CROSSING CULTURES: HOW HISPANIC YOUTH ADAPT

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt

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Despite the large number of Hispanic families living in the US, Hispanic adolescents' experience of adjustment to a different culture has been under-studied. Traditionally, survey instruments have been the primary method of assessing acculturation, which has not fully captured the complexity of the immigration and adaptation process. This study used qualitative methods to elicit the experiences and processual nature of acculturation among Hispanic adolescents. The purpose of the study was to identify the specific issues that Hispanic youth face as they acculturate to the US. In addition, the study sought to identify the role schools can take in facilitating their adjustment.

The study's design included the use of ten focus groups (53 students) comprised of 7th and 8th grade students in two public schools in a northeastern, mid-sized city, and individual interviews with three staff members. The student participants were largely Mexican, Dominican and Honduran. The students represented a wide spectrum of Hispanic acculturation experiences, ranging from the newly arrived to second-generation status. Their concerns reflected the influence of a variety of contextual factors.

The results indicate that there are significant differences between the 1st and 2nd generation participants. The topics of importance to the participants depended on where

they were located along the adaptational process. Issues of the newly arrived were relative to their native countries, while the issues of the more acculturated participants were relative to the mainstream United States culture. The topics discussed by the members of the school staff were generally consistent with those of the students. However, they had additional concerns regarding the low levels of educational skills they observed with new entrants into the schools. The school personnel also highlighted the contextual issues that challenge Hispanic youth's educational functioning.

The results of the study underscore the importance of examining the intersection between developmental and acculturation processes from the perspective of Hispanic youth. This type of data can help shape interventions that will positively influence Hispanic youth development. The study identifies some of the measures schools can implement to facilitate the overall adjustment of Hispanic youth to an academic environment and US culture.

Preface

       As I grew up listening to the stories of my parents and family members recounting their experiences in a new culture, little did I know where that would lead me in the future. Immigration is a subject dear and close to me. My parents arrived from Puerto Rico much like other immigrants before them, seeking to improve their economic situations. They endured much hardship. Unfortunately, United States citizenship was insufficient to protect them from the negative reactions to this new set of "foreigners." Their fortitude and perseverance was my first lesson about resilience. Growing up as a second generation Puerto Rican, I traversed two cultures, negotiated the differing values and did my best to find that happy medium between the two. As a result, I developed an increasing interest in how people address life's various adaptational demands.

       Becoming a social worker and mental health practitioner allowed me the opportunity to continue to listen to people's life narratives and to help them surmount their own adaptational challenges. I have had the privilege of working with many people of varying cultures, ages, and walks of life. I also spent eighteen years in a local school district, largely populated by Hispanic immigrants. There, I came face-to-face with the daily realities of education and the complex interaction of individual, family and various other environmental factors. My memory banks are filled with examples of the strengths of the human spirit in the face of all kinds of adversity.

       Consequently, it was natural for me to focus my dissertation on the acculturation process of Hispanic youth. A qualitative design permitted me to listen to the participants' narratives and hopefully contribute, at least a little, to the understanding of the acculturation of Hispanic youth. With their help, I hoped to identify the role of schools in helping them adjust. Long after the study was completed, I continue to hear the students'

voices speaking of their challenges, hopes, dreams and disillusionment. This dissertation
is dedicated to their spirit and resilience.

Acknowledgements

If it takes a village to raise children, producing a dissertation is a close second. There were countless people who helped me launch, conduct, and write this dissertation. I will be indebted to them forever. The dissertation represents a collaborative effort of the highest magnitude.

First, my committee spent countless hours reading and re-reading the chapters, helping me shape and reshape the parts that eventually formed a coherent whole. The chair of my committee, Dr. Judith Baer provided a great deal of guidance and propelled me toward greater scholarly heights. She assisted me with issues of conceptualization and with the production of a well written document. Dr. Claudia Moreno helped me to pay close attention to methodology in qualitative research. When coding issues made my head spin, Dr. Shari Much helped me to think like a researcher. I am especially indebted to Dr. Peter Guarnaccia, a mentor extraordinaire. He was the first to suggest a study in the schools. His expert guidance and encouragement, from start to finish, were invaluable. I am also thankful to the School of Social Work for their financial assistance with the project.

I had a great team of research assistants. From them I learned how stimulating and enjoyable it is to conduct research with dedicated and talented people. Igda Martinez performed the difficult job of typing notes during the focus groups and helped with the coding. Her extensive experience with focus groups was priceless. The trustworthiness of the study was greatly enhanced by additional research assistants who separately coded the initial focus groups in order to obtain consensus about the codes. Dr. Alex Interian, Karol Silva and Dr. Guarnaccia helped with this process and I am so grateful to them. A heartfelt thank you is deserved by all of them. Fellow students, such as Nancy Scotto

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Statement of Problem

Hispanics are the fastest growing group of immigrants in the United States (US

Census Press Release, 2004). As the Census Bureau statistics indicate, the Hispanic

population is now close to 13% of the total population (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). The

Hispanic growth rate between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2003 was 13%, almost four times

that of the 3% rate for the total United States population (US Census Press Release,

2004). Between July 1, 2003, and July 1, 2004, alone, the Hispanic population grew at a

rate of 4%, more than three times that of the total population (US Census Press Release,

2005). Projections to 2050 suggest that Hispanics will account for 24% of the population

(US Census Bureau, 2004). In addition to their growing numbers, Hispanics are unique in

that they are relatively young in comparison to non-Hispanic European-Americans. In

2002, the Current Population Reports of the US Census Bureau indicated that 34% of

Hispanics were under the age of 18, compared with 23% of non-Hispanic European

Americans (Ramirez & de la Cruz).

Despite their larger numbers and youth, Hispanics are underrepresented in

adolescent research (Fuligni, 1998a; García Coll et al., 1996; McLoyd, 1998). Rodriguez

and Morrobel (2004) conducted a comprehensive review of eight prominent adolescent-

development journals and two Hispanic-focused journals during the period of 1996-2002.

They summarized the journals' attention to adolescent development for Hispanics living

in the United States and Puerto Rico. Out of 1,010 empirical articles in the six non-

Hispanic-focused journals, 62 reported results on Hispanic youth. Less than half of those

articles were focused on Hispanic youth exclusively. In the two Hispanic-focused

journals, 59 out of 261 articles were focused on developmental issues, and the rest were

symptom-oriented on such issues as substance use and depression. This deficit in research is especially concerning given that Hispanic youth are experiencing the social, psychological, and biological changes of adolescence, as well as undergoing the process of adaptation to a different culture. The negotiation of these interconnected processes is critical to Hispanic adolescents' successful transition to adulthood and integration into the wider society.

The scarcity of investigations related to Hispanic youth is particularly evident for the middle school years (Crean, 2004). Early adolescence is defined in terms of transitional events—including puberty, changes in school or the structure of classes, and achievement demands (Brooks-Gunn, 1988). For the general middle school population, little data exists that describes the kind of strategies young adolescents employ to manage normative developmental transitions, as well as non-normative stressful events, such as the death of a parent. Recently, early adolescence has received greater attention as a phase of adolescence with unique characteristics, but few studies have examined the years incorporating the transition to high school (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2000). Simmons, Burgeson, & Reef (1988) proposed that the cooccurrence of several major life transitions during the years preceding high school entrance result in negative outcomes for academic achievement and self-esteem. Adaptation to such transitions to middle school and high school is often experienced concurrently with the biological changes of puberty and their attending social relational implications. It is unclear how the foregoing propositions affect Hispanic middle school youth, especially when they confront the additional demands of adjustment to a dissimilar culture.

The need for greater research attention is heightened in view of the variety of contextual difficulties that impact on the well-being of Hispanic youth. Foremost,

Hispanics have a lower standard of living than the rest of the population (Casas & Vasquez, 1996; García-Coll et al., 1996; Leyindecker & Lamb, 1999). Hispanic children younger than 18 years of age comprise 28% of the children living in poverty, compared to 9% of European-American children (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). Other contextual factors that are considered correlates of poverty include the limited access to health care among Hispanics. In 2000, 25% of Hispanic children lacked health insurance, as compared to 7% of European-American children. The absence of health insurance impedes access to primary and secondary medical care. In addition to these contextual factors, Hispanics largely live in substandard, crowded housing located in unsafe communities (Hernández, 2004; Montaño & Lopez Metcafe, 2003).

The ramifications of the above demographic statistics are most evident within the school environment, where the contextual constraints cited above interact with the daily academic demands made on Hispanic children and adolescents. Hispanic youth represent more than 25% of the students registered in major city schools and 14% of the public-school registrants in the United States (Gibson, 2002). Along with poverty and the attending features cited above, the low educational attainment of parents joins the list of risk factors for low academic achievement among Hispanic youth (Montaño & Lopez Metcafe, 2003; President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2001). Hispanic youth are less likely to have parents who have graduated from high school (Hernández, 2004; Ochoa, 2003). The association between parental level of education and their children's academic achievement is revealed in the fact that the Hispanic population younger than 25 years of age is less likely to have graduated from high school. More than 2 in 5 Hispanics in this age group have not completed a high school education (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). While 89% of the non-

Hispanic European-American population under the age of 25 has graduated from high school, the corresponding figure for high school graduation among Hispanics is only 57%. It is well established that youth who do not complete high school are more likely to be unemployed and to earn less than those with a high school diploma (Llagas & Snyder, 2003).

In addition to the factors linked to socioeconomic status, academic success for the immigrant sector of Hispanic youth has been associated with the age of arrival and prior educational experiences (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2003). For example, Cortina and Gendreau (2003) found a high number of Mexican immigrant children entering the New York City schools with little or no prior educational experience, placing them further behind mainstream youth in academic skills. Gaining English proficiency is a crucial component of academic success and subsequent employment. Cortina and Gendreau also found that it appeared to be more difficult for older immigrant youth to achieve English-language proficiency. Only 45% of all the Mexican children who entered the New York City school system at the middle school level, and 15% of those who entered at the high school level, achieved English-language mastery.

These issues are further complicated by the tendency of most Hispanic youth to find themselves in large, overcrowded, urban school districts with limited resources to meet the numerous educational and social/emotional needs of this population (Ochoa, 2003; President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2003). Yet, as institutions that have a significant impact on the daily lives of Hispanic students, schools are in a prime position to facilitate their adjustment to a different culture. Consequently, research studies within school contexts can provide

opportunities to increase knowledge about how Hispanic youth adapt to the United States culture and what assists that process.

Goals of the Study

In order to address this lack of research on Hispanic youth, the *Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt* research project focused on the processes related to the adjustment to a different culture. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to explore the factors that affect Hispanic youth development and to identify the ways early-adolescent Hispanics perceive and cope with the demands of culture change. Using focus groups, this research study captured the experiences of the students who had various lengths of residence in the United States. While the importance of context in the full understanding of developing youth has been neglected in prior research (García Coll et al., 1996), this investigation examines the intersection of adolescence and the environment, with particular attention to the school setting. In sum, the research study intends to increase the knowledge base of how culture change affects Hispanic adolescent adjustment within the school context. Given the aforementioned threats to Hispanic adolescent well-being, it is crucial that factors that facilitate adjustment are identified.

The adaptation to a different culture incorporates the concepts of acculturation, stress, and coping. A brief definition of these key concepts will follow as an introductory background to the in-depth attention they will receive in the Literature Review.

Definitions

Acculturation. This is the term used to describe the process of change immigrants undergo as they adjust to the host society (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992;

García-Coll & Vázquez García, 1995; Marín, 1993; Miranda, 2000). The concept of acculturation is closely tied to adaptation, defined by Rogler (1994) as incorporating the ways humans accommodate to environmental changes and how the environment is poised to produce such changes. Accommodation entails the incremental incorporation of the skills useful for optimal functioning in the new culture (Miranda). Changes in behavior, values, and attitudes generally accompany acculturation. In order to create facilitative settings for Hispanic adolescents, the nature of the accommodating strategies and factors most likely to lead to a positive adjustment need to be better understood. While acculturation can be viewed as an individual or group process, this research study focuses on psychological acculturation, defined by Padilla and Perez (2003) as "the internal processes of change that immigrants experience when they come into direct contact with members of the host culture." (p. 35). The process of culture change can be accompanied by varying emotional responses.

Stress. The immigrant experience is a life-altering one that challenges the resources of the individual and group. Stress has been strongly associated with the movement from a native country to an unfamiliar one (Balls Organista, Organista, & Kuraski, 2003; Brody, 1990; Smart & Smart, 1995). A stressful event is one that an individual finds "taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 21). The source of the demands on adaptational resources can be external, internal, or both (Smart & Smart). Grant et al. (2003) extend the definition to include "environmental events or chronic conditions that objectively threaten the physical and/or psychological health or well-being of individuals of a particular age in a particular society" (p. 449). A process of appraisal, which includes an assessment of the stressor, is part of the stress response and influences a course of

action (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress can be expressed in a variety of ways such as depression, anxiety, or other behavioral manifestations (Lazarus & Folkman; Sandler, Wolchik, MacKinnon, Ayers, & Roosa, 1997). While stress has been considered a threat to well-being and health, the specific conditions associated with negative consequences are unclear (Grant, et al.; Lazarus). Furthermore, the exposure to a stressful event cannot be assumed to produce negative outcomes (Garton & Pratt, 1995; Miranda, 2000). Although acculturation has been associated with stress, it is likely that the relationship between acculturation and mental health is mediated by multiple variables such as the presence of social supports and discrimination (Balls Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003). While acculturation may influence levels of stress, how individuals respond to psychologically challenging experiences is of critical importance.

