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Experiences of Oaxacan Youth Attending High School in Los Angeles: Implications for Educational Practice

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Experiences of Oaxacan Youth Attending High School in Los Angeles:

Implications for Educational Practice

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requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Gina Maria Taglieri

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Experiences of Oaxacan Youth Attending High School in Los Angeles:

Implications for Educational Practice

by

Gina Maria Taglieri

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Pedro Noguera, Co-Chair

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It is well known that a significant number of California students are of Mexican heritage. What is less apparent to educators is that increasing numbers of these students are children and youth from Indigenous communities of that region. Effects of globalization and free market forces have not only caused the displacement and migration of Indigenous peoples to large cities within Mexico, but also to several parts of the United States, in search of work. Indigenous students from Mexico differ considerably from their *mestizo* peers, both culturally and linguistically (Vásquez, 2012). For California educators, this means that within the group known homogeneously as "Latino," is in part made up of students from families who may speak an Indigenous language at home, and who may observe Indigenous cultural traditions and ways of life (López, 2009; Ochoa and Ochoa, 2005). A growing body of literature is shining a light on the challenges Indigenous students encounter as they navigate the educational system - in Mexico and here in the US. There are between 100,000 and 200,000 Zapotec immigrants who now live in greater Los Angeles, and the number of

Indigenous children and youth from communities in Mexico are attending California public schools is increasing. Due to their unique background, Zapotec students may present educators with additional considerations as they plan for their instruction and support. The work presented here chronicles a year-long case study which sought to explore the schooling experiences of Oaxacan youth at an urban high school in Southern California. During the course of the investigation, multiple factors within the school environment were analyzed, including instructional practices, school and district procedures and perceptions of staff, students, and parents with regard to Oaxacan students. It is the hope that the findings of this investigation, which delves into an area that has been the focus of precious few studies within the extant literature, will generate further conversation and inquiry about the layers of complexity that exist for Indigenous Oaxacan students attending school in LA. Perhaps the discussion contained within the pages of this work will begin to pave the way to greater awareness among educators and can be an impetus for informed decision-making which with have a positive impact on Oaxacan students in US public schools, and on other Indigenous students from Latin America.

Keywords: Zapotecs in Los Angeles, displacement of Indigenous peoples, Mexican migration, Indigenous education, Oaxacan students, Oaxacalifornia, transnational spaces, translocality

The dissertation of Gina Maria Taglieri is approved.

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2020

To all the world's children who find themselves on the move,

wherever you are… you are welcome, and you belong.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Context for Study

Educators and policymakers are aware that large number of Californians have family ties to one or more countries in Latin America. According to the California Department of Education, in 2019-2020, 3,381,198 students in the public schools (54.9%) identify as "Hispanic or Latino" (CDE, 2020), and the vast majority of these students are of Mexican heritage. What is not so well-known is that an increasing proportion of this population of students are in fact, Indigenous students, from rural communities in Mexico (Casanova, O'Connor, & Anthony-Stevens, 2016). For California educators, this means that of the students frequently referred to homogeneously as "Latinos," are children and youth from communities who may be native speakers of an Indigenous language, and who may have been enculturated into traditional ways of life of the First Peoples of Mexico (López, 2009; Ochoa & Ochoa, 2005). One of the largest populations of Indigenous youth residing in California are those with families from Zapotec-speaking communities, whose ancestral territories lie within the Central Valley region of the Mexican state of Oaxaca (Vásquez, 2012). In the 1980s, due to changes in Mexico's economic policies and other conditions, increasing numbers of men and women from Zapotec communities were forced to leave their pueblos, and move to larger cities in search of work (Bacon, 2008). Some migrated to Central and Northern regions of Mexico, and others as far north as Los Angeles, seeking work. Students from such Indigenous migrant families present California educators with several additional considerations as they plan for their instruction and support. First, students attending school in Los Angeles who speak an Indigenous language at home are often multilingual and multicultural (García, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzmán, 2006). In addition, students from families from Zapotec communities may possess alternate ways of seeing the world that are incongruous with the dominant school culture, having been socialized within a family and community that is non-Western in its worldview (Battiste, 2002; Castagno & Brayboy,

2008; Noguera, 2003). Lastly, these students and their families are likely to have experienced high levels of discrimination in Mexico due to their background and traditions, a situation which is often reproduced in the receiving country (Casanova et al., 2016).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study presented here is to explore the factors present in one urban, California public high school which impact the academic and social experiences of students with connections to Zapotec-speaking communities in Oaxaca. This work represents a preliminary effort to shine a light on aspects of the complex lives of this growing population of immigrants, and to examine ways in which California educators might improve the social and academic opportunities available to these students. Multiple studies have shown that due to a number of factors, vulnerable students, including Indigenous, undocumented, and other children and youth from non-dominant backgrounds, often experience challenges which make academic achievement more difficult (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; CDE, 2017; Vásquez, 2011). Although the numbers of Indigenous students from Latin America has been increasing steadily over the past two decades, the extant literature reveals only a few studies focused on these youth, and their experiences in U.S. public schools (Vásquez, 2012). The studies that do exist are focused on the differences between Indigenous Mexican and mestizo identities, and how identity development may impact student achievement (Vásquez, 2012; Vásquez, 2019).

This case study seeks to start a conversation around how these students identify both barriers and facilitators to school success as they adjust to school conditions in California, how they perceive interactions with school staff and peers at school, and how they come to view themselves as learners within this urban, U.S. context. In addition, this study examines teacher and staff awareness of this particular student population, in an effort to understand how this may influence actions in terms of approaches to instruction, supports and services provided, and to begin to think

about immigrant parent perceptions and their impact on participation and interactions at school. The study does not question the presence of migrant youth and their families, but centers on how schools can better provide a positive educational experience that will promote their academic and social success. The stance of the research presented here is that all immigrant families, especially those who have experienced forced displacement and violence in their home countries are welcome in California schools, and as educators, we must do our utmost to convey to them a sense of belonging, and to provide them with a means to academic and social success.

Research Questions

According to Maxwell (2013), the research question forms the "heart" of the research design. During the year-long period of fieldwork, the research questions were modified slightly in an effort to adapt to a deepening understanding of the phenomena under consideration. Over the course of the inquiry, the questions become more nuanced and sophisticated. The following amended research questions ultimately guided the study and analysis presented here.

1) What do experiences of high school students and their parents with ties to Zapotec-speaking communities in Oaxaca tell us about challenges and facilitators impacting their a) academic success and b) social/emotional well-being at school?

1a. What are challenges, if any, around issues involving language and identity?

1b. What challenges, if any, arise from discontinuities of school and home expectations?

2) What are school-based supports/services, approaches to instruction, and activities/events which facilitate an increased sense of ***belonging*** (sense of comfort and acceptance) and ***engagement*** at school (academic interest, positive interactions, participation in events/activities)?

2a. What impact, if any, does staff ***awareness*** of students' backgrounds have?

2b. What impact, if any, do the ***perceptions*** of students, parents, and staff have?

Positionality

Researchers are motivated to engage in projects which reflect their personal, practical, and professional goals (Maxwell, 2013). In the case of the study presented here, this assertion would appear to be correct. My journey began with a sense of connection to Latin America, through family ties and lived experiences. In addition, the study is in part motivated by a desire to increase my own awareness, and that of my colleagues, about the human and linguistic rights of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it is a goal of this particular work at all times to honor and respect the diverse cultures, traditions, and languages of all First Nations and Native communities of the Americas. As a 3rd generation American of European and Middle-Eastern descent, an adult "third-culture kid" from Southern California, I am aware of the potential for bias, misunderstanding and even damage to the vulnerable communities who are often the subjects of academic study. Keeping this reality at the center of this work, I position myself as one concerned educator, who seeks to generate greater awareness about the experiences and backgrounds of students who make up a part of our school communities across California. It is my firm belief that such awareness will lead to actions on the part of institutions and individuals, bringing about systemic improvements with positive implications for marginalized students and families. Throughout the period of this project, I have sought to give voice to students and to convey their message to an audience of fellow teachers and teacher-educators. In conducting this inquiry, I have attempted to initiate a conversation about one particular student population, but it could just as well be applied to other marginalized groups. It is my hope that this type of work will encourage growth and evolution among educators and in our public education system, so that we may better serve students from Native communities of the Americas, as well as other students from backgrounds that are not typically represented in the curriculum. I come to this work with a conviction that diversity of all kinds leads to a stronger and more enriched society, and more specifically, that traditions and knowledge of Indigenous peoples

of the Americas have provided the world with myriad contributions in a multitude of areas. Moreover, Indigenous students are seldom exposed to accurate representations of their communities and their contributions in the school setting, and I am acutely aware of the absence of Indigenous voices in decision-making around what is presented in schools, both from an historical perspective and in terms of current issues. Given that the arrival of Europeans in the Americas resulted in the near destruction of Indigenous traditions and ways of knowing which developed over millennia, it is the position of this researcher that we as educators must do what we can to interrupt this exclusionary trend and do what we can to move over and make room at the table for diverse voices and lifeways best expressed by members of the First Nations and Native communities of the Americas.

As an educator with 15 years' experience working in U.S. public schools, and from a thorough review of the extant literature through this lens, there are certain assumptions which underpin the work presented here. First, I begin with the claim, that due to historical, cultural and linguistic factors, students attending high school in Los Angeles from families originating from Oaxaca, are likely to experience difficulties making academic progress in the public school setting (Flores-Marcial, 2015; Vásquez, 2012). Second, unlike their peers of European descent, it is highly unlikely that Indigenous students from Mexico attending school in California will see their own histories formally integrated into the curriculum (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Next, I assume the stance that as public educators working in a multicultural, multilingual state within a pluralistic society, most of us are invested in promoting a sense of respect for all cultures and languages, and in providing positive schooling experiences for students from diverse backgrounds (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Furthermore, I take the position that staff and students alike benefit from a greater awareness about the strengths and challenges of all students, including those originating from Indigenous communities of the Americas. Finally, a premise underlying this

work that is based on both my experience and a review of the literature, is that most California educators currently lack sufficient awareness about students with family ties to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca specifically, and about Indigenous students from Latin America more generally. Teachers today are not well versed in the cultural and linguistic differences among Latino students, not to mention ways in which they might support their unique needs in terms of academic achievement and social/emotional well-being. Throughout the course of this case study, my aim has been primarily to give voice to the personal stories of Oaxacan students and their families, as well as the school-based staff who serve them, and to attempt to make meaning from the accounts of study participants. With the information that has been collected over one year, I have done my best, given my own limitations as a teacher and researcher, to lay out each participant's perspective as faithfully as I am able.

Study Implications

A preliminary exploration of the experiences of Zapotec students at one Los Angeles high school may represent an important first step towards a productive discourse among researchers and educators about how we might better support these students as well as other children and youth from non-dominant backgrounds. Long-term goals of this study include the raising of awareness about this vulnerable student population, which may ultimately lead to improved conditions for students. Moreover, this and subsequent related efforts may inform and improve district procedures and education policy, and to prepare teachers who are more culturally competent and prepared to provide effective instruction and support for diverse students (Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Van Patten & Williams, 2014). The study presented here will offer an original contribution to the literature base with regard to the well-being of Zapotec students attending schools in Los Angeles. The study was intentionally designed to provide a space to listen and to give voice to personal stories from members of one group of "culturally diverse" students, among many such vulnerable populations

which currently make up our diverse California school communities. Finally, it is an express goal of this study, to encourage school-based professionals to make meaningful distinctions between the many diverse students of Latin American origin collectively known as *Latinos, (*and increasingly as *Latinx)* in the literature. This effort aims to contribute to the conversation started by other researchers based both in California and in Mexico, and to build upon previous studies addressing the challenges and chances for success of students with families from Zapotec communities in California schools.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the fact that a growing number of Indigenous students from Mexico and Central America are attending California public schools, there are few studies specifically focused on the experiences of these students. A large number of articles focus on how educators might modify approaches to instruction, services, and other supports or activities in order to a better serve more generally, students who are *culturally diverse*, or from *non-dominant backgrounds* (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, few studies specifically address the needs of students attending U.S. schools whose families originate from Indigenous Zapotec communities in Mexico. The following section lays out a review of topics within the extant literature which may have an impact on 1) students and families with connections to Indigenous communities of Oaxaca, and 2) education trends and programs offered in California schools to support these and other culturally diverse students.

Individual and Family Context

The State of Oaxaca

The politically defined state of Oaxaca is located in southern Mexico, with the state of Guerrero to the west, Puebla and Veracruz to the north, Chiapas to the east, and the Pacific Ocean along its south-facing coast. Oaxaca is the fifth largest state in Mexico, with eight distinct regions, each featuring unique cultures, cuisines, topographies, languages, and ethnicities. These regions are La Cañada, La Costa, Cuenca del Papaloapan, El Istmo, La Mixteca, La Sierra Norte, La Sierra Sur and Los Valles Centrales (Flores-Marcial, 2015). These diverse regions are home to sixteen officially recognized Indigenous ethnicities, and four language families (Flores-Marcial, 2015). According to INEGI, the Mexican census organization, Oaxaca is home to the largest population of citizens who speak an Indigenous language at home (INEGI, 2016). The two most populous Indigenous ethnic groups in Oaxaca are the Mixtec- and Zapotec-speaking peoples from communities in the Central

Valley and Sierra regions of Oaxaca (UNESCO, 2020). The state capital is Oaxaca de Juárez, a colonial city with characteristics much like other 16th century Spanish settlements. The city lies within the Central Valley region and is home to over 250,000 inhabitants. Nearby, in the hills above the city, the World Heritage archaeological site of Monte Alban stands as a reminder of the proud history of pre-Columbian civilizations that have inhabited the area for millennia (UNESCO, 2020).

Figure 1. Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico

source: whc.unesco.org

The region in which this site is located has a sub-tropical climate, and lies between the Sierra Madre Oriental and the Sierra Madre del Sur, at an elevation of about 5,100 feet above sea level. The Central Valley region of Oaxaca has historically been inhabited primarily by those coming from a number of communities which speak one of the many variants of the Zapotec language group. The political boundaries of the territory of Oaxaca has changed a number of times since pre-Hispanic times (Ordóñez, 2000). The capital was originally named Antequera after the arrival of the Spaniards in 1532. The city and state territory were subsequently renamed after Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. It is said that Oaxaca is a name derived from the Nahuatl "Huaxyacac" (INAFED, 2016). The shield of the newly named capital city Oaxaca de Juárez featured a woman's severed head, which symbolized the brutality of the Spaniards against the Native people of the region (INAFED, 2016). To the east of the city lies Tlacolula de Matamoros, which is a bustling center of commerce for Zapotec-speaking communities of the region. The surrounding pueblos, though relatively close to each other by car, are observed to have significant differences in

language and traditions which define each of them. There are four distinct ethnic groups which are identified as Zapotec: Isthmus, Northern Sierra, Southern Sierra, and the Central Valley (Flores-Marcial, 2015). The latter group have referred to themselves as *benizaa*, which translates as "people of the clouds" (Dixza, 2020). The name "Zapotec" was given to them by invading Nahuas (Aztecs), and later adopted by the Spanish, and is for many, an affront to the Indigenous communities (Flores-Marcial, 2015). Zapotecan is one of the largest and most varied branches of the Otomanguean linguistic family, which is the source of about one-third of all Indigenous languages of Mexico (Flores-Marcial, 2015; Terraciano, 2004).

Ethnohistorians have been among the first to recast assertions about the conquest of Mexico as a singular event that was experienced in much the same way across the Indigenous communities of Mesoamerica. Though scholars often confirm evidence of the disastrous effects the arrival of the Spanish had on the Indigenous communities of Mexico, what some are now asserting is that not all communities experienced colonization in the same way (King, 2012; Terraciano, 2004). This is important because the Indigenous communities of Oaxaca did not come into contact with the Spaniards until later than other regions, and in fewer numbers than those of central Mexico.

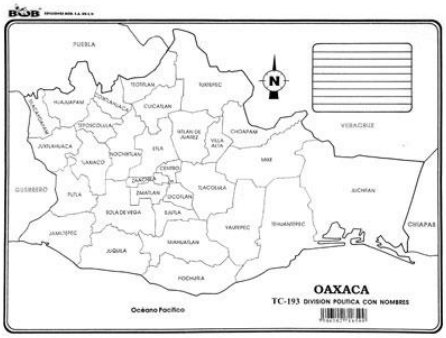
Though Mexico's colonial period was detrimental in many ways, the damage to cultural norms and linguistic practices varied by region. Indigenous people all over Mexico were vulnerable to diseases brought by the Spanish, however not all regions suffered the cultural and linguistic destruction experienced by the Native people of central Mexico. Oaxaca was considered too remote for many Spanish settlers, and for this reason, the non-Indigenous population remained comparatively small throughout the colonial period (Terraciano, 2004). This is one explanation for the large population of Indigenous peoples currently living in Oaxaca, speaking Indigenous languages at home and in the marketplace, and continuing to practice age-old cultural traditions that

span millennia. This unique combination of historical factors are salient when considering the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of families coming from this area of Mexico.

Figure 2. Map of Oaxaca - location within Mexico

source: Pérez, Handley, & Grieshop, 2010

Figure 3. Map of Oaxaca - political



source: Google images

Figure 4. Map of Oaxaca - Indigenous Ethnicities

source: Google images

Education in Mexico

Like other countries in Latin America, the region that is now known as the nation of Mexico was changed forever from the moment of contact with Europeans. This colonial history profoundly impacted the development of all of Mexico's political, social, and cultural institutions. Prior to the period of colonization, however, this region was home to some of the world's most advanced civilizations. When Indigenous Americans and Europeans clashed and eventually settled into a complicated union, a new national character was born, and continues to influence every aspect of

life in Mexico today, including its most important institutions. The system of education in Mexico evolved in a particular socio-historical context, and currently serves about 14 million students in public schools, grades 1-6, with approximately 800,000 identified as Indigenous children and youth during the academic year 2018-2019 (Moctezuma, 2019). In some regions of Mexico, school attendance rates are alarmingly low, especially in the less developed southern states like Chiapas and Oaxaca. These tend to be areas with the largest number of Indigenous peoples and the highest rates of poverty and illiteracy in the nation. These are also areas where students are least likely to continue attending school through grade 12, which is compulsory in Mexico (Moctezuma, 2019; Monroy, 2019).

Indigenous Bilingual and Bicultural Education

Though much work still needs to be done, Mexico can indeed claim to be one of the first countries in Latin America to design education programs to serve its Indigenous populations. During the period of colonization, these services were offered by representatives of the Catholic Church, and the goal was primarily to educate the Indigenous population about European religion, culture, and language. Indigenous students, such as many from Nahua (Aztec) communities, who already had a writing system and were familiar with the use of paper and ink, were able to adapt quickly, learn new content and the Spanish alphabet, while using their native Nahúatl as the primary language of instruction (Favre, 1998; Hamel, 2008a; Terraciano, 2004). However, these colonial efforts were, in reality, centered around the goal of Christian conversion, and to bring about the "castellanización" of Indigenous children and adults. Those who resisted, were often forced into submission (Favre, 1998; Spicer,1962; López, 2009).

Nevertheless, when Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, there was already a centuries-old system of education firmly in place, though Euro-centric in nature, and intimately connected with the Catholic Church (Modiano, 1978). One of the most important developments of

this epoch, was the government's priority of unifying the nation. The system of education became an instrument of state-building and control of the citizenry (Hamel, 2008b). In those times, one goal of the system was to force the assimilation of all Indigenous peoples, and so the history of trauma around schooling and cultural destruction was tragically similar to those perpetrated on Native peoples in the U.S. (López, 2009). The effort to erase Indigenous cultures and the suppression of Indigenous languages during this period was widespread (Hamel, 2008a; López, 2009). It goes without saying that the leaders of the day believed that a monolingual society was preferred and would provide the best hope for unification, and Spanish became the preferred language for all institutional business.

Following the Mexican Revolution, which began in 1910, the idea of the "prototypical" Mexican was born, that is, the recognition of a "mestizo," or mixed-race citizen, of both Indigenous and European blood. A new Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) was created under the leadership of José Vasconcelos, and over time, a number of departments were added to address issues targeting more vulnerable student populations, including one to focus on Indigenous Education. Vasconcelos' notion of a "mystical Indigenous identity" or "raza cósmica," took hold in the national consciousness in the first part of the 20th century, and continues to influence policies today (Favre, 1998; Hamel, 2008b). Vasconcelos did appear to empathize somewhat with the decimation of Indigenous communities, which led to greater efforts to provide multilingual, multicultural programs to serve them (SEP, 2016). However, these sentiments on the part of the education leader reflect more of a paternalistic view of Indigenous peoples and the education programs he found appropriate for their communities (SEP, 2016). He advocated a type of vocational education for Indigenous peoples, and did not recommend distracting them with academic endeavors, unless they were a means to the economic development of the countryside (SEP, 2016). So from the earliest conceptions of a national education system, the perspective of educational leaders was one of seeing

Indigenous students as those who would engage in manual labor. Thus, Vasconcelos' view of the Cosmic Race as an amalgamation of both European and Indigenous ethnicity, he did not seem to see the Indigenous peoples as capable of academic pursuits without the mixing of the races. Despite some isolated attempts at innovation in programs serving Indigenous students, the dominant practice in Mexican schools continued to be one characterized by the suppression of Indigenous language use, and an ongoing preference for assimilationist approaches with the associated racism which comes from such practices (Favre, 1998; López, 2009).

In the 1990s, paradigm changes brought about an evolution in the understanding of the unique needs of Indigenous students, and a greater effort was made to promote the linguistic and cultural rights of the Indigenous people of Mexico (Hamel, 2008b). Despite these changes, classism and discrimination against Indigenous people have continued within Mexico, and Indigenous children remain those at greatest risk of being excluded from the educational system due to issues of poverty and lack of opportunity. Historically, Indigenous students in Mexico have been more likely to drop out of school and obtain lower scores on standardized tests than many of their non-Indigenous peers (Ramírez, 2005; Flores-Crespo, 2007). These are important considerations to take into account when we as educators become more aware of the cultural and linguistic differences that may exist among mestizo and Indigenous students who have family ties to Mexico.

Global Forces and Migration

The economies of the U.S. and Mexico have been interconnected since the inception of each of the two nations. California in particular, has historically been a logical choice for migrants seeking work outside of Mexico. Large numbers of agricultural workers or *campesinos*, have been coming to California since the time of the Braceros, in the 1940s (Cruz-Manjarrez, 2013). It is understandable that this pattern of migration would develop, given that these neighboring countries have had "complementary economies," one having tremendous amounts of capital, and the other

having large numbers of laborers in need of work (Bacon, 2008, p. 26). For several decades now, economic "reform" policies have resulted in the loss of jobs in many sectors of Mexico's economy. These conditions have left many Mexican nationals with no choice but to migrate east and north in search of work (Bacon, 2008). Until the early 1980s, most of these agricultural workers were *mestizos*, and typically were native Spanish speakers.

However, this situation began to change as a result of a variety of economic, social, and political factors. Over the last several decades, increasing numbers of Indigenous peoples from communities in Mexico found themselves living in extreme poverty, and the economic "reforms" that were gaining popularity appeared to worsen these conditions (Bacon, 2008). According to INEGI, the state organization which collects and maintains census data in Mexico, Oaxaca has long been the state with the largest number of inhabitants who consider themselves to be Indigenous, or members of the Native communities of Mexico (INEGI, 2015). Indigenous men, women, and children from Zapotec communities, are estimated to number just over one million across several pueblos within the Central Valley region. Historically, the Indigenous residents of Oaxaca have lived primarily in rural areas, and their livelihoods have been based on subsistence farming on communally held lands (McGuire, & Martin, 2007). Zapotec farmers have long been itinerant workers within Mexico, providing a flexible source of labor in response to ups and downs in the agricultural sector. During the recession of the 1980s, many Zapotec farm workers chose to migrate to the United States, and the number of Indigenous immigrants has been increasing since that time (Bacon, 2008; Rodríguez, 2009). Over the years, the pattern of migration has become *feminized*, given that majority of migrants from Oaxaca changed from primarily male, to a situation in which more and more migrants were women and children (McGuire & Martin, 2007). Another change has been around the topic of immigration, with earlier migrants planning to remain only temporarily, whereas more recently, families frequently arrive in California with the intention of taking up permanent

residence (Klaver, 1999). California has received by far the largest number of Indigenous migrants from Mexico, with an estimated 300,000 Indigenous persons from Oaxaca settling in various parts of the state (Bacon, 2008; Rodríguez, 2009).

It can be said that globalization overall has left Indigenous peoples with both "problems and promises" (Fenelon & Hall, 2008). The 1990s brought on a new era of visibility for the human and linguistic rights of Indigenous peoples around the world, which has resulted in unprecedented communication and collaboration among Indigenous peoples from every continent (Fenelon & Hall, 2008). On the other hand, from the perspective of Indigenous communities, globalization can be seen as a threat to their cultural and linguistic rights (Reinke, 2004). The homogenizing effects of globalization can be seen in several of the pan-Indigenous movements and organizations which have sprung up in recent years. These forces are viewed as empowering as well as destructive, as new practices and policies are enacted in political, economic, and social domains. The era of globalization has given rise to economic policies that preference free market principles and an increase in the privatization of human services. Such policies are derived from a particular economic ideology known as neoliberalism, which advocates for free trade across borders, new management, privatization, and promotes policies which are intended to liberate markets and reduce regulations (Bacon, 2008). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was conceived under such conditions.

NAFTA, which was signed in 1993, along with other policies of "economic reform," have led to multiple unintended consequences for Mexico, one of which is the widespread displacement of Indigenous peoples (Bacon, 2008). Although NAFTA was just one part of a process that had begun years before, these trade policies resulted in the lowering of the price of corn to such a level that it was no longer possible for small farmers in Mexico to produce this crop. Subsidized U.S. farmers engaged in "dumping" when they offered to sell this staple of Mexican cuisine for rock

bottom prices. Mexico went from a nation that produced most of its own corn to one that was dependent on imported corn within a few short years of NAFTA's signing (Bacon, 2008). There were similar problems with other crops, such as coffee, with comparable effects upon Indigenous peoples who tended the land upon which they were cultivated (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Robson et al., 2018). The restructuring of the Mexican economy post-NAFTA led to large-scale privatization of industry as well (Bacon, 2008). Once again, economic policies which were conceived of by the capital-rich countries of the north, have resulted in trade practices that adversely affect nations of the global south, like Mexico. The U.S. has benefited greatly from this arrangement, and as the mass migration of Indigenous peoples began, the U.S. also benefited from the low-cost labor of the immigrants (Reinke, 2004). Though NAFTA was meant to reduce migration, it created conditions which resulted in a significant increase in the number of migrants to the U.S., most of them undocumented. Some of these policies have been beneficial to Mexico, especially for the country's wealthiest citizens. Such impacts of the globalized economy have resulted in a paradox of hope and devastation for Indigenous communities in Latin America (Bacon, 2008; Klaver, 1999; McGuire & Martin, 2007). The 1990s saw an intensification of conditions which have caused increasing numbers of Indigenous people from Mexico to be displaced. Certain political, social, and economic forces within the new global order have made it difficult for many Indigenous Oaxacans to maintain their livelihoods in their home territories.

Despite the messaging endemic to the current political and cultural realities within the United States, migration as a phenomenon has existed as long as human beings have. Such movement of populations has consistently been a catalyst for change in the landscape of our world (Robson, 2019). Migration from one area to another is a process that is dynamic, complex, sometimes bi-directional, and can reshape societies, impacting forms of capital and other resources, and modifying associations among political entities (Robson, 2019). With regard to Oaxaca, decades

of migration have drained Indigenous pueblos of labor, and have modified traditional norms of communal governance (Kearney, 1995; Kearney, 2000; Robson, 2019). The reduction of the population, primarily men, impacts each pueblos ability to coordinate public works projects, to maintain the regular observance of religious and cultural celebrations, and to preserve the social order and the place-based identities that have existed for millennia (Kearney, 2000; Robson, 2019). In conclusion, one of the unintended consequences of global forces, the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands, has caused lasting changes to territories in Mexico, and has also posed particular challenges for the communities receiving them. This context is important to keep in mind as we consider barriers and facilitators encountered by the families of students with ties to Indigenous communities of Oaxaca who have settled in Los Angeles and other parts of the U.S.

Regional Context

California Waves of Change

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, more than 300,000 people lived in California, living in hundreds of small autonomous communities. At the time of contact, Tongva lands included all of greater Los Angeles, and neighboring tribes to the north and west were the Chumash, the Tatavium, and the Serrano, and to the south and east, the Cahuilla and the Luiseño tribes (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009). These tribes traded and intermarried with each other, and especially the villages along the coast and on the islands, shared an abundance of resources. Yaanga was the name given to one such village, which was located then at the site of current day downtown Los Angeles.

Hernán Cortés invaded Mexico in 1519, and within a relatively short period of time, conquered the extensive Aztec Empire. With imperial ambitions, the Spanish reached the Pacific coast, and proceeded to head north, raiding Indian villages along the way. In 1542, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a Spanish explorer and his crew, sailed as far north as what is now San Diego, went ashore and claimed the land for Spain. The method of colonization preferred by the Spanish in their

conquered lands of North America was to establish "presidios, pueblos, and missions." In this way, the Spanish colonizers took control of the Native people's lands by force, through religious conversion, cultural and economic domination (Calisphere, 2009; Jurmain & McCawley, 2009).

The mission system in California was particularly destructive to Native people and societies. The goal of the Franciscans was to replace the identity of the Indians with a new, Christianized one. The San Gabriel Mission attracted Native people in the area by offering opportunities for farming and other vocations. They would baptize the Native people, and encourage them, sometimes forcefully, to convert to Catholicism. Once an Indian was baptized, they could not turn away from the religion, and they remained connected to the mission for life (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009). To attract the Indians to the mission, the Franciscans would offer small gifts and meals at the mission. This must have been effective, especially during drought years in arid Southern California, when food was not as plentiful. The Tongva people who were baptized ended up joining the San Gabriel, San Fernando, and San Juan Capistrano missions. Over time, Indigenous people from multiple tribes, were assimilated into the culture of the missions, and some intermarried with Spanish and later Mexican settlers (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009).

The Pueblo of Los Angeles was founded in 1781 on Tongva land, and many of the Indigenous people from the Tongva nation provided the labor required to build the growing mission settlement (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009). This was the era of the Spanish land grants, and the missionaries and ranch owners often had disputes over the land. Unconverted Indians were called "pagans" and considered "wild," and were prevented from working on the ranchos or to own land. Although the Spanish claimed to own the land, they kept some of the land in trust for the most "faithful indians." During the period of Spanish rule, Native peoples' rights to the land were upheld, even though they may have had to compete among themselves, *to be more European*, in order

to obtain such a land grant. However, this all changed after 1821, when Mexico gained independence from Spain.

The new Mexican governor in California planned to secularize the missions and turn over all the land to non-Indigenous settlers (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009). After the change in government, any hope the Native residents of the San Gabriel mission may have had to eventually own parcels of land around the mission slipped away. Extensive ranchos became social and economic centers of California during the period of Mexican rule, which lasted until 1847. Until this time, European and European-American settlers to California accepted the Native people, worked alongside one another, and often intermarried (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009). This changed after the European-American invasion, and the admittance of California as the 31st state of the United States. Under U.S. rule, settlers who came to California were generally intolerant of Indigenous peoples and treated them as lower forms of humanity (Jurmain & McCawley, 2009). Race and ethnicity became hierarchical in society within the new state of California, and Indigenous people were subjugated to the lower tiers by a culture that valued lighter skin and European culture. This is the state of affairs that has continued on into the 21st century to some degree and set the tone for the mass migrations to come.

New Arrivals from the South

Immigration to California from further south in Mexico and other parts of what came to be called Latin America, was gradual and steady throughout the remainder of the 19th century and the first 30-40 years of the 20th century. In the mid 1900s, the growth of the Hispanic or Latino population to the U.S. intensified exponentially. In 1960, Latinos made up about 3% of the US population at 6 million, and in recent years has grown to over 17% of the total population, or 54 million, the vast majority of Mexican heritage (US Census, 2010). This demographic change has had a huge impact on U.S. society, and this dramatic population shift has resulted in political and cultural

controversy and division (Gutiérrez, 2016). The history of immigration of Latinos to the US is complex and has its roots in economic developments at the state, national, and global levels, as well as considerations around foreign policy, military intervention, and law enforcement efforts (Gutiérrez, 2016). Migration to the U.S. from Mexico and other Latin American nations began early in the history of the United States, at a time when the federal government had singular aspirations of expanding its economic and territorial control from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in February near Mexico City, ending the U.S. Mexican war. In this agreement, Mexico was forced to give away its territory, including the regions now known as the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. The agreement also offered U.S. citizenship to the estimated 100,000 Mexican citizens who lived in those areas. The need for labor began to increase in the late 1800s, and restrictions on Asian immigrants, who had provided most of the unskilled labor up to this point in the West, became more stringent. Increased demands for labor in agriculture, mining, and construction provided new incentives for potential migrants from Mexico (Gutiérrez, 2016). The extension of the railroad, especially, required a huge influx of workers, and so the migration began in earnest.

Conditions leading to the Mexican Revolution in 1910 provided further incentive for migrants to head north to the U.S. This trend continued for the first part of the new century and estimates from U.S. and Mexican census data from 1900 indicate that around 100,000 Mexican citizens were living in the U.S.; there were 220,000 in 1910, and as many as 478,000 in 1920. By the start of the Great Depression, there were an estimated 639,000 Mexican nationals residing in the U.S., and along with descendants of those who stayed at the time of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the number of Hispanic or Latino residents surged to about 1.5 million (Gutiérrez, 2016). In the 1930s, there was a reverse trend for a short period of time, and between 350,000 and 500,000 migrants were compelled to return to Mexico. Northern migration started again during World War

II, as the thousands of soldiers fighting in Europe created a shortage of labor at home. Recognizing this need, the federal government initiated a guest worker program in collaboration with the Mexican government, with the signing of the Emergency Farm Labor Agreement in 1942 (Gutiérrez, 2016). This sanctioned migration for purposes of providing a flexible source of labor became known as the *Bracero* program, which resulted in long-term impacts for the future of Mexican immigration to the U.S. Even after the termination of the guest worker program in 1964, industries became dependent on the consistent source of labor. Communication channels were established during this period between employers and workers, and family ties and other relationships across national borders were created and maintained. These conditions, along with continued state and federal policies provided incentives for the continuation of migration patterns. Because of these forces, along with the promise of improving economic realities, Mexican immigration steadily increased in intensity until the 1990s.

Depending on the year of arrival and manner in which migration was undertaken, many new migrants where considered to be unauthorized to live and work in the U.S. Indigenous peoples from Mexico and other parts of Latin America were counted for the first time in 2010 in the census (U.S. Census, 2011). Towards the end of the 20th century, the trend of population movement began to change somewhat, and another demographic shift began. Once again, regional, national, and global forces contributed to the mass migration of the Indigenous peoples of Mexico. In addition, forces that were to lead to the mass destruction of Indigenous languages and communities had already been at work for many years. Given this historical context, it is understandable that the promise of plentiful, well-paid work in California gave rise to the northern movement of Indigenous people from Mexico.

Zapotecs in Los Angeles

Los Angeles has been a primary destination for Zapotec immigrants, who have settled in multiple areas throughout the city, based primarily on their pueblo of origin (Rodriguez, 2009). The influx of Zapotec immigrants in recent years has contributed greatly to the cultural, artistic, and linguistic diversity of the city. In addition, with increasing numbers of students from Indigenous communities in Mexico attending local schools, new conditions have presented themselves, and have led to new challenges and considerations for educators and district leaders.

Zapotec communities in Los Angeles are transnational or *translocal* by nature, making them somewhat distinct from other Native American communities in the U.S. (Cruz-Manjarrez, 2013; Kearney, 2000). Zapotec enclaves in Los Angeles have maintained close ties with their pueblos in Oaxaca. Men and women residing in these ethnic communities regularly send monetary "remittances" to hometowns (Lopez, Escala-Rabadan, & Hinojosa-Ojeda, 2001; VanWey, Tucker, & McConnell, 2005). In addition to providing a way for migrants to maintain contact with home communities, this practice also provides a way for community members away from home to sustain a sense of identity and a sense of place while living in another context (VanWey, et al., 2005). According to several studies on the topic, Zapotec migrants to Los Angeles work primarily in service jobs, including restaurant work for men, and cleaning jobs for women (Klaver, 1999; López & Runsten, 2004).

The fact that tens of thousands of Zapotec families now reside in Los Angeles, with children enrolled in the public schools, presents educators with certain practical challenges and complex issues to contemplate (García et al., 2006). Some of the practical considerations may lead to increases or variations in school-based services and supports, which can be addressed through new policies or adaptations to existing practice. Other challenges are less tangible, and more difficult to address, such as examining attitudes and behaviors which may lead to a climate that does not promote the well-being of certain students (Torres & Noguera, 2008). First and foremost, effective

services to assess and support language acquisition and development are critical for students whose native language is Zapotec. Educators may debate the best way to assist children and their families to acquire local language skills, but it cannot be denied that this is a major barrier to success for new arrivals (Casanova et al., 2016). Another challenge for these families will likely be stress and anxiety due to immigration status if they are not yet authorized to live in the United States (Bacon, 2008). Though schools will not seek out this information from families, it will no doubt be a source of fear and distraction as they get settled in their new community and begin to interact with local school personnel (McGuire & Martin, 2007). Related to immigration status, the challenge of maintaining employment and a sufficient income to live in Los Angeles is especially difficult for parents who are undocumented. Yet another issue to consider is that Indigenous students from Mexico are likely to be culturally different from their mestizo Mexican and Mexican-American peers and should be understood as having diverse needs and perspectives (Vásquez, 2012). It is important for school officials and teachers to recognize this fact, since this awareness may lead to more positive perceptions and awareness, and the ability create classroom communities that support students with disparate cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Casanova et al., 2016). Moreover, Indigenous families who have arrived recently from Oaxaca will likely be from small rural pueblos, with societal norms that are very different from those of mestizo families and other families from urban areas in Mexico (Battiste, 2002; Vásquez, 2012). Furthermore, it will be important for staff and service providers to be aware that due to a long history of oppression and colonization, and also given current social dynamics within Mexico, Indigenous students and their families are likely to have experienced harmful levels of discrimination. More importantly, it is important for educators to be aware that these conditions are likely to be reproduced within the receiving community, are likely to continue to occur in the school setting and must be identified and interrupted by school staff (Casanova et al., 2016; Vásquez, 2012).

Finally, it is important to note that all of the difficulties inherent in being a recent arrival in a new land will, of course, apply to those immigrants with ties to Zapotec communities residing in Los Angeles (López & Runsten, 2004). It is important to note that Indigenous Mexican migrants often live in poverty and have low levels of education attainment, which results in a multitude of challenges (Casanova et al., 2016). In general, Indigenous students have historically been excluded from social, political, and economic advantages as compared to their non-Indigenous peers, and students from Oaxaca are no exception (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Vásquez, 2012). Zapotec-speaking families may face barriers to a smooth transition in a variety of domains, such as dealing with psychological trauma due to separation from children or other family members, among other challenges (McGuire & Martin, 2007; Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011).

Oaxacalifornia

Immigrants from Indigenous communities of Mexico have sought work outside their home territories at least since the 1960s. As was stated above, hundreds of thousands of migrants from Mixtec and Zapotec communities in Oaxaca have come to work and settle in the U.S., primarily in agriculture and service sector jobs. The large number of migrants working in Los Angeles while maintaining strong economic and family ties with their home communities necessitated the creation of organizations to facilitate the exchange of money and information between multiple contexts (Rivera-Salgado, 1999). A number of organizations emerged in response to this need, and Los Angeles became headquarters to several political, economic, and cultural centers supporting Indigenous Oaxacans living in California (Rivera-Salgado, 1999). While the existence of translocal organizations in California created by and for Indigenous Oaxacan migrants does not necessarily mean that relations between its members and their communities of origin are always positive, it does signal that economic, political, and cultural exchange are strongly encouraged (Robson, 2019). The Organización Regional de Oaxaca (ORO) started in 1988 and had as its purpose to "promote and

preserve Oaxacan culture," along with regional art and cuisine of the pueblos it represents (Rivera-Salgado, 1999). In addition, the organization facilitated the transfer of money back to the home communities, which has provided a huge influx of cash used to carry out public projects in Oaxaca. While ORO began as a coalition of hometown associations, it has more recently become the primary force behind the popular Guelaguezta festival in Southern California. By the late 1990s, ORO represented 12 Zapotec communities with approximately 30-40 members each (Rivera-Salgado, 1999). The organization also interfaces with Los Angeles police to assist in efforts to support residents from Oaxaca and other countries living in LA, and they even offer youth scholarships for college study (COFEM, 2020). While ORO is an organization primarily run by migrants from Zapotec communities, the Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional (FIOB) is a political entity created to serve members of multiple Indigenous groups from Oaxaca (Mercado, 2015; Rivera-Salgado, 1999). This organization has hosted political protests important to its members, such as the "Five Centuries of Resistance" protest in response to Columbus Day celebrating the "discovery" of the "new world." FIOB has also facilitated political organizing locally and across contexts and helps to forge a good relationship between the state governments of California and Oaxaca (Rivera-Salgado, 1999). Another important function of FIOB is the production of its publication, *El Tequio*, which serves to amplify the voice of Indigenous Oaxacans to a global audience (Mercado, 2015).

Over the decades, these transnational, translocal organizations have evolved in response to situational realities of the Indigenous migrants they serve. The 1990s brought increased awareness about Indigenous human and linguistic rights, and a growing activist movement in Mexico in the later part of the decade. These organizations, like the population they serve, are translocal through and through, and for this reason are unique when compared to organizations emerging the era predating this one, dominated by forces of globalization; they represent Indigenous peoples who effectively live in a context that is created from the confluence of multiple physical and

psychological spaces. *Oaxacalifornia* is a term which has been used to describe such a context, bridging multiple territories, histories, traditions, and political associations (Raquel Gutiérrez, 2010; Rivera-Salgado, 1999). It appears to be understood to express many of the myriad layers and dimensions which exist within this translocality, a phenomenon born of the forces of migration and globalization (Appadurai, 1996; Robson, 2019). Oaxacalifornia is a complex concept, best explained by those whose lived experiences created it, in which artistic, linguistic, cultural, intellectual, and identity politics interact and travel across contexts, effectively in a state of continuous reinvention and transformation. Guelaguetza festivals, which have grown in popularity in recent years, take place in both California and Oaxaca each year. These festivals represent an appropriated or translocal variation of the Zapotec practice of guelaguetza, which is an Indigenous "sharing system of collaboration and exchange… from pre-Columbian and colonial times" that has continued to this day (Flores-Marcial, 2015, p. ii). Far from the traditional Indigenous "code of conduct" consisting of gift-giving (the original guelaguetza), labor (tequio), and service (cargos), the modern day Guelaguetza festivals are more of a reflection of the lived experiences of Indigenous migrants living in Oaxacalifornia (Chavez, 2013). Though not all communities are represented, and not all migrants learned their traditional dances growing up in Oaxaca, festival organizers encourage communal dances to be shared in the context of the festival (Chavez, 2013). While the Guelaguezta festival in Oaxaca is often criticized by Oaxaqueños as overly commercialized and created for tourists, the festivals of the same name in California are largely seen as culturally important for migrants seeking to demonstrate pride in Indigenous diversity and in Oaxacan identity (Chavez, 2013).

CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Several theoretical frameworks informed the design of the study presented and guided the research process at the outset. The frameworks I have selected to include in this dissertation reflect themes that were explored through the data collection process and used to inform the analysis of the data at all stages. The case study presented here was influenced by previous studies in human development, psychology, and anthropology. Theoretical frameworks that were influential at the inception of the study are in line with this background. The primary scholarship which informs the context and focus of this study center around micro processes at the level of the individual, and how interactions with other people and the environment impact the life experiences of those individuals. For the purposes of the study presented here, I assert that such interactions have a significant impact on the academic and social success of students. Given this stance, the first premise asserted is that there exists a hierarchy of needs which impacts human functioning and well-being, and that a sense of belonging is an important factor in that hierarchy. Next, it is assumed that within a pluralistic society, it is important that diverse cultural groups maintain a sense that they belong and form an integral part of the society in which they reside. It follows that educators are in a unique position to lay a strong foundation for this pluralistic stance, by means of culturally responsive teaching. Building upon this approach to honoring and upholding a multicultural society and providing opportunities for diverse groups of students to "see" themselves in the curriculum, a theory of social identity becomes an important factor of life within pluralistic societies. Microaggressions theory provides us with a framework to discuss how interactions at the micro level within a diverse society can involve dynamics of power and privilege, with a dominant group

denying power to diverse, marginalized groups. Furthermore, an environmental systems theory provides a useful framework by which the individual can be viewed as interacting within a complex, multi-layered context, which impacts all aspects of human development. Importantly, this theory also maintains that the individual retains agency and the ability to have an impact on the context within which they find themselves.

School Belonging

One theoretical framework that informs this work is one which asserts that a sense of belonging at school is fundamental to every student's academic and social success. Within most U.S. public schools, the dominant, European-American, middle-class perspective is well represented and is consistently affirmed for its core values and beneficial impacts on students. Students who come from families claiming a similar cultural background to that which is dominant in the school setting, are assumed to experience fewer discontinuities between norms and expectations at home and at school (Noguera, 2003). It is often taken for granted by students and staff from the dominant culture that these settings should constitute complementary parts of a given student's formative experiences. However, a closer look at students and families who do not come from backgrounds which facilitate connections to the culture of our public schools would indicate that home-school discontinuities could present an additional barrier to success for some students (Noguera, 2003).

According to Goodenow and Grady (1993), the concept of "school belonging" was first discovered in the early 1990s to have a positive impact on factors associated with improved academic and social outcomes for students, especially for those from marginalized groups and consequently more vulnerable (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). School belonging has been described as "the level of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief students have in the value of their school" (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007, in APA Report 2012, p. 57). A sense of belonging at school was found to be positively correlated with a number of "motivation-related" measures such as having

expectations for success, a belief in the value of schoolwork, a desire to do well at school, and to put forth a good effort (Goodenow & Grady, 1993).

The concept of school belonging was derived in part from the classic theory and corresponding five-tiered model introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943, which posited that all human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. In this model, Maslow indicates a need for love and belonging at the third tier, and one must be satisfied in order to move on towards "self-actualization" (Maslow, 1943). The theory was revisited in the 1990s and applied to the educational context specifically with regard to motivation attainment and achievement. Scholars have reframed the classic theory to address diversity and inclusion in the classroom (Kunc, 1992). A sense of belonging as it pertains to schooling has also been associated with increased engagement and higher levels of achievement and is seen by some researchers as critical to school success during the critical adolescent years of high school (Green, Emery, Sanders, & Anderman, 2016; Neel & Fuligni, 2013). In fact, a number of studies have found that simply the *perception*s of belonging at school may be result in greater resilience and school success in middle school and beyond (Green et al., 2016). According to Green et al., (2016) there are distinct types of belonging experienced by secondary students, and that social and academic forms of belonging are not always experienced at the same time (Green et al., 2016). A sense of social belonging was influenced by the level of social acceptance perceived by the student within the school community as a whole, and with experiences (or lack thereof) of incidents like bullying. On the other hand, a sense of academic belonging resulted from experiences such as support and encouragement from teachers, high expectations, opportunities for academic growth, and having a peer group to share academic achievements (Green et al., 2016)

Closely related to school belonging, is the sense of comfort, and the feeling of being "at home" when at school that is brought about as a result of positive interactions and relationships

between students and teachers. Such interactions have been linked to more successful school adjustment, especially for immigrant students (Portes & Rumbaut, 2007). Some studies have shown that such positive interactions lead to higher levels of engagement, participation, attendance, academic achievement, and improved mental health (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2011; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). Positive interactions and relationships at school can mitigate stressors inherent to navigating different home and school cultural contexts and can facilitate access to social connections within the receiving context. Actively involved and caring staff, who understand the challenges a student may be facing can provide advice to newly arrived students and their families and have a considerable impact on the successful integration into U.S. society. English Language Development teachers often act as a student's advisor and support person, taking on roles beyond the scope of teacher (Trickett, Rukhotskiy, Jeong, Genkova, Oberoi, Weinstein, & Delgado, 2012). For the purposes of the study presented here, a sense of belonging at school is assumed to be impactful on positive student outcomes, especially among students who are often made to feel foreign or "othered" through interactions with persons within the dominant culture.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Since the first days of European settlement in North America, history has been marked by struggle, first for the rights of Indigenous peoples and then of persons from other racial and ethnic groups, against the multiple injustices inflicted by the European colonizers and the European Americans who dominated the cultural landscape. However, this deeply-rooted racism and structural inequality has consistently been matched by the tremendous courage and resolve of everyday heroes. Through every era, there have been activist leaders who have fought in defense of the human rights of oppressed and marginalized peoples. Within academia, the late 1960s saw the creation of new university disciplines in ethnic and area studies, which were created in part to raise awareness and to provide a space for a resistance to the oppression experienced by people of color

in the United States (Talavera & Solorzano, in Banks, 2012). By the 1970s, within the field of education a number of researchers began to focus on what came to be known as multicultural education. This movement was started by African American scholars, primarily James Banks, who was one of the first to assert that "ethnic minority" students in the U.S. were not reaching their academic and social potential, and that educational environment within schools played a major role in perpetuating this problem (Banks, 1974). According to Banks (1974), cultural and ethnic diversity was not generally regarded as an asset within public school communities, and educational leaders did not address structural racism within the institution (Banks, 1974; Noguera, 2003). Several scholars went on to focus intensively on this area of research and made recommendations about how to integrate a multicultural approach to educational practice (Banks, 1974; Gay, 1977).

The 1990s brought a new level of interest in multicultural education, and some researchers began to focus on approaches to teaching that would be most effective for diverse students. While foundational ideas about how instruction might be adapted to allow diverse students to be more successful appeared as much as a decade prior, the approach did not gain traction until Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) coined the phrase, "Culturally Relevant Teaching." The original intent, according to the author was for teachers and teacher-educators to become more cognizant of the "cultural landscapes" of classrooms, and to begin to appreciate the assets all students brought to the table, rather than focusing on deficits (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2002). After only a few years, this idea whose time had come became a mainstay of progressive teacher education programs around the country. Though this groundbreaking work began as a way in which White teachers might begin to shift their practice in order to better support African American and other diverse students, it quickly gained popularity and a solid research base. The term changed slightly to include the word "pedagogy" instead of teaching, in order to indicate that associated activities such as planning and collaboration were necessary steps to any culturally relevant approach to instruction

(Ladson-Billings, 2014). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy evolved into a theoretical stance and approach to teaching that was meant to reach all students, regardless of background (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Around the same time, Geneva Gay (1995) made landmark contributions to the new paradigm and asset-focused approach to teaching, modifying the phrase and making it her own. In her approach, Culturally Responsive Teaching was described in detail, with recommended methods and strategies to ensure the success of marginalized students (Gay, 1995; Noguera, 2003).

These approaches to instruction and practice aimed to serve the needs of marginalized and vulnerable students and have continued to evolve and grow over recent decades. In her article published in 2002, Dr. Gay articulated three pillars to implement a successful approach to teaching that is also "culturally responsive." These included effective strategies to working with students from non-dominant contexts; appropriate content that is respectful, accurate, and inclusive; and the incorporation of the latest multicultural education research and practice (Gay, 2002). Tyrone Howard (2003) contributed to the conversation in one important way by positing critical reflection as a powerful means by which new teachers could acquire the skills required to implement a culturally relevant approach to instruction with a curriculum that is centered around issues of social justice (Howard, 2003). In 2012, another scholar and proponent of multicultural education, Django Paris, questioned whether the terms "relevant" and "responsive" continued to be sufficient in a changing world in which social justice centered teaching was gaining ground (Paris, 2012). He proposed an update to the terms Culturally Relevant or Responsive Pedagogies which would reflect the need to teach students about the systemic inequalities that reproduce the status quo and perpetuate barriers to success for many marginalized students (Paris, 2012; Noguera, 2003). This suggestion among academics was well received by educational researchers, including the pioneers in this area of study, and Paris' new terminology of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies is now commonly in use (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

According to an increasing number of education researchers, the focus on student deficits, a preference for English-only instruction, and dominant cultural norms and course content is not only reflective of societal inequities but can also be detrimental to the developing sense of self-concept and identity of young students (Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). Moreover, some state that the absence of accurate and respectful cultural representations in the curriculum puts Indigenous youth and other students from non-dominant backgrounds at a disadvantage (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Some studies suggest that a culturally responsive approach to instruction for students from marginalized communities may have a positive impact on academic and social emotional outcomes (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Additional contributions and iterations of the Culturally Relevant/Responsive/Sustaining Pedagogies were found in the literature, however, for the purposes of this study, the version of the theoretical framework which is most applicable to a racially and ethnically heterogeneous, urban school setting, is the terminology and meaning as reframed by Paris (2012). In terms of the study presented here, it is asserted at the outset that an approach to pedagogy which is culturally affirming within the high school setting would be more conducive to the healthy development of positive self-regard, a sense of belonging, and of racial and ethnic identities among students in the focus population. These in turn, would likely have a positive impact on student achievement and social/emotional functioning in school and beyond.

Microaggressions Theory

Microaggressions terminology was originally introduced by scholars based in New York, and the theory that developed as a result of the taxonomy view such incidents through a lens of how and why they occur within social and political contexts (Torino, Rivera, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Sue, 2018). Microaggressions have been defined as "derogatory slights or insults directed at a target person or persons who are members of an oppressed group" (Torino et al., 2018, p.3). Such

remarks and actions are thought to be rooted in the deep-seated assumptions and beliefs of individuals within the dominant culture (Solórzano & Perez Huber, 2012; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008). In terms of the study presented here, microaggressions theory is a framework from which the school setting is examined for the occurrences of such enactments of bias as well as for the impact such incidents may have on student academic achievement and social/emotional well-being. In applying microaggressions theory to educational settings, there are several assumptions which are regarded as foundational. The first is the assertion that structural racism and inequality has always existed in the U.S., and that this is evident within all of its institutions, including the education system (Noguera, 2008). The second is that microaggressions are pervasive for youth growing up in this society, and that such incidents adversely impact both students' academic performance and ability to maintain social and emotional wellness (Sue et al., 2008; Sue, 2010). Lastly, it is asserted that the dominant group is largely unaware of such affronts to students, and moreover, unaware of the structural nature of racism and inequality within our schools (Noguera, 2008; Sue, 2010).

Microaggressions in K-12 schools can take many forms and can impact many different students from different marginalized groups (Sue et al., 2008; Torino et al., 2018). Visual, verbal, and other microaggressions send out damaging messages to vulnerable youth, such as the implication that they lack intelligence, are foreign (and not welcome), are prone to crime, and deserve their place at the margins of society (Noguera, 2008; Sue et al., 2008; Yosso & García, 2010). Visual manifestations of racism in media, photos, or other images can have a powerful impact, especially on students of color (Keller & Galgay, 2010; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Sue et al., 2008; Sue, 2010). Nativist microaggressions aimed at both immigrants and non-immigrants can take the form of comments or actions that question a person's right to be here, emphasize their "otherness," or lack of belonging (Pérez Huber, 2011; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015).

With regard to Latinos specifically, studies have demonstrated that there are systematic "acts of disregard" towards this student population, which include disrespectful gestures, derogatory messages, stereotypical comments, and expressions of low expectations (Pérez Huber, 2011; Yosso & Garcia, 2010). Pedro Noguera (2008) further asserts that schools often perpetuate the "cycle of failure" for students from marginalized groups, as negative messaging, low expectations, and high rates of disciplinary action will almost certainly lead to negative outcomes (Noguera, 2008).

It is concerning to say the least that such experiences of overt and covert racism are a regular feature of growing up in the United States. For immigrants and students of color, such as many of the participants in this study, the cumulation of these effects is likely to take a toll (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2008). Multiple studies have shown that microaggressions and other acts of bias occur on a daily basis in the lives of many students, and this has been shown to adversely impact their ability to succeed and thrive in educational settings (Howard, 2008; Noguera, 2008; Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2012; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015; Sue et al., 2008). The pressures of racial and ethnic stereotypes begin early in life, and often occur within the school setting, which is supposed to be a place of safety, support, and acceptance. The experiences of students from marginalized communities in U.S. society range from dangerous and deadly, to less severe and more covert but still damaging forms of racism and daily acts of bias (Howard, 2008; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solórzano & Perez Huber, 2012; Sue, 2010;). Microaggressions and other acts of bias are part of what can be characterized as a newer form of discrimination which is less overt and aggressive, harder to identify by observers, yet is still extremely harmful to the targeted individual (Sue, et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). According to researchers, a state of mind they have termed "racial battle fatigue" is experienced by many students of color, who grow weary of repeated microaggressions, and shines a light on how such incidents ultimately have damaging impacts

(Solorzano & Perez Huber, 2012). Microaggressions are especially concerning for children in the process of developing an identity of their own (Sue et al., 2008).

Sadly, the microaggressions which are inflicted on students, whether intentional or not, are often perpetrated by well-meaning White middle-class teachers, and are frequently subtle, layered, and based on a student's race, ethnicity, phenotype, class, sexuality, language, gender, immigration status, accent, or surname. Classroom teachers who demonstrate racial and other types of discrimination and bias can have lasting effects on the person targeted by such comments or actions. This is compounded by the fact that in K-12 schools, there appears to be a general lack of awareness and willingness to bring about needed change (Noguera, 2008). This is how many Americans of European descent unknowingly perpetuate and reproduce the status quo.

The California Department of Education reports that there were 307,470 public school teachers during the 2019-2020 academic school year and the majority by far identify as White (61%), with 21% identifying as "Hispanic or Latino," and .5% as "American Indian or Alaska Native." On the other hand, the student population for the same year, was reported as being 22% White not Hispanic, 55% "Hispanic or Latino," and .5% "American Indian or Alaska Native" (Data Reporting Office/CDE website, 2020). This is not to suggest that all White teachers are discriminatory, however, it stands to reason that a group which has not historically been subjected by racial bias and discrimination will be somewhat less aware of their own propensity to engage in such enactments of bias in the classroom, whether they are conscious or not. A lack of cultural competence and racial awareness may lead teachers to both overt and inadvertent acts of bias and discrimination which are damaging to the student who is the receiver of such comments or actions (Sue et al., 2008). One way that teachers can discredit students of color, or students from other cultural contexts is by maintaining the belief in her heart and mind that the Western way to think and convey knowledge is the best and only way to demonstrate knowledge. This is highly relevant to the topic of study

presented here, since Indigenous students may have non-Western worldviews, and practice traditions that are unknown or devalued in Western contexts (Battiste, 2002; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

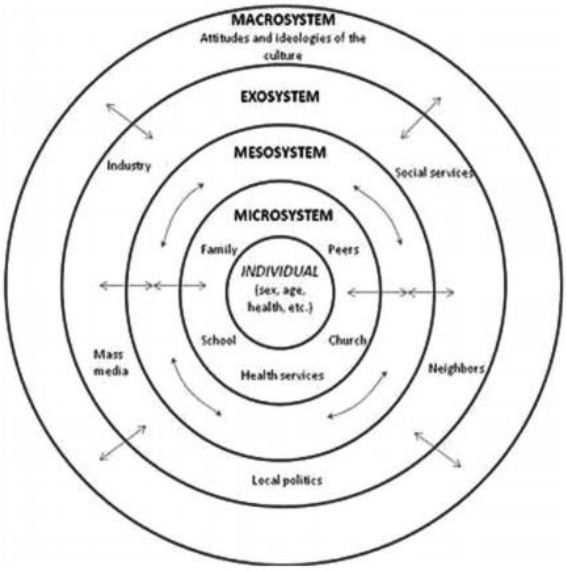
Ecological Systems Theory

This theoretical framework was first introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s and was originally formulated for the field of human development. From the perspective of this framework, the developing person is viewed as a result of dynamic interactions between the self and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989). The model representing this framework is one that consists of a number of nested concentric levels, with the individual and its immediate environment (e.g., family, classroom, etc.) located at the center (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989). The layered levels surrounding the central focus expand outwards and the circles of influence become larger and are meant to represent important factors impacting the physical and psychological characteristics of the individual. What is most salient about this theoretical frame but is not necessarily made clear by the visualization of the theoretical model, is that each level represents not only a certain environmental factor of influence, but also a dynamic process of "reciprocal biopsychological" interactions between self and the contexts within which the individual is living and growing (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989). This means that this theoretical stance takes into account the physical world that surrounds a developing child, but also the impact s/he has on the environment and, especially, the evolving perceptions the individual has about the context within which they find themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989). Moreover, the structure of the levels and the resulting interactions that occur in and around them can be altered and manipulated, so as to have a direct impact on the perceptions and behaviors of the central individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989). This framework would appear to provide scholars with a useful lens from which they can view the complex worlds of students from diverse backgrounds and begin to explore and comprehend the myriad factors

impacting their daily lives.

The theory continued to evolve across Bronfenbrenner's lifetime, and with the input of scholars from a variety of disciplines. By the mid 1990s, a "mature" version of the framework was used by many scholars writing about children and the processes impacting their development, though not always capturing the original intent of the author (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). As with other powerful theories whose time had come, this one was cited in the work of scholars who used an earlier, less evolved version of the model which focused mainly on the environment rather than the individual and his/her impact on such (Darling, 2007; Tudge et al., 2009). As stated above, and for the purposes of the study presented here, it is important that an understanding of this theoretical stance include the critical role of the individual in co-creating his or her experience through a complex process of interaction with the environment. This is vital to the use of this framework, since this revised understanding ascribes a degree of agency to the individual who is the central focus of the model (Darling, 2007; Trudge et al., 2009). The level surrounding the individual is called the microsystem, which contains the person's family, school, and neighborhood. The next levels are the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem, which contain descriptions of increasingly expansive and less direct factors impacting the individual, however, not necessarily less critical or influential to their life chances (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Darling, 2007). Scholars have more recently presented revisions to the model, including at least one group of researchers who assert that for culturally diverse individuals especially, what is known as the influence of "culture" could more accurately be placed at the microsystem level than at the macrosystem level (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Vega-Molina, & García Coll, 2017).

Figure 5. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model



source: Bronfenbrenner, 1977 in Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017

An ecological systems approach in research has often been used by scholars focused on various phenomena around the process of immigration and assimilation as a way to portray the multiple influences impacting children and youth developing in this context. According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), "Immigrant youth do not develop in a vacuum, but rather through a multiplicity of overlapping ecological contexts" (Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010, p. 16). An ecological systems approach allows immigration researchers to make meaning of complex factors affecting the immigration experiences of students and their families (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Onaga, 2010; Suárez Orozco et al., 2010). The model is uniquely suited to examine and describe the realities faced by students from immigrant families - both facilitators and the many challenges - within a framework that allows for the complexity and dynamic nature of the multiple contexts that these students are functioning in (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). For the purposes of this study, all participants are from families who at some point in the recent past choose to immigrate to the U.S.

and have settled in Los Angeles. Whether they arrived within the last year with their parents, were born in the U.S. and schooled primarily in Mexico, or born here of Mexican-born parents, all have multiple contexts they must navigate. An ecological systems perspective is assumed for the purposes of this study and stands as a point of departure for the conversation about experiences of Oaxacan youth attending school in Los Angeles.

Segmented Assimilation and New Immigration

Another theoretical framework informing this work is built upon Alba's Straight Line Assimilation theory (Alba & Nee, 1997). Straight Line Assimilation is the idea of the "melting pot," in which the experience of an immigrant in a new land basically proceeds in a linear fashion. The man or woman arrives in his/her newly adopted country, full of hope, ready to work hard and assimilate into the new culture. As the years pass, the newcomer lives and works, learns the dominant language, and has a family. The children from this family are born citizens and typically become more educated and successful financially, surpassing the education level and wealth of their immigrant parents (Alba & Nee, 1997). However, some scholars in the field have argued that this relatively predictable trajectory is primarily reserved for those (im)migrating from Europe (Portes & Zhou, 1993). According to the new theory set forth by Portes and Zhou (1993), if the individual arriving in the U.S. is a person of color, this sequence of events does not proceed in such a linear fashion. Segmented Assimilation is a theory that promotes the idea that immigrants constructed as having a racial identity other than White are more likely to encounter obstacles along the way, regardless of their eagerness to work hard to achieve their dreams, just as other (im)migrants (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Proponents of Segmented Assimilation further contend that if the recent arrival happens to speak a native language other than English, the individual will likely encounter discrimination and barriers to access of the opportunity structure. According to this frame, the degree to which an individual will be able to surmount obstacles in their path will largely depend on

the skills and abilities they have brought with them from their home country. In addition, desirable factors, or *facilitators* that are in place in their new context will also place a critical role in their success (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2009). These two perspectives on the trajectory of experiences faced by new (im)migrants to the U.S. form the basis for an important distinction that contextualizes the study presented here.

Finally, the period known as the so-called *new immigration* has certain distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from other eras of immigration in U.S. history. The new immigration referred to commonly in the literature consists of all immigration that occurred to the U.S. after 1965 (Portes & Zhou 1993). One factor that makes this newer group of arrivals so different from previous waves of immigration to the U.S. is that approximately 85% of the persons arriving with intention to settle in the U.S. since 1965 have been people of color. Some of these new Americans are highly educated, and some are not, depending on the circumstances they bring with them as a result of living in their home country. As an increasingly large body of research demonstrates, the immigration experience is qualitatively different based on the racial and ethnic background of the new arrivals (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). Some scholars contend that a combination of the two above perspectives form the basis for much of the research about immigration today, and there appears to be a growing realization that a multitude of factors impact immigration and assimilation experiences at every stage of the process. Carola Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010) further identified five distinct achievement trajectories reported by new immigrants to the U.S. These descriptive domains operate at the level of the individual, and include *low achievers*, *improvers*, *slow decliners*, *precipitous decliners*, and *high achievers* (Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, Bang, Pakes, O'Connor, & Rhodes, 2010). The domain that best describes the experience of the individual who has recently arrived in the U.S. can be extremely impactful in terms of their future life chances in the new context.

The theoretical frameworks described here represent several bodies of work that have been influential during the course of my career and my doctoral studies. These frameworks, among others, have been important in framing my stance as an educator and researcher, and have impacted every stage of this case study, from the inception of the study design and the data collection process, to the analysis of the data. The theoretical frameworks which are included here will be used to illuminate the data reported in the findings, to make comparisons, and to draw conclusions in the discussion that follows.

Study Terminology

Some of the words, phrases, and descriptive mechanics used throughout this dissertation were chosen intentionally over other, possibly more common ones due the particular nuances in meaning they convey. The terminology was chosen to align as closely as possible with the assertions and frameworks outlined above. In some cases, a lesser known term was selected for use instead of a more common one, with the express intention of calling attention to any perceived limitations of the more familiar phraseology. In the sections that follow, I will detail my choices made in this regard to more clearly communicate my theoretical stance and inform the reader of the importance of these selections. This clarity should allow a more comprehensive understanding of the context and findings presented.

Translocality

The terms *translocal* and *translocality* are preferred, and will be used throughout this dissertation, instead of related terms in the literature such as *bilocal, transnational,* and *transborder*. The terms *translocal* and *translocality* more accurately represent the global and local dynamics of migration that affect both sending communities in Oaxaca and receiving communities in the United States (Robson, 2019). Furthermore, these terms also project an experience that is complex and influenced by multiple cultural and linguistic physical and psychological spaces, rather than implying the binary

focused term, bilocal. They also build upon the definition proposed by Stephen (2007): "movement of place-specific culture, institutions, people, knowledge, and resources within several local sites and across borders—national and otherwise" (Stephen, 2007, p. 65). Finally, and perhaps more importantly, given the fact that the persons at the center of this inquiry are indigenous individuals connected to Indigenous communities of the Americas, the terms *translocal* and *translocality* deemphasize the presence of national borders and nation-states, and preference the experiences of physical and psychological spaces which transcend such constructs, which postdate the cultures and traditions of Indigenous communities which span millennia (Weeber, 2020). These terms convey a sense of connections and relationships that extend beyond the pueblos and cities that shape the experiences of Indigenous migrants from Oaxaca and include the varied sociopolitical factors that impact their lived experiences.

Indigenous with a capital "I"

Many scholars who center their work around social justice issues and issues facing Indigenous communities are choosing to capitalize the "I" in Indigenous. In recent decades, Indigenous activism has reshaped the understandings of the peoples who maintain thousands of years of connection to their ancestral lands. These communities have been adversely impacted by global economic policies, resulting in many cases in large scale displacement and decimation from migration and depopulation (Robson, 2019; Weeber, 2020). The United Nations has adopted the term "Indigenous" to refer to these Native peoples, of the First Nations, of the Indigenous communities of the Americas and beyond (Weeber, 2020). Many such communities have existed on the same land for millennia, practicing the same traditions, speaking Indigenous languages, and living intellectual and spiritual lives distinct from those forced upon them after the arrival of the Europeans (Weeber, 2020). The capital "I" signals respect for and recognition of what differentiates the history and experiences of these communities and peoples from those of other persons who may

have been born in this land, but who do not share the same history of invasion, subjugation and trauma, or domination and exploitation (Weeber, 2020). The Indigenous peoples of the Americas have gained the world's attention and are in the process of reclaiming their human and linguistic rights and the sovereignty of their Nations. The term Indigenous is used as a way to communicate solidarity with these communities and convey the recognition of these histories and struggles.

First Nations, Native or Indigenous Communities

The use of the terms *First Nations, Native communities,* and *Indigenous communities* are also intentional and are used throughout this written work. These phrases were chosen for similar reasons as stated above, in the sense that they are both intended to recognize the positionality of the Native peoples of the Americas as the original inhabitants of these lands, their ongoing struggles to sustain and revitalize Indigenous languages and traditions, and the continuous fight for self-determination and recognition as sovereign nations. *First Nations* tends to be a phrase used primarily in the English language literature, referring primarily to politically defined territories within the U.S. and Canada. The phrases *Native communities* and *Indigenous communities* interchangeably, stand in as derivations of the Spanish *comunidades originarias*, a phrase used across academic work referring to the many Indigenous peoples of Latin America.

Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism

Cultural pluralism and *multiculturalism* are phrases with slightly different connotations depending on academic field and region of study. For the purposes of this work, these terms are primarily used in reference to the sociopolitical context within which diverse students find themselves. The term multiculturalism has also been mentioned as it pertains to the field of education, which should be understood to indicate the pedagogical movement which resulted in an approach to culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching. In either sense, the term can be understood to signify a reference to the "politics of difference and the emerging social struggles over

racialized, gendered, and classist societies" (Torres, 1998, p. 175). However, multiculturalism as a sociopolitical movement necessitates the inclusion of a discussion about identity and intersectionality. In fact, according to Torres (1998), it is impossible to remove the concept of identity and citizenship from any discussion about the state. This is because the goals of a system of education which serves to produce the model citizen for any given state will evolve and be redefined over time (Torres, 1998).

In the past, the well-known metaphor of the "melting pot" as the visualized ideal for a citizenry in the United States was seared into the consciousness of many Americans (Butera, 2001). This concept is rooted in a vision of the U.S. as a nation of diverse peoples, from all parts of the world, coming together to assimilate under one new cultural paradigm, with all of the differences melting together to make one new whole. However, since the era of New Immigration, this notion has revealed itself to be a melting pot that apparently preferences European "difference" to the exclusion of other forms of racial and ethnic diversity. Butera (2001) lays out the evolution of these terms, from the romanticized view of the process of assimilation, to a society which is represented more accurately as a mosaic (or a "salad" comprised of diverse components), with all of its diverse citizens able to contribute equally to a whole (and, by implication, esthetically pleasing) work of art, while also maintaining their characteristic differences. This conceptual frame is exemplified by the term *cultural pluralism* in the literature. Nonetheless, over time this idea was found to have some serious limitations as well (Butera, 2001). In this vision for a society, the propensity to be identified mainly by one's race/ethnicity is intensified, and the deleterious effects of a social hierarchy based on race, ethnicity, and social class becomes inevitable. However, multiculturalism as a social movement, though not without some limitations of its own, is an approach which seeks to improve upon prior frameworks by rejecting the hierarchy of race, ethnicity, and social class, in favor of a society which values the cultural capital of all of its citizens. A multicultural vision for the United

States includes one that denies the inevitability of assimilation, and instead holds up an ideal for society in which individuals from a variety of racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds can continue to celebrate their differences, while ascribing to a set of commonly held norms for citizenship that define what it means to be a citizen (Butera, 2001; Torres, 1998).

CHAPTER IV: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

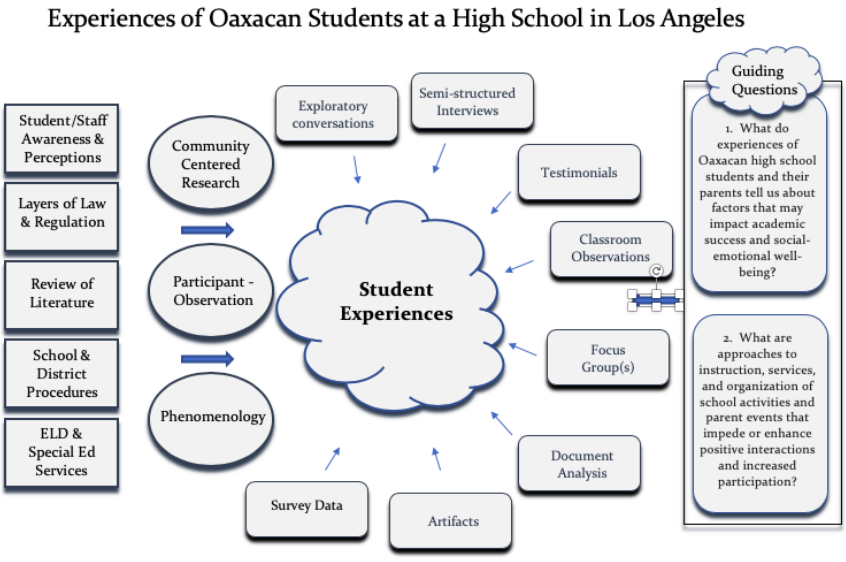
Ethnographic-Style Case Study

The conceptualization of the study developed after an initial review of relevant literature, having an introductory conversation with a potential participant, engaging in orientation activities, and taking two exploratory trips to Mexico. As the research process progressed, new thoughts and decisions were recorded about changes to the research design and procedures, by documenting such developments in analytic memos, and were ultimately added to the data corpus. Several reasons guided the decision to select a case study design for this investigation. Given that the study took place at one comprehensive high school in Los Angeles, it made sense that this setting would be the designated unit of analysis. Within this one school, many types of data were gathered, with the goal of creating a holistic picture of the setting, and to provide detailed information about the questions of interest. The case study design was also deemed as most appropriate since this study was designed to be exploratory in nature, with the primary objectives of starting a conversation about factors impacting student success, to build theory, and formulate additional questions based on the experiences one particular student group. Moreover, given that this case study will be exploratory by design, the information and insights gained were not conceived as a means by which we may draw conclusions about all Indigenous Mexican students, in any public school, in Los Angeles or elsewhere. Finally, an overarching goal of this case study, as with other investigations which share this design, is to use the information gathered in an effort to develop questions that may be further tried and tested in future studies (Maxwell, 2013).

The case study presented here can also be described primarily as an ethnography, though not all aspects of the investigation involved ethnographic techniques. In conducting the fieldwork for the study presented here, it is true that I was engaged across an entire academic year with a group of students and school professionals in a number of ways and in a variety of contexts. I had an official

role at the school from which I was able to interact with study participants (and others at the school) in both formal and informal ways, while still being able to gather important study data. Furthermore, in this participant-observer role, I engaged in a number of activities which were social and/or extracurricular, with students, staff, and families. In addition, I did consider myself an observer, as an "outsider looking in," seeking to report aspects of both the etic and emic perspectives of both researcher and participants, respectively. However, I did also conduct formal interviews and administered a student survey, which yielded a fair amount of quantitative data. A significant amount of quantitative data was also gathered from publicly-available sources such as census information and state statistics on student achievement. For these reasons, I have described the investigation presented here as an *ethnographic-style* case study.

Figure 6. Case Study Conceptual model



Qualitative and Phenomenological

The decision to engage in this inquiry using a primarily qualitative approach was intentional and was deemed not only as the most appropriate for this particular study design, but also the best way to respond to the research questions posed. It was determined that questions such as those

devised at the start of this investigation, which have sought to explore rather than to compare, would be most appropriately addressed through qualitative methods (Maxwell, 2013). According to Maxwell (2013), a qualitative approach best assists the researcher to see the world in terms as a series of contextual situations and interactions, to make connections, and to explain how factors may be related. Moreover, a qualitative approach employs inductive, or *ground-up* reasoning, and encourages the researcher to focus on specific contexts or populations. This allows for themes and patterns to reveal themselves, rather than to be deduced through the process of comparing data from a large sample and making claims with the intent of generalizing them (Maxwell, 2013). However, it is important to note that this particular study was also structured, with a general plan for data collection and analysis, though with enough flexibility as to allow for an openness to new insights and understanding. Bazeley (2013) uses the phrase *planned flexibility* to describe such an approach to the process of qualitative research (Bazeley, 2013).

Furthermore, the design, data collection and analysis employed in this study were informed by the qualitative approach known as phenomenology, with visual and verbal data used in an effort to comprehend the meanings made of experiences by the participants. Semi-structured, phenomenological interviews were employed as a means to seek to understand and represent the perspectives offered by individual participants about their lived experiences (Bazeley, 2013; Mertens, 2014). This approach to the research process allowed me to explore the meanings each participant has given to subjective experiences they conveyed (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). The primary focus was on the interpretations of a certain group or community of various phenomena, based on their particular ways of knowing and viewing the world. Every effort was made throughout the study, to accurately represent the voices of participants, and to consider multiple meanings based in their experiences and perceptions. To do this, the study design featured an approach to data analysis that was collaborative, with data analyzed and interpreted from several perspectives. There were also

opportunities for participants and researcher to revisit and clarify data collected during interviews, conversations, and observations, so as to improve the likelihood of accuracy of intention of meaning. Finally, presentations of findings include verbatim narratives of participants, artifacts, and work samples, as testimonials to their experiences in their own words, and from their own perspectives.

Community-Centered Approach

This study utilized an approach to research which this researcher has named *Community-Centered Research* (CCR), which is partially based on an approach known as Critical Indigenous Research Methodology (CIRM). This approach to research has been renamed in order to differentiate it from CIRM, which may best be reserved for Indigenous scholars and Indigenous communities. This approach was intentionally adapted to more accurately reflect the identity of the researcher as a non-Indigenous person, and to represent more clearly the context of racial and ethnic heterogeneity within which the study was conducted. For the purposes of this study, CCR is a process characterized by the following components: 1) an approach to research that maintains throughout each phase of the process, a focus on the needs of the community that is the subject of the investigation; 2) a process that is co-constructed and collaborative at every stage, and which seeks to include the perspectives of all stakeholders and which openly recognizes power dynamics among them; 3) an approach to research that is applied in nature, aiming to address and resolve everyday problems faced by a given community, and which results in a product or service that may be useful to the community; and finally, in terms of the case study presented here, 4) a methodology which attempts to adapt the tenets of *CIRM* and is employed by researchers who are outsiders to the Native communities which are germane to the study. Any similarity in name or meaning shared with another research methodology unknown to me is not intentional.

With respect to the second component above, as a non-Indigenous scholar, I deliberately chose to refrain from methodology which is intended for the investigations by Indigenous scholars as they engage in work with participants in Native communities of the Americas and elsewhere. I would also like to acknowledge that although these methodologies may share similar goals and approaches, as a non-Indigenous scholar, I assume an outsider position in all phases and aspects of the research process. This is why I have come to the conclusion that a CCR methodology, with CIRM as its guiding framework, would be more appropriate for this study and for other studies conducted by non-Indigenous scholars, but which maintain a focus on issues of central importance to Indigenous participants.

The CCR methodology described here was governed at all stages by many of the ideals described within Indigenous research methodologies, which are best characterized as approaches which engage in a research process based upon an understanding of and respect for the cultural values and norms for behavior of the people who are the focus of the research (Brayboy, Gough, Leonard, Roehl, and Solyom, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Moreton - Robinson, 2016). With respect to the case study presented here, there are two groups of participants who were of central interest to this research effort: students and their families who originate from Zapotec communities in Oaxaca, Mexico, and all other non-Indigenous Latino, and Euro-American, school-based staff who to varying degrees, represent and reproduce a form of the dominant U.S. culture as it is expressed in Los Angeles, California. Every effort was made to enter into conversations with participants from each of these groups, maintaining a stance of respect for their various backgrounds and cultures. As with CIRM, the CCR process was designed to be guided by such principles as respect, relationships, reciprocity, and responsibility (Brayboy et al., 2012; Peters, 2013). In considering reciprocity, for example, monetary and other incentives were offered for completion of all surveys and interviews, and instructional support services were offered to student-participants.

In addition, participants were advised that the study would give voice to personal stories and experiences, and a copy of the final report was offered to be provided at the conclusion of the dissertation. Finally, like the Indigenous research paradigm, CCR was characterized by a collaborative approach at all stages of the research process, from the study description, selection of participants, instructional and event support, project goals, and collection of data, and will be concluded with the delivery of a final product which it is hoped, will be beneficial to the community that was the focus of this inquiry.

CHAPTER V: METHODS & PROCEDURES

Case Study Procedures

The case study at the high school was conducted in several phases across the year-long approved study period, from June 2018 to June 2019. The first phase took place roughly between June and August 2018 and included a thorough review of school information and achievement data, school history and relevant events, document analysis of available materials, school and district websites, and an interview with the outgoing principal. The procedural phases of this case study remained fairly consistent with the plan submitted at the outset and approved by the IRB at UCLA and the LAUSD Research Unit, with some minor exceptions. The period of fieldwork reflects an amended/earlier start date which made it possible to interview the outgoing principal in June 2018 at the conclusion of his tenure at the high school. It was advantageous to have had the opportunity to meet with this administrator prior to his departure in order to discuss the project at length, and to obtain his feedback and suggestions to ensure its success. A second meeting was held both with the outgoing as well as the new incoming principals, during which the goals and phases of the study were explained in detail, and questions and concerns were articulated. This meeting also started the project off on a positive note and helped me to gain the support of both school leaders. In collaboration with these individuals, a chronological plan was established for the study, logistical needs and limitations were addressed, research goals were defined and expanded, and the proposed deliverable at the conclusion of the study was discussed.

Orientation to Fieldwork Site

During the summer prior to the start of fieldwork, it was necessary to submit a school volunteer form, get fingerprinted, and do a TB screening, which are required for all adults working at the school. In preparation for fall, preliminary research about the school itself was conducted, including a basic overview of the school's history, teacher and student demographics, and

information about the community in which it is located. In addition, the school website, and general documentation obtained from the district were assessed. An ongoing review of the literature continued during this time. With most of the foundational work complete, the fieldwork began the first week of school in August 2018. Though the new principal was extremely busy at the start of the year and was not able to meet that first week, due to having familiarized herself with the study back in June, I was given the green light to begin. I was asked to work with a staff member whose job it was to run the parent center and to provide outreach services to parents, who appeared to be excited to work with me on the project. I was also assigned to work in an English Language Development (ELD) classroom and was introduced promptly to the teacher I would be assisting.

Relationship Building

The first four months of school were spent identifying potential study participants as well as getting to know staff, students, parents and alumni. During this time, I engaged in a variety of relationship building activities such as starting to teach a small group in the classroom, acting as chaperone on school field trips, beginning after school tutoring, doing home visits, providing transportation and assistance (for one adult student), and engaging in off-campus activities such as college visits. Later in the year, I helped to organize a presentation to the leadership class on the origins of the Guelaguetza festival, in which one of the alumni came to speak to students and also participated in a focus group. Field notes were collected during the first three to four months of the study, and analytical notes were written at the conclusion of fieldwork days, though this practice was eventually stopped since it began to intrude upon my participation in the classroom.

Selection of Participants

The selection of participants for this case study was purposeful. Student participants were eligible if their parents, or grandparents originated from a Zapotec-speaking community in Oaxaca. Parent participants were eligible if they themselves or their parents originated from one of these

communities. Alumni participants were eligible if they, their parents or grandparents originated from one of these Native communities, and they attended the high school where the study was being conducted. Staff participants were eligible if they had contact on a regular basis with students with families from Zapotec-speaking communities of Oaxaca. Expert informants were eligible if they currently resided in a Zapotec-speaking community in Oaxaca, with knowledge of the traditions, languages, and current events impacting those communities.

Originally, the study plan called for the use of three strategies to identify potential participants. First, recruitment flyers with research team contact information were to be posted in areas of the school in which parents often congregated. Interested families would contact the PI or advisor for the study, and more information and consent forms would be provided. Second, the contents of a document known as the "home language survey," a short survey given to all families of newly enrolled students, was to be reviewed. On this survey, parents indicate the language spoken in the home, and once returned, this document is used to determine if new students should be assessed for their English language abilities, and possibly recommended for enrollment in English Language Development (ELD) courses. Families indicating that Zapotec was a language spoken in the home would be contacted with study information. Third, the student survey was to be administered during the first weeks of school and used as a recruitment tool. The final question on the survey asked if the respondent would like to become more involved with the study. Students indicating further interest would be contacted with additional study information as well.

