (Olivos, 2009). This study showed how the school could partner with parents to bridge the communication gap with Latino parents. The parent facilitators helped the learners to see the value in reaching out to the school by emphasizing the team aspect of doing so. The workshops gave the parent learners to confidence to approach the school and advocate for their children.

The topics chosen for the focus of the presentation clearly met the needs of the community. The literature tells us that parents are the most important source of information for Latino children to assist them in gaining access to college, yet they are often the source of inaccurate information (Antonio, 2002; Post, 1990). By presenting these topics, the parent facilitators attempted to close that gap and demystify information about college.

Changes and Modifications

Another goal of this action research project was to find out what changes and modifications the parent facilitators made to the curriculum throughout the action research cycle. They made three changes: the addition of a student speaker, an analysis of transcripts with the parent learners, and improved advertising efforts. These changes all helped to demystify college knowledge information for the parent learners, making college a reachable goal in their minds.

The addition of the student speaker came after the first workshop. The parents felt that they wanted another voice and this proved to be a positive addition. By the third workshop, we had one college student or recent college graduate sitting with the parent facilitators as they presented. The student speakers did not present, but they helped answer questions. The parents liked this addition because the students knew the answers to questions about the application process and other details that the parents had not been exposed to in their experience.

Previous research on parents connecting to other parents focused on hearing from guest speakers such as those representatives from Families and Futures program (Auerbach, 2004). In Families and Future, the parents felt that the personal testimony about paying for college gave them hope (Auerbach, 2004). In our action research, we found that the addition of a student speaker added another layer of knowledge and gave the parents even more confidence, rather than simply hearing from other parents.

The parent facilitators suggested sharing a “good” transcript and a “bad” transcript with the parents after our first workshop. Team members did not feel that they could help parents analyze the transcript as the colleges do, but that the examples exposed the parents to what a transcript looks like and where the GPA and class rank were located on it so they could quickly recognize those components on their child’s transcript in a few years. The addition of the transcripts helped the parent facilitators further illustrate the importance of grades and GPA to the parent learners. Through my observations, I was able to see how the addition of the transcripts allowed parent facilitators to deepen the discussion of grades and GPA.

By giving parent learners the opportunity to review transcripts and understand GPA, our parent facilitators equipped parents with the tools to help them make better curricular choices for their children. We know that Latino parents typically rely on the school to make these choices (Torrez, 2004), and one of the goals of this project was to empower parents. By providing this information to parents through other parents, we sought to empower parent learners. The workshops gave them the confidence to now ask questions and approach the school. By demystifying information for the parents, they now felt more confidence and empowerment to advocate for their children and approach the school.

Similar to findings from previous research (Auerbach, 2004; Downs et al., 2008), parent facilitators in this study built a network with other parents that provided them with a support system. The key, just as in previous research, was involving the parents in the workshop development process. This allowed them the chance to take ownership and create a more sustainable system of empowerment.

Impact of Workshops on Parent Learners

Finally, my task was to find out if the workshops had an impact on parent learners. I

focused on changes to knowledge and behaviors. The most significant findings were that parent learners understood how to pay for college, they gained navigational capital, and they gained knowledge of ways to prepare their son/daughter for college as a result of participating in the workshops. I also found that parents gained confidence and found more ways to put their children on the college path as a result of participating in the workshops.

Many Latino families often do not even consider college because of the rising cost of college and their limited understanding of the system (Brown et al., 2003). Furthermore, Latino parents often overestimate the cost of college (Antonio, 2002) and are less likely than White parents to save money for college or to seek information about financial aid (O'Connor et al., 2010). Previous research also makes it clear that many Latino parents fear they may be taking on an enormous financial burden when their children go to college (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003; Fann, Jarsky, et al., 2009b; Kao & Tienda, 1998; McCallister et al., 2010). One of the most prominent fears about college for parents in the Latino community is financial burden (Antonio, 2002; Brown et al., 2003; Kao & Tienda, 1998; McCallister et al., 2010). One of the reasons for their fear is that many Latinos do not understand financial aid and financing college (O'Connor et al., 2010).

As a result of the workshops, parents understood how to pay for college. They did not understand all of the specifics; rather, they felt confident and their perception of the barriers changed. Similar to Auerbach (2004), in these workshops, the personal testimony about paying for college gave the parent learners hope and they felt that college was within reach. These findings offer a way to address misconceptions among Latino parents when it comes to a deficiency in knowledge when it comes to paying for college. Using the personal stories of other parents, and students, parent learners changed their perceptions. Other schools should consider

employing the help from parents in the community when presenting information on financial aid to other parents.

The navigational capital gained by the parents was a key finding. This provided parents with the tools to continue on their journey to prepare their children for higher education. We know from the research the critical importance of increasing parent and student knowledge about navigating the educational pipeline and better understanding the steps it takes to get to college (Auerbach, 2002, 2004; Gándara, 2002; Torrez, 2004). We know that parents serve as an important resource for students when it comes to college information and support, and yet parents often are the source of misinformation about college (Antonio, 2002; Post, 1990). When Latino parents have the correct knowledge, they are able to assist their children with curricular decisions (Torrez, 2004).