Coping. This term refers to the ways people manage stressful events and is considered decisive for psychological well-being (Compas, 1995; Miranda, 2000). Specifically, it is defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person (Lazarus, 1984, p. 141). Matheny, Aycock, Pugh, Curlette, and Silva Cunella (1986) expanded on this definition as "any effort healthy and unhealthy, conscious or unconscious to prevent, eliminate or weaken stressors or to tolerate their effect in the least hurtful manner," (p.509). Healthy coping skills are those adaptive measures that lead to a sense of control over the event. Lazarus posits that coping skills are not static, fixed aspects of functioning but dynamic measures, subject to change and modification. Adolescence is especially a time when these skills are in flux and in the process of development (Compas, Connor, Saltzman, Harding Thomsen &

Wadsworth, 1999; Donaldson, Prinstein, Danovsky, & Spirito, 2000; Eisenberg, Fabes, &

Guthrie, 1997).

The roles of stress and coping are of particular importance to educational

outcomes. Stress has been found to adversely affect academic achievement in youth

(Annunziata, Hogue, Faw, & Liddle, 2006; Crean, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001;

Wood, 2006). Coping skills help buffer the effects of stress (Lengua & Stormshak, 2000)

and are associated with healthy adjustment (Clarke, 2006), consequently, promoting

positive academic outcomes. Given the low high school graduation rate of Hispanic

youth, much would be gained from understanding the role of stress and coping in the

process of acculturation during early adolescence. The reduction of levels of stress and

the optimization of coping skills have the potential to contribute to positive educational

outcomes and psychological well-being.

Goals and Usefulness of the Study

The first goal of the *Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt* research

project was to provide a rich description of the acculturation experiences of the Hispanic

middle school students under study. By eliciting the perspectives of the youth directly,

the study was able to identify the specific issues of importance to the participants. The

results were anticipated to provide a fuller understanding of the challenges faced by the

youth and to identify the strategies perceived as most helpful. Second, the results of the

research study have the potential to offer schools information about how the academic

setting can facilitate the adjustment of Hispanic middle school students to the demands of

the school environment. Third, it was further anticipated that the findings from this

research study would provide additional guidance to social workers and other mental

health practitioners in the development of interventions in the direct service to Hispanic youth and their families. Increased knowledge about the interaction between acculturation, environmental context, and adolescent adjustment would potentially enhance treatment outcomes. Finally, the findings of the research study also offer the opportunity to contribute to the debate about how acculturation is understood and measured.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Thus far, general characteristics of the Hispanic population have been presented, obscuring the variability within the group. Actually, Hispanics represent a diverse set of people nested within varying contexts and histories. In order to avoid the treatment of Hispanics as a homogenous collective, a summary of the composition of the largest Hispanic subgroups in the United States will comprise the first section of the Literature Review. This will serve to frame the research study within its larger context and to recognize the significance of context for acculturating adolescents. The rest of the Literature Review will be organized into seven additional sections:

- Adolescent Mental Health—Contemporary Conceptual Approaches

- Acculturation Theory

- Acculturation Research

- Acculturation Stress

- Acculturation Stress and Hispanic Adolescent Psychological Well-Being

- Coping

- Summary

Hispanics: A Diverse Population

For the purposes of this research study, the term "Hispanics" will be used strictly as a descriptor, as done by the United States Census, indicating a group of people who were born or whose parents were born in Spanish-speaking countries or regions such as Mexico, Central and South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and Spain (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). While Hispanics share the same language and certain values, their within-group diversity has been increasingly acknowledged (Guarnaccia,

1997; Massey, Zambrana, & Ball, 1995; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002; Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002), contrary to its under-emphasis in the past (García Coll et al., 1996). Racial heterogeneity, differences in socioeconomic levels, sociopolitical contexts, and other situational factors, in both the exiting and host societies, create varying influences on the acculturation process (Guarnaccia; Rogler, 1994). Even within particular Hispanic countries, variations also exist in socioeconomic levels, sociopolitical history, and diversity from indigenous cultures, as well as the incorporation of their own immigrant groups over time. A brief summative review of the largest subgroups—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans—will illustrate how variation can affect the acculturation process.

At 67%, Mexicans are the largest Hispanic subgroup in the United States (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). Mexicans who lived in the Southwest at the time of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo found a new country superimposed over their land, resulting in multiple generations of Mexicans living in the United States. Mexico lost one-half of its northern territory as the result of this treaty to end the Mexican War (Suárez -Orozco, & Páez, 2002). Given their proximity to the United States, the incorporation of Mexican labor into the United States economy has a long history. Between World War I and World War II, the United States looked to Mexico to replace a declining labor pool. Recruitment of Mexican migrant workers took place during that time and continued after World War II through the Bracero Program (Portes, 1994). The demand for immigrant labor continues to encourage Mexicans to move to this country (Suárez-Orozco & Páez).

More recently, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the treaty implemented in 1994 to increase trade between Mexico and the United States, has

provided new motivations for immigration. While the treaty has modestly increased wages in Mexico because of increased trade, it has also increased the ability to raise money for the migratory path to the United States. In addition, an increase in consumerism and consumption is posited to raise expectations for higher standards of living, which also prompts migration (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). Furthermore, economic conditions in Mexico, immigration quotas, and the demand for immigrant labor account for the large undocumented portion of the Mexican settlers in the United States. Nearly 40% of Mexican immigrants are illegally living in North America (Suárez - Orozco & Páez). The undocumented status of Mexican and other immigrants is a significant contextual factor in the process of acculturation due to the constraints it imposes on upward mobility and full access to society's resources and services (Smart & Smart, 1995).

As the second largest subgroup, Puerto Ricans represent 9% of the Hispanic population in the United States (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). As United States citizens, they can travel freely between the mainland and the island (Cauce & Domenech- Rodriguez, 2002; Guarnaccia, 1997). While this may appear to create a distinct advantage over other Hispanic immigrants, Puerto Ricans have the highest rate of poverty among Hispanics (Ramirez & de la Cruz; Suárez -Orozco & Páez, 2002). A commonwealth of the United States for the past 54 years, the island remains highly dependent on the United States economy and vulnerable to the fluctuations of the markets. High unemployment rates on the island increase the flow of migrants to the mainland (Guarnaccia). Such economic determinants have caused a circular flow of migration between the United States mainland and Puerto Rico (Duany, 2002).

In contrast to the immigration experiences of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, the Cuban immigration experience offers a prime example of how the socioeconomic status of a group and a welcoming host country can significantly alter the incoming group's total experience. During the first main immigration of Cubans in the 1960s, entrants were offered political asylum and generous financial assistance from the federal, state, and local government (Moll & Ruiz, 2002). Hailed as anti-communist, Cuban immigrants were awarded 1 billion dollars from the United States government via the Cuban Refugee Program between 1965 and 1976 (Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2002). In addition, the Cuban immigrants that entered the US were among the most educated and skilled members of the Cuban population (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Leyindecker & Lamb, 1999). Today, Cubans are the wealthiest and most educated Hispanic group in the US (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002; US Census Press Release, 2000d). The efforts of these early immigrants have resulted in a powerful economic base.

However, the experience of the Mariel Cubans, who arrived in the 1980s from the port of Mariel, Cuba, has been markedly different (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). They entered under much less favorable political conditions and were among the least educated of the home Cuban population. (Guarnaccia, 1997; Stepick & Dutton Stepick, 2002). In contrast to earlier Cuban entrants, the children of Mariel Cubans hold the lowest level of educational attainment of the group (Portes & Rumbaut). The differences in personal resources and the context of the Mariel Cubans' reception by the dominant culture have significantly contributed to their adjustment experience.

Other Hispanic immigrants originate from the Dominican Republic, South America, and Central America. Groups of settlers from El Salvador, Columbia, Nicaragua, and Guatemala have fled their countries due to economic conditions, political

unrest, and violence. Some have been professionals in their countries of origin and have had to accept low-skilled and low-paying employment due to an undetermined status. These groups have not been favored by preferential treatment, such as the financial support given to the first group of Cubans (Gil & Vega, 1996; Guarnaccia, 1997). The countries of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru represent the largest portion of Hispanics arriving from South America (Guarnaccia). In total, Hispanics from Central America and South America comprise 14% of the Hispanic population (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). While Spain is considered a Hispanic country, it is not included in this summary due to their relative small numbers. The United States Census reports a Spanish population in the United States of 100,135 (US Census Bureau, 2000b), less than 1% of the US population.

As such, the diversity of the Hispanic population precludes generalizations within and between groups. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that these differing contexts will have unique implications for the different groups of Hispanics who immigrate and stay in the United States. The Mexican adolescent, undocumented and struggling in poverty, may have a different acculturation experience from the Cuban adolescent whose parents are well educated and affluent. Consequently, within-group differences in adaptation may be related to macro-level factors (Portes & Zady, 2002), such as the economy or the political context. Therefore, it is essential to keep these contexts in mind as the process of integrating into a new culture is more specifically addressed.

Adolescent Mental Health—Contemporary Conceptual Approaches

Research studies that have included multiethnic samples have identified some of the similarities and differences in psychological well-being between Hispanic adolescents

and youth from different cultural backgrounds. For example, gender differences in certain areas of psychological well-being appear to have cross-cultural relevance. In particular, stress has been generally reported more often for girls than boys (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992; Garton & Pratt, 1995; Seiffge-Krenke, 1993). Investigations focused on both mainstream and immigrant populations found that girls appeared to be more highly affected by stressful life events in general (Compas, 1995; Griffith, Dubow, & Ippolito, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Self-esteem, as another indicator of psychological well-being, has been found to be lower in girls than boys in both mainstream and multicultural samples of adolescents (Griffith et al.; Rumbaut, 1994). Portes and Rumbaut found marginally lower levels of self-esteem in their sample of girls when compared to boys.

Similar to the cross-cultural self-esteem and stress findings, depression has been found to be higher among females of all ages in the general population worldwide (Culbertson, 1997). This finding appears to hold for adolescent females as well. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found gender difference for depression was also markedly significant among their study's culturally diverse population. Over one third of the females reported elevated depression scores, compared to only a fourth of the males. The difference remained consistent over the course of their longitudinal study. Portes and Zady (2002) and Benjet and Hernández-Guzmán (2002) conducted research that found lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of depression in the girls among their Hispanic adolescent samples. However, developmental progression may influence the variations of these indices of psychological well-being. For example, in a longitudinal study conducted by Roberts, Sarigiani, Petersen, and Newman (1990) involving 242 mainly European-American sixth to eighth grade youngsters, self-image decreased for girls and increased for boys as they moved from the sixth to the seventh grades. By the

eighth grade, girls re-established a more positive self-image and appeared to have adjusted to changes caused by puberty and entrance into middle school. Additional multicultural research is needed to demonstrate the replicability of these findings across groups of adolescents.

For the mainstream adolescent population, the onset of puberty and middle school entrance has been found to pose the greatest risk for increases in depressed mood and reduced educational attainment (Compas, 1995; Gonzales, Dumka, Deardoff, Carter, & McCray, 2004). Benjet and Hernández-Guzmán (2002) also found this to be particularly true for girls in their study of 951 (512 females, 439 males) fifth- and sixth-grade students in Mexico City. Furthermore, acute life stressors and social conflict were found to be significant risk factors in early adolescent adjustment, each being positively associated with symptomotology (Crean, 2004). Clearly more research needs to be conducted with Hispanic middle school youth in order to understand better how the combination of acculturation, the onset of puberty and middle school entrance affects their mental health.

The understanding of the complexity of the various factors that affect adolescent psychological well-being is hampered by the lack of agreement about what is directly associated with stress and how it is operationalized. Zane and Mak (2003) found this to be particularly true for acculturative stress. For example, various aspects of psychological well-being, such as depression and self-esteem (Valentine, 2001) have been measured by the use of different scales (Gil & Vega, 1996). Szalacha and colleagues (2003) used the Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children in their study including 248 Puerto Rican adolescents (128 girls, 120 boys). This measure contains questions involving scholastic and athletic competence, as well as social-acceptance components believed to be important measures of self-assessed competencies pertaining to self-esteem. Sam (2000)

used another measure of self-esteem, the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, in his study with a multiethnic sample of 506 immigrant adolescents (50 Chilean, 112 Turkish, 150 Vietnamese, and 194 Pakistani). This measure obviously taps fewer aspects of self-esteem and focuses on self-perception of self-esteem in isolation from other competencies. The use of multiple measures of psychological well-being affects the level of comparability between constructs, especially when different aspects of the construct are tapped in a questionnaire.