The first method for selecting participants remained, with recruitment flyers posted in the parent center, and distributed during parent events and meetings. The parent liaison became the primary contact for recruitment calls, and she also reached out to families as well. This process resulted in a form of snowball sampling, with word of mouth being the primary method of identifying additional participants. The second strategy had to be eliminated, upon learning that

reviewing the home language surveys would constitute a FERPA (privacy) violation. The third strategy did not end up being practical, upon learning that the entire student body would have to obtain parent permission prior to administering the survey. Therefore, in the interest of time and ease of implementation, the student permission slips for the survey were only given to students in four ELD classrooms. The next part of the process involved identification of staff participants, which began as a sample of convenience. I was working in one ELD classroom, and so that teacher volunteered to participate within the first month of the study, followed by two additional ELD instructors. The ELD administrator agreed to participate as well due after a significant amount of interaction between us throughout the period of fieldwork, and rapport was established. As the study continued, other staff members who appeared to have information pertaining to the research questions were approached and recruited as participants. Only two individuals out of all of the staff approached ended up declining the offer to participate.

Once a core group of students, staff, and parents was identified, the informed consent process began. All participants were informed of the study purpose and procedures, and were given an opportunity to provide their consent, in written form. Parents from Zapotec communities in Oaxaca were also asked if we could offer their children an opportunity to participate in the study. Depending on their response, we then sought to obtain written permission for their child, and assent from students under 18 years of age. The process of recruiting additional participants and obtaining consent continued throughout the academic year. The administration of the student surveys was put off to a later time due to the time it took to obtain parent permission for each student. The staff survey was put off at first, then abandoned altogether when it became clear that the information in the survey could be more easily obtained from knowledgeable participants through the interview process. The table below offers a snapshot of the study participants.

Table 1.

Study participants

Pseudonym	Role	Method	Ethnicity	Gen	Pueblo of origin
Luis	student	interview	Oaxacan/ Mexican	2	Tlacolula de Matamoros
Angel	student	interview	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	1.5	San Bartolomé Quialana
Manuel	student	interview	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	1	San Miguel del Valle
Ms. Ortega	staff/counselor	interview	Mexican	1.5	Los Angeles
Mr. Ruiz	staff/teacher	interview	Mexican-American	1.5	Los Angeles
Ms. Alber	staff/teacher	interview	Euro-American	-	Midwest
Ms. Morales	staff/admin	interview	Mexican-American	1.5	unknown
Ms. Delgado	staff/counselor	interview	Mexican-American	1	unknown
Mr. Alonso	parent	interview	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	1	unknown
Ms. Romero	parent	interview	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	1	unknown
Ms. Navarro	alum	interview	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	1.5	Tlacolula de Matamoros
Mr. Ruiz	alum	interview	Mexican-American	1.5	Los Angeles
ELD 1/2 class	14 students	survey	various	-	-
ELD 3 class	11 students	survey	various	-	-
ELD 4 class	19 students	survey	various	-	-
Leadership	9 students	survey	various	-	-
Verónica	student (gr 12)	focus grp1	Oaxacan	2	
Josefina	student (gr 12)	focus grp1	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	2	
Patricia	student (gr 12)	focus grp1	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	2	
Leticia	student (gr 12)	focus grp1	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	2	
Teresa	student (gr 12)	focus grp2	Oaxacan	2	
Alicia	student (gr 12)	focus grp2	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	2	
David	expert informant	interview	Oaxacan/ Zapotec	-	San Pablo de Mitla

Data Collection Phase

The student focus groups, which were supposed to happen earlier in the year, with individual interviewees being selected as a result, ended up being the culminating data collection activity for the study. Soon after the first participants were recruited, and informed consent was obtained, the

interviews began. Some of the participants agreed to multiple interviews, with some sitting for just one session, while others were conducted across five or more sessions. Each of the interviews in these cases became progressively more personal, and I was able to acquire a deeper understanding of what the participants were trying to communicate. Teachers were offered a $40 gift card for their participation in the interview process, since per LAUSD requirements, the interviews were only able to take place after school hours. Every single teacher, counselor and other staff member declined these gift cards, despite repeated offers. Instead, the gift cards were enclosed in a final thank you card to each staff participant at the end of the school year. Classroom observations were conducted throughout the school year in the context of my work in multiple classrooms, across a variety of contexts. Artifacts such as student work samples, flyers, handouts, booklets, publications, photos of posters, etc. were also collected throughout the period of fieldwork, starting in the summer prior to the start of fieldwork.

Conclusion of Fieldwork

The period of fieldwork concluded after the origins of the Guelaguetza festival presentation for the senior leadership group, and the two focus groups were conducted and recorded on video. Gift cards valued at $25 were given to all focus group student-participants and thank you cards were given to all staff participants, including a gift card for those who participated in an after school interview. I held my final after school tutoring sessions the last week of school in June 2019, with three students I knew quite well by that point. I assisted these students in getting their questions answered about course selection for the following year, summer school class enrollment, and finished the year of fieldwork with the attendance at a final parent meeting and awards ceremony. Following the period of fieldwork, I continued the process of transcribing and translating interviews, importing all data collected into the software program, and beginning the process of conducting member checks. With the goal of engaging in the first efforts to disseminate the information that

was emerging from my year of fieldwork, I did a small presentation of my initial findings to a group of graduate students at UCLA. The process of data analysis, clarification through member checks and questions to expert informants has continued until the writing of this dissertation.

Data Collection Methods

The primary approach to data collection and analysis was qualitative and phenomenological. At all times, every effort was made to observe and record the actions and relationships within the context of naturalistic situations and activities, and to attempt to discover how participants made meaning of their experiences. As Maxwell (2013) laid out, a process orientation to the investigation makes it important to observe and interact with participants within the school context, striving to understand what was happening (and not happening), and to derive meaning from documents, records, interview, observation, focus group statements, images, artwork, and work samples (Maxwell, 2013). At all times it was the aim of the fieldwork portion of the project to record what was seen (and what was not seen). Through conversations and interviews with participants, I was able to make connections between observed phenomena and a thorough exploration of the contexts in which participants were operating (Maxwell, 2013). As with any study with a phenomenological orientation, the challenge of examining an eclectic array of data - from historical documents, surveys, interviews, observations, and focus groups - was to infer what the meanings of events and interactions were for students, parents, and staff. Then, the goal was to question the understandings of the phenomena observed, ask for clarification, revise, and re-revise, and to continue until a reasonable degree of assurance about the accuracy of the meanings expressed was obtained.

Direct Contact Methods

Both direct and indirect data collection strategies were employed across the course of this case study. Direct methods included exploratory conversations, participant-observation field notes, semi-structured interviews, recording of testimonials and narrative statements, classroom

observations, focus groups, member checks, and expert informant interviews. Direct data collection methods are explained in greater detail below.

Exploratory Conversations. These were conversations that took place during the course of the study, especially at the start of the period of fieldwork. Informal conversations took place frequently in the context of myself as participant-observer and were recorded in a notebook while in the field or recorded at the earliest convenience after leaving the school for the day. Information that appeared to be relevant to the study and research questions was recorded and used to formulate subsequent questions contained in the semi-structured interviews.

Participant-Observation/Fieldnotes. Throughout the course of the academic year in which the fieldwork for this case study took place, I acted as participant-observer, collecting fieldnotes in the course of working in classrooms and with school staff. I was in the role of an official volunteer at the school site, having been fingerprinted and tested for TB, and was assigned to work three days a week in an English Language Development classroom, including teaching a small group of students regularly. In addition, I provided multiple forms of support to one participant who was a special education student in the form of transportation to appointments and meetings on- and off-campus, and arranged a college visit for three students, which included one study participant, including transportation after school to the university site, and supervision of these students while visiting the school, with full knowledge of high school staff and written parent permission. On this visit, the students were able to observe two college classes, and speak with a college professor about programs available at the university. All of these experiences allowed me to get to know the student participants and develop the rapport necessary to have deeper conversations and explore themes emerging in the data.

Semi-Structured Interviews. The interviews conducted during the study were semi-structured and phenomenological, with an initial focus on asking consistent questions, and then

following up in an effort to explore the deeper meanings behind each response. The semi-structured interview format was chosen purposefully to address certain themes and ideas that arose during exploratory interviews. Student and teacher interviews took place during after-school hours, and monetary compensation or tutoring assistance was offered. Teachers were offered a gift card for their participation, though several did not accept the offer. The structured aspect of this approach to interviewing provided the interviewer with a consistent "guide" for questioning, to ensure that certain responses could be compared across participants and settings. This consistency is particularly useful in discovering themes and identifying differences in responses among individual participants (Maxwell, 2013). This interview method also facilitated the categorization and reduction of large amounts of data, and therefore made the organization of data and the subsequent analyses easier (Maxwell, 2013). In addition, the semi-structured interview format allowed the interviewer to remain open to all possible responses, and to explore themes of interest that arose in greater detail. Each interview contained a set of questions, with suggested follow-up questions. This format gave participants who wished to explain further or add something to their comments the opportunity to do so. In fact, within the context of the formalized questions, this was encouraged, and all such responses were recorded and added to the data corpus. The open-ended questions and follow-up questions were conducted with participants in a conversational style, which enabled them to more easily expand upon their thoughts and develop ideas as they responded (see Appendices I - M).

Testimonials and Narrative Statements. This case study includes data which records the *testimonials* and *narrative statements* of study participants. All interview data was recorded, transcribed, and translated, as appropriate, and so statements drawn from this data is verbatim, and are referred to as testimonials. Statements in Spanish are translated into English, and therefore not verbatim, however any Spanish language statements included in the study are presented in both languages. Narrative statements represent the emotions, values, and ideas described by the participants, but

were not recorded, and therefore cannot be written as verbatim statements. Such narrative statements were derived from accounts recorded in the fieldnotes taken by the researcher, as well as in analytical memos recorded, on the same day when possible, from memory. It is asserted here that both narrative statements and testimonials add texture to the report of findings from the data and bring the case study to life. The potential for bias is greater in a narrative statement than a testimonial. However, this threat to validity was reduced by performing member checks. Such narrative statements were confirmed with the study participants whose words formed the basis of the statement.

Classroom Observations. Many classrooms at the school were observed informally during the period of participant-observation. Formal observations were also conducted using a classroom observation protocol in the four classrooms that participated in the student survey (see Appendix N). In addition, one special education classroom was observed multiple times both informally and formally, as was needed to interact with one study participant who was a member of the class. The more formal observation protocol was largely adapted to a more informal approach to recording overall impressions and more detailed observations in classrooms within which I worked regularly. Formal observations were conducted in classrooms in which I spent little time. All classroom observations were necessarily conducted during the school day and consisted of a 30-40 minute focused observation during instruction time, and an approximately 10- to 15-minute conversation with the teacher before and/or after the observation. During this time, if it was possible and unobtrusive, I gathered student work and other artifacts.

Focus Groups. Two focus groups were conducted during this case study. The first focus group was informal, and took place following a presentation on Zapotec cultural traditions by an alumnus-participant to four high school students. The questions asked during this focus group session were formulated as a result of the information provided during the presentation, and from

the themes and ideas that arose spontaneously from the participants. During this focus group, I acted as a participant in the post-presentation conversation. The second focus group was more formal, with a set of questions that was developed ahead of time (see Appendix H) and was conducted with two high school students. All students who participated in the focus groups were high school seniors and part of a school leadership class. All students who participated in the focus groups identified themselves as having family ties to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca. Both focus groups were filmed, and the audio was recorded and transcribed.

Member Checks. In some cases, study participants were contacted again to follow up on certain statements made during the interview process, in order to confirm that the meanings made from these statements were captured accurately. Participants had the opportunity to make changes or add additional statements to explain the meanings they had intended to convey during their interview. Questions during follow up member check interviews varied depending on the type of information or clarification that was required.

Expert Informant Feedback. During the period of data analysis, a study participant with expert cultural and linguistic knowledge of the study population and context was sought out in order to assist in the understanding of the experiences of students and their families with ties to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca. This study participant was given a set of separately formulated interview questions in order to gain additional information around themes emerging during the data analysis phase (see Appendix P).

Indirect Methods

The researcher also engaged in indirect data collection during the course of the study. Indirect methods included collection of artifacts, document analysis, and data derived from the administration of a student survey. Indirect data collection methods are explained in greater detail below.

Artifacts. Several artifacts were gathered for analysis during the course of the study, including district and school publications, parent handouts, parent communications, student-made posters, student work samples, and flyers posted around the school. With staff permission, these items were collected from various offices around the school, from attendance at parent meetings and events, from classrooms, and from students themselves. Photos were taken of posters and flyers which were seen posted in hallways, classrooms, and offices throughout the school. Photos of students were rarely taken, but photos of the school campus as well as counseling and department offices were taken and stored with the rest of the data collected.

Document Analysis. School and district websites were viewed and analyzed, and notes were taken if relevant information pertaining to the study and research questions were observed. School and district publications, handouts, and flyers were also collected, and relevant information was recorded for further analysis.

Student Survey. As part of the case study, a student survey was also administered to three English Language Development (ELD) classes and one leadership class for a total of 53 survey respondents. Students in the four classes were given assent forms, and if they showed interest in taking the survey, a parent consent form was sent home in both English and Spanish. The students who returned the signed consent document were given a survey to complete in class. The survey was administered across 5 days by the classroom teachers and me. Most of the 38 questions on the survey required multiple choice responses; however, there were also some short answer questions posed. Important demographic data was obtained from the survey, as well as detailed information about students' perceptions, preferences, and experiences they have had at school (see appendix C).

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data in the form of audio and video recordings, field notes, analytic memos, documents, and artifacts were transcribed and translated (as needed) and uploaded to a secure file. All data was organized and coded, using a coding scheme I developed. The majority of the data collected was organized, coded, and analyzed through the use of NVivo qualitative analysis software. Themes were developed from a close analysis of multiple forms of data. Testimonials have been presented in their original format, with translation as needed, and personal narratives have been reported with the permission of participants. In some cases, member-checks were conducted to ensure accuracy of translation and interpreted meaning. Surveys were coded and analyzed for descriptive information and correlation of data using Excel and SPSS software. Analytic memos and field notes were included in the data corpus, as well as artifacts, videos, school and district documents, information appearing on relevant websites, and policy documents.

First-Cycle Coding. Once the period of field study neared its final stages, qualitative data analysis began in incremental steps, and an eclectic approach to coding the data was selected. Analysis of the data collected began with a certain degree of trial and error, after being translated, transcribed, and uploaded to the NVivo software. According to Saldaña (2016), this initial stage is somewhat experimental in nature for many qualitative researchers, during which different approaches are tried and accepted or rejected, prior to selecting final coding strategies destined to generate more substantive analysis (Saldaña, 2016). After this exploratory phase, the methods most appropriate to the study design and research questions were selected, and the large amount of data collected during the period of field work was scanned and organized. Elemental methods known as *Structural, In Vivo,* and *Concept Coding* were chosen as the foundation for the first-cycle coding process. First, the data corpus was divided into large chunks of text and sorted into fourteen

categories. Based on the target ideas embedded within the two study research questions, the categories provided the foundational structure for the coding process. These categories included identity development, interactions with the environment, belonging, culturally responsive teaching, discrimination, microaggressions, awareness, perceptions, factors impacting academic success, factors impacting social and emotional well-being, barriers to success, and facilitators to success.

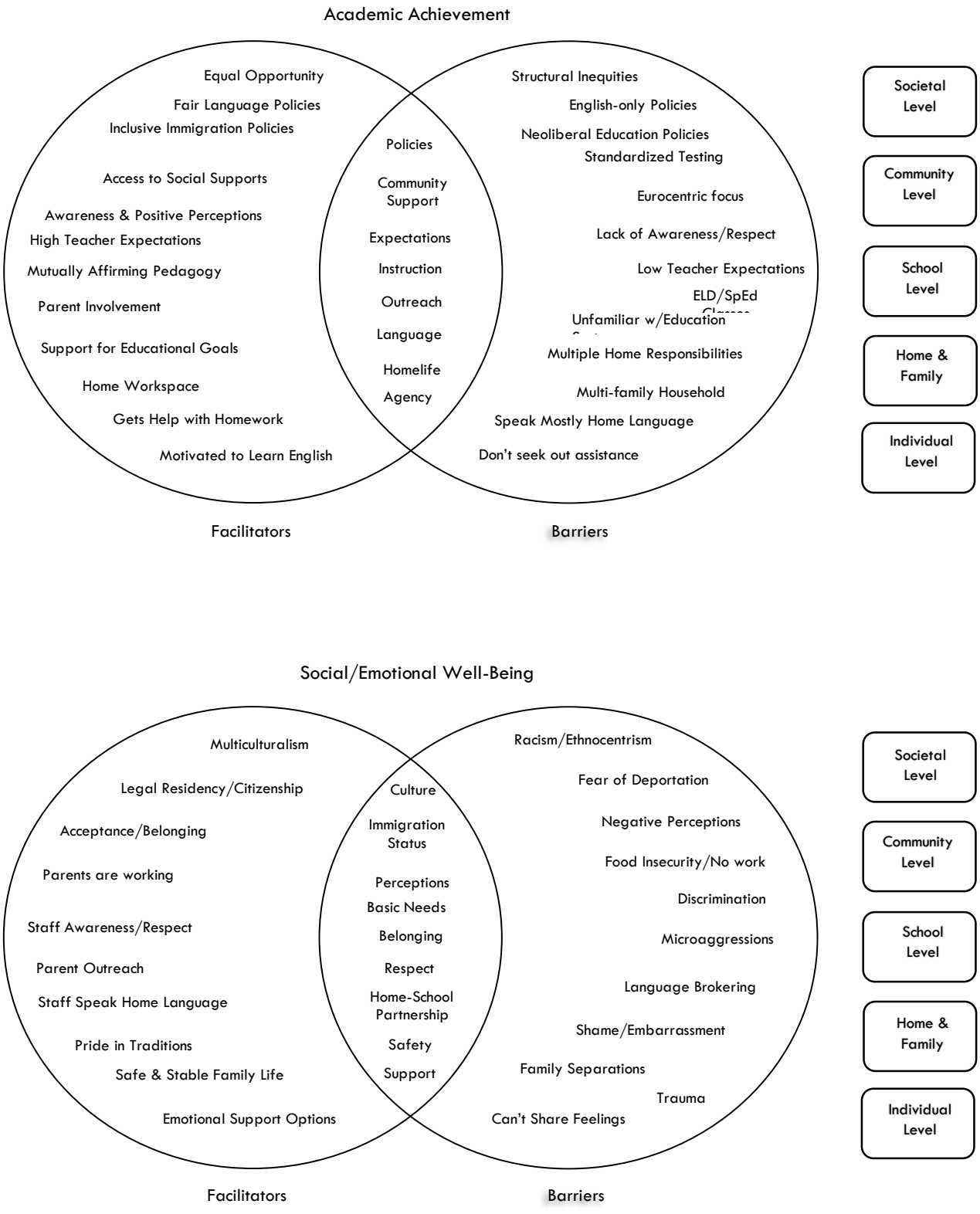
Following this first step, the data was reviewed again, and direct quotations within the text which pertained to any of the foundational categories were sorted using In Vivo Coding. The third and final elemental method, Concept Coding, was then employed, and it was during this last foundational step in the first-cycle coding process that the initial categories or "nodes" were renamed, moved around, collapsed, and/or expanded. These changes were carried out in order to create nodes which better reflected the developing concepts in the data, and to align more closely with Bronfenbrenner's original and adapted ecological systems models, incorporating the micro-, meso-, and macro-level influences impacting the lives of students. In addition, nodes for barriers and facilitators to success were copied and organized so that they would exist within both areas of school success, as outlined in the guiding research questions: academic achievement and social/emotional functioning. This duplicity of nodes necessitated the limited use of simultaneous coding, since some statements could be viewed as both a barrier and a facilitator of student success.

The entire data corpus was then reviewed again for each of two final first-cycle coding strategies. These were both affective methods, which were selected based on the case study design and the fact that data collection methods were primarily rooted in phenomenological and ethnographic approaches. The first of these affective methods is known as *Values Coding* and required a closer examination of text contained within each concept node, with the goal of focusing on each participant's statements as they pertained specifically to their "values, attitudes, and beliefs, and represent[ed] his or her perspectives or worldview" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 131). This was an

important strategy, given the fact that making meaning from the communicative efforts of study participants and the subsequent development of theory was critical to the goals of this case study. The final review of the data corpus during first-cycle coding was accomplished by the use of the affective method known as *Evaluation Coding,* which is a strategy used by qualitative researchers specifically to offer opinions and judgments about observed programs and policies (Saldaña, 2016). This final coding method was selected due to the evaluative nature of the second research question, which inquired into efforts made by the school and district to provide effective programming for culturally diverse students.

Operational Model. Following several rounds of first-cycle coding, an operational model was developed in order to visualize the newly emerging vision of how to organize and give meaning to the concepts and ideas taking shape from within the data. The preliminary structure of the nodes, and the first methods selected for categorizing and coding the data shifted significantly at this point in the process. Instead of sorting the data into nodes based on the research questions and the concepts they contained, the conclusion of the first-cycle round of coding allowed for a more diverse organization of concepts through the lens of the ecological systems model approach. The visualization enabled a more holistic view of the factors impacting student experiences not only at the school level, but also more effectively illustrated the multiple influences from the micro- to the macro-level. In addition, this newly developed model allowed for the sorting of impactful factors into those that posed barriers and those that facilitated success at school. Nodes and categories were rethought, restructured, renamed, moved, collapsed, and expanded to reflect the evolving vision of the study and its data corpus, and to assist in the comprehension of the meanings of participant experiences as they revealed themselves to the researcher. Finally, this step in the process gave shape to concepts emerging from within the data, and also set the stage for the focused level of examination that was to come.

Figure 7. Operational Model Diagram



Second-cycle Coding. The next phase of the data analysis process involved a close examination of the data in their newly configured state, employing a patterned coding method known as Focused Coding. This approach furthered the previous stage of coding and analysis through the reorganization and recategorization of data based on newly emerging themes and conceptual foci, allowing a deeper connection to the meanings held within. Recurring themes and ideas were used to develop new subcategories and to make predictions. In some cases, participants were contacted again to obtain their sense of these topics as they developed. The expert informant was contacted at this stage of the process in order to ask for specific feedback. This was done in an effort to reach for a deeper understanding of the meanings behind new and emerging themes and concepts, and to ensure that the analysis more closely resembled the nuanced perspectives expressed by participants. Subsequently these opinions and ruminations were then added to the data corpus, much in the way others have incorporated thoughts and opinions of research team members during the analysis phase (Faulstich Orellana, 2015). Categories and concepts began to reformulate themselves as new theories and ideas, and to take shape as discussion points and topics for future research. This iterative process continued as the data was reviewed and reanalyzed, until the data told a sufficiently coherent and meaningful story about the experiences of Oaxacan students attending high school in Los Angeles. As a final step in the process of what I have called a Community-Based Research methodology, this dissertation will be adapted and presented in the form of a final report. This report will be disseminated to interested study participants, other stakeholders, and the Research Unit Committee at LAUSD. The report will be presented with the sincere hope that the information derived from the period of investigation will be of use to the community in which the research took place (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Survey Data Analysis

Student surveys from each of four participating classes were collected from the teachers and were coded by group and survey number. Each of the 38 questions, as well as their corresponding response choices, were assigned numerical codes for ease of organization and analysis. All information was deidentified and entered into a secure excel file. Demographic and other attribute data was extracted directly from the spreadsheet to provide contextual information for the study. Short answer responses were transferred verbatim to the same secure spreadsheet, and later organized. Short answer responses were then coded according to the procedures for first- and second-cycle coding, and included, as appropriate, with other excerpts from the data corpus as testimonial statements. Numerical data was analyzed using frequency counts and simple two-variable correlations. Statistical tests were not run as part of this study, but the data will be reserved for future analysis. The quantitative and qualitative data derived from the student surveys and other sources of data from the case study are reported in the following sections.

CHAPTER VI: FIELDWORK CONTEXT

Portrait of a Los Angeles High School

The fieldwork for this study was completed at a large, comprehensive urban high school (grades 9-12) in Los Angeles, California. This school was chosen due to its immediately proximity to a well-establish Oaxacan ethnic enclave in the city and is the neighborhood school for many Zapotec-speaking immigrant families. The following is a compilation of information gathered from an analysis of the school's website, with supporting evidence from the California Department of Education website. The school opened its doors for the first time nearly 100 years ago, and its distinctive architecture is reminiscent of this period. The site stretches over 24 acres and includes a large football stadium and track. There is a Native American sacred site located on the property, which is maintained by the Gabrielino-Tongva Springs Foundation which has been a source of water for the area since 400 B.C.E. (school website, 2020).

The student body is racially and ethnically diverse, reflecting the city of Los Angeles itself, and provides a rigorous educational program to students born in 47 countries who speak 23 languages (school website, 2020). The mission and vision statement page of the school website explicitly affirms a commitment to serving culturally and linguistically diverse students. The total number of students enrolled during the 2019-2020 school year was just over 1500. This number represents .25% of the number of students in LAUSD as a whole (596,937). Racially speaking, the student body is diverse, with approximately 24.4% identifying as African American (district total is 7.7%), .1% Native American/Alaska Native (district is .2%), 6.1% Asian (district 3.6%), Filipino 1.7% (district 1.9%), Hispanic/Latino 51.6% (district 74.1%), Pacific Islander .2% (district .2%), White 13.4% (district 10.3%), Two or more races 2% (district 1.6%), and not reported .4% (district .4%). An estimated 40% of the staff at the high school could be identified as people of color, the majority of these being teachers of Latin American heritage. An estimated 80% of ELD teaching

staff identified themselves by their Mexican or Central American heritage. According to DataQuest (CDE, 2020), there were 21 9th grade ELD students enrolled at the high school during the 2019-2020 school year, 21 10th grade students, 21 11th grade students, and 7 12th grade students were English Language students (school website, 2020).

Several years ago, the school converted to a locally funded, affiliated charter high school, with ties to LAUSD. The school also houses a STEM magnet school within the larger school structure. The high school offers over 20 advanced placement courses and a program for academically gifted students. Students are able to self-select themselves to be enrolled in these courses, so they don't have to be nominated by a staff member. The school website describes all of the extracurricular activities offered at the school, which range from cheer and drill team, a drum line, a variety of competitive sports, and a jazz ensemble. Goals articulated in the vision statement include preparing students for a 21st century workforce, facilitating the development of knowledge, skills, and values to be a citizen of a multicultural democracy within an interdependent world, making technology available and integrated for all students, allowing students equal access to all services and activities, encouraging interdisciplinary connections among academic subjects, and providing a safe, clean, and stimulating program for all students (school website, 2020).

The number of English Learners (ELs) attending the high school has declined over the last five years. During the 2015-2016 school year, it was reported that there were 145 ELs, while there were just 84 reported for the year the fieldwork for this study was conducted (2018-2019). That year, there were 4 reported Arabic-speaking students, 2 Tagalog-speaking students, 2 Portuguese-speaking students, 2 Thai-speaking students, 67 Spanish-speaking students, and 6 "other" languages spoken by EL students at the high school (Ed-Data, 2020). In recent years, Farsi, Mandarin, Korean, and Japanese have also been reported. Though there is no specific breakdown of ethnicity for the Spanish-speaking students, it is estimated that between 10% and 15% of ELs at the high

school have connections to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca [from fieldnotes, student survey data, and staff interview data]. The process for determining which students are designated as English Learners is based on the required Home Language Survey Document given to all families at the time of enrollment. If the student's parent or guardian indicates that a language other than English is spoken at home, the student will be assessed for English language proficiency using the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC). This assessment is required by federal and state law and is administered to newly enrolled students the summer prior to the first year of attendance, or during the fall semester (Ed-Data, 2020). If the student does not receive a passing score, s/he will be designated as an EL for purposes of course selection and curriculum planning. According to the Multilingual and Multicultural Education Department website for LAUSD, parents can choose among six programs for their children who are designated as English Learners at the secondary level (LAUSD, 2020). Five of these programs are designed for students who did not receive a passing score on the ELPAC, and one (the Mainstream English Program) is selected for those who have passed, or by parent request. The five programs offered to parents of designated EL students attending schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District are 1) the Dual Language Two-Way Immersion Program, 2) the Dual Language One-Way Immersion Program, 3) the Secondary English Learner Newcomer Program, 4) the Language and Literacy in English Acceleration Program (L^2EAP), and 5) the Accelerated Program for Long-Term English Learners (LAUSD, 2020).

Not all of these programs are offered at all secondary schools in the district, and the programs offered at the high school observed during the year of fieldwork were a version of the L^2EAP Program and the Mainstream English Program. The latter program was offered to students with "reasonable" English proficiency, and students were given a schedule which included "regular" grade-level English plus an ELD class, which included specially designed English language

instruction. The L²EAP program was formerly known as the Structured English Immersion Program and is specifically designed for students who are English Learner beginners, and nearly all instruction is in the target language (LAUSD, 2020). Given that three of the four ELD teachers were native Spanish speakers at the high school, some clarification was offered in Spanish in these classes. Korean- and Arabic-speaking students, in contrast, did not receive clarification in their primary language in this program [source: fieldnotes and LAUSD publications]. Each student must pass ELD1 and ELD2 during their first two years attending the high school, and during those years, students do not typically attend "regular" English classes. This may pose a challenge to students who have educational goals that include attending a college or university after high school graduation, since they must pass four years of English to receive a diploma. According to one student participant, this was not explained to him by his guidance counselor at the start of freshman year, so he did not have a full understanding of which classes he needed to take in order to be eligible to apply to college [source: field notes and student interview]. Students who are designated as English Learners remain so until they pass the ELPAC at a level of proficiency determined by the district along with other data from teachers and staff recommendation. Once a student achieves these goals, the student is then reclassified as Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). The category known as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) for curriculum programming and course selection purposes, contains both redesignated students and students who passed the ELPAC despite the fact that their primary language is a language other than English (Ed-Data, 2020).

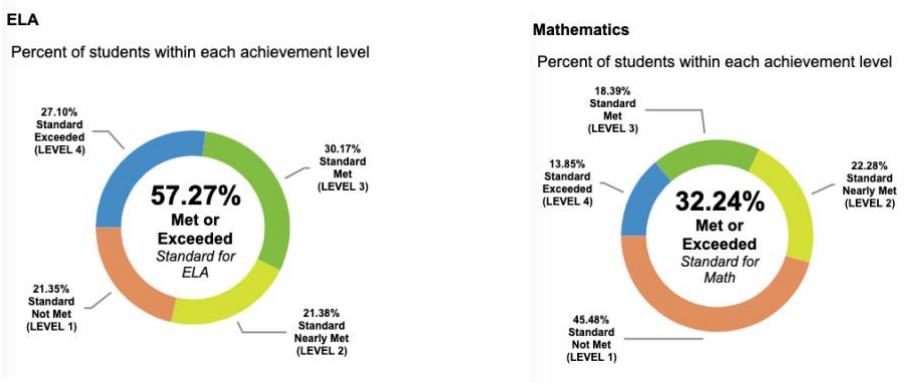
Student Achievement

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system replaced the prior state assessment program, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program in 2014. The CAASPP system includes the Smarter Balance Summative Assessments (SBAC) for English language arts/literacy and mathematics (grades 3-8 and 11), the California Alternate

Assessments (CAAs) for ELA and mathematics (grades 3-8 and 11), the California Science Test (CAST) and California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science (grades 5, 8, once in high school), and the California Spanish Assessment (CSA) for Spanish language arts (grades 3-8, once in high school - all optional) (CDE website, 2020). The following figures and tables show the CAASPP results for the 2018-2019 school year (and other years) for English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The first set of figures indicate results for all California public school students who took the test, the next set contains overall scores for the high school in which the fieldwork for this study took place, and the final group of tables and graphs show the percentage of students who received scores indicating that they met the minimum level for proficiency (levels 3 and 4), with the scores disaggregated by race/ethnicity (CDE, 2020).

Figures 8-9.

Percent of CA 11th grade students who met or exceeded proficiency on the SBAC in 2018-2019



source: www.cde.ca.gov

Tables 2-3.

Percent of students who met or exceeded proficiency on the SBAC at the case study high school

CAASPP English Language Arts/Literacy Results	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Std Exceeded Level 4	28 %	27.06 %	28.89 %	26.07 %
Std Met Level 3	41 %	39.69 %	37.78 %	32.14 %
Std Nearly Met Level 2	21 %	19.85 %	20.95 %	26.07 %
Std Not Met Level 1	10 %	13.4 %	12.38 %	15.71 %

CAASPP Mathematics Results	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Std Exceeded Level 4	9 %	10.05 %	12.14 %	9.35 %
Std Met Level 3	22 %	24.74 %	21.09 %	23.02 %
Std Nearly Met Level 2	29 %	30.15 %	23.64 %	28.06 %
Std Not Met Level 1	40 %	35.05 %	43.13 %	39.57 %

Source: www.cde.ca.gov

At the high school at which the fieldwork for this study was conducted, during the 2018-2019 academic year, 58.21% of students met or exceeded proficiency in the area of English language arts/literacy. This figure represents proficiency scores that are slightly higher than those reported by the state as a whole (57.27%) for that school year. With regard to the mathematics assessment, the case study site reported that 32.37% of students met or exceeded proficiency for that subject area in 2018-2019, as compared to 32.24% for the state as a whole. The following tables and figures illustrate the same rates of proficiency, when the data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity.

Tables 4-5.

Percent of students who met or exceeded proficiency on the SBAC by race/ethnicity

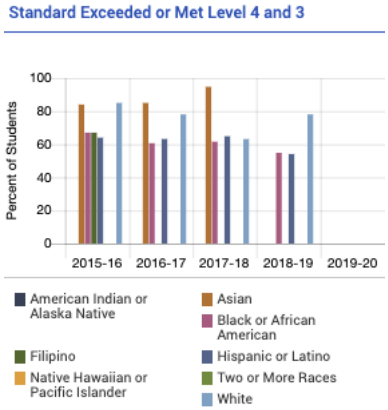
CAASPP ELA/Literacy Results by Race/Ethnicity for Selected Achievement Level	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Redacted	N/A	N/A
Asian	84 %	85 %	94.74 %	Redacted
Black or African American	67 %	60.61 %	61.54 %	54.79 %
Filipino	67 %	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
Hispanic or Latino	64 %	63.21 %	64.84 %	54.11 %
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Redacted	N/A	Redacted	Redacted
Two or More Races	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
White	85 %	78.05 %	63.16 %	78.05 %

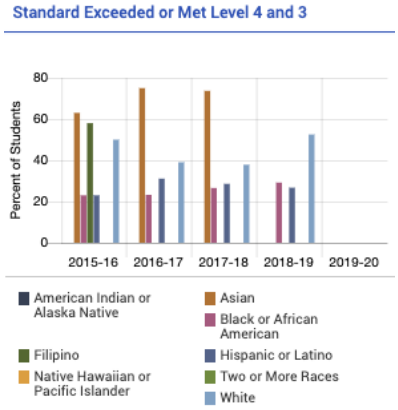
CAASPP Mathematics Results by Race/Ethnicity for Selected Achievement Level	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	Redacted	N/A	N/A
Asian	63 %	75 %	73.68 %	Redacted
Black or African American	23 %	23.23 %	26.56 %	29.17 %
Filipino	58 %	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
Hispanic or Latino	23 %	31.09 %	28.57 %	26.71 %
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Redacted	N/A	Redacted	Redacted
Two or More Races	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted	Redacted
White	50 %	39.02 %	37.84 %	52.5 %

Source: www.cde.ca.gov

Figures 10-11.

Percent of students who met or exceeded proficiency on the SBAC by race/ethnicity





These tables and figures indicate that Latino students showed a 54% proficiency rate as compared to 78% of White students on the ELA portion of the SBAC, and about 27% on the math test as compared to 53% of White students during 2018-2019. There is no data on proficiency levels for Native American students reported since the total number attending is less than 1%. The final set of tables illustrates the same breakdown of proficiency rates for EL students.

Tables 6-7.

Percent of English Learner (EL) students who met or exceeded proficiency on the SBAC

CAASPP ELA/Literacy Results for English Learners	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Std Exceeded Level 4	0 %	0 %	0 %	7.14 %
Std Met Level 3	10 %	0 %	18.75 %	0 %
Std Nearly Met Level 2	24 %	26.32 %	25 %	14.29 %
Std Not Met Level 1	66 %	73.68 %	56.25 %	78.57 %

CAASPP Mathematics Results for English Learners	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Std Exceeded Level 4	4 %	0 %	6.67 %	0 %
Std Met Level 3	14 %	5.26 %	13.33 %	7.14 %
Std Nearly Met Level 2	7 %	5.26 %	0 %	7.14 %
Std Not Met Level 1	75 %	89.47 %	80 %	85.71 %

Source: www.cde.ca.gov

It might be expected that EL students would not perform as well on the standardized assessments, and these proficiency rates reflect this. Given this fact, the 7.14% of EL students who were able to achieve a proficiency level 4 is surprising. This may in part confirm the viewpoint of at least one ELD teacher that the ELPAC exam is more difficult than other assessments, and in fact "many native speakers of English could not pass that test." This statement also points the curious possibility that these students were able to score a proficiency level of 4 on the SBAC but were not able to reclassify as FEP after taking the ELPAC [source: fieldnotes and teacher interview It is also interesting to note that the exact same percentage of students who received a proficiency level of 4 on the ELA portion was also reported for the math SBAC under proficiency level 3, and level 2 for that academic year. This could simply be an unusual coincidence based on the fact that 6 students of the total 84 would closely reflect that percentage.

The challenges reflected in these figures, for the purposes of this study, is that there is no available data that I was able to find that disaggregated the Hispanic/Latino group into regions, EL levels, or into Indigenous/non-Indigenous Latino students. That degree of specificity would be very useful in order to see if there are differences in achievement among the various populations grouped together under one ethnicity. Furthermore, due to the fact that Mexican students and families from Native communities do not appear to always identify as Native American, the data could be misleading. If all of the students with connections to Indigenous communities in Oaxaca, for example, were able to identify themselves as part of the "American Indian/Alaska Native" group, it would be interesting to see what changes would be reflected in the achievement data, not to mention the fact that Native American performance would be more likely to be reported with more significant numbers. The student survey data, reported in the following section, does give some indication that Indigenous students from Oaxaca appear to have satisfactory GPAs despite the fact that most are still classified as ELs at the high school site for the case study.

Participant Profiles

This section provides a brief introduction to each of the primary study participants, in order to add context to the narrative statements and testimonial, as well as background information that will support meaning-making and claims derived from the data. Student survey respondents are not included in these descriptive profiles due to the anonymous nature of those data sets. All of the study participants introduced below were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Student Interview Participants

Luis. During the year I conducted fieldwork at the high school, Luis was a junior, and a member of one of the advanced ELD classes. Students from the more advanced classes were able to enroll in regular grade-level English classes in addition to their ELD English support class. Luis was approached by his teacher and asked if he would like to participate in the study. When he heard

that the study was about students with family from Oaxaca, the teacher let me know that he was eager to participate. I observed his class the following day and gave him an information flyer about the study and consent forms to take home. His excitement about the study was evident during each of three interviews I conducted with Luis. Though he did not always recount stories that were positive, he indicated how glad he was that someone was focusing on students who shared his ethnicity. Luis was born in Los Angeles to parents who had immigrated from Oaxaca within the last 20 years. Luis had an older sister who graduated from the high school Luis attended, and was now a student at a local university. Luis' parents were from the same pueblo and were speakers of one of the variants of the Zapotec family of languages, though they were also strong speakers of Spanish. His grandparents were native Zapotec speakers and lived in Oaxaca. Luis seemed to regret that he did not speak more Zapotec, so he could communicate better with his grandparents. He had only visited their pueblo in Oaxaca one time with his mother, father and sister, and that was many years ago. He did speak to them often over FaceTime, and he used the Zapotec words he knew along with Spanish to communicate with them. Luis was a second generation American and indicated that he took great pride in his background and identity as a Oaxacan student.

Angel. Angel was a freshman at the high school during the period of my fieldwork at his high school. He was born in a pueblo in Oaxaca and had just arrived with his father at the start of the school year. Angel did not speak English when I first met him, and it was actually his father who referred him as a participant in the study. I met Angel's father at a parent information meeting, in which the parent liaison made a brief announcement in Spanish about the study. Several parents spoke to me after the meeting ended, and Angel's dad was one of them. Angel was a fluent speaker of the variant of Zapotec spoken in his pueblo, and he was intimately familiar with the traditions and practices of his community. Angel was one of the students I spent the most time with over the course of the academic year. He was in my small ELD group in the morning (along with two other

students), he participated in my afterschool English tutoring group, and I went to his home to tutor him in algebra. He lived in a small apartment near campus with his two aunts and his three elementary and preschool-aged cousins. His father lived nearby with several other men but came to visit during our tutoring sessions. When I was there, I noticed that Zapotec was the primary language spoken among family members. The smallest children enjoyed speaking to me in English and showing off to their cousin how well they could speak (perfectly, without any trace of an accent). Angel is also the student I took for a college tour, and to attend two college-level classes (their professor told him that he asked better questions than his university students!). It was evident that he was extremely bright from the first day I met him, and he had big plans for his life. He expressed that he missed his mother a lot, and his three older siblings, who held primarily professional jobs in Oaxaca. Angel was the baby of the family, and dad had been working in Los Angeles for most of his life. He seemed very upbeat all the time and seemed to love his school and all that the U.S. had to offer. I still keep in touch with Angel, and he has learned so much English! Angel sat for three interviews with me, and this was in addition to the multiple times we were able to interact when I was teaching the small group of ELD students each morning.

