

A CASE STUDY OF IMMIGRANT LATINO PARENTS WHO USE A NEWCOMER
PLACEMENT CENTER IN AN URBAN DISTRICT

A Dissertation by

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DEDICATION

A special thanks to my husband, Steve and my children Sarah, Nick and Liz. You have allowed me to chase this dream. At the start of this journey we were a family of five. The journey has lasted seven years and you have added some very special people to our lives and now we are a family of thirteen. You have seen me go through some good times, some sad times and some hard times to get through this process. Thank you for all of your unconditional support.

I love you.

Para mi familia.

Mi mamá y mi papá, Elida y Ramiro Gutierrez.

Para mis hermanos y hermanas;

Richard, Norma, Steve, Mario, Teresa, Jerry y Martin.

La vida fue maravillosa con todos ustedes, con cariño.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined a Newcomer Placement Center as a promising model for effectively meeting the unique needs of immigrant families to connect with schools and other programs and agencies in the community. Latino immigrant families, particularly where English is not the primary language used in the home, may be unsure of the education and support services available to their children. Latino immigrant parents naturally use their accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills so they can successfully navigate the U.S. public education system. Newcomer Placement Centers allow immigrant families to demonstrate their knowledge because they know their children and what is best for them.

Documents collected during the intake and placement of students and in-depth interviews with six immigrant parents who used the district's Newcomer Placement Center between July and December 2008 were analyzed. Documents and interviews indicated families who used the Center made positive associations with the bilingual staff who assisted them as a result of building and using social capital. Immigrant families looked for assurances they made the right decision in their move to a new community. Parents were cooperative, forthcoming, and honest with sharing often-sensitive information about themselves and their children in order to meet the challenges of going to U.S. schools.

Latino immigrant families were determined to make life better for themselves and their children in spite of tremendous barriers they encountered. Their resiliency in addition to their funds of knowledge allowed parents to help get their children to begin their education in a new community through the use of the Newcomer Placement Center which may serve as an effective model to other school districts that serve and communicate with parents of Latino immigrant families as well as immigrants from other countries.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Latino immigrants come to the United States seeking a better life for their family (First & Carrera, 1988, 1991; Morse, 2005). Whether they are recent immigrants, first, or second-generation citizens, immigrant Latino parents seek the same educational goals for their children as White, middle class families. To accomplish these goals, they know it is important for their children to be successful in U.S. schools. Immigrant Latino parents have good intentions to look for the multitude of services that are needed to help their children be successful but will hesitate if communication with service providers becomes uncertain (Schmidt, 2005). Fear and uncertainty are particularly high among parents who do not have the appropriate documentation to be in the U.S. (DeJong & Graefe, 2008).

Eighty percent of the children of Latino immigrants are born in the U.S. and are U.S. citizens (Capps, et al., 2005; Gurak & Kritz, 2000), who should enjoy the same rights and privileges as other U. S. born citizens. However many have parents who, because they are undocumented, do not enjoy these rights and privileges. Undocumented parents may be cautious of interacting with schools and other public institutions because they fear deportation or other consequences related to their status. Regardless of the immigration status of the students, parents want their children to be educated and have opportunities for success. The majority will take the risk of crossing into the U.S. for education and better working conditions (First & Carrera, 1988, 1991; Green, 2003; Olmedo, 1998).

Children of Latino immigrant families must confront the challenges of first understanding, and then negotiating their place in American society. Like generations of immigrants before, they often deal with racial and economic prejudice as they struggle to create a

new identity for themselves, one that is rooted in their ancestry, but at the same time, seeking all the opportunities and promises this country has to offer (Morse, 2005). These children arrive at their new school with hope, personal knowledge, and experiences living in two countries. Hope for the children is the optimism, energy, family support, and native language that if nurtured can ultimately make a vital contribution to the nation's future (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997). Their experiences, knowledge, and language must be seen as assets, not weaknesses, which are too often converted into vulnerabilities while these children spend time in the American school system. Despite their many challenges and differences, Latino immigrant children have shared some very important experiences. Often they must learn a new language and adapt to a new culture (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). They must do well in school to be able to lead successful and productive lives in this country (First & Carrera, 1988, 1991). For purposes of this study Latino immigrant family refers to a family in which any member attended school outside of the United States at some point in their school career. Creating a newcomer educational placement center is an option school districts are pursuing to help immigrant students and their families make the adjustment to U.S. public schools.

Newcomer Educational Placement Centers

In order to accommodate the growing number of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students, school districts in large urban communities are opening newcomer educational placement centers (Hartman, 2007; Lucas, 1996). These places are variously known as Newcomer Placement Centers, Welcome Centers, Intake Centers, Student Placement Centers, and/or One Stop Enrollment Centers, and these terms are used interchangeably throughout the study. These centers are places where every student new to the district and whose primary language is other than English comes with his or her family to pre-register for school and to

participate in assessments that determine the student's academic English level and placement in appropriate English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) classes. The consolidation of the school enrollment process into one location to help families meet all of their needs has been one adjustment made by larger school districts. These newcomer placement centers can also connect each family with a home-school liaison that leads the family through school orientation and can provide interpreter services when a need arises (Ferguson, 2005; Schmidt, 2005).

Newcomer Programs and Newcomer Placement Centers

Because the terminology can be confusing, this section will distinguish between newcomer programs and newcomer placement centers. Newcomer students include immigrant students with recent arrival experiences who may have limited formal schooling, and regardless of their schooling experiences, have very limited English proficiency. In order for these students to learn English in settings other than customary ESOL programs for English Language Learners, their basic survival English needs will determine the best program. Larger school districts have developed newcomer programs or newcomer schools in order to bridge the gap between newcomers' needs and regular language support programs. Students who enter a separate program must do so on a voluntary basis (Feinberg, 2000). Newcomer programs include newly arrived students in classes separate from the regular language support program, each student in the program requires a plan for English language development needed for academic use in order to acquire new language with the integration of content. Ultimately, any newcomer program includes objectives to help new immigrant students acculturate to U.S. schools, and to new and varied educational opportunities (Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 1997).

Newcomer Centers and/or Newcomer Programs serve the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students in a school district. The words Newcomer Centers or Newcomer Programs are sometimes used interchangeably, which adds to the confusion about the terminology. In both cases, ESOL teachers develop appropriate academic curriculum and language acquisition instruction for these students to promote their successful academic careers. ESOL teachers instruct ELL students according to their language ability and enhance English survival skills. Programming includes familiarizing students with the structure and expectations of the US educational system. Newcomer Center teachers can serve as liaisons to receiving teachers in students' assigned school. Although Newcomer Programs and Newcomer Centers have similar purposes, Newcomer Programs are usually located within existing ESOL programs, whereas Newcomer Centers are usually separate schools (Short & Boyson, 1997).

Newcomer Placement and/or Intake Centers also provide services for students and their families with little or no English language proficiency. However, the main purposes of Newcomer Placement Centers and/or Intake Center services are to conduct assessments and ensure appropriate educational placement of all limited English proficient students, as well as offer essential services to their parents in a centralized location. Newcomer Placement Centers and/or Intake Centers focus on early and continuing support for parents of ELL students. Staff facilitates registration of new English Language Learners. They provide parents of these students with an orientation to the school district, as well as with information about community resources. Newcomer Placement Centers and/or Intake Centers deliver the initial language proficiency assessment and use multiple measures, including native language assessments (if available) to assess students' skills and knowledge (Lucas, 1996; Short, 1998).

One documented benefit of Newcomer Placement Centers is having staff available to talk to parents individually and privately, which helps immigrant parents build trust and confidence in the school (Olmedo, 1998; Schmidt, 2005). Placement center staff can explain district procedures so families can enroll their children in a district school. Staff at intake centers can alleviate a family's anxieties by educating both documented and undocumented families on their rights to an education and their legal protection from any type of inquiry about their citizenship status. Many families fear deportation so the newcomer placement center can help the family understand the school system does not require proof of legal status in order for their children to attend school (Lyons, 1988). For these reasons, Wichita USD 259 decided to open a newcomer educational placement center to better serve its growing population of immigrant families and students.

Research Problem

Most non-immigrant parents know how to access the plethora of services provided via the U.S. educational system and know how to advocate for their children (Aronson, 2001; Beutler, Briggs, Hornibrook-Hehr, & Warren-Sams, 1998). In contrast, Latino immigrant families, particularly where English is not the primary language used in the home, are unsure of the education and support services available to their children. Some parents have the knowledge that English is the language of the school, but may not know how to find the help they need to access public education services. Additionally, most school personnel assume all parents already know how to access public education services (Olmedo, 1998; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

Some immigrant parents are able to become skilled in making connections to properly complete the tasks of getting their children enrolled in U.S. schools and learn to support their children's education in the manner that U.S. schools expect. It is important to understand their

social networks (Stanton-Salazar, 1997), the people parents and families connect with in order to access information to make important life decisions. Latino immigrant parents naturally use their accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills so they can successfully navigate the U.S. public education system. Educational placement centers that offer “one stop shopping” for immigrant parents are designed to make it easier for parents to either use their existing social networks or develop new ones. Newcomer Placement Centers allow immigrant families to demonstrate their knowledge because parents are assumed to know their children and what is best for them.

The Newcomer Placement Center in Wichita USD 259 not only has the potential to help families, students, and schools, but also to form relationships with community agencies and service providers. Most importantly, the creation of a Newcomer Placement Center can contribute to the overall success of the student, the student’s family, and the success of the school district. Because these centers are a relatively recent idea, very little research has been conducted to determine their effectiveness. In particular, the families who are the recipients of the services provided at the Newcomer Placement Center are not often asked for their perceptions of what works best for them. The following scenario is typical at the Newcomer Placement Center.

Margarita arrives at the Newcomer Placement Center with her four children accompanied by her sister, a long-term resident of the community. As a recent transplant to the community, Margarita came from Colorado. She went to her local school and inquired about what she needed to do to enroll her four children. By the time she arrives at the Newcomer Placement Center she is irate and dejected at the way she was treated at her first stop, the neighborhood school, and sent to the Newcomer Placement Center. She

contends the principal at the neighborhood school greeted them at the front door by asking them if a language other than English was used in the home. Margarita acknowledged they did speak Spanish as well as English. She said it was at that moment all communication was shut down and she was informed that she had to go to the Newcomer Placement Center located about eight miles from their neighborhood. She stated, "We did not even fill out a paper with our names." Margarita believed she and her children were sent away because they were Mexicans. She communicated to the Center staff that she conjured the thought that perhaps the school staff thought that her family was illegal. She was quick to tell the Center staff that her family was legal. When the Center staff began working with her they decided that the supervisor needed to be brought into the situation so Margarita's voice of discontent could be heard. A referral to the Newcomer Placement Center is supposed to be a positive experience for families. Somehow, this parent believed that something was wrong with her and her children, and that being sent to the Newcomer Placement Center was an unnecessary step or even a punishment.

Margarita's situation is one way that some families are greeted at the schools. The principal thought she was being helpful and welcoming but in reality was upsetting to Margarita and her family, as she did not understand why she was being sent to the Newcomer Placement Center. When I hear the voices of immigrant parents like Margarita, I am reminded that their perceptions are critical to making changes and improvements at the Newcomer Placement Center.

Objectives and Research Questions

This study examined intake data of Latino immigrant families from fall semester 2008, and perceptions from selected parents interviewed about their experience with the Newcomer

Placement Center. The study sought Latino immigrant parents' perceptions regarding Wichita USD 259's efforts to help them through the process of using the Newcomer Placement Center. Latino immigrant parents had the opportunity to articulate the practices they believe were necessary for them to get through the intake process in a productive way.

Focusing on the existing intake data and perceptions of Latino immigrant parents led to the development of the following research questions:

1. What are the demographics of the Latino immigrant parents using the Newcomer Placement Center during fall semester 2008?
2. What strengths do Latino immigrant parents share about themselves and their children?
3. How do Latino immigrant parents describe their experiences at the Newcomer Placement Center?
4. How would Latino immigrant parents change the services the Newcomer Placement Center provides?

The primary objectives of this research were to gain information about how Latino immigrant parents perceived their strengths and how they, along with their children, were affected by their experience at the Newcomer Placement Center, and what changes they recommended.

Significance of the Study

While there are numerous studies on culturally and linguistically diverse students, immigrant students and family involvement, the foundation of those studies tends to be assimilation, language acquisition, academic achievement, and integration into the schools and the best way to educate students with language and diverse needs (Commins, 2007; Dorfman &

Fisher, 2002). School districts with rapid growth of immigrant students and changing demographics through immigration and migration might benefit from this study.

Information and research gathered for this study could have significant influence in school districts in search of information addressing cultural diversity and English Language Learners (ELLs). The creation of a centrally located Newcomer Placement Center or a one-stop shop to intake and place immigrant and migratory families and children into the proper school settings may be essential in order to provide adequate services and programs and maintain strong standards while an expected increase in achievement scores of Latino students which have been imposed by No Child Left Behind Act (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002).

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The theoretical framework is a vital component of any study, as it helps to inform the entire study; it is the orientation that one draws upon when conceptualizing a study (Merriam, 2001). LeCompte and Priessle (2003) stated, “Theories are statements about how things are connected” (p. 118). The purpose of the theories is to explain why things happen as they do. This study used Ricardo Stanton Salazar’s (1997) theory of the social capital minority youth and their families bring to the educational system that triggers their skills and abilities so that they are able to work with others thus modeling their personal resiliency for their children in order to stimulate their funds of knowledge.

The literature review is crucial to identifying the overall theoretical framework because it is a narrative description that integrates, synthesizes, and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic (Merriam, 2001). This section of the literature review will provide an overview and history of the theory of social capital as it relates to educational attainment. More recent developments in the theory apply it to Latino immigrant families and funds of knowledge.

Theoretical Framework: Social Capital and Funds of Knowledge

The study was framed theoretically from social capital as it related to minority youth and their families (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) and funds of knowledge (Moll & Greenberg, 1992; Veléz-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). As applied in this study, Newcomer Placement Center staff can be a form of social capital for newcomer minority youth and their families. Language minority families have access to other families who have paved the way and personnel in other agencies

were also considered sources social capital in this study. Each of these theories in explained in the following sections.

Social Capital

Stanton-Salazar (2001) defines social capital as a set of assets existing within people that is triggered through associations with others. The assets people have are then used to help them accomplish their goals or to empower themselves in some meaningful way. Such associations can occur in various ways: between two individuals (e.g. teachers and student), between individuals in a group (e.g. parents in a neighborhood), and between groups within a community (e.g. parents, students and school personnel).

According to Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2001), social capital has three fundamental properties. First, it is a self-motivated process founded on reciprocal investments in a relationship or set of relations. These investments have to do with the substance of social life, that is, with social interactions, cooperative activity and exchange, shared meaning, and continual assessments of common interests. To have social capital is to be in relationship where all parties make reciprocal investments and commitments to one another, although not always to the same degree, as power differences between parties play a key role.

The second property of social capital is represented by a set of cultural rules, obligations, and expectations that are contextualized within power relations. The person who is more powerful than the one occupying the giver role makes investments and asks for assistance one way, while the person with less power than the giver makes investments and asks for help in another way. Under conditions that include the effective management of power differentials, such reciprocal investments lead to trust as well as to enforceable expectations and obligations (in Coleman's terms [1988, 1990], a "credit slip"). Coleman (1988, 1990) in his landmark

contribution to the literature on social capital, calls attention to the obligations (social debts), expectations, and trustworthiness that can inhere in sustained relationships and that make possible the flow of exchange of resources and support (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

The third property of social capital is its resource-generating capacity. This implies that when individuals engage in relationships of trust and mutual enforceable expectations valued resources flow back and forth between each other thus building trust. Contentment with such resources and social support can occur as a direct result of activating particular relationships or ties or as a natural by-product of social interactions and cooperative activity. During times of need, tailored access to valued resources and forms of support, in the context of trusting and binding relations, allows people to achieve their objectives so they are able to experience a degree of individual empowerment such as improved academic performance; school and social acceptance, family and life adjustments, and family economic stability or mobility. This property is a true test for language minority students who have to balance the pressure to assimilate in U.S. society with trying to maintain their own culture. They have to build trust so they can gain social capital. Such empowering can help students grow emotionally, socially, and institutionally (e.g. making “connections” with gatekeepers). Following Coleman (1988), “resources” can take other key forms as well, in the enforcement of community norms and identity forms, and in the execution of social sanctions (i.e., social pressure to conform). Immigrant parents have to learn new social rules, for example, taking students out of school to interpret for parents at a medical appointment is unacceptable in the U.S.

At a Newcomer Placement Center, placement of immigrant students often begins with an examination of their family network and social support system through the administration of a questionnaire and an interview. Through the use of a personal social web during the newcomer

intake process and the connection with teachers at the school students begin to learn to navigate a new system, one that allows them to persist or not persist in a dominant culture, which ultimately adds to success in an educational setting (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001). In addition to social capital, families' funds of knowledge play an important role in their children's success in school.

Funds of Knowledge

Funds of knowledge are historically developed and accumulated strategies (e.g., skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge essential to how well a family functions and survives (Greenberg, 1989; Veléz-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Veléz -Ibáñez and Greenberg first used the term funds of knowledge to describe the cultural resources households contain that provide the basis for understanding the cultural systems from which families emerge, which are also important and useful assets in the school setting. Funds of knowledge are intellectual, social, and emotional resources that enable modest income families to survive with dignity and respect (Gonzalez, et al., 1993; Mercado, 2005). Latino immigrant families are naturally strategic with their funds of knowledge in order to maximize the operations of the family (Gonzalez, et al., 1993).

Ideally, the Newcomer Placement Center can be the hub of social networks to help immigrant families avoid unnecessary trips and expenses to enroll their children in school. The Center is a place where bilingual staff serves important emotional and service functions to families. Latino immigrant family households are repositories of funds of knowledge capable of providing opportunities for learning as opposed to the view that their households are hindrances to academic progress. Newcomer Placement Center personnel can learn to identify immigrant families' funds of knowledge, and use their own social capital and knowledge of families to serve as bridges between the families, students, and the schools. The Newcomer Placement

Center furthermore has the potential to play a central role in providing immigrant families with institutional support and in identifying their social capital and funds of knowledge that can be communicated to schools in order to help their children be successful.

Literature Review

The literature review further elaborates on theories of social capital as they have developed over the years, and then examines immigration trends and the status of immigrant families in the U.S along with the current status of Latino populations in the U.S. Research and laws concerning how to appropriately serve Latino English Language Learners. This literature review concludes with the need for newcomer placement centers.

Social Capital: Origins and Contemporary Applications

Social capital is a theoretical concept frequently used by educational researchers and decision makers working to enhance U.S. schools (Portes, 2000). The term “social capital” originated as early as 1916 by John Dewey and in 1920 by L. J. Hanifan, however the initial contemporary development of the concept has been credited to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James Coleman (Portes, 2000). They launched the ongoing debate over strands of social capital that are viewed as both similar to and competing with each other.

Bourdieu (1986) distinguished between three forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social. He defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (1986, p. 51). Bourdieu believed those with more economic and social resources contributed to a privileged class of people. Therefore, his work emphasized

finding ways to provide fair and equal opportunities for various people who were lacking contact to resources and power.

James Coleman's (1988) contribution to the development of the idea of social capital was to consider the actions and experiences of people as a form of social capital because it carried the features of any social structure. Coleman concluded the institutions and social structures of selected groups were better matched to the promotion of reciprocity, trust, and individual action than others, which in turn led to the creation of human capital. That is, people used their skills, abilities, and attributes to add to their performance and productivity within an organization. Coleman was comfortable in emphasizing social capital was created among people and networks that were part of the family and religious institutions.