Despite some of the problematic aspects of adolescent developmental research, newer perspectives offer the prospect of expanding the understanding of this age group. Research and developmental theory focusing on adolescents have increasingly turned to the importance of contextual factors in the lives of youth as they transition to adulthood. Researchers in the field of developmental psychology have embraced the perspective of the adolescent as embedded in a system of reciprocal relationships within multiple settings (Coie et al., 1993; Compas, Hindren, & Gerhardt, 1995; García Coll et al., 1996; Grant et al., 2003; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Cooper (1999) speaks to the "multiple worlds" of adolescents, which include family, school, neighborhood, and friends that are nested in the ecocultural framework of adolescents' daily lives. Each world is seen as containing values, beliefs, and expectations that the adolescent must navigate within and across settings. Some studies have included differing geographical locations, as well as historical periods in the assessment of educational achievement, self-esteem, and other outcomes (Elder & Kirkpatrick Johnson, 2002; Massey et al., 1995; Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Sarigiani, Wilson, Petersen, & Vicary 1990).

Integrative models of development also have recognized that mainstream theories of youth development have not generally included the intersection of ethnicity, gender,

culture, social class, and race and their effect on growing youth (García Coll, et al. 1996).

For example, skin color is a major criterion of acceptance in the United States with

discrimination increasing as the skin color darkens (Massey et al., 1995; Portes &

Rumbaut, 2001). Darker skin has a negative impact on earnings (Gomez, 2000), and Hall

(1994) proposes that it may have negative mental health outcomes such as depression.

Thus, adolescent development is best understood when the interaction of the person

within the environment is fully appreciated.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979) emerged from a time when

psychological research commonly involved models testing the effect of individually

oriented predictor and outcome variables. While the importance of the environment was

theoretically asserted, research studies tended to omit its presence from investigations

related to adolescent psychological growth. Ecological theory transcends the prior focus

on the individual and the areas of perception, cognition, and emotion. In this framework,

the adolescent is viewed as situated within layers of settings that include neighborhood,

schools, families, and wider geographical contexts. Development is conceptualized as an

evolving interconnection between the person and the environment. An ecological

perspective of human development emphasizes the mutuality of adaptational processes as

individuals and the systems surrounding them respond to each other.

Ecological theory outlines four successive layers of settings where adolescents are

situated (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem involves the adolescent's immediate

context, such as family, school, and peer relations. The mesosystem is a structure of

microsystems and represents two or more settings involving the adolescent, such as

home, neighborhood, and school. The exosystem incorporates two or more settings, where, in at least one, the adolescent is not directly involved. This can be seen in the relationship between home and a parent's place of employment. While adolescents are not directly involved in their parents' job, it nonetheless affects their well-being. Finally, Bronfenbrenner defines the macrosystem as incorporating characteristics of all the above systems. The macrosystem contains general, stable patterns of organization—such as laws, customs, media, opportunity structures, beliefs, and so on—that are common to the youngster. For example, discrimination is a part of the macrosystem that has a rippling effect through the rest of the layers of systems affecting development. Culture is another example of a macrosystem that provides the developing adolescent with "systems blueprints" for behavior.

A contextual approach is particularly relevant to the understanding of Hispanic adolescents of all nationalities. From the impact of immigration policies and discrimination to the most immediate relationships of the adolescent, Ecological Theory affords the researcher an increased appreciation for the impact of outside systems on the growing adolescent. Thus, this theoretical model permits the exploration of varying sets of interactions, such as how the exosystem affects adolescent self-esteem and self-concept. Additional relevance to the process of acculturation is provided by the theory's concept of "ecological transition." The definition includes changes in the individual's position that result from alterations in the setting or roles. An ecological model acknowledges the role of these changes as represented in the acculturation process.

Acculturation Theory

Acculturation incorporates the psychological and social changes people undergo as they adjust to a new culture (Cabassa, 2003). Conceptualization about this process has a long historical legacy dating back to ancient history (Rudmin, 2003). More recently, in the pre-World War years of the 20th century, interest in acculturation peaked in response to the heavy influx of southern and eastern European immigrants arriving in the United States (Gordon, 1964; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Rumbaut, 1994). A key figure in the study of acculturation, sociologist Robert Park, developed his own theory of acculturation in 1914 (Padilla & Perez). His model incorporated three sequential stages of acculturation: contact, accommodation, and assimilation. Contact was thought to pressure the differing cultural groups to find ways to accommodate to each other. As the immigrants accommodated to the host culture, integration into the dominant group led to assimilation through intermarriage and a fusion of the groups. Assimilation implied a progressive, linear adoption of North American behavior and values. This perspective assumed that immigrants had to choose one culture due to the deleterious adjustment of living on the margins of two cultures (Garza & Gallegos, 1995).

In 1936, anthropologists Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) developed the definition of acculturation that continues to be the most often cited in current literature on the subject: "acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149). This definition challenged the assumption that change was possible only in the newly arrived group. The authors identified three possible results of acculturation: 1) acceptance, or the loss of the native culture and the assimilation of the values and behavior patterns of the

dominant culture; 2) adaptation, as defined by the combination of both the native and the dominant group into a unified culture; and 3) resistance to the assimilation process due to an oppressive stance by the dominant culture.

In 1954, the Social Science Research Council further elaborated on the prior description of acculturation by specifying a more multidimensional, multifactorial process. This definition incorporated the significance of ecological and demographic variables that impinge on the native or newly arrived group. The definition also included "the selective adaptation" of values, precluding the assumption of total adoption of all aspects of the dominant culture. Acculturation was distinguished from assimilation, positing that one could be acculturated, but not assimilated. For the Social Science Research Council (1954), assimilation implied the progressive approximation toward adoption of the dominant culture. A complete fusion was, nonetheless, the expected outcome.

While an assimilationist perspective dominated acculturation theory, other conceptualizations have also existed simultaneously since the 19th century (Gordon, 1964). For example, the popularized "melting pot theory" proposed that the many cultural groups present in the US would eventually fuse and blend, with characteristics of each culture integrated into the whole. The cultural pluralist perspective proclaimed the right of each culture to maintain values and aspects of the native culture, while functioning as full participants in a society.

Another approach to the examination and understanding of the immigrant experience involves the concept of transnationalism, which refers to a dual affiliation to the native and host country that is reinforced by the frequent returns to the native culture (Duany, 2002; Suárez Suárez -Orozco & Páez, 2002) and such technological advances as

e-mail, shortened length of travel by planes, and other communication media (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998). It also reflects the production of social organizations and links that facilitate a continuity of contact with the native country (Moll & Ruiz, 2002). Transnationalism addresses the decreased sense of belonging to a clearly defined territory (Nyberg Sorenson, 1998). For example, Glick Schiller and Fouron (1998) wrote about how Haitians from Haitian-populated areas in the United States participated in a radio station program with their compatriots in Haiti. Transnationalism and Berry's integration strategy both share the concept of the mutual involvement in two cultures.

Acculturation Research

Initial operationalization of the construct of acculturation reflected the linear, unidimensional conceptualization of acculturation (Berry, 2003; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Zane & Mak, 2003). The term dimension is often used in acculturation literature and requires clarification of its definition as part of this review. Magaña, de la Rocha, Amsel, Fernández, and Rulnick (1996) defined the term dimension as specifically referring to the way a measure is scored, as opposed to describing domains of behaviors, such as values or preferences. Unidimensional measures of acculturation attempt to capture the process of change in one direction, toward the adoption of mainstream behaviors, along an ordinal response set (Magaña et al, 1996). Consequently, adjustment to a new culture moves across a single continuum, beginning with complete adherence to the native culture and ending with total adoption of aspects of the majority group (Cabassa, 2003; Zane & Mak). The midpoint on the scale is considered a bicultural position, but as Magaña and colleagues indicate, the use of the means or sums of the scores fails to clearly represent the underlying distribution of responses. It is possible that

a respondent had many low or high scores, or scores evenly distributed, thus limiting the interpretive meaning of a bicultural score.

An example of a unidimensional instrument is found in Cuellar, Harris, and Jaso's (1980) first Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA), one of the most widely used measures of acculturation. It was meant to serve as an index with potential for use as a moderator variable in clinical practice and research. The questionnaire incorporates a linear progression toward adoption of North American culture by asking respondents to rate involvement in different domains ranging from one extreme labeled Mexican and the other, "Anglo." Increase in "Anglo" behaviors assumes a reduction in "Mexican" behaviors, with the middle point assuming a bicultural position. As a unidimensional model, the ARSMA forces a respondent to essentially choose between the two cultures and negates the immigrant's ability to gain competence in both cultures (Cabassa, 2003; Garza & Gallegos, 1995; Rogler, 1994; Rogler, Cortés, & Malgady, 1991; Salant & Lauderdale, 2003). Although unidimensional measures have these limitations, Zane and Mak (2003) found that 14 out of 31 acculturation instruments use this form of measurement.

The conceptualization and operationalization of acculturation along a unidimensional continuum generated much debate among acculturation researchers. It became increasingly apparent that adopting aspects of one culture did not necessarily mean loss of elements of the other. As a result, Cuellar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995) developed the Acculturation Rating for Mexican Americans II to correct the zero-sum assumption. The ARSMA II elicits responses about involvement in such areas as language use and preference, ethnic identity and classification, cultural heritage, and ethnic behavior, also using a Likert scale. The new instrument, however, allows

respondents to rate involvement in North American and native culture on two separate scales. For example, the statement "I have difficulty accepting some behaviors exhibited by Anglos" has a match, "I have difficulty accepting some behaviors exhibited by Mexicans" on a separate section of the "bidimensional" measure. In other words, acculturation is measured in two directions; the adoption of European-American behaviors and the degree native-country behaviors are maintained. This provides a clearer assessment of involvement in both cultures and a truer appreciation of the possibility of adopting aspects of the host culture while simultaneously maintaining elements of the native group (Gonzáles, Knight, Morgan-López, Saenz, & Sirolli, 2000; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Ryder et al., 2000).

The Acculturation Scale for Mexican Americans II inspired the additional development of bidimensional acculturation scales. Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, and Buki (2003) developed the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale and reported knowledge of six other self-report bidimensional measures of acculturation. The Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (Marín & Gamba, 1996) is another example of a measure that assesses acculturation in two directions by asking respondents to answer types of questions such as; "how often do you speak English" and "how often do you speak Spanish," thereby acknowledging the limitations of a one-directional approach. This measure also includes the assessment of preferences for participation in culture-specific holidays, daily cultural activities, and musical tastes.

While unidimensional and bidimensional models have identified changes in characteristic behaviors over time and have yielded information about individuals' relationship to two cultures, some acculturation scholars have viewed this type of measurement an oversimplification of a complex process (Escobar & Vega, 2000; Marín,

1993; Ryder et al., 2000; Salant & Lauderdale, 2003). The scales involved in the

assessment of acculturation typically yield one or more summary measurements of

various aspects of behavior such as language preference (Cortes, 2003; Gonzáles et al,

2000). The over-reliance of proxy measures—such as food and language preferences,

social affiliations, traditions, and so on—have been questioned by researchers due to the

indirect nature of the measurement of change (Dana, 1996; Escobar & Vega, 2000;

Gonzáles et al., 2000; Negy & Woods, 1992). Language use, in particular, tends to be

used as a global indicator of acculturation (Gonzáles et al, 2000; Rogler; 1994, Zane &

Mak, 2003). While this has been found to be a reliable sign of the level of acculturation

(Gonzáles et al, 2000; Norris & Ford, 1996), it focuses on a single aspect of the process,

thus limiting a fuller understanding of underlying changes and adoption of new values

(Negy & Woods).

     Generational status has been used as an indicator of acculturation in a similar

way. Adoption of the behaviors of the dominant culture is associated with the length of

time spent in the new setting (Pérez & Padilla, 2000). However, both the use of language

and generation do not tap the degree that core values of the native culture are maintained

even if superficial behaviors are adopted (Escobar & Vega, 2000; Negy & Woods, 1992).

Marín and Gamba (2003) asserted that some values, such as the importance of family

ties, remain strong despite a longer period of residence in a new culture. Similarly, Pérez

and Padilla found that cultural values did not change uniformly across generations in

their study of 203 Hispanic high school students, while an American cultural

orientation—in terms of foods, language, and so on—increased in a linear fashion. In

addition to the limited attention to underlying attitudes and values among acculturating

groups, Padilla and Pérez (2003) noted how the major theories failed to consider the

examination of other factors, such as personality characteristics and how they facilitate or hinder the acculturation process. Thus, proxy measures offer gross categorizations of acculturation (Dana, 1996) and consequently, an incomplete picture of the process (Gonzáles et al., 2000; Zane & Mak, 2003). The complexity of the acculturation process challenged the development of theoretical and measurement models that would more fully capture the experience of adaptation to a different country.