Manuel. Manuel was a 20 year old student at the time of my fieldwork and was still able to attend the high school due to the fact that he was still an English Language Learner and a special education student with significant intellectual needs. Manuel was another student that I spent a great deal of time with, since he was mostly on his own, and required a great deal of assistance. Manuel was born in Los Angeles to his young parents, who had come to work in the 1990s. However, they had to return to Oaxaca when Manuel was still a baby. Manuel grew up in a more remote Zapotec-speaking pueblo in Oaxaca and was the oldest of 6 children. Manuel had returned to the U.S. four years ago, in order to work and send money back for his family. His native language was Zapotec, and his second language was Spanish. He spoke some English and enjoyed speaking

with me. Manuel lived in a two-bedroom apartment with his much older cousin and his wife and two children in one bedroom, a second family in the other bedroom. Manuel slept on a couch in the living room, which he usually shared with several other men who he didn't know well. The nature of his learning difficulties was unclear, though his special education eligibility had just recently changed to Intellectual Disability (ID) within the last year. This category made him eligible for Regional Center services and supports, however he had not connected with them until that point. I did two formal interviews with Manuel, and I also had many other opportunities to get to know him during the dozens of times we went to one of his appointments. I took him to medical appointments, to his work to begin his shift, to an adult school program, and to get a bus pass. I also assisted him in applying to the Department of Rehabilitation for job training and attended one of his IEP meetings. I was present several times when he communicated with his family on FaceTime and had the opportunity to speak to his mother to get some information the doctor was asking for.

Staff Interview Participants

Ms. Blanco. Ms. Blanco wore many hats at the school, and she was one of the first staff members I was introduced to, along with the Parent Center Liaison (who declined a formal interview). Ms. Blanco was the administrator of the ELD program and a variety of other support services at the school. She coordinated parent events, career and college events, field trips, and teacher appreciation lunches. She was always running around the school and was rarely in her office. She and I got to know each other well during my fieldwork, and I was fortunately enough to sit with her for two lengthy interviews. She was extremely generous with her time and did everything she could to assist me in acquiring the information I was hoping to obtain. Ms. Blanco appeared to be a favorite among teachers and students alike. She knew everyone, and everyone knew her, and she had an impressive, very direct, and yet always respectful way of talking to kids and adults. She was in her early forties, had four young children of her own, including a baby, yet her

energy seemed without end. She was incredibly dedicated to the students and was in favor of learning more about the students with families from Oaxaca. She herself was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. as a young child. By the end of my fieldwork year, Ms. Blanco had accepted a principal position at another high school, and they are lucky to have her.

Ms. Ortega. Ms. Ortega is another gem of the school whom I got to know fairly well over the course of my fieldwork. She was the full-time social worker and had worked in the district for ten years. Though she was only in her mid-thirties, Ms. Ortega had a son who was graduating from high school that year. She was born in Los Angeles of Mexican-born parents and married her high school boyfriend who was originally from Guatemala. She was yet another staff member whose tireless work for the school and for the students was inspiring and humbling. I would see her all around the school, talking with kids, putting out fires, providing teachers with support. Every time I spoke with her about a student, she already knew all about their situation. She didn't know a lot about Oaxaca, but she was very aware of the additional challenges many students with ties to Oaxaca faced. She was very supportive of the study and communicated to me her interest in learning more about this student population. I was fortunate enough to do one formal interview with Ms. Ortega, and to have several follow-up conversations with her.

Mr. Ruiz. Mr. Ruiz was another incredible teacher-participant. He is the teacher who invited me to work in his ELD class three days per week with a small group of 9th grade students. Mr. Ruiz was in his late forties and had worked at the high school for his entire teaching career. He and I became quite close during the year of fieldwork, and I still visit his class whenever I am in Los Angeles. Mr. Ruiz had a small class of about 15 students who were enrolled in the first and second levels of ELD. Most of his students were Spanish-speaking, but there was one student from Korea and another from Saudi Arabia. He was a fast-talking, confident teacher, with a cluttered but organized classroom. He believed in the old-school way of teaching English to students, and was

resistant to the new, "evidence-based" curriculum the district had adopted. As was mentioned above, Mr. Ruiz was the type of educator who went above and beyond for his students, often taking on roles that are not typically expected of a classroom teacher. He planned the prom, attended all the sporting events, and was involved with the homework club after school. Mr. Ruiz was also born in Mexico and came to the U.S. before turning eighteen. He was extremely supportive of the study presented here, and graciously sat with me for three interviews in addition to many additional conversations.

Ms. Alber. Ms. Alber was yet another teacher who gave generously of her time and was supportive of all my efforts the year of my fieldwork. In her forties, of European descent and originally from a state in the Midwest, she had been teaching in the LA area for more than ten years. Ms. Alber taught the level three ELD class and was nice enough to allow me to observe multiple times, and even teach a small group. She sat with me for two formal interviews, administered the student survey to her class, and recruited several student participants. She was open about not knowing much about Oaxaca or the students who came from that part of the world, but she was interested in learning more. Like Mr. Ruiz, she had an organized clutter about her classroom, and was friendly and patient with her students.

Ms. Morales. Ms. Morales was a busy administrator at the high school. I didn't have many conversations with her but saw her in the halls often and said hello. She was able to sit for a formal interview just one time, however I attended multiple meetings she led and events she officiated. It was evident that Ms. Morales was a native Spanish speaker and identified as Latina. She was extremely dedicated to making certain changes at the school which she was passionate about.

Parent Interview Participants

Mr. Alonso. Mr. Alonso was Angel's father and had lived and worked in Los Angeles for many years. The summer prior to the school year when I met him, Mr. Alonso had returned to his

pueblo in Oaxaca and had brought his youngest son back with him to the U.S. Mr. Alonso was a native Zapotec and Spanish speaker and did not feel comfortable speaking English. I had one formal interview with Mr. Alonso, and a few follow-up conversations. He was supportive of the study and asked his son to participate. He appeared to be very proud of his son and wanted him to continue his studies through high school and until he graduated from a university. Mr. Alonso expressed appreciation for the opportunities that living in the U.S. gave to his son.

Ms. Romero. Ms. Romero was a native Zapotec speaker from a pueblo in Oaxaca. She had two children attending the high school where I was doing my fieldwork, a senior and a freshman special education student. She agreed to sit for one formal interview in exchange for some tutoring support for her son. Ms. Romero did not speak English, but she did offer to teach Zapotec to some of the students who were interested in keeping up their heritage language. She was referred to me by the Parent Center Liaison, who sat in the room with us to help make Ms. Romero more comfortable with the interview process.

Alumni Interview Participants

Ms. Navarro. Ms. Navarro attended the high school in the 1990s and now works as a college professor teaching courses about the Indigenous peoples of Mexico. She was born in Oaxaca and is from a Zapotec-speaking family that immigrated to the U.S. when she was five years old. Ms. Navarro was a key participant to this study, due to the amount of time I was able to spend with her, learning about her experiences, and about the history and traditions of her family's pueblo of origin. I conducted seven interviews with Ms. Navarro, though they went more slowly than other interviews due to the fact that she had two young children she was attending to while we spoke. Ms. Navarro is also the participant who came to speak to the leadership class about the origins of the tradition of guelaguetza, and also who invited a freshman participant in the study to attend her

college courses. Ms. Navarro was also generous enough to share informative films and readings with me about topics which came up during our interview time together.

Mr. Ruiz II. Mr. Ruiz attended the high school as an adolescent himself and was also a teacher at the school at the time of the study. Much of the information I learned from my interviews with Mr. Ruiz was taken from those different perspectives - as a school employee and a former student.

Focus Group Participants

Students from Focus Groups 1 & 2. The students who participated in the focus groups were all seniors from a leadership class whom I met after having a conversation with their advisor. I was scheduling an interview with the social worker when the advisor overheard us talking and let me know they were planning a Guelaguetza festival for the end of the school year. This led to the presentation we organized in order to have an expert come to speak to the students about the original tradition and how it has changed over time and across contexts. After the presentation, six students agreed to participate in the focus groups, which ended up being the last data collection activity of the school year.

Expert Informant

David. David has been a lifelong resident of San Pablo de Mitla, a Zapotec-speaking pueblo of the Central Valley region of Oaxaca. I met him while on a trip to Oaxaca to attend the Guelaguetza festival. David is the oldest of three children, now in his late 20s. He graduated from the University of Oaxaca, and this year was able to travel to Spain for graduate work thanks to a scholarship from that institution. From the first day I met him, David always expressed great pride in Oaxaca - the cuisine, the cultures, his community, the traditions, and above all else, his family. He identifies as Zapotec, and though he is not a fluent speaker, this is the native language of his parents as well as many of his friends and their parents. David appears to be extremely proud of his

heritage, and knows a great deal about the history, traditions, and current issues facing his community. I sent David a list of questions from time to time, in order to ask for clarification about something or to help me understand the information obtained during the fieldwork process. Through his lens as an insider, David was often able to make connections between contexts, and was invaluable in helping me to make meaning from the information gathered.

Student Survey: Respondent Attributes

When asked about connections to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca, 12 students of 32 who responded (38%) indicated a connection to one or more of these communities, while 21 students left this question blank. Interestingly, only one student claimed Native American identity, and that student indicated that their tribal affiliation was Kumiai. This would suggest that students with Zapotec heritage don't typically identify as being Native American, but more commonly as Mexican or Oaxacan. The grade level breakdown of survey respondents included 31% students in 9th grade, 25% in 10th grade, 40% in 11th grade, and 4% in 12th grade. Students who indicated that they had connections to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca were mainly 11th grade students, with 7 juniors, 3 sophomores, and 2 freshmen. With regard to grade point average, 2% reported a GPA of 4.0 or higher, 49% in the 3.0-3.9 range, 47% in the 2.0-2.9 range, 0 in the 1.0-1.9 range, and 5% reported a GPA of less than 1.0. Students who indicated that they had connections to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca were most likely to report grades in the 2.0-2.9 group with 5 selecting this range, with 4 additional respondents selecting the 3.0-3.9 range. One student reported grades higher than 4.0, and 2 respondents left this question blank. It is interesting to note that 33% of the total number that answered the question about having assistance at home in completing their homework (17/51) indicated that they did not have access to help at home, including 12/42 (29%) of ELD students, and more surprisingly 5/9 (56%) of leadership students, many of whom take honors level courses regularly. Of the 47 students who responded to the "specialized classes" question, 45% stated that

they were currently enrolled in an honors-level course, 19% were taking a two-year algebra course (which is given at a slower pace than the regular algebra course), 19% were enrolled in resource, other special education, or support class. Of those who claim Zapotec connections or heritage, 33% were enrolled in special education classes.

Of the students taking the survey, 74% responded that they were receiving free/reduced-price meals (FRPM) at school. Within the group of respondents claiming Zapotec heritage, 11/12 (92%) received FRPM. Of the families with connections to Zapotec communities, 1 mom worked in a restaurant, 2 were cleaners, 1 was caring for children, 3 had "other" jobs (cashier, activities director, and dry cleaning worker), and 5 responses were left blank. In terms of the work their fathers were doing, 11/12 (92%) dads worked in restaurants, with 1 response left blank. When asked about the birth country of their mothers, Mexico was the most frequent response, with 44% of the total number of respondents indicating that their mothers were born in that country. Though only 2% of respondents claimed Oaxaca as the birthplace of their mothers (5% of Mexican-born mothers as reported by their sons/daughters), this most likely does not indicate that more mothers were not born in Oaxaca. Rather, the mode of response was to simply give the name of the country rather than the state and country, even though the question asked for both. This potentially could point to a language difference or manner of common parlance in Mexico, where places (especially Native communities) tend to be referred to more as regions or pueblos rather than by the political significance of the term "state." When asked the same question about their fathers, Mexico again was the response given most frequently, with 37% of respondents indicating that their fathers were born there. Of the dads born in Mexico, 7% were reported to be born in Oaxaca, with that state representing 19% of the total of Mexican-born dads. This again indicates an increased likelihood of identifying a parent's birthplace by country only, rather than by state and country, as is common in the U.S. When asked how long their families had lived in the U.S., 9% of students responded less

than one year, 19% for 1-5 years, 4% for 6-10 years, 49% more than 10 years, and 19% of students indicating that their families have "always" lived in the U.S. In keeping with this trend, the student respondents with connections to Zapotec communities also indicated that they have lived in the U.S for 10 years or more (67%), including high school students enrolled in first year ELD classes despite all those years living in the U.S. This interesting state of affairs point to a number of factors, including limited exposure to English in spite of many years living in the country, ineffective language instruction at earlier grade levels, difficulty passing the exit exam (now the ELPAC), a combination of these, or possible overexaggerated reports of the years lived in the U.S. for this question.

Finally, with regard to information about Indigenous students and Native American cultures, languages and current events, most students appear to have given responses that were honest and informative. For example, when asked about the Sacred Springs site located on campus, it appears that most student respondents who were newer to the school and/or newer to speaking English were less likely to know about its existence. Of the 48 students who responded to this question on the survey, 31% were not aware of the site location or its significance and history (29% of these were enrolled in an ELD class, and just 4% of those enrolled in the leadership class). Towards the end of the survey, students were asked if they would like to devote more time in and out of class learning about Native American cultures (62%). It is especially encouraging that a number of students made final comments at the end of the survey expressing their appreciation for learning more about their fellow students' ethnic backgrounds and indicating that they in fact gained some knowledge from the survey questions themselves. The following are the comments that students left as "additional thoughts" on the survey [source: student survey].

Q: Do you have any additional thoughts about this survey or the ideas presented here?

"No but it made me rellise a lot."

"Well not all know this but we gotta learn."

"Everyone will have the chance to learn about this."

"We can have a very diverse environment and still be very separated as far as friend groups."

"It's a cool survey, lots of kids from Oaxacan descent like this."

"It's interesting."

High Frequency Word Cloud

One of the features of the NVivo software program is one in which the data corpus can be scanned for word frequencies, which then can be combined to create a "word cloud" with the top 100 words that appear most frequently across all data files. It provides yet another way to look at the data to get a sense about the themes and topics contained within the text of the various interviews, focus groups, and field notes. Below is the word cloud generated from a high frequency word query of the data.

CHAPTER VII: FINDINGS

I. Factors Impacting Student Success

As stated earlier, the vast majority of the data collected for the purposes of this case study are qualitative in nature. Findings from this substantial body of data are derived primarily from semi-structured interviews, but also from field notes, survey short-answer questions, focus groups, classroom observations, document analysis, student work samples, and other artifacts. The following section describes the qualitative data that emerged after a thorough, systematic investigation of the data, with a focus on uncovering patterns of theme and content which addressed the research questions. Subsequent in-depth analysis revealed particular concepts of interest, including which experiences appear to have the biggest impact on the academic and social success of high school students of Oaxacan heritage. The categories listed below are phrases and concepts derived directly from the research questions which guided this case study. The following section offers an explanation of each concept as it became operationalized, and about the findings that emerged as a result. Verbatim quotes from the data offer supporting evidence for the themes reflected in the guiding questions are presented.

School Culture: Past and Present

In the 80s and 90s, there was a larger number of recently migrated families from Oaxaca in the area than there are now. Immigration in the mid 1980s especially, was easier for some families as a result of The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which codified a path to residency for millions of immigrants. When he attended the high school in the 80s, one teacher claims that about 30% of the English Language Learners had family ties to communities in Oaxaca. Now, "Mr. Ruiz" estimates that about 10% of English Learners were of Oaxacan heritage. He went on to describe what he remembered about the number of students from Native communities of Oaxaca at the time he attended the school back in the 1980s,

> We started to see a large number of [Oaxacan students]. And then we see in the neighborhood… like there were more. There was that they were so kind to each other. They were very poor. They knew each other. And oftentimes they knew they could talk to one another in their language and that would help them a whole lot. And oftentimes even if they will come in late into the class who would always indicate so-and-so is from [a pueblo in Oaxaca], and then they'll speak to one another in their language.

School Culture Then. One participant, known as "Ms. Navarro," recalls during one of her interviews experiences she had while attending the high school. She was called names such as "india" and "Oaxaqueñita" frequently by other students and done in such a way she said, intended as a put down. These acts of prejudice, she states, were mainly carried out by her peers of Mexican heritage. She told a story of repeated insults over time, recalling,

> I mean it started since elementary school. OK. Because the kids who called themselves Chicanos were the ones who were making fun of me for being Indian. So even an elementary school third grade. So now they call it bullying but back then you know they were just being me. So, I mean that followed me from elementary school the entire time there wasn't a pause like it was always like you can be Mexican or you could be Latino but not if you were anything other than that. So [it was like] being rejected by this like larger Latino/Chicano group of students.

On a similar note, two ELD teachers mentioned similar experiences with organizations at their high schools. Mr. Ruiz, who described himself as Mexican-American, was born in Mexico and described the Chicano club on campus as one who he said, "excluded students who didn't think the same way as they did." He explained that his experience with that club was so negative as a teen, that he refused to identify himself as Chicano. He seemed to have a generally negative perception about organizations claiming to represent that movement. "They know they have some problems - that's why they are going through a re-examination of their name and their practices," he told me [from field notes]. Likewise, another ELD teacher, who participated in the study by allowing me to observe his class several times, and also to conduct the student survey with his students, came to the U.S. to attend a university and settled in Los Angeles. He also expressed a distrust and negative impression of these organizations, claiming that they "pressured" him to join in college [from field notes].

Last, Ms. Navarro, in talking about a group she tried being part of during her college days, recalled,

> I remember in one meeting they were going to put together some cultural event and they wanted to bring some Aztec dancers… and then I told them that there were other Indigenous dances that were really important too [and remembered thinking] not only had they not heard of it, [but] they didn't care to learn about it.

All adult participants described at least one painful and overt act of discrimination and racism from their school days in the 1980s and 1990s, and these were perpetuated by students of all races. Ms. Navarro expressed that acts of discrimination and microaggressions perpetrated by White peers (and their families), held a certain power over her in a way that was impactful in terms of the way she saw herself, and about the professions she was interested in [from field notes]. She recounted an experience in which she told her boyfriend's parents what she wanted to do when she grew up:

> So, I wanted to be an aerospace engineer, basically. But instead of encouraging me, they kept telling me there's certain jobs in engineering like… and you're a brown person. People like you don't go into engineering. And I believed them because I was 16, you know, and I didn't have somebody else to, like, tell me otherwise.

Other acts of bias were based more on her family's limited income level. As an era, the 90s marked the beginning of the widespread use of the internet at high schools around the nation, and back then she stated that the capacity to use the new technology called attention to differences between high and lower income students at the school. Such experiences, she expressed, had a negative impact on developing adolescents, as Ms. Navarro described,

> The first time I used a computer when I was in high school. And I told you I had friends who were, you know, in these AP classes and honors classes. And I was the only person of color in some of those classes. So, at the end of the year in 1995, I remember there were a couple of my classmates who had email… so, they wrote their email on my yearbook and I didn't have a computer. I didn't even know we didn't have Internet. It was so expensive. Those kind of things and others, you know, you're still dragging around you from high school.

Another factor that may have changed since the 1980s and 1990s, is the school district's reaction to and treatment of newly arrived families. The following recollection points to the

impression that one schools may have offered limited support to her family when they tried to enroll her at the neighborhood school. Ms. Navarro recalled a lasting perception, after reflecting back on this time,

> When we got here, I apparently didn't have all the documentation they needed or the immunizations I needed to go to school. So, I actually had to wait a whole year. They didn't let me start elementary school. I was supposed to start first grade and they didn't let me.

In terms of academic support back in the 1990s, there seems to be a connection for this participant between high expectations from teachers and her personal academic success. Ms. Navarro explained, for example, that in the 90s, students couldn't choose to take AP or Honors classes on their own but were dependent on a recommendation from one of their teachers. She lamented not being having access to these advanced classes, and pointed out,

> I did all the work I got A's. So, it just always felt like it wasn't rigorous enough like what I was doing in terms of preparing. Back then as you had to be elected by a teacher. You couldn't just walk in and say I want to be in the AP class. No. Because now supposedly you can elect any AP or honors class self-elected.

On the other hand, Ms. Navarro also talked about the positive impact one of her teachers had on her confidence to achieve academically. She described what this teacher did to be supportive of her academic success recounting,

> She basically just she says you shouldn't be here you should be in an AP class in an honors class. I felt like she was taking the time to give me credit for something that nobody else was. Especially you know like the [guidance] counselor. I mean the counselor basically said well what kind of job do you want.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that Ms. Navarro believed that this particular guidance counselor steered her towards jobs that were more "appropriate" for her gender and ethnicity:

> [The guidance counselor] handed me the book where you could get jobs. There was like this folder. And I remember I needed a job, so I actually grabbed the folder. I made a couple calls where basically I became a nanny. So, I had that job for like a couple of years. So, the guidance counselor was not enough at all.

A final point Ms. Navarro brought up is that in the 1990s, in her view, there were more White, middle-class students attending her high school in Los Angeles than there are now. She realized

even back in school that she had more interactions with these students than did her Oaxacan friends and family who settled in other areas of Los Angeles and attended other high schools. She explained that she felt this was beneficial to her because she had opportunity to learn more about the dominant culture than others did. She went on to express of her Oaxacan peers who did not have this exposure,

> They didn't get to have some of the references that I had you know like going to a White kid's house and seeing how they had a pool and like you know the dad was a professional and the mom was too. Or that they had a computer at home. Or people who you know who had a stay at home mom. And you met those kids through school activities.

School Culture Now. Multiple sources, which will be clarified in the following section, attest to the fact that there is more racial and ethnicity diversity now among the school staff, and Spanish is spoken by a number of them. One aspect of the current culture at this particular high school is the way in which staff interact with students and their families who speak Indigenous languages. In reference to conducting meetings with parents who spoke one of the variants of Zapotec, for example, Ms. Ortega stated,

> They usually bring a relative with them … sometimes they'll come to me and speak Spanish and then they'll translate [for the parents] or if someone opens up, they speak just enough to have a couple of questions and they'll always ask somebody else to try. So that's what we saw over the years.

"Ms. Ortega" recalled that parents weren't always able to get involved due to the fact that they were working a lot. If invited to a meeting with school staff for any reason, she stated, "Sometimes it would be the father or sometimes the mother would be the one coming to the school. Staff would offer to run the meeting in Spanish, thinking that would be easier." However, when the parents' strongest language was Zapotec, for example, she noticed that language support and facilitation was often needed, stating, "I would see them paired up with another person - you'll see the kid or another family member or a relative or a friend who was there with them [to translate into Zapotec]." Ms. Ortega reported that the staff member made this statement as if she was

disappointed that they could not provide translation in Zapotec. Her body language and tone communicated concern for the fact that she was not able to speak to the parents directly. As a Latina of Mexican heritage, she claimed to be accustomed to speaking in Spanish to families coming from Mexico. In this case however, she found herself in a situation in which the Indigenous language was strongest, and then she stated that English was preferred over Spanish.

Another topic in regard to the current school culture that was interesting to note was that all of the teachers interviewed seemed to believe that there was very little discrimination going on at the school. "Ms. Morales," a school administrator, stated,

> I think it's a big plus when teachers and the whole staff of school communities are open to that diverse community. So, I do feel that we're in a good place when it comes to that and just embracing the differences. I'd just like to again see more highlights of those differences throughout the year's [extracurricular] activities.

This perspective does not always appear to be shared by students, who seem to think that acts of discrimination were common at school, though not necessarily perpetrated by staff, the culture was such that such acts went unnoticed when perpetrated by other students [student survey data]. At least one student, the participant known as "Luis" claimed that there were more race-related fights on campus the year of the study, he thought, due to the fact that there was a new administration. In fact, he stated multiple times that he felt the change in administration has contributed to factors that he viewed as negative, such as fewer festivals and events, a more restrictive dress code, and fewer opportunities for students to interact and express their needs to school leadership [interview with "Luis"].

Individual and Family Context

It is assumed that every student's family context provides the foundation from which they base their capabilities to achieve academic success and social/emotional well-being. Stressors are present within every family, however, families who have migrated to Los Angeles from Oaxaca share a set of conditions that can add an extra layer to existing challenges. These factors include issues of

(im)migration, homelessness, financial concerns, trauma and separation from family members who stayed behind, and navigating the complexities of living in a translocal context. In addition, Indigenous families are likely to uphold values which may differ from the dominant culture, and actively maintain a connection to an Indigenous community in Oaxaca.

Issues Around (Im)migration. One aspect that is characterizes this student population, and participants in this case study, is that some carry with them stories of immigration that were challenging or even traumatic. Several participants shared parts of their family immigration stories, which illustrated some of the different reasons for the decision to leave their homelands. The most common reason given for the decision to migrate was economic hardship in Mexico, which caused a family member to go north in search of work:

> My dad went to the United States to work because my family didn't have any money. They had land to work but they didn't have any money for basic needs. So, my dad started coming to the United States regularly but for short periods of time so that every time [he came back to visit], one of my siblings was born.

This participant mentioned that her mother decided to go to California to find her dad because her little brother was very sick, and her family in Oaxaca was unable to help with the extensive costs of his treatment,

> We lived in my dad's family's home, but my grandparents weren't that nice to [my mom]. My youngest brother got hepatitis and my mom didn't have money to pay for medicines, so he almost died. One day my mom made the decision that we were gonna go find my dad, and even if we didn't find him, we were just gonna go... So, my mom made the decision to pack everything up and go to Los Angeles. And so we did that.

This participant gave an idea of the hardship her mother was experiencing trying to make ends meet while continuing to stay in her pueblo in Oaxaca,

> I mean my mom was a seamstress in the in the town. And she had a lot of work but because you know there were three kids she couldn't work during the day. So, she would work all night well while we slept basically. I remember all of that. It really stayed in my in my memory. And like during the day when she when she really needed to do some you know some seamstress-work she would make popcorn for us to sell so we would sit in the front of our house with a little table and sell popcorn.

The same participant, who traveled to the United States with her mother and siblings in the early 1980s, told of the journey, which she made with her family as a 5-year old,

> The person that helped us go across the border was from our town, and she knew that he was the one and he helped a lot of the people from our town across the border. So [my mother] knew him and he knew my dad. Like so the bus, in an airplane [and] like car rides. She made it to the border with us and she carried my youngest brother in her arms. My aunt helped with my middle brother, and I could walk.

She recalled that her parents were paying for this journey for a long time, because they owed the coyote money, which seemed to have an impact on her as she grew up [from field notes],

> It was it different than it is now. My mom was in debt because she owed money to the coyote. Even though it wasn't as much as it is now. I mean back then it was a few hundred dollars. Now it's thousands of dollars. So, they didn't have any money because they basically had to work so that they could pay off that debt and pay for the things we needed like for the apartment.

She went on to say,

> I remember going through a tunnel and I remember the eyes to this day [from the rats in the tunnel]. That's the one animal that I'm still totally scared of - mice or rats. They were in the tunnel. Yeah…

Continuing her story, this participant talked about how her mother had to be creative to help the children get through the experience,

> My mom did an incredible job of preparing us for [the journey]. Our dream was to go to the Disneyland. Absolutely. And so, my mom said, 'I promise you one day I will take you to Disneyland.' That was her promise. And that's when she told us we're going to go. [She told us,] but you have to behave really well, and you have to be quiet and you have to do all these things. Oh my gosh. Did it work.

She also recalled what it was like actually crossing the border, and shared what stuck out most in her mind:

> We were like sitting on some boulders and I remember eating for the first time in my life eating what looked like Wonder Bread. I remember a gallon of milk which we didn't drink. We didn't like milk because I mean we it wasn't part of our regular diet. And then a van came and then we [all] had to get in really quickly and we had to be really quiet. So, because of the way we had to jump into this van [and all the people] my foot was twisted for I don't know how long but it felt like an eternity. And at whatever point where people started getting off, I lost my shoe. And when they dropped us off [in Santa Monica], I didn't have a

> shoe. So, my very first like the very first steps I took in the United States were without a shoe.

Some of the second generation students who were born in California, talked about their parents' immigration stories. "Luis" spoke about what he knew about the way his family came to live in Los Angeles:

> Well [my mom and dad] came separately I learned from the other side. I know my grandmother came here and then went back to Mexico and then came back again and then that's when my mother and my aunts came here. So, my mom and my grandmother my aunts and uncles were all living [nearby]. And my father attended the same adult school… afterschool classes to learn English. And that's basically how my mom and dad met.

Another 2nd-generation student who participated in focus group #2, talked about her mother and father, and how they came to live in Los Angeles. Though the reasons for many families is economic, a number of them mention how important it was for their parents that they could get a better education:

> Both of my parents are from Tlacolula, but they never met there. And they came here around the same age. And in both cases, they say that they came here because my grandpa came first, and they actually wanted [to have a good] education and to be working.

Another focus group #2 participant pointed out that for their family there was a back and forth interconnectedness. Moreover, several participants spoke about their grandparents coming to work and then returning to Mexico, only to have the son or daughter come in the next generation. When asked if she knew how her family came to live in Los Angeles, she explained,

> So, my dad was actually the first one that came. So, my dad came here at the age of 14. I believe he came here to work because there weren't a lot of job opportunities for them. So, my dad and his entire family, they worked really, really hard for it. So, we decided to come here. My uncle was actually the one that brought him here, so I crossed over there. From there. He started working here for about two or three years and then he decided to move back. And then he met my mom. They got married. My mom came here, she had one of us. Yeah, my mom came here, they worked for a bit, they moved back to Mexico for like a year. Then she had my brother. Yeah. So, two of my siblings were born over there.

One participant, I have called him "Angel," was separated for many years from his father, who was working in Los Angeles. When he was approaching high school age, his family decided that he

could come to the United States to study and to be closer to his father. When I met Angel, he had recently arrived from Oaxaca, and had just started his freshman year at the high school. He told me that he missed his family but was excited to begin his studies in California. He explained what he told his mother and father to convince them it would be a good idea for him to go to the U.S.,

> I told her that I wanted to come to study in another country because I would like to study more, because [my father] missed me, I would be learning to speak another language. And I told dad that I wanted to learn to speak six languages. Some people had suggested that I could stay in Oaxaca and learn these, but I did not want to wait so long [to learn English].

He expressed that this was an important decision to be made within the family and included a discussion about working in California once he arrived. Even though two of his older siblings attended university in Oaxaca, and had professional jobs, it was still hard for his family to make ends meet. Angel was the youngest of four children, and he indicated that it was time for him to help his family [from field notes]. He continued,

> I told [my dad] that I spent a lot of time thinking about leaving [Oaxaca]. In the end he told me that it would be good to come. Everything is so expensive, and it will be a burden for my father [to support me] because I don't help him. I'll be proving to my mom that it's okay to travel to another country to better myself.

Angel went on to explain that he wanted to prove wrong the "ideology" that just because you are from a small town you cannot achieve many things. He stated that he was trying to prove this way of thinking wrong.

Another parent participant, coincidentally from the same town as Angel had a different motivation for coming to Los Angeles back in the 1990s. Known as "Ms. Romero" for the purposes of this case study, she was very open in saying, "Well in Oaxaca I grew up with my mom, and my siblings - four women and two men - a pretty lonely family, with their father [gone to work in Los Angeles]. I came here alone to see my dad who was [already working here]." Ms. Romero went on to describe the difficult transition she experienced, stating that the work was very difficult, and the culture was very hard to get accustomed to. She arrived when she was fifteen years old, and

told me, "When I arrived, the truth is, these people told me that I couldn't get a job because I was a minor." It was evident from the way she said this that it was somewhat of a shock to her that she was required to attend school, and that getting work would be so challenging [from field notes].

Another participant, Ms. Navarro, had a number of family members who came to California, starting with her grandfather, back in the days of the Bracero program. She talked about the fact that California farmers have had a long history of going to pueblos in Mexico and actively recruited workers, making promises of large salaries and an improved quality of life. Ms. Navarro described her family's story:

> My paternal grandfather [I think] had a green card, he had permission to come and work in the United States. His card I think he first got it around 1950 or I might be wrong about that and like 1943. And then he had that green card and he talked about how recruiters would come to [his pueblo]. They wanted to get men to go on the train, [they were] farmers, like agriculture recruiters. Right. Because they wanted people to come and working in the agricultural field. So, they would take hundreds of men at a time and bring them into the United States to work in in the fields as part of the settled program. [My grandfather] was one of those men, and because he had that experience, he was one of the [early] people in our community of Tlacolula who established that point of migration. Several of those men brought their families later on.

Homelife and Traditions. Interviews with multiple participants indicate that the people with connections to Native communities of Oaxaca share some traditions with those from other regions of Mexico, however, others are unique. Study participants elaborated on some of the traditions practiced within their families. An expert informant, who I have called "David" described some traditions that are common in modern-day Zapotec-speaking pueblos in Oaxaca. He explained,

> Catholicism is most prevalent, but in some towns, it is a mixture between Catholicism and pre-Hispanic customs, although we know that the colonizers used pre-Hispanic traditions precisely to combine them with the religion they brought to more easily subdue the pueblos. I think that many families, [even if] they move to Los Angeles, would continue to celebrate the Day of the Dead. Others celebrate [their own specific] town festivals and I know this because on some occasions, I have heard that from Oaxaca they would send mezcal and a person would visit Los Angeles to go to prepare [a tradition drink called] *tejate* because the countrymen who lived in that city would have their own traditional party with a band food and everything.

Some of the focus group participants described what some of these traditions have been like in their own families. One young woman stated that she wasn't really used to the traditions, and so she didn't really feel that connected. She said she thinks this is because it's her parents who are from there, not her, and that she was born in Los Angeles, so she was more accustomed to life here [from field notes]. Another participant talked about how much she appreciated that her family has continued the traditions from Oaxaca:

> I was raised with these traditions 'cause you know my parents lived there their whole lives. We have a small community… so, we also like all gather round. We do like the traditions that we do over there. We do it here. So, we just continue it. I also like the weddings. A lot of people like continue to have the traditional weddings are supposed to be and stuff like that, so I am pretty connected to it.

The other young woman talked about a "feria" that they organized every year in their community both in Oaxaca and in LA. She talks about the celebration and the special drink they have, which is a traditional drink known as a "drink of the gods," called *tejate*.

> It's usually around September. So yeah, they usually have like this fair of different pueblos and they have like a contest of the different kinds of tejates that they have, they do the ice cream, the food, and then the do a small calenda, so like for example the people from Tlacolula they bring canastas and dress up… it's like a huge celebration.

She went on to explain that each pueblo has a different kind of dance, and everyone from that pueblo grows up doing their traditional dance, and it seems like this dance becomes part of who they are [from field notes]. One young woman explained how she actually did not usually do the dance from her family's pueblo, but always wanted to. The other participant in the focus group explained her experience with the dance by stating,

> I actually did do [the dance] like at a young age. My mom would put the layers and layers of clothing. Yeah. On a hot summer day and like we'll dance with the canastas and the music. Usually, I would use the piña because it was so small, and it's like the dance… I really liked it because like at the time because I was a kid, nobody would judge me and stuff. Right. And they do my braids. And then like I dress up the traditional [clothing] from Tlacolula.

During one of her interviews, Ms. Navarro indicated that being part of the community as an adult required a great deal of time. She lamented feeling the time pressure to take part in community celebrations [from field notes]. She explained,

> So, it's a challenging thing because I don't want to feel hypocritical - I want to participate… It could be a feast for patron saint. It could be a wedding or anniversary. It could be a baptism. It can be a celebration. Yeah, it could be someone's birthday. It could be anything. I mean it's like what the community is doing together you just kind of gather wherever that thing is. And so, in the context of that celebration you might be asked to be a "puppet" you know to be you know to be one of the people blessing the food got to be where the people blessing the drinks or whatever. You know I mean the gesture is good it's a gesture of gratitude. What I mean it's a gesture of gratitude and humility.

Family Values. Closely related to cultural traditions are the values upheld by each family. The case study field notes contain an entry regarding this topic from June 2019, which demonstrates that parents from communities in Oaxaca have concerns similar to other parents:

> I remember talking to a couple of the parents [from Oaxaca]. It was interesting because when I asked what [they would] like to see more of at the high school, and for several parents, there was more of a focus on character development - avoiding gangs and avoiding drugs - things like that. It was interesting because you know like cultural awareness wasn't really a thing they ever brought up. So, it was kind of like these basics you know, like I don't want my kid to be in a gang. I don't want my student and my child to be on drugs. And they were asking me if there was anything to address these concerns at the school [from field notes].

One parent participant, Angel's father, "Mr. Alonso," told me during his interview that he would like to have more Christian values taught at school. He realized that it might not be possible due to the laws in the U.S., but he clearly felt that this was an area that was missing. Mr. Alonso also described how concerning it was to observe student behavior at school. At one parent event we both attended, he indicated to me, "The students can be so disrespectful to the teachers" [from field notes].

In terms of education, a student participant, Luis, talked about his own family, in which education seemed to be highly valued:

> When a family migrates here but the child is already like you know older like in high school like a lot of people come and like what would you need to understand is Mexican schools.

> Schools in Mexico and Oaxaca are totally different than here. You know like the education is totally different.

Though his parents did not attend high school in their pueblo in Oaxaca, he asserted that there was an expectation for Luis to get a good education. he indicated that he felt the weight of these expectations at home, as he described, "to do better and go farther than his parents went in school." He continued,

> There's definitely a bunch of traditional roles like every parent that migrates here and has a child here in the U.S., [they're] automatically like they want the best for the child and they're going to send them to a good school and they always want them to go to college right away.

To explore some of the other values that may be underlying the perspectives of students and their families with connections to Indigenous pueblos in Oaxaca, I turned to the expert informant. He explained that Zapotec people he knows are very proud of their history, language, and traditions, which he collectively referred to as "a treasure that cannot be counted." In his experience traveling to other parts of Mexico, David told me that he got the impression that others appreciated Oaxaca very much. He recalled,

> Everyone loves Oaxaca and many even tell me 'Hey I'm also almost Oaxacan because my great grandmother was from there,' which is a bit funny to me, but I tell them that I am happy to know it and [glad] that they appreciate their roots. Many love the Guelaguetza festival and mezcal, so they always make positive comments about our culture, gastronomy and traditions.

In regard to his own values, David responded by saying,

> I believe that one of the challenges for Oaxaca in general is to combat poverty and improve educational conditions. What fills me with pride is all the ancestral treasures of my culture, the worldview of the peoples, ALL the good VALUES that they instill in us, respect for the family for our elders and for the people. That fills me with pride.
> [Creo que uno de los retos para Oaxaca en general es combatir la pobreza y mejorar las condiciones de educación. Lo que me llena de orgullo es todo los tesoros ancestrales de mi cultura, la cosmovisión de los pueblos, TODOS los buenos VALORES que nos inculcan, el respeto por la familia por nuestros mayores por la gente. Eso me llena de orgullo.]

Stability of Work and Housing. Students from Indigenous families from Oaxaca were often sharing space with a number of family members or others, and all of them had jobs outside of

school. One Saturday in the fall of my field work year, I went to a Angel's home, to help him with his math assignment. He lived in a small apartment with two of his aunts, and 4 cousins who looked to be around five or six years old. His father lived down the street from them, sharing a space with several other men. I sat in the middle of the room seated at a table with him, trying to help with algebra, while his cousins ran around, and his dad and aunts sat or stood nearby. The primary language everyone was speaking was Zapotec. The kids occasionally came up to join in the math lesson, speaking English without any accent [from field notes].

Another of the student participants, known as "Manuel," was born in the U.S., but went back to live in Oaxaca as an infant with his parents. He returned to the California at age fourteen in order to work and send money back to his family. Manuel's teachers and counselor let me know that he routinely fell asleep in class. Since they all knew he worked 40 hours per week, they were understanding about his tendency to sleep [from field notes]. He described his job, where he worked six days a week:

> I work a lot, I work hard here at my job, but the money [I receive] here [is good and] I send the money back [to my family]. I am a dishwasher, and I like the work. I work hard and they let me eat dinner there too… I have been in Mexico for a long time and I decided to come back and help my family, so I decided to come here.

Manuel explained that the jobs he had back in Oaxaca were different, like a sweeper or helping with animals, and he didn't get paid very much. At his job at a steakhouse in Los Angeles, he was making $14/hour, which allowed him to provide support for his family back in his pueblo in Oaxaca. He was able to obtain a food handler's certificate through the high school's vocational education program, which helped him get a raise at work. Manuel shared that on multiple occasions he experienced discrimination at work from other kitchen workers, who made fun of him for being "indio" and for speaking Zapotec.

Manuel shared some of his experiences with me one day before leaving for work. He told me that was treated badly by the other workers, and how they made fun of him for being slow to

understand directions. He also indicated that he had burned himself on the pans a number of times and did not receive assistance for these wounds [from field notes]. Like Angel, Manuel was living in an apartment with many others, and did not have a quiet space at home in which he could do his schoolwork. Manuel was living in a two-bedroom apartment which he shared with his male cousin (in his 20s), his cousin's wife, their two young children, another couple and their child, and three other working men from Oaxaca. Manuel paid $300/month for a sleeping space on a couch in the living room, where the three men slept as well.

Separation from Family Members. Several student participants indicated that they had experienced some type of separation from family members in order to come to California, or to continue living in Los Angeles. On several occasions when speaking about his family, Manuel, a senior in high school had noticeable tears welling up in his eyes. When I met Manuel, he had not seen his parents or siblings for nearly four years [from field notes]. He openly admitted that he was depressed. Since he was over 18, and since he wasn't able to drive, I offered to drive him to several long overdue doctor, psychologist, and testing appointments. Each time I drove him to one of these, he was sure to FaceTime his family in Oaxaca from my car. He spoke the variant of Zapotec from his pueblo with his family and translated for me so I that could greet his family. Manuel was the oldest child in the family, and the only one who was born in the U.S. Manuel shared with me that he would like to bring the rest of his family to live in Los Angeles, starting with his 16 year old brother [from field notes]. "It would be good for him to come and work, but he doesn't have papers," he told me one day.

The topic of family separation came up in an interview with Ms. Navarro, as she was speaking about her own father, who had left the family to go to work in California the year prior to the year she came with her mother and siblings,

> My dad went to the United States to work and to send back money to my mom… but what tends to happen when many of those men came to the United States, they would sometimes

> kind of forget about their family for a while back wherever they came from. She didn't know what his status was like if he had a job or if he had money or if he had another family or what was going on.

I was exposed to first-hand evidence of this phenomenon on one of my study trips to Oaxaca. I was taken to several pueblos by three graduate student friends/colleagues to learn more about the diversity of the Zapotec-speaking communities. One aspect about the pueblos that was noticeable almost immediately is the absence of working-age men. The majority of the inhabitants of the two pueblos I visited, which were at least a 20-minute drive away from the main thoroughfare, appeared to be women, children, and the elderly. In both pueblos we visited, there were kids on summer break from schools in Los Angeles. I met a Zapotec woman driving back in the "colectivo" whose sister lived in Culver City [from field notes]. After seeing these examples pueblos with few men residing there, I posed a question to David, an expert informant:

> Q: When you were a child, was it common to hear stories about families that moved to Los Angeles? [Cuando era niño, ¿era común escuchar historias sobre familias que se mudaron a Los Angeles?]
>
> A: Always, to Los Angeles and the northern states in Mexico like Baja California, Nayarit, and Jalisco. I have a cousin whose father left him when he was 3 years old and after a long time, he came back but I always used to tell my cousin that I could lend him my father because his whole childhood he felt sad because he couldn't be with his dad. [Siempre, a Los Angeles y a los estados del Norte de México como Baja California, Nayarit y Jalisco. Tengo un primo que su padre lo dejó cuando tenía 3 años y después de mucho tiempo regresó pero siempre yo le decía a mi primo que le prestaba a mi papá porque toda su niñés se sintió triste por no estar con su papá].