By giving parents navigational tools, these workshops gave the parents confidence to seek help and solutions when it comes to preparing their children for higher education. These findings show that if schools make the effort to effectively inform Latino parents, they are better equipped and will be able to be a resource for their son or daughter. The research tells us that schools are not effectively reaching parents (Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). The changes in perceptions as a result of these workshops proves that schools can effectively reach parents and extent their knowledge, if they employ innovative strategies and utilize their own parents to help other parents.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings have several implications that can help administrators and districts that wish to implement similar parent education workshops in their district. School leaders should involve parents in schools and look to this model to help them see ways to more effectively reach Latino

parents.

Empowering Parents

Empowering parents to educate other parents in their own community had an observable positive impact on all participants, both facilitators and learners. Parent learners developed confidence to start having conversations with their children about homework, visiting colleges, goals, and spending time at the local library. They also talked about having the confidence to go to the school and make appointments with teachers to discuss their child's progress. This is the exact behavior change that the parent facilitators wanted to achieve. Empowering parents involves giving them the tools necessary to be advocates for their children throughout their education.

Educating parents in the community with other parents helped them to all feel more confident and that the goal of higher education was within reach. In Chapter 5, I discussed several examples of parents feeling more confident throughout the process. The parent learners talked about learning from other parents, "parents-to-parents," as giving them confidence. The connection to others who have gone through the process also instilled confidence in the parents. After hearing from other parents (and students) about their stories and their path, parents felt at ease and more empowered to move forward on the path to college.

Amount of Information Shared

Initially, I wanted to implement a series of workshops for parent learners because I felt that there was so much information to share about college knowledge. Over the course of development, this study evolved into an action research project wherein I implemented the same workshop with parents at three different elementary sites. What I learned through this process is that we can have an impact, even in a one- to two-hour workshop. Our short workshops were

able to put the parent learners at ease by demystifying information about college for their children.

Initially, it seemed daunting. There is so much information to share; but, in the end, demystification of college knowledge information provided parents with base knowledge for them to learn more as their children grow older. We shared with parents the importance of knowing which questions to ask and that the school is accessible. This approach came from the parent facilitators. They wanted the parent learners to be equipped with the skills and the confidence to ask the school officials the right questions to help their children succeed.

The Role of the Administrator

I feel that my role as the participant observer and the administrator was important. The parents felt at ease with me there and were able to talk freely and ask questions. This might be something to explore in future research, but I think that the administrator's relationship with parents is crucial when empowering parents. The administrator must understand the Latino culture and make parents aware of this understanding. This trust is developed over time and is based in the relationship that he or she develops with them. It takes work and time to get to the point where parents feel at ease.

In the Latino culture, school officials, including teachers and counselors, are highly respected (Olivos, 2009). Latino parents often trust that the school administration and teacher have the best interest of their child in mind when making decisions (Olivos, 2009; Tinkler, 2002). Thus, they allow the school to make these decisions for their children (Torrez, 2004), even when they should be more involved. These workshops help to break down these barriers and empower parents to be more involved and to question the authority of the school.

It is important to consider the critical question: why do not schools reach out to parents to get them more involved if it is so crucial for academic achievement? The reality is that many school administrators might avoid reaching out to parents because empowering parents can create more problems for them on a daily basis. Parents that are more involved tend to advocate more for their children and may contact the school and administration more frequently to question decisions being made. Administrators can get ahead of the curve by empowering parents and giving them a voice in the school community.

School administrators should involve parents in school and not be afraid to empower parents. Parents, when they are able to define how they are involved, can have a stronger impact on their child's education. By arming parents with more knowledge and confidence to ask questions, we teach them to advocate for their children. In the end, this can help Latinos gain more access to higher education. School principal leadership is critical to involving parents (Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006; Thigpen et al., 2014), and the principal plays a crucial role in making parents feel welcome at the school (Sebring et al., 2006; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009).

School leaders wishing to implement a similar model should note the importance of being mindful of parents and their culture throughout the process. Administrators should embrace parents and the stories they bring with them. Parents need be validated in order to open up and learn from each other.

School administrators wishing to implement a similar program at their sites should consider alternate ways to recruit parent learners to attend the workshops. We know that Latino parents respond in different ways to the school due to the cultural differences. Sending a letter home or a flier posted on a bulletin board is not enough. When we recruited participants, I relied

on the site principals to get the word out. They sent home a flier and a “Teleparent” via phone. In the future, I would not rely on the site principal to recruit parents. Knock on doors, talk to parents when they pick their children up, and develop relationships with key parents in the community: these efforts would be more effective. Recruitment should be one of the most important parts of the process. I did not realize this was so important until much later in the action research process.