Berry (1997, 2003), one of the leading researchers in the study of acculturation, developed a more complex framework that posits four possible ways, or strategies, that individuals can employ in the process of adaptation to a new culture: separation, assimilation, marginalization, and integration. A separation strategy takes place when immigrants remain primarily involved with their own culture, avoiding contact with the host society. At the other extreme, assimilation refers to immigrants who abandon ties with the primary culture and refuse to maintain a native cultural identity. Withdrawal from both cultures is referred to as marginalization. When immigrants maintain their original culture while actively involving themselves with the dominant culture, they are using an integration strategy. Berry (2003) found that research conducted in a variety of countries has generally uncovered either an orientation toward native cultural maintenance or an orientation toward the new culture. Berry's acculturation model moved beyond previous models by proposing that individuals can adapt to a new culture in various ways.

Furthermore, Berry's (1997, 2003) theoretical framework distinguished between psychological acculturation and sociocultural acculturation. The development of the behaviors and skills needed to function with others in a new environment constitutes the definition of sociocultural acculturation. This type of acculturation depends more on the

length of residence in the new environment and language ability. Psychological acculturation refers to the internal changes individuals undergo as adjustment to the new culture progresses and the demands of adaptation are met.

Even though Berry (1997) emphasized psychological acculturation more than sociocultural acculturation, he acknowledged the influence of context on the acculturating individual. He asserted that acculturation strategies could be imposed by the dominant society through discrimination and economic exclusion. For example, the use of a separation strategy, where individuals withdraw from the host culture, has not been seen by Berry as necessarily a matter of choice if the host culture is a discriminatory one toward the immigrant group. Berry's definition of integration has included the freedom to choose this strategy only when the dominant society has embraced a multicultural perspective that is inclusive and tolerant of cultural difference. Although the model does not explain how an integration strategy can still be employed in a discriminatory society, Berry gave the role of context in the acculturation process greater attention.

The importance of studying acculturation within a contextual framework has been increasingly reflected in contemporary research's incorporation of situational factors occurring before, during, and after immigration (Cabassa, 2003; Fernández-Kelly & Schauffler, 1994; Guarnaccia, 1997; Guarnaccia & López, 1998; Padilla & Pérez, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rogler, 1994; Rogler et al., 1991). For example, preimmigration experiences of political unrest or persecution may result in already traumatized individuals entering a new culture. The journey to the new country itself may carry significant risk and affect an immigrant's psychological well-being. On the entry side, economic conditions in the host country may facilitate or hinder the financial survival of the immigrant. Furthermore, the kind of reception immigrants experience

upon arrival may include discrimination based on their skin color, language spoken, accent, and other non-European-American features. Exclusionary practices and attitudes that result from discrimination may present the incoming group with barriers to adjustment (Lorenzo-Hernández, 1998; Portes, 1994; Smart & Smart, 1995). For example, immigration policies governing who may enter a country represent a contextual factor that impacts on an immigrant's acceptance into the mainstream culture. An undocumented status has significant implications for the marginalization of the immigrant. The absence of legal admittance into a country renders immigrants vulnerable to exploitative employment practices and limited access to all the benefits enjoyed by the dominant group (Rogler, 1994; Smart & Smart).

While acculturation research is appreciating the multifaceted nature of the process in how it is measured, other concerns about the assessment of acculturation have been voiced by various researchers (Cabassa, 2003; Escobar & Vega, 2000: Negy & Woods, 1992) in relation to issues of construct, and content validity in acculturation research. Specifically, these researchers have found a lack of consensus in relation to how acculturation has been defined, operationalized, and measured. Uniform measurement of behavioral domains has been absent (Zane & Mak, 2003). Even when language has been used as a measure, some researchers have used language proficiency, and others language preference (Zane & Mak). Furthermore, it has not been clear if acculturation measures are sensitive to the within-group diversity found among the Hispanic population.

The *Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt* research study takes into account the multifactorial nature of acculturation. In addition to contextual factors, the study also recognizes the contribution of the concepts of stress and coping in the understanding of acculturation and the overall adjustment of Hispanic adolescents.

Acculturative Stress

Due to the multifaceted nature of adjustment to a new culture, acculturation theory has sought to understand the complex interaction between individual, family, social, economic, and political factors impinging on the adjustment to a different culture. The role of stress in this interplay of factors is a crucial one associated with acculturation. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as an event or experience that is taxing or exceeding an individual's resources and is highly influenced by perception and the appraisal of the stressor. Although the potential threat of stress on well-being is well established for adults, similar research has lagged behind for children and adolescents (Garton & Pratt, 1995; Grant, et al., 2003) in general and cultural subgroups in particular.

Accculturative stress relates to ways immigration challenges the psychological resources of those involved in the demands of adapting to a new environment. Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003) rests on the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) definition of stress and has shaped his postulation of three levels of psychological challenge that accompany the acculturation experience. The first psychological challenge, "behavioral shifts," involves minimal stress. The immigrant is learning new behaviors and there may be some conflict, but it is assessed as surmountable. Acculturative stress, as the second level of psychological difficulty, refers to more serious conflict that is challenging but still within the individual's control. The third level of psychological difficulty is a more serious form of acculturative stress that represents those changes that exceed an individual's ability to cope and can lead to serious psychological disturbance. In his research, Berry found that psychological problems generally increased soon after entry but waned over time. Sociocultural acculturation has been considered a linear process, while psychological acculturation has generally been held as more curvilinear. The

perception and appraisal of the stressor and its meaning contributes to the variability of psychological outcomes. High levels of stress can lead to one of Berry's acculturation strategies, marginalization, where the individual withdraws from both cultures.

Acculturation stress (Berry, 1997, 2003) has been considered highly variable and dependent on multiple individual and environmental factors. Hypothesized sources of acculturative stress include the separation from significant personal relationships (Al-Issa, I., 1997; Rogler, 1994; Smart & Smart, 1995), personality attributes such as inflexibility and a negative attitude about immigrating (Hovey & King, 1996; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999), negative experiences with the country of origin and the receiving societies (Rogler), and discrimination (Gonzáles & Kim, 1997; Smart & Smart). An undocumented status (Rogler; Smart & Smart) and the communication barrier caused by limited English proficiency represent additional significant sources of stress (Lorenzo-Hernández, 1998).

Berry's conceptual framework has been used extensively to measure the effects of his four acculturation strategies on acculturation stress and psychological well-being (Rudmin, 2003). As previously indicated, those four acculturation strategies include: (1) separation, sole involvement with the native culture; (2) assimilation, the abandonment of ties with the native culture; (3) marginalization, the rejection of both native and host cultures; (4) integration, the active involvement with the host culture, while maintaining aspects of the native culture. Acculturative stress is usually examined in terms of the presence or absence of mental heath outcomes such as depression. Berry (1993, 1997) found the integration strategy, where both cultures were embraced, was the optimal form of acculturation because of its association with positive mental health effects. It has been

posited that bicultural individuals have a wider range of coping resources at their disposal (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

Alternately, the marginalization and separation strategies have been most often associated with high levels of acculturative stress expressed in behaviors such as substance abuse or delinquency (Berry, 2003; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). In these strategies, individuals withdraw from either the host society alone (separation) or from both the native and host cultures (marginalization). However, Rudmin (2003) reviewed some of Berry's research studies and found the operationalization of his model to be problematic. Specifically, Rudmin found that if respondents' received a high score in one strategy, such as integration, low scores in the separation strategy would have been expected. Yet, in his examination of the analytic results of various studies completed by Berry, Rudmin found conflicting results in positive correlations between opposing constructs, such as marginalization and integration. Rudmin also found no empirical evidence for the association between integration and positive psychological well-being. However, Berry and Sam (2003) refuted Rudmin's assertions by contending that such apparent contradictions reflected the use of multiple acculturation strategies by individuals experiencing the acculturation process. Thus, Berry and Sam asserted that the sole use of one acculturation strategy was not to be expected. It has not been clearly demonstrated whether and how acculturation strategies change and evolve over time, and how that evolution affects mental health.

Inconclusive findings in acculturative stress research may also be attributed to the conceptual frameworks that underlie the assessments used in mental health research with acculturating groups. Specifically, measures of mental health have been shaped by theories of human development dominated by male, European-American, middle class

values and perspective (Compas et al., 1995; Fuligni, 1998a; Lerner, Lerner, De Stefanis, & Apfel, 2001; Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004; Weisz, McCarty, Eastman, Chaiyasit, & Suwanlert, 1997). Ethnocentrism, or the tendency to use one's own group standards as universal (Berry et al., 1992), can be translated to expectations for certain behaviors, which are applied to other cultural groups. Furthermore, the instruments that measure the effects or outcomes of acculturation have been generally standardized on European-American samples (Gutiérrez, 2002), creating doubt about construct equivalence and validity (Knight & Hill, 1998). The automatic transfer of cultural expectations from one group to another does not recognize the potential variation in the expression of psychological distress across diverse cultural groups. Cultural forces can suppress or facilitate the expression of certain behaviors considered acceptable to an individual's reference group (Weisz et al., 1997). In situations where assessments have been translated to the targeted group's language, the translated words may carry different cultural meanings and connotations (Erkut, García Coll, & Tropp, 1999; Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, & López, 1998), also affecting the validity of the instrument. The role of culture is important given that it helps define what is perceived as stressful, helpful, or harmful (Copeland & Hess, 1995; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

As research on acculturation stress and other aspects of psychological well-being has evolved, the cultural definitions of psychological distress emanating from the Hispanic population have appeared in some research studies. For example, Cortes (2003) used both qualitative and quantitative measures to examine the mental health of Puerto Ricans in New York. Focus groups identified the definitions of distress relevant to her particular population and contributed to the formulation of the items in the questionnaire she developed. Cortes utilized some commonly used measures and questions derived

from the focus groups. Results indicated that the affects of anger and disillusionment more accurately defined depression for this group. When anger, disillusionment, and nostalgia were added to the statistical model, they were positively related to depression. In further recognition of the relevance of contextual factors, Cortes included migratory and resettlement factors in the understanding of the impact of acculturation on psychological well-being. Cortes and other researchers have proposed that the relationship between acculturation and mental health is likely to be mediated by a variety of factors (Balls Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003; Rogler, 1994). Cortes recommended that experientially driven investigations be conducted to explore other variables, such as perceived discrimination

The Hispanic Stress Inventory or HIS (Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1991) is an example of a measure that incorporates cultural relevance. Semi-structured interviews provided definitions of stress emanating from community samples of Hispanics across the domains of marriage, family, occupation, economic, discrimination, and acculturation. The instrument was designed to be used with both recent arrivals and more acculturated Hispanics. As a measure standardized on a Hispanic population, the HSI addressed the questions of content and construct validity posed by assessments standardized on a mainstream population. The HIS took into account symptoms of stress/anxiety among Hispanics, such as conflict between individual and family goals that the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression scale omits. The identification of discrimination, minority status, and stress related to language fluency represent distinguishing factors of relevance to the Hispanic population in the understanding of acculturative stress. While the HSI provides a valuable measure of the stress experiences

of the Hispanic population, as an adult-specific measure of well-being, it leaves a void in the assessment of Hispanic youth, who may perceive different sources of stress.

Acculturative Stress and Hispanic Adolescent Psychological Well-Being

Stressful life experiences pose a potential threat to the healthy development of youth (Grant et al., 2003). Major life events are assumed to affect an adolescent's life by its disruptive nature (Compas, 1995) and thus, pose significant risk factors for psychological symptoms (Crean, 2004). Acculturative stress, in particular, is of significance to the adjustment of Hispanic adolescents as it weighs in along with the biological, social-emotional changes of adolescent development. Hispanic youth have their own additional sources of stress beyond those experienced by the mainstream European-American population. For example, discrimination has been associated with elevated levels of depression (Rumbaut, 1994; Szalacha et al., 2003) and lower levels of self-esteem (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) among their investigations involving Hispanic youth.

Research in the area of acculturative stress and Hispanic adolescent adjustment is in its infancy, but one particular research study has examined immigrant adolescent acculturation and well-being on a large scale. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) coordinated The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), a research project of first- and second-generation immigrants. Their research used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and included 5,262 eighth- and ninth-grade children of immigrants and 2,442 of their parents. Interviews and surveys were first conducted when the students were eighth and ninth graders and 4 years later, as high school students. The research project included a multiethnic sample of Hispanic, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Cambodian

immigrant children living in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, and San Diego. The study captured

the within-group diversity of Hispanics by including Mexicans, Cubans, Nicaraguans,

Dominicans, and Colombians. A variety of factors were assessed including the influence

of the neighborhood, school, and family context; English literacy acquisition; ethnic

identity; family relations; academic achievement; and psychological well-being.