He went on to say, "Of those I know, they only leave and never return or if they return to Oaxaca, they do it once and never return to Los Angeles. I have a friend who has dual citizenship, so she does come twice a year."

When asked if they thought their parents made a good decision to come to Los Angeles, most of the participants said that they thought that it was. Luis looked at this question from the standpoint of safety and security, and focused on the decision to come to one California city over another, stating,

> You have like a lot of people going to go to San Diego with a lot of border control. Right now, a lot of Los Angeles feels like the place where like you wouldn't be hit with a lot of ICE. You know immigration control… Yeah but I feel like [it] was a good decision.

In regard to what she thought of her parents' decision to move to Los Angeles, a second-generation student from focus group 2 stated, "It's going well with the education and jobs and everything. Yeah. So right now, they are U.S. citizens. So, my dad was the first one to get his citizenship… my brother and I were born here, and then my mom [got hers]." When asked to speak about why a family might choose to leave their pueblo, David offered this response from the perspective of someone still living in Oaxaca,

> [I think] to better their lives and the lives of their family, so they will have more money to provide for their family and make their home, so they can work very hard and achieve this, so certainly they will come up against a lot of discrimination, and in general they will find better pay than here. But to move with the whole family, I think that they believe they will stop being poor and at least their children will have a better education if they move to that city.

When asked if he thought he made a good decision bringing his son to Los Angeles, one parent participant, Mr. Alonso, stated, [It's going] good and the reason to come was to work," though he went on to say that it would also be beneficial if his children could study… "that would give them something different than someone who has just always been in [our pueblo]."

Connection to Home Community. Some of the student participants reported having a very close connection to their communities in Oaxaca, while others did not. Parent participants from Zapotec-speaking communities all conveyed a strong connection to their pueblos, though with varying levels of participation in translocal activities and events. All participants gave responses which communicated pride in their roots, and in the case of Luis, a desire to spend more time in Oaxaca and to learn to speak Zapotec [from field notes]. One of the focus group participants described her level of connection to her community as minimal. She said,

> I don't really like going to Oaxaca just because I'm not used to living like that. My parents are the only ones from there, so technically they love it. They're like, oh, we're going to go for vacation time. And I have lots of family members over there. That's why I do a lot of

> visiting back and forth from both sides of the family. And actually, I have really close relatives like my great grandparents on my mom's side. They actually do come to the U.S. when they get the chance. But they don't like it here because they like it over there. There's a big difference, right?

Another focus group participant seemed to feel differently about visits to her parents' community in Oaxaca. She recounted a memory from one of her trips:

> I walked around the entire pueblo like dancing and stuff like that. I was like, I cannot believe what's happening because I have to go up the mountains and then walk around and do a lot of dancing. Yeah. Wow. I definitely am really proud to be [Zapotec]. I have like everyone here knows me and are all my friends like something. They joke around with me.

Several student participants talked about memories of their visits to Oaxaca. For example, one participant remembered,

> I've been twice and I just feel like there's something magical. Yeah. For sure. I gain like ten pounds every year because of whatever the food is so good. There it is a lot more natural. Like, I don't know how to explain it, but like it feels different, like maybe something gets lighter for some reason because, like, my mom, she does her hair and she every time she goes because she goes every year and she comes back and she's like, look at my hair and eyeliner it's because of the water. She explained to me because it comes from the mineral wealth, mineral water, you know, where to be honest like whenever I go, I always have to get like water bottles always because if I drink the water over there, it makes me sick.

Angel, who grew up in Oaxaca until the age of fourteen, indicated how proud he was to learn about the history of the Zapotecs who put up a fight against the Nahuas (Aztecs),

> I am proud, and I love to speak [my] language because [one day] it is something that will no longer be spoken. But [at my school] they didn't give Oaxaca any, they don't even talk about the region of Oaxaca in fact it's very unpopular to talk about Oaxaca. [Once] in Mitla I had a private class with my friend from history and we were walking through the [ancient buildings] and he was explaining to us everything that happened.

Angel's dad, Mr. Alonso, had more to add on the subject, stating that a relationship to the home community was very important and supported him. He stated that it didn't matter if he went several times a year or just once in a while for Christmas - he still feels very connected. He said, "It's home. Not to mention the fact that they speak Zapotec there, which always has just the right word, which Spanish doesn't always have."

Ms. Romero, who stayed in Oaxaca until age fifteen, mentioned that she still had family there - her mom, grandmother, my uncles, and cousins. She talked about her connection to her home community in Oaxaca:

> So, you have to [visit] the whole family, and go from time to time, and if you cannot, then you have to FaceTime. My boys already went to visit Oaxaca, they went to visit their grandmothers, and they liked it very much. My son didn't like it much since he speaks only a little bit of Zapotec. I don't get angry because in his house it is pure Spanish, [because] my husband and I speak variants of the language from Mitla and Tlacolula.

Ms. Navarro described her connection to her community in Oaxaca, having grown up partly there and partly in Los Angeles. She explained,

> Ever since we were able to get documents to travel back and forth, we've been pretty consistent and going back because my mom's side out of six siblings, three live there, and three live here. So, we still have close family. When my grandparents were alive, both my parents and I would try to go at least twice a year usually for Day of the Dead and then some other time like that wasn't a big feast or anything.

She went on to add,

> My family and I have a pretty close connection every time I arrive. It feels good because it feels like I'm going home or to my other home. And so, I have lots of friends and family still there, and an old boyfriend. When I arrive usually people start saying hi to me. People there usually say hello anyway but then they'll say how are you… when did you get here, how long are you going to be here… Especially in my immediate neighborhood but then around the community whenever I go to the market or visit family, I always find someone who I know, or I walk past my old elementary school, or past a lot of familiar places where I have a childhood connection.

The degree of connection participants felt to their community seemed to be rooted in a variety of factors, and the experiences were different for each person. Some of the factors impacting the connection were whether they were close to family living there, whether their experiences visiting were positive or not, and whether they spoke enough Zapotec to communicate with grandparents etc. There was a wide variety of perspectives, though most participants agreed that it was positive to remain connected, even though some were not able to travel as much as they wanted due to the cost. FaceTime seemed to be a popular substitute to going in person, and all the

participants I spoke to about this stated that they used FaceTime often to stay in touch with relatives in Oaxaca.

Identity Development and Indigeneity

In terms of identity, most participants chose to identify themselves to me as either as "from Oaxaca" or from their home community by name. Rarely did student or parent participants identify themselves to me as Mexican [from field notes]. Those who spoke a variant of the language identified themselves also as Zapotec, and by the pueblo where they grew up. Ms. Navarro was the only participant to identify as an Indigenous person, though when asked, several of the other participants also claimed this identity as well. In the study context, none of the first-generation student participants who grew up in Oaxaca referred to themselves using that term, however, some of the student participants born in the U.S. did.

Luis expressed the value of knowing his own family history, including the fact that he had recently began thinking about his identity as an *Indigenous person*. He also explained how meaningful it was that his father still owned some land in his pueblo in Oaxaca, and he seemed to feel a kind of connection to a place because of this [from field notes]. He emphasized the significance of this by summing up, "That land is so important… and to know your heritage of your family is very powerful." With respect to his own identity, David added,

> I always identified myself as a Mexican from the land of the beautiful and beloved Mexico or the beautiful sky, but I also brought grasshoppers and handicrafts with the name of Oaxaca because I always made my pueblo known. Many learned the name of my state thanks to the fact that they tried chocolate, exotic things and I left them some details brought from my land.

A participant in focus group 1 discussed the reaction some students had when they learned about their Indigenous roots, and how she felt that learning about Zapotec history really helped her learn about herself:

> A lot of the students go back and tell their parents, you know. You can look it up and show it to them like something has been written for this long. There's a super long history. There's this, like, really intense value. And it helps us understand our own selves. It totally helped me understand once I acknowledged that I understood where my history stood and like how long, you know, for all that time that I felt the shame, I really felt like it was a type of violence upon me because of all the negative feelings that I associated with my identity.

When asked if it was our responsibility as teachers and school staff to support kids in their identity development, the school social worker, Ms. Ortega said, "It is our job. We're creating future leaders here." She continued,

> I mean we have all these clubs, and you don't have to identify in order to be part of a group. But we have these clubs to help them identify. I wish that the kids would request more of it because I really think that as soon as there is a need, we are ready to take that on and I think that what does make [our school] unique is that we are very diverse. I mean worldwide we have every kid and every language within our school… and that affects our Oaxacan community.

Ms. Navarro shared how she typically identifies herself to others:

> So, I usually say that I'm from Oaxaca. It's a place it's a state in the south of Mexico because I like to acknowledge the fact that there is diversity in Mexico. And so, the North or the center is very different than the South. I do that first and then I tell them that that I'm Zapotec. And then people usually don't know what that means. So, I say well I belong to an Indigenous society. And most people just have no idea what any of that means.

She continued to explain the reason she and other Indigenous people may not choose a hyphenated name when stating their ethnic identity to others, or even one which contains the name of the nation-state(s) created as a consequence of colonialism. She explained,

> How about just for example when people just group everybody together from Mexico as "Mexican." Is that in conflict with saying you're from a first community of Mexico? Like, I don't know if that makes sense. Some people I've met like the source of that term *bilocal* … to kind of not recognize the two separate countries. It is more like I would never say I'm Mexican-American. I think those are. I mean if whoever calls themselves that, if they knew what that means historically, then they would know that that's a political statement.

She continued to explain why she thought it was critical for high school students to feel supported and safe as they explored these issues, citing "how difficult it must be for youth to navigate." She explained,

> I mean if I have a hard time you know bringing that up or responding I'm sure high school kids have a really hard time! And especially if you don't know that you have a right to be respected because everyone's treating you or people like you or people who identify as a certain thing in this case like as if Indigenous people didn't have any rights or even a right to be respected or to be considered as equal.

She went on to give her perspective on how to go about supporting students' identity development in high school. She responded,

> I think about especially… what are ways in which a school institution can support such a healthy exploration of an identity like that so that kids can develop and grow and feel supported and not that they were impeded in some way from becoming who they are? They think curriculum would really help. I mean for sure. Because that's our job as educators.

One student participant in the study, Luis, was very open about the fact that, as a junior in high school, he was just starting to learn more about his Indigenous roots. In fact, one day after the conclusion of our second interview, he stated, "I didn't even know I was Indigenous until this year" [from field notes]. Luis went on to say that his exploration began when his older sister started bringing home some of the readings from her Chicano studies class at a local university. Luis said in fact that he was thinking about starting to call himself "Chicano" (or "Chicanx" based on his understanding that the "'x' stood for 'Indigenous'."

Ms. Navarro recalled these struggles as a youth and talked about her own journey and the conclusions she arrived to with regard to her identity as an Indigenous person from Oaxaca. Not only is it important for these students to figure out who they are and who they want to be for their own development, she said, but they also must decide if they will actively take a stance to protect and promote the human and linguistic rights of their people. She explained,

> So, I was saying that I'm very political and I'm an activist for the rights of indigenous people for Indigenous languages [and] for the recognition of Indigenous presence. I'm an activist and my goal is for the general society to acknowledge that the Americas are founded on Indigenous lands. That's [what I say] whenever I have conversations, wherever I go and on all the projects that I'm involved in.

She went on to talk about how the choice to defend her ideals sometimes put her in the position of having to educate others.

> And so, there's a lot of literature that… [use terms] like first nations, first communities, first peoples of the Americas. And does that strike you as respectful or as like complicated? [One term] I don't use is the word Indian. That's the one word I do not use. Well like on purpose, I don't use it in English or in Spanish… in Mexico historically that word is just heavy with prejudice and racism and I choose not to use it. So, [I prefer] the first communities and First Nations which tends to be more common in the Canadian literature.

Ms. Navarro went on to explain the importance of using the word "pueblo" instead of "village," when referring to Native communities of Mexico, specifically because the latter term has the connotation of a place with inhabitants who are less educated and less sophisticated.

These examples illustrate how the challenges of being a young person who may also be a new immigrant, a student of color, and an English Language Learner, are made even more so by the extra layer of complexity added by an increasing awareness and embracing of an identity as an Indigenous person. In addition to all of these considerations, youth with connections to Native communities of Oaxaca, must navigate the complicated psychological space created by the evolving forces of globalization and displacement, a translocal community which exists in and around Los Angeles.

The expert informant for this study, David, who is a graduate student and young man from a Zapotec community in Oaxaca, explained what, in his opinion, the main differences were between students at the university with connections to Indigenous communities vs. those who do not:

> Physically [there are none, but] culturally a lot because they certainly grew up in different contexts, for example (with more respect for nature and solidarity between the community), perhaps you would think that non-Indigenous children could discriminate against children of Indigenous peoples, in general everything happens during childhood. But when they are young and growing up, I think that now more recognition has been given to the peoples and it is likely that non-Indigenous students respect those who they are. Something that happened to me in my high school is that I saw the classmates from Indigenous communities, we were more responsible, and we fulfilled all of the tasks, unlike the kids who lived more in urban areas and who no longer knew what culture they were but that they were still oaxaqueños.

And, of the modern day relationship between Zapotec communities and other Indigenous communities of Oaxaca:

> The relationship between the Zapotecs and Mixtecs is good, [we are] not very close because we are geographically far apart, but there is a lot of difference in physical traits between us. In the way we speak, eat, even say hello, we are very different.
> [La relación entre zapotecos y mixtecos es buena, no es muy estrecha porque estamos muy separados geográficamente pero hay mucha diferencia en rasgos físicos con ellos. En la forma de hablar, de comer, incluso de saludar somos muy diferentes.]

David went on to say that in his circle of friends they were all proud of their identity as Zapotec people, but he also recounted a story of an acquaintance from his time at the university who encountered a great deal of discrimination because he spoke an Indigenous language. David believd that for this reason, this acquaintance of his shied away from his roots for a number of years. David recalled,

> His name is J, and since he was young, he had enjoyed his studies, but in his pueblo they didn't have access to the upper grades, so he had to travel, just before adolescence, to [another] school… where others made fun of him a lot because he couldn't speak Spanish well, since his native language is the only one they spoke at home. This caused him such trauma that he carried it with him until his graduate studies, nevertheless when I spoke with him and helped him to realize that he had an invaluable treasure that was his language, he began to change his perspective and helped me record some videos in his language for a school project he had and… he felt more secure.

In one interview, the principal, who will be called "Ms. Tavira," talked about some of the ways in which discrimination that is experienced against Indigenous persons can be carried across borders and enter the halls of Los Angeles schools:

> I think there is a perception and I've heard people and other kids saying because they're Indigenous, they're not as educated. And that may be the reason why some kids still [don't] want to be labeled as that, is what I used to observe… And they would you know call them "indios" you know that's in a negative way. That's what I remember seeing [at another high school]. I don't see that here.

The school social worker, "Ms. Ortega" added her knowledge about the racism Indigenous people from Mexico experience in that country, by stating,

> I'm second generation Mexican. I was born here but even I spend a lot of time in Mexico where you know, there's a lot of racism against the Indigenous historically. So, well that is historically an Indigenous [country]. So, as a Mexican I saw [myself] as a lot more Indigenous. Granted, they speak their Indigenous language though right. So, I thought when I started working [with these families] we were talking like oh we're all Mexican. But no. Granted similar more about like all the immigrant story and the reason why they come here.

> Same reason my parents came here… for better or more [opportunities]. But I did notice something that they are very…. once again generalizing… but they're very united in regard to community. I'm going to say it's a [pueblo/community] mentality.

With respect to native languages spoken by people from Native communities of Mexico, Ms. Tavira described the first time she realized the linguistic differences of Indigenous students from Mexico at school, by stating,

> And that's when I became aware of this population of students because you know I would speak to them in Spanish and I'm thinking why don't you understand? And they would look at me you with the blank face and even some of our teachers would wonder if there was something wrong with the kids. You know that kind of stigma. And that's when I initially became aware and it opened my eyes, you know? You know that their language is not Spanish.

She continued to explain some of the ways this additional challenge was present in the school lives of some Indigenous students from Oaxaca, and also ways in which this awareness impacted her decisions as an administrator,

> I didn't have a person who spoke that language, so I had to rely on other kids... Same thing we don't have that extra support. So, just based on what I've seen, I would say yes, they do struggle more because they're trying to manage [learning] Spanish and English at the same time. And then if we're talking about geometry for instance then there is another sort of language. That's why we had to make some changes around our master schedule with our kids that would not take geometry until later on when they were more proficient in English, because they struggled a lot with the language.

Ms. Ortega also spoke about the first time she became aware of some of the linguistic differences between the Indigenous families from Oaxaca and other families from Mexico:

> I didn't start working with families from Oaxaca until I started working here. And so, I gradually became more aware… and this is twelve thirteen years ago of the large Oaxacan community, but not how unique it was. So, when I would start having parent meetings I would I notice that they would speak English with an accent. And so, then I assured them we could speak Spanish, but they would keep directing me in English. And I say it's okay I speak Spanish, and some of them were like, I feel more comfortable in English. So, it opened up my eyes to like oh you mean because you're from Oaxaca, from Mexico, but you don't speak Spanish.

With respect to cultural differences of Indigenous students from Oaxaca, Mr. Ruiz, described what he noticed that stood out from other students who came from Mexico. He recalled,

> They'll take a Spanish for Spanish-speakers class and their dad comes around and then they come out with their altars and stuff and that really shows… the background and their culture and they bring pictures of that with the kids or what they do at home and the families usually identify as being Zapotec and like actually Indigenous people.

Native American Themes. One of the interesting qualities of the school in which I conducted my fieldwork, was the fact that there is a sacred site of the Gabrielino-Tongva people right on campus. I thought this was notable given the community of students at the center of the case study and focus on the issues and challenges facing Native students. Mr. Ruiz spoke about the springs stating, "The Tongva sacred springs used to be more a part of the school community. Now a new person from the tribe has taken over and they haven't done as many activities for the school or for the students." A different administrator who I have called "Ms. Delgado," talked about the springs, and how most students who have attended the school for a while have visited the site. She explained:

> So, we can use this space over there the sacred springs with permission. And so, for example as a science teacher that was one of the first questions that I asked in my interview actually. I said hey can we use that space because it's a natural space, right? And that's hard to find. It's undisturbed. And so, what I learned was that of course we have to ask permission because it is sacred ground. And so, then we would you know describe what we want to do in the space - for me it was water sampling or observing the wildlife that was in the ponds and just tabulating things and testing things out. And so, for me just fine to go down there.

She went on to explain how other teachers were able to access the site as part of their lessons:

> One of the Spanish teachers has the key to get in there and she communicates regularly with the caretaker of the springs, the person the woman who runs all the programming that happens in there around Indigenous Peoples Day. Well, they have a celebration over there and they invite you know the full school community - staff, students, everybody, and then they do you know some dancing some crafts it's like a little mini powwow kind of thing. And it's pretty fun. There used to be classrooms down there. Mr. Leon you may have met the science teacher.

Ms. Navarro spoke about her recollections about the springs when attending school in the 1990s:

> I think it was a really interesting place because I had grown up in this neighborhood so I always knew the school as a place where I could go play because when we were little younger. Like when I wasn't even in high school after hours we'd go there and play. We'd go to the springs and there were fish there… It's Tongva sacred ground. I would go there with

> my brothers and play. So. I always kind of waited for when I would get a chance to go there as a student.

It was notable that Ms. Ortega made the connection between the presence of the sacred springs and the impact this might have on Indigenous students from Oaxaca attending the school, stating,

> You already have a thing spring here of the Indigenous people. There is a celebration, and our students are invited to participate from the Tongva people. Because we have the Indian Springs… that's just what it's called historically. It's gated off it's down there and it's actually neat - the native springs that come in from the mountains. Our senior breakfast is held there. So, there is an awareness of sorts, but could we do more? Yes. We could do much more in terms of how students can gain more knowledge about [Native people].

With respect to the history of colonialism and the impacts on Indigenous communities, Ms. Navarro, who is also a professor at an LA-area university, talked about Mexico and the history of injustices towards such communities. She explained,

> We talk about conquest as a process and students say so we weren't conquered. And my answer is No. Yes, there was a military battle and yes, there was death and destruction and there was colonialism, but conquest is a process… look at the resiliency of Indigenous communities and like the ways in which Indigenous people have, to varying degrees, succeeded in maintaining aspects of their identity.

She went on to explain how difficult it is for Indigenous students to navigate between finding pride in their history and accomplishments and falling into the "fetishization" of pre-Columbian America. She added,

> But we want to acknowledge the fact that there have been some aspects of society culture tradition knowledge that have been guarded and reproduced and that we can still find today. So, I ask them to be careful to not fetishize, to not exoticize, to not idealize, but to acknowledge intellectual achievements. Internal knowledge and like how that knowledge had to be repackaged under colonialism because colonialism tried to do away with everything pre-Columbian. [They did away with] anything that didn't serve the interests of the Spanish crown…

She explained why it was in the best interest of the colonizers to attempt to erase or overshadow the accomplishments of the Native communities of Mexico. She also pointed out why it would be important for Indigenous students to learn accurate representations about their people:

> But you know so the big thing right now is like the Day of the Dead and like face painting. People don't paint their face in their communities [in Oaxaca]. [It's just not] something they

> do. But like a lot of the Chicano students, they're like, 'Oh we're being traditional, we're like doing what our ancestors did.' It's like no - they didn't do that.

She asserted that students' efforts to get acquainted with the histories of their heritage community would inevitably lead to a greater sense of the complexity of historical events and the cultural meaning they may take on:

> And plus, how do you hold onto contradictions like the Nahuas - they were all over the place, right? And [during their efforts at expansion, were often not real nice to their neighbors, or took back prisoners and maybe they were colonizers. Yeah, they were also colonized so the colonizers were colonized…

Translocality. One visual example representation of the complexities around the phenomenon known as Oaxacalifornia was presented during the Visualizing Language exhibit at the Central Library in downtown LA. This installation went up during the year of my fieldwork and consisted of several large murals with depictions of life in a *translocal* world. The exhibit also featured stories and video of the sights and sounds of the artists and their families and friends from the sister pueblo of Tlacolula de Matamoros, in Oaxaca. All around the exhibit space were little kiosks, with information in Spanish, English, and Zapotec, with audio recordings by various LA residents with connections to Zapotec-speaking communities in Oaxaca. During a presentation to the AVID class, Ms. Navarro suggested to students that an exhibit like that could be a great way for them to see their heritage represented proudly in a public place in the city. What made it even more interesting, the murals, which were painted by three young artists connected to Tlacoluca, were hung just below the existing murals, which depicted disturbing scenes portraying the period of contact between European invaders and the first people of California:

> Young guys… put together a series of murals in the rotunda of the Central Library… That exhibit became such a big deal, like it was in The New York Times, it was in the Mexican newspapers and the L.A. Times Weekly. It was on KCET… And one of the most controversial things was that the murals that are there now were painted in 1933, and they're very racist. So, these were kind of a reaction to the murals that are there now. Now, here is a young mother. She's a mom and her child. The child has these tattoos on his arm. They're not meant to be literal. They're a metaphor for the experience that people of low income or

> migrants have when they come from other countries, they could be from any country, but in this case, of course, it's Mexico.

She went on to explain how she has described this space known as Oaxacalifornia. She continued, in regard to immigrants coming from Oaxaca,

> [They are all over] the United States but particularly in California which leads to me to introduce the concept of California as literal but then the also kind of more philosophical idea of Oaxacans who live in California which is sort of a space that's bilocal in nature and that people who are in that space have parts of two different worlds. If people recognize Oaxacalifornia… [then] their artwork acknowledges that it is a result of these two worlds.

Zapotec Language(s). Manuel, who is a native speaker of the Zapotec language spoken in the pueblo where his family lives in Oaxaca told me about his thoughts about how school staff reacted to the fact that he spoke an Indigenous language:

> The teachers here support you as Indigenous people. The teachers [tell me they] want to learn zapoteco, and they want to speak zapoteco too sometimes! I say it's not impossible to be able to learn zapoteco, and one day we can teach them to love zapoteco so that they can speak and have some words certain times going to work with [students from Oaxaca] I love people that I can teach words in zapoteco.

Manuel seemed to describe a validating experience at school, while at work, the story was often very different. Another participant, Luis, spoke about the importance of the language to him and his family, especially in his case, so he could communicate with his grandmother:

> Well, I used to be really into it. My dad is a fluent speaker because my grandmother she doesn't speak any Spanish. She speaks only Zapotec. But my grandfather speaks Spanish too. So, you know my dad is [helping me learn] so I can talk to his mom. Yeah, for sure. And I've been trying to learn it personally, I think it's great. I used to have this history teacher who was also like obsessed with the history of Zapotecs. I used to like every day in lunch I used to always go into his room, and he would teach me new word and some phrases that I've been going [to tell my dad].

Luis continued,

> And then I try those phrases but then usually my dad calls her and then he usually just translates... And I hear these words and I'm like, I want to learn these words so badly so I can talk to my grandma. You know she's like miles away in Mexico, and [I think], 'Hey I'm here and like I want to communicate!' Now - before it's too late… before she passes.

After being asked, David told me why it might be difficult to offer Zapotec classes at schools in Los Angeles as a way for students to keep up their language skills even after migration. He explained that there are more than 40 variants of Zapotec spoken in his region of Oaxaca, and that some people no longer understand each other because the accents change from pueblo to pueblo. He went on to give an example of how sometimes help in learning one's own heritage language may come from unexpected teachers:

> Yes, in my town something curious happened. Some foreigners came to learn our language, they wrote it and then they made books to teach. I thank them very much because if it weren't for them now, we would not have anything and they are very kind people, in fact when they arrived more than 50 years ago the people of the town did not love them, but they soon won the affection of the people and I know some Americans now who speak English, Spanish and Zapotec, isn't that interesting? So, it is possible to learn my language BUT I know communities that their languages are in danger of extinction because they have nothing written down.
> [Sí, en mi pueblo ocurrió algo curioso. Unos extranjeros vinieron a aprender nuestra lengua, la escribieron y luego hicieron libros para enseñar. Yo les agradezco mucho porque si no fuera por ellos ahora no tuviéramos nada y son personas muy amables, de hecho cuando llegaron hace más de 50 años las personas del pueblo no los querían pero pronto se ganaron el cariño de la gente y conozco algunos norteamericanos que hablan inglés, castellano y zapoteco ¿no es interesante? Entonces sí es posible aprender mi lengua PERO conozco comunidades que sus lenguas están en peligro de extinción porque no tienen nada escrito.]

When asked if his school in a Zapotec-speaking pueblo in Mexico supported his learning about Zapotec language and history, David talked about his own experience at school,

> The teachers are from outside so NO, the school did not support me, but yes, they did let us do assignments to write about stories of our grandparents etc. But they don't know about our pueblo. [Los maestros son de fuera entonces NO, la escuela no me apoyó pero si nos dejaban tareas para escribir historias de los abuelos etc. Pero ellos no conocen de nuestro pueblo.]

During one of our interviews, the principal revealed that she had considered finding a Zapotec translator. However, they opted instead for the practice of having the parent outreach coordinator arrange to have a family member who was comfortable speaking both Zapotec and Spanish (or English) to accompany parents to the school for meetings and events [from field notes]. She observed of the (sometimes very young) translators, that oftentimes these kids who were

learning both Spanish and English were often more proficient than their [monolingual] peers. She stated, "It was very interesting to learn that… it was a new learning for me."

One participant from focus group 1 recalled of her early experience visiting family in Oaxaca and being expected to speak Zapotec. Speaking about her grandmother, she remembered,

> I suppose she didn't know how to teach me, like she would talk to me, but then I would ask her like, OK, but [how do you say?] Just like we didn't know we didn't have a system. There was no system because they're like she would just start talking to me in Zapotec. And I had no idea what she was talking about. would understand, like two words, you know, and then she would laugh at me, but lovingly, not like at me, but like why don't you understand me? I'm like, because I don't speak, you know? But now that I've been in the process of learning it because I was all around it when I was a little kid, like when I was a little kid, I actually I mean, I hung out with my grandparents, so I heard it until I was like six years old.

One of the participants in focus group 2 talked about the variety of abilities in speaking Zapotec that exists within her own family. She, like other participants, mentioned some regret at not being able to speak now that she has gotten older:

> For me, my dad and my sister are fluent. My mom understands it fully, but she struggles a little bit to speak it. I personally don't speak it or understand it. I understand very, very little like just the basics. Yeah, I would have loved to hear it by speaking and everything, but unfortunately my parents didn't teach me.

Another focus group 2 participant brought up the solidarity among Zapotec-speakers on campus even though they are from diverse pueblos in Oaxaca. He spoke of the interactions between himself and other Zapotec-speaking peers, and his sense of belonging on campus:

> So, a lot of [Zapotec-speaking kids] are like fighting with each other, and we're speaking like Zapotec. And they were like, oh, you see this? And I just feel like it's interesting because even though Zapotec is alike but they're pretty different, like they have different accents and how people say things differently. But I think overall, like they are pretty aware of the culture that we have here on campus. And they, like, help us with it, too.

Angel, a native Zapotec speaker, described what his experiences at school were like with other students who spoke the language:

> There was another boy [from] another town that spoke very different from ours… it depends on each [variant of] zapoteco for each town it has their tonality their way of saying it and some words change. For example, where your family lives in Oaxaca and what town.

> So, to form a group after school to speak zapoteco would be too difficult because they are too many different [variants].

Angel went on to say that there is another young man who he can understand, since they are from the same pueblo… however that boy, he said, was always in a bad mood and they have had many disagreements. There are challenges and complexities in forming a language group, both because of the multiple variants of Zapotec, and also the interpersonal factors that might make such groups undesirable to participants.

In reference to variants of Zapotec that have fewer and fewer speakers with each passing generation, Angel stated that he understood that the version of the language spoken in Tlacolula was almost gone. This, he told me, is because the pueblo sits right alongside a major highway, and therefore has become a hub for transportation and the marketplace leading to increased rates of Spanish spoken in that particular location [from fieldnotes]. The people who live in more remote pueblos, and the migrants who are sent from them, are more likely to speak their unique variant of Zapotec, and in the case of the latter, to bring that linguistic tradition with them to Los Angeles.

In regard to the pride in identity expressed by students who are able to speak their heritage language, Angel stated,

> You were seeing the best in me… when there was a song in my language, in Zapotec… I am proud of [my language] and I love to speak that language because as I say it is something that will no longer be spoken [one day].

Angel's father, Mr. Alonso, said during his interview,

> Angel tells me that for him it is very important to keep speaking Zapotec too. Yes, there are many speakers, here you can talk to them, but they don't want to talk to you. Then those who come here are young people who only want to speak pure Spanish and I think it's a pity. Yes, because already it does not have importance to them.

When asked if he was able to speak Zapotec when he went to school, and if he thought things were changing, Mr. Alonso stated, "Unfortunately, already when I [was growing up] no longer, [but] before, yes, [lessons were] in zapoteco. But now yes, they say that there are bilingual and cultural

schools and now, in my pueblo, they are already giving classes in zapoteco." From a student perspective, Manuel indicated that he planned to keep up his Zapotec skills while living in the U.S. He explained,

> It is possible here to maintain your zapoteco. It is not is not difficult to continue speaking zapoteco [but] you must continue practicing it every day with your relatives that come from [Oaxaca], and to chat with them in zapoteco. Not to lose it… no, no, and not to have shame of speaking zapoteco which they tell us is ignorant or something, that does not matter. What matters is to continue speaking that language, to know where we come from, to conserve our languages. Why is it a shame to speak zapoteco? How it is that people make fun of someone for speaking zapoteco?

Discrimination and Microaggressions

Student Survey Data. On the student survey, 23/53 (43%) of total respondents reported witnessing or hearing about acts of discrimination at school based on race or ethnicity. The remaining respondents either left this question blank or indicated that they had not. Of the students which identified a connection to a Zapotec community in Oaxaca, one student left this question blank, five indicated that "no" (they had never been involved or witnessed discrimination). The following statements are some of the verbatim excerpts from the student survey in response to the following question:

Q: Have you ever been involved in or witnessed discrimination or bullying *at your school based on race/ethnicity?*

Students with connection to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca	All other students
"Yes a race war against some kids once in a while."	*"Yes, people make racist remarks based upon ignorance."*
"Yes because they laugh when we do not speak English."	*"I've definitely been called a chink or chinky but never at a problematic level."*
"Is a sphiking not inglish is they laugh."	*"I've heard certain names being saing said as jokes that are offensive."*
"Yes sometimes when I can't understand or speak English."	*"Yes my freshman year a group of black kids were disrespectful about Cesar Chavez Day and when the teacher said to not eat grapes they said loudly, "I don't care, I'm eating all the grapes!" and laughed."*

"Yes, some times, when someone don't speak 125nglish, or because you are 'Morales' or 'Oxaca.'"	*"Yes, people from 'color' or African American always refer to me like White when the true is that I am from a Latino country and they believe people there isn't White."*
"I was bully when I was in elementary school."	*"We make fun of each other."*
All other students	*"People think is fun when another people can't speak English."*
"Yes when I just get here in my freshman year I wasn't talking English and I was feeling lost and everyone was laughing at me."	*"Sometime people say things bad of my because They have idea of That I not understand Just 1 time because I'm muslim."*
"Yes, white and black people discriminate latino people."	*"When I can't speak English."*
"Yes one guy were told, 'you go back to your country' because he did not speak English and he was come from Mexico,"	*"I've personally never have seen it but people I know tell me about situations."*

[source: student survey]

When asked specifically about discrimination based on language ability, the vast majority of survey respondents (91%) indicated that they have been the target of or had witnessed some form of discrimination based on English language ability.

Other forms of discrimination and microaggressions were mentioned by a number of participants. Manuel mentioned the way other workers from Mexico treated him at the restaurant where they all worked together in the kitchen. He stated that they would call him derogatory names such as "indio," exclude him from discussions, and make fun of him for speaking his native language [from field notes].

At her presentation to the senior AVID class, Ms. Navarro talked about the frustration she has experienced as an Indigenous woman because so many people associate her identity with people of the past and not the present:

> A lot of tourists will go to an archaeological site. They'll say, oh, look at your "ruins." I get so mad because they're not ruins. It's you know, it's an ancient site. It's a sacred site, and an archaeological site. But the people who are the ancestors of those societies and those cultures are still around.

She continued to explain,

> I get mad because I said, you know what, without math, without physics, without engineering, without scientific process, these structures would not be standing here two thousand years after they were built because they were built over 2000 years ago. Some of them, like when you see the intricate patterns in some of the sites and people are like, oh, how pretty. You know, the way selfies, we just call pretty. They don't talk about what actually like the intelligence or the intellectual power that went into the creation of those sites.

Concerns Related to Language

As stated above, the most commonly reported incidents of microaggressive acts involved students making derogatory statements towards English Language Learners and based on their English speaking abilities. The following section reports findings in areas related to language in response to the study research question about the impact of language issues on academic achievement and social/emotional functioning. Language issues reported here represent both barriers and facilitators to student success.

Language Brokering. Also called Natural Translation, para-phrasing, and family interpreting, language broking is "work that children of immigrants do as they use their skills in two languages to read, write, listen, speak, and do other things for their families" (Faulstich Orellana, 2009, p. 1). The work that immigrant children do is necessary for their families to carry on the day to day business of life. This work both "shapes and is shaped by the routine practices of the household" (Faulstich Orellana, 2009, p. 2). This important work also has an impact on every aspect of the life of the child's who is asked to do this work (Faulstich Orellana, 2009). These impacts can be positive or negative, as will be illustrated in the examples which follow.

Ms. Navarro talked about her experience in elementary school in which she was asked by her teacher to be the personal translator for a new student in the class:

> In third grade there was a kid whose name was his was I still remember his name. And he didn't speak English. I remember he was like from Bellflower. But he didn't speak English. And he I think he had a learning disability now thinking about it because we were doing

> things like numbers and he didn't know them. [The teacher] sat him next to me and she basically made me translate all of the lessons that we were having. And how could that be. I was so annoyed because I felt like I was being forced to do something but it's not that I didn't want to do it, it was that I was being forced to do something that I couldn't do.

She expressed her frustration at having to fulfill this responsibility while she herself was still trying to learn:

> I felt that [my teacher] was punishing me when I didn't do it right. I remember that kid. He just didn't get it. Like you didn't get numbers and I would get him so frustrated. I remember one time we had a fight like we literally like we're slapping each other… And because he didn't want to listen to me and because I was trying to explain and because the teacher was getting mad at me and I remember we had a fight like yeah, in third grade. And I don't know if she cared or she realized that I had just learned English 2 years before or like a year and a half before.

Luis recalled one time in which he went to the guidance office to ask a question about his own schedule, and he was detained in order to assist school staff communicate with another student. He had gone to the office to discuss his own schedule, but there was a student struggling to speak English and was asked to translate everything. he recalled,

> I thought it was kind of crazy to think like this is that student's future. These are the classes they're taking. This is to determine their whole life, right? Whether he's going to go to college or whatever… and how to know what to take and not to drop.

The preceding section covered a number of contextual themes which address the first research question for this case study and provide information and evidence to support the impact of a variety of factors on the academic achievement and social/emotional well-being of vulnerable populations such as students with connections to Native communities in Oaxaca. In the next section, the second research question will be addressed, which pertains more to a series of school and district practices that impact overall student success.

II. Impacts of School-Based Practices on Student Success.

Impacts of Support Services

English Language Development (ELD) Programs. A number of issues were discussed across participant interviews with regard to challenges facing students who are native speakers of languages other than English, which would include newly arrived students from pueblos in Oaxaca. Student with limited English proficiency at the time of school enrollment, are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs). Teachers mentioned challenges related to testing, program implementation, and reclassification (exiting the program). The following examples give a sense of the challenges faced by students and staff associated with the ELD program at the school of focus for this case study.

ELD Program Identification. I spoke with several staff members associated with the ELD program who had knowledge of the identification process. Some had clear opinions about the level of difficulty of the new assessment, known as the ELPAC, which replaced the old test, the CELDT, about two years ago. This required assessment is given initially when the results of a home language survey and/or staff concern signal the need to assess. The school social worker briefly explained the initial screening process for a hypothetical student who had recently arrived from Oaxaca:

> So, if we have a student who had never attended school in the United States, and it's the first time enrolling… our bilingual coordinator has them take a placement test. Then their written and full and verbal language [score] determines where in the ELD program [they will be placed].

It is also clear that the test is given at time of first enrollment, to any student with a language other than English spoken at home, as indicated on the Home Language Survey. Subsequently, the assessment becomes a means by which students' progress is kept track of, and it is the mechanism that allows them to "reclassify" as English proficient (FEP). This reclassification can make a big difference in the life of a student in terms of the courses they can take, and consequently, passing

the test can impact their future educational plans. Mr. Ruiz talked about the new test [ELPAC] compared to the old one [CELDT],

> [The ELPAC] is a little longer. The listening and speaking parts are extremely complicated. The topic they had to talk about [last time I gave it] was light refraction. [I tell them] I know you know what that is because I know you studied it last year in your physics class. So, you tell me what light refraction is all about, right? Exactly. So, they're supposed to listen to this stuff for about three and a half minutes and then retell what that thing is all about.

If students don't pass, they are labelled an "English Learner" (EL), and are assigned to two sections of English Language Development (ELD) classes. One of the advanced ELD instructors, "Ms. Alber," spoke about the challenges inherent in taking the test repeatedly and not being able to pass it in order to be "reclassified,"

> [I wonder] about the overall impact they feel. Say a kid stays in the ELD classes because they don't get reclassified. What's the impact on their college prospects or their academic prospects because they're not getting past [the test]? Like my kids are all advanced, which means they've been in the ELD program five or more years. But what that means is they just can't get out of here… it's a tiny group, but for whatever reason [they don't pass the test].

She speculated that maybe some of these students may have unidentified learning disabilities and would possibly benefit from taking the test with IEP accommodations [from field notes]. She explained,

> [Some students] probably should have [an IEP], but then there's also the thing if there's no discrepancy between your performance and your ability, [you won't qualify]. Let's say you just have kind of low IQ. Right. Well that's just you and you're gonna have a hard time doing anything and that includes passing these tests like that kid that I was telling you about. He is so far behind in his credits he had to go to continuation school.

This illustrates how not being able to pass the ELPAC and to reclassify as an English proficient student could pose a serious barrier for EL students. Ms. Alber also shared with me privately that she wasn't sure if native English speaking kids would be able to pass the ELPAC. She told me she thought it would be interesting to administer it to a regular English 4 class and see how many would pass [from field notes].

ELD Services. One aspect I noticed about the ELD program during the year of my fieldwork, which could potentially be another barrier to success for students who are learning English, is that due to limited time for additional classes, students in the ELD program had to take the ELD series instead of regular English classes. This means that EL students missed out on the content in English courses across one or more years of high school, with great impact on their future educational trajectories [from field notes]. In addition, the classes, which are less rigorous than most English core classes, had a number of issues from the perspective of the teachers. Mr. Ruiz explained,

> In regards the actual I'm expecting this year to be even worse. I again as I said my criticism of the current program right now is the fact that you don't get a chance to hold anybody back. You did a whole year, and you pass. Yes. That's an automatic no matter what you do. The assumption being that a four year English would be more than enough for you to pick up that level and get the next level. The reality is totally different.

When asked about the new curriculum he was asked to start using this year, Mr. Ruiz was visibly discouraged. He told me how it didn't make sense to him, and despite the fact that the new department administrator was proud of the fact that it was "evidence-based," this did not move him. He expressed how the book did not teach the basics of language and grammar or vocabulary, but just jumped right into conversational scenarios and reading text for comprehension. He added,

> It's a thick book and it's super expensive. It's got a lot of stuff but look. I can't teach him anything from a book that is teaching them how to read [without the foundations]. And I can't teach you how to read [English] if you don't read another language.

Mr. Ruiz seemed to think that the district had been taken in by the big publishing companies. He indicated that he preferred to teach the same way he had been successful across two decades. He questioned the logic of disregarding all the experience he has gained over the years in favor of learning a new way, asking, "Do they think I want to just throw down the trashcan everything I have used for about 20 years?"