Social networks are an important component of Coleman's (1988) theory. He supported the idea that it is the family's responsibility to adopt certain norms to advance their children's life chances. For example, he stressed how important it was for parents to know the parents of their children's friends. This type of social structure facilitates development of effective norms he called "intergenerational closure" (p. S106). Coleman connected with social capital as (positive) social control, where trust, information channels, and norms are characteristics of the community.

The most current notion of social capital is that of Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000). Instead of viewing social capital as an individual asset, he views social capital as a property of communities, cities, and even nations. Putnam uses social capital to illustrate the loss of sense of community in America and how communities are in social decline. Putnam, therefore, sees social capital as a form of civic responsibility that can lead to economic prosperity. His work emphasizes how important it is for people to trust each other; that it is the mutual exchange

between people that fosters shared communal action in terms of economic and political development. He highlights voluntary associations as creating and sustaining the bridging social capital that enables people to get ahead. Putnam gives detail to two forms of social capital, bridging and bonding. Bridging social capital refers to reaching out to other groups of people with varied life experiences. Bonding social capital is based on solid connections among like-minded people such as families, work colleagues, sororities, and fraternal organizations.

Social Capital and Education

Social capital easily made the leap in its application to education. Bourdieu's (1973, 1986) theories provided an alternative account for deficit and human capital theories by pointing out the inequitable distribution of social capital among schools. Bourdieu's (1973, 1986) treatment of social capital is based on the idea that individuals are able to maintain their position in a social network by using their connections with like people, namely those of privilege. Bourdieu (1986) argued the amount of social capital a person has depends on the number of connections in their network that he or she can access plus the volume of economic, cultural, and social capital each person in the network has on an ongoing basis. Bourdieu saw social capital as a tool of reproduction for the dominant class, and he emphasized structural constraints and unequal access to educational resources based on class, gender, and race (Lareau, 2001). Bourdieu's (1986) usage of the concept of social capital meant a negative experience for the oppressed, and positive outcomes for the privileged.

Coleman (1988) saw social capital as influential in the development of human capital, which ultimately translated to high school graduation and college enrollment. He (1988) argued the more social capital students had, such as the presence of two parents in the home, fewer children in the family, parental support for higher educational expectations, and intergenerational

closure, the more likely children were to finish high school and not drop out. Coleman's theory promotes the idea that family relationships and intergenerational closure are related to school motivation, educational achievement, and student engagement. Coleman's view is more about the value of connections for all involved such as those in individual roles and those as a collective people or group, those people who are considered to be privileged or disadvantaged. According to Dika and Singh (2002) Coleman's version of social capital takes three forms, all of which are abstract and intangible. These are level of trust that one will follow through with his or her responsibilities, communication networks, and rules and consequences where the common good is valued over self-interest.

Stanton-Salazar (1997) developed a social capital conceptual framework for studying the socialization of racial minorities building on the work of Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu (1986). He identified institutional constraints and barriers that made it difficult for low status and racial minority youth to accumulate social capital. Stanton-Salazar (2001) further developed the theory in his book that reports on the study of Mexican American youth's school and family support networks. His model highlights the adolescent ability to become enmeshed in a social network, affected by counter-stratification (helping students' access mainstream resources and opportunities) and stratification (dividing a society into levels based on wealth or power forces).

Social Capital, Family Background, and Educational Attainment

Coleman's (1988) theory supports the idea that family background is a major contributor to gaining social capital. Family resources are significant to accruing social capital but not all families have access to the same resources. Nonetheless, Coleman believes all families can have social capital with the right kind of family, for example middle class, two parent homes. In contrast Bourdieu (1986) argues that social capital is inequitably distributed, much like financial

capital and economic resources. He furthermore believes social capital is predetermined for some people. To illustrate, the Kennedys of Massachusetts will always have an abundance of social capital due to their family connections, wealth, power, and prestige.

Family background is a component of most social capital studies related to education (Dika, 2003). DuBois (2001) suggested family background or resources have the potential to become social capital and help an individual attain benefits. Dika noted qualitative research on social class and social capital has examined the experiences of those who have more as compared to those who have less. Lareau and Horvat (1999) contended that some forms of social capital are valued more than others. For example being bilingual may be a form of social capital in some contexts, but in White, middle class U.S. schools it might not be valued. They challenge that “moments of inclusion and exclusion” affect one’s ability to deploy social capital in certain contexts like schools. Indicators such as family structure, involvement, and skills are forms of social capital that might not matter if they are not valued in certain contexts.

In their study of poor African- American teenagers who remained in school, and as young adults entered the workforce, avoided serious trouble, and were emotionally healthy, Furstenberg & Hughes (1995) concluded that strong family relationships accounted for these positive outcomes. In the language of social capital these positive relations included intergenerational closure, strong help network of the parent, the number of friends known by parent, parent involvement in the school, seeing close friends weekly, and friends’ educational expectations.

Limits of Social Capital

Portes (1998) believes there is little evidence to support that social capital will provide a set remedy for major social problems confronting racial and linguistic minorities, as assured by some of the social capital experts. He posits that social ties can bring about greater control over

unruly behavior and provide privileged access to resources; social ties can also restrict individual freedoms and keep outsiders from gaining access to the same resources intended for a collective group (Portes, 1998, 2000).

Moreover, people are creating alternative forms of social networks, which are changing how they relate to each other and how they build levels of trust and reciprocity (Edwards, 2004). Coleman's (1988) theory of social capital does not consider the increasing diversity in family types, such as blended, immigrant, extended, or single parent families. Further, traditional forms of social capital have been criticized for stifling creativity, encouraging conformity, being divisive and oppressive, and maintaining inequities (Portes, 1998). Families that do not fit the white, middle class norm for creating social capital are at risk of being subjected to social control because they are changing work-family responsibilities and other roles on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or social class, thus jeopardizing their own social capital in the process.

Recently arrived immigrant groups depend greatly on their networks and bonds of solidarity in order to adapt and move ahead in the American society (Portes, 1998, 2000). In particular, the second generation can be expected to depend heavily on parental guidance, as well as on support from other members of the community. This idea is clearly reflected in the work of Stanton-Salazar (1997).

Social Capital and Racial/Linguistic Minorities

Stanton-Salazar (1997) offers a framework for explaining the socialization and schooling experiences of working-class minority youth through their social networks. He explored the role institutional agents such as teacher, counselors, and job manager, played in the larger multiethnic context working-class minority youth must negotiate. Stanton-Salazar conceded that social capital and institutional support are the foundation for a framework to be used with minority

youth. He contended that institutional support within schools could be problematic for working class minority children and adolescents because of ideological expectations from individuals in those institutions. Stanton-Salazar suggests how minority youth develop strategies for overcoming obstacles and how they figure out ways to develop supportive relationships with institutional agents. Stanton Salazar concentrates on the benefits individuals or families accrue by virtue of their ties with others. Social capital happens through interpersonal networks and institutional resources.

Interpersonal or social networks are those collective processes that could involve the students, parents, and school staff, including mentors and volunteers, which promote various levels of success for individuals. Significant others influence attitudes, abilities, and behaviors along with the traits expected by society (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001). Social capital fosters the development of trust, norms, and expectations among youth who come to share a similar goal-orientation toward schooling with the relationships they have secured. These relationships allow for the accumulation of social capital that can then be converted into socially valued resources or opportunities (positive relationships, varied experiences, good grades, diploma and so forth), and ultimately, academic achievement (Valenzuela, 1999).

At the institutional level, school climate, which includes structure, controlled discipline, and academic norms established by the school community and the mutual trust between home and school are major forms of social capital. These forms are found to contribute to student learning outcomes. They have been shown to have a significant impact, not only on creating a learning and caring school climate, but also on improving the quality of schooling and reducing inequality of learning outcomes between social-class groups (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). Of all the different kinds of valued network-related resources in society Stanton Salazar

(2001) has emphasized those institutional resources most associated with what it means to be middle-class, or to be privileged, or to “participate in power.” One of the most effective ways in organizing the democratic dynamic in urban schools is to provide an organized system of institutional support.

Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2001) discusses six key forms of institutional support, and describes them as “key ingredients for social integration and success within the school system and in other mainstream institutional spheres” (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 315). These six forms of institutional support include various funds of knowledge, those funds most associated with success within the educational system. The first supports are those that regulate communication, interaction, and exchange within mainstream institutional systems. Second is bridging, which is the process of acting as a human bridge to supervisors, to social networks, and to opportunities for exploring various mainstream institutions, (e.g. high school career counselors or university campuses). The third support is advocacy, the process of intervening on behalf of another for the purpose of protecting or promoting their interests. Role modeling is the fourth support, modeling behaviors associated with effective participation in mainstream domains, and effective coping with stratification forces such as help-seeking behaviors and rational problem-solving strategies. The provision of emotional and moral support, provided in the context of other forms of support geared toward promoting effective participation in mainstream domains and effective coping with stratification, is the fifth form of support. The sixth and final form of institutional support is evaluative feedback. It comprises advice, guidance, and incorporates the provision of institutional funds of knowledge as well as genuine emotional and moral support. Although this system of institutional support is a relationship-based system, consisting of both the student’s family and the school district’s representatives as the institutional supporter, the district

representative (educator) has the greater power in establishing this relationship, which will aid in creating the democratic dynamic as the student prepares to enroll for school.

All six of these key forms of institutional support are the responsibility of educators actively participating in the well being of the student and his family in order to place him in the most appropriate school setting. No matter what negative conditions the student faces, if a significant educator provides the student with care and support, the student may be able to cope with the negative consequences of the reproductive dynamics that exist in larger society.

Educators need to be aware of the position they hold as district representatives and advocates for children, and need to know what they are able to do to provide support. Minority youths have acquired skills and competencies needed to become problem-solvers and productive adults in a complex society. Many minority youths do succeed in school despite at-risk conditions.

Educators who tap into the skills and competencies of these youth may become a part of social network that might contribute to the success of these students (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), whose numbers continue to increase, particularly immigrant youth.

Immigration Trends and the Status of Immigrant Families in the U.S.

After a half a century lapse, the United States has again become a country of immigration. In 1990, the foreign-born population reached 19.8 million, or 7.9% of the total population. By 2005, the number had grown to 37 million, or 12.5% of the total population. A century ago in 1908, immigration accounted for 14.7% of the American population, and Portes and Rumbaut (2006) asserted that figure is again being approached fast, and the impact of contemporary immigration is significant and growing.

Immigration to the United States is today primarily an urban phenomenon, concentrated in the largest cities. In 2003, less than 5% of legal immigrants went to live in non-urban areas,

and 40% settled in just ten metropolitan locations. In particular, recent years have seen the gradual end of what was a significant component of pre-World War I immigration: rural-bound groups coming to settle empty lands or to work as farm laborers (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Several major demographic shifts over the past half-century have transformed the U.S. and life in this country in many ways. Especially noteworthy is the fact that most school-age children are likely to be members of ethnic or racial minority groups than members of the dominant culture. Racial/ethnic minorities are destined, as a whole, to become the numerical majority within the next few decades (Hernandez, 2004), in particular immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean Islands.

The Status of Latino Immigrants in the U.S.

The number of Latino students in the public schools across the U.S. account for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollments from 1990 to 2006. In 2007, about 16.4 million children, or more than one in five children in the United States had at least one immigrant parent (Fry, 2007). There are now approximately 10 million Hispanic students in the nation's public kindergartens and its elementary and high schools; they make up about one-in-five public school students in the United States (Fry & Gonzales, 2006). The public schools were comprised of one-in-eight public school Latino students in 1990. Enrollment growth among Latino students is expected to continue for decades, according to a recently released U.S. Census Bureau and by 2025 one in three students in the U.S. public schools will be of Latino descent (Fry & Passel, 2009). By 2050, it has been projected there will be more school-age Latino English Language Learners than school-age non-Hispanic white children (Fry & Gonzales, 2006).

English Language Learners

Because of these immigration trends, educating English Language Learners (ELLs) is a crucial challenge for the nation as a whole and for large urban districts in particular. In 2007, it was estimated that 5.1 million ELLs were in the U.S., which was an increase of 1.8 million since 1995. ELLs comprise almost 11 % of the U.S. school age population. This number is expected to increase to 30% by the year 2015. Nearly 30% of these students are educated in the nation's biggest cities (Snipes, Soga, & Uro, 2007).

The enactment of NCLB in 2001 resulted in increased accountability requirements for ensuring all students achieve at high levels. Schools are required to disaggregate student achievement data and report outcomes by student groups. Consequently, schools and districts must take responsibility for ELLs academic success or be subject to sanctions under the law. Yet the difference in academic outcomes between ELL students and their native English-speaking counterparts is large, especially with respect to standardized test scores and high school graduation rates (Snipes, et al., 2007). A major challenge involved in bringing ELLs to full academic proficiency is helping them to develop the requisite literacy skills to access and master academic content. Another consideration is the programmatic approach to addressing the needs of ELL students in U.S. public schools, which is controversial and varies considerably from state to state (Beutler, et al., 1998; Capps, et al., 2005).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) calls for quality education and accountability for all students in U.S. schools and this includes English Language Learners (ELLs) (Hill & Flynn, 2006; Reed & Railsback, 2003). The more diverse schools become the greater the pressure to normalize the curriculum and instruction. For ELLs, the pressure has meant fewer opportunities to learn in ESL or bilingual supported classrooms. For teachers, increased diversity has meant a

strong push for ELL students to learn English quickly and to place them in mainstream classrooms. This has caused an urgent need to improve the quantity and quality of instruction for ELLs, both in special programs and in regular classrooms. All teachers of ELLs and those in mainstream classrooms in particular, are searching for effective teaching strategies for these students. In classrooms with language diverse populations, ESOL teachers are responsible for ensuring the curriculum and teaching strategies reflect an alignment with English Language Proficiency Standards. Teaching to the English Proficiency Standards, however, is every teacher's responsibility. In their book, *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners*, Hill and Flynn (2006) set out to prepare a comprehensive review of research-based strategies relevant and applicable to ELL students. They said,

Setting objectives in the classroom helps focus the direction for learning and establish the path for teaching. For ELLs, setting objectives is especially important: Imagine the incredible amount of incoming stimuli bombarding these students as they try to learn both a new language *and* content knowledge. This sense of being overwhelmed can subside when students are told exactly what they are going to learn each day upon entering the classroom. Aware of the intended outcomes, they now know what to focus on and what to screen out as they process new information. (Hill & Flynn, 2006, p. 22)

The educational environment also becomes a friendlier place for ELLs when they have a clearly stated target for learning. When objectives are set correctly, students work toward clearly defined goals and are able to explain what they are learning and why.

ESOL Program Models

Mainstream teachers throughout U.S. schools face new challenges as rapidly changing demographics have come up against new federal and state policies, controversies regarding

bilingual education, dual language support, English language support and limited school resources in order to serve students in classrooms that are more diverse than ever (Reed & Railsback, 2003). Program models and instructional methods for English Language Learners are focused on practical, research-based principles and instructional strategies that mainstream teachers can use to meet the needs of these diverse learners. Five major program models are described below.

Newcomer programs. This program is designed to meet the needs of ELL students in incoming grades 2-12 with low-level English literacy skills and some limited formal schooling in their native countries in a survival English context. Students enrolled in newcomer programs are usually recent arrivals to the United States. The goal of these programs is to help students acquire beginning English skills and core academic skills, and to acculturate to the U.S. school system (Feinberg, 2000). Some programs might have the additional role of promoting students' native language skills. These programs can vary widely in their organization. Selected ESOL teachers and paraprofessionals are assigned to work with these students in a self-contained setting for explicit teaching (Feinberg, 2000; Short, 1998).

Instructional methods using students' native language as support. These instructional methods exist within nearly every ELL program model. Some programs use bilingual paraprofessionals within the mainstream classroom to provide native language support. Other programs use teachers trained in a variety of sheltering strategies. In its most general sense, these are methods in which teachers or paraprofessionals use the ELL's primary language to translate unfamiliar vocabulary or clarify lessons taught in English (Jesness, 2004).

Instructional methods using English as a Second Language (ESL): These include various approaches to teaching English to non-native speakers in secondary settings. The three common

subdivisions of ESL emphasis are: (a) grammar-based ESL, which is instruction in English that teaches about the language, including its structure, functions, and vocabulary; (b) communication-based ESL, which is instruction in English that emphasizes using the language skillfully in meaningful contexts; and (c) content-based ESL, which is instruction in English that attempts to develop language skills while preparing students to study grade-level material in English. Although using content as a means, these programs are still focused primarily on learning English, which distinguishes them from sheltered instructional methods (Freeman & Freeman, 1998).

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). This program model focuses on teaching grade-level content in a way that is understandable for ELL students while at the same time promoting their English language development. SIOP is a means for making content comprehensible for English learners while simultaneously developing their English language skills. Teachers use a variety of techniques for making the content concepts and information understandable so that ELLs can participate in grade-level classes. It is an instructional framework that has been shown to significantly increase the academic achievement of English learners. It uses a variety of sheltering strategies in a unified, structured way. This method of instruction requires significant teaching skills in both English language development and subject-specific instruction; clearly defined language and content objectives; modified curriculum, supplementary materials, and alternative assessments (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

Two-way immersion programs (also known as dual-language or bilingual immersion). The goal of these programs is to develop proficiency in the student's first or native language (L1) and in a second language (L2). The students in the program are typically divided between the native English speakers and English language learners and from the same language group and

similar cultural backgrounds. Oftentimes the programs and instruction include models such as 90/10 which 90 % of instruction in non-English and 10 percent in English, gradually increasing to 50/50. Many dual programs which are at 50/50 include students in the immersion programs half of their time in school. These programs require significant school, family, and community commitment, significant peer interaction, and bilingual teachers who are trained to teach in both languages (Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Hill & Flynn, 2006).

General Principles for Teaching ELL Students

ELL students in mainstream classroom require the same skills they are taught in the ESOL program, thus the need for the mainstream teachers to learn language acquisition theories and be able to apply the key principles in their classrooms. There are four major instructional methods for serving English language learners, characterized by the degree to which they incorporate a student's native language and the approach they take to delivering academic content. In addition, several specific program models have been developed using these instructional methods as a guide (Linguanti, 1999). However, there is no one-size-fits all approach to ELL instruction models. In the report, *Program Alternatives for Linguistically Diverse Students*, Fred Genesee, researcher for the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, & Excellence (CREDE) said, "No single approach or program model works best in every situation. Many different approaches can be successful when implemented well. Local conditions, choices, and innovation are critical ingredients of success" (Genesee, 1999, p. 4). The four major instructional principles for ELL students are described in the following paragraphs.

Increase comprehensibility. This principle provides teachers with strategies to make content more understandable to their students. This involves providing nonverbal clues such as pictures, objects, demonstrations, gestures, and intonation cues. As ELLs develop their language

skills, other strategies are added to include building from language that is already understood, using graphic organizers, hands-on learning, and cooperative or peer tutoring techniques (Krashen, 1985).

Increased interaction. This principle encourages students to use their language skills to directly communicate with others and negotiate meaning in real-life situations. Examples of specific instructional strategies are cooperative learning, study buddies, and project based learning (Robertson, 2006).

Increase critical thinking skills. This principle encourages developing higher order thinking skills as a student's competency grows. Strategies include asking students higher order thinking questions, modeling by thinking aloud, explicit teaching, reinforcing test-taking and study skills, and holding high expectations (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Cummins, 1986).