Portes and Rumbuat (2001) posited three acculturation strategies in their Children

of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) that addressed the intergenerational components

of acculturation and how they affect the psychological well-being of acculturating

adolescents. The first, dissonant acculturation refers to negative outcomes resulting from

immigrant youth acquiring the English language and North American behaviors at a faster

rate than their parents. Portes and Rumbaut found that dissonant acculturation was

associated with greater intergenerational conflict. The more rapid acculturation of the

child was more likely to lead to role reversal as a result of parental dependence on their

children to help in the interaction with the new culture. Reduction in parental control

tended to lead to a greater potential for the child's negative peer involvement. The CILS

study associated the combination of dissonant acculturation, poor schools, and weak

families to lower academic achievement.

Consonant acculturation involves both parent and child incorporating the new

culture at the same pace. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that this type of acculturation

included mutual support between the generations as adaptation took place. Consonant

acculturation was most likely to occur when parents already possessed educational and

economic resources. The third of Portes and Rumbaut's acculturation modes was

identified as selective acculturation, which took place when the adjustment process of both

parents and children was embedded in a coethnic community of sufficient size to slow the

acculturation process. Coethnic communities were found to buffer the effects of change and to prevent an accelerated rate of acculturation for the children of immigrants. Those immigrant youth who adapted via selective acculturation tended to maintain their native heritage while adopting the language and norms of the host culture. This mode of acculturation is similar to Berry's integration strategy and was also found to have the most positive outcomes.

Other studies conducted on intergenerational relations within varying cultural groups have found that United States-born adolescents endorse mainstream cultural values at a faster rate than their parents, increasing the discrepancy between parent-child beliefs (Fuligni, 1998b; Lau et al., 2005). Phinney, Ong, and Madden (2000) found divergence from parental values across their multicultural sample of 701 adolescents ($n = 197$ Armenian; $n = 103$ Vietnamese; $n = 171$ Mexican/Mexican American; $n = 95$ African-American; $n = 135$ European-American), suggesting dissonance in parent-adolescent values may not necessarily associate with acculturation, but a part of adolescent-parent relations in the United States. For scholars of acculturating youth, differences in parent-adolescent values have the potential to increase conflict between the generations as adolescents adopt more European-American values, such as an emphasis on independence (Fuligni, 1998b). The increase in conflict resulting from the adolescent's divergence from traditional values has been considered a risk factor for negative developmental outcomes (Lau et al., 2005). However, Lau and colleagues (2005) assert that intergenerational dissonance in cultural values may not necessarily increase conflict or maladjustment in adolescents. Santisteban and Mitrani (2003) observed a wide variation of responses to acculturation by family members based on a variety of individual, familial, and cultural factors that combined to affect adolescent adjustment.

Gil and Vega (1996) also included intergenerational components in their research on acculturative stress, but they included the additional measures of language conflicts, acculturation conflicts and perceived discrimination. They were particularly interested in examining the temporal variation of acculturation stress. Gil and Vega sampled 885 sixth and seventh graders that included a sample of Cuban (674) and Nicaraguan (211) youth in southern Florida. They found that family acculturation conflicts (e.g., "How often do you get upset at your parents because they don't know American ways?") followed a curvilinear path. Acculturation conflicts were high for the first 2 years of settlement, lower for the 3rd through 10th year and increased past the 10th year of entrance. Language acculturation followed a linear path, which decreased with time residing in the United States. This study highlights how acculturation stress appears to change over time and that different types of acculturation stress have different trajectories.

In addition to the impact of intergenerational relations, other factors involved in the psychological well-being of Hispanic adolescents have been identified. A higher incidence of negative psychological outcomes has been associated to a higher level of acculturation into the mainstream society (Gonzáles et al., 2000; Gonzáles & Kim, 1997; Harker, 2001). Rumbaut (1994) found a decrease in self-esteem among Hispanic youth born in the United States. Substance abuse among United States-born Hispanics is generally higher than for those born in another country (Vega, Gil, & Kolody, 2002). Educational achievement, as another measure of adolescent well-being, has shown consistent declines in association with increased generational status (Buriel, 1993; Fuligni, 1998a; Gonzáles et al, 2000). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that foreign-born Hispanic students achieved higher test scores than second-generation students. Other researchers have found that students born in their country of origin possessed a strong drive for academic achievement and performed

at higher levels than children born in the United States with immigrant parents (Gonzáles et al., 2000). One potential explanation for these phenomena speculates that Hispanic youth born in the United States may experience a relative deprivation due to higher but unrealized expectations (Leyindecker & Lamb, 1999). Another hypothesis involves the possibility that as length of residence in the United States increases, adherence to native values decrease and some of the protective factors of the immigrant family, such as close family ties, are lost (Gonzáles et al, 2000; Harker, 2001).

Gil and Vega (1996) also underscored the effect of within group differences among their Cuban and Nicaraguan samples on acculturation stress. The different experiences of the Cuban and Nicaraguan participants in the study emphasized the significance of the context of entry. The first major group of Cuban immigrants was welcomed by the United States government and given refugee status and various supportive services. The Nicaraguan immigration of the late 1970s and early 1980s was also associated with escape from a Marxist regime, as well as a civil war in Nicaragua. However, as Gil and Vega have noted, Nicaraguans have not experienced the same type of support and welcome the first group of Cubans received. Nicaraguans have found it difficult to receive work permits and have a lower standard of living than the Cubans. Gil and Vega found that the Nicaraguans in their study had higher levels of acculturation stress. In addition, they found that language conflicts were higher for adolescents than for their parents, pointing to the different effects of acculturation stress on adults versus youth.

While the potential risk of acculturative stress is recognized, researchers warn against conclusions that assume the process leads to negative psychological outcomes (LaFramboise et al, 1993). The effects of stress appear to be mediated by varying

characteristics of the environment, such as family support (Compas et al., 1995; Hovey & King, 1996), which can buffer the challenges of acculturation. Consequently, one cannot assume that all Hispanic adolescents experience high levels of acculturative stress, the kind that exceeds coping resources (Romero & Roberts, 2003). Moreover, a moderate level of stress has the potential to promote positive development and improve adaptive responses. Thus, stress alone does not determine any one type of psychological outcome. The ways adolescent youth address and surmount acculturation stress in a particular context is a key factor to be further examined in the following section of the Literature Review.

Coping

While stress poses a risk to adolescent psychological well-being, coping mediates its relationship to adaptational success (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping resources are major determinants of adjustment during the developmental path to adulthood (Compas, 1995). Coping involves those efforts to manage and resolve stressful demands. Adaptive coping skills are protective factors against stress (Crean, 2004; Lengua & Stormshak, 2000) and their increased strength can reduce the probability of negative outcomes (Compas et al., 1995). When the factors related to stress cannot be resolved or mastered, coping leads to strategies designed to tolerate or minimize its ill effects (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The understanding of the role of coping behaviors on adolescent development is multifactorial and dynamic. The same environment can elicit different responses, just as similar coping efforts can be identified in different environments, at different times.

There is substantial variance in coping behaviors depending on a range of factors, including personal resources, beliefs about control over the environment, problem-solving skills, and social support (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In addition, biological and contextual factors have varying impact at different points in development (Coie, et al., 1993). On the biological end, temperament is an individual characteristic that influences coping behaviors and developmental trajectories (Rothbart & Derryberry, 2002). Differences in temperament refer to stable, automatic, and involuntary behavioral styles based on genetic predispositions and those learned over time (Compas, Connor, Saltzman, Harding Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 1999). Eisenberg, Fabes, and Guthrie (1997) point to the role of temperament in influencing the level of emotion control and intensity in the coping process. However, while moderation in inhibitory processes is generally adaptive, excessive control can undercut effective coping. As an example of how temperamental predispositions can influence coping, Eisenberg et al. found that individuals with outgoing, positive outlooks tended to cope better.

Various researchers in the field of stress and coping have classified coping efforts. Only the major approaches found in the literature will be cited here, as classifications of coping behaviors tend to fall into similar categories. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguished between problem- and emotion-focused coping. Active attempts to act on, solve, or master the stressor are considered problem-focused. These may lead to information seeking or problem-solving behaviors. Attempts to manage and regulate the emotions attached to a stressor define emotion-focused coping and are exemplified in the use of distraction or ventilation of feelings. An alternative organization of coping efforts is the approach-avoidance model (Moos, 2002). The model makes the distinction between directly resolving stressors (approach coping), as opposed to ignoring or

distancing oneself from them (avoidance coping). While there is overlap between the

problem-emotion-focused model and the approach-avoidance one, the latter classification

changes the focus from the situation to the individual's reactions to the stressor. Whereas

these types of coping involve conscious efforts, Compas et al. (1999) posited that coping

could also take the form of reflexive, automatic responses based on temperament,

learning, and conditioned responses.

Withdrawal or avoidant coping has been found to lead to negative psychological

outcomes such as depression (Seiffge-Krenke, 2000). Alternately, approach-focused

coping has been found to be most associated with the lower levels of depression

(Herman-Stahl, Stemmler, & Peterson, 1995). Other research findings have uncovered

that no single coping strategy is effective or preferable across all situations and for all

adolescents. For one, the type of stressor influences the category of coping efforts

mobilized. Problem-focused coping abilities and approach strategies are considered more

adaptive when the object of the stressor is perceived as changeable. Emotion-focused

coping has been identified as most adaptive in situations considered impermeable to

change (Compas, 1995; Crean, 2004; Eisenberg et al., 1997; Sandler et al., 1997).

Flexibility in the use of coping strategies offers the most adaptive benefits. Griffith et al.

(2000) tested the approach-avoidance model with 375 7th-, 9th-, and 12th-grade students

in a semi-rural, industrial, mid-western community, across three domains of stressors

including family, peer, and school. Avoidance coping was employed more often when

stressful family situations were seen as uncontrollable. In this study, adolescents

perceived school stressors as more under their control and thus used more approach

coping. Similarly, Compas et al. (1999) found that the increased use of problem-focused

coping in his sample of adolescents, a style comparable to approach coping, was used in

situations perceived as surmountable. Emotion-focused coping was implemented in those situations perceived as uncontrollable.

The age of the adolescent also influences the choice of coping strategies. Coping behaviors are in the process of development in early adolescence. The increase in approach strategies over time, especially for family and peer stressors, reflects a progression in cognitive and emotional development (Griffith et al., 2000). Emotion-focused coping, in terms of the regulation of affect, similarly increases with age. However, problem-focused coping appears less determined by age (Compas et al., 1999; Donaldson et al., 2000). It is thought that problem-focused coping is learned earlier due to its greater accessibility through modeling from adults (Compas, Worsham, & Ey, 1992). Emotional regulation is less directly observable. Cognitive development increases youth's ability to regulate emotions in order to increase that type of coping.

While continuing research has led to a better understanding of the finer distinctions of coping strategies and the factors under their influence, several areas need clarification. For one, multiple classifications and interpretations of coping behaviors hinder the comparability of research studies and have lead to confusion about the definitions of the various categories. As a result, Gonzáles Tein, Sandler, and Friedman (2001) proposed a more refined categorization of coping with a four-factor model that consisted of active coping, avoidance, distraction, and social support. Even with this more specific approach to distinguishing between the various coping behaviors, it has also become evident that coping behaviors do not always fit into a single category. For example, social support can be viewed as an emotion-focused approach or problem-focused depending on the intent of the effort (Gonzáles et al., 2001). Furthermore, some avoidant strategies may be adaptive for the adolescent at a certain time or situation

(Compas et al., 1995). Herman-Stahl et al. (1995) found that avoidance was an effective coping tool as long as it was not the sole strategy employed over time. An over-reliance on any kind of withdrawal coping strategies was found to be related to negative psychological outcomes. Even distraction, considered an avoidant coping strategy, may also be adaptively used in certain situations. Thus, taken together, there is a need for a clearer distinction and the consistent use of the various subtypes of coping (Compas, 1995).

Just as gender differences were found in adolescents' experience of stress, variation was also found in the type of coping strategies utilized by males and females. Research has indicated that girls tend to use a problem-focused approach more often in that they actively seek to resolve the situation (Griffith et al., 2000). Copeland and Hess (1995) found that the females ($n = 126$) in their sample of 244 adolescents tended to use a proactive style, ventilation, positive imagery, and self-reliance. The males ($n = 118$) tended to use more avoidance and a variety of diversions. Approach or "active coping," as used by the study's authors, and distraction served to buffer stressful events for girls. However, approach or active coping held no effect on depression for boys exposed to high levels of stress in the domains of family, peers, and neighborhood. Seiffge-Krenke (1993) reviewed his own long history of research on coping and adolescents by examining 3,000 adolescents, 12-20 years old, from various cultural groups. He measured how the sample managed the normative demands of problems identified as typical for adolescents. Three main modes of coping emerged: active coping, internal coping, and withdrawal. A comparison to a clinical group revealed the greater use of withdrawal as a coping response in the clinical population. In general, girls used social resources (approach/problem-focused/active) more often. Other research on gender differences in

coping has found that boys tend to use distraction and avoidant coping more often than girls (Grant et al., 2003).