If schools wish to develop programs and policies aimed at increasing college preparedness of students from Latino parents, they must find ways to socially connect with Latino parents. They must offer support in Spanish for those parents that only speak Spanish. Then parents will feel comfortable coming to school and participating in the social network. It is when they feel that level of comfort that the change can happen.

Recommendations for Educators

As school leaders, we have the ability to make changes to empower parents and involve parents in the school in a way that is effective. We have the choice to empower parents, and they should embrace it. Administrators and school district personnel must consider these recommendations when implementing this model in their schools. Educators must be culturally-sensitive to parents, allowing them to be safe in the environment. Administrators might also find ways to effectively recruit parents to attend meetings and use our process as a guide.

Allowing Latino parents the opportunity to share stories and talk informally was a critical component of the success of these workshops. We know that Latino parents require a welcoming environment that connects them to the school in order to be active in the school community (Auerbach, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Tornatzky et al., 2002). When administrators allow Latino parents the space to connect in a welcoming environment, they increase the chances of

empowering the parents. One of the distinct characteristics of this process was the bond formed among the parents and the confidence gained.

Administrators must work to find effective ways to recruit parents to attend the workshops. Previous research tells us that inviting parents passively or simply sending a letter home is not enough to get parents to attend the workshops (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). When schools find ways to connect with parents through means that relate to them culturally, such as creating a social network for parents and understanding the parent-child connection in the Latino culture, parents are more involved and become advocates for their children (Auerbach, 2004).

We know that, traditionally, schools forget the importance of the family and social network for Latino parents (Auerbach, 2006, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Kiyama, 2010). Latino families' social networks are critical for their growth (Kiyama, 2010; Valdez, 1996), and families will often base decisions on what they learn from their social networks (Kiyama, 2010). These social networks are crucial for the goal of empowering Latino parents.

Administrators wishing to implement a similar program should find ways to informally engage parents in the school to begin conversing with parents and connecting with them in a more social manner. There are many ways to engage parents informally such as visiting them at church or other community locations. Another idea I tried at my school was hosting "Coffee with the Principal." This gives parents the chance to engage with administrators in a more informal setting and allows them the chance to ask questions that may be on their mind. Allowing parents the space to socialize and connect with administrators and other parents helps them to feel more connected. Administrators should communicate with parents in their native language, when possible, and show genuine interest in their culture.

Suggestions for Further Research

The struggles we experience in recruiting parents should be explored in further research efforts. As an AR Team, we were interested in how to best advertise to Latino parents. This suggestion came up several times throughout our AR Team meetings. Parents, even after data collection, still wanted to discuss effective ways to connect other parents with me. Further research should explore how to recruit Latino parents to participate in the school and what efforts are successful at reaching these parents.

The role of the administrator in this process should be explored further to better understand how the administrator can support the implementation of this model. It is my feeling that administrators should learn to be sensitive to the culture that parents bring to the table and find ways to embrace those traits to empower parents in schools.

Future research should consider long-term follow-up with parents. The timeframe for this project was limited and future research should consider following up with parents a year or more after the workshop to understand how, if at all, new behaviors and perceptions have taken hold. More time might allow for more parent network development and that could be explored, as well.

Limitations

Conducting the study in two languages was a challenge. In retrospect, I would have focused on one language. If the AR Team meetings had been conducted in one language, there would have been less need to translate and explain what the others were saying throughout the meetings. The parents did not mind or make an issue of this, but future efforts might consider this in their implementation.

Additionally, it was a challenge to get the parent learners to conduct the follow-up interviews. Almost all parents said that they would be available for follow-up interviews but I was only able to reach about half of those who agreed to be interviewed. Several parents, when contacted, asked if I could call them back and provided a specific time when prompted. Even after data analysis began, I attempted to follow up with more interviews and those efforts proved to be unsuccessful.

In the future, I would suggest interviewing parents at the end of the workshops to capture the parent responses right away. Although the follow-up interviews were helpful and provided significant findings, this was an area that could have provided more information if parents had been more willing to be interviewed. Alternative efforts should be employed in the future by schools wishing to implement this model. Getting parents to attend the workshops was a challenge and limitation of this study.

Concluding Remarks

While some schools may have parents who are highly involved in the education of their children, other schools struggle to engage parents in the educational process. It can be uncomfortable and, many times, schools do a lot of work and only a few parents show up to reap the benefits. Administrators should actively encourage parents to be involved in the school. We must be deliberate in our efforts. School leaders often shy away from efforts to involve more parents as it might mean more exposure and bigger challenges. On the other hand, we know that when parents are involved in the education of their children, children have a better chance at entering college and maintaining support at home. School leaders should embrace and advocate for parent empowerment.