Use a student's native language to increase comprehensibility. This principle incorporates the student's native language with instruction. That is, ELL students receive academic support in their native language. Teachers can use bilingual texts or those that involve a student's native culture; they can decorate the classroom with posters and objects that reflect the students' diversity of language and culture. This model requires that teachers be cognizant of the students' cultural background and incorporate cultural knowledge in their lessons (Cummins, 1996; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

The No Child Left Behind Act is both a continuation and an alteration of previous federal policies designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in the U.S. public school system (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). School districts, therefore, have a legal responsibility for designing and implementing programs that will enable English language learners and immigrant students equal educational opportunities thus the need for various program models and

instructional strategies. A review of the historical and legal responsibilities for serving these students is necessary in order to properly serve the students who are compelled to fit into the mainstream.

Historical and Legal Context of Educational Services for English Language Learners

Approximately 5 million students with limited English language skills are in the U.S. public schools and are held to the same high academic standards imposed on all students in the U.S. Therefore, school districts have a responsibility to make certain that English Language Learners have access to a quality and equitable education that allows them to make academic progress while learning English (Pearson, 2006). Therefore, one of the most important aspects of public education immigrant families become familiar with when they arrive to enroll their children in school is the many detailed laws that give specific guidelines to what U.S. schools are required to do. These laws are also intended to protect the rights of families and their children. Parents of Latino immigrant and minority youth are encouraged to know their rights so they can avoid any problems and seek assistance for their children (Lyons, 1988). Problems Latino immigrant parents often encounter with the educational system are issues of their immigrant status, ethnicity, race, language, and/or disability. All children have the rights to specific kinds of educational programs that schools have to provide for free.

A school district is required by law to develop a special program for English language learners, typically called an ESOL program. At a minimum the ESOL program must provide special help through a specially trained teacher in order to assist English language learners. Through the use of research-based strategies teachers are to provide assistance to help the child learn what other children are learning regardless of their English language proficiency. This help must continue until the child shows a level of proficiency at the advanced or fluent level (Hill &

Flynn, 2006). A school district also has an obligation to provide parents with basic information in a language they can understand. If the language is common in the district, important notices are to be translated. If their language is not common in the district, the district is expected to make provisions for translation (Lyons, 1988).

Federal protection of language-minority students can be traced back to enactment of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law prohibits those who receive federal funds from discriminating on the basis of race, color, and national origin. Because local school districts were responsible for educating language minority students, what was then the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) offered support through its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in 1968 (Lyons, 1988). All federally assisted (e.g. Title I) school districts were to ensure that students of a particular race, color, or national origin were offered an education normally obtained by other students in the school system. Title VI itself prohibited intentional discrimination. Schools have a legal responsibility to design and implement programs that will enable such students to get through language barriers and improve their academic performance (Center for Immigration Studies, 1995). The Courts used improved academic achievement in judging whether or not an educational agency was fulfilling its legal responsibilities for language-minority students. A 1970 memorandum issued to school districts from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) stated their responsibilities to provide an equal educational opportunity to ELLs:

Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students (Lyons, 1988, pp. 7-8).

The memorandum mandated that school districts take action to provide programs, however it did not specify the actual steps to be taken. The memo explained violations of the law such as excluding students from school because they did not speak or understand the language of instruction; inappropriately assigning immigrant students to special education classes because they lacked English skills; failing to design programs to teach English as soon as possible, or offering programs that did not lead to anywhere. Failing to notify parents whose English is limited in a language they could understand also violated the law (Lyons, 1988).

Lau v. Nichols and Castaneda v. Pickard: Legal Remedies for Language Minority Students

Parents of immigrant students sought enforcement of Title VI when they filed suit in Federal Court. These parents complained that school districts' practices deprived their children of equal educational benefits. A landmark suit against the San Francisco School Board was brought by parents of Chinese ancestry, and reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 1974 as *Lau v. Nichols*. The U.S. Supreme Court found in favor of the Lau family. The *Lau v. Nichols* decision was directly followed by Congressional action reaffirming the right of language-minority students to equal educational opportunity. The Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) was passed within weeks of the *Lau* decision, and required state and local education agencies to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers for language-minority students. EEOA would not allow schools to simply provide students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum, arguing that students who do not understand English are denied a meaningful education. With the *Lau* decision, the Court held that the school system had violated Title VI by denying these children a meaningful opportunity to receive a public education. The decision required school districts and schools to provide ELL students with educational opportunities addressing their language needs. Through the *Lau* precedent and subsequent U.S. Department of

Education guidelines, ELL children were assured of equal access to schooling, including, if necessary, special programming that allows them an opportunity to effectively participate in public education (First & Carrera, 1988, 1991; Lyons, 1988).

Between 1975 and 1980, OCR conducted nearly 600 Title VI compliance reviews, which led to, by July 1980, negotiating *Lau* plans with 359 school districts. Nearly all of these plans were based on the *Lau Remedies*, which gave the federal government influence over educational decisions made by local and state education authorities. The courts were concerned with immigrant students' opportunity to learn English and with schools' responsibility to provide "meaningful education." The *Lau Remedies* provided detailed and specific approved approaches, methods, and procedures. These guidelines became the standards by which the OCR determined whether an education agency was in compliance with Title VI (Lyons, 1988).

In 1981 *Castaneda v. Pickard* ruled against the Raymondville, Texas Independent School District (RISD). Mexican-American children and their parents filed suit, claiming the district was discriminating against them because of their ethnicity. They argued classrooms were segregated using grouping criteria that easily identified their race and ethnicity. Under the *Lau vs. Nichols* ruling, school districts were required to establish bilingual education, but there was no way to evaluate the sufficiency of the school's methods. The *Castañeda vs. Pickard* case established three criteria that a program serving ELL students must meet. The program must be (a) based on sound educational theory, (b) implemented effectively with adequate resources and personnel; and (c) evaluated over time as effective in overcoming language deficits. These criteria were used to determine whether a school district was serving ELL students and if the program adequately addressed their needs (Lyons, 1988; U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Plyler v. Doe: Immigrant Status and Equal Access

During the 1970s, many people entered the United States illegally because they came from Mexico to work for low wages in border-states like Texas. In 1981 most of the three to six million undocumented workers were living more or less permanently in this country. This situation led to questions about the legal status and rights of these persons and their children.

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the case of a group of children of undocumented workers who had been denied free public schooling by the state of Texas. In *Plyler v. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Texas law that excluded children without proof of legal residency or full tuition from attending public schools. The *Plyler v. Doe* decision was based on the Fourteenth Amendment and it set the precedent that children could not be denied an education based on immigration status. The ruling determined that public schools could not deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status. The schools were not to engage in any practices that held the right of access to school or required Social Security numbers from all students, as doing so might expose undocumented status (Contreras, 2002; Lyons, 1988).

Legal Mandates for Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" on August 11, 2000. The order reiterated Federal agencies' responsibility for identifying any need for services to English language learners, developing and implementing a system to provide services and meaningful access to ELL students, and for evaluating the services they provide. To assist Federal agencies in carrying out these responsibilities, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a Policy Guidance Document, "Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - National Origin Discrimination

Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency" (LEP Guidance). LEP Guidance contains compliance standards for those institutions receiving Federal financial assistance to ensure programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to ELL students and do not discriminate on the basis of national origin, which is a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The guidance did not impose any new requirements but reiterated the Title VI principles that OCR has been enforcing for over 30 years. The guidance discussed methods by which recipient/covered entities can meet their obligation to provide oral interpretation to LEP persons. The guidance also outlines the general parameters of a recipient/covered entity's obligation to provide translation of written materials, providing examples that illustrate both the importance of such translation and the flexibility that recipients have in meeting this obligation (Presidential Documents, 2000). These laws provided the impetus for urban districts to create Newcomer Placement Centers to better serve immigrant families.

The Need for Newcomer Placement Centers

The laws ensure that immigrant and language minority children are provided with access to an equitable education, as schooling is particularly important for immigrant youth. For them, it is often the first sustained, meaningful, and enduring participation in an institution of their new society (Contreras, 2002). Today, more Latino immigrant children spend more time in school than ever before in the history of the United States. It is the schools where, day in and day out, immigrant youth come to know their teachers and peers from the majority culture as well as newcomers from other parts of the world. It is in school that immigrant youth develop academic knowledge and form perceptions of where they fit in the social reality and cultural imagination of their new nation (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2008). Because large numbers of immigrant and

language minority youth are entering U.S. public schools, Newcomer Placement Centers can offer families a central location where they can find assistance.

District-sponsored Newcomer Placement Centers are often staffed with bilingual professionals, and their purpose is to register, assess, and place students in programs and provide oral and written information to parents in their native language (Lucas, 1996). With the rapid change in linguistic and ethnic demographics comes the need for school districts to make adjustments to fill the need to help families with language and cultural needs and understanding. The creation of a centrally located Newcomer Placement Center has served as one such adjustment in order to better serve families of English language learners, the schools in the district, and the local community (Hartman, 2007).

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methodology

This study was conducted primarily within a qualitative research tradition. Qualitative research allows the use of multiple interactive and humanistic methods to collect text or picture data in the setting that is being studied (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Two primary strategies to collect data were used, analysis of questionnaire and other documents collected through the intake process of individual students and interviews with Latino immigrant families who used the Center. Qualitative methods facilitated the study of issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002). This depth and detail generated from a smaller number of people and cases increased the researcher's understanding of the specific case and issues surrounding the case, but has reduced making generalizations to other cases (Merriam, 2001). This implies the results can be applied meaningfully to the context of the case, but generally, cannot be applied to a multitude of other cases. Merriam (2001) concurs that qualitative methods are richly descriptive if the focus of the inquiry is on process, meaning, and understanding.

A fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its interpretive nature. Therefore, throughout the data collection process the researcher is constantly watching for themes or topics that emerge (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2001). In this process, the researcher is continuously filtering information, probing deeper when needed, and developing a rich description of the case.

Researcher Positionality

As creator of the Newcomer Placement Center this project has become my personal vision and mission to carry to its fullest potential because I believe the services provided to parents and their children are critical to a successful start in a new school. I believe parents are the key to successful students among immigrant and migratory families because they are

courageous and resilient (Suro, 1998). After all, I have personal experience because I am part of a Latino family.

In May 2005, I was completing 27 years of service in the school district. I had served as a classroom/ESOL teacher for 17 years and then the next 10 years as an administrator in two ESOL schools, and earned district level certification. My direct contact with parents at the time they first entered the office at the two schools provided a model that all schools could emulate because of the opportunities parents had to tell their stories in order to help me find the best placement for their child. I asked many questions in order to ascertain student needs and skills to best serve them. I too was an adolescent student who learned English as a Second Language and located to a new school, which enabled me to better understand the plight of the new families who were dependent on an intake process to help their children relocate to a new school.

That same month, I wrote a letter to the supervisor who posted the position of Director of ESOL/Migrant programs, which later became the Multilingual Education Services (MES) Department and the home base to the ESOL/Migrant programs, which led to the creation of the Newcomer Placement Center. Prior to the interviews and the selection process, I wrote her in order to inform the supervisor that I was the best person for the position of Director. At the time, I explained that I was the most qualified due to my knowledge of the Spanish and English languages, credentials and training in building and district level duties, as well as my personal experiences. My adolescent experience as a school age child of a Latino immigrant migratory family who moved across the country to find a better life would serve as a true pioneer to the work that lie ahead in the development of the Center.

My personal story is like many families who come to the Center, many have left the familiar behind in order to improve their lives and to protect other family members from

impending hardship and uncertain futures. I grew up learning Spanish as my first language, which made me an ESOL student without a program and promoted the “sink or swim” approach. Later in my young adult life, laws were enacted to protect children who entered school with a language other than English so they could learn English in a more dignified way and with respect to their native language.

I was a seasonal migrant worker through my childhood and adolescent years. My work experiences began at the age of seven when I picked cotton alongside my grandmother, two brothers, one sister, and numerous cousins, friends, and neighbors. Cotton picking was part of my life every summer until the age of 11. In the springtime there were tomato and green bean picking and on occasional fall and winter days, there were oranges and grapefruits to be picked. After my younger brothers and sister grew older, there were five Gutierrez children who worked in the fields. My mother joined us by resuming the work she had done in her younger years and it became a family thing. My father maintained a job as an x-ray and medical technologist at a local hospital. My grandmother pulled away because she was aging and she cared for my three younger siblings and an older handicapped (polio) brother. In the midst of youth, my youngest brother died of a staph infection at the age of seven months. We were then a total of nine. The grief became a part of life for us. After all, the baby’s death was now considered a gift from God, our own guardian angel and direct link to Jesus and his Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As we continued the family summers as field hands (our job title on the federal Migrant rolls), other family members coordinated all of the work done as children with growers and farmers in the Texas Rio Grande Valley. My family members considered children working at a young age as way to educate them about family commitment, the Mexican culture, a hard work ethic, building relationships with loved ones, and most importantly learning ways to improve our

quality of life. The times were rough but the rewards were countless, after all “los chismes, historias y consejos de la familia que estaba ausente y la gente del Valle Rio Grande nunca se acababan (the gossip, stories and advice about absent family members and the people from the Rio Grande Valley” were never-ending thus building social capital and funds of knowledge.

Later in my adolescence and prior to the family’s move to Kansas, we went to Michigan to pick fruit and vegetables during the summer. The summers there began with a schedule that included harvesting various fruits and vegetables. On several occasions we were able to pick apples and peaches before we returned home to Texas. The final season we worked in Michigan and made the move to Kansas to begin school. When I was 14, my family moved from a predominately Latino area in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas where my parents left behind cross-generational ties that spanned across many years. The Spanish language was a way of life and we moved to western Kansas where native and second languages were German and Russian and the numbers of Latinos were few.

The first two summers we were in Kansas we migrated south to Oklahoma to chop cotton, which included removing the weeds choking the plants. My uncle and the farmer negotiated the work for us. All of the work was done by our family and led by my mother. This was the first time we were on our own. In those years, we learned to go as a family in order to earn money for the household that we did not have to share with other relatives. This summer work continued through my first two years of high school. My mother then started a Mexican restaurant business in order to help sustain the family and our jobs as field hands ended after the second year of traveling to Oklahoma.

I struggled as a writer in high school and college but I knew I had to complete college because it would be the one thing many of my cross-generational family members did not have

like so many other English language learners without proper training. My mother went to school through the eighth grade, thus contributing to the Latino dropout rate many years prior to the research studies of today. My father completed college with the help of the G.I. bill after he served time in the Army. The G.I. bill provided college or vocational education as well as one year of unemployment compensation for returning World War II veterans. I have come to believe that all students can be successful if one conveys the message that individual ELL (English Language Learners) students are a priority. My background and experience growing up speaking Spanish and working the fields, but believing in and having the opportunity to pursue higher education, are what informs this study of Wichita USD 259's Newcomer Placement Center.

Research Site and Context

Wichita Public Schools has experienced an influx in its diversity and ELL (English Language Learner) population from 2% to 15% since 1995. The immigrant and migratory increases of the student population are a result of the international association to the economic and educational needs in Wichita along with the urban growth and varied increase in the Hispanic populations across the community. Many local people have participated in the sponsorship of families from around the world. Wichita Public Schools is richly diverse in ethnic groups, which for the 2008-2009 school year included: 38.31%- White, 23.79%- Hispanic, 19.86%- African American, 10.17%- Multi-Racial, 5.33 %-Asian and 2.54%-American Indian and language groups (79 different languages spoken). The enrollment offices of many local schools have experienced an unpredictable number of new arrivals from all over the world. Many school office staff members were having a complicated time helping families register their children for school. Complications included not being able to provide native language support in

order to complete the required paperwork for student enrollment. Many schools were forced to find interpreters within school staff or ESOL staff who understood the language and cultural needs of many of these families. This took a significant amount of time away from staff that typically spent their time supporting the school's students, teachers and administration.

To address these concerns, the Wichita Public Schools District Office administration and local school board supported opening the Newcomer Placement Center in the spring 2005. The Multilingual Education Services (MES) Department was created to serve families beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. The centrally located facility which houses the MES Newcomer Placement Center serves as a one-stop enrollment provider for students and families whose first language in the home is other than English. The Center became the place where every new English Language Learner (ELL) came with his or her family to register for school and take mandatory pre-assessments in order to assess the English proficiency level of the student to determine placement in the appropriate program and school. The families were also connected with other programs and agencies in the community that provide health, economic assistance, literacy, childcare, interpretation, and other services.

Since the doors have opened the staff has worked diligently to educate the community about the Newcomer Placement Center, Wichita's immigrant and migratory population, programs of support available to English Language Learners and their families, district translators and interpreters, and using the media resources to communicate with community groups about the needs at Multilingual Education Services Department. Overall this has demonstrated a supportive school system and community that responded actively providing information to the general public about the positive aspects of Wichita's diversity.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods for this study included document review and interviews. These were appropriate for collecting data in a qualitative case study because they yielded rich descriptions about the Newcomer Placement Center and the families who used the many services provided at the Center. The following sections go into more detail about each of these collection methods and the participants of the study.

Document Review

A review of documents allowed me to explore existing records, documents, artifacts, and archives, all of which embodied a rich source of information about the Newcomer Placement Center and the families who used its services (Patton, 2002). A review of documents provided access to information that could not be gathered using other data collection strategies (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) and allowed me to triangulate data collected from other methods. Documents provided me with contextual and background information about Latino immigrant parents who used the Newcomer Placement Center. I determined whether what was documented was consistent with what participants revealed in the interviews. A variety of documents collected and maintained since the Center opened in 2005 were the main source of data for analysis:

- Parent Questionnaires were used to interview the parents about their children and provided a primary source of data for analysis. A Center staff member orally questioned each parent about his or her child during the intake process.
- Approximately 1050 questionnaires were completed between July through December 2008 and 935 were Latino. Of those 935, 502 met the criteria for Latino immigrant parent to qualify for the study. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

- 2005-2008 student files which are kept at the Center, students' tests, transcripts, birth certificates and other collected documents provided information to gain information about immigrant families and to improve the services provided at the Center. Only a review of the fall 2008 documents helped this study; previous years did not provide any useful information.
- Descriptions of the Newcomer Placement Center Procedures for enrollment, the forms and questionnaires the parents complete; which included the pupil information form, the Home Language Survey, the Migrant Survey, and the food application were studied. Copies of the Home Language Survey in both English and Spanish are included in Appendix B.
- District and Newcomer Placement Center policies and procedures, ESOL enrollment and program guidelines; waiver and withdrawals forms used with the ESOL program description were used.
- The student files at the Newcomer Placement Center provided much of the data about the students and their families.

The pre-enrollment process for the fall semester began June 1, 2008 and ended December 19, 2008. By that time 1049 students had been through the Center. I reviewed the student files and sorted them by those who listed Spanish as the language in the home. I studied birth certificates to help me determine Latino-born parents or students born in a Latin American country. When all records were reviewed a total 502 records were used. The intake process includes a Newcomer questionnaire, which helped me put the student information into fields that provided information about each student without identifying him or her. I used student

identification numbers without names in each case in order to double check the information being gathered.

Interview Participants and Criteria for Selection

Interview participants in this study were six parents who used the MES Newcomer Placement Center between July 1, 2008 and December 19, 2008. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select information-rich participants who will illuminate the questions under study. The MES staff assisted in identifying participants for the interviews and they assisted as needed with translations. All participants signed a consent form prior to participation in the collection of data. The consent form outlined the purpose of the research, stated participation was voluntary, assured confidentiality, and guaranteed the option to withdraw from participation at a later date. The consent form was translated into participants' native language. Copies of the consent form in English and Spanish may be found in Appendix C.