Ms. Alber, who taught the advanced ELD class, expressed her opinions about the she was asked to teach her students, who were primarily juniors and seniors. In the area around her desk area, which she affectionately referred to as "an organized mess," she tried to locate the new curriculum textbooks. Evidently, she wasn't making much use of them either, telling me, "The ELD program as it is now has a [new] curriculum… somewhere I have a book or two from it and I'll be happy to show it to you," as she continued to search. She went on to explain that each unit in the new text had a number of associated materials that she was able to access in the bookroom. She stated,

> You know you go somewhere and they're like here's a box of stuff if you want it… are you asking me, do I want to carry my own box of books somewhere? I don't. And so sometimes they I feel like I got some room but it's sort of like, 'This is a paragraph. This is a…' You're like oh my god, it would kill me if [my teacher gave] me that, yeah, I would want to die. It's so boring. Yeah. And so, I just try to do different things.

From these examples, it seems that the ELD teachers at this school were making their own curriculum decisions. Ms. Alber, who is actually a credentialed English teacher, (and not a credentialed ELD teacher) had a different take on the matter. She explained,

> You know how you are expected to understand what you're reading [in order to] be able to say what your argument is, about what your thesis is or whatever, and you know that because of what's in the text that you read. So [giving them more substantial text to read] gives them a chance to both practice their English skills, to develop those skills and do that all toward the standards.

She went on to explain her philosophy for her ELD class, which at the third year, an advanced level, allows for students to take regular English concurrently. She said of her class,

> And so, I treat it sort of like as a supplemental English class. And we also do grammar, like I get out the grammar book and go OK here's what you need to know about nouns. Here's what we need. Who knows about a…? Let's talk about that and then we do exercises for that.

The ELD Administrator, Ms. Delgado, spoke about the challenges she experienced trying to obtain buy-in from teachers to follow the district guidelines for instruction and curriculum. She also

spoke about the difficulty of serving a large group of 80+ students with only one coordinator. She expressed one idea she had to address the latter issue in stating,

> ELD students who have been in the program longer need a little bit less direct support than the new students who may need more support. So, they could be divided up like with another coordinator or taken must this first year you know if there had to be some kind of distinction like that, I would say yeah split it up so that it's if you are in ELD classes 3 or 4, in advanced, you know you're with this person. And if you just got here or your language abilities are at this level then you're with this other person.

Mr. Ruiz talked about structures they have had in place over the years for the program, and he also had some ideas about what was most (and least) effective. He explained that in the past there were multiple levels, and students could advance or stay back based on their achievement at each level, as assessed by the ELD teacher. This he felt gave teachers more flexibility in how to serve the students [from field notes].

Special Education Programs. Some students with connections to Native communities in Oaxaca who participated in the study were receiving ELD services, special education services, or both. Data collected by way of the student survey indicated that more than half of the Oaxacan students in beginning ELD classes were receiving some type of academic support through special education [student survey data]. In addition, one participant, Manuel, received special education support throughout the day in lieu of ELD services. One focus group participant, who was also in the leadership class, indicated that he received some type of special education services [from field notes and focus group data]. On this topic, Ms. Ortega, the school social worker, commented,

> Unfortunately, some kids never could classify out. I have a perfect [example of a] student and she's in an alternative school, but she was born and raised here in LA. We noticed that she starting to ditch school and then said because she hates school. We noted that she had been struggling always, and [the team asked] is this something more than a language barrier? So, what we do is we have a meeting then we assess [the situation] and then we give interventions. And if after those interventions are done and there's still no improvement then we might give way for a special education evaluation.

She went on to explain,

> And so, that is the procedure, and that process is functioning pretty well at [the school]. And from that team is where we would say hey, he's been struggling forever. Is he in the right English placement? What is the result of the IEP [assessment]... and where is the gap? What's happening? And so, it becomes a little like detective work.

Such teams, often known as Student Study Teams (SST) are considered best practice in public schools today, yet there are still large numbers of students of color and students who are English learners found to have disabilities at disproportionate rates than expected (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017). Ms. Ortega seemed aware of this tendency, and was sensitive to this fact, as demonstrated in her remarks:

> Unfortunately, what we do find is that there is an over-assessment of special education for kids and sometimes our most challenging are the ones that are a 'double whammy' with both ELD and special ed. Yeah. That's just a challenge we have in our field.

Mr. Ruiz also spoke about the double identification as an English Language Learner and a student with a disability. He expressed his thoughts on this topic, stating,

> Of course, there's confusion as to how is it that they can't learn - because they have a learning disability or is it that they have a language disability? Because they don't know one language, can they fully know the other one? Over the years yeah, I mean people have recommended the students to be tested and they've found out that they can do the test in both English and Spanish or other different languages. They've actually done Farsi as well. And what we have found out is that sometimes they just didn't have an education.

He went on to explain the process for students who do end up recommended for testing and then move forward with an evaluation:

> Once [the testing] happens, then they have a meeting with the parents to let them know what they found. And from there they decide to give a student a specific description if there's a learning disability or something. I know like dyslexic or whatever it happens to be.

Mr. Ruiz concluded by describing the types of supports they may get to assist them in school, and importantly, to up their chances of passing the ELPAC. He stated, "Those kids get some kind of accommodations like extra time on the [test]. So that's a good thing. They can take as long as they need to." He also added the fact that "long term" ELD students, who are not able to pass the test

don't graduate on time. He told me that those students can stay in high school if needed until age twenty-two [from field notes].

Student Engagement

For the purposes of this exploration, engagement is defined in two parts: behavioral engagement, or effort and perseverance, and emotional engagement, or the feeling of a sense of belonging (Lee, 2014). The following section reports findings from the data corpus with regard to student engagement and the closely related theme of student participation. Teachers and staff appear to have slightly different ideas about what constitutes engagement, with some equating this as "effort" or verbalizing responses. Ms. Alber observed of her ELD students, "I see them making an effort when they're in my class. I feel like they're really trying," telling her students that their hard work will pay off on the upcoming ELPAC exam [from field notes]. Some teachers viewed student engagement in the context of students who were attending after school support sessions. For example, Ms. Delgado talked about an intervention class for ELD students on Wednesdays after school and referred to this form of participation as student engagement. She also described that the site of the sacred springs acted as a motivating factor to increase student attendance and participation. In reference to such events at the beautiful site, she noted,

> We use it sometimes for celebrations like the senior breakfast - it will be held over there. So, it'll be a catered event set up some tables and it's really great. And you know unfortunately, the reason why we use that space is because it can be set apart from the rest of the campus not necessarily because it's a beautiful you know sacred space or anything like that you know that has nothing to do with it it's just a place that's set apart.

When asked about the engagement of Oaxacan students in general in school related activities, Ms. Ortega, the school social worker, indicated that getting involved and engaged in extracurricular activities was akin to student engagement. She commented,

> Actually yes, just recently Mr. X was talking to students that they identified as Oaxacan. And they talked about possibly doing like a Guelaguetza, to get ready to embrace the Oaxacan culture and so on. But prior to that it didn't really come from them. I think what did help is that they identified [as Oaxacan students].

Extracurricular Activities. The following section reports some of the findings with the data corpus around the theme of extracurricular activities. One student participant talked with pride about his involvement with the marching band, an activity that is extremely popular for youth, both in Oaxaca, and among California students with family ties to Oaxaca. Speaking about this extracurricular activity, and expressing frustration towards the new administration, who he felt canceled an important school-wide festival, impacting his drum line. Luis shared,

> There's a lot of clubs that make their money from [the festival] because I'm in drumline and I'm the captain. This is my third year on it. So, I've been to all years [of the festival]. I've been in freshman year and [there was] huge success last year as well. And that's where we make all our money because we're not allowed to fundraise on campus.

Ms. Delgado, the ELD coordinator, spoke about some after school opportunities around academics, which are offered to ELLs who have struggled to obtain all their graduation requirements:

> There [are] also credit recovery courses happening now. We also had a program called language in action that was happening now and one specifically for the lower level ELL students to help them with those conversational social skills and some of the expectations that are in the classroom when they could just work on those in a fun peer to peer kind of environment. And [in an environment that is] a lot more relaxed. They would feed the kids [pizza]. It's really hard to get kids to stay after school, right? So that's something that we struggle with as an entire campus where many of our students come from other places in the city, since we're not really a community school. Yeah, they maybe have to get on a city bus or on a school bus and they've got to go when it's time to go.

One of the ELD students I worked with in the mornings was in this situation. She took a city bus for over an hour each way to school. This excluded her from participating in many after school activities, even if she wanted to be involved [from field notes].

When discussing the plans for a Guelaguetza festival at school, one of the focus group 1 participants mentioned,

> Now, you feel like [our cultural traditions are] a rich source of difference, you know? And so, I don't know if we can do that, but I will be here and on and off and hopefully we can all come back [for the festival]. But can we form a group to go to the administration and say, 'This is what we need to have on campus?' I think the idea is a really great idea because it at least it highlights one of the reasons why people should be curious, more curious. Like this is just one thing that we do in Oaxaca, you know? This is not all of it. So like, if you see this

> and you think it's interesting or you want to know where it comes from, ask more questions, you know?

The students in focus group 1 were asked about other multicultural events that were done on campus, and a number of the students laughed. One participant responded,

> We have like a multicultural day... It's not really a multicultural festival. Yeah, I just feel sad. I feel like it's not very much, but it's just about [making] money. Yeah, well, it's when you pick out something superficial from each culture and instead of having any internal planning.

The student went on to explain that since her freshman year the "multicultural day" has devolved into a type of food court, in which Panda Express represents China, and Dominos represents Italy. The students referred to it as "a joke" [from field notes].

Nevertheless, some extracurricular activities, despite some shortcomings, stand out as positive experiences in the lives of Oaxacan youth. Ms. Navarro spoke of her lunchtime meetings with the Latino Student Union back in the 1990s:

> We'd go to the meetings and I remember [our advisor] was in the process of writing a book. So, we would have lunch in her office and sometimes she'd order pizza for us. It was just like a place where you could go and hang out but also organize things. So, we organized. For example, we organized one of the homecoming [events], and they have pictures of that which is actually really funny.

Parent Participation. According to a number of observations from parent gatherings, formal meetings, and interviews with staff and parents, the degree to which parents become involved at school seems to hinge on a number of factors. One parent, Ms. Romero, a native Zapotec speaker, and mom to a senior at the high school, explained how some activities at school are more relevant to her concerns than others. She stated,

> All these years I've been here, there have been many workshops and for example, I was very interested in a workshop when I attended where they talked about drugs and how many ways there are for children to have access if there were things that I didn't know that even with things we use at home. Yes, because there is now more abuse of pills. Thank God because my children so far have behaved well. I hear a lot since I talk a lot with them about the movies everything and the gangs also, yes. I would also like to see more workshops where I know that if the teachers and the whole director are pushing the children, they will let them know how important it is to continue studying. I would also like to tell them if there

> are any, because they have been asked where they are doing it, that is to say, how important it is to continue studying.

Overall, Ms. Romero seemed to be pleased with the relationship she has fostered at the school over the years. She apoke about such experiences:

> I like it a lot [at the school], there is a lot of support, with whom I usually prefer to talk with [the parent liaison], and also with the counselor if she is here also, but it has always been Ms. X, [the parent liaison], who helped me a lot to translate with them and to explain what are the activities here at school and the workshops of parents. [I also] meet for the coffee with the principal, or the teacher [appreciation] lunch. For all those who work at the school she has also been involved in helping them. We have come to the when on school cleaning day, if we have always attended, I have always been very happy to be involved at the school.

The principal, Ms. Tavira, talked about the topic of holding workshops of interest to parents,

> Well, [we hold] parent workshops about what they can do as parents, also not only to learn about the different types of risks that are our youth are facing, but also how to identify [what their own children are] thinking… alcohol and drug prevention program and some of the things that they should be looking at, you know at home… some of the items that may seem like it's a highlighter and it's not you know it's actually a [vaping] device. So, educating the parents you know as to the signs they can look for and also informing them of the supports that are in place here if they're if they're dealing with those challenges with their students here.

How to help their children avoid joining a gang, or to not use drugs appeared to high on several parents' list of concerns. Ms. Tavira continued to tell me about the actions she has taken to address these concerns, which are important to many parents:

> I've reached out to the city attorney's office. And one of her deputies was coming in for different parent meetings so that the parents also can see where the community resources are. So, I think more than anything just educating them and teaching or informing the parents of where to ask for help. I mean the number one source of support are resources that we have here on our campus such as our psychiatric social worker, you know, and therapy the different groups we have on campus for counseling and things like that.

It became clear that Zapotec-speaking parents with connections to Native communities in Oaxaca were primarily concerned about what most parents worry about… 1) the safety of their children, and 2) the quality of their education. Ms. Romero, fluent in Spanish as well as Zapotec, talked about the difference since the new administration arrived:

> What is [different is that] Spanish is understood. I always have the opportunity with the director now that she has arrived, and Ms. X, [the parent liaison] and the activities for parents are the truth. Yes, there have been many workshops about how to help us as parents to get involved with the teachers to work closely around the progress of our children, that has also pleased me a lot about the school.

Another way in which the school reaches out to parents is through home visits. Ms. Ortega, the school social worker, talked about this form of outreach,

> Part of my job as a counselor is to do home visits. Well, you know any school official has the right to do a home visit - yeah, we're all district employees so. But if they don't feel comfortable that's a different thing. Let's say for example when there's an IEP, [I might ask,] 'Why don't you come with me? You're the one that has a relationship with the family,' and those people that have done home visits with me have thanked me because it opens up a whole perspective to that student… There's a day that we call student recovery day and it's usually held like the like at the opening of school like September. It is when we go out as a district to do home visits out into the community to cover potential drop-outs and so on.

When asked about parent outreach for his ELD students, Mr. Ruiz observed that he was accustomed to calling all of the parents at the start of the year, and some of the parents tell him right away that they probably won't be able to get to the school because of the hours they work [from field notes].

Impacts on a Sense of Belonging

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy. The following section highlights teacher and administrator thoughts about how to integrate a culturally sustaining approach, and ideas about the possible impact such efforts may have on student achievement and a sense of belonging at school. I asked most of the participants about their thoughts on teachers including more culturally relevant assignments for students. For example, when this question was posed to her, Ms. Tavira, replied, "I think the Spanish classes that do like altars have like little projects for their students. And yeah, I see my culture there sometimes. And I mean not like it's Oaxacan traditions, of course. You know, there's a lot of parties there for different celebrations."

As a student, Luis recalled an activity he did in middle school in one of his classes, stating, "I did like in 8th grade a project on a family tree… and then I set them up online and then there was a

list and some were right with my dad somewhere," which he seemed to remember fondly [from field notes]. One memory that was very positive for Luis, was a recollection about a math teacher he had freshman year. As a student who prefers to pronounce his name in the original Spanish way, he was happy about the fact that she pronounced it the way he did. He recalled,

> She connects to students really well because she doesn't like the tiny things that make you feel so welcome like she says my name in Spanish. And that makes me feel like so good because I only hear Luis. At home, I never hear 'Louis,' so I hope I hear Luis here too. L-U-I-S. Ms. X, she calls me that too, and she does it with every student. She also talks like more substantive Spanish… They call you by your Spanish names like you know they care.

Luis continued to think of examples, this one from a history class last year. He explained, "Well we learned about how you know Christopher Columbus came here and took over the Native people. And from our perspective, that's showing like respect for Indigenous people." He continued, "But then because he's an AP teacher, and he has to move on fast, I hardly have time to let everyone know about my culture. Yeah, and that's one of the things I see a lot of… I don't usually mention my Indigenous culture." When I asked Luis if he would have liked it if his history teacher would have asked students if they would like to share, he added that he thought that high school might not be the best time to start:

> I'd be for it but there's definitely a lot of kids who would be offended. Because if I go back to the topic of like someone like a teacher or a lesson about Oaxaca, I'd feel like a lot of you would be upset because like it's been years… like I've been learning about American culture and making my culture [to be an] American kid. And then like now we're finally going to do it? Like many of them would be mad, because like the timing, you know? Like now we're gonna do it in high school? I'd love to see it in elementary schools because that elementary and middle school that's where they think about labels, and that's when they you know, let kids be proud of who they are.

Luis told me that he would like to be a teacher one day, and that he will use his Spanish and Zapotec language skills to help make students feel valued and included [from field notes].

When asked the same questions, Ms. Alber expressed concern about asking students where their families came from, thinking this might be viewed as disrespectful. She explained,

> Like how would I know [where students are from], like all of their data is private, I mean I don't know anything about anyone other than their name like I can find some information language I might be able to look up whether they're fluent in English or reclassified fluent or have a second language as in original language but I may or may not be able to know which language it is.

She continued, giving an example of this by describing, "My one student who really is mostly a Spanish speaker, although again he reads really well in English because of his schooling in Peru. But like he's from Peru." When referring to the newly adopted ELD curriculum, she added, "I mean I do think that they more or less would like us to make sure that we include things that reflect [student backgrounds]." Despite the fact that Ms. Alber stated that she still felt somewhat uncomfortable about how to modify her curriculum in order to reflect the backgrounds of her students in her lessons [from field notes].

When asked about what he thought California teachers could do to support students coming to Los Angeles from Oaxaca, David offered this opinion:

> I believe that the task of teachers is to empower students from a migrant family, to talk to them about Human Rights, to hold inclusion fairs as well as when they talk about Egypt, Paris, etc. Hold a whole school or whole classroom fair to discuss other cultures. Say curious facts, for example, that the Aztecs in Mexico invented the number ZERO and that color television was also invented in Mexico. Change the paradigm of superiority that American children are made to believe, for a reality of equality, equity and everything that makes us valuable. The simple fact of being human beings. Also putting movies on about the Guelaguetza would be very interesting.

The principal, who is motivated to implement monthly "inclusion fairs," has started working with the librarian on a program to celebrate multiple cultures. Ms. Tavira added,

> She's already comparing resources for teachers not only to come to the library and use the resources she's going to be putting by month but also, I asked her, 'Well why don't we plan assemblies throughout the year at school?' And I said, different theme different month, Black, African-American History Month. That's another huge one I said to plan around that. She's using the resources online and she's already putting together files for teachers to access. Yeah. And so, she's gonna be my point person for assemblies. And she's going to be looking for speakers to come in and you know just doing that outreach. That's to make sure that we have at least some throughout the year because there was nothing of that sort this year. And that's a void. So, she's going to be helping me with that.

She went on to explain more about her vision for culturally sustaining events at the school, saying,

> And I told her [they] could be motivational. Could be you know, dances you could be you know whatever we decide you know whatever. And to involve the kids so that we get their perspectives as well. So, she's gonna be helping with that, and she's already working to get an author for September.

Apparently, this vision for diversity and inclusion represents a change from the previous administration, who did not prioritize such monthly presentations. One staff member mentioned to me that the previous principal was perceived to not be supportive of immigrant families [from field notes]. Ms. Tavira offered to send information my way about what the kids decided to include during the monthly assemblies, and in keeping with her vision of including input directly from students, she added,

> I don't wanna speak for them. think a lot of them felt like they had some things about their culture that made them different. And I'm sure all Mexicans feel that way about their area. I mean I've been to Mexico like 20 times at this point, and obviously you know every region is different. So that was one thing we talked about. And of course, a lot of Oaxacan kids are into being in a band. You know there's always like a band.

In terms of culturally sustaining activities in the classroom, Ms. Tavira stated,

> This being my first year, it would be hard to give you an answer around that. It hasn't been something that has come up as a conversation or topics. Maybe as we start looking into those monthly themes and how we're going to incorporate that, you know what do we put in [the curriculum]? Maybe then we will. This year you know at least in my mind I was just concentrated of course and a lot of other different things and that didn't really stand out to me. In terms of what they're doing in the classroom differently for this particular group of students.

She went on to explain how she already knew she might meet with some resistance from some of the teaching staff. She stated,

> There are definitely a couple of teachers that would say like oh no, like I wouldn't ask anybody to do that or to do a video in an activity. I mean again for me I'm a science teacher. So, I would have not done something like that other than an icebreaker activity at the beginning, where you know we're trying to you know for community building and just getting to know my students that would perhaps be would be one of my questions I used to give them questionnaires and then other you know like whatever else it wanted to share.

It definitely seemed as if Ms. Tavira thought that culturally sustaining pedagogy could be implemented through extracurricular events and clubs. She remarked, "I think more than anything,

highlighting the many different languages and the many different cultural backgrounds for students as much as we can, not only inside the classroom but also outside, in like extracurriculars." When asked how important it was for students to see themselves represented in the curriculum, she asserted, "I mean it's important just so that kids can see that from an inspirational point of view, also so that they know [they] can accomplish what a role model did."

Identity Affirming Activities. Ms. Navarro recalled that her exploration and identity development began in high school back in the 1990s. It illustrates in part how unaware some students may be, and how providing accurate information and safe spaces to express their ideas as they develop would be very important. She first became aware after getting to know a supportive teacher at school, who was the advisor for the Latino Student Union at the school in the 1990s:

> She always talked about being a Chicana… and talked about Chicanos and Latinos… and so I think what I decided it was okay I'll just be the president of the Latino Student Union and do things here. I mean I started becoming aware of the like complicated history. I was interested in pre-Columbian stuff so I just started researching and looking at pictures, and in my really kind of young, uninformed mind, but like curious mind, I would make stuff up [and put them] together as if it was the same thing.

She went on to talk about the powerful influence a supportive teacher had in supporting her identity development and academic achievement. She talked about one of her English teachers who also ran the yearbook, recalling,

> Ms. X was like eye opening in other ways because she didn't necessarily do anything for me. She just talked and I was listening to what she was saying to the whole group. And when she talked about her identity and where she came from and how we should fight because she came from the civil rights movement.

Ms. Ortega talked about the importance of diversity, with regard to the way Oaxacan students have tended to identify themselves to her. She explained,

> Once they're here they identify more as Latino. And just taking care of what they have to take care of. So, I don't think necessarily they're respected for being themselves. I don't know. I personally don't know if they're being Oaxacan has anything to do with it or Latino or whatever they identify as.

She goes on to state that if students did want to get together some kind of event to empower themselves, she thinks the administration and school staff would be in favor:

> I'll be honest, if they want to do something like that then we will embrace it as we have other things. I know for a fact that our school community would embrace it. Actually, we're doing something this week. It's called #aboutvalues week and we're integrating us whole deal like diversity, tolerance, and we do this throughout the school year. And it's a big event. And we're doing it with leadership, and we do anti-bullying week in the fall. And we've had other weeks to embrace diversity and basically, we always say United We Stand.

Ms. Ortega shared her vision and hopes for her students, by stating,

> I wish that students would embrace their own identity more. For example, let's just consider our Latino students, right. We make up the majority of our student body. So many countries, so many accents… I wish that they would say to me in September, 'Do like when you let the Latino history month.' My goal for next year is to have it during that month. Oh, with like a big poster of Latin America. And that students would come and place a flag to the Latin American country or even state within that country that they represent. Because I don't think they did enough of that [before].

Staff Awareness of Student Background. Following are some examples around staff awareness of the background of Oaxacan students, and how this may or may not be communicated to the students themselves. When asked about often she interacts with students and families with connections to Oaxaca, Ms. Tavira, responded, **"**I would say often… I can't tell you [for sure] because I don't know who has that label, but I can kind of tell that maybe they are." Realizing that the parents of Indigenous students from Oaxaca spoke Zapotec as their native language was also the moment Ms. Ortega recalled gaining her first awareness about this population. She commented, "That was what started opening my eyes. I know that [colonization] happened for all Latin American countries, but I mean specifically regarding Oaxaca. It just opened my eyes to a lot of stuff, including the language barrier." When asked if she thought there were fewer Oaxacan families in the area than there were in prior years, Ms. Ortega responded,

> Yes and no. I think that since I've been here so long, I've noticed that unfortunately that due to changes in the community, they are demolishing a lot of the older buildings. And these are where a lot of our Oaxacan families lived, in the older buildings because rent is cheaper.

> And nevertheless, now I'm generalizing, but where there's two families living together, or when it's only single males with like eight guys living together. And because of all the new development it's really pushing a lot of Oaxacan families out of the area, even if they can double up. Now having said that, I still continue to have some Oaxacan families living in the older buildings because it opened my eyes to like a whole new side [to this area]. When I was doing these home visits, I was like oh, some have [moved further away where it is cheaper]. They continue to come to school here but they may not necessarily live here.

The experience of doing home visits helped Ms. Ortega to learn more about the community and some of the challenges the students from those households faced, including lengthy rides to school, doubled up housing or homelessness, family separations, and limited language skills in both English and Spanish. She remembers being surprised when she, as a self-identified Mexican-American, thought she would find cultural and linguistic familiarity between these families and her own, but she often did not always find that to be the case. I recall being impressed by her honesty and her willingness to learn, and her courage to acknowledge some lack of awareness [from field notes]. She also found it strange that the district discouraged such home visits, because in her estimation, she was able to learn so much valuable information that would help her to serve the students better.

Ms. Ortega talked about some of the additional challenges faced by this student group, which she had become increasingly aware of over the years. With regard to making assumptions about their language of choice or cultural traditions, she also warned of jumping to other conclusions:

> I learned that not necessarily right to assume that they were not born here, so that we have students that may not necessarily speak English, but were born here, and then within the first two years of the life taken back to Oaxaca by the family, kind of going back home. And then when they're of high school age they send them back [to work].

On this important difference that she noted between the Oaxacan students and students with families from other regions of Mexico, she continued,

> So, I've had at least six to eight students like that versus your typical Latino family, where if anything, they migrate here and then get to two and a half generations, or whatever. But for some of my Oaxacan students, to be born here then they go back to Oaxaca to live their life. Adolescence comes and then they come back.

She explained why this is important for us to be aware of. She went on to say,

> The Oaxacan students [are more vulnerable] because many of them are independent here. Versus other [Latino] students that come and they've got a mom or a dad who supports them, and they're less inclined to depend only on their job.

It is important to add to this the fact that these young students, who are essentially alone here in the U.S., are dealing with loneliness and grief at the family separations they may be experiencing [from field notes].

Other teachers recall the first time they remembered becoming aware of the unique characteristics of their students with connections to Native communities in Oaxaca. Ms. Alber commented:

> Prior to me working at [this school], I was not knowledgeable about Oaxaca. I think the only thing I knew about what Oaxaca was from this immigration course that I took as a Bachelor level student… And I did like a small research project and that's when I heard about it. So, when I came here it was what opened my eyes.

Mr. Ruiz shared his recollections in this regard:

> Speaking from the faculty perspective we have over the years in fact, actually learned that there is an influx of a lot of these students from this particular part of Mexico and they're often aware you can ask, and they'll tell you some of the students in that there are difficulties that come from reaching out to their parents or the difficulty the kids have in the classroom.

He continued,

> Oftentimes they can recognize them because they're, you know, they see them struggle all the way through. But [some] actually were born here, or whose parents either were born here that came in here or when they were little. [Teachers are] able to recognize them oftentimes the kids are very proud of their heritage.

Several staff members were aware that Oaxaca as a region within Mexico, and that students from there faced multiple layers of challenge. Staff members were also aware about some of the cultural traditions practiced by students and their families.

Student, Parent, and Staff Perceptions. The findings reported here about student, parent, and staff perceptions about each other and about the school more generally are intended to provide information about potential barriers and facilitators to student success.

Student Survey. The question of perceptions was addressed in part through the qualitative responses acquired from the student survey. On the survey, the term perception was defined as impressions or thoughts when you think about these peers. Of the 53 student survey respondents, 66% wrote something about their perceptions of their Oaxacan peers, with 8 being students claiming connections to communities in Oaxaca. The remaining respondents left this question blank. The following statements are some of the verbatim responses to the question:

Q: How would you describe your perceptions about Oaxacan students at your school?

Students with connection to communities in Oaxaca	**All other student respondents**
'I'm Oaxacan myself so all I can say is that I'm fine and I learn fine…"	*"They really don't talk, they are shy.*
"I love them (heart)."	*"Normal people, I don't recognize."*
"They're very cool people. I love seeing my people around me."	*"I think all people are equal and the are the true americans because US steal their lands in the past, it's why is very indignan for me that people refer to them like 'Mexicans.'"*
"Oaxaca is inteligent is working a people etc."	*"He needs help to understand the languaje and how all the system works."*
"There are many people and they are good people."	*"In my opinion it's nice to know people from other countries but something they get a lot of bullying at school."*
"They respect them they aren't racist too much."	*"They are people, much like myself."*
"My dad is Oaxacan, so I don't really think anything bad. I share a culture with them."	*"I've haven't met a Oaxacan student from Mexico."*
"They only know they are good people and talk a lot."	*"I don't usually go into deep thought about them but I respect their culture."*
	"Don't see them any different than other students."
All other student respondents	*"A lot of Oaxacan students I know are great & I appreciate them."*

"They are nice."	*"I believe they are good people who are trying to get a better education."*
"A lot of people are friendly."	*"I'm cool with them, a lot are my friends."*
"The person Oaxacan are nice person."	*"I know nothing about them."*
"I know nothing."	*"Friendly"*
"The Oaxacan is very nice guys."	*"I do not believe that there are perceptions because not many are aware of ethnic background."*
"Sometimes we don't get along."	*"Like any other student"*

[source: student survey]

A related indicator of students' perceptions from the data collected was derived from the survey question about each respondent's own awareness about Native American and Indigenous students in general who attend their school. Of the 45 students who answered this question, 17 felt that that they were "not very aware" (38%), and 12 indicated that they were "not aware at all" (27%). These two levels of response (little or no awareness) were selected by 64% of the total number of respondents. Furthermore, when asked about their own level of awareness regarding Native American or Indigenous students from Mexico, 20% indicated that they were "not very aware" and 22% that they were "not aware at all" for a total of 41% for both responses indicating low levels of awareness.

In terms of student perceptions about ***teachers and staff***, 49 respondents answered the question about their opinion about the level of staff awareness and respect for culturally diverse students. Of those who responded, 10% reported that they believed staff were "not very culturally aware or respectful," and 2% indicated that staff was "not culturally aware or respectful." Moreover, when asked about their opinions of the same awareness and respect given by other ***students***, 9% of respondents stated that they thought their peers were "not very culturally aware and respectful," and 11% believed they were "not culturally aware and respectful" [source: student survey].

Interview, Focus Group, and Fieldnotes Data. A number of staff, students, and parents shared some of their perceptions about the school, the community, the curriculum, and school leadership. The following section reports some of the findings related to this research question. I would like to start with my own perception as a researcher, that most of the staff I associated with during the year of my fieldwork, struck me as professionals who were working hard to understand this population, and to do their utmost to support students with ties to Native communities in Oaxaca [from field notes].

When asked about perceptions of life in Los Angeles for potential migrants, prior to making the decision to leave Oaxaca, David, the expert informant, responded,

> [They think] that they will improve their lives and those of their family, that they will have more money to support their family and build their homes, that they will work very hard to achieve it, that they will surely face a lot of discrimination, and in general that they will find better wages than here. But moving with the whole family, I think that what they perceive is that they will stop being poor and at least their children will have a better education if they move to that city.
> [Que mejoraràn sus vidas y las de su familia, que tendrán más dinero para mantener a su familia y hacer sus casas, que trabajarán muy duro para lograrlo, que seguramente enfrentarán mucha discriminación, y en general encontrarán mejores sueldos que aquí. Pero mudarse con toda la familia, yo pienso que lo que perciben es que dejarán de ser pobres y por lo menos sus hijos tendrán mejor educación si se mudan a esa ciudad.]

When asked about her own perceptions about this student population based on her own background as a Mexican-American, the principal, Ms. Tavira, revealed that she was aware of the discrimination against Indigenous persons that was common in Mexico, and that there might be perceptions by others that Indigenous people did not have a high level of education [from field notes]. Ms. Ortega had some thoughts on this topic as well:

> I don't think the Oaxacan students are perceived as having a perception. I mean we have like, 70 percent Latino students. So, they're just perceived as Latinos. Or ELLs, more out because when you have them by the language, we have a lot of like college bound leadership Ambassador students that are from Oaxaca, and their family came here, and they are the ones that stand out more. The ones that are in the e-mail because they didn't come to high school and are pretty long in learning the language. So, that way they're perceived as more on an individual basis rather than as a group.

Ms. Ortega went on to say that she perceived that the staff and other students are generally supportive. She thought it was interesting to mention that in the leadership group, some of the students didn't even know who was Oaxacan. She said when the leadership commented on something he was working on about Oaxaca, "Some student leaders were like oh my family is from Oaxaca… and like so many of them were from Oaxaca and they didn't know that about each other." Ms. Ortega did say that she thought, with regard to Indigenous Oaxacan families, "They're so humble…" and as she described, this was not necessarily like other Latino students.

When asked the question about perceptions, Ms. Navarro talked about lived experiences. Recalling an interaction she had had with one of her own students, she stated,

> In our reading that's where we get nuanced. That's what we go deep into what we call like down on the ground, you know? And I'm a person living, and you are a person living through these larger historical processes. How is this affecting us? We can all talk about how different we are. But at the end of the day, we're actually all very similar.

Ms. Alber held some perceptions about Oaxacan students and their families that Oaxacan parents wanted their children to achieve, but only to a certain point. She said,

> When I talk, I notice a lot of kids would certainly hear this or their parents have attitude of you think you're better than me, you get all this fancy education and now you think you're better than me. You got to go to college, and you've heard parents say that to the kid. It's not as if they directly say that, but you get this feeling that they want them to do well, but only so well… that it's more important to keep everyone together than for them to advance.

Speaking about one of her former students with ties to Oaxaca, she commented on the values within her family that appeared to be different than the dominant culture, saying, "And like this girl is not going to college. She has to stay home and take care of mom and dad and brothers and sisters… it's like a cultural expectation that doesn't necessarily value the same things." In addition, Ms. Alber mentioned some of the Mexican students who attended a previous high school she worked at in another part of Los Angeles:

> And at [my old school] most of the school's Spanish speaking, and like 98 percent of the school has heritage elsewhere, so it's one of the schools like you have to have a three week break. I didn't know this was why we had a three week break, but because if you go

> somewhere over the break, you drive a week to see your grandma, you're going to stay a week with her because it took so much time to get everybody down there. Yeah, and then you have to drive all the way back to California. Like it takes a while. You need three weeks if you're going to go visit family by car.

She continued on this topic, commenting on how much school some of her students missed to go on family trips to Mexico or elsewhere:

> And kids some good times have come back a week later even or around Easter also was a big time [for trips]. You'd lose people like sometimes it was like a third of your class is still on vacation. So, and you know to be sure I'm sure that happens in affluent white families as well where they're like well we had an opportunity to go to St. Barts. So, we're taking the jet and that's also frustrating. But it's that thing of how we value education, and we think the White students, even if they stay away longer, [we think] that their families value [education].

Ms. Alber stated that this was what many teachers believed. She continued,

> Here's what I think. It depends if they're the sort who are buying their way into Stanford or to USC then no, they don't really value [education] more. But I think there's also the thing of like, get your homework. You're going to do it on the plane. I bought you this novel. You know what I mean? I see the nanny's coming and she's gonna help you with your homework.

Ms. Alber continued on this theme,

> So essentially, I don't know if it's that like Puritan, Puritanical-like work ethic, but in working class neighborhoods, even White working class neighborhoods… So, it's more like a class expectation, like I can remember being a kid getting an 'A' on assignment and we'd worked [hard on it], and other people didn't do well because they just sat there, and [one of them] goes, 'You got an A? You're so dumb.'

Ms. Alber appeared to perceive that education was not necessarily a priority in many households of students from Oaxaca. Moreover, her belief was that no one would be available at home to assist these students with their homework. She explained,

> [Mom and dad] can't help them with their homework. Or maybe it's just like the kind of academics that he is expected to do, aren't the home priority. And that he's getting mixed up in a gang. Tells me like he hasn't gotten enough guidance at home. Whatever that looks like.

Finally, when Ms. Romero was asked what she thought about the perceptions of the students themselves, she said of her 12th grade son, "He says that he has felt very comfortable here. To begin with he had gone to such a small school, so when he arrived here, he was surprised to see a very large school with many more students." Her perception as a mother was that she needed to be

worried about drugs and gangs. Her fears when moving here were expressed in her comments, "Let's say they get drugs or into the gangs, what are the consequences? [I would like lessons] so that children can see the consequences when they drive around taking their drugs and what can happen to them."

Study Limitations

As with any case study, the findings presented here are specific to this particular school at this particular time and reflects the thoughts and experiences of a relatively small number of people. The findings are not intended to be taken as generalizable facts which are experienced by all students of Oaxacan heritage, nor are they representative of students who attend other high schools in Los Angeles or the same school in another era. Rather, the findings reported here are meant to be used to begin to start a conversation and to develop theory about the factors impacting the academic and social success of this particular population, and to create awareness about the challenges faced by this particular group of students and their families. Another limitation of this case study is the relatively small number of participants that agreed to participate. This limits the experiences presented to a small group of students, teachers, and alumni. A third limitation lies with the student survey, which was given to several ELD classes and one leadership class. This makes the data from this data collection tool limited to the experiences of two small subsets of the school population, and although it can be said that the students of Oaxacan origin were represented in both contexts, it is evident that these groups of students have wide disparities in their current circumstances, possibly lending to faulty conclusions about the experiences of these students. Finally, the study findings may contain errors due to the complexities of translation and interpretation of language and meaning, and though I did my utmost to prevent misunderstandings and mistakes in the transfer of participant perspectives, there is a possibility that conceptual errors exist in the data. It is the hope that the ideas set forth in this dissertation serve primarily not as an

iron-clad set of truths regarding the experiences of Indigenous Oaxacan students attending school in Los Angeles, but to foster further dialogue and exploration of the themes presented.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION

Barriers and Facilitators to Student Success

The data collected during the period of fieldwork for this case study highlight some important factors to consider in regard to the academic achievement and social/emotional well-being of Oaxacan youth attending high school in Los Angeles. Certainly, many of the factors discussed here would also act as barriers and/or facilitators to success for other vulnerable student populations, indeed for all student populations. However, it is important to realize that common knowledge does not always mean effective policies and procedures are adopted and implemented to ensure that such facilitators are in place or that barriers are removed. Explanations for such oversights are bound to be complex and vary across schools and districts. However, a discussion addressing these somewhat commonplace ideas is warranted in order to reiterate their importance to maximize the chances for success for all students. Furthermore, some of the factors discussed here are more specific to students with roots in Native communities in Oaxaca, and other Indigenous students. This latter set of factors may be new to some readers, and their importance may seem less obvious. However, it is my position that facilitators and barriers to the academic success of Indigenous students from Oaxaca, and elsewhere, is a primary focus of this work and deserve greater attention in future research.

Some of the Indigenous Oaxacan students who participated in this study have excelled in their studies, while others have faced substantial challenges. The findings from this study identify a number of possible areas that the school and district might take into account in their operations and planning which will serve to maximize the probability of success for current and future students. It became evident that some of the factors examined during the course of this case study (e.g., special education services) could act as either barriers or facilitators to success, depending on how such elements are implemented at the school. It must be reiterated that the findings reported above are

based on a relatively small number of students, at one school, within a limited time frame. This is to say that the findings are not necessarily indicative of factors that would generalize to other high schools. However, the data presented is intended to expand the conversation about how education leaders might improve the chances for success for students from vulnerable populations, such as those with connections to Indigenous communities in Mexico. What follows is a discussion about the barriers and facilitators discovered during the course of this case study which are thought to impact both the academic achievement and social/emotional well-being of Oaxacan youth attending one high school in Los Angeles. Many of the factors described are highly interrelated, and it is probable that enacting positive change in one area will impact a number of other areas. Of course, the opposite of this would also apply, in that failure to address the barriers described could lead to increased challenges in a number of areas.

Facilitators to Student Success

Positive School Culture. Creating a community of learners which inspires motivation and excellence, while fostering the character traits of good citizens of the local and global community are goals of most educational leaders these days. The findings from this case study show that the unit of analysis, one high school in Los Angeles, has retained the leadership of a strong, compassionate, enthusiastic woman of color, who has many ideas about how to shape the culture to reflect the positive and inclusive vision of her staff and district. Overall, I was struck by the beautiful, well-maintained campus, and across a year of being a participant-observer, I witnessed the incredible dedication, compassion, and kindness of students and staff alike. The high school is also among the most culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse campuses in the district, of both staff and students, and by all accounts this diversity appeared to be highly valued within the school community [from field notes]. It is also my understanding, from speaking to two alumni, that things have moved in a positive direction since the 1980s and 1990s when they attended [from field notes].

Even though there is always more work to be done, many changes have been positive in terms of establishing a more positive and inclusive school culture at the school. It would appear that now, given the evidence from the data, extracurricular activities are more accessible to a greater number of students. Racial and ethnic diversity at the school is viewed as a strength by current school administration, instead of a "deficit" (Gay, 1995). Moreover, there appears to be greater support for students and families who are multilingual, with parent outreach in languages other than English, and with language support is provided at all meetings and events. It was evident that school staff made an effort to promote parent participation of families from Oaxaca who speak an Indigenous language (and all families). A next step might be for school leaders might be more proactive in providing training for staff to familiarize them with the various cultures and languages represented in their classrooms, and to consider collecting more accurate language data and hiring Zapotec-speaking interpreters for meetings. All of these steps would enhance services provided to Indigenous families from Oaxaca, as well as improve factors which contribute to a positive school culture overall.

While it is true that a positive and welcoming school culture is important for all students, this is especially true for students from vulnerable groups, including those from families who have recently immigrated, with values and traditions that may diverge from those of the dominant culture. One of the alumni participants was able to comment on changes that appear to have ameliorated a culture in which discrimination against Oaxacan students was normalized at the school. She reported a consistent pattern of microaggressive acts perpetrated against her in the 1990s due to her Oaxacan heritage and her identity as an Indigenous person [from field notes]. Research has shown that certain practices can be adopted which can assist school leaders in bringing about positive change and reduce discrimination, foster a sense of belonging, empower students from immigrant families, promote social justice, educate and enlighten students and staff, and address intrinsic bias

(Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). To make the school culture more positive for Indigenous students from Oaxaca, such practices might also include integrating assignments about Native communities of Mexico (for the whole class), collecting more accurate data on Indigenous languages spoken at home, providing information about students' communities of origin for staff, promoting more visible recognition of issues facing the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, and hiring parent center staff who speak one or more variants of Zapotec.

High Expectations. Several staff participants reported having high standards for themselves and their students, and many students indicated having high expectations for themselves during their high school career and beyond. A considerable number of student respondents on the survey were part of the AVID program, which has strict academic and behavioral requirements for participation. A number of Oaxacan youth on both focus group panels reported course schedules which included a number of advanced placement and honors courses. Many students discussed future plans that included university study. A number of teachers and administrators appeared to hold high standards for all students to achieve, and students were rewarded in a number of ways for their participation. Several afterschool supplemental programs were available to students, and posters at school and other messaging conveyed the importance of academic achievement and good citizenship. All students at this high school now have unencumbered access to honors and advanced placement courses since they are able to self-elect to take such classes, though some students didn't seem to know about this option [from field notes]. The administrators seemed to concur that this approach has been highly successful overall and gives students the message that if they work hard, they can succeed without obstacles [from field notes].