When engaging parents in workshops about college, schools need to avoid providing too much information. The results of this study show that parents (and students) can help other parents learn about what it takes to attend college without overwhelming them with too many facts and data. These workshops took the opportunity to demystify college knowledge information for this group of Latino parents. By focusing on the demystification of the college process, these workshops were able to help the parent learners gain confidence to move forward to support their children as they prepare for their educational future.

This model can serve as a guide to school leaders in search of innovative ways to involve parents at all levels. We know that parents are a crucial part of the education of their children. As the parent facilitators emphasized, parents, teachers, and counselors must work as a team in the education of our children. Teaching Latino parents to advocate and ask questions was a critical part of this model. Parent facilitators felt that they had equipped the parent learners with the desire to learn more and the confidence to ask the right questions.

Appendix A
Pre-/Post-Questionnaire for Parent Learners

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire! *Gracias por tomar el tiempo para completar este cuestionario!*

#1: How many children do you have? <i>¿Cuántos hijos tiene Ud.?</i>	#2: What are their ages? <i>¿Cuántos años tienen?</i>
#4: Are you Hispanic/Latino? <i>¿Ud. es hispano/latino?</i> _____ Yes/ Sí _____ No	

Please circle your response below. *Por favor, marque su respuesta con un círculo.*

#5: I understand the importance of grades in high school. *Entiendo la importancia de los grados en la escuela secundaria.*

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat agree</i>		<i>Agree completely</i>	
<i>No estoy de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy un poco de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy de acuerdo</i>	

#6: I understand the courses that my son/daughter will need to take in high school in order to attend a 4-year university. *Entiendo los cursos que mi hijo/a tendrá que tomar en la escuela secundaria para poder asistir a una universidad de 4 años.*

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat agree</i>		<i>Agree completely</i>	
<i>No estoy de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy un poco de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy de acuerdo</i>	

#7: I understand how the teachers, counselors and parents work together in high school to prepare students for college. *Entiendo cómo los maestros, consejeros y padres trabajan juntos en la escuela secundaria para preparar a los estudiantes para la universidad.*

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat agree</i>		<i>Agree completely</i>	
<i>No estoy de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy un poco de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy de acuerdo</i>	

#8: I understand the difference between the different systems of higher education in California (community colleges, Cal States and UCs). *Entiendo la diferencia entre los diferentes sistemas de educación superior en California.*

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat agree</i>		<i>Agree completely</i>	
<i>No estoy de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy un poco de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy de acuerdo</i>	

#9: I understand how a counselor can assist me when my child is in high school. *Entiendo cómo un consejero me puede ayudar cuando mi hijo está en la escuela secundaria.*

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Somewhat agree</i>		<i>Agree completely</i>	
<i>No estoy de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy un poco de acuerdo</i>		<i>Estoy de acuerdo</i>	

#10: I understand how to pay for college. *Entiendo cómo pagar la universidad.*

1
2
3
4
5
6

Disagree
Somewhat agree
Agree completely

No estoy de acuerdo
Estoy un poco de acuerdo
Estoy de acuerdo

Rate the following high school events/activities below on their importance in preparing your son/daughter for college/university. Please circle your choice. / Califique los siguientes eventos/actividades de la escuela secundaria por debajo de su importancia en la preparación de su hijo / hija para el colegio/la universidad.

	<i>Not important/ no importante</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important/muy importante</i>			
#11: Sports / deportes	1	2	3	4	5	6
#12: Activities / actividades	1	2	3	4	5	6
#13: Clubs / clubes	1	2	3	4	5	6
#14: Grades/GPA / las calificaciones	1	2	3	4	5	6
#15: Community Service / servicio comunitario	1	2	3	4	5	6
#16: SAT or ACT Exam / exámenes SAT o ACT	1	2	3	4	5	6
#17: Having a schedule/un horario fijo	1	2	3	4	5	6
#18: Completing homework/ Completando la tarea	1	2	3	4	5	6
#19: Scholarships/Becas	1	2	3	4	5	6

#20: What should you do if your child is not receiving good grades? What steps do you take?
 ¿Qué debe hacer si su hijo/a no está recibiendo buenas calificaciones? ¿Qué medidas toma usted?

#21: Would you be interested in being interviewed as a follow up to this questionnaire? Questions will be similar to these questions but will focus on more detail. Thank you!
 ¿Estaría usted interesado en ser entrevistado como una segunda parte de este cuestionario? Preguntas serán similares a estas preguntas, pero se centrarán en mayor detalle. Gracias!

_____ Yes / Sí
 Phone number/ número de teléfono: _____
 Name/Nombre: _____
 Best time to reach/La major hora para llamar: _____

_____ No

Appendix B
Interview Protocol – Parent Learners
Phone interview (follow up with 5 to 7 parents)

Intro: Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on the phone. The goal of this short interview is for me to find out a little more about your participation in these workshops and how they have benefited your and what we can do to improve these workshops in the future.