All participants were selected using a purposive sampling strategy, which Merriam (2001) describes as grounded in the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore selects a sample from which the most can be learned. All participants had to have been to the Center sometime in the fall 2008 semester. Each one had to be clearly identified as a Latino immigrant, which was verified on their child's birth certificate. I also looked for at least three whom I had interactions with during the intake process as documented by the notes on some of the paperwork. I looked for families that had single children, multiple children, special education needs, various English levels (newcomer to fluent), high school experiences, immigrant status issues, and other experiences at the Center. This strategy deepened my understanding of immigrant parents' strengths and their perceptions of the

Newcomer Placement Center, and how we might better meet their needs instead of satisfying the needs of the school system (Erlandson, et al., 1993).

The six parents interviewed were selected after the review of the student files in the document review. Initially, 935 files were reviewed and ultimately 502 met the criteria to be selected for the study. In the review of the student files copies of documents such as Intake Enrollment Checklist, Home Language Survey, parent questionnaire, birth certificate, proof of address, and student transcripts were required in the file. If any of these documents was missing then the folder was put aside due to its lack of information. Once all the folders were reviewed, other criteria were used to eliminate certain students' files. School experience as well as siblings and grade levels were considered alongside their elementary, middle and high school experiences. Students' school experiences in the U.S. and those in another country factored into selection of the parents. Some siblings in a family had foreign country school experiences and that was considered. Kindergarten students entering school were removed due to their parent's lack of experience for that particular child in the enrollment process regardless if they had siblings in other grade levels. English language proficiency was a factor. Students with little English experience and those with fluent skills were considered. Students with and without special programs were also considered. Student files were sorted by the month they came to the Center. Time of year was also considered, since August was the busiest time for parents and the Center, a memory of the process may be vague or indistinguishable. The largest one time majority of the students came to intake in August, which meant there were more student files to review and two interview participants were selected from this group. Families who visited the center during the months of September, October and November were also selected. Once all of those factors were considered then the pile of student files was reduced to a more workable

number. In order to get to the six interviews, other characteristics were carefully thought out. Pupil Information Forms (PIF) were pulled from the student database in order to verify their status in the school district. Because mobile students were being studied I had to find out if they were still enrolled in the district. The PIF was used to determine parent's work status, marital status, and accessibility to a form of communication like a telephone or a computer (email address) were considered due to the type of experiences they would bring to the enrollment process.

The six parents who participated in interviews provided insights about their experiences prior to arriving to the Newcomer Placement Center, the Center's structure, and procedures for completing the paperwork for enrollment. They were asked to share their views on the ways they were referred to the Newcomer Placement Center and the reasons or explanations they were sent, the way they were greeted or welcomed in either the school or the center, and the process they experienced while at the Center. They were asked if they had ever returned to the Center with others or whether they made recommendations for others to visit the Center. They were also asked if they had additional interactions at the Center.

Interviews allowed the researcher to travel back and forth in time with the participant to gain knowledge about their experiences being studied (Erlandson, et al., 1993). Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and place for each participant and researcher. Most of the interviews were held in the home of the participant, a school setting, or the Newcomer Placement Center office. The individual interviews were conducted face-to-face and permission was sought to tape record interviews. Two different interpreters were used with all of the interviews in order to clearly communicate with the immigrant parents where the Spanish language was dominant.

I used a semi-structured interview guide format to gather data. A set of open-ended questions was designed to solicit responses to the list of questions or issues to be explored. In all cases the questions and the prompts were changed or edited in order to solicit the responses that best described the individual responses. In all cases the interview allowed me to loosen the structured of the interviews in order to allow the participants to give an answer that was true to their experiences prior or during their time at the Newcomer Placement Center. Their experiences allowed them to be flexible with their responses (Merriam, 2001) so a true picture could be provided. The interview questions in both English and Spanish are contained in Appendix D.

A pilot test of the protocol was conducted with the interpreters and two parents who used the Newcomer Placement Center a year ago and did not participate in the study. The pilot allowed the researcher to determine if the questions achieved the purpose of the item. Suggestions derived from pilot tests allowed for the adjustment of interview questions (Erlandson, et al., 1993). Since an interpreter helped conduct the interviews; it was important to ensure the questions were culturally sensitive and easily understood in a language other than English.

In the research report and in all conversations, special care was taken to protect the anonymity of information and the identity of informants by using pseudonyms for place and person names, removing potential identifiers, and by storing all data gathered in a secure location away from the study site (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The process of data analysis and interpretation involved making sense out of the information collected from the document review and the interviews. Qualitative research

methods allowed the inquirer to use strategies of inquiry to collect open-ended, emerging data with the intent of developing themes from the information (Creswell, 2003). Data collected from individual interviews and documents was examined using a constant comparative method of analysis (Merriam, 2001). The data analysis process allows the researcher to look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities that become categories for focus (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Each interview was recorded and then transcribed verbatim using the interpreter as needed to prepare a bilingual transcription as needed. However, as a bilingual researcher I had direct access to the views of the participants. It was through the Spanish language and colloquial language that I was able to understand as the participants shared their experiences. They recalled the individual attention they received at the Center. Within the translation and interpretation with the parents, I found nuances of the language in constructing their accounts to be personal and specific. It was in the oral and written accounts of the participants' lives that helped me remember the specifics in their stories as written in my notes. I was able to hear their voices and note their individuality. I was familiar with the language of the participants and the nuances of their social interaction with me, I understood them and their message was clear. As a researcher, I was able to adapt to their language needs and specific questions. In the transcription, I captured the words but not always their nonverbal language and their sounds and colloquialisms that put them at ease. I learned their personal stories through their language, which helped absorbed enough of their story to help me understand their situations and how they contributed to their experiences at the Center.

One of the ways that I was able to participate was through the use of the concept of code switching in a way that assumes a direct relationship between languages, values, meanings, and identities, which related to their stories. Code switching allowed me to move between English

and Spanish within the topic of conversation. It has been shown going between the languages in speech can take place for a variety of reasons and the practice does not guarantee that a specific meaning will be conveyed because of a particular language such as Spanish to English (Temple, 2006). I wanted to make myself clear regarding their experiences at the Center so I used English with parents who were Spanish dominate to make sure they had the meaning of the intake experiences that were unique to their school enrollment process.

In all cases I used high-context communication (HCC) to gather meaning from what parents had to say during the interviews. The HCC system allowed me to “read between the lines” (p. 172) in order to gather the unspoken meaning of the verbal message, and to make sense of the nonverbal facets that accompanied what the parents in the interviews were saying. As a *bilingual Latina* person I was able to keep in on their behavior because I was sensitive to them (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

High-context communication refers to communication patterns of indirect verbal mode: self humbling talk, nonverbal subtleties, and interpreter-sensitive values (i.e the receiver or interpreter of the message assumes the responsibility to infer the hidden or contextual meanings of the message (p. 172).

Analysis of the interview data began with the transcription of all of the interviews in Spanish from the audio recording. After the transcriptions were completed, I listened to the audio recording again and used my notes from the interview as I read the words that were transcribed to make sure I understood what the parents were trying to say as I remembered it. The transcriptions were translated into English and attached to each participant within a table. I was able to take each individual thought and its translation to be used as an answer the research questions.

I then reviewed each transcript and began to look for patterns in the data and to identify categories common across the transcripts. Data were divided into segments and then sorted into categories that had something in common. Within each category, data were scrutinized with consideration to common attributes among them. Some categories were combined, others expanded, and some were eliminated because only one or two people remarked about its implications. Conclusions and interpretations were formed based on the findings that emerged in different categories (Merriam, 2001).

Text data from the 502 records were analyzed along with that from the parent interviews, which were compared with the constant comparative analysis (Merriam, 2001). These comparisons allowed me to go back and forth between data gained from the documents and the interviews in order to construct categories or themes that captured some recurring patterns. These comparisons led to subcategories, which permitted me to see a continuous comparison of remarks, comments, description of their children, which were reduced to the smallest, discrete units of information that can stand alone as independent thoughts. These units of data included words, phrases, sentences or complete paragraphs, which were enlightening and guided the research towards a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2001).

Microsoft Excel software was used for data management of the large number of text in the documents such as the student records collected at the Newcomer Placement Center, and parent interviews. Data was further refined through this process until themes become clearly articulated as findings until patterns suggesting final themes emerged (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Research Quality

The accuracy of the findings was verified using three primary strategies – triangulation, member-checking, and rich, thick description as outlined by Creswell (2003). Triangulation

using different sources of data to justify a common theme found in the data collected; member-checks allow study participants to review and determine whether or not the findings are accurate; and rich, thick description is used to provide the reader with a sense of the setting in an attempt to share the experience.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussion

In this chapter I report my findings, which are divided into three sections. The first section includes information about the district's Newcomer Placement Center. Section two addresses the findings from the document review about the Latino immigrant students and their families. Section three includes interview information about what parents had to say about their children, their experiences at the Center, and suggestions for how they would change any of the services provided at the Center. To protect the confidentiality of participants, their names, as well as those of their children have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Wichita Public Schools Newcomer Placement Center

Because placement centers for newcomer immigrant students are a promising model for effectively meeting the unique needs of this group, the Wichita Public Schools, Kansas, opened the Newcomer Placement Center (hereafter referred to as the Center) in July 2005. It is located in the privately owned Midtown Community Resource Center and is administered by Wichita Public Schools' Multilingual Educational Services Department. It is centrally located in the city and the school district leases space to accommodate the incoming families. The Center helps families connect with other programs and agencies in the community that provide health, economic assistance, literacy, childcare, interpretation, and other services. Advice is given about the importance of learning English for the adults and brochures describe where they can go for English classes ranging from free to professional instruction. In addition to the Director and a teaching specialist, the Center employs 16 full-time bilingual staff members who administer the Intake Questionnaire, oversee completion of required paperwork for all schools such as the

Home Language Survey, Pupil Information Form, an application for Free and Reduced Lunch, and parent acknowledgement of district policies regarding student behavior and Internet use.

When Latino immigrant families come to the Center, a staff member greets them in their native Spanish language or English as needed. The multiple services the Center provides for Latino immigrant families, students, and schools include a staff member who registers and evaluates students whose first language or the language most often used at home is Spanish. Specially trained staff evaluates foreign-born students with appropriate assessments to measure English language proficiency and determine placement. Staff takes time to inform families about appropriate programs for their children. Staff provides the family with an overview of the school their child will be assigned to attend. Other services communicated to families include the multilingual resources and services available to help families communicate with school personnel in order to make the transition to a new school easier. When the parents have completed the intake and enrollment process, Center staff provides and reviews a packet of information which contains maps of the community, information about nutrition guidelines, before and after school child care, medical, vision, dental and immunizations, and school policies and procedures (e.g. dress code, attendance, etc.).

The documents needed from parents or guardians in order to register a student include proof of age and legal name, proof of residency within the school district boundaries, immunizations and other medical requirements, and official records from schools in the U.S. or another country to help determine grade and course subject placement. Parents are encouraged to disclose any information needed to best serve their child through a questionnaire developed by staff at the Center and interpreted in a way that best conveys the message the parents are sharing.

Previous school experiences are critical to the success of the students so parents are encouraged to share details about them.

Every school year begins with a formal enrollment process, and many immigrant families in the district begin their school experiences with the enrollment process at the Center. Immigrant families who arrive at any Wichita Public School are asked to complete a Home Language Survey at the start of their enrollment process. If a language other than English is the response to any question the parent must be referred to the Center for further processing. Because these children are required by the Office of Civil Rights to be tested for English Language Proficiency, the enrollment process at the school must stop and the children must report to the Center where services are available and carefully considered. Many barriers like language, proof of age, previous school attendance and/or school fees may keep families from moving forward through the enrollment process.

Demographics of Latino Immigrant Families Who Used the Newcomer Placement Center

The student files at the Center provided much of the data about the students and their families. The pre-enrollment process for the fall semester began June 1, 2008 and ended December 19, 2008. By that time 1049 students had been through the center. I reviewed the student files and selected those who listed Spanish in the home. I then had to determine that at least one of the parents or the students was born in a Latin American country. A total of 502 records met the criteria for inclusion in the study.

A Newcomer Placement Center Intake Questionnaire was administered to all students entering the school district. The questions were grouped into sections such as Student Information, Health Information, Family Information, School Information, and Comments. In the School Information section parents are asked to tell about their child's previous school

experience, school records, and special programs in the child's school experience. The parent is then asked to tell something about their child they would want the teacher to know. Other data came from students' placement files, which included a home language survey, previous school transcripts, as well as their birth certificate and a transcript generated at the district's Newcomer Placement Center. The data found in the files were placed into 32 different fields for further analysis.

Results of this data analysis are organized around the topics of family status, language status, education/school status, family perceptions of their children, and information parents wanted the school to know about their children. Family and Language status includes information about parents and students' country of birth, the languages used by the students, parents and family as well as the family dynamics of the students such as guardianship. The education and school status included students' age, grade level, and particular circumstances that might affect their education such as special education and/or medical needs. This section also includes the family views of their children's status such as the loss of loved one, divorce, moves, and/or retention. Another set of questions asked what information parents would like to share with school personnel.

Family Status

The students' records indicated that 52% were male and 48% were female. Seventy-three percent of the students' legal documents (e.g. birth certificates) showed the country of birth for one or both of the parents was a Latin American country such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, or Venezuela. Eight percent of the students had a parent born in the U.S. as well as Latin America. However, 19% of the records were Unknown because their family roots were less obvious. In these cases, the Home Language Survey or the Student

questionnaire illustrated comments like “back home,” “in my country,” “my family back home,” “born in U.S. but spent most of my time in Mexico,” which indicated that immigration patterns did exist in the family (See Table 1).

Table 1
Parents Country of Birth

	Total #	Percentage
Mexico	364	73%
Unknown	97	19%
U.S.	41	8%

Analysis of the students’ country of birth showed that 31% were born in Mexico and 67% were born in the U.S. Another 2% were born in other Latin American countries (See Table 2).

Contrary to popular perceptions, a majority of these school-aged immigrant children were born in the U.S. and are citizens entitled to the same rights as all U.S. citizens.

Table 2
Students’ Country of Birth

	Total #	Percentage
U.S.	328	67%
Mexico	155	31%
Other Countries	19	2%

A large majority of the students resided with either two parents or with their mother. According to the documents, more than half (54%) of the 502 students lived with both of their parents and 35% lived with their mother only. However, of the remaining students 17 lived with a parent/stepparent and only 7 students lived with their father (See Table 3).

Table 3
Legal Guardian

	Total #	Percentage
Both Parents	268	54%
Mother	174	35%
Relatives	30	6%
Stepparent	17	3%
Father	7	1%

Seventy percent of the students had siblings under the age of 19 living in the home.

Twelve percent were living at home as only children and 17% were living with a variety of relatives, most commonly cousins (see Table 4).

Table 4
Home (Living with)

	Total #	Percentage
Siblings under age 19	350	70%
Cousins and/or relatives	86	17%
Only child	62	12%
Friends and/or Roommates	4	<1%

Language Status

While the records showed that Spanish was the native Language for 98% of the students, 52% reported using Spanish in the home and 47% reported using both languages in the home. In both cases less than 2% used English or considered it a native language (See Table 5). However, 89% of families reported primarily using Spanish in the home and 10% spoke both Spanish and English in the home.

Table 5
Native Language

	Total #	Percentage
Spanish	493	98%
English	10	1%
Both	2	<1%

English is the language most families want their children to learn; therefore only 33% reported having no English model in the home. Of those who lived with English models in the home 18% were siblings, 15% was the mother, and 16% were relatives. Only 6% of both parents were able to model English in the home. The records showed 12 students used friends who lived in the home and provided English modeling (See Table 6).

Table 6
English Model in Home

	Total #	Percentage
None	162	33%
Siblings	86	18%
Relatives	80	16%
Mother	72	15%
Father	47	9%
Both Parents	29	6%
Friends	12	2%

The English level of all students who came to the Newcomer Placement Center was assessed and the results of these 502 students showed that 82% qualified for English language support and were labeled as English language learners (ELLs). Eighteen percent of these students tested as

fluent and were thus not in need of English language support. Of the 82% who qualified as ELLs, 18% were new to the English language, which required them to be in a more structured setting to learn survival English language skills (See Table 7).

Table 7
Tested English Level

	Total #	Percentage
ESOL	304	61%
Fluent	92	18%
Newcomer	92	18%
Waiver/Withdrawal	10	3%

Education/School Status

Seventy-six percent of these students were elementary age, 14% were middle school age, and 10% were of high school age. However the actual grade levels in which these students were pre-enrolled showed that 15% were going to high school, 15% to middle school, and 70% were going to elementary. The discrepancies included issues like retention, promotion, 4-year-old school age start, and other variables. School readiness in other countries may have been an issue (See Tables 8 and 9).

Table 8
Age Groups

	Total #	Percentage
Elementary	368	76%
Middle School	72	14%
High School	67	10%

Table 9
Actual Grades

	Total #	Percentage
Elementary	352	70%
High School	75	15%
Middle School	78	15%

Students with high school experiences arrived with the need to be placed in a high school setting so a high school diploma could be obtained. High school transcripts are needed so students can be placed accordingly. Without proper paperwork students are in jeopardy of spending more time than necessary in the high school setting. Twenty-eight of 92 high school students with U.S. school experiences arrived to the Center without transcripts and another 14 high school students from another country came without transcripts.

Sixty-six percent of the students who came to the Center have only attended U.S. schools. Twenty-three percent of the students last attended school in another country and 11% were educated both in the U.S. and another country thus causing an interruption in their schooling, as they were involved in a transnational experience, going back and forth between two countries.

Table 10
Last Place Attended School

	Total #	Percentage
U.S.	332	66%
Another Country	114	23%
2 Other Countries	56	11%

Family Perceptions of their Children's Status

The question was put forward to parents about any circumstances that have affected their children (students) and 69% said none. Eighteen percent said the move to Wichita has affected them and 16% mentioned a separation, divorce, or death. Another six percent had health and or anxiety issues. Parents also mentioned their children's pre-school and kindergarten experiences. Some started pre-school, but it was disrupted when the family moved. Parents made comments such as, "Attended pre-Kindergarten for three months, then we moved to Mexico and we returned and no more Pre-K." In other cases, the child did not go to Kindergarten, "because she would cry." A few had a smooth transition, "She began Kindergarten in Mexico at age 4 and then came to Kindergarten in U.S."

Some parents were apprehensive when asked to share information about their children, as they reported some traumatic events such as death, deportation, or kidnapping of a loved one that might interfere with their child's education, making comments such as "needs a lot of TLC due to death of her mother," "Dad was deported and the kids think he is working in another state," and "she was kidnapped in Mexico." Parents who spoke about their children's emotional problems were forthcoming and honest with their responses like, "has anxiety problems," "would like for school to help with grief counseling," "he is depressed since his grandfather's death," and "would like to see him get help." Table 11 contains a summary of comments parents made about circumstances that affected their children's education.

Table 11
Circumstances that Affected Student

	Total #	Percentage
None	344	69%
Move to Wichita	59	18%
Separation from Loved Ones	51	10%
Divorce or Separation (Parents)	32	6%
Family Issues	34	8%
Death of a Loved One	21	4%
School Issues such as attendance, learning English	17	3%
Health of the Child (Student)	11	2%
Health of a Loved One	3	<1%

Twenty-eight percent of families reported they had children with medical needs and the majority of the problems were related to vision, glasses, asthma, and/or allergies. Parents spoke about their children’s medical issues, such as “gets migraines, begins to vomit, feels dizzy and blurred vision,” and “cannot hear in right ear.” Table 12 contains a summary of comments related to students’ medical needs.