Cross-cultural application of coping strategies has also been discussed by Berry (2003), who explored how his acculturation strategies related to coping strategies. For example, he proposed that the coping mechanism of avoidance could be applied to the separation strategy, a form of acculturation that involves rejection of the dominant culture. Seiffge-Krenke and Shulman (1990) conducted a research study with 353 German and 187 Israeli adolescents to examine general and group-specific coping skills in a cross-cultural context. Coping strategies generally fell into either active, seeking out social supports, or passive coping and withdrawal. The authors of the study found that the Israeli adolescents tended to employ more of the internal coping (passive and withdrawal), and the German group of adolescents employed greater use of active coping. They concluded that culture played a role in shaping the type of coping behavior adopted by adolescents, as shown by the Israeli respondents' tendency to use one type of coping more often than the German respondents.

There has been limited research on the development of coping abilities among Hispanic adolescents (Crean, 2004). Given that Hispanic adolescents face additional challenges involving acculturation and the stressors associated with minority group status, poverty, skin color, and exposure to dangerous residential and school environments, they have been under-represented in the coping-research literature. The research that has been conducted with Hispanic youth in relation to coping has tended to refer to negative psychological outcomes, such as substance abuse, physical abuse, and pregnancy (Gonzáles et al., 2000). Copeland and Hess (1995) conducted one of the few studies to include young adolescent Hispanics in the examination of the influence of

gender and ethnicity on more normative coping. Overall, Hispanic and European-American adolescents reported the use of similar coping efforts (catharsis, self-reliance, and proactive orientation). However, Hispanic adolescents sought spiritual support and social activities as coping strategies more often than European-American adolescents. Crean conducted another study that involved 304 Hispanic sixth- and seventh-grade students in an economically disadvantaged geographical area. His research found that the pursuit of social support or approach-focused coping was associated with adaptive coping and negatively associated with psychological symptoms. The identification of the coping efforts employed by particular groups of adolescents in particular contexts will help determine those measures that have the most potential for helping Hispanic immigrant youth adapt.

Gonzáles et al. (2001) conducted a study using a four-factor model of coping efforts with a sample of 445 (237 Mexican American, 81 African-American, 77 European-American, and 50 other low-income, urban, adolescent students) in a large southwestern city. The study also identified some broad patterns of adolescent coping across groups. Active coping was identified as the most adaptive coping behavior for all respondents. However, even these generalities were found to have exceptions. High levels of stress led to decreased use of active coping. Whereas avoidance and distraction have been grouped together as passive forms of coping in other research, this study distinguished the two. Avoidance was defined as coping that attempted to gain distance from the problems through wishful thinking, suppression of thoughts. Gonzáles and colleagues (2001) differentiated distraction by defining it as more of an active form of coping because it involved the participants in a different activity in an effort to prevent themselves from thinking about the stressor. Distraction was found to be an effective

coping strategy, but only if levels of peer stress were not too elevated. In this study, avoidance had its benefit at high levels of family stress. The authors postulated that the uncontrollable and chronic nature of the stressors faced in poor neighborhoods might influence the choice of coping strategies and adjustment in this population. As previously noted, the exercise of avoidant strategies has been most associated to situations perceived as uncontrollable by youth.

In general, social support moderates the impact of stress and has been shown to be a protective coping resource for the general adolescent population (Compas et al., 1992; Crean, 2004; Sandler et al., 1997; Thiede Call & Mortimer, 2001), as well as for Hispanic adolescents (Portes & Zady, 2002). However, there may be some variation between groups. Chapman and Mullis (2000) found that the African-American adolescents they studied ($n = 245$) made greater use of spiritual, peer, and family support than the European-Americans in their sample ($n = 116$), who used ventilation of feelings more frequently. Thus, the European-American adolescents appeared to use more psychologically oriented coping measures, while the African-American sample used more socially and spiritually oriented strategies.

The importance of positive family relations is a main factor in the facilitation of coping behaviors for the general population, including Hispanic groups (Portes & Zady, 2002). Family cushions the adolescent against stress (Crean, 2004; Printz, Shermis, & Webb, 1999) and remains one of the most significant influences in an adolescent's life (Frydenberg, 1997). Hispanic immigrants seem to bring with them familial and communal mechanisms that are protective of their psychological well-being (Harker, 2001). As such, familialism, a Hispanic cultural value, is considered a buffer for the effects of acculturation (Marín & Gamba, 2003). Familialism refers to a strong

identification and attachment with the nuclear and extended family, as well as feelings of loyalty and reciprocity (Marín & Gamba, 2003). The decrease in family cohesiveness that occurs for Hispanic immigrants as they acculturate may explain the decrement seen in educational attainment and psychological well-being (Harker).

As another form of social support, the presence of a co-ethnic community has also been found to cushion the effects of stress (Portes & Zady, 2002). The presence of compatriots in the community also helps to moderate the pace of acculturation as Hispanic youth adjust to a different culture (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Summary

The literature suggests that Hispanic adolescent adjustment to a different culture depends on multiple factors. As the complexity of the acculturation process continues to unfold in the emerging research, the specifics of the interplay between the risks posed by the transitional period of early adolescence, acculturative stress, adolescent coping, and contextual factors need further clarification. While some general patterns have been identified in cross-cultural studies, Hispanic adolescents experience additional stressors compared to an adolescent population that is not involved in culture change. Furthermore, Hispanic youth may use different coping skills in different ways, based on cultural norms and the various contextual factors affecting their development. Thus, clarification is needed to identify the stressors that are most salient for differing Hispanic adolescents and the coping strategies that have been shaped by their cultural orientations.

The literature further indicates that adolescents live within various levels of context that need to be considered in research studies. Hispanic adolescents are in an ecological transition that incorporates multiple changes, in acquisition of a new language and

adaptation to a different culture, settings, and to potentially different roles. This research study has been conducted to address the need to understand how these differing contexts facilitate or hinder Hispanic youth adjustment to a different culture. Increased research in this area will inform the interventions that hold the most promise for a successful adaptation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret phenomena as perceived and understood by the individuals involved (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Nelson & Quintana, 2005). This type of inquiry is focused on an in-depth examination of people's experiences within settings where the daily events of their lives take place (Adler & Adler, 1994; Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Also known as naturalistic inquiry, qualitative research is meant to bring the researcher close to the data and phenomena under study. Qualitative research seeks to answer the how and why of social phenomena (Patton) in all its complexity. Since this is an inductive process, the investigator is open to discovery and derives concepts from the data. Given that qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the meaning of people's experiences (Janesick, 1994), it applies well to the study of acculturation. Qualitative research provides an opportunity to examine the acculturation phenomena from the perspective of the individuals who experience it (Cortes, 2003).

As such, the choice of qualitative methodology for the *Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt* research study is based on the nature of the inquiry. Qualitative research is well suited to areas that are complex and have been understudied (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), such as the acculturation process during adolescence. For example, an inductive approach in acculturation research helps to identify those variations in cultural expressions of distress particular to the targeted group for study. Furthermore, the socioeconomic and cultural factors that affect behavior can be better distinguished through qualitative methods (Zayas & Rojas-Flores, 2000).

Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore areas that have not been fully captured by quantitative research (Fuligni, 1998a; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The multifaceted nature of culture change is not well understood. The underlying processes related to change are unclear. While language proficiency or food preferences serve as markers of change (Cabassa, 2003; Gonzáles et al., 2000), the underlying processes involved in adapting to a different culture remain unclear. Qualitative studies can help to identify how culture influences latent variables (Knight, Tein, Prost, & Gonzáles, 2000).

The importance of context has been repeated often in the previous chapters. Qualitative research recognizes the unique set of contextual forces that shape behavior and experience. Naturalistic inquiry asserts that people's lives and experiences cannot be separated from the context in which they occur (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since adolescent development is nested within multiple layers of environmental influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), their impact must be understood in order for research to identify the conditions in which certain relationships occur. The overarching focus of this study is the examination of how Hispanic youth adapt and the exploration of the conditions that offer the least negative impact for their overall well-being. Qualitative research provides a prime opportunity to understand the person within the environment.

The emic nature of qualitative research is particularly relevant to this research study. An emic approach describes the unique aspects of a cultural group (Cooper et al., 1998) and seeks to discover categories of meaning for the group under study. This approach serves to avoid assumptions about the universality of developmental features. As previously noted, mainstream theories of development and measures of psychological well-being embody a European-American perspective and cross-cultural researchers have warned against their universal application to different cultural groups (Gutiérrez, 2002).

A qualitative method of inquiry allows for the identification and understanding of each group's unique perspective and experience. Betancourt and López (1993) call for a "bottoms-up" approach to cross-cultural research. The researcher begins with observation of a given cultural group and then examines its cross-cultural applicability and its implications for psychological theory. As research on stress and coping during the adolescent years increases, qualitative research can contribute to the clarification of what is defined as stressful to Hispanic youth and what helps them cope.

Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998) is a qualitative theoretical framework and analytic strategy that coincides with the goals of the proposed study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1994), grounded theory goes beyond the description of phenomena as it also proposes to gain insight and understanding through interpretation and theory development. It is based on a view of reality as constructed by multiple perspectives and the constant, mutuality of influence in the interaction between people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Grounded theory is premised on the belief that individuals' behavior is determined by the meaning given to phenomena through the interaction with others (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Consequently, grounded theory is interested in the identification of patterns and the understanding of interactions that produce theory. Strauss and Corbin (1998) define theory as plausible relationships among the concepts generated by the data. Interview questions framed within a grounded theory approach are "generative and conceptually-related" (p. 275). The *Crossing Cultures* research study aspires to contribute plausible preliminary relationships between the process of acculturation and Hispanic adolescent adjustment.

In sum, the search for greater understanding of the "how" and "why" of acculturation phenomena among Hispanic adolescents is well suited to the use of qualitative methodology.

Research Questions

The *Crossing Cultures* research study asks the following questions:

- How do middle school Hispanic immigrants describe and perceive the immigration and acculturation experience?

- What aspects of the immigration/adjustment experience do the participants consider most difficult or stressful?

- What coping strategies does the targeted group employ during the acculturation process?

- Do the male and female participants differ in their perception of stressors and use of coping strategies?

- What strategies do the participants and school personnel see as facilitative of the adjustment process?

- How do the contextual factors of school, family, and community impact on the acculturation process for the targeted participants?

- What can schools do to facilitate the adjustment process of Hispanic adolescents?

Setting

The *Crossing Cultures* research study takes place within an urban, mid-sized, northeastern public school system. The name of the city and school district will be

withheld from all sections of the dissertation in order to protect the anonymity of the

participants. As the United States Census Bureau indicates in their American Fact Finder

publication (US Census Bureau, 2000a), the targeted community for the research study

had a population of approximately 49,000 in 2000. Hispanics of any race comprised 40%

of the population of which 39% was Mexican, 17% was Puerto Rican, 15% was

Dominican, and 1% was Cuban. The Central American population stood at 12% of the

Hispanic population of which the Honduran population contained the highest numbers at

8% of the Hispanic total. South Americans represented 4% of the city's Hispanic

population. The category of "all other Hispanics" was 13% of the Hispanic population,

mostly (12%) containing those "not elsewhere classified." The Mexican presence in the

city is clearly reflected in the numerous Mexican-owned establishments selling groceries,

fruit, music, and clothing along one of the main thoroughfares of the city.

As of February 15, 2006, the city's school district reported a Hispanic population

of 73% (District Enrollment Count). Two schools in the school system participated in the

study and will be identified as the Smith and Jones Schools in order to protect their

identity. These schools are among those in the district with the highest Hispanic

population. Smith School contains a kindergarten to eighth grade configuration in a

building dating back to the early 1900's. As of the 2004-2005 school year, the Hispanic

population at the Smith School comprised 90% of a total enrollment of 871 students

(National Center for Education Statistics, Search for Schools, College and Libraries,

2004-2005 school year). As of February 15, 2006, the Hispanic population had risen to

92% (District Enrollment Count). Similar to the Smith School, the Jones School

originally had a range of kindergarten to eighth grade in one building. However, the

school closed and two temporary spaces were built to house a K-5 school and a separate

middle school while new buildings are constructed. The Jones School opened its doors in September 2005 as a newly built, separate middle school. According to 2004-2005 enrollment statistics, 74% of 905 students of the original K-8 building were Hispanic. However, after the school was divided, resulting in a separate middle school, the student population became relatively more heterogeneous as the school's catchment widened, including students from many schools. Thus, as of February 15, 2006, the Hispanic population of the Jones School amounted to 67% of the school's total population (District Enrollment Count). Finally, the number of children in both schools who participated in the free or reduced lunch program is an indicator of the poverty in the district. During the 2004-2005 school year, 87% of the Smith School population was enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program, and at Jones School, the number was 88% of the school population (District Enrollment Count).