1. Since you attended the workshop, what has changed in your understanding of supporting your child to plan and prepare for higher education? (Probe for specifics)
2. Since you attended the workshop, has your behavior changed? (Probe for specifics) What have you done differently?
3. Are you more confident that you can afford college? Why or why not?
4. What do you plan to do this year to prepare your son/daughter for high school? College? What do you plan to do in the next 1 – 3 years? 3 – 5 years?
5. Did something in particular from the workshop help you to develop this plan?

Workshop Delivery

6. What components of the workshops were most helpful?
7. What can we do in the future to improve the workshop?

Appendix C

Guiding Questions for Action Research Team

After each workshop at the first two elementary schools (within one week)

1. As we consider the Principles of College Culture (McDonough, 2009), how effective was the curriculum at addressing our targeted principles?
2. What would you suggest that we change for the next workshops? What can we do better?
3. How do you feel about presenting to your peers?
4. What do you think about their responses to the pre-/post-questionnaire?
5. What do you think about your role as a facilitator?

Appendix D

Curriculum Development Observation Protocol

Purpose: The purpose of this protocol is to provide general categories for observation.

Interaction with research and other curriculum:

- What materials do they find most useful?
- What do they find exciting?
- What topics spark the most conversation?
- What topics seem to elicit emotion?
- Which topics seem uninteresting?
- Is anything missing that would be helpful?

What are the parent facilitators doing?

- What types of activities are they suggesting?
- How is their demeanor towards each other, as facilitators?
- Is there anyone who stands out as the natural leader of the group?
- What are their reactions to the sample curriculum presented?
- What questions do they ask?
- What do they discuss?
- How do they feel about presenting?
- Ways of interacting with each other
- Do they seem confident with the topics being discussed?

Appendix D (continued)

Date: _____ Number of Leaders: _____

Time	Parent Leaders (Descriptive notes)	Reflective Notes

Appendix E
Action Research Team Guiding Questions

1. What would you suggest to other schools and parents that plan to present workshops to Latino parents?
2. Is there anything that we could have done better?
3. How did you feel about presenting to your peers?
4. What do you think about their responses to the pre-/post-questionnaire?
5. What do you think about your role as a leader?
6. How did you feel about presenting to parents in your community? Did you feel comfortable? Would you do this again?
7. Do you feel that these workshops were beneficial? How were they beneficial? What signs did you notice that made you feel the workshops were effective?
8. What components of the workshops were most effective?
9. What really worked well?
10. What is something that could have been better?
11. What are our next steps?

REFERENCES

- 2010 Census Data Products: United States - At a Glance main page. (n.d.). Retrieved June 10, 2014, from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2010/glance/>
- Adelman, C. (1999). *Answers in the Tool Box. Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment*. National Inst. on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED431363.pdf>
- Adelman, C. (2006). The tool box revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college. *U.S. Department of Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED490195>
- Alexander, K. L., & Eckland, B. K. (1977). High school context and college selectivity: Institutional constraints in educational stratification. *Social Forces*, 56(1), 166–188. doi:10.1093/sf/56.1.166
- Anderson, K. J., & Minke, K. M. (2007). Parent involvement in education: Toward an understanding of parents' decision making. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 311–323. doi:10.3200/JOER.100.5.311-323
- Antonio, A. (2002). "College Knowledge for Successful K-16 Transitions." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Ascher, C. (1988). Improving the school-home connection for poor and minority urban students. *The Urban Review*, 20(2), 109–123. doi:10.1007/BF01112512
- Aspiazu, G. G., Bauer, S. C., & Spillett, M. (1998). Improving the academic performance of Hispanic youth: A community education model. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 22(2).
- Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Tahan, K. (2011). *The Condition of Education 2011. NCES 2011-033*. National Center for Education Statistics.
- Auerbach, S. (2002). Exposing the rules of the game of college access: Making privileged information accessible in a family outreach program. In *Annual Meeting of the Sociology of Education Association*. Asilomar, CA.
- Auerbach, S. (1999). "Conceptualizing College: Listening to Multiple Voices in Action Research with Students of Color." Presented at the Reclaiming Voice II, University of California, Irvine.
- Auerbach, S. (2002). Why do they give the good classes to some and not to others?: Latino parent narratives of struggle in a college access program. *Teachers College Record*, 104(7), 1369–1392.