Table 12
Students' Medical Needs

Type	Number of Comments	
Vision/Glasses	70	
Allergies	27	
Asthma	13	
Heart	4	
ADHD	4	
Hearing	3	
TOTAL	143	28%

When it came to school performance, 82% reported their child did well in school and 18% did not. When parents were asked about retention, 90% said no and 10% said they had a child who had been retained. Five percent had children with special needs and Individual Education Plans to support their special education need. Table 13 includes a breakdown of types of special education needs.

Table 13
Students with Special Education Needs

Type	Number of Comments	
Speech	13	
LD	5	
Gifted	4	
Multiple Disorders	2	
Autism	1	
Total	25	5%

Parents were asked to describe any difficulties their children may have had in school and 14% said their children had difficulties with academics such as reading, math, writing, and speech disabilities and/or language. Four percent reported their children had behavior problems such as distractibility, talking too much, and problems with teachers and others.

Nine percent of the parents reported their children had specific strengths and mentioned positive qualities such as “very good” or “excellent student.” Some parents identified strengths in academics such as reading, math, and writing. Parents recognized other positive aspects related to their children’s education, such as bilingual, fast learner, smart, “A” student, enthusiastic learner, takes advanced classes, and studious. Table 14 contains a summary of the types of strengths parents identified.

Table 14
Student Strengths

Descriptor	Number of Comments	
Academically on target	27	
Very Good Student	11	
Responsible	5	
Bilingual	4	
Total	47	9%

One hundred two (102) parents described their children as Introverted and Reserved using descriptors such as shy, timid, quiet, inhibited, and nervous. Parents wanted their wishes made known to those who teach their children, including “have patience,” “needs motivation,” or “Spanish only language spoken in the home,” and “She will need a lot of help.” Table 15 contains a summary of these descriptors.

Table 15
Introverted and Reserved

Descriptor	Number of Comments	
Shy	51	
Quiet	24	
Timid	19	
Inhibited	5	
Nervous	3	
Total	102	20%

Other parents (87) called attention to their children being Extroverted and Outgoing because they were sociable, talkative, friendly, choose friends carefully, and got along with others. Some parents answered with words and phrases such as “shy and likes to paint,” “quiet, but then talkative,” and “very happy, talkative and very respectful.” Table 16 contains a summary of these descriptors.

Table 16
Extroverted and Outgoing

Descriptor	Number of Comments	
Sociable	36	
Talkative	28	
Friendly	20	
Total	87	17%

Nine percent (44) of parents placed emphasis on their children’s Conduct and Behavior at school. Twenty-six parents stated their children were easily distractible by being restless, disorganized, and constantly busy. Eighteen parents described their child as having discipline

concerns and being a handful with previous teachers, and some were described as loud, impulsive, and immature.

Thirteen percent (64) of parents talked about their child being Compliant and Obedient at school. Thirty-three comments were made about their children being good, happy, or peaceful and others described their children as compliant, obedient, and well behaved. Twenty-three comments were made about their children being respectful, responsible, honest, confident, and kind, while nine others were described as normal and average.

Fifteen percent (77) of parents used descriptors indicating their children like to be Active and Involved such as a hand on learner, likes to paint, draw, color, and make art as well as being creative. Parents described their children as being active and liking sports, dancing, singing and playing. Some parents shared that their children like being on the computer. Table 17 includes a summary of these descriptors.

Table 17
Active and Involved

Descriptor	Number of Comments
Likes to play	23
Likes to paint/draw/color/art	19
Active	15
Likes computers	10
Creative and dramatic	10
Total	77

Twenty-eight percent of parents (143) were quick to describe their children as being Focused, Positive Learners because they believed their children were advanced, smart, inquisitive, serious, or a good, capable student who is ready to learn and who particularly liked

reading, math, and writing. Parents wanted teachers to know their children were good listeners, curious, focused, and goal oriented but some needed to be challenged. Parents wanted to remind teachers that their children respond well to positive feedback and they like to help others learn because they are sensitive and giving.

Some parents provided complete sentences and many details about their children's abilities with or without suggestions for the teachers. One parent said, "She is outgoing, likes to participate and loves music." In affirmation other parents stated, "He listens very well. He is happy to start school," and "he is a well behaved child." At times some parents' interjected specific skills such as; "she is a good reader," "fast learner," and "easily adapts to change." Others offered their children's subject interests, "likes to read," "likes to write," and "likes math and science." Some parents focused on their children's talents, "play sports," "loves music and belly dancing," and "likes to do creative acting."

Other parents made positive comments about their children as students, such as "good student," "a very attentive child," and "easy to work with." Other parents spoke with pride about their children such as, "she is a sweet and good girl," "loves to talk and participate," and "very well mannered and loveable." Parents think of their children with humor like, "likes to keep kids laughing," "calm until someone pushes his buttons," "he is a curious little fellow," "she likes to use Spanglish," or "she is a smarty pants." When asked to tell about their children, parents embrace their humility with comments such as, "likes to help others," "makes friends easily," or "likes to share with others." Parents were dignified talking about their children's academic strengths, "He is a gifted child," "grabs a hold of material quickly," "was attending honors classes," "an 'A' student," "very smart," and "intelligent," and "respects teachers and peers."

Table 18 contains a summary of the descriptors parents used for their children as Focused, Positive Learners.

Table 18
Focused Positive Learners

Descriptor	Number of comments
Ready to Learn	34
Good student	32
Smart/Intelligent	25
Likes school/participation	21
Likes math, reading, writing	19
Sensitive	19
Needs to be challenged	18
Total	143

Some parents (55) listed Poor Academic Experiences, such as does not like school, low achieving, struggling, lacks confidence, needs motivation, or repeated a grade as characteristics about their children. Some parents expressed concerns about their children’s academic needs, “concerned about speech,” “retained due to state assessments,” “lack of knowledge,” and “a slow learner.” Others brought up their children’s need for support such as, “She wants to make up credit at the Learning Center,” and “wants to finish high school.” Another parent wanted someone at school to, “work with her speech.” Another parent said, “His grades are not good and he needs support from his teachers.”

Parents were well aware of their children’s shortcomings describing, “has bad temper,” “easily angered,” and “easily embarrassed. Yet another parent said, “He is very shy, would like for him to come out of his shell.” Other parents addressed previous experiences others needed to

know such as “will lose homework if not asked for it,” “Struggled with Algebra due to language barrier,” and “Special Education since Kindergarten.”

Some parents felt remorse regarding past negative experiences their children had to endure previously in school with comments such as, “Pre-K teacher would hit her,” “she did not like going to school,” “performs below grade level,” and “mother had to relocate and child was retained.” Table 19 contains a summary of the comments parents made about their children’s poor academic experiences.

Table 19
Students Poor Academic Experiences

Descriptor	Number of Comments
Low achieving	18
Struggling student	17
Repeated a grade	10
Needs motivation	9
Total	55

Information Parents Want Shared with School Personnel

Parents were given the opportunity to share any information they wanted school personnel to know about their children. Sixty-seven (67) or 13% parent shared at least one detail about their child and 124 or 25% did not share anything they would want the teachers to know about their child. Twenty-eight (28) parents wanted teachers to know that adjustment and changes in their child’s life like moving has affected their child. Forty-four (44) parents focused on the future of their child’s success by asking for intervention opportunities such as in reading, writing, and math for continued success. Others wanted to remind teachers to have patience with their children. Some parents (44) wanted to remind the teachers of their children’s need for

English support and proficiency. Bilingual support with communication at school and in the home was also mentioned.

Forty-one (41) parents shared some negative factors influencing some of the students. The factors emerged through the children showing fear, depression, and emotional concerns because parents asked for some counseling support. In two cases parents mentioned corporal punishment at school and others included anger, bad, truancy, loneliness, and poor treatment. An expulsion was also mentioned.

Eight percent (39) of parents shared that there were family matters and concerns with their children such as death, abandonment, divorce and other family issues affecting their children. Another 8% (42) of parents shared medical, speech, and special education concerns as worrisome while lack of school paperwork for proper enrollment caused added stress.

Discussion of Documents Analysis

At the Newcomer Placement Center, placement of immigrant students begins with an examination of their family network and social support system through the administration of a questionnaire and an interview. Analysis of all records indicated the families who used the Center made associations with the staff who assisted them in the Center consistent with Stanton-Salazar's (2001) definition of social capital. Parents were cooperative, forthcoming, and honest with sharing often-sensitive information about themselves and their children, indicating they trusted the Center's staff members. Ninety-eight percent of the parents were native Spanish speakers, but were able to communicate effectively with the Center staff. Stanton-Salazar refers to this as the resource-generating capacity property of social capital. First, trust between the parents and Center staff was established because a relationship had to begin in order for the process to take its course by exchanging information. The Center staff had to ask personal

questions about the child as well as the parent. The analysis of family status showed that 54% of the 502 students lived with both of their parents and 35% lived with their mother only. The language status within the records showed that Spanish was the native Language for 98% of the students and 52% used Spanish in the home with 47% used both languages in the home. These were forms of social capital they brought with them to the Center, which can be built upon to foster educational success for students and positive relationships with families in a new community (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001).

Seventy-three percent of the parents in the study were born in Mexico, thus a reason for moving or migrating to a new community as determined by their participation in the Placement Center. Leaving a community tends to destroy established bonds, thus depriving family and children of a major source of social capital. Eighteen percent of the parents mentioned the move to a new community affected their children's lives. Family moves are hard on children's emotional adjustment and educational achievement because immigrant families want the best experiences for their children. Pedro Noguera (2004) trusts immigrant families were building on their social capital because assimilation was the price of mobility for social progress in American society. The majority of the students, 67%, were U.S. born thus the motivation to progress in American society. The remaining 33% of the students born in Mexico or other Latin American countries were moved to the U.S. by their immigrant parents to become a part of the social experiences of school in order to develop new social identities (Coleman, 1988).

Families moved when their children were school aged, 70% of the students had siblings under the age of 19 living in the home and others sought out other family members or friends for support when coming to a new community with 17% living with relatives. Parents can rely upon

support and assistance of others when they are included in home and school systems thus building on their social capital (Coleman, 1988; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995).

Education in the English language is required for the students to be successful in a U.S. school. Students educated in U.S. schools have a better chance of obtaining a diploma when their basic education is rooted in the U.S. system. Students with experiences in U.S. schools numbered 66% and 34% were educated in one or more countries other than the U.S. Elementary aged students were the majority at 70% age and 30% were in the secondary grades. English fluency is another factor for success in a U.S. school and 18% of the students tested fluent and 82% qualified for ESOL. The data showed the majority of the children were young and in need of services. Parents reported that 67% of the students had easy access to some English modeling with one or more parent (s) or stepparent(s), siblings, relatives, and/or friends. Both English proficiency and bilingual language status may play a prominent role in determining access to social capital within a family (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Because 98% of the students used Spanish and 82% qualified for ESOL services, high bilingual students may have an advantage over working-class English dominant students in gaining access to adult social capital (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). By using the services at the Center, the students' English skills were measured and parents were given the results of the proficiency assessment to support their native language.

Stanton-Salazar (1997) indicates coping or resiliency plays a critical role in the process of social capital formation. Parents were honest, forthright, and troubled when they were asked about any circumstances that their children had experienced that could have affected their experiences in school, 10% mentioned separation from loved ones. Four percent shared that a loved one had died. Six percent said they were divorced or separated, and 8% had family issues

such as the deportation of a loved one affecting their lives. Twenty percent reported their children to be introverted or reserved. Ten percent reported their child was retained at some point in their school experiences and 11% had poor academic experiences. Five percent required special education support and 4% reported their children had behavior problems. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch, (1995) support the need for enhanced assistance provided by school personnel as well as parents that needs to go beyond encouragement and modeling such as network-oriented support. Parents shared information about their children with the understanding that school personnel might be able to help.

Ricardo Stanton-Salazar (1997) argues that children of immigrants and minority youth are in a constant state of having to learn how their own cultures function and they should be able to cross back and forth across the different borders so they can engage themselves in school and in a social network. He believes this learning takes place within networks. From these networks youngsters build their chances for successful bicultural socialization. Social networks operate in and around common factors such as friendship, language, race, culture, and country of origin thus contributing to more success school experiences (Arriaza, 2003).

Parents who shared more positive comments about their children's experiences in school wanted the others to know about their children's success and wanted them to continue because 28% shared their children to be focused positive learners, 17% reported their children were extroverted and outgoing while 15% saw their children's strengths as active and involved and 9% of the parents shared their children's strengths to be academically on target, good student, responsible and/or bilingual. Interactions and school experiences these Latino immigrant families and their children are not inherent ethnic properties brought from homelands, but the results of responses to the challenges and deprivations of the past experiences (Bankston, 2004). Parents

found ways to tell the Center staff about their children and they did so to help them succeed. The use of "capital" in order to explain the school achievement of immigrant children and children of immigrants can be seen as a version of an "input" approach to schooling and its influences on academic outcomes that students take with them to school and the parents were the voices of their children during the interview process (Bankston, 2004; Coleman, 1988).

Families use their Funds of Knowledge

Latino immigrant families are naturally strategic with their funds of knowledge in order to maximize the operations of the family (Gonzalez, et al., 1993) because 502 students and their parents made it to the Center and completed the required paperwork as evidence by the records used in this study. Many recent Latino immigrants, especially Mexicans, have attempted to accommodate to U.S. mainstream culture without assimilating, thus trying to maintain their own language and customs (Olmedo, 1998). Ninety-eight percent of the students in this study used their Native language in the home and of those students 47% used both Spanish and English in the home. These high percentages of students using two languages reflect that students are well prepared to use their culturally developed bodies of knowledge also known as their funds of knowledge. An important assumption underlying the funds of knowledge concept is that the families in the community know many things, have many skills, yet this wisdom is generally not recognized by the mainstream or by educators (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Funds of knowledge is to demonstrate that there are many important skills which children learn in their homes, that parents have knowledge which should be recognized in the school environment and which can be capitalized upon for curriculum development. Thirty-three percent of the students brought school experiences from other Latin American countries and 66% brought experiences from other U.S. schools. Stanton-Salazar refers to this as "coping," which is

understood as resiliency that children acquire at the stage of developing the problem solving capacities to succeed in school. Interviews with select Latino immigrant parents provided an opportunity for a deeper examination of their experiences with the Newcomer Placement Center.

Interviews with Latino Immigrant Parents

Personal interviews with six parents took place at a mutually agreed location, and without their children present in five of the six cases. Five of the six parents were originally from Mexico and one was from El Salvador. However, of those five, only one came directly from Mexico and the others came from four different U.S. states. Four of the six were homemakers and two worked outside of the home. One parent was part of a transnational family because he maintained close ties and traveled back and forth to his family in a small rural community in Chihuahua, Mexico (Goldberg, 2001). The parents' oral English language proficiency included one advanced speaker and one intermediate speaker. The others were at a beginning level with little to no oral skills, and required an interpreter to assist with the interview. Tables that summarize information about each of the parents and their children can be found in Appendix E.

The six parents interviewed had among each other ten school-aged children who ranged from grades one to nine. The ten students were evenly split in gender. Six of the ten students were born in a Latin American country and four of them had some schooling in their native country. Two adolescent students were entering U.S. schools for the first time. Four of the ten students tested fluent in English proficiency and two were at the beginning stages. Others included one advanced English proficiency and three at the intermediate level. The ten students were tested for English proficiency as required by the results of the Home Language Survey and six qualified for English language support in the ESOL programs across the district and one needed special education services due to his Autistic label and his Individual Education Plan

(IEP). He did not require ESOL because he tested fluent notwithstanding the Autistic label.

Three students did not qualify for ESOL services. Each of the six participants is introduced in the following paragraphs.

Lorena. Participant number one, Lorena, is a 35 year old, single mother of four who arrived in the school district in early September 2008. The interpreter and I met with her at her home. She welcomed us alongside her sister and other family members. She explained that she arrived at the Center with her sister, her high school aged son Ray, and her one-year old toddler, Marcos. She emigrated from Chihuahua, Mexico with them. Ray had only attended school in Mexico and was to enter high school for the first time with minimal English skills.

Lorena also came to the Center in January 2009 with another son, Pedro, who arrived from Arizona after four months of schooling there but the majority of his schooling took place in Mexico. She explained when she first came to Kansas with Ray and her toddler; Pedro went to live in New Mexico with his father and a younger sister, who are still in New Mexico.

After the interview was fulfilled, I asked if there was anything that I could do to assist her as she continued to get use to the city. She talked about her job as a service industry worker at a local hotel. Lorena proceeded to give me more information about her two other children who lived with their father. She explained Pedro's resistance to her. He arrived in December to live with her because his father was deported and he was sent to live with her by his girlfriend. In the meantime, the father's girlfriend had her ten-year old daughter in New Mexico, who had been kidnapped from Mexico and taken across the U.S. border at the age of three. She proceeded to tell me she had been kidnapped by her ex-husband (father of the child) seven years prior when he took her illegally to New Mexico. She wanted me to help her get through the child welfare system in New Mexico. When I asked about all that had been done with law enforcement she

proceeded to tell me that she was working with a person at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children when she lived in Mexico. Later, I was informed by the Assistant for International Cases at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that Lorena's move to the U.S. no longer made it an international case and since then the laws to protect her or her child had changed. Lorena had no legal jurisdiction. Her only option was to go to the school in New Mexico and pick up her daughter. She did not know where else to go or what to do. I spent numerous hours trying to help connect her with the right people. I finally had to remove myself from the situation.

Rosa. Participant number two, Rosa, is a 33-year-old, married, mother of one daughter with another baby on the way who had emigrated from El Salvador. She came to the school district by way of Little Rock, Arkansas where she and her husband lived for six years with their daughter. The interpreter and I met with her at a mutually agreed place, which was her child's school. Permission from the administrator to conduct the interview at the school was granted prior to the interview. Rosa did not have a car and did not want to meet at the place where she was living because she and her family were staying with relatives while they saved enough money to buy a home. She made it a point to tell me that their home in Arkansas was still unsold. Rosa joined her husband when she immigrated to the U.S. He had been working in Arkansas several years prior to her arrival, but came to Wichita for better work opportunities. She commented, "Porqué supuestamente mi esposo estaba acá, el me mando a traer a mí todo mundo nos venimos por un mejoramiento económico." "Because my husband was supposedly here, he sent for me, everyone comes to better their finances."

After the interview was fulfilled, I asked Rosa if she had any other concerns. She shared her appreciation for the resources she was able to get at the Center. She was grateful for the

dictionary we gave her. She expressed her efforts to learn English at the area vocational center. After she went through many details about her efforts, she shared that she was not going to be able to attend classes for the next few months due to the impending birth of her baby. I was able to provide some relief by explaining that I had an alternative for her. I was going to allow her to use Sed de Saber, an interactive English learning system that utilizes innovative Leapfrog technology to help Spanish-dependent speakers learn English at their own pace and on their own time. However, I had to deliver it at another time. When I made an appointment to deliver it, I went to her house and explained how to use it. When I excused myself to leave, she wanted to talk to me about some cosmetics she was selling. She demonstrated some product and sent me on my way with a catalog of the product she sells to make extra income for the family.