Gaining Entry

Gaining entry for access to participants (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was facilitated by my employment in the targeted school district. I was directly involved with the special education student population as a member of the Child Study Team at the Smith School. The establishment of trust in the primary investigator is an important component of gaining entry into the research site and obtaining access to participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A pre-existing affiliation assists entry and increases confidence in the credibility of the investigator (Lofland, 1971). A previously established working relationship with the principals assisted in the establishment of trust in my integrity and professionalism. The teaching and guidance staff of the Smith School had been involved in a collaborative association with me for many years in relation to the

academic achievement of their students. This type of positive relationship helped to secure the cooperation of the teachers whose classes were directly involved with the study. Although I was not directly involved with Jones School, I had previously worked with the principal, which helped in gaining entry into that school. At the time the proposal was introduced to the superintendent's office, the interim assistant superintendent charged with reviewing the study had also worked previously with me. This person was central to the support of the project and its approval by the school board.

Sampling Frame

A purposive sampling frame was used for the study. Purposive sampling involves the specific selection of "information rich" cases that will highlight the subject under study (Patton, 1990). By focusing on particular groups, I have been able to provide extensive details about the participants' experiences (Nelson & Quintana, 2005). Purposive sampling takes full advantage of the density of information obtained from group participants and increases the ability to develop grounded theory due to the range of perspectives presented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Due to the lack of information about middle school Hispanic adolescents, a purposive sampling frame permitted concentrated attention to this group.

Participants

Study participants were Hispanic students who shared the experience of acculturation and the early adolescent developmental stage. As such, seventh- and eighth-grade students were targeted for the study. In order to capture the passage of time in the process of acculturation, students were drawn from the Welcome Center at the Jones

School, the bilingual classes, and the monolingual English classes of both schools. The Welcome Center is a class in the Jones School designed for the newly arrived Hispanic student (less than two years in the United States), who enters the district with academic delays of two or more grade levels in their native language. Students newly entering the school district take one examination to determine grade-level skills and another examination to assess the level of English proficiency. There is a Welcome Center class at the Smith School as well, but this class includes a younger age group. Students in the bilingual classes are learning English while being instructed in Spanish. In order to transition into a monolingual English speaking class, a certain level of English proficiency must be demonstrated by the passage of an examination. Monolingual classes are instructed in English only and generally include students who have been in the United States for more than three to five years. Thus, registration as a seventh- or eighth-grade student with enrollment in one of the targeted schools comprised part of the requirements for student participation in the research study. Initially, seventh- and eighth-grade students born in a Hispanic country were sought as participants. However, due to the initial low response rate, the research study was subsequently expanded to include Hispanic students born in the United States with at least one parent born in a Hispanic country.

Additional participants in the study included one guidance counselor from each school and the Welcome Center teacher of the Jones School. The triangulation of data sources (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990) is the comparison of two data sources for the purpose of examining the consistency of findings collected at different times from different participants. The points of views emanating from school staff and students provided an opportunity to evaluate areas of convergence and divergence regarding the

issues under study (Patton). Furthermore, triangulation strengthens the credibility of the results of a qualitative study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The school personnel were chosen because of their ongoing contact with the student population and close involvement in their academic and social functioning. They were in a prime position to observe and assess the needs of the student population and, thus, would be able to provide their own observations and perspective involving the adjustment of the acculturating Hispanic students. The criterion for inclusion of the Welcome Center teacher and guidance counselors in the study was their direct assignment to one of the targeted schools.

Research Design—Focus Groups

The method for data collection was the use of focus group interviews with the students. Focus groups are group discussions centered on the investigation of a particular set of issues (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999). They are particularly suited for the investigation and understanding of complex behaviors or insufficiently studied phenomena (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Litosseliti, 2003; Lugo-Steidel, Ikhlas, López, Rahman, & Teichman, 2002; Morgan, 1997; Morgan & Krueger, 1993) such as acculturation. Qualitative research is based on the belief that people construct the meaning of phenomena based on their interaction with others (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Focus group methodology, in particular, encourages the expression of different points of view in a non-judgmental environment (Krueger, 1993) during the exchange of ideas, feelings, and perspectives. Focus groups capitalize on the dynamics of group processes and the premise that people do not form ideas and attitudes in a vacuum (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Consequently, this type of data collection has the potential to be rich

due to the interaction between the participants (Barbour & Kitzinger; Morgan; Patton, 1990).

Krueger and Casey (2000) affirm that when participants feel they are similar in some way, it facilitates the expression of a shared experience. The study involved participants who shared commonalities, such as school, ethnicity, and the acculturation experience. The participants were also all in the adolescent phase of development, a time when youth are highly involved with their peer group, as well as in forming their own ideas and opinions (Koss-Chioino & Vargas, 1999). Thus, focus groups provided the participants the opportunity to examine their experiences as adolescents involved in an acculturation process, in their own words, from their own perspectives (Cortes, 2003).

Nine Focus groups were initially proposed. However, 10 groups were held in order to accommodate the student interest in participating in the groups. In view of the importance of male/female differences in the area of stress and coping, as indicated in the literature review, the original design of the study called for the groups to be divided by gender. However, due to the low initial response rate, the original plan was not executed and mixed male and female focus groups resulted.

In order to guide the interviews without a restrictive format, an open-ended interview was used to elicit the participants' perspectives (Knodel, 1993). A "standardized open-ended interview" (Patton, 1990) includes a set of predetermined questions and/or topics as a guide. This not only maintains some general focus on the subject under study but also facilitates comparability of data between groups. The sequencing of questions allowed participants to become acquainted with the topic and provided an opportunity to hear and reflect on others' responses (Krueger, 1998a).

A research assistant, who was a bilingual, Hispanic graduate student in the psychology department of the university, accompanied me during the focus groups. She also was particularly experienced with the focus group methodology. As written observations during focus groups are an essential component of accurately representing the data (Krueger, 1993, 1998a), the research assistant typed field notes during the sessions on a laptop and e-mailed the notes to me.

A medical anthropologist, professor, and member of my dissertation committee was intricately involved in the research study. His long history of conducting focus groups and work within the field of acculturation served as a constant guide for me. He attended three focus groups and participated in the coding and debriefing process.

One interview each with two guidance counselors (one from each school) and one teacher from Smith School were incorporated into the research design for the purpose of comparability to the student participants' results. Due to the concentrated amount of time I was engaged with the participants (Greenbaum, 2000), the individual interview permitted me to probe the subject matter in more depth (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 1990). Separate interviews were more convenient for these participants in terms of scheduling. Additionally, interviewing these participants separately was helpful because sessions were held in their own schools and natural environments. A standardized open-ended interview format was also used for the two guidance counselors and one teacher.

Procedure for Approval of the Study

At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, a research proposal was prepared and sent to the principals of the Smith and Jones Schools (see Appendix A). In order to

have access to the student population, it was considered crucial to have the support of the

principals before approaching the superintendent and the school board. Once the

principals received the proposal, a meeting was held with each of them in his or her

respective school. I elaborated on the nature and scope of the research project and

explored the principals' willingness to accept the research study in their schools. Once

the project received acceptance from the principals, the proposal was sent to the

superintendent of the school district. He gave the proposal to the assistant superintendent

for further examination. I met with the assistant superintendent, the research assistant,

and the medical anthropologist (Rutgers University professor). The project received

informal approval from the assistant superintendent, who recommended formal

submission to the New Brunswick Board of Education. Per the assistant superintendent's

instructions, an "Executive Summary," a briefer version of the original proposal (see

Appendix B), and a "Resolution," (see Appendix C) that accompanies such submissions

to the board, were prepared and sent to the Board of Education. The Board approved the

study on March 15, 2005. Following this consent by the Board of Education, the study

was submitted to the Rutgers University Investigational Review Board for approval,

which was secured on May 31, 2005. After all of the necessary authorizations were in

place, the school principals were informed that data collection would be initiated in

September 2005.

Procedure for Recruitment of Participants for Focus Groups

      Once the school year commenced in September 2005, the school principals were

contacted to discuss the procedure for the recruitment of the students. I proposed student

recruitment take place during a brief presentation of the study to the students in their

classrooms. The principals and I agreed that the study would begin with the Smith School based on the reality that the Jones School had just moved into a new building, necessitating a period of acclimation for staff and students. A copy of the Executive Summary and Board approval was attached to a memorandum directed to the teachers (see Appendix D) informing them of the study. Although the guidance counselors were not directly involved in the study, they also received the same information about the study because they were important contacts in the schools. Their cooperation had been secured in the event that a participant needed to discuss any possible emotional reactions that could occur because of a discussion of their experiences in the focus groups.

The teachers were individually contacted to secure a convenient day and time for the presentation of the study to the students. The home-room periods at the start of the day were designated as the best time for the presentations. During these presentations, the purpose and scope of the study was explained to the students and questions were encouraged. Bilingual consent forms (see Appendix E1 and E2) in English and Spanish were distributed to the students with the instructions to discuss participation in the study with their parents or guardians. If both student and parent agreed to participate, students returned the signed consent forms to their teachers. I visited the classrooms on a daily basis in order to retrieve the consent forms and to answer any further questions raised by the students. In addition, I attended the "Back to School" evening program at the Smith School. This is a yearly program designed to inform parents of school programs and educational objectives and encourage their participation in their children's education. The research assistant and I occupied a table near the entrance of the school, along with other tables promoting various school programs. I also spoke to parents in some of the

classrooms in order to present the study and encourage their children's participation in the focus groups.

The initial response rate for the consent forms was low. I decided to call the parents in order to encourage the return of the consent forms and foremost, to explore the reasons for the poor response. The parents that I reached reported that they did not understand the consent form. The requirements of the Investigational Review Board (IRB) resulted in the format and length of the consent form that appeared to be confusing to the students and parents. In consideration of the low literacy rate of the parents in the district and the possible fears that undocumented immigrants could have in relation to involvement in research studies, I decided to explore the possibility of shortening and simplifying the consent form. I contacted the IRB to discuss the possibility of simplifying the consent forms. The sponsored-programs administrator of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs offered open, monthly meetings to researchers in order to discuss any issues related to IRB approval of investigational studies. On October 14, 2005, the research assistant and I met with the sponsored-programs administrator during one of his monthly open meetings at lunchtime. He was willing to consider a revised, shortened consent form. Based on his instructions, a new consent form was prepared. The revised consent forms were accompanied by other changes, presented in the form of an amendment to the original protocol. One change involved an augmented incentive of a free movie ticket for each participant, as opposed to a raffle for two movie tickets per focus group. Incentives are regularly used to encourage and increase the participant response rate (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Greenbaum, 2000). Another change involved eliminating the Spanish word "investigadora," the word for researcher in Spanish, from the consent form. The concern was that the word would be associated with

investigations, potentially creating wariness in a largely undocumented population. Finally, it was decided to expand the student participation criteria to include Hispanic students born in the United States with at least one parent born in a Hispanic country. It was anticipated that these changes would increase the number of potential participants.

During the process of amending the protocol, an assistant professor/psychologist, who was completing a postdoctoral program involving focus groups, expressed interest in joining the study as a research assistant. His name was added to the amended research protocol for approval by the IRB. This additional research assistant was also Hispanic and bilingual. He attended two focus groups and participated in the coding process.

On November 8, 2005, the IRB approved the new consent forms (see Appendix F1 and F2) along with all of the other changes. During the wait for the approval from the IRB for the amended application, enough students responded to conduct three focus groups before the new protocol-approval date. Recruitment continued following the same previously outlined format. The new consent forms were distributed immediately and an increase in the response rate was noted at both schools.

Procedure for the Implementation of the Focus Groups

The location for the focus group meetings within each school building was established with the principal. At the Smith School, the focus groups were held in the teacher's lounge. At the Jones School, the focus groups were held in the principal's conference room. Qualitative research considers the natural environment of the participants to be important in conducting qualitative research as it brings the investigator as close to the real world of the participants as possible (Patton, 1990). The familiarity of the setting for the students was considered of particular importance in facilitating

participation and comfort with disclosure of thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). The choice of the location for the meetings was limited and was determined by the privacy these particular rooms offered, the availability of a large table with chairs and a table for refreshments. Although the focus groups took place in the principal's conference room and the teachers' lounge, the students did not appear to be uncomfortable with these sites. The fact that the meeting rooms were within the students' school buildings may have subordinated the impact of attending the focus groups in spaces they did not usually visit.

A memorandum (see Appendix G) informed the principals of the focus group dates once they were set. I informed the students of the date via a yellow flier delivered with a copy of the signed consent form in an envelope to their homeroom classes. In addition, the teachers were also given a yellow flier with the date of the focus group and the names of the students in his/her class who had signed up to attend. Once the students were advised of the date for the focus group, two calls were made to the home, one to confirm receipt and knowledge of the date for the focus group by the parent/guardian and another call 1-2 days before the actual focus group, as a reminder. Another reminder in the form of an additional yellow flier was given to the teachers and the students a day before the meeting. This procedure was followed for each focus group.