- Auerbach, S. (2003). "Unpacking College Preparation Programs: The Role of Family in Engagement." Presented at the American Education Reserach Association, Chicago.
- Auerbach, S. (2004a). Engaging Latino parents in supporting college pathways: Lessons from a college access program. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 3(2), 125–145.
- Auerbach, S. (2004b). Engaging Latino Parents in Supporting College Pathways: Lessons From a College Access Program. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 3(2), 125–145.
- Auerbach, S. (2006). If the student is good, let him fly: Moral support for college among Latino immigrant parents. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 5(4), 275–292.
doi:10.1207/s1532771xjle0504_4
- Auerbach, S. (2007). From moral supporters to struggling advocates reconceptualizing parent roles in education through the experience of working-class families of color. *Urban Education*, 42(3), 250–283. doi:10.1177/0042085907300433
- Auerbach, S. (2009). Walking the walk: Portraits in leadership for family engagement in urban schools. *School Community Journal*, 19(1), 9–32.
- Auerbach, S. (2010). Beyond coffee with the principal: Toward leadership for authentic school-family partnerships. *Part of Special Issue: Building Partnerships Wth Diverse Families and Communities*, 20(6), 728–757.
- Baker, A. J., & Soden, L. M. (1998). *The challenges of parent involvement research*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. Retrieved from http://www.parentsassociation.com/parents/parent_involvement.html
- Barton, A. C., Drake, C., Perez, J. G., Louis, K. S., & George, M. (2004). Ecologies of parental engagement in urban education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(4), 3–12.
doi:10.3102/0013189X033004003
- Brown, S. E., Santiago, D., & Lopez, E. (2003). Latinos In higher education: Today and tomorrow. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 35(2), 40–47.
doi:10.1080/00091380309604092
- Cabrera, A. F., & La Nasa, S. M. (2000a). Overcoming the tasks on the path to college for America's disadvantaged. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2000(107), 31–43.
doi:10.1002/ir.10703
- Cabrera, A. F., & La Nasa, S. M. (2000b). Understanding the college-choice process. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2000(107), 5–22. doi:10.1002/ir.10701
- Cabrera, A. F., & Nasa, S. M. L. (2001). On the path to college: Three critical tasks facing America's disadvantaged. *Research in Higher Education*, 42(2), 119–149.
doi:10.1023/A:1026520002362

- "California Postsecondary Education Commission closed its doors on November 18, 2011" (2011) [press release]. <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/>, accessed on February 24, 2014.
- Ceja, M. A. (2001). *Applying, Choosing, and Enrolling in Higher Education: Understanding the College Choice Process of First-Generation Chicana Students*. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Chavkin, N. F. (1993). *Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society*. SUNY Press.
- Chavkin, N. F., & Gonzalez, D. L. (1995). *Forging partnerships between Mexican American parents and the schools*. ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Cline, Z., & Necochea, J. (2001). ¡Basta Ya! Latino Parents Fighting Entrenched Racism. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 25(1-2), 89–114. doi:10.1080/15235882.2001.10162786
- Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2007). *Doing action research in your own organization*. SAGE Publications.
- Coles, A. S. (1993). School to college transition programs for low income and minority youth. *Unpublished Manuscript*.
- Conley, D., & Seburn, M. (2014). Transition Readiness: Making the shift from high school to college in a social media world. In *Postsecondary Play: The role of games and social media in higher education* (pp. 71–102). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- De Gaetano, Y. (2007). The Role of Culture in Engaging Latino Parents' Involvement in School. *Urban Education*, 42(2), 145–162.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving Parents in the Schools: A Process of Empowerment. *American Journal of Education*, 100(1), 20–46.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1994). Consejos: The Power of Cultural Narratives. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 25(3), 298–316. doi:10.1525/aeq.1994.25.3.04x0146p
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2004). *Involving Latino families in schools: Raising student achievement through home-school partnerships*. Corwin Press; Thousand Oaks; CA.
- Dolan, S. L. (2009). Missing out: Latino students in America's schools. *Washington: National Council of La Raza*.
- Domina, T. (2009). What Works in College Outreach: Assessing Targeted and Schoolwide Interventions for Disadvantaged Students. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(2), 127–152. doi:10.3102/0162373709333887
- Downs, A., Martin, J., Fossum, M., Martinez, S., Solorio, M., & Martinez, H. (2008). Parents Teaching Parents: A Career and College Knowledge Program for Latino Families. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 7(3), 227–240.

- Epstein, J. L. (1996). Perspectives and previews on research and policy for school, family, and community partnerships. In *Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes* (pp. 209–246).
- Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, *13*(1), 1–22. doi:10.1023/A:1009048817385
- Fann, A., Jarsky, K. M., & McDonough, P. M. (2009a). Parent Involvement in the College Planning Process: A Case Study of P-20 Collaboration. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *8*(4), 374–393. doi:10.1177/1538192709347847
- Fann, A., Jarsky, K. M., & McDonough, P. M. (2009b). Parent Involvement in the College Planning Process: A Case Study of P-20 Collaboration. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *8*(4), 374–393. doi:10.1177/1538192709347847
- Floyd, L. (1998). Joining Hands A Parental Involvement Program. *Urban Education*, *33*(1), 123–135. doi:10.1177/0042085998033001007
- Fund, S. M. (2004). Caught in the financial aid information divide: A national survey of Latino perspectives on financial aid. *A Presentation Prepared by the Sallie Mae Fund and the Thomas Rivera Policy Institute*.
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). (2014, January 21). Program Home Page. Retrieved February 22, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>
- Gándara, P. (2002). A Study of High School Puente: What We Have Learned about Preparing Latino Youth for Postsecondary Education. *Educational Policy*, *16*(4), 474–495. doi:10.1177/0895904802164002
- Gandara, P. C. (1995). *Over the Ivy Walls: The Educational Mobility of Low-Income Chicanos*. SUNY Press.
- Gandara, P. C., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed social policies*. Harvard University Press.
- Gándara, P., Larson, K., Mehan, H., & Rumberger, R. (1998). Capturing Latino Students in the Academic Pipeline. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/84h2j4qs>
- Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Routledge.
- Gregg, K., Rugg, M., & Stoneman, Z. (2012). Building on the Hopes and Dreams of Latino Families with Young Children: Findings from Family Member Focus Groups. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *40*(2), 87–96. doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0498-1