Reyna. Participant number three, Reyna, is a 32 year-old single parent with two middle school daughters. Reyna was born in Mexico and lived there until she moved to Arizona. They came to this community from Phoenix, Arizona where they lived the previous 13 years. Reyna and her daughters came to the Center in November 2008. She learned about the Center from friends who used it the previous year. Reyna came to the Center because she was told she would get assistance in Spanish. When she arrived all that was told to her was true. She was welcomed and then was given a packet of forms for each of her daughters. They were escorted to the testing room to be assessed for English proficiency. She was assisted with the paperwork, which she appreciated. She noted that her daughters were tested and were told which school they would attend.

Reyna was cooperative with my interview request and straightforward in her responses. As we began to part ways, I asked her if there was anything she needed. She stopped and asked me to call her daughters' school on her behalf to let them know the office staff helped enroll her

daughters in a kind and helpful way. She also wanted me to stress that school staff needed to know her older daughter struggled academically and the younger daughter was the better student. I asked her if the school had called with any concerns and she said no. I assured her that I would call and encourage the ESOL teacher or a teacher who worked closely with her daughters to provide a report about their progress in school. Reyna mentioned the school experiences in Arizona for the older daughter were compromised due to her limited English, which made it difficult for her to learn. Reyna's voice lowered to a whisper when she revealed that her daughter was not treated very well in the Arizona school.

Francisco. Participant number four, Francisco, is a 60 year-old single father with 28 years living in the U.S. He came to the Wichita community in 2003 to work in a meatpacking plant. He emigrated from Chihuahua, Mexico to Tucson, Arizona where he lived for his first five years in the U.S. He then moved to California and lived there for 17 years. Travelling to and from Mexico over the course of the last twenty-seven years to be with family became a way of life for him. Francisco's lifestyle was that of a transnational, that is, one who resides in any of the U.S. while maintaining close ties to small rural communities in northern areas of Mexico (Goldberg, 2001). However, in 1987 he was sick and spent some time in Mexico recuperating. He is bilingual and has good command of the English language. Francisco came to the interview with his daughter, Ana who is in the eighth grade and has limited oral English. He plans to bring his younger sons to begin school in the district at the start of the next school year.

As the interview came to a close, I asked Ana how she was doing in school. She looked at her father and smiled. She did comprehend my question. In the midst of the smile, I asked her if she believed her English was getting better every day. In her shy demeanor, she shook her head to say no. I responded by saying, "I do not believe that." I reminded Ana that due to her excellent

academic performance in school she was one year ahead of students her age in Mexico and in her current school, because her teachers recommended placing her a year ahead. (Note: At the time of enrollment, she was placed in 7th grade with her age group so she could learn English with easier academics, but at the end of the first semester, her current teachers placed her in the next grade level due to her above average performance and recorded evidence of her 7th grade completion in Mexico). Her father, Francisco interjected at that time and asked if there was any way that I could help her with her oral English skills. I told him while Ana listened that I could offer language learning assistance. I showed her the interactive English learning system, Sed de Saber that utilizes innovative Leapfrog technology to help Spanish-dependent speakers learn English at their own pace and on their own time, which assured me that she would use on a regular basis.

Josefina. Participant number five, Josefina, is a 33 year-old mother of three who came to town in November 2008 without her husband, from Phoenix, Arizona where she had spent the previous eleven years. Mexico is her native country and where she lived prior to coming to the U.S. with her first-born child, who was an infant at the time. Her other two children were born in the U.S. Once she established rapport with the Center staff, she spoke of the recent deportation of her husband, thus prompting her move to a new community where she could be with family. The deportation was a very sensitive topic for Josefina and she did not want her children to know of their father's deportation. She did inform us that her children thought their father was away from them for work. She also indicated that her eight year old son was recently diagnosed with a form of Autism and she was trying to get to know that aspect of her life with his disability in the absence of her husband added in with her own lack of English skills. The three children were in grades six, second (autistic child), and first. Josefina was unsure of all that she had to do to get

through the enrollment process because one of her children required serious interventions and special education.

When the interview concluded, I asked Josefina if all the issues with her husband's deportation had been resolved and she said "yes." She told me her circumstances were better because he was back in Wichita and the children were doing so much better. She mentioned that the move to a new town and to a new school was not easy but she had no choice but to move closer to family once her husband was removed from the home due to immigration issues. She told me that her husband returned to them within three months after his deportation. I asked how he got back and in a few words she said, "He and a friend walked back." Her husband and a friend literally crossed the river and walked all the way from Mexico to their new home in Wichita. She assured me that he did not involve anyone else but his friend and paid no one to bring him back. She explained that it was not easy but risky and dangerous. Her husband was motivated to get back to his family and most importantly to his wife because of their special needs child. The child does much better with his father around. She shared how the walk through rough terrains and tumultuous weather across the lower U.S. were detrimental to his feet and his body thus he needed time to recuperate, however at the time of the interview he was already working.

I was so engrossed in Josefina's story I could not help but ask if there was anything she wanted me to do. She asked me about how she could learn English, as she now saw the real need since she was no longer in Arizona. It was much easier to communicate in Arizona because most information is accessible bilingually. She needed to learn English just to conduct business for her special needs child as well as her other children. I provided her with the Sed de Saber interactive learning system to help her learn English at her own pace and on her own time.

Josefina was complimentary of all the help she had received at the Wichita Public schools and wanted me to call the current school to thank them for their support. She had special praise for the social worker and the Spanish translators who have helped her special needs son. She asked if I would call her son's teachers in Arizona since I had spoken to them before (during the pre-enrollment process at the Center in November) and tell them that he was adjusting well to his new school and to thank them for their work with him and that he has made great gains. Josefina departed the interview with more confidence to help her family. She expressed her satisfaction with the schools and the translators because she was informed and her children were happy in school, relieved that her husband was back and working as well as on her way to learning English.

Maria. Participant number six, Maria, is a 34 year-old mother of two sons with bilingual skills to navigate the educational system. The family arrived in August 2008 after being in Illinois where she had moved with her husband 13 years prior. The boys were entering 8th grade and 4th grade with long-term school experiences in the same school district. The older boy, Mario, was born in Mexico along with both of his parents and he came to the U.S. as a toddler. Mario was a social child with the "need to belong" as his mother put it. The younger child, Josue was U.S. born and was described as a compliant, good student.

Maria used the Internet to find out what she needed to do to pre-enroll her children. She called the district office as a follow up to the information she found on the Internet. She was later connected to the Center. She was proactive in the enrollment process. She was given the forms and staff at the Center made sure she completed the paperwork accordingly. Her children were tested for English language proficiency. Center staff explained to Maria because her sons came from another state they needed to pass an English test to find out their needs and place them in

school. Maria informed me that all of her questions were answered and staff helped her get through the enrollment process. She was concerned that all of their previous school information would be transferred and the boys would be placed in their proper grade level. When asked about the current situation she said, “Con respecto, pues me siento bien porque ustedes me han ayudado mucho con todo lo que yo he necesitado para arreglar el problemas de mis niños.” “With respect to you, I feel good because you have helped me a lot with everything I needed to take care of my children’s problems.”

Maria agreed to the interview because she wanted me to help her follow up with the Illinois school district and administrators regarding Mario’s promotion to 9th grade. She was not sure what grade he was going to be in the following school year due to the treatment she and her son received from Illinois school administrators at the time she announced their departure from the area and the move to a new state. She wanted validation and reassurance that Mario was going to move on to the 9th grade. She explained that at the final hour before the 8th grade promotion celebration at Mario’s previous school, the family was told that Mario would not be able to participate. After a few days passed, Maria called the school to find out what happened. The principal told her that Mario had failed his Language Arts class and he would need to make it up in summer school before he could be promoted. She told him they were moving and summer school in their school district would not be possible. The principal gave Maria a transcript letter outlining all the steps the next school district needed to take to make sure Mario would be able to go to 9th grade. One of the specific details included Mario’s need for summer school interventions to pass his Language Arts course in order to be promoted. The administrator told her that if Mario did not get that intervention then he would have to repeat the 8th grade. When Maria learned our school district did not offer summer school as an intervention, she was

worried. She blamed herself for all the moves throughout the school year because the family had moved back and forth from Illinois to Kansas three times during the school year, causing major disruption for her sons. I explained that our district used summer school funds throughout the school year to provide interventions such as before and after school tutoring or remediation classes worked into the students' schedules. I assured her that Mario would go to the ninth grade and the intervention would be done at the next school. I explained that I worked with the schools across the district to place students according to their age and previous experiences. The lack of summer school for a would-be 15-year-old student would not be his demise. She had other things to worry about. I explained that Mario's problems with not passing his Language Arts class was most likely due to missing assignments because he scored fluent in his English proficiency at the time of his test. Maria expressed to me that Mario needed attention in school and acted like a class clown and a troublemaker for the staff at the school in order to be liked by his peers. She told me that all of the family moves were affecting him because he behaved in ways to show his classmates that he was worthy of their friendship. I assured her that I would communicate with the previous school and the next school while considering the best school placement for Mario.

Parents who come to the Center have a story to tell about themselves and their children. In all cases, the parents who participated in the interviews moved to Wichita for a better life and wanted an education for their children. They wanted assurance that they made the right decision to move to Wichita and one way to do that was to make arrangements at the Center to ensure a smooth transition to a new school.

Parent Perceptions of Their Children

Parents were prompted to share their perceptions when asked specific questions about their children. They provided their perceptions in their native language since they wanted to

make sure they were understood. When direct quotes are used, the parents' response in Spanish is written first and then followed with the English translation.

Immigrant Parents Want their Children to Succeed in School

The six parents interviewed wanted their children to be successful and were concerned about how they would adjust to a new school setting. Parents understood their children were at the Center to be assessed for English proficiency and the results would determine their placement in a new school. Lorena said, “yo tenía que ir para que primero le hicieran un examen a mi hijo, para ver en qué nivel lo iban a poner, depende de qué nivel de Inglés el trajera.” “I was told I had to come here first because they needed to test my son, to find in which level to place him, depending on the English level he was coming in with.” She understood the process and the results indicated he needed some intensive support with his English in order to succeed in a U.S. school.

One factor out the control of the children was the family's need to move from one place to another, which affected their schooling. When parents feel they have to move for financial and/or family reasons, they become worried about the year-end outcomes for their children. Maria had several moves through the year and she worried about her sons, especially the one completing the eighth grade. She was not sure what the school in Illinois would do to assure her of his grade level for the coming year. She wanted to share her story and believed her voice was silenced in Illinois; that no one would listen to her. Maria shared her concerns and said, “Por mi niño, hubo más complicado porque la situación allá en Illinois, y la traté de arreglar allá y no me dieron ninguna posibilidad de arreglar nada allá, y me dijeron que solamente que ya que estuviera aquí, entonces tratar de arreglarla.” “For my son, the situation in Illinois was more complicated, I tried to take care of it there. They didn't give me any possibilities, they said it had

to be done and fixed here.” She left with trust in the Center’s administrator to communicate with the student’s previous administrator in Illinois.

All parents understood the importance of their children learning English in order to be successful in U.S. schools. Five of the ten children tested fluent or advanced in English, which informed parents that their children knew enough English to manage their academic experiences in a more independent way. Three children had results in the intermediate level, which informed parents of their child’s need for academic English support. Children at the intermediate level do well socially and with day-to-day interactions listening and speaking, but require directed support in academic reading and writing. The Center helped Rosa recognize her daughter’s English level as being an asset, but her shyness interfered with her progress. The daughter’s experience talking with the Center’s Director gave her more confidence and kept her from being transferred to a different school with an ESOL program. Rosa commented, “Supuestamente la iban a mandar otra porque ella tenía el problema ese entonces desde que fuimos al lugar donde usted trabaja con la directora, ella cambió mucho realmente ... incluso cuando llegó acá su profesor le dijo que ha avanzado mucho.” “They were supposedly going to send her to another school because she had that problem [shyness] and since we came to your place where you work with the director, she [daughter] really changed a lot...her teacher told her she had come a long way.” Parents used the feedback they received at the Center regarding the results of the testing during the intake process. Parents felt supported and reassured that their children would be properly placed and receive appropriate educational services.

Two children were at the beginning level, which informed parents that their children were going to need some intensive support in order to learn English because they were in the middle school grades. These two children were placed in the survival newcomer classes. Once placed

the parents became more comfortable with the school assignment and the process their children were experiencing thus trusting the school system to help their children get ahead through an education.

A few parents also noted gaps in the progress their children were making, which they attributed to the behaviors they were displaying in the home. These parents believed their children needed more support causing them to become uncertain. One parent was apprehensive about her child's comfort level in school because he tested fluent in English at the second grade level where he belonged but he also had special education needs. Josefina said, "Si, realmente porque el siempre necesita mas atención que los demás, sí realmente estaba preocupada por Esteban y la educación que el iba a recibir, las personas con que lo iban a tratar." "Yes, because he really needs more attention than the others, I really was worried about Esteban and the education he was going to receive, the people that were going to work with him, and how they would treat him." Francisco was similarly concerned for his daughter, Ana, who at 13 years old is beginning high school in the U.S. because she was advanced in her previous school in Mexico. She is a grade level ahead of her peers, but does not speak much English and is hesitant to use the English she has acquired. He was unsure of her confidence in a new school while learning English in parallel to the academic knowledge she had Spanish. Francisco said of his daughter, "she was real comfortable since she started [to learn English] but she doesn't want to talk until she starts to talk perfect, not yet." A gifted student, Ana was a perfectionist who did not want to risk making a mistake speaking English.

Parent Perceptions of the Newcomer Placement Center

The interviews with the six parents revealed some information about the Center that was previously assumed by Center staff. The parents were asked several questions to describe their

experiences at the Center at the time of enrollment for their children. They were asked to share information about themselves and their children. They were also asked about any changes in services they received at the Center. Parents were prompted through the interviews in order to solicit complete answers.

Most parents (four of six) learned about pre-enrolling at the Center through family and friends. One parent used the Internet and the school referred another. The parent who used the Internet began her search by investigating what she had to do to enroll her children. She stated,

Porque llamé al distrito escolar investigando cual era el distrito escolar de aquí, entonces ya me dijeron el número de teléfono, hice una cita para venir a inscribir mis niños aquí. Busqué por el Internet, busqué el distrito escolar que había aquí y entonces ahí fue cuando me di cuenta.

Because I called the school district inquiring which the district here was, then they gave me the phone number. I made an appointment to come and enroll my children here. I searched on the Internet, I searched for the school district here and that is when I realized it.

Parents accessed a variety of resources ranging from friends and neighbors to the computer to gather the information to help their children with the educational process.

Parents Were Happy and Satisfied with the Newcomer Placement Center's Staff and Services

All parents indicated the staff at the Center treated them well and answered all of their questions. Parents established that the Center was a place to get answers in their native language about schools in the district. The Center served as a connecting hub to other resources in the schools as well as the community. To illustrate, Lorena said, "Pues fueron muy amables con nosotros nos dieron toda la atención que necesitábamos y pues todas las preguntas que yo hice

nos respondieron fue bien el trato de ustedes hacia mí.” “Well, they were very kind with us, they gave us all the attention we needed and all my questions were answered, and you treated me very good.” Parents were especially appreciative of being able to communicate with Center staff in Spanish. Rosa said, “Me gusto también que hay personas que hablan Inglés y Español para mí fue más fácil porque incluso fui con mi esposo, el puede más Inglés que yo pero habían muchos que hablaban en español.” “I also liked that there are people that speak English and Spanish, it was easier for me because I went with my husband; he has more English than I do, but there were plenty who spoke Spanish.” Parents were cognizant of the resources at the Center to help communicate about their children. They will try to speak English but appreciated Spanish support so information about their children could be exchanged with less misunderstanding.

Parents adjusted well to the intake process because they knew it was the place that was going to help them complete the pre-enrollment process for their children’s future in Wichita Public Schools. They did not mind waiting as they appreciated the time and attention they received from staff. For example, Francisco and his daughter spent over two hours in the process and he gave a positive report about the treatment they received at the Center,

It was real busy, but we received the best, the best, the best lady who talked with us, she had the best service. She explained everything the best she can, she was a real nice girl; she was Hispanic. Everything was perfect and clear.

The Newcomer Placement Center was a new experience for all parents, as a Center like it was not available in their previous U.S. schools. When asked if they had used a Newcomer Placement Center before all commented that had not, but would want to in the future if they moved to another district. Josefina said, “Claro que siempre la voy a recordar después de que llegué aquí y lleve los niños a la escuela dije ya está todo listo. Ok, pues muy bien, es la primera vez que yo

miro algo asi.” “Of course I will always remember it, after I came here and took the children to school. I said to myself, everything is ready. Well, okay, it is the first time I see something like this.” Parents felt good about their experiences at the Center, which at first required them to confront the unfamiliar.

Parents who used the Center felt safe, comfortable, and believed they would be helped without bias. For instance, Rosa said, “Para mí fue una experiencia bonita, una oficina que si yo podía recomendar a alguien que fuera ahí, lo recomendaría realmente sí, porque nos atendieron bien no hay discriminación que es lo más importante.” “It was a good experience for me, an office that if I could recommend to someone to go there I really would because they helped us well, and there is no discrimination, which it is the most important.” Reyna felt immediately at ease when she walked into the Center. She commented, “Rapido miré y dije si me van ayudar, yo sentí que sí eran sinceras y que me estaban diciendo todo de corazón.” “I quickly observed and told myself that I was going to be helped, I felt that they were sincere and that they were telling me everything from their hearts.” Parents’ felt valued and well treated and described overall positive experiences.

Parents Experiences at the Center were Positive

All parents appreciated the help they received from the Center staff at the time they had to do the paperwork. One parent felt comfortable the minute a staff member sat and explained the paperwork. Another parent has referred many people to the Center and reported good experiences at the Center where they received personal attention from a staff member who understood them and took the time to listen to them. For example, Maria said, “Sí, porque sirve de más ayuda que ir directamente a la escuela donde tiene uno que hablar con la secretaria, hay veces uno no entiende todas las cosas, ellas están siempre ocupadas y esa es la diferencia.” “Yes,

because it helps better than going to the school where you have to talk to the secretary, sometimes you don't understand everything, they are always very busy, and that is the difference." Parents felt better speaking to someone who understood their language and their needs, which was preferable to dealing with school secretaries where communication can break down.

Josefina was all-inclusive about her positive experiences at the Center and its effects on the overall school experiences for her children. She saw the Center as an advocate for immigrant parents whose staff would run interference with the school on their behalf. She said,

Pero a mí se me hace excelente, porque de aquí están cuidando, cuidan a las escuelas, tienen el control de las escuelas, de los niños y a mí se me hace algo muy bien porque hay alguien más que está pendiente de tus hijos, además de los directivos de la escuela, y eso me gustó mucho.

But I believe it is excellent, because you are watching, from here you are watching the schools, have the control of the schools, of the kids and I believe it is a good thing because it is another set of eyes keeping tabs on your kids, besides the school administration, and I really liked that.

In all cases, the parents who participated in an interview were positive about their experiences, as the Center helped them understand and demystify the enrollment process. They were particularly attentive and appreciative of the numerous bilingual support staff working with them and other families. Some spoke of the regular enrollment process like all other students in a school with a secretary or office staff. Parents who were interviewed would share with other members of the community about the positive experiences they had at the Center.

Parents Saw no Changes Needed to Center Services

Parents did not identify a need to change anything about the services they received at the Center. Rosa was happy about the treatment she received. She quoted the Center director by saying, “Mire le doy mi número de teléfono y cualquier cosa llámeme” eso fue muy bonito para mi, y yo la tengo presente y cualquier cosa que mi hija necesitaría, yo se que la llamo y ella me ayudaría.” “She was impressed that the Center director provided her with a phone number and explained she could call any time. ‘Look, I give you my phone number and give me a call about anything.’ That was very nice to me, I keep her in mind for whatever my daughter may need, I know if I call her she would help me.”