It might seem evident that having high expectations for all students is an obvious goal, however, like many microaggressions, incidents which convey low expectations to students can be expressed in subtle ways by staff who are often unaware of their actions. The guidance counselor

described above, who offered a young Oaxacan woman a binder of childcare jobs rather than helping her find an internship in engineering, is one example of this. Teachers adding their (discouraging) opinions even when a student has already decided to self-elect an honors course is another. This may be another area in which extended training may be needed in order to offer information and time for staff to reflect on their practice. In this way, staff may be better equipped to identify and interrupt incidences in which low expectations are communicated to students. With respect to Indigenous students, including those from Mexico, some may be aware of the long history of an system of education that has been used as a tool for cultural destruction, and so being mindful of this may be especially important (Brayboy et al., 2012). Furthermore, as indicated by a number of participants, overt discrimination against people from Native communities in Mexico is likely to be an ongoing issue, specifically around the faulty, yet apparently common belief that Indigenous people "don't value education" or that they are "not educated." It would be important for school administrators to set a tone in which such ways of thinking are challenged, and staff are encouraged to maintain high expectations of students who have internalized such beliefs (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Availability of Emotional Support. A striking feature of the school involved in this study was the readily available access to emotional support for all students. As reported in the findings section above, maintaining a full-time social worker and several interns was at the discretion of administration. This school decided to maintain this support for students for at least the last ten years, through the last administration and into this new one. As stated, the social worker was extremely knowledgeable about every student I discussed with her, which is striking in a school of 1,500 students. A number of students interviewed as well as those who participated in the focus groups recalled having a positive interaction with the social worker, who helped them solve a problem they were having [from field notes]. Moreover, when walking (or more accurately, running)

down the hall with her, I noticed that she was familiar with most of the students we encountered, and greeted them warmly [from field notes]. Dr. Noguera (2003) advises of the importance of the paradigm shift educators have had to make in order to serve students in public schools, especially in areas where there are large numbers of low-income families. The evolving role of urban schools has necessitated the provision of services such as those of this dedicated social worker and her staff (Noguera, 2003).

Students who face a variety of challenges, as many students from Oaxaca do on a regular basis, are likely to benefit from having professional staff who are available to assist them. With respect to Indigenous Oaxacan students, counseling staff should ideally be aware of students' background, and adept at asking appropriate questions to uncover issues. They should also be trained to use culturally competent strategies to address the many stressors these students may be experiencing. For Indigenous students connected to communities in Oaxaca, examples of these may be issues as a result of family separation(s), difficulties around immigration, complex issues of identity, challenges of structural racism and linguistic discrimination, the absence of cultural representation in the curriculum. In addition, it would be most effective if counseling staff were aware of and attuned to histories of colonization and cultural destruction when serving Indigenous students, including those from Native communities in Mexico (Brayboy et al, 2012).

Staff Awareness. In one of her interviews, Ms. Ortega indicated how her practice of making home visits was enlightening to her, allowing her to learn a lot of information about her students [from field notes]. This information is valuable because it helps school staff to develop rapport and connect with vulnerable students and families who may need additional support. In addition, a home visit conveys powerful messages to students that they are important, that they matter, and that the school and parents are in communication with one another. These actions would appear to be beneficial to students in a number of ways, and it follows that this practice is

likely to improve the student's connection to and engagement at school. However, there are other ways to become informed about our students, and it would appear to be wise for schools to do whatever they can to facilitate this process. For student participant Luis, the importance of teacher awareness was demonstrated with the simple act of one teacher pronouncing his name correctly, or another spending his lunchtime learning Zapotec words with him. Both actions, while exemplifying culturally sustaining approaches, are also critical to making a student feel seen and heard. This is the essence of a sense of belonging, which can be viewed as a basic human need, a fundamental requirement for student engagement, and critical to student achievement (Green et al., 2016; Neel & Fuligni, 2013). Staff who may not know much about Oaxaca or the Indigenous people who originate from there, will require training and support to develop this awareness about students in their classrooms. For this reason, it is important for staff to receive training and cultural information, especially those who will be serving a large number of students with family connections to these communities (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Fostering a Sense of Belonging. The high school which was the focus of this case study does a lot to ensure that Oaxacan students feel that they belong. However, it is always prudent to examine ways to increase this important sentiment among students, especially those from home cultures that are different in qualitative ways from the dominant White, middle-class culture in the U.S. Goodenow & Grady, (1993) have demonstrated that a sense of school belonging has been associated with better outcomes for students from marginalized groups. This sense of belonging is also connected to greater commitment and involvement at school (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007). Students who feel as if they are accepted and that they belong are more likely to make their best effort and to excel in school. Long ago, Maslow (1943) made the argument that a sense of belonging is not only connected to academic success but is actually a fundamental basic need that all humans must possess in order to function effectively.

A framework of school belonging asserts that this factor has a tremendous impact on students' academic and social outcomes (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). As stated in previous sections, the public schools in California are reflective of the larger, dominant society. That society is primarily characterized by a culture that has been primarily Western European/British in nature. For the most part, U.S. and Canadian languages, customs, and ways of thinking and interacting are rooted in norms for thought and behavior that were inherited from the nations in Europe and Great Britain. This way of life arrived with the first settlers and proceeded to dominate the cultures that were native to these lands and has continued to do so ever since. As stated above, the last several decades have seen a large number of immigrants from non-Western contexts arriving in the U.S. These new immigrants have experienced varying degrees of challenge in adjusting to the existing culture. The ancestors of students from Native communities in Oaxaca were exposed to different European colonizer invading their own territories, but they exercised resistance, and their descendants have managed to maintain traditional ways of life for thousands of years. Students with connections to pueblos in Oaxaca which practice traditional Zapotec ways of life bring a rich cultural tradition which may not always be in sync with U.S. norms for thinking and acting (Brayboy et al., 2012). It follows that students from cultural backgrounds that are more aligned with the dominant culture are likely to experience fewer discontinuities with norms they encounter at school (Noguera, 2008). School staff who understand this phenomenon and take steps to even the playing field for students who may be dealing with greater home-school discontinuities will facilitate success for students with non-Western backgrounds.

Encouraging Student Engagement. The degree to which a student is able to become engaged at school is closely related to the previously discussed sense of school belonging. In fact, some definitions of student engagement break the term down into two parts: behavioral and emotional engagement, which includes a sense of belonging (Lee, 2014). Findings from this study

show that efforts to do home visits, connect with students, speak about the Zapotec language, and to provide extracurricular activities have all promoted greater participation and engagement. The data demonstrates that simple acts of caring can be powerful in the lives of marginalized students. The data shows that saying some words in the home language, mentioning the community where a family is originally from, talking about a tradition or festival, or simply listening to a student and helping them to feel accepted and valued at school are all important acts which encourage greater levels of engagement. In terms of vulnerable populations in general, engagement is critical, as it is correlated with increased academic achievement (Lee, 2014). For Indigenous Oaxacan students more specifically, encouraging student engagement can lead them to be exposed to lessons and opportunities that will help them envision a life for themselves that includes higher education and career options which can enable them to be role models for students who come after them. Given that students from Zapotec-speaking are connected to their communities, but don't always "see" others like themselves reflected in the curriculum, having guest speakers and/or examples of successful people who they can identify with is especially important to this growing community of learners. The related topic of culturally sustaining pedagogy offers more ways the school can engage students and convey a sense of belonging at school. Ultimately, it may be said that a sense of belonging is based on the perceptions of students, staff, and parents, which have been developed over time. It is important to draw a connecting line between these phenomena, since positive perceptions may lead to a greater sense of trust and belonging, which may increase student buy-in and emotional engagement (Lee, 2014).

Positive Perceptions. As for many of the themes presented here and supported with evidence in the findings, having positive perceptions of our students is likely to improve their experiences at school. Several participants from this case study expressed positive or neutral perceptions of one another. A few demonstrated deep-seated biases that are concerning, and may

lead to microaggressions against Indigenous Oaxacan students. Positive perceptions among stakeholders at the school can positively impact levels of participation and engagement, greater regard and rapport between teachers, parents, and students, and an increased sense of belonging at school. All of these characteristics are associated with better outcomes for marginalized students, including more vulnerable populations.

With respect to students with ties to Native communities in Oaxaca, a difference was revealed in the data between staff and student perceptions. The stated perspective of several school employees who participated in this study was that school staff possess a high degree of cultural competence. However, this did not square with the opinions of the students as reported in the student survey, interviews, and focus groups. Some of the students with Oaxacan heritage reported that they did not think that the staff was culturally aware in general and seemed to think that most teachers knew very little about Oaxaca, specifically. Students from families from Zapotec-speaking pueblos in Oaxaca, may refrain from involvement at the school based on communication around perceptions with members of their own communities, who they are more likely to trust. In the absence of challenges to such perceptions, some may maintain perceptions of the school and school staff that pose barriers to their ability to succeed themselves and/or provide their child(ren) with the support and participation required to lay a foundation for academic achievement and social success. Likewise, if staff members were to maintain a perception that Oaxacan families don't value education, this would be likely to inform the comments and actions of staff holding these beliefs. Like all work around social justice, challenging such deep-seated beliefs takes time, information, and new experiences to replace old thought patterns (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Engaging staff in workshops to do this internal work would allow participants to begin to question their assumptions and to see their students in ways that are more productive to developing home-school partnerships (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Supportive Faculty and Staff. Several student participants made positive statements about a supportive teacher or other staff member at school. The social worker was viewed as very supportive by a number of current students [from field notes]. The ELD teachers, who seem to play a more expansive role in the support of students and their families than other teachers typically do, were named by students as providing them with much needed support. One of the alumni participants spoke about a teacher who believed in her and who listened to her as a primary reason for her to attend college and pursue her career as a professor. A number of parent participants remarked that the parent center liaison was instrumental in their participation in workshops and other events at the school. It is undeniable that the efforts of a supportive adult have played a very important role in encouraging students and helping them to gain confidence in themselves. The data from this study provides yet another example of the powerful impact of adult mentorship and support while guiding their students in a positive direction.

For Oaxacan youth, given the degree of connection and participation in traditions associated with their family's community in Oaxaca, there may not be as many opportunities to attend school events, to participate in student activities, or to develop rapport with school staff. It would be important for teachers to make an effort to understand each student's situation, and to offer alternative ways for them to become involved and to develop those critical relationships. Moreover, it would be important for staff to begin from the standpoint of success and then, when encountering barriers, to work to understand what might be getting in the way for some of their students. Again, due to high levels of community responsibility and with most family members in the household working, some Indigenous Oaxacan students may depend on staff to reach out to them, to communicate their support, and to help students find opportunities that will work for them within the context of their family traditions and responsibilities (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Extracurricular Activities. It is apparent that this particular high school is fortunate to have a principal who has prioritized the development of a number of extracurricular activities, and she made it very clear during her interviews that her goal is to make these such activities accessible to all students. She seems to recognize the importance of such activities for student engagement. In fact, a number of student participants spoke about the activities they were involved in at school (e.g., AVID, drumline, leadership, clubs, festival planning etc.), and it was clear from the way participants talked about these activities how important they were to them. At the time of the fieldwork for this case study, the principal was working hard to get a series of monthly activities aimed at celebrating different cultural groups at the school up and running. In addition, she had an idea that struck me as extremely insightful, which was to have monthly awards events designed to reward students demonstrating both academic excellence and also showing character which supports the values and vision of the school in its efforts to combat discrimination of all kinds. During the year of fieldwork at this high school, I was invited to attend three field trips as a participant-observer/chaperone and extra adult, and they were all very interesting and valuable educationally, but also appeared to be enjoyable to the students who participated. There were many such trips planned throughout the year, and open to all students [from field notes]. Activities such as these enrich the regular curriculum, and provide students the opportunity to make friends, learn by doing, and to see their teachers in a different setting, thereby enhancing their rapport and positive regard.

For students with ties to Native communities in Oaxaca, there are some extracurricular activities that are especially conducive to their academic and social success. Data from focus groups indicated that within the context of the drumline one participant was able to gain skills and establish friendship that bridged the gap between home and school expectations. Given that playing an instrument in a band is a highly valued cultural skill both at school and in the home/community, this activity particularly is well-suited to Oaxacan youth. In addition, the leadership club provided a

space for students with family ties in Zapotec-speaking communities to get to know each other in a space that encouraged conversations about planning cultural events of interest, such as the Guelaguetza festival. In this context, important relationships with peers and adults were made, and conversations about future college and career options took place. This club was attended by highly successful students with family ties to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca and provided a space at this high school to explore future education, and to plan events that were of mutual interest and identity affirming.

Culturally Sustaining Activities. For the purposes of this section, both pedagogy and extracurricular activities will be included in the discussion. Closely related to identity affirming activities, the concept of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, (also known as Culturally Relevant or Culturally Responsive Teaching) has been shown to contribute to greater levels of academic achievement and social/emotional well-being for students from marginalized groups (Banks, 1974; Gay, 1977; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Despite the potential to facilitate academic and social/emotional outcomes, there was not a lot of evidence from the data to support such activities taking place in the classroom at the school where this case study was conducted. However, multiple students did attest to the fact that culturally sustaining extracurricular activities were important to their sense of belonging and engagement, and in affirming their own identity as Oaxacans. The new administration had a specific plan to roll out a monthly series of assemblies, each with a theme related to cultural, racial, ethnic, or gender identities. Multiple interviews with the administrative staff confirm the enthusiasm for this program, which was intended to be offered as a celebration of diversity. There was little mention of how they plan to prepare teachers to integrate culturally sustaining activities into their instruction. However, as many studies have shown, this practice, along with increasing the cultural competence of staff and students is highly effective in engaging students from diverse backgrounds (Gay, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Noguera, 2008).

Effective ELD and Special Education Services. A number of studies have shown that mistakes can be made when identifying students for special education who are also designated as English Language Learners (Becker & Deris, 2019; Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017; Umansky, Thompson, & Díaz, 2017). This is because relatively few specialists have the training, time, or materials needed to perform an accurate assessment, not to mention to make an informed determination about the presence of a learning disability in a student who is multicultural and multilingual. As Cheatham and Hart Barnett (2017) suggest, services can be highly effective for students with disabilities who are also English learners, however, the possibility for error is high, and the subsequent placement in a special education program for a student who does not need such services can have the opposite impact on his or her chances for success.

Recognition of Multi-level Dynamics. Referring back to one of the theoretical frameworks for this case study, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory also reminds us of the importance of individual, family, community, and societal levels of influence when considering complex interactions impacting human development. For example, one participant from a pueblo in Oaxaca, Angel, by all appearances faces a number of challenges. Despite this fact, his individual temperament, undying optimism, and tendency to study and work hard, has resulted in incredible success for him so far, during his first years in high school. It is possible that, due to his recent arrival, he has to this point been less aware of the levels of racism and microaggressions that occur in the community. It is also possible that growing up in a more remote, homogenous pueblo, he was sheltered from some of the factors which adversely impact other Indigenous students from Mexico. It is also possible that he has an unusually strong and supportive family unit. There are many factors to consider, and it is nearly impossible to know what specifically is responsible for his apparent success. It is important to keep these complex combinations of forces, and myriad interactions between levels of influence in the lives of Oaxacan youth, in mind in any discussion

about academic and social/emotional well-being of California students (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017).

Supportive Environment for Identity Development. Closely related to relevant extracurricular activities and relationships with supportive staff is the importance of the school providing safe spaces for students to gather accurate information and to have meaningful experiences as they explore and develop a sense of identity (Flores-Crespo, 2007; Kearney, 2000; Vásquez, 2019). Interview data confirms that there are several staff members at the school, including the principal and the school counselor, who accept and embrace their professional responsibility to support adolescent students in the critical work of forming a healthy identity and sense of self. This finding is important because not all educators seem to feel that this is part of their job description. These beliefs on the part of some educators may be related to antiquated ideas about the purpose of education, which was once thought to be only about academics. This notion has been changing gradually over the years, and it is important for staff to understand that the developmental trajectory for students living with poverty, in abusive homes, and from marginalized groups are likely to encounter a more complex trajectory as they grow and develop into adults (Flores-Crespo, 2007; Kearney, 2000; Vásquez, 2019). It will be important for school leaders to assist teachers in making the paradigm shift to an expanded view of what constitutes "education" in the context of a public school, both because this is what is required and because this is also the philosophy promoted by the state department of education (CDE, 2020).

This discussion necessarily touches upon the importance of staff awareness, simply because it is hard to support students when you know little about their background or what issues they may be facing. The post-modern nature of our society sometimes puts teachers in a position where they feel they must contort themselves into relativist pretzels, by being "open to everything." While it is the case that the data from this case study demonstrates that the parent participants from Zapotec-

speaking communities don't necessarily prioritize the school teaching cultural information to their children, as new generations begin to experience the distance between the traditions they practice and those of their parents and grandparents, it becomes important to provide a space for students to explore their own perspectives around these developments. A part of every student's identity is formed by the way they are seen by those in the dominant culture (Flores-Marcial, 2015; Vásquez, 2019). Given the fact that a near universal experience of students from Zapotec communities in Oaxaca is one of discrimination based on who they are or how they look or speak, reproductions of cultural activities which ground them in their heritage become safe and affirming activities as they navigate the world they live in (Flores-Marcial, 2015; Vásquez, 2019).

Some educators from the dominant culture might say that they should not get involved in such issues. On the contrary, providing students with a safe space in which they can go about this work is one way of facilitating their academic achievement and social/emotional well-being. Supporting students' identity development does not need to be taught in a formal lesson, and teachers don't have to be experts on all cultures and ethnicities to be effective. It may consist of efforts such as leaving their classroom open at lunchtime for students to hang out, acting as an advisor to a club (that the students create), being there to listen and to ask questions; these are all ways in which educators can provide much needed support. Obtaining book and video suggestions from experts and then giving access to reading materials for students to borrow and/or showing informational videos in class often fall to us as educators. To support vulnerable students, including those from Indigenous communities of Oaxaca, educators must become more aware of the challenges they face, and with accurate information, we can be there to support them as they do the difficult work of becoming adults. Finally, having some positive information or experiences to share from their home communities, like photos from a trip, or knowing some words in Zapotec can send a powerful message that their family background is both valued and important.

Recognition of Indigenous Identity Finally, a basic tenet of this case study is that it is crucial for California educators to realize the important fact that not all Latino students share the same culture and linguistic background. Grouping all Latinos together into one monolithic group is not productive and can be harmful to students. In terms of creating a positive school culture, which fosters a sense of belonging and affords safety for developing identities, a one-dimensional view of being Latino, or even of being Mexican, does not recognize the degree of diversity represented by the students who are grouped together in this one category. The data from this study confirm that it is critical that Indigenous Oaxacan students be seen and valued for the unique cultural and linguistic gifts they bring, along with those of their families and larger communities. California educators would benefit greatly from understanding the importance of the findings presented here, which demonstrates that California students with connections to Native communities in Oaxaca come from unique backgrounds that vary from those of other Mexican immigrants (Vásquez, 2012; Vásquez, 2019).

The fact that students from Zapotec-speaking communities are from Indigenous communities in Mexico, and may speak an Indigenous language, is important for a number of reasons, which are highlighted in the case study findings. First and foremost, Zapotec communities in Oaxaca are distinct and unique, but also share cultural characteristics (Flores-Marcial, 2015). Many of these communities maintain customs and traditions that extend back thousands of years (Flores-Marcial, 2015). This mean that students with connections to Indigenous communities in Oaxaca are the beneficiaries of rich traditions that have been in practice for millennia. It cannot be overstated how important this heritage is to many Indigenous Oaxacans, and how critical to their very existence is the maintenance of a connection to these communities of origin. It may be difficult for educators to understand just how comprehensive and supreme many Indigenous Oaxacans consider their responsibilities with respect to their home communities. The needs and requirements

of this home community will be of primary importance, and solidarity to that community is paramount. This represents a kind of dedication to community that is not easily understood by most modern-day U.S. residents. However, it is a reality for many Indigenous Oaxacans living in California, and school staff would do well to become more aware of these communities, and to accept and respect the cultural frameworks from within which students and families are operating.

Along with strength and solidarity of culture and traditions, students with families from Native communities of Oaxaca are likely to share certain cultural values which arise from and perpetuate their proud cultural traditions. As stated above, students with families from Zapotec-speaking communities of Oaxaca may be expected to fulfill responsibilities to their home communities that provide the *tequio* necessary for their families to remain part of that society. Moreover, Indigenous Oaxacan students, according to the data from field notes and interviews, are more likely to exhibit behavior at school that reflect the cultural values and norms that are so important to these communities. They may hold the respect of elders in high regard, and therefore might present themselves somewhat differently from their peers, showing an unusual degree of respect for their teachers. They may need additional encouragement to speak their mind directly, as is common in U.S. culture, especially if they feel it would be seen as disrespectful. In addition, students with connections to Zapotec communities in Oaxaca may have been raised with the values inherent to the practice of guelaguetza, and therefore may be more likely to interact in a more relational manner with others, rather than taking a more transactional approach as is the norm in U.S. dominant culture. These admirable qualities may in fact leave some Indigenous Oaxacan students in a more vulnerable position as they acclimate to U.S. culture.

In addition, students with connections to Native communities in Mexico, like all Indigenous persons, may be potentially susceptible to harm in the school environment in a number of ways. First, it is likely they will have experienced high levels of discrimination and racism, due to their

ethnicity, their race, their language, or all of these. Moreover, Indigenous students from all over the Americas may be cognizant to different degrees of the history of trauma which was the result of the colonization of their people, and they may grapple with difficult emotions about the dominant culture, which can be seen as representing the colonizers/invaders. Furthermore, Indigenous students with connections to Oaxaca may have additional layers to contend with as they process issues of identity when compared with non-Indigenous Mexican students (Vásquez, 2012; Vásquez, 2019).

Academically speaking, Indigenous students from Mexico are more likely to be multilingual, and multicultural, and more likely to be from small pueblos with cultures and traditions that are unfamiliar to teachers and staff who are part of the dominant U.S. culture. Indigenous Oaxacan students may have religious traditions or celebrations that are difficult for U.S. teachers to comprehend (e.g., a hybrid of pre-Columbian and European traditions, or prioritizing a family trip to a religious site which falls at an inconvenient time during the school year). Finally, Indigenous students with connections to Oaxacan communities may experience levels of trauma due to family separations, living with poverty, and immigration issues. These are only some of the reasons it would be beneficial for California educators to become more aware the important distinctions of between students who identify as Indigenous students from Native communities of the Americas, and those who do not have ties to Indigenous communities. As educators charged with maximizing the academic and social/emotional well-being of all of our students, it is important for school staff to make an effort to learn more our students' heritage communities, and to know more about the challenges Indigenous Oaxacan students face on a daily basis. Finally, it is critical that all educators acknowledge more generally the diversity of the Latino student population within our public schools (Vásquez, 2012; Vásquez, 2019).

Barriers to Student Success

A number of challenges were found to stand in the way of the potential for the academic achievement and for the social/emotional well-being of Oaxacan youth. Some of these factors include lack of awareness on the part of school staff, perceptions of students and families, low expectations, discrimination and microaggressions, home-school discontinuities, scheduling and coursework constraints, and inequities associated with support programs. These barriers, those not always present at the school, and not affecting all students, are nevertheless areas for school leaders to contemplate with regard to academic achievement and populations of students considered to be most vulnerable.

Limited Awareness. One factor which was striking from the findings is the lack of awareness of the Oaxacan student population among school staff, despite the existence of an ethnic enclave in close proximity of the school over at least three decades. This particular community in Los Angeles is home to a large number of Zapotec-speaking families who make up a significant part of the school community, estimated between 8 and 12% of the student body, depending on the year. With such a history, one would think that all staff interviewed would have a substantial awareness about the community and the challenges faced by the students with ties to this community. However, this was not always the case. The school social worker, Ms. Ortega, seemed to be the most aware of all of those interviewed, but even she had stated that she would like to know more. Naming a staff member such as Ms. Ortega to provide a brief informational training to other staff would serve to provide basic information to teachers, and perhaps others who make up the student body, about this population. I am not suggesting that she provide staff superficial facts about Oaxacan youth that would only serve to essentialize their culture and communities of origin. However, information that is pertinent to current issues facing students, such as family separation, home responsibilities, and identity development might be helpful, along with some positive

information about the Native communities in Oaxaca from which many of them have migrated. This would undoubtedly lead to increased opportunities for staff and students to connect and for students and their families to participate and would foster a greater sense of belonging at school.

Negative Perceptions of Students and Families. From the interview and field notes data, it seems apparent that perceptions about Oaxacan students and their families could be improved, and likewise, greater outreach might help to dispel unrealistic perceptions families may have about the school, the staff, and the community. In the findings section above, one administrator revealed a perception that Indigenous peoples were in general "less educated," and due to communication difficulties due to speaking Zapotec as their primary language, were sometimes viewed by staff as having special needs [from field notes]. In addition, one staff member with whom I interacted regularly, and who appeared to be very supportive of this study, still lowered her voice when speaking about "Indigenous people" in a way that seemed to convey some type of shame. This staff member also declined to be interviewed for this study, with her stated reason being, "I am not an Indigenous person" [from field notes]. Moreover, a very obviously dedicated, European-American staff member participating in the study made statements about the families of Oaxacan students that seemed to question their dedication to education in general [from field notes]. These sorts of comments in my experience are a very common sentiment among especially White, middle-class teachers. I think this perception stems in part from a lack of experience with the particular ethic group of the families they are referring to. Because many middle-class, White families do not have the same type of approach to family relations and religious faith, for example, students and families participating in important family events or religious celebrations can seem to them like a "choice" that family makes instead of doing an assignment, attending a school event etc. Upon further examination I believe that these values are not incompatible, but it is a matter of what a family deems to be "essential." From the findings, several participants spoke about family and

community responsibilities as a "given" around which the rest of life takes place [from field notes]. In this way of thinking, competing events and activities become a sort of "pressure" between what is required, and what is very important, rather than a "choice" to do one or another. It would seem that an ongoing examination of perceptions and assumptions among the staff would benefit all involved. As described in the microaggressions framework, such faulty beliefs and perceptions can easily manifest as microaggressions in the school setting, which can lead to lasting damage to students and lower levels of achievement (Solórzano & Perez Huber, 2012; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008).

Discrimination and Microaggressions. Responses from the student survey with regard to witnessed acts of bias at school indicated that microaggressions around language proficiency were common. However, a number of participants shared painful memories of being excluded, being told they couldn't pursue certain professions due to their race and being called "indio" or made fun of for speaking an Indigenous language. Such experiences have a distressing, cumulative impact on the target of such assaults, and as stated above, are often unintended, and are a direct result of deep-seated assumptions and beliefs on the part of the perpetrator (Howard, 2008; Solórzano & Perez Huber, 2012; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008). Given that the school setting is the primary location in which these negative experiences take place in a young person's life, it is incumbent on the school leaders to set a tone and create a school culture that is inconducive to such incidents. One way to address the insidious issue within schools, is to offer a required class on structural racism and bullying prevention. Extracurricular events aimed at promoting understanding among difference would also be beneficial, as long as they are well thought out and intentional in their messaging.

Inaccurate Placement in Special Education. The relatively large number of English Language Learners (ELLs) represented in this case study who were also identified as having a

disability and receiving special education services is an area for further examination. This finding is concerning because of the aforementioned tendency for special education assessors to come to incorrect conclusions, setting into motion a trajectory of services and programs that may have a negative impact on student academic achievement (Becker & Deris, 2019; Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017; Umansky, Thompson, & Díaz, 2017). Studies suggest that students who are removed from their general education classes to receive special education support (and in some cases who may not require such services), may fall behind their peers and lose access to required courses and other opportunities, thereby impacting future educational plans (Umansky et al., 2017).

When ELLs are correctly identified and placed in effective special education programs, implemented by well-trained staff who are aware of the complexities of bilingualism, and who engage in culturally responsive practices, such services can constitute a facilitator to academic achievement (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017). Unfortunately, this is not always the situation in which ELLs, especially at the secondary level, find themselves, and many misconceptions remain about how to effectively serve these students (Cheatham & Hart Barnett, 2017). One of the issues ELLs confront is difficulty in passing the ELPAC assessment, which is the test which will allow them to exit ELD classes and begin to take regular English and more rigorous classes offered by the school. Given the challenges they may experience in passing this test, and in becoming reclassified as English proficient, some ELLs may find it more difficult to gain access to the courses they will need to pursue higher education after high school. Students in this situation sometimes end up in alternative settings to complete their education, such as adult school or continuation school, potentially exposing them to learning environments which can be more challenging for them to navigate than the traditional high school setting.

Inaccurate or Poorly Executed Celebrations. Although there are plans for some extracurricular events at the high school in which this case study was conducted, and there have

been some festivals and events in the past, they didn't strike me as particularly well thought out at the time they were described [from field notes]. This is important because it is not enough to have an event that approximates an important holiday or to promote an international food day, because to have value and meaning, and to not risk essentializing a culture, it is important for information to be accurate and for the event to honor/celebrate (and not offend). There are a number of examples from the data, including the recollection of the multicultural food festival, which was discontinued two years prior. Such events can serve to trivialize the importance of sacred traditions and practices held dear by families in the community. With regard to "culturally relevant" events, it is important to be thoughtful and intentional, especially as members of the dominant culture who may be attempting to "celebrate" a tradition of a culture unfamiliar to their own. Expert informants must ideally get involved to minimize the chance of misrepresentations. Moreover, the findings do not provide evidence of a focus on culturally sustaining pedagogy in the classroom setting, which is unfortunate. It seems that there is ample evidence to support the benefits of implementing such an approach to thinking about lessons and experiences to share with students.

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are a number of factors for school leaders to consider which will be likely to impact on the academic achievement and social/emotional well-being of marginalized and students at the school which was the site of this case study. This goal of this dissertation has been to shine a light on some of these factors in relation to one such population, namely students with connections to Zapotec-speaking communities in Oaxaca. Over the last forty to fifty years, the forces of globalization and impacts of neoliberal economic "reforms" have caused the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their native territories across Mexico. Since that time, an increasing number of families from Native communities in Oaxaca have migrated to Los Angles for a variety of reasons - to be with family, in search of work, or seeking educational opportunities. In recent years, state departments of education have been tracking the academic progress of students from what they have identifies as vulnerable groups, including English learners, migrant children, students with disabilities, low-income students, and students of color. Most educators recognize a gap in the achievement of these vulnerable groups, and this has been the focus of a number of studies. Oaxacan youth attending school in Los Angeles frequently fall into overlapping groups of vulnerable student populations. At the high school site of the fieldwork for this case study, there were a number of student participants who were, in many ways, achieving academically and who reported having numerous friends and activities they enjoyed. However, there were others who were not as fortunate. This case study has endeavored to reveal some of the factors that may impact the success of Indigenous Oaxacan students in the broad areas of academic achievement and social/emotional well-being.

From the findings reported here, it is evident that more investigation must be done in a number of areas impacting Indigenous students from Mexico living in California. One area that posed a challenge at the start of this case study was the difficulty in obtaining accurate data

about students from Native communities of Mexico. The categories that might pertain to this population that are offered on forms such as the census and other school documentation are Latino/Hispanic and Native American. In addition, the Home Language Survey form has some obvious limitations, as school employees were not able to give an accurate account of the number of Zapotec speakers in that part of the district, since data is not collected in a way that makes this information clear and consistent. An overall examination is needed if there would be any benefit to people from Indigenous communities in Latin America if they were able to more accurately identify their own race and identity on documentation as required by state and local authorities.

During the course of the ethnographic-style case study presented here, a number of barriers and facilitators to success were identified and supported with evidence from primarily qualitative and a limited amount of quantitative data. As a case study, the identification of factors impacting student success, as supported by the findings reported here, is meant to contribute to the conversation about Indigenous Oaxacan students attending high school in Los Angeles specifically, and not to make claims about vulnerable student populations in California public schools more generally. A primary focus of the study was to uncover and express why it is important for California educators to acknowledge the diversity that exists among Latinos, and to make distinctions in a number of ways between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from Mexico (and elsewhere). It has been argued that it is important for school personnel to be aware of the backgrounds of the students served in California public schools. Research tells us that being knowledgeable about student backgrounds will enable teachers to activate prior learning, establish rapport, engage in culturally sustaining activities, and minimize microaggressions. It has also been asserted that it is important for educators to be able to acknowledge their students' stated identities, and to be prepared to offer safe spaces and

assistance in order to support them most effectively in their development. There were a number of very encouraging practices observed at the school which is the site for this case study. In terms of the population that was the focus of the guiding questions, there were a number of facilitators to success in place.

In addition to uncovering factors impacting student success, it was also the intention of this case study to use the findings to build theory as a basis for further inquiry. Over the course of this study, there were a number of ideas which could serve as ways to frame future research efforts. First, the framework for culturally sustaining pedagogy could be adapted to better fit the urban setting, and to reflect an approach to instruction that focuses on all students, including those from the dominant culture. I propose the idea of a "mutually affirming pedagogy," in which all cultures and backgrounds are explored and highlighted during the instructional process, and the focus is not on viewing any one group as "culturally diverse," which can serve to "other" students, but rather on viewing each and every student as having a culture and a background that is worthy of affirmation and respect. Within the context of this updated framework, culture and power dynamics can be discussed and unequal structures can be challenged from a more level playing field. Second, it seems evident that teachers today require ways in which to learn about communities represented in their classrooms, and this could be a framework from which teachers begin to plan instruction and supports. It could be best practice for teachers to be expected to conduct a thorough exploration of the backgrounds of their students prior to the onset of instruction. This should not be a "soundbite" approach to learning about the food and dress of various world cultures, but rather a deeper look at individuals and communities represented in their own classrooms. Last, the study highlighted the need for a change in the way we approach the preparation of pre-service teachers, especially with respect to their "internal" preparation. A number of the barriers presented as findings of this case study

require teachers to engage in a considerable amount of training, exploration, and reflection that is simply not possible in any meaningful way in our current approach to teacher education. Increased time engaged in these activities will provide a way to begin to challenge deep-seated bias and lack of cultural knowledge that is the source of a number of barriers discussed above. With that being said, there are many positive efforts aimed at eradicating barriers to success for California students, and programs and services provided at the school of focus for this case study is no exception. However, a number of the facilitators described were not always observed in this context, due to a number of reasons beyond the control of the staff.

In regard to future research, there are a number of directions in which I would like to see further investigation. For example, I would like to learn more about the number of students from vulnerable populations who are identified as both English Learners and special education students. As a special educator, I am interested in what factors enable so many ELs to be identified as having disabilities, and to look more closely at the effectiveness of programs designed to support them. I am interested in ways we might improve the assessment process to make it more attuned to bilingual students, and in ways they might obtain the support they need without having to designated as having a disability if they in fact, do not. In addition, I would like to explore ways to identify students and families more accurately based on their communities of origin rather than by a general category such as "Latino." I would also like to find out if this process would benefit the communities in any meaningful way besides making our data more accurate. Also, I am interested in knowing more about students from Native communities of the Americas, and how lived experiences of these students vary qualitatively from their non-Indigenous peers. In addition, I would like to learn more about translocal communities and about the meanings made from the students and families who are part of them. To do this, I would like to collaborate with researchers and communities on the Mexican

side and look at schools and education from the perspective of sending communities and educational institutions. Finally, I am interested in exploring what impact cultural representation has on specific groups of students. For example, what are the academic and social/emotional benefits specifically of students "seeing" themselves represented in the curriculum? How does staff and student awareness about specific student backgrounds lead to increased levels of engagement and success? How can schools help to develop the social capital of parents of students from marginalized groups, and how can they improve parent outreach and participation for parents who work long hours and have responsibilities to their own communities? These topics are numerous, ambitious, wide-reaching, and involve many layers and complex factors. However, after completing this case study, these have revealed themselves as future directions of greatest interest and need.

In conclusion, it was an honor and a pleasure to engage in this case study at an urban high school in Los Angeles. For me, this work constitutes the first of several explorations about how to better support vulnerable student populations in California schools. There are factors reported here which would promote the success of all students, and yet there is also some information that pertains specifically to the unique population of focus of this case study, namely youth with family connections to Zapotec-speaking communities in Oaxaca, Mexico. It is my hope that this work will raise awareness about this student population attending school in Los Angeles, and that school staff and leaders will explore opportunities for positive change to improve the chances for academic success and social/emotional well-being for Indigenous Oaxacan youth.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Student Survey Assent Script

Confidential Student Survey: University High School

All responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will remain confidential

The following survey is the first part of a study being conducted in association with LAUSD and the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. The purpose of this survey is to explore student awareness about cultural diversity at University High School, and more specifically, about Native American students from the US, Mexico, and other parts of Latin America. In addition, the survey will serve as a means of identifying students who may be interested in participating in additional research-related activities.

This survey is voluntary. Your responses are anonymous, and your identity will never be known by the administrator unless you give your contact information directly.
Participation in the study is not required in order to participate in the raffle.

1. Please indicate your interest in entering the raffle at the end of this survey regardless of participation, in order to be entered in the raffle;
2. All survey respondents and non-respondents who indicate interest will be entered in the raffle;
3. The winner will be chosen by compiling all names of students/staff participating in the survey, and selecting one name by use of a random name picker app/tool;
4. Chance of winning will be approximately 1 in 1500.

***The raffle is for a gift card of $40 and the gift card is for Amazon.**

Appendix B: Parent Consent for Student Survey Spanish/English

Permiso de los padres - encuesta para estudiantes/estudio de UCLA

La clase de su hijo tomará una encuesta para un estudio realizado por un estudiante de doctorado de UCLA. La encuesta de investigación es parte de un estudio más amplio que se está realizando como una colaboración entre LAUSD y la Escuela de Graduados de Educación e Información de la UCLA. El propósito de esta encuesta es obtener información descriptiva sobre el cuerpo estudiantil y explorar el conocimiento y las percepciones sobre la diversidad racial, étnica, lingüística y cultural, y más específicamente, sobre las experiencias de los estudiantes en el Programa de Desarrollo del Idioma Inglés en la University High School.

Los estudiantes completarán una encuesta / cuestionario voluntario que demora aproximadamente 20 minutos.

Hacer esta encuesta causará poco o ningún riesgo para su hijo. El único riesgo potencial es que algunos estudiantes puedan encontrar ciertas preguntas con temas sensibles. La encuesta ha sido diseñada para proteger la privacidad de su hijo. Los estudiantes no pondrán sus nombres en la encuesta. Además, ninguna escuela o estudiante será mencionado por su nombre en un informe de los resultados. Su hijo no obtendrá ningún beneficio de inmediato al participar en la encuesta. Sin embargo, los resultados de esta encuesta pueden ayudar a los niños en el futuro. Nos gustaría que todos los estudiantes seleccionados participen en la encuesta, pero la encuesta es voluntaria. No se tomarán medidas contra la escuela, usted o su hijo, si su hijo no participa. Los estudiantes pueden omitir cualquier pregunta que no deseen responder. Además, los estudiantes pueden dejar de participar en la encuesta en cualquier momento sin penalización.

Por favor lea la sección de abajo y marque una casilla. Por favor devuelva el formulario a la escuela dentro de tres días. Si desea obtener más información sobre esta encuesta, comuníquese con el equipo de investigación o con la Oficina del Programa de Protección de Investigación Humana de UCLA:

Gina Cobin, coordinadora del estudio: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, asesor de la facultad: pednoguera@gmail.com

UCLA Oficina del Programa de Protección de Investigación Humana (OHRPP):
Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, o si tiene inquietudes o sugerencias y desea hablar con alguien que no sea el investigador, puede comunicarse con el OHRPP de UCLA por teléfono: (310) 206-2040; por correo electrónico: participantes@research.ucla.edu o por correo: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

¡Gracias!

Nombre del niño: _____
Grado: _____

He leído este formulario y entiendo de qué trata la encuesta.

Marque uno:

[] Mi hijo puede participar en esta encuesta.

[] Mi hijo no puede participar en esta encuesta.

Firma de los padres: _____
Fecha: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

University of California, Los Angeles

PARENT PERMISSION FOR MINOR TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Schooling Experiences of ELs from Oaxaca

Gina Cobin, PhD student and Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty advisor, from the Department of Education at UCLA, are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you and your family have indicated that you recently came to live in Los Angeles, are originally from Oaxaca and have at least one child attending University High School, and in English Language Development classes. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study seeks to give voice to the schooling experiences of EL students from Oaxaca. It is the intention of this study to discover if students and their families are encountering challenges, with a goal to inform educators about how they might improve instruction and supports for diverse children and youth in California schools.

What will happen if my child takes part in this research study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to:

- Your child will be asked to complete a survey which also includes demographic questions;
- The research team will collect "artifacts" with your permission and your teachers permission (student work, posters, documents, photos, artwork etc.);
- Complete one interview of approximately 40 minutes, in a comfortable, private location selected by parent and interviewer and/or participate in 1-2 focus group(s) with other participants, as desired;
- Allow interview to be recorded, and allow interviewer to take notes without identification of participant;
- Discuss school experiences, perspectives about the current school/curriculum, and about any challenges experienced, especially due to cultural and linguistic differences;
- Comment on accuracy of narratives and/or transcriptions after completion of all interviews, and to clarify meanings as needed.

***All interviews will be conducted outside of the regular school day, at a location mutually agreed upon.**

How long will my child be in the research study?

Participation will take place between June 2018 to December 2019, from initial consent to interview and final comments (and conclusion of tutoring, if applicable).

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that my child can expect from this study?

- To the extent that it is not comfortable for your child to discuss immigration experiences, identity, or challenges s/he may have experienced at school, the interview questions could potentially be uncomfortable.
- These topics may not be something your child would normally discuss with a person unknown to him/her, and this may lead to discomfort during the interview. No information about immigration status will be asked about or recorded.

No information will ever be shared without permission.
The study goal is to improve conditions for diverse students in California.
Your child's identity will be protected at all times.

Are there any potential benefits to my child if he or she participates?
Yes. As a credentialed teacher in California, the interviewer would like to offer tutoring for your child, to be completed between September 2018 and June 2019, at a location mutually agreed upon.

The results of the research will be shared with you and professionals in the school district, if desired.

Your child is not required to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.

Will information about my child's participation be kept confidential?
Yes. Any information that is obtained that can identify you or your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded names. No identifiable names will be written on any notes or in any recording.

*All photo and video data will be kept indefinitely in a locked folder on the private laptop of the principal investigator, which is backed up regularly on a secure network.