- Grubb, W. N., Lara, C. M., & Valdez, S. (2002). Counselor, Coordinator, Monitor, Mom: The Roles of Counselors in the Puente Program. *Educational Policy, 16*(4), 547–571. doi:10.1177/0895904802016004005
- Harklau, L. (2013). Why Izzie didn't go to college: Choosing work over college as LaTammy feminism. *Teachers College Record, 115*(1).
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Annual Synthesis, 2002.
- Horn, L., Chen, X., & Adelman, C. (1998). *Toward resiliency: At-risk students who make it to college*. Citeseer.
- Horn, L. J., Chen, X., & Chapman, C. (2003). Getting Ready To Pay for College: What Students and Their Parents Know about the Cost of College Tuition and What They Are Doing To Find Out.
- Hossler, D., Braxton, J., & Coopersmith, G. (1989). Understanding student college choice. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, 5*, 231–288.
- Inger, M. (1992). *Increasing the school involvement of Hispanic parents*. ERIC. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED363932.pdf#page=25>
- Jackson, K., & Remillard, J. (2005). Rethinking parent involvement: African American mothers construct their roles in the mathematics education of their children. *GSE Publications, 11*.
- Jones, T. G., & Velez, W. (1997). Effects of Latino Parent Involvement on Academic Achievement. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED410676>
- Jun, A., & Tierney, W. G. (1999). At-Risk Urban Students and College Success: A Framework for Effective Preparation. *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum, 9*(4), 49–60.
- Kao, G., & Tienda, M. (1998). Educational aspirations among minority youth. *American Journal of Education, 106*, 349–384.
- Kiyama, J. M. (2010). Family Lessons and Funds of Knowledge: College-Going Paths in Mexican American Families. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 10*(1), 23–42. doi:10.1080/15348431.2011.531656
- Leonard, J. (2013). Maximizing College Readiness for All Through Parental Support. *School Community Journal, 23*(1).
- Martinez, M., & Klopott, S. (2005). The link between high school reform and college access and success for low-income and minority youth. American Youth Policy Forum.
- McCallister, L., Elians, J., & Illich, P. (2010). Perceptions about Higher Education among Parents of Hispanic Students in Middle School: Implications for Community Colleges.

Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 34(10), 784–796.
doi:10.1080/10668920802605254

- McClafferty, K. A., McDonough, P. M., & Nunez, A.-M. (2002). What is a college culture? Facilitating college preparation through organizational change. In *annual meeting of the American educational research association, New Orleans, LA*. Retrieved from <http://www.bridgingworlds.org/P-20/McClafferty.pdf>
- McDonough, P. M. (1997). *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity*. SUNY Press.
- McDonough, P. M. (1999). Doing whatever it takes: Conflict-based college admissions in the post-affirmative action era. In *annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada*.
- Medina, C., & Luna, G. (2000). Narratives from LaTammy Professors in Higher Education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 31(1), 47–66. doi:10.1525/aeq.2000.31.1.47
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003008>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *Trends Among Young Adults Over Three Decades, 1974-2006*. Jessup, MD. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012345>
- NCES. (2007, September). Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved November 11, 2013, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/minoritytrends/index.asp>
- O'Connor, N., Hammack, F. M., & Scott, M. A. (2010). Social Capital, Financial Knowledge, and Hispanic Student College Choices. *Research in Higher Education*, 51(3), 195–219. doi:10.1007/s11162-009-9153-8
- Olivos, E. M. (2009). Collaboration With Latino Families A Critical Perspective of Home—School Interactions. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 45(2), 109–115. doi:10.1177/1053451209340220
- Perna, L.W., & Swail, W. S. (1998). Early intervention programs: How effective are they at increasing access to college. In *Summary of a focused dialogue session at the meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Miami, FL*. Retrieved August (Vol. 23, p. 2000).
- Perna, L.W. (2005). The key to college access: Rigorous academic preparation. *Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach*, 113–134.