Josefina’s experiences with the Center and the school district have been so positive she does not want to move her children at all. She said, “No para nada inclusive no me he querido mover de escuela, mis niños van muy contentos a su escuela, les encanta, les gusta, no cambiaría nada.” “Not at all, in fact, I have not wanted to move schools, my children go very happy to their school, they love it, they like it, I wouldn’t change anything.” Josefina believed the staff helped with her special needs child, so she was afraid to move him to another school.

Parents Were Grateful for the Myriad Services the Center Provided

These parents were grateful for the Center and all mentioned using other services the Center provided, such as Spanish-English dictionaries, translation or interpreters, and the language line (provides Spanish interpreting on the phone via conference calling) after their initial visit. Lorena expressed her gratitude by saying, “Es importante que existen este tipo de personas de las cuales nos ayudan, tienen también personas que le traduzcan a uno porque no sabe uno Inglés, y tienen traductores, o sea es bueno- Gracias.” “It is important that people who

help others still exist, you also have people who translate to those of us who don't speak English, and you have interpreters, I mean it is good. Thank you.”

Some parents left the Center after the intake process and returned from time to time to use other services. Three of the parents, Josefina, Maria, and Rosa, saw the Center as an ongoing resource, not simply a place to enroll their children in school. Rosa said, “Sí, después regresé para mi suegra que le gustaron los libros, ella también quería uno para aprender in Inglés porque viene de visita, regresamos a traer unos libros nos atendieron super bien.” “Yes, I came back for my mother-in-law, she liked the books, she also wanted one to learn English because she comes to visit, we came back to bring some books and they helped us very super well.”

Center Staff Alleviated Parents Concerns and Worries

All parents expressed some concerns about the uncertainties they would confront when interacting with a school agency in order to enroll their children. Parents are often concerned about their immigrant status and some fear authority and government agencies. Most of the parents mentioned they adjusted willingly and without difficulty to the expectations of the enrollment process at the Center. Center staff put them at ease and ensured that any information they shared would remain confidential. Josefina declared,

Lo que más me ayudó es que sentí confianza primero que nada con personas que hablaban mi idioma que me entendían y que comprendieron la situación en que yo llegué sin conocer a nadie, y me sentí bien tranquila me sentí en confianza me sentí que todo iba a estar bien que estaba hablando cosas confidenciales y que todo se iba a quedar aquí.

What helped me the most is that I felt the trust first of all with people that spoke my language that understood me and the situation that I was in without knowing anyone, I

felt at ease and was very confident that the situation was going to be okay, that I was talking about confidential issues and that everything [the information] would stay here.

Lorena was sensitive to the possibility of any inconvenience because she and other immigrant families come from a foreign country either illegally or they have special needs. She was bold and said,

Pues de ante mano darle las gracias por la atención que nos brindaron que me pudieron ayudar para que mis hijos pudieran estar en una escuela ya que venimos de un país extranjero muchas veces piensa uno que se le van a cerrar las puertas que no va a poder meter a sus hijos, porque muchas veces viene uno de ilegal.”

First of all, thank them for the attention they gave us, and that they could help my children to be able to be in school, given that we come from a foreign country, many times people think the world is going to come down on you closing doors, that they are not going to be able to enroll their kids in school because a lot of times you are coming here as an illegal.

Josefina commented, “Con las necesidades que tenía el niño y pues toda esa preocupación que tenia, se sintió tranquila, mientras estuvo aquí de saber de que, pues sí íbamos a ofrecerle lo que el necesitaba. “With the needs of the child and all the worries that you had, did you feel at ease while you were here that well, we were going to offer you what you needed.”

Several parents were concerned about their children moving to a new school with little or no English. They believed that coming to the Center actually helped their children. Because families spent time with paperwork and teachers assessed children it was easier to ask questions about the best placement for their children. Rosa went so far as to say, “Y desde que llegamos al centro traté la manera de tratarla diferente porque no era culpa de ella que fuera tímida, si no que

necesitaba seguridad.” “Since we came to the Center I tried to treat [my daughter] different because it wasn't her fault that she was timid, she just needed confidence.”

Some parents approached their visit to the Center with apprehension because they believed their situations were going to be unique and more difficult than others. Josefina described her situation as scary. She said,

Si claro, yo venía bien asustada preocupada con todo lo que iba a pasado y estaba con personas que no conocía pero si me encontré me sentí como en casa me encontré personas bien amables entendieron mi situación me ayudaron me orientaron más que nada si me sentí muy a gusto.

Yes, of course, I was very scared, with everything that was happening, with people that I didn't know, but I found, I felt as if I was at home with kind people that understood my situation and help me, guided me, and most of all felt comfortable.

Josefina was especially fearful because her son has special needs,

Estaba preocupada por mi hijo y la educación que iba a recibir las personas aunque lo iban a tratar siempre he tenido ese cuidado de que estar en la escuela al pie del que personas lo ayudan, como es todo, sí tenía preocupación por el.

I really was worried about my son and the education he was going to receive, the people that were going to work with him, I have always been careful being at the school attentive to who are the people that are going to help him, and how everything is. Yes, I was worried about him.

Josefina counted on the Center to understand and help her find the services for her son's special education needs.

Community Reactions to the Center

Parents were asked about what people in the community say about the Center and indicated the Center has a good reputation among families in their community. Parents connected the services at the Newcomer Placement Center to be representative of the schools in the district. For example, Reyna heard from her neighbors and friends that she would have to bring her daughters to the Center and was reassured because the district had good schools. Reyna eagerly stated, “Pues que me dieron buen trato y un excelente personal tienen. Pues dicen que es muy buena oficina tienen muy buenas escuelas que está muy bien. Para mi ver, todo está muy bien.” “Well for me they treated me great and they also have excellent personnel. People said this is a very good office, they have great schools and that everything is great. For me everything has been very good.”

Summary and Comparison between Documents and Interviews

The data on 502 students studied in the documents mirrored the data gathered about the 10 children of the parents who participated in the interviews. The majority of the students’ parents in both groups were born in Mexico. However, the children of the interview group were slightly more foreign born compared to U.S. born because more of them were older. Both sets of data showed that the younger children were U.S. born. In all cases, the data showed that a majority of students in each group were U.S. educated. In both data sets, more students lived with both of their parents while the next higher group lived with their mother only. In all cases, the majority of the families and their children were more likely to use Spanish in the home than English.

Children in both datasets represented a variety of needs. The children functioned at various levels of English and language skills from fluent to beginning to survival English. Their

school experiences ranged from bilingual education to limited formal schooling to interrupted schooling. Their academic levels were advanced to severe special educational needs. Some children required special attention during the intake process just to get a true picture of their previous school performance in order to place them in a grade level.

Parents in all cases worried about their children's education because in the two groups the majority of the children who use the Center qualified for ESOL services, indicating the need for English language support. Parents in both groups expressed concern about their child's special needs and Newcomer status (newly arrived with little to no English). Students in the elementary grades were the majority in the document review and children of those interviewed included one student more at the secondary level. Parents in both groups were prepared to support the programs in the schools but each group had parents with specific concerns about individual children.

The families who have used the Center in the last year together were grateful that a place like the Center existed because they were able to speak of their children openly and honestly in order to work together with Center staff to identify the best educational placement for their children. The families who used the Center have taken risks in their move to a new community because education is important to them. Even if parents were illegal, the majority of their children were born in the U.S.

The parents who participated in the interviews are survivors and collectors of information about services for their children. They were determined to find the resources no matter how painful or time consuming it was to get what they considered the best services for their children. All families left the Center prepared to take their children to any school in Wichita Public Schools.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Implications

The conclusions presented in this section are the result of examining the findings through the theoretical framework of social capital as it relates to Latino immigrant students and their families in addition to the funds of knowledge parents use to help them get through the educational process.

The Newcomer Placement Center Increases Latino Immigrants Parents' Social Capital

Stanton-Salazar (2001) defines social capital as a set of assets existing within people when triggered through associations with others. The assets they have are then used to help them accomplish their goals or to empower themselves in some meaningful way. He takes social capital to have three fundamental properties: self-motivated property, a set of cultural rules, obligations and expectations that are contextualized within power relations, and resource generating capacity. Each of these properties of social capital was evident in the data.

The first is a self-motivated property founded on reciprocal investments in a relationship or set of relations. These investments have to do with the substance of social interactions, cooperative activity and exchange, shared meaning, and continual assessments of common interests. In the case of the intake process, parents began to build their social capital in Wichita Public Schools through the interactions with Center staff including those who welcomed them, those who helped complete the paper work, those who assessed their children, and those who checked them out. Some parents were involved with more specific staff like the Director. To have social capital is to be in relationship where all parties make reciprocal investments and commitments to one another, although not always to the same degree, as power differences between parties play a key role.

The second property of social capital evident at the Center is represented by a set of cultural rules, obligations, and expectations that are contextualized within power relations. This included the intake process procedures, a set of processes that had to be completed on each student so that parent and student knew they would now be ready to be assigned to a school. In order for students to be pre-enrolled properly, a packet of information had to be coordinated with the check out person and those who worked with the students. Once the students were ready to be sent to the school then the completion of the required paperwork in its required status, Center staff would know Latino immigrant parents left the pre-enrollment process with peace of mind so they would not have to confront a school secretary who might think less of them because they spoke Spanish as indicated by Maria, a parent who participated in an interview. Stanton-Salazar (2001) supports the notion that the person who is more powerful is the one occupying the giver role, in this case, the Center staff makes investments by providing support to parents, while the person with less power than the giver makes investments with the time and providing information needed by the school district. All of these interactions under the proper conditions at the Center lead to trust as well as to enforceable expectations and obligations thus, the gain of social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

The third property of social capital is its resource-generating capacity. This implies building trust when individuals become engaged in relationships of trust and mutually enforceable expectations that flow back and forth between people. The services provided at the Center are numerous. The intake process is required for all new students and when done properly, the parent and their children are empowered to go on to the schools to enroll, which is utilizing social capital. However, many of the documents used to help parents are translated hence the use of the Translations Department at the Center. Those staff members assisting

parents are part of the Interpreter Pool, part of the Center staff. Resources are provided at the Center in other forms. The Language Line allows the parent and schools to communicate with one another via a conference call.

Contentment and satisfaction with resources and social support can occur as a direct result of activating particular relationships or ties or as a natural by-product of social interactions and cooperative activity. During times of need, supports to parents are tailored access to valued resources, in the context of trusting and binding relations, which allows people to achieve their objectives so they are able to experience a degree of individual empowerment. This can lead to improved academic performance; school and social acceptance, family and life adjustments, and family economic stability or mobility. This property is a true test for language minority students who have to parallel their need to assimilate in U.S. society while trying to maintain their own culture. They have to build trust so they can gain social capital. Such empowering can help students grow emotionally, socially, (learning to give of one's labor), money-oriented, and institutional (e.g. "connections" to gatekeepers). Following Coleman (1988), "resources" can take other key forms as well, in the enforcement of community norms and identity forms, and in the execution of social sanctions (i.e., social pressure to conform).

Latino Immigrant Parents Build Social Capital

The Center has become the hub of social networks to help immigrant families become familiar with the district and community and to help enroll their children in school. The Center is a place where bilingual staff serves important emotional and service functions to families and where trust is built. Social capital is built through associations that happen between two people, individuals in a group, and between groups within a community. The intake process at the Center naturally brought children and parents together in ways to connect with one another and with

Center staff. Their children can also link with others and thus build social capital. The gain in social capital happens as a source of social control or one's social life, one's family support, and the extra familiar networks that provide benefits that comes from other connections such as settings the people meet one another (Monkman, Ronald, & Theramene, 2005). In all cases, parents were able to talk about connecting with others, for example Rosa said, "Me gusto también que hay personas que hablan Inglés y Español para mí fue más fácil porque incluso fui con mi esposo, y el puede más Inglés que yo pero habían muchos que hablaban en español." I also liked that there are people that speak English and Spanish, it was easier for me because I went with my husband, and he has more English than I do, but there were plenty who spoke Spanish."

Some parents understood the social resources the Center offered and visited repeatedly to seek opportunities to maximize services. Rosa, for example, took advantage of the relationships she had developed with other parents and Center staff to make reciprocal investments through the many people who spoke Spanish while she pre-enrolled her child. She and several others also sought resources that would help them learn English.

All of the Latino immigrant parents who were interviewed and 73% of those in the documents who used the Center began their journey in the U.S. using the skills they knew, those that are cultural and learned, and connected to other funds knowledge. Many Latino immigrant parents depend on others to navigate the institutional systems such as education, health, government and civic responsibilities if bilingual services are not available (Suro, 1998). Often Latino families are "collectors" of social capital because relationships matter to them (Stanton Salazar, 2001). For example, each parent interviewed for the study connected with the Center Director on a personal level. Five of the six parents returned to the Center to seek additional

resources beyond the initial pre-enrollment process, as they used their relationship with the Director to “collect” and increase their capital.

If family members have bilingual skills in reading and writing as well as orally they are further ahead of those who have limited or minimal skills such as relying on the use of cognates (words that are similar in both languages). The central idea is that social networks are valuable assets for Latino families. Interactions with others help them commit to those who teach and inform them about the needs and education of their loved ones. Their interactions also help them contribute to become a part of the social fabric of the society they join. The sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks thus schools and the services like the Center can bring great benefits to the immigrant Latino families (Fry & Gonzales, 2006; Fry & Passel, 2009). The concept of social capital contends that building community and trust requires real face-to-face encounters, which these parents received at the Center (Stanton Salazar; 2001). Nowhere was this more apparent than in their relationship with the Center Director/Researcher.

The Newcomer Placement Center Director is a Source of Social Capital for Latino Immigrant Parents

In every interview, parents were asked if there was anything else they wished to say and all six made requests of me, the researcher, who was also the Center Director. Parents were willing to participate in an interview, but came to the interview knowing they had the full attention of the Center Director and their time with me was an opportunity to make known their special needs and circumstances. I was able to connect with parents in order to help them with other complicated issues. Parents were comfortable and decided to use the social capital they had gained through the triggers of their interactions with me. For example, Lorena asked me to help locate her daughter in another state due to the kidnapping instigated by the girl’s father seven

years prior. When I asked about the history she was able to share the work she had previously done to find the child. Since she was now in the U.S. and not in Mexico, she believed the process would be easier once in the U.S. but several calls to the National Office for Missing and Exploited Children shared with me as they had with Lorena that the case was international as long as she was in Mexico but national in the U.S. once she came to the states. In retrospect, she used her funds of knowledge gained through the Center, as when I called her and asked her if she would be willing to participate in an interview she said yes, hoping I would help her later. She figured that I wanted something so perhaps she could get something in return from me. She used her skill set or her funds of knowledge to connect with me almost like a credit slip (Coleman, 1988).

After my interview with Rosa, she asked me about ways to continue her English studies while home on maternity leave. I did come up with some materials she could use and I told her that I would deliver them to her since she did not have a ride to my office. Within five days, I delivered the materials to her place and then she asked me to sit down. She shared some beauty products she was selling and wanted me to buy some. I listened to her information. I sat patiently and listened to her details, and then she handed me a catalog and some products to try. She used her connection (social capital) and sought the opportunity (with her funds and knowledge) in her interactions with me to further her income.

My interview with Reyna was short and held at the Center. She came in and agreed to participate in the interview with the knowledge that her children were in the car with another adult and needed to move through the interview process quickly. After I concluded her interview I asked how her girls were doing in school. I was moved to ask her about her daughters as a sign of gratitude for her time with me and to show my respect to her as a parent who could contribute

to my research. I wanted her to know that I cared about her daughters and she responded by telling me that her older daughter was struggling since her English was still limited in comparison to her younger daughter. She gave me more information about the troubles the older daughter was experiencing and wanted me to follow-up with the school.

After my interview with Francisco, he felt he could talk to me about all of the jobs he has held in order to support his children here and in Mexico. He shared that he was in need of some support for his gifted daughter, Ana who was having trouble using the English language orally. He wanted to help her but was at a loss as to find the best ways to do so. He knew she was making gains academically but was reluctant to speak English in front of him. Again, I was able to provide them with materials that would help Ana learn English at her own pace.

During her interview, Josefina expressed worry about her special needs son, Esteban. She knew her other children were going to be fine in school since their English was proficient. Josefina was scared and reluctant to participate in the interview but once she knew she would be connected with the Center staff, and able to talk about the support she had received to help her children get into school she was willing to cooperate because she knew it would ultimately help her with Esteban. She knew that she was facing lasting concerns for Esteban's future, and by participating in an interview she was gaining capital to help her family. She reminded me of the extra effort I went through at intake time to gather information about Esteban by talking to his previous teacher during the process. She knew that I was able to gather information about her son quickly and thoroughly, perhaps at other times she would need similar services from me.

Maria agreed to the interview because she knew the Center was a place where she could be helped. Once I asked her to be interviewed she wanted to take care of our interview so I could help her with her son's grade placement. She had used resources the Center had to offer on

several occasions throughout the school year, but was facing problems with her son, Mario, who was facing retention in the 8th grade, jeopardizing his transition to high school and ultimately graduation, she was looking for some time with me.

The Center becomes Part of Latino Immigrant Families' Funds of Knowledge

In addition to social capital, a family's funds of knowledge play an important role in their children's success in school because they include the accumulated strategies and bodies of knowledge such as skills, abilities and practices essential to a family unit functioning well (Greenberg, 1989; Veléz-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). The Latino immigrant families who use the Center or families like them who are recent arrivals to a new community have to put trust into the school system to provide the best information to prepare their children to begin school in a new place (Mercado, 2005).

The parents in this study are like many who come to the Center; they are low income and have to count on their social and emotional resources to survive with dignity and respect (Greenberg, 1992). They shared their concerns and details that may influence their children's acceptance in the school setting. The parents are encouraged to tell talk about their children, extended family and friends who bring them to the new community and previous experiences and skills and abilities. Families who use the Center are given the opportunity to do tell their story through the use of the Parent questionnaire and they are grateful for the opportunity.

Latino immigrant parents have to add new skills and abilities to make life in a new community a part of their social network. In this study, they counted on bilingual staff, an active Center administrator, openhanded schools, and their local friends and families members who brought them to the Center in order to add to their social network, which contributed to their success. Social networks help families connect with others who may be having some of the same

experiences, such as lack of English, a new school, and a general need for extra resources thus reducing anxiety and fear toward institutional systems. The services at the Center have helped these immigrant Latino families avoid unnecessary experiences when it comes to the welfare of their children. Center staff provides ongoing support and information through conference calls among the parents, their children, and school personnel. Other ongoing services that help parents become informed and add to their funds of knowledge are the Center's various forms of communications and district translators. The parents leave the Center with a new understanding which then becomes a part of their funds of knowledge and they keep returning to use other services and they share that knowledge with others in the community.

The operations of Latino immigrant families are naturally strategic with their funds of knowledge because they are connected to intellectual, social, and/or emotional needs which promotes confidence and self-respect among family members (Gonzalez, et al., 1993). The parents' use of funds of knowledge provides rich and variable experiences for Latino immigrant families because interactions at the Center perpetuate a value for the skills they have as a family unit, the use of Spanish in the home, and they see other people with needs like theirs. They are able to share via the Intake Questionnaire pertinent information about their children before they get to school. Because each family spends about an hour and a half during the intake process they leave with the sense of community and contact information for future services. They are comfortable with the services offered at the Center thus adding to their funds of knowledge and social capital, which helps them to start school more prepared. If children are comfortable in schools then parents become mindful and ready to assist their children when other issues arise.