What are my and my child's rights if I allow him/her to take part in this study?

- Your child can decline to participate at any time.
- You and/or your child can decide which questions to answer, and which questions not to respond to.
- You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You and/or your child may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still choose to remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com
OR

The UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

_____
Name of Child

_____
Name of Parent or Legal Guardian

_____ _____
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian Date

Appendix C: Student Survey

University High School Confidential Student Survey
All responses to this survey will remain strictly confidential - the survey is voluntary

The following survey is part of a larger study being conducted as a collaboration between LAUSD and the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. The purpose of this survey is to obtain descriptive information about the student body, and to explore awareness and perceptions about racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, with a special focus on students with connections to Native communities of Mexico. Your responses are anonymous, and your identity will never be known by the administrator unless you intentionally give your contact information.

1. Do you consent to participate in this study by taking this survey?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

*(even if you mark yes, you can still decline to answer any question you don't want to respond to)

2. What grade are you in at University High School?

- ☐ 9th grade
- ☐ 10th grade
- ☐ 11th grade
- ☐ 12th grade

3. What is your GPA?

- ☐ over 4.0
- ☐ 3.0 - 3.9
- ☐ 2.0 - 2.9
- ☐ 1.0 - 1.9
- ☐ below 1.0

4. Do you receive free or reduced-price breakfast or lunch at school?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

5. Where were you born?

- ☐ Los Angeles, California
- ☐ other place in the US - city/state: _____
- ☐ outside of US - city/country: _____

6. Where were your parents born?

- ☐ in the US which city/state: mother _____ father_____
- ☐ outside of US - city/country: mother _____ father_____

7. How long has your family lived in the United States?

- ☐ less than one year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years

- more than 10 years
- always

8. What type of work do your parents do here in Los Angeles?

Mother/Guardian #1	Father/Guardian #2
Restaurant	• Restaurant
Cleaning	• Cleaning
Doctor/Lawyer	• Doctor/Lawyer
Factory/Mechanic	• Factory/Mechanic
Cares for children	• Cares for children
Agricultural	• Agricultural
Teacher/Professor	• Teacher/Professor
Other: _____	• Other: _____

9. How much of the English instruction do you understand when you are in your classes?

- 100%
- almost everything
- a lot but sometimes I get confused
- about half
- very little
- other (please explain): _____

10. If you answered above that you have difficulty understanding instruction in your classes, can you say why (check all that apply)?

- I get too tired
- I get distracted in class
- The teaching is confusing
- I get bored in class
- I am still learning English
- Other (please explain): _____

11. Which English class(es) are you currently taking?

_____ _____ _____

12. What grades do you typically get in your core English class(es)?

- As
- Bs
- Cs
- Ds

13. Check all of the following specialized services or classes in your schedule:

- Resource class
- Speech
- Special education class
- 2-year algebra

- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Honors course
- ☐ AVID
- ☐ Other: _____
- OT or PT
- AP class
- Support class (extra help)
- Not sure/none of these

14. Who lives with you at your home (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Stepmother
- ☐ Aunt(s)
- ☐ Brother(s): age(s)_____
- ☐ Grandmother(s)
- ☐ Adult not related to me
- Father
- Stepfather
- Uncle(s)
- Sister(s): age(s)_____
- Grandfather(s)
- Other: _____

15. Do you have parents, brothers or sisters that don't live with you?" If so, where do they live?

- ☐ yes (please explain): _____
- ☐ no

16. Is there someone at home who is available to assist you with your school work?

- ☐ yes, a sibling
- ☐ yes, a parent
- ☐ yes, another adult
- ☐ yes, a friend/peer
- ☐ no

17. There are over 200 languages spoken by families living in Los Angeles. What language(s) are spoken in your home (check all that apply)?

- Spanish
- English
- "Spanglish"
- French
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Arabic
- Italian
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Cantonese
- Farsi
- Korean
- Tagalog
- Armenian
- Other: _____

18. Estimate how much of the time each language is spoken in your home (you can estimate % or explain in another way as needed):

19. Indicate the language(s) you can speak:

- Spanish
- English
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Tagalog
- Farsi
- Korean
- Armenian

- Italian
- Other: _____

20. Indicate the language(s) you can understand:
- Spanish
- English
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Italian
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Tagalog
- Farsi
- Korean
- Armenian
- Other: _____

21. Indicate the language(s) you can read:
- Spanish
- English
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Italian
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Tagalog
- Farsi
- Korean
- Armenian
- Other: _____

22. Indicate the language(s) you can write:
- Spanish
- English
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Italian
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Tagalog
- Farsi
- Korean
- Armenian
- Other: _____

23. Which is your strongest language talking to your friends?
- Spanish
- English
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Italian
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Tagalog
- Farsi
- Korean
- Armenian
- Other: _____

24. Which is your strongest language talking to your parents?
- Spanish
- English
- French
- Arabic
- Mandarin
- Japanese
- Italian
- Zapotec
- Mixtec
- Tagalog
- Farsi
- Korean
- Armenian
- Other: _____

25. How do you typically identify yourself to others in terms of your race and ethnic background (check all that apply)?
- Latino/Latina
- Mexican
- Oaxacan
- Mixtec
- Jehovah's Witness
- Jewish

- Hispanic
- Chicano/Chicana
- Native American
- American Indian
- Indigenous
- Black
- African-American
- White
- Euro-American
- Asian
- Zapotec
- Maya
- Cherokee
- Arab
- Fernandeño
- Navajo/Dine
- Caribbean
- Italian
- Armenian
- Chinese
- Muslim
- Christian
  - Catholic
  - Pentecostal
- Gabrieleno Tongva
  - Persian/Iranian
  - Pacific Islander
- African
  - Japanese
  - Other: _____

26. If you or either of your parents identifies as a member of a Native American tribe or Indigenous/Native Community of Latin America, please name the community associated with (check all that apply)?
    - Gabrieleno Tongva
    - Cahuilla
    - Kumeyaay
    - Fernandeño
    - Lakota
    - Yaqui
    - Ojibwe
    - Not Native American
    - Chumash
    - Luiseño
    - Morongo
    - Navajo
    - Cherokee
    - Chickasaw
    - Apache
    - Other: _____

27. If you or any of your family members from a Zapotec community in Oaxaca? If so please indicated which community (or communities):
    - Tlacolula de Matamoros
    - San Lucas Quiaviní
    - San Bartolomé Quialana
    - San Miguel del Valle
    - Mitla
    - Yagüi
    - Other: _____
    - Santa Ana del Valle
    - San Juan Guelavía
    - Xaagá
    - Villa Díaz Ordaz
    - Teotitlán del Valle
    - Oaxaca de Juárez
    - Not from a Zapotec community

28. How would you describe the racial/ethnic makeup of your school community?

29. What would you say is your level of ***awareness*** about the Native American/Indigenous students at your school? (***awareness*** = you know about them, you know something about the cultures, languages, and current issues within Native American/Indigenous communities):

    - ☐ very aware
    - ☐ somewhat aware
    - ☐ not very aware
    - ☐ not aware at all
    - ☐ other: _____

30. There are Native Americans/Indigenous peoples who come from all over the Americas. Some Indigenous families who live in Los Angeles are originally from Native communities in Oaxaca, Mexico.

How aware would you say you are about Mexican/Latin American Indigenous students at your school? (*awareness* = you know about them, you know something about the cultures, languages, and current issues within Native American/Indigenous communities):

- ☐ very aware
- ☐ somewhat aware
- ☐ not very aware
- ☐ not aware at all
- ☐ other: _____

31. How would you describe your *perceptions* about the Oaxacan students from Mexico at your school? (perceptions = your impressions or thoughts when you think about these peers?)

Response:

_____

_____

32. In your opinion, how culturally aware and respectful to culturally diverse students do you think teachers and staff are at your school?
    - very culturally aware and respectful
    - somewhat culturally aware and respectful
    - not very a culturally aware and respectful
    - not culturally aware and respectful
    - not sure

33. How culturally aware and respectful to culturally diverse students do you think the
    - students are at your school?
    - very culturally aware and respectful
    - somewhat culturally aware and respectful
    - not very a culturally aware and respectful
    - not culturally aware and respectful
    - not sure

34. Have you ever been involved in or witnessed discrimination or bullying at your school that was based on race or ethnicity? Please explain.

Response:

_____

_____

_____

35. Have you witnessed discrimination at your school based on other attributes (check all that apply)?

- Language
- Immigration status (having documents/papers)
- Indigeneity
- Gender
- Dis/abilities
- Other physical characteristics

36. University High School is unique in that there is a sacred site of the Gabrieleno Tongva people located on campus (Sacred Springs). Were you aware of this site? If so, how did you learn about it (check all that apply)?

- yes - in my classes
- yes - outside of class
- yes - it is common knowledge
- maybe - I think so
- no - I had no idea

37. Would you like to see more instructional time and extracurricular activities devoted to learning about Native American/Indigenous Communities of the Americas at school (e.g., Gabrieleno Tongva history, Zapotec language, culture, and current issues)?

- yes - in class
- yes - out of class
- no - not needed
- other: not sure

38. Do you have any additional thoughts about this survey or the ideas presented here?

Response: _____

THANK YOU!

Appendix D: Student Participant Assent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

ADOLESCENT (Ages 13-17) ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
Study name: Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth

Gina Cobin, a PhD student, and Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor, from the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) at UCLA, are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are associated with University High School and are originally from a community in Oaxaca.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?
This study seeks to give voice to the schooling experiences of English Learners from Oaxaca and their families in California public schools. It is the intention of this study to explore these experiences, and to discover if students and their families are encountering challenges. This may be useful information and could inform educators how they might improve instructional experiences for diverse children and youth in California.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?
If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to participate in one to two interviews, in which you will be asked about your experiences at University High School. The study will take place between June 2018 and December 2019, and will include an initial consent, interview(s), and possible follow-up discussions.

****All interviews will be conducted at a location mutually agreed upon by researcher and participant.**

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
Some of the interview questions could potentially be sensitive. You can choose not to discuss any issues that cause you discomfort.

No information will ever be shared without permission.
The study goal is to improve conditions for diverse students in California.
Your identity will be protected at all times.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
Yes. As a credentialed teacher in California, the interviewer would like to offer support/tutoring services in your class, and of English Learners at Uni, to be completed between September 2018 and June 2019. In addition, the results of the research will be shared with you if desired.

You are not required to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.
Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?
Yes. Any information that is obtained that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded names. No identifiable names will be written on any notes or in any recording.
*All audio and visual data will be kept indefinitely in a locked folder on the private laptop of the principal investigator, which is backed up regularly on a secured network.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You can choose if you want to be a participant in this study. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and still choose to remain in the study.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- You will be asked to complete a survey which also includes demographic questions;
- The research team will collect "artifacts" with your permission and your teachers permission (student work, posters, documents, photos, artwork etc.);
- Complete one or more interviews and/or take part in a focus group with other students;
- Interview questions will be about your school experiences and perspectives on in general, curriculum, and any challenges you may have had in regards to class content and extracurricular activities;
- Allow interview to be recorded, and allow the interviewer to take notes (without name identification);
- Allow member of research team to take or receive photos with your permission;
- Allow interviewer to observe one of your classes (as needed);
- After all interviews are complete, allow member of research team to meet with you again to obtain your comments/feedback regarding contents of transcripts, accuracy of narratives and/or translations, and to clarify meanings as needed.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, or in the event of a research related injury, please contact one of the members of the research team listed below:

Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com
AND/OR
Contact the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT CONFIRMING ASSENT

_____
Name of Student/Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Student/Participant Date

Appendix E: Parent Permission for Study Participation Spanish/English

University of California, Los Angeles

PERMISO DE PADRES PARA MENORES DE PARTICIPAR EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN

Nombre del estudio: ***Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth***

Gina Cobin, estudiante de doctorado, y Dr. Pedro Noguera, director de tésis, de la facultad del Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) de la UCLA, están llevando a cabo un estudio de investigación. Usted fue seleccionado como posible participante en este estudio porque usted y su familia han indicado que recientemente se vinieron a vivir a Los Angeles, son originarios de Oaxaca, de una comunidad zapoteca y tienen al menos un niño que asiste a University High School. Su participación en este estudio de investigación es voluntaria.

¿Por qué se está haciendo este estudio?

Este estudio busca dar voz a las experiencias escolares de los jóvenes zapotecas y sus familias. La intención de este estudio es descubrir si los estudiantes y sus familias enfrentan desafíos. Estas experiencias podrían informar a los educadores sobre cómo podrían mejorar la instrucción para niños y jóvenes diversos en California.

¿Qué sucederá si mi hijo participa en este estudio de investigación?

Si acepta permitir que su hijo participe en este estudio, le pedimos que:

• Se le pedirá a su hijo que complete una encuesta que también incluye preguntas demográficas;

• El equipo de investigación recogerá "artefactos" con su permiso y el permiso de sus maestros (trabajos de los estudiantes, carteles, documentos, fotos, obras de arte, etc.);

• Completar una entrevista de aproximadamente 40 minutos, en un lugar cómodo y privado seleccionado por el padre y el entrevistador y / o participar en 1-2 grupos de enfoque con otros participantes, según lo deseado;

• Permitir que se grabe la entrevista, y permitir que el entrevistador tome notas sin identificación del participante;

• Discutir experiencias escolares, perspectivas sobre la escuela / plan de estudios actual, y sobre cualquier desafío experimentado, especialmente debido a diferencias culturales y lingüísticas;

• Comente sobre la exactitud de las narraciones y / o transcripciones después de completar todas las entrevistas y aclare los significados según sea necesario.

** Todas las entrevistas se realizarán fuera del día escolar regular, en un lugar acordado por el investigador y el participante.

¿Cuánto tiempo estará mi hijo en el estudio de investigación?

La participación tendrá lugar entre septiembre de 2018 a junio de 2019, desde el consentimiento inicial hasta la entrevista y los comentarios finales (y la conclusión de la tutoría, si corresponde).

¿Hay algún riesgo potencial o incomodidades que mi hijo pueda esperar de este estudio?

• En la medida en que no le resulte cómodo a su hijo hablar sobre las experiencias de inmigración, la identidad como persona indígena o los desafíos que puede haber experimentado en la escuela, las preguntas de la entrevista podrían ser incómodas.

• Los temas de inmigración / estado de la documentación, y la identidad como miembro de una comunidad indígena pueden no ser un tema que su hijo normalmente discutiría con una persona desconocida para él / ella, y esto puede ocasionar incomodidad durante la entrevista. No se solicitará o registrará información sobre el estado migratorio.

Ninguna información será compartida sin permiso.

El objetivo del estudio es mejorar las condiciones para diversos estudiantes en California.

La identidad de su hijo estará protegida en todo momento.

¿Hay algún beneficio potencial para mi hijo si él o ella participa?

Sí. Como una maestra certificada en California, el entrevistador desea ofrecer tutoría para su hijo, que se completará entre septiembre de 2018 y junio de 2019, en un lugar acordado mutuamente.

Su hijo no está obligado a participar en este estudio. La participación es voluntaria.

¿La información sobre la participación de mi hijo se mantendrá confidencial?
Sí. Cualquier información que se obtiene que pueda identificarlo a usted o a su hijo permanecerá confidencial. Se divulgará solo con su permiso o según lo exija la ley. La confidencialidad se mantendrá por medio de nombres codificados. No se escribirán nombres identificables en ninguna nota ni en ninguna grabación.
* Todos los datos de foto y video se mantendrán indefinidamente en una carpeta bloqueada en la computadora portátil privada del investigador principal, que se respalda periódicamente en una red segura.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos y los de mi hijo si él o ella toman parte en este estudio?

- Puede sacar a su hijo de este estudio en cualquier momento.
- Su hijo puede negarse a participar en cualquier momento.
- Usted y / o su hijo pueden decidir qué preguntas responder y qué preguntas no responder.

¿Cuáles son los derechos de mi hijo si le permito participar en este estudio?

- Puede elegir si desea que su hijo participe en este estudio, y puede retirar su consentimiento y descontinuar la participación en cualquier momento.
- Cualquiera que sea la decisión que tome, no le aplicará ninguna penalización ni perderá los beneficios a los que de otra manera tenía derecho.
- Puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar y aun así elegir permanecer en el estudio.

¿A quién puedo contactar si tengo preguntas sobre este estudio?

- Si tiene preguntas, comentarios o inquietudes sobre la investigación, puede hablar con uno de los investigadores. Por favor contactar:

  Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu

  Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com

O puede estar en contacto con:
La Oficina de la UCLA del Programa de Protección de la Investigación Humana (OHRPP):
Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, o si tiene inquietudes o sugerencias y desea hablar con alguien que no sean los investigadores, puede comunicarse con la OHRPP de UCLA por teléfono: (310) 206-2040; por correo electrónico: participantes@research.ucla.edu o por correo: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.
Se puede pedir una copia de esta información para mantenerla en sus registros.

_____	_____
Nombre del niño	Nombre del padre o tutor legal
_____	_____
Firma del padre o tutor legal	Fecha
_____	_____
Firma de la persona que obtiene el consentimiento	Fecha
_____	
Nombre de la persona que obtiene el consentimiento	

****

University of California, Los Angeles

PARENT PERMISSION FOR MINOR TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth

Gina Cobin, PhD student and Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty advisor, from the Department of Education at UCLA, are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you and your family have indicated that you recently came to live in Los Angeles, are originally from Oaxaca and have at least one child attending University High School. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study seeks to give voice to the schooling experiences of EL students from Oaxaca. It is the intention of this study to discover if students and their families are encountering challenges, with a goal to inform educators about how they might improve instruction and supports for diverse children and youth in California schools.

What will happen if my child takes part in this research study?

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to:

- Your child will be asked to complete a survey which also includes demographic questions;
- The research team will collect "artifacts" with your permission and your teachers permission (student work, posters, documents, photos, artwork etc.);
- Complete one interview of approximately 40 minutes, in a comfortable, private location selected by parent and interviewer and/or participate in 1-2 focus group(s) with other participants, as desired;
- Allow interview to be recorded, and allow interviewer to take notes without identification of participant;
- Discuss school experiences, perspectives about the current school/curriculum, and about any challenges experienced, especially due to cultural and linguistic differences;
- Comment on accuracy of narratives and/or transcriptions after completion of all interviews, and to clarify meanings as needed.

***All interviews will be conducted outside of the regular school day, at a location mutually agreed upon.**

How long will my child be in the research study?

Participation will take place between June 2018 to December 2019, from initial consent to interview and final comments (and conclusion of tutoring, if applicable).

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that my child can expect from this study?

- To the extent that it is not comfortable for your child to discuss immigration experiences, identity, or challenges s/he may have experienced at school, the interview questions could potentially be uncomfortable.
- These topics may not be something your child would normally discuss with a person unknown to him/her, and this may lead to discomfort during the interview. No information about immigration status will be asked about or recorded.

No information will ever be shared without permission.
The study goal is to improve conditions for diverse students in California.
Your child's identity will be protected at all times.

Are there any potential benefits to my child if he or she participates?

Yes. As a credentialed teacher in California, the interviewer would like to offer tutoring for your child, to be completed between September 2018 and June 2019, at a location mutually agreed upon.

The results of the research will be shared with you and professionals in the school district, if desired.

Your child is not required to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.

Will information about my child's participation be kept confidential?
Yes. Any information that is obtained that can identify you or your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded names. No identifiable names will be written on any notes or in any recording.

*All photo and video data will be kept indefinitely in a locked folder on the private laptop of the principal investigator, which is backed up regularly on a secure network.

What are my and my child's rights if I allow him/her to take part in this study?

- Your child can decline to participate at any time.
- You and/or your child can decide which questions to answer, and which questions not to respond to.
- You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You and/or your child may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still choose to remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com
OR

The UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

_____
Name of Child

_____
Name of Parent or Legal Guardian

_____ _____
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian Date

Appendix F: Parent Spanish/English Participant Consent Form

Universidad de California, Los Angeles
CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UNA INVESTIGACIÓN

Nombre del estudio: ***Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth***

Gina Cobin, estudiante de doctorado, y Dr. Pedro Noguera, director de tésis, de la facultad del Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) de la UCLA, están llevando a cabo un estudio de investigación.

Usted fue seleccionado como posible participante en este estudio porque usted y su familia pueden tener las calificaciones para la investigación. Nos gustaría hablar con familias que son originarias de comunidades de Oaxaca, que se han establecido en Los Angeles, y que tienen un niño que asiste a University High School.

Su participación en este estudio de investigación es voluntaria.

¿Por qué se está haciendo este estudio?
Este estudio busca dar voz a las experiencias escolares de los jóvenes de origen oaxaqueño y sus familias en las escuelas públicas de California. La intención de este estudio es explorar estas experiencias y descubrir si los estudiantes y sus familias enfrentan desafíos con respeto a la educación. Esta puede ser información útil y que podría informar a los educadores cómo podrían mejorar las experiencias de instrucción para los diversos jóvenes de California.

¿Qué pasará si participo en este estudio de investigación?
Si se ofrece como voluntario para participar en este estudio, la investigadora le pedirá que participe en una o dos entrevistas, en las que se le preguntará acerca de sus experiencias con la escuela de su hijo. El estudio se llevará a cabo entre junio de 2018 y diciembre de 2019 e incluirá un consentimiento inicial, entrevista(s) y una conversación de seguimiento si sea necesario.

** Todas las entrevistas se realizarán en un lugar acordado por la investigadora y el participante**

¿Hay algún riesgo potencial o incomodidad que pueda esperar de este estudio?
Habrá algunas preguntas de la entrevista que posiblemente podrían ser difíciles contestar acerca de la inmigración y los desafíos que usted pueda confrontar al interactuar en la escuela, y pueden ser temas que normalmente no discutiría con una persona desconocida, y esto puede generar incomodidad durante la entrevista. No está obligado a contestar cualquier pregunta, y su estado documental no será un tema de la entrevista, ni será un tema de la investigación.

Ninguna información será compartida sin permiso.
El objetivo del estudio es mejorar las condiciones para diversos estudiantes en California.
Su identidad estará protegida en todo momento.

¿Hay algún beneficio potencial si participo?
Sí. Como un maestro con credenciales en California, la investigadora le gustaría ofrecer tutoría para su hijo, si desea, entre septiembre de 2018 y junio de 2019, en un lugar acordado mutuamente. Además, los resultados de la investigación se compartirán con usted si desea.

No está obligado a participar en este estudio. La participación es voluntaria.

¿La información sobre mí y mi participación se mantendrá confidencial?

Sí. Cualquier información que se obtenga que pueda identificarlo a usted o a su hijo permanecerá confidencial. Será revelado solo con su permiso. La confidencialidad se mantendrá por medio de nombres codificados. No se escribirán nombres identificables en ninguna nota ni en ninguna grabación.

* Todos los datos audio/visual se mantendrán indefinidamente en una carpeta bloqueada en la computadora portátil privada de la investigadora principal, y en una red segura.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si participo en este estudio?
Puede elegir si quiere participar en este estudio. Puede retirar su consentimiento y descontinuar su participación en cualquier momento. Cualquiera que sea la decisión que tome, no le aplicará ninguna penalización ni perderá los beneficios a los que de otra manera tenía derecho. También puede negarse a responder cualquier pregunta que no desee responder, y aun así elegir permanecer en el estudio.

¿A quién puedo contactar si tengo preguntas sobre este estudio?
Si tiene alguna pregunta, comentario o inquietud acerca de la investigación, puede hablar con uno de los investigadores como se indica a continuación:

Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com

O puede estar en contacto con:
La Oficina de la UCLA del Programa de Protección de la Investigación Humana (OHRPP):
Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, o si tiene inquietudes o sugerencias y desea hablar con alguien que no sean los investigadores, puede comunicarse con la OHRPP de UCLA por teléfono: (310) 206-2040; por correo electrónico: participantes@research.ucla.edu o por correo: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

Se puede pedir una copia de esta información para mantenerla en sus registros.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE

_____

Nombre del participante Fecha

_____ _____

****

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH - PARENT PARTICIPANT

Study name: Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth

Gina Cobin, a PhD student, and Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor, from the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) at UCLA, are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you and your family may have the qualifications we are looking for. We would like to speak with families who are originally from communities in Oaxaca, who have settled in Los Angeles, and have child who attends University High School.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study seeks to give voice to the schooling experiences of English Learners from Oaxaca and their families in California public schools. It is the intention of this study to explore these experiences, and to discover if students and their families are encountering challenges. This may be useful information and could inform educators how they might improve instructional experiences for diverse children and youth in California.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to participate in one to two interviews, in which you will be asked about your school experiences in Los Angeles. The study will take place between June 2018 and December 2019, and will include an initial consent, interview(s), and possible follow-up discussions.

****All interviews will be conducted at a location mutually agreed upon by researcher and participant.**

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

Some of the interview questions could potentially be sensitive. The topics of identity and immigration may not this may lead to some discomfort. Your immigration status will not be a subject of the interview, nor will this be a topic of concern to the research team.

No information will ever be shared without permission.
The study goal is to improve conditions for diverse students in California.
Your identity will be protected at all times.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

Yes. As a credentialed teacher in California, the interviewer would like to offer tutoring services for your child, if desired, to be completed between September 2018 and June 2019, at a location mutually agreed upon. In addition, the results of the research will be shared with you if desired.

You are not required to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Yes. Any information that is obtained that can identify you or your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded names. No identifiable names will be written on any notes or in any recording.

*All audio and visual data will be kept indefinitely in a locked folder on the private laptop of the principal investigator, which is backed up regularly on a secured network.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
You can choose if you want to be a participant in this study. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and still choose to remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
In the event of a research related injury, please immediately contact one of the researchers listed below. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers as indicated below:

Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):
If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

You may request a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

_____
Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Appendix G: Staff Participant Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH - STAFF
Study name: Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth

Gina Cobin, a PhD student, and Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor, from the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) at UCLA, are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are associated with University High School and have interactions with students from Oaxaca and/or their families.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?
This study seeks to give voice to the schooling experiences of English Learners from Oaxaca and their families in California public schools. It is the intention of this study to explore these experiences, and to discover if students and their families are encountering challenges. This may be useful information and could inform educators how they might improve instructional experiences for diverse children and youth in California.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?
If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to participate in one to two interviews, in which you will be asked about your experiences at University High School. The study will take place between June 2018 and December 2019, and will include an initial consent, interview(s), and possible follow-up discussions.

****All interviews will be conducted at a location mutually agreed upon by researcher and participant.**

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
Some of the interview questions could potentially be sensitive. You can choose not to discuss any issues that cause you discomfort.

No information will ever be shared without permission.
The study goal is to improve conditions for diverse students in California.
Your identity will be protected at all times.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
Yes. As a credentialed teacher in California, the interviewer would like to offer support/tutoring servicesyou're your class, and of English Learners at Uni, to be completed between September 2018 and June 2019. In addition, the results of the research will be shared with you if desired.

You are not required to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?
Yes. Any information that is obtained that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded names. No identifiable names will be written on any notes or in any recording.

*All audio and visual data will be kept indefinitely in a locked folder on the private laptop of the principal investigator, which is backed up regularly on a secured network.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You can choose if you want to be a participant in this study. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and still choose to remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, or in the event of a research related injury, please contact one of the members of the research team listed below:

Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com
AND/OR
Contact the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

You may request a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

_____
Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Appendix H: Focus Group Questions

Case Study: Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth Gina Cobin - UCLA/GSEIS
Focus Group Questions

1. What was the reason your family decided to come Los Angeles and how do you think the move here has been overall?
2. How are you and your family still connected to their community in Oaxaca? Have you been there and if so, what is it like there for you?
3. How well do you and your family members understand/speak Zapotec? Would you like to learn more and why/why not?
4. How do you think your family's values/traditions are different from other students' families??
5. How do you feel about being a student at Uni in general? What have your experiences been like at school both positive/not so positive?
6. What are the activities you have been involved with at the school? Can you say something about your friend group?
7. Can you describe your parents'/family interactions with teachers and school staff? What would improve these interactions?
8. How do you identify yourself to others in terms of ethnicity/family background?
9. Do you feel accepted at school as student with family from Oaxaca?
10. How does the atmosphere at Uni support you in developing your identity/identities?
11. Do you ever have opportunities to see your heritage/culture/traditions reflected in your activities and classes? How could curriculum be improved to incorporate your heritage?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at school? Any other ideas?

THANK YOU!

Appendix I: Student interview protocol

Proposed study title: School Experiences of Zapotec Youth
Gina Cobin - UCLA

Student Interview protocol: ≈ 40 min.

1. How long have your family lived in Los Angeles and what have you heard about what brought them here?
   Possible follow-up: How has it been for you and your family overall?

2. How are you and your family still connected to their community in Oaxaca?
   ¿Cómo están ustedes y su familia todavía conectados con su comunidad en Oaxaca?
   Possible follow-up: What are your thoughts about that community?
   ¿Qué te parece de esa comunidad?

3. How well do you and your family members understand/speak Zapotec?
   Possible follow-up: Would you like to learn more and why/why not?

4. How do you think their values/traditions different from other students' families??
   Possible follow-up: What has been positive? What has surprised you?

5. What have your interactions/experiences been like at school?
   Possible follow-up: What about parent/family interactions with the school?

6. What are the activities you have been involved with at the school?
   Possible follow-up: How do you feel about going there?

7. Have you encountered any challenges when interacting with peers?
   Possible follow-up: Tell me about your friend group?

8. Do you feel accepted at school with your unique background?
   Possible follow-up: What could make things better?

9. Do you feel that Zapotec students are accepted/embraced at school?
   Possible follow-up: Do you see your culture/heritage reflected in your classes?

10. How could curriculum be improved to incorporate your heritage?
    Possible follow-up: Any other ideas?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at school?

THANK YOU!

Appendix J: Staff interview protocol

Proposed study title: School Experiences of Oaxacan Youth
Gina Cobin - UCLA

Staff Interview protocol: ≈ 40 min.

1. How aware are you and your staff of the unique backgrounds of Zapotec students?
   Possible follow-up: How many Zapotec families do you work with?

2. Are families from Oaxaca in general known to be Zapotec/Zapotec speaking?
   Possible follow-up: Do these parents have any special language needs when they interact with school staff?

3. What are your thoughts on the unique needs of Indigenous students from Oaxaca?
   Possible follow-up: What are your perceptions of these students?

4. Do you think Zapotec students are different in ways from other students from Mexico?
   Possible follow-up: What additional practices/resources would you like to have available for these families?

5. What have your interactions been like with your Zapotec students and their families?
   Possible follow-up: What do you think are some of the challenges they face?

6. What is your personal level of knowledge and comfort (and that of your staff) in terms of Zapotec culture?
   Possible follow-up: Level of knowledge about Oaxaca, Mexico and current issues?

7. How important do you feel it is for students to see examples of their own culture reflected in lessons at school?
   Possible follow-up: What opportunities are there for students to learn about their heritage, be with other students outside of class?

8. What role do you think the school and staff play in identity development of your students?
   Possible follow-up: What are some opinions staff have shared with you?

9. Do you think all students are supported and diversity embraced at University High School?
   Possible follow-up: What could make it even better?

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about experiences with Zapotec students and their families?

THANK YOU!

Appendix K: Parent interview protocol

Proposed study title: School Experiences of Zapotec Youth
Gina Cobin - UCLA

Parent Interview Protocol

1. How long have you lived in Los Angeles and what brought you here?
   Possible follow-up: Describe how was the transition to California?

2. Did anyone assist you in your move here?
   Possible follow-up: Can you talk about the process of finding a place to live, a job etc?

3. What was it like where you grew up, at the school you attended?
   Possible follow-up: How are the values/traditions different from what you are accustomed to?

4. What do you think in general about the school your child attends?
   Possible follow-up: What has been positive? What has surprised you?

5. What have your interactions been like at the school?
   Possible follow-up: With whom do you usually interact?

6. What are the activities you have been involved with at the school?
   Possible follow-up: Explain how you feel about interactions at the school?

7. Have you encountered any challenges when interacting with your child's teacher?
   Possible follow-up: Are there sources of support available to you (friends, other parents, staff)?

8. What do you think your child's experiences at school have been like?
   Possible follow-up: What are some experiences they have shared with you?

9. What is your relationship to your home community in Oaxaca?
   Possible follow-up: How is your child connected to your home community?

10. How does communication work in your home in terms of language use?
    Possible follow-up: How important is it for you child to speak Zapotec?

11. Does your family practice certain cultural traditions that you want your child to continue?
    Possible follow-up: Do you think such traditions are supported at school?

12: What else would you like your child to learn at school if you could make recommendations?
    Possible follow-up: What did you find of particular importance in your own experience?

13. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at University High School or other California school?

****

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en Los Angeles y qué es lo que la trajo aquí?
P/S Describa cómo fue la transición a California?

2. ¿Le ayudó alguien acerca del proceso de inmigración?
P/S¿Puede hablar sobre el proceso de encontrar un lugar para vivir, un trabajo, etc.?

3. ¿Cómo fue el lugar donde creció y la escuela que asistió?
P/S¿Cúal es la diferencia entre los valores y tradiciones aquí de los que está acostumbrado?

4. ¿Qué piensa en general sobre Uni?
P/S¿Qué ha sido positivo y qué le ha sorprendido?

5. ¿Cómo han sido sus interacciones en la escuela?
P/S¿Con quién suele interactuar?

6. ¿Cuáles son las actividades en las que ha participado usted en la escuela?
P/S¿Explique cómo se siente acerca de las interacciones en la escuela?

7. ¿Ha encontrado algún desafío al interactuar con el maestro de su hijo?
P/S¿Existen fuentes de apoyo disponibles para usted (amigos, otros padres, personal)?

8. ¿Cómo cree que han sido las experiencias de su hijo en la escuela?
P/S¿Cuáles son algunas experiencias que sus hijos han compartido con usted?

9. ¿Cuál es su relación con su comunidad en Oaxaca?
P/S¿Cómo está conectado su hijo a esa comunidad?

10. ¿Cómo funciona la comunicación en su hogar en términos de uso del idioma?
P/S¿Es importante para usted que su hijo hable zapoteco?

11. ¿Practica su familia ciertas tradiciones culturales que desea que su hijo continúe?
P/S¿Cree que esas tradiciones son apoyadas en la escuela?

12: ¿Qué más le gustaría que su hijo aprendiera en la escuela si pudiera hacer recomendaciones?

13. ¿Hay algo más que quisiera compartir sobre sus experiencias en Uni u otra escuela de California?

Appendix L: Alumni interview protocol

Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth
Alumni Interview protocol
Gina Cobin - UCLA

1. What is your family background and how long has your family lived in Los Angeles?
   Follow-up: How was the transition to living in California and how did they choose what part of the city to live in?

2. Did your family have any support when they decided to move to Los Angeles?
   Follow-up: Can you talk about the process of finding a place to live, a job etc.?

3. What is your/your family's relationship to your/their home community in Oaxaca?
   Follow-up: What is it like for you connecting/visiting this community?

4. What was it like where you grew up, and at the schools you attended?
   Follow-up: Did you notice that the values/traditions differed from what you were accustomed to?

5. What do you think in general about your experience at Uni?
   Follow-up: What aspects were positive? What aspects were challenging?

6. Thinking back, what were your interactions like with staff and students at Uni?
   Follow-up: What do you think could have improved the situation?

7. What was your/you parents' level of English when you started at Uni, and what language supports and services were available to you and your family?
   Follow up: Did you have any specific challenges academically?

8. What are the activities were you involved with at Uni?
   Follow-up: Did you feel accepted and respected while participating?

9. Did you feel that staff and other students were aware of your background and of challenges you and your family might be experiencing?
   Follow-up: What were sources of support available to you and your family (parent outreach, hometown association, other parents, staff)?

10. What were your perceptions of students, teachers, staff, and society when you were at Uni?
    Follow-up: In what ways did you feel supported or not supported?

11. What languages were spoken in your childhood home, and how did this impact you?
    Follow-up: How did differences between home and school environments and communities in the US and Mexico impact you academically and socially?

12. Did your family practice certain cultural traditions that were different from others?
    Follow-up: Do you think such traditions were respected at school?

What are the different level of home in both places.

13: What was it like as you grew up in terms of identity development within two cultures?
    Follow-up: Did you experience validation or recognition of this identity at school?

14. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at University High School or other California school?
    Follow up: As an adult, what do you think would have improved your experiences?

Appendix M: Administrator Interview Protocol

Proposed study title: School Experiences of Oaxacan Youth
Gina Cobin - UCLA

Administrator Interview Protocol

1. As principal, how often do you interact with Oaxacan/Zapotec students and families at Uni?
Possible follow-up: What are your perceptions of the Oaxacan students and families you have interacted with?

2. How aware are you and your staff of the unique backgrounds of Oaxacan/Zapotec students?
Possible follow-up: What are your thoughts on the unique needs of Indigenous students from Oaxaca who attend Uni?

3. How important do you feel it is for students to see examples of their own culture reflected in lessons at school? Possible follow-up: What opportunities are there for Oaxacan students to learn about their heritage, be with other students outside of class?

4. Do any teachers at Uni create lessons that are culturally relevant for Indigenous students from the Mexico or the U.S.? Possible follow-up: How important is it to you that they do this?

5. Is there any professional development to assist teachers to provide culturally relevant instruction or opportunities? Possible follow-up: What would you like staff and teachers to know more about this and about Oaxacan students?

6. What do you think is the level of knowledge and comfort in terms of Oaxacan/Zapotec culture, traditions, and current issues of your staff? Possible follow-up: How could students be involved to provide feedback to teachers on this?

7. What role does language support play at Uni for Oaxacan/Zapotec students?
Possible follow-up: What additional skills/resources would you like teachers to change or to have available?

8. What role do you think the school and staff play in identity development of your students?
Possible follow-up: If it is an important role, how is this support provided at Uni?

9. Do you think all students are supported and diversity embraced at University High School?
Possible follow-up: What could make it even better?

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about this study or about Oaxacan/Zapotec students and their families affiliated with Uni?

THANK YOU!

Appendix N: Classroom observation protocol

Classroom Observation Form

Instructor: _____ Course _____

Peer/Observer: _____ Date and Time _____

Use criteria that apply to format of course observed.

Review Section	Description/Comments
1. **SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT** (shows good command and knowledge of subject matter; demonstrates breadth and depth of mastery)	
2. **ORGANIZATION** (organizes subject matter; evidences preparation; is thorough; states clear objectives; emphasizes and summarizes main points, meets class at scheduled time, regularly monitors on-line course)	
3. **RAPPORT** (holds interest of students; is respectful, fair, and impartial; provides feedback, encourages participation; interacts with students, shows enthusiasm)	
4. **TEACHING METHODS** (uses relevant teaching methods, aids, materials, techniques, and technology; includes variety, balance, imagination, group involvement; uses examples that are simple, clear, precise, and appropriate; stays focused on and meets stated objectives)	
5. PRESENTATION (establishes online course or classroom environment conducive to learning; maintains eye contact; uses a clear voice, strong projection, proper enunciation, and standard English)	
6. **MANAGEMENT** (uses time wisely; attends to course interaction; demonstrates leadership ability; maintains discipline and control; maintains effective e-platform management)	

Review Section	Description/Comments
7. **SENSITIVITY** (exhibits sensitivity to students' personal culture, gender differences and disabilities, responds appropriately in a non-threatening, pro-active learning environment)	
8. **ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS** (assists students with academic problems)	
9. **PERSONAL** (evidences self-confidence; maintains professional comportment and appearance)	
10. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF CLASSROOM (optional) **(state location and physical attributes of classroom, number of students in attendance, layout of room, distractions if any; list any observations of how physical aspects affected content delivery)**	

Strengths observed:

Suggestions for improvement:

Overall impression of teaching effectiveness:

Appendix O: Recruitment Flyer

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
RECRUITMENT FLYER

Would you and your child be interested in participating in a research study?

Study name: Schooling Experiences of Oaxacan Youth

Purpose of Study
This study, conducted in conjunction with LAUSD and the Graduate School of Education at UCLA, seeks to explore the schooling experiences of Zapotec youth and their families at University High School. I have obtained your contact information as a potential study participant either through the online survey submitted or through recommendation by University High School staff.

The study will take place between June 2018 and June 2019, and will include initial consent, interview(s), focus group(s), and follow-up discussion of findings and clarification (and conclusion of tutoring, if applicable).

You are not required to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.
Your participation in this study is not necessary to enter into the online survey raffle.

Any information that is obtained that can identify you or your child will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded names. No identifiable names will be written on any notes or in any recording.

*All photo and video data will be kept indefinitely in a locked folder on the private laptop of the principal investigator, which is backed up regularly on a secure network.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
  If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

  Gina Cobin, study coordinator/PI: gcobin@ucla.edu
  Dr. Pedro Noguera, faculty sponsor: pednoguera@gmail.com

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**

  If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

Appendix P: Expert Informant Questions

Expert Informant Questions

1. How do you identify yourself to others in terms of background/ethnicity within Oaxaca?
    1b. Do young people in Oaxaca identify themselves by background/town/language?
2. How do you identify yourself to others in Mexico outside of Oaxaca?
    2b. What are your experiences within Mexico about your state/town/background?
3. How do you identify yourself to others when you travel outside of Mexico?
    3b. Do you identify as Mexican or do you stick with Oaxacan?
    3c. Do people seem to know much about your country/state?
4. What are the most common languages spoken in your town?
5. How many people would you say are native speakers of Zapotec in your town?
6. Do the elders in your town identify themselves as "Zapotec" or some other way?
7. How do you feel about speaking Zapotec/talking about the background of Zapotec people?
8. What are the other Zapotec speaking towns around your town?
9. When you were growing up was it common to hear stories about families who moved to LA?
10. Do these families seem to go back and forth between California and Oaxaca?
11. What are examples of the most important traditions and values from your town, your family?
12. Are these unique to your family or common to your town/region?
13. What traditions and values do you think families would be sure to continue after moving?
14. As a teacher in California, what would I need to know about students and families with roots in Zapotec communities in Oaxaca?
15. What do you think about the changes/commercialization that has resulted from a festival like Guelaguetza in Oaxaca?
16. Do you have ways to learn Zapotec in Oaxaca if your parents didn't teach you?
17. Did your school support you in learning authentic Zapotec language and history?
18. What are some current events facing Zapotec communities in Oaxaca?
19. If you could change something what would you do?
20. What is the perception of Los Angeles from the point of view of Oaxacans who choose to go?
21. What would you say are differences between Zapotec youth in Oaxaca and "non-Indigenous" students who grew up in Oaxaca?
22. Are the relationships between people from different Zapotec communities positive or are there rivalries and competition?
23. What is the relationship like between people from small towns and big cities?
24. What is the relationship like between Zapotec people and Mixtec people in general (historically and currently)?
25. Do you have any other comments on any of these topics?

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