- Perna, L.W., & Titus, M. A. (2005). The Relationship between Parental Involvement as Social Capital and College Enrollment: An Examination of Racial/Ethnic Group Differences. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(5), 485–518. doi:10.1353/jhe.2005.0036
- Perna, L.W. (2000). Differences in the Decision to Attend College among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 71(2), 117–141. doi:10.2307/2649245
- Peterson, D. (1989). *Parent involvement in the educational process*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Pitkin, John, & Myers, Dowell. (2012). *Generational Projections of the California Population by Nativity and Year of Immigrant Arrival*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. University of California Press.
- Post, D. (1990). College-Going Decisions by Chicanos: The Politics of Misinformation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 12(2), 174–187. doi:10.3102/01623737012002174
- Reports Highlights: The Impact of Regular Upward Bound: Results from the Third Follow-up Data Collection. (2005, December 20). Evaluative Reports. Retrieved February 22, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/Elial/highered/upward/upward-3rd-report.html>
- Rodriguez, S. (2003). What Helps Some First-Generation Students Succeed?. *About Campus*, 8(4), 17–22.
- Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Bryk, A. S., Easton, J. Q., & Luppescu, S. (2006). The Essential Supports for School Improvement. Research Report. *Consortium on Chicago School Research*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED498342.pdf>
- Shaughnessy, M. F. (2005). An interview with Mary Catherine Swanson: About (AVID) advancement via individual determination. Retrieved December 23, 2009.
- Snow, C. E., Barnes, W. S., Chandler, J., Goodman, I. F., & Hemphill, L. (1991). *Unfulfilled expectations: Home and school influences on literacy*. Cambridge, MA, US: Harvard University Press.
- Stringer, E. T. (2004). *Action research in education*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Constantine, J. M., Seftor, N. S., Martin, E. S., Silva, T. & Myers, D. (2006). Study of the Effect of the Talent Search Program on Secondary and Postsecondary Outcomes in Florida, Indiana, and Texas. (2006, August 30). Evaluative Reports. Retrieved February 22, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/Elial/highered/talentsearch-outcomes/index.html>

- Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (2009). Educating Latino immigrant students in the twenty-first century: Principles for the Obama administration. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(2), 327–340.
- Swail, W. S. (2000). Preparing America's Disadvantaged for College: Programs That Increase College Opportunity. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2000(107), 85–101. doi:10.1002/ir.10706
- Swanson, M. C., & Others, A. (1993). The AVID Classroom: A System of Academic and Social Supports for Low-Achieving Students. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?q=ED368832&id=ED368832>
- Talent Search Program. (2014, February 6). Program Home Page. Retrieved February 22, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triotalent/index.html>
- The Campaign for College Opportunity. (2013). *The State of Latinos in California in Higher Education*.
- Thigpen, D., Freedberg, L., & Frey, S. (2014). *The Power of Parents: Research underscores the impact of parent involvement in schools* (p. 15). Oakland, CA: EdSource.
- Tierney, W. G. (2002). Parents and Families in Precollege Preparation: The Lack of Connection between Research and Practice. *Educational Policy*, 16(4), 588–606. doi:10.1177/0895904802016004007
- Tierney, W. G., & Auerbach, S. (2005). Toward Developing an Untapped Resource: The Role of Families in College Preparation. In *Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach* (pp. 29–48). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Tierney, W. G., Corwin, Z. B., & Colyar, J. E. (2005). *Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach*. SUNY Press.
- Tierney, W. G., & Hagedorn, L. S. (2002). Making the grade in college prep: A guide for improving college preparation programs. *Los Angeles: The Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California*.
- Tinkler, B. (2002). A Review of Literature on Hispanic/Latino Parent Involvement in K-12 Education. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED469134>
- Tornatzky, L. G., Cutler, R., & Lee, J. (2002). College Knowledge: What Latino Parents Need To Know and Why They Don't Know It. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED469295>
- Torrez, N. (2004). Developing Parent Information Frameworks that Support College Preparation for Latino Students. *High School Journal*, 87(3), 54–63.
- Upward Bound Program. (2014, January 31). Program Home Page. Retrieved February 22, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>

- Valdez, G. (1996). *Con respeto: Bridging the distances between culturally diverse families and schools*. Teachers College Press New York.
- Warren, M., Hong, S., Rubin, C., & Uy, P. (2009). Beyond the bake sale: A community-based relational approach to parent engagement in schools. *The Teachers College Record*, *111*(9), 2209–2254.
- Wiley, A., Wyatt, J., & Camara, W. J. (2010). *The development of a multidimensional college readiness index*. College Board Research Report.
- Young, J. W., Lakin, J., Courtney, R., & Martiniello, M. (2012). Advancing the quality and equity of education for Latino students: A white paper. *Educational Testing Service (ETS) Research Report ETS RR-12, 1*.
- Zambrana, R. E., & Zoppi, I. M. (2002). LaTammy Students. *Journal of Ethnic And Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *11*(1-2), 33–53. doi:10.1300/J051v11n01_02