Social Capital and Funds of Knowledge help Latino Immigrant Families be Resilient

Latino immigrant parents are resilient and resourceful; after all they found ways to make it in the U.S. (Capps, et al., 2005; Fry & Gonzales, 2006; Fry & Passel, 2009). They are determined to make life better for themselves and their children in spite of tremendous barriers they encountered (e.g. poverty, language, or lack of formal education). The Latino immigrant parents in this study chose to leave their previous home whether they come from another country or another U.S. place, and are resilient. They have had to cope with the stresses of an itinerant adventure; they may not know where they are going to land once they left their home. As was evident in their stories many Latino immigrant families are living life compounded with one crisis after another but somehow they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are generally able to cope on their own, but they also know how to seek help in times of trouble thus increasing their funds of knowledge. Their ability to deal with life's ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children, thus passing on the families' funds of knowledge.

All Latino immigrant parents who participated in this study revealed inner strengths such as courage, pride, and motivation, to help them and their children live day to day. As was evident in the documents and interviews, many have resources that serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include humor, communication skills, supportive and caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access outside resources and services when needed. All of these strengthen their ability to parent effectively, and they can be nurtured through supportive interactions with others. They have the desire to begin to develop themselves in such activities to learn English and involvement in school activities. In addition, these Latino immigrant families' value community services that can help them when they get information they

do not clearly understand such as ESOL programs and special education for children with individual needs (Gateway, 2009).

Implications

This study shows that the Wichita Newcomer Placement Center is removing barriers when Latino immigrant families are entering the school system whether they have had positive or negative experiences with their previous school. The Center staff is trained to listen in a non-judgmental way and to consider the children and family situations to benefit the children's needs.

Other school districts might consider a similar model in order to help place children with little disruption to their school experiences through the use of a central location a set procedure and bilingual staff. Regardless of how the enrollment process happens in a school district, new Latino immigrant families must become familiar with the educational process by enrolling in school to assure their children are in compliance with the school attendance mandates. Parents want schools to assist families to better understand their district enrollment process. Centers like the Wichita Newcomer Placement Center can benefit parents and schools.

A Newcomer Placement Center like the one in the study can serve as an effective model to other school districts that serve and communicate with parents of Latino immigrant families, as well as immigrants from other countries. Many immigrant students across school districts might be in need of some of the same services provided at the Center such as students' English proficiency assessments, pre-enrollment paperwork, and a parent questionnaire. School districts may use this model in order to communicate to receiving schools the best ways to help their new students.

Newcomer Placement Centers are able to manage large groups of people in order to support the pre-enrollment process needed to prepare their children to begin school. Parents

appreciate the time they need to read and become familiar with the required paperwork. They may appreciate that the center staff prepares school information gathered all at one time and organized per individual children. A Newcomer Placement Center can help schools become better informed about students because of information gathered about the children at intake and shared with schools.

Newcomer Placement Centers benefit parents because they are central place to address many questions about services they may have for their children. A Newcomer Placement Center should be able to allow parents to address issues about their children face-to-face with bilingual people because they provide information that would otherwise not be readily communicated. Newcomer Placement Center also help parent and schools diffuse any misunderstandings between the two. Parents appreciate bilingual resources that explain community resources in Spanish and English.

If a school district begins to use a Newcomer Placement Center with numerous lines of support parents must be asked how it can be improved so that ongoing adjustments and modifications can be made to enhance the services. Those in leadership roles must make inquiries to families with unknown immigrant status and minimal English skills about how they navigate the process so others can be helped.

How school districts structure and organize themselves to intake immigrant students and provide assistance to their families is sometimes indicative of the values, beliefs, and goals to build and maintain strong relationships with parents, families, the community and businesses. In other words, school and district demographics must be considered. If a large immigrant population is present then native language support must be considered in order to help the most vulnerable population. Once families begin to use the process, they must be asked how it can be

improved so that ongoing adjustments and modifications can be made to enhance the services. Those in leadership roles must make inquiries to families with unknown immigrant status and minimal English skills about how they navigate the process so others can be helped.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Parent Questionnaire

<p>STUDENT INFORMATION:</p> <p>Legal Last Name: _____ DOB: _____</p> <p>Legal First Name: _____ Age: _____</p> <p>Preferred Name: _____ Gender: M ___ F ___</p> <p>Current Address: _____</p> <p>City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone(s): _____</p> <p>Language(s) spoken in the home: English ___ Spanish ___ Vietnamese ___ Other: _____</p> <p>English Knowledge: Understands ___ Speaks ___ Reads ___ Writes ___ How long? _____</p> <p>Native Language: _____ Understands ___ Speaks ___ Reads ___ Writes ___</p> <p>Who is the English Role Model to support academic work? _____</p> <hr/> <p>HEALTH INFORMATION: Inform school nurse of health concerns</p> <p>Immunization Records: Yes ___ No ___ Referred: ___ Physical Exam: Yes ___ No ___ Referred: ___</p> <p>Are there health concerns: Speech ___ Hearing ___ Vision ___ Diabetes ___ Asthma ___</p> <p>Epilepsy ___ Allergies (specify) _____ OTHER _____</p> <p>Other concerns: _____</p> <hr/> <p>FAMILY INFORMATION: Primary Language in the home: _____</p> <p>Guardian(s) Name: _____ Relationship _____</p> <p>Guardian(s) Name: _____ Relationship _____</p> <p>Any circumstances that have affected the student's life: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>List the name, age and relationship of siblings/relatives living in the home who are under 19:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>SCHOOL INFORMATION:</p> <p>Last School Attended: _____ GR _____ Date: _____</p> <p>City: _____ State _____ Country _____</p> <p>Present grade level: _____ School transcript available ___ Yes ___ No</p> <p>The transcript shows the student performs at _____ level.</p> <p>Need a release of records form: ___ Yes ___ No</p> <p>How many years did student attend school in another country? _____</p> <p>What country(s) and grade levels? _____</p> <p>How many years did student attend school in the USA? _____</p> <p>What state(s) and grade levels? _____</p> <p>Did the student do well in school? ___ Yes ___ No If difficulties, please explain: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Has student repeated a grade and why? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Special Ed Program ___ Yes ___ No Specify: _____</p> <p>Special Ed paperwork ___ Yes ___ No <i>WALK-IN needed</i> ___ Yes ___ No</p> <p>What do you want the teacher(s) to know about your student? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <hr/> <p>COMMENTS:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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For School Secretary's Use:
List Student ID _____

English
Home Language Survey

Appendix B
Wichita Public Schools
HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

Date: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Student's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Parent/Guardian Name: _____
First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Telephone Number: _____
Home Work

Student's Place of Birth: _____
City State Country

Has your student previously attended a school in the United States? ___ Yes ___ No

My student first entered a school in the United States on _____
Month/day/year

Is there any language other than English spoken in the home? ___ Yes ___ No What language? _____

If yes, please respond to the following questions:

1. What language did your child learn when first beginning to talk? _____
2. What language does your child most frequently use at home? _____
3. What language do you most frequently speak to your child? **Father:** _____
Mother: _____
4. What is the language most frequently spoken at home: _____
5. Please describe the language understood by your child. (Check only one)
 - ___ Home Language Only - No English
 - ___ Mostly the Home Language and some English
 - ___ Home Language and English equally
 - ___ Mostly English and some of the Home Language
 - ___ English Only
6. If available, in what language would you prefer to receive communication from the school?
___ English ___ Spanish ___ Cambodian ___ Laotian
___ Vietnamese ___ Other _____

Parent Signature

Date

Multilingual Education Services
Midtown Community Resource Center
1150 N. Broadway
Wichita, KS 67214
(316) 866-8000
Fax (316) 866-8010

Revised 12/10/07

For School Secretary's Use: List Student ID _____

Spanish
Home Language Survey

Apéndice B
Escuelas Públicas de Wichita
ENCUESTA DEL IDIOMA DOMESTICO

Fecha _____ Escuela _____ Grado _____

Nombre del estudiante _____ Fecha de Nacimiento _____

Primer Nombre Inicial del segundo nombre Apellido

Nombre del padre o tutor _____

Primer Nombre Inicial del segundo nombre Apellido

Dirección _____

Calle Ciudad Estado Código Postal

Número de teléfono _____

Hogar Trabajo

Lugar de Nacimiento del estudiante _____

Ciudad Estado País

¿Ha asistido su hijo(a) previamente a una escuela en los Estados Unidos? Sí No

Mi hijo(a) entró a una escuela en los Estados Unidos por primera vez el _____
mes/día/año

En su hogar, ¿se habla otro idioma aparte del inglés? Sí No Cuál idioma _____

Si es afirmativo, por favor conteste las preguntas a continuación:

1. ¿Qué idioma aprendió su hijo o hija cuando comenzó a hablar? _____

2. ¿Qué idioma utiliza su hijo o hija con más frecuencia en el hogar? _____

3. ¿Qué idioma usa usted con su hijo o hija con más frecuencia? (Padre) _____

(Madre) _____

4. ¿Cuál es el idioma que se habla con más frecuencia en el hogar? _____

5. Por favor describa el idioma que su hijo(a) entiende. (Marque uno solamente)

- A. Idioma materno solamente - Nada de inglés
- B. Idioma materno en su mayoría y algo de inglés
- C. Ambos igualmente, idioma materno e inglés
- D. Inglés en su mayoría y algo de idioma materno
- E. Inglés solamente

6. Si hubiese a disposición, ¿en qué idioma preferiría recibir la comunicación de la escuela?

- Inglés Español Camboyano
- Laosiano Vietnamita Otro: _____

Firma del Padre o Tutor

Fecha

Servicios Educativos Multilingües
Midtown Community Resource Center
1150 N. Broadway
Wichita, KS 67214
(316) 866-8000
Fax (316) 866-8010

12-10-07

Appendix C

Letter of Consent-Interview



The Metropolitan Advantage

Department of Educational Leadership

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am conducting research for my graduate studies at Wichita State University. The study will seek the parents' perceptions regarding Wichita USD 259's efforts to help parents through the process of using the Newcomer Placement Center. Parents will have the opportunity to articulate the practices that are necessary for them to get through the intake process in a productive way. Parents will also have the opportunity to reflect on their own strengths to get through the intake process and how they, along with their children, have been affected by their experience at the Newcomer Placement Center and what changes they would recommend. They will all be asked to share their views on the ways they were sent to the Newcomer Placement Center, the way they were greeted or welcomed in either the school or the center and the process they experienced while at the Center.

I hope to gain information about how immigrant parents perceive their strengths and how they, along with their children, have been affected by their experience at the Newcomer Placement Center and what changes they would recommend.

Participants are being selected among those immigrant parents who represent the two largest language groups, Spanish and Vietnamese. The pool of participants will include parents or guardians who have used the Newcomer Placement Center. Five to seven immigrant parents or guardians who have used the Newcomer Placement Center since July 1, 2008 will be invited to participate in an interview one time. You have been asked to participate in this study because you meet these criteria. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time and place for each participant and researcher. The individual interviews will be conducted face-to-face and permission will be sought to tape record interviews. Interpreters will be used to clearly communicate with parents whose language levels are different than mine.

Your interview responses to the questions will remain confidential and you will not be identified in any way in the study. You will be given an opportunity to review a summary of findings to check for accuracy and given an additional time for feedback prior to the study's completion.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to have to participate. Please understand that I will not be asking any questions about your immigration status or anything else that might put you in jeopardy. You can refuse to answer any questions

they are not comfortable answering. I will destroy the recording after the study is over. I will make sure no one else will have access to the recording or the transcript except for yourself, me, and possibly the interpreter/translator. Should you decide not to participate; it will not affect your relations to the community, USD 259 or to WSU. If you have any questions, feel free to contact my advisor, Dr. Jean Patterson at 105I Hubbard Hall, phone 316-978-6392, email jean.patterson@wichita.edu or me at 1863 Holland Lane and you may call me at 316-200-7472 or 866-8004. If you have any concerns regarding your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Office of Research Administration at Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, 67260-0007, telephone (316) 978-3285.

By signing one copy of this form, you are granting your permission to participate in the interview. Please keep a copy of this form provided to you for your records. Your signature indicates you have read the information above and voluntarily agree to participate in the study. You retain the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or fear of reprisal. Thank you for assisting me in this important study.

Sincerely,

Dalia G. Hale

Signature of Subject

Date

Apéndice C

Carta de Autorización – Entrevista



The Metropolitan Advantage

Departamento de Liderazgo Educativo y Psicología Escolar

Estimado Padre/Tutor,

Estoy llevando a cabo una investigación para mis estudios de postgrado en la Universidad Estatal de Wichita (*Wichita State University*). El estudio busca encontrar la percepción de los padres acerca de los esfuerzos del Distrito Escolar 259 de Wichita (*USD 259*) para ayudar a los padres mediante el uso del Centro de Recién Llegados. Los padres tendrán la oportunidad de expresar cuáles son las prácticas necesarias para utilizar de manera productiva el proceso de admisión. Los padres también tendrán la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre sus propias fortalezas para llevar a cabo el proceso de admisión y cómo ha influido en ellos y en sus niños su experiencia en el Centro de Recién Llegados, y qué cambios recomendarían. Se les pedirá que compartan sus puntos de vista sobre las maneras en las que se les envió al Centro de Recién Llegados, la manera en que fueron recibidos o acogidos tanto en la escuela como en el centro y el proceso que tuvieron que llevar a cabo en el centro.

Espero obtener información acerca de cómo los padres inmigrantes perciben sus fortalezas y cómo ha influido en ellos y en sus hijos su experiencia en el Centro de Recién Llegados y qué cambios recomendarían.

Los participantes son seleccionados entre los padres inmigrantes que representan los dos grupos idiomáticos más grandes, español y vietnamita. El grupo de participantes incluirá padres o tutores que hayan hecho uso del Centro de Recién Llegados. Cinco de cada siete padres inmigrantes que hayan usado el Centro de Recién Llegados desde el 1^{ro} de julio de 2008 serán invitados a participar por una vez en una entrevista. Se le ha pedido que participe en este estudio porque usted cumplió con ese criterio. Cada entrevista durará aproximadamente 45 minutos, y se programará una hora y lugar mutuamente acordados por cada participante e investigador. Las entrevistas serán hechas en persona y se pedirá permiso para grabarlas. Se usarán intérpretes para comunicarse claramente con los padres cuyos niveles del idioma sean diferentes del mío.

Las respuestas a su entrevista serán confidenciales y usted no será identificado de ninguna manera en este estudio. Se le dará la oportunidad de revisar un resumen de los hallazgos para verificar su exactitud y se le dará tiempo adicional para darnos sus opiniones antes de terminar el estudio.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria y usted no tiene obligación de participar. Por favor, entienda que no haré preguntas acerca de su estado legal de inmigración o cualquier cosa que pudiera ser perjudicial. También tiene el derecho de no contestar preguntas que no se sienta cómodo de responder. Destruiré las grabaciones una vez que el estudio termine. Me

aseguraré que nadie más tenga acceso a las grabaciones o a los certificados de estudios, con excepción de mí misma y posiblemente el intérprete/traductor. Si usted decide no participar; ello no afectará sus relaciones con la comunidad, USD 259 o WSU. Si tiene preguntas, por favor comuníquese con mi consejera, Dr. Jean Patterson en 105I Hubbard Hall, teléfono 316-978-6392, correo electrónico jean.patterson@wichita.edu o conmigo en 1150 N. Broadway, Salón 300 o llamándome al 316-866-8004. Si tuviera inquietudes acerca de sus derechos como sujeto de una investigación, puede comunicarse a la Oficina de Administración de Investigaciones de la Universidad Estatal de Wichita, Wichita, Kansas, 67260-0007, teléfono (316) 978-3285.

Al firmar una copia de esta carta, usted está otorgando autorización para participar en la entrevista. Por favor, guarde una copia de esta carta entregada a usted para su archivo. Su firma indica que ha leído la información de la parte superior y está de acuerdo en participar voluntariamente en el estudio. Usted se reserva el derecho de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin sanciones o temor a represalias. Gracias por ayudarme en este importante estudio.

Sinceramente,

Dalia G. Hale

Firma del Participante

Fech

Appendix D
Apéndice D

English and Spanish
Interview Questions

Would you tell us your name, how long have you been in Wichita?
Nos puede decir su nombre por favor? Hace cuánto llegó a Wichita?

Where did you live before you came to Wichita?
Dónde vivía antes de venir a Wichita?

Probe:

What is your native country? What was your last stop?
En qué país nació? Donde fue su última parada antes de llegar a Wichita?

How long ago did you use the services at the Newcomer Placement Center?
Hace cuanto usó los servicios en el Centro de Recién Llegados?

How did you know what to do to enroll your child(ren) in school.?
Cómo supo lo que tenía que hacer para inscribir sus niños en la escuela?

How did you learn about the Newcomer Placement Center? Who sent you there?
Cómo supo del Centro de Recién Llegados? Quién lo envió aquí?

Probe:

Describe your experience?
Cuénteme cuál fue su experiencia?

Would you describe your experience at the Newcomer Placement Center?
Me puede describir su experiencia en el Centro de Recién de Llegados?

Probes:

Tell me about the welcome you received?
Que tal estuvo el recibimiento que le brindamos?

What helped you the most during your experiences at the Newcomer Placement Center?
De sus experiencias en el Centro de Recién Llegados, qué fue lo que más la ayudó?

What would you change about the services you received at the Newcomer Placement Center?
Que cambiaria usted de los servicios que recibió en el Centro de Recién Llegados?

What do you want the Newcomer Placement Center staff to know about you and your children?

Qué desearía dejarle saber al personal del Centro de Recién Llegados sobre usted y sus niños?

What do people in the community say about the Newcomer Placement Center?
Qué dice la gente de la comunidad sobre el Centro de Recién Llegados?

Have you made any referrals to others about the Newcomer Placement Center?
Ha referido usted a otros al Centro de Recién Llegados?

Do you have anything else you would like to add or say?
Hay algo más que usted desea decir?

Appendix E

Interview Parents

	Lorena	Rosa	Reyna	Francisco	Josefina	Maria
Age	35	33	32	60	33	34
Native Country	Mexico	El Salvador	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
Time in US	<1 year	11 years	13 years	28 years	11 years	11 years
Previous location	Mexico	Arkansas	Arizona	California	Arizona	Illinois
Referred by	Sister	Sister-in-law	Friends	Sister	School	Internet
Visit to Center	October 2008	September 2008	November 2008	August 2008	November 2008	August 2008
English Proficiency	None	Beginner	None	Advanced	Beginner	Intermediate

Their Children

	Country of Birth	Gender	Grade	English Proficiency	Foreign School Experience	US School Experience	Special Programs
Lorena Child	Mexico	M	9	Beginner	11 years	None	Newcomer-ESOL
Rosa Child	El Salvador	F	3	Intermediate	None	4 years	ESOL
Reyna Child 1	US/AZ	F	7	Advanced	3 years	6 years	ESOL
Reyna Child 2	Mexico	F	8	Intermediate	4 years	6 years	ESOL
Francisco Child	Mexico	F	7	Beginner	8 years	None	Newcomer- ESOL
Josefina Child 1	Mexico	M	6	Fluent	None	7 years	None
Josefina Child 2	US/AZ	M	2	Fluent	None	3 years	SPED- Autistic
Josefina Child 3	US/AZ	F	1	Fluent	None	2 years	None
Maria Child 1	US/IL	M	4	Intermediate	None	5 years	ESOL
Maria Child 2	Mexico	M	8	Fluent	None	10 years	None