The focus group interviews took place immediately after the school day. At the Jones School, most students were transported by bus to and from the school building. This required me to ascertain whether each student would need to use a late bus to get home, or whether a parent would drive the student home. For those who did not typically stay after school, the bus number was identified and the relevant administrators advised of the additional passengers on the late bus. I accompanied the students to their

designated buses after the focus groups. This was especially essential for the more

recently arrived immigrant students, who were not familiar with their surroundings.

Smith School is a neighborhood school and most of the students walk to and from the

building. I, nonetheless, ascertained whether parents planned to pick up their students, or

whether they were permitted to walk home. I believed that these extra measures increased

the parents' comfort with the project and me. I anticipated that by reassuring the parents

that I would attend to their children's safety, the probability of student participation

would increase.

A Student Information form (see Appendix H1 and H2) in English and Spanish

was completed by the participants of the focus groups at the beginning of each group

interview. The form contained questions that provided important information about

length of time in the country, the use of English and Spanish language, and so on. After

the first focus group, the form was revised (see Appendix I1 and I2) by the removal of the

following question;

Do you speak any other language other than English or Spanish? Yes _____ No _____
If you answered yes, what other language do you speak? _____

Originally, this question was designed to explore whether any of the participants

belonged to an indigenous group in their native countries, resulting in the possible

acquisition of a language beside Spanish. However, the participants had a difficult time

understanding this question, and it was believed best to remove it.

The initial bilingual focus group interview guides (see Appendix J1 and J2)

provided an outline for a semi-structured interview comprised of questions formulated in

relation to the research questions and relevant issues for Hispanic immigrant youth. The

Interview Guide for the focus group included questions about the challenges of

acculturation, as well as what the participants believed the school could do to help them

better. A question about coping strategies was included to reflect its importance in adolescent development. The Interview Guides were slightly different for the English speaking and Spanish speaking groups. Both Interview Guides yielded expressions of what was challenging for participants across levels of acculturation. The more acculturated group (i.e., those with longer residence in the United States) was more comfortable speaking English during the focus groups, while the less acculturated, more newly arrived participants from the Welcome Center and bilingual classes preferred to speak Spanish during the meetings.

In qualitative research, meaning is determined by the data as it evolves (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consequently, the focus group Interview Guide was modified and shaped by the emergent data. After the first focus group, slight changes to the Interview Guide (see Appendix K1 and K2) were made based on the responses from the groups and the debriefing that took place after the first focus group. The introductory remarks were shortened. I realized that some of the introductory information was covered in the oral assent. The number of questions was reduced, but the essential probes were kept. Furthermore, the decision was made to begin the focus group with the writing exercise. This prevented redundancy while continuing to ease the participants into the group discussion. The change proved to be a more efficient use of time and engaged the students immediately. The quiet students were also engaged sooner and this gave them an opportunity to verbalize in a more comfortable way.

The focus group format included: (1) oral assent from the participants (see Appendix L1 and L2), (2) completion of the demographic data form by the participants, (3) distribution of name tags, (4) introductions by all present at the group, (5) a writing exercise, (6) discussion of the topics generated by the group, (7) pizza and soda, and (8)

distribution of the free movie tickets. By involving the participants in the oral-assent

process, I gained assurance that the students did not feel obligated to participate, even if

their parents had given their permission. Oral assent is a requirement of the IRB's

protocol for research with minors. Name tags for all the participants were included in

each group to help create a friendly environment that encouraged conversation among the

participants (Greenbaum, 2000). The writing exercise eased the students into the

discussion and helped them to verbalize their thoughts, experiences, and feelings. The use

of the writing exercise was also a strategy to encourage participation from the quieter

students (Greenbaum) as it gave them an opportunity to offer responses within a more

structured format that was less anxiety-provoking than a solely spontaneous one.

The written exercise for the Spanish-speaking participants asked them to note the

three things that have been most difficult and three things that have been easiest since

arriving to the United States. The English-speaking groups were asked to write three

things that have been easy and three things that have been hard about being a Hispanic

teenager in the United States. The participants each had a turn verbalizing their written

answers to the question and these responses were written on a large poster paper that was

affixed to a wall in full view of all participants. The poster paper also served as another

record of what was being said and the participants were free to correct me if I

misunderstood a communication.

Each focus group met once for 1 ½ -2 hours. Each group was audio-recorded both

by a digital recorder and a tape recorder. This assured me that if one form of recording

malfunctioned, another would be recording at the same time. As previously mentioned,

the research assistant present at each focus group typed notes on a laptop. Pizza and soda

were served either at the beginning or the end of the focus group, depending on the pizza arrival time. The movie tickets were distributed at the end of each focus group.

Procedure for Recruitment of Participants for the Individual Interviews

The recruitment of the two guidance counselors and one teacher followed a similar format to the focus groups. A copy of the Executive Summary and Board approval were attached to the same memorandum sent to the teachers earlier in the school year. The members of the school staff were directly contacted by phone or by a face-to-face visit in order to determine their willingness to participate in the study and to find a convenient time for the individual interview. The teacher and the two guidance counselors were not offered an incentive to participate in the interview, but they were given a set of free movie tickets after the interviews as a token of appreciation.

Once the Welcome Center teacher and the guidance counselors agreed to participate and a date was scheduled, each signed a consent form (see Appendix M) before the interview.

Procedure for Implementation of Individual Interviews

As with the focus group Interview Guide, an Interview Guide was used with the school staff (see Appendix N). The guide provided an outline of probes sequenced in a way to gradually introduce the participants to the subject matter. The guiding questions were similar to the focus group guide for increased comparability potential. Questions were broad enough to allow the school staff to express their own observations and thoughts, while specific enough to stay close to the topic under study. The Interview Guide used for the school staff did not require changes.

The individual interviews of the guidance counselors took place in their offices before the start of the school day. The interview of the teacher took place in the classroom after the end of the school day. The individual interviews were 45-60 minutes in duration and were audio-taped by a digital recorder. Only I was present at these meetings, and I took notes during the interview.

Human Subjects Issues

The discussion about immigration and personal experiences can bring up difficult feelings or memories among the participants during focus group interviews. As a licensed clinical social worker, I was prepared to handle any adverse emotional reactions. If there had been any students exhibiting or expressing such reactions, I would have immediately addressed them after the focus-group interview. I would have assessed the level of the adverse emotional reaction. If necessary, I would have made a referral to a community agency or arranged for the student to speak to the school guidance counselor on the following school day. The guidance counselors were aware of the dates of the focus groups and the possibility that students would require their assistance after the groups. Additionally, for students requiring ongoing support, counseling services offered by school social workers was available within each of the schools throughout the academic year. No adverse emotional reactions occurred during any of the focus groups. A few of the students did become teary or cried during the focus groups, but these instances were brief and handled successfully within the group.

Alternately, the support and concern offered by the discussion with other students who have had similar life events can provide emotional support and potentially help develop stronger bonds with fellow students, possibly facilitating the process of

adjustment. While there was potential for adverse emotional responses, there was also potential for increased self-awareness and self-understanding resulting from the self-reflection and exposure to other students' experiences and comments.

In relation to the school personnel, it was considered highly unlikely that adverse emotional reactions would occur during their interviews. The content under study was comparable to issues and material confronted by guidance counselors and teachers on a daily basis and was considered unlikely to produce any additional stress or anxiety. There were no adverse emotional reactions among the school staff during the individual interviews.

As a member of the Smith School Child Study Team, I was aware that it was possible that a participant could have been a student that was counseled by me as part of my work responsibilities. This was the case with one student. Before the focus group, I discussed with the student her thoughts/feelings on participating in a focus group with me as the facilitator. The student did not voice any qualms or conflicts about this situation. It was my impression that her familiarity with the facilitator of the group actually encouraged this student to participate, rather than feeling pressured or obligated to do so. I reassured the student that the content of her counseling sessions and participation in a focus group would be kept confidential and that the student was under no obligation to participate in the focus group.

The Researcher as the Instrument

I assumed the role of a participant observer, whose role was to listen and observe while also interacting with the participants (Frey & Fontana, 1993). As investigator, my role was to simultaneously study, explore, and examine phenomena and participate in the

phenomena (Patton, 1990). Face-to-face interaction with participants in a study affords a prime opportunity to capture others' perspectives and the given meaning to those perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The participant observer includes both the insider and outsider perspective (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). The duality of this role of participant-observer requires a balance between involvement and detachment (Bruyn, 1966). As there is a continuum between observer and participant that an investigator can adopt, I was more of an "observer as participant" (Bruyn), where my purpose was openly known to the participants, and the emphasis was placed on the observer role. In keeping with the goals of qualitative inquiry, as participant-observer, I sought to understand social phenomena from the perspective of the participants

The credibility of the researcher is an important component in considering the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Patton, 1990). I am a licensed clinical social worker with 30 years of clinical experience working with adults and children of all ages. I possess extensive interview experience, an inherent part of clinical work. In addition, my educational training included an understanding of developmental processes.

As an employee of the targeted school district for 17 years, I was familiar with the issues the population under study was facing within the schools. The credibility of the investigator also involves how issues relating to the insider-outside perspective are handled. An issue of qualitative research pertains to the advantages and disadvantages of the proximity of the researcher to the participants and their setting. As a member of a Child Study Team, I was familiar with the schools, the school district, and the Hispanic population in the schools. I had direct knowledge of the issues facing the Hispanic population within a school district. While I did not have direct contact with all of the students before the focus groups, many of the students had seen me in the hallways of the

school. Thus, while this lent an additional advantage of familiarity for the students, they also maintained some distance. At the Jones School, I was not directly involved with the school but had worked with some of its staff.

I understood well the importance of being cognizant of the potential for personal bias while conducting a naturalistic research project, where I was an "insider" as well as an "outsider." The benefits of working with a research team were especially pertinent in this area. The feedback from the research assistants and the consulting professor was invaluable in assuring that no personal bias interfered with the recruitment, conduct, and analysis of the research study.

My second-generation Puerto Rican identity also augmented the credibility of my role as a researcher. I am fluent in Spanish and familiar with the issues of acculturation. It is considered an advantage if the investigator has personal and social characteristics that permit a greater degree of mutual comfort between researcher and participant (Lofland, 1971). An inside perspective, however, requires the investigator be aware of any tendency to over-identify with the focus group participants or make assumptions about understanding the participant perspective.

While sharing similar characteristics with the participants contributed to the insider perspective, I am Puerto Rican and therefore a citizen of the United States; I lack the experience of having an illegal status, contributing to the outsider position. I am also an outsider because I am an adult, as opposed to being an adolescent, who truly has an insider perspective. A balance between the insider and outsider perspectives is an important aspect of conducting qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As far as my role in conducting the focus groups and individual interviews, I led the interviews in such a way as to encourage discussion and elaboration but kept the

interviews focused around the general topic (Frey & Fontana, 1993). I addressed the participants in a nonjudgmental, accepting way that created a greater potential to help the students increase their level of comfort for maximum verbal expression.

Analysis of Data

   After each focus group, the research assistant e-mailed his or her typed notes to me. Taking notes helped to capture verbal expressions that were inaudible due to low voice quality or simultaneous speakers. These notes increased the reliability of the data (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). I transcribed each focus group into a word-processing file. The audio recordings were compared to the focus group notes and transcription to confirm the accuracy of the spoken words. This was especially helpful with the clarification of poorly audible words in the recordings.

   The first focus group interview served as a pilot group and was included in the overall data analysis. The transcribed audio recording from the session was listened to and analyzed separately by the research assistant, the professor on the research team, and me. Following this, a debriefing session was held to review the Interview Guide, format, and the flow of the focus group. Debriefing sessions offer an opportunity to discuss the immediate impressions of the group process (Krueger; 1998a) and to identify any changes that may be needed in the Interview Guide or format of the group. Each member of the research team generated an initial set of codes before the debriefing meeting. These independently generated codes were compared and merged into one preliminary list (see Appendix O). Based on this debriefing, the necessary aforementioned changes were made to the Interview Guide and Student Information form. A final set of codes, which included the pilot focus group, was developed and is included in Appendix P.

Face-to-face and e-mail debriefing sessions continued throughout the study following each focus group. In addition to allowing for immediate discussion of the group process, debriefing also ensures that the impressions and observations will be immediately documented and discussed (Krueger, 1993). Debriefing enhances the verifiability of the findings of a study (Krueger, 1998a). Notes were taken during each debriefing session and treated as data that was included in the analytic process. The insights derived from the debriefing notes were helpful during the data analysis (Krueger, 1998a). In addition to debriefing sessions, I held periodic meetings with the rest of the research team for the purpose of the verification of the coding scheme.

The analysis of the focus groups was based on the analysis of the complete transcripts, notes, and debriefing sessions. This is considered the most rigorous form of analysis (Krueger; 1998b) as it is a form of triangulation. Grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) provided the specifics of a systematic form of analysis for the study. The basic tenet of this type of analysis is predicated on comparative analysis, which involves the joint activities of data collection, coding, and analysis. In Glaser and Strauss' "theoretical sampling," the researcher performs all three activities simultaneously in a back-and-forth manner, which allows for the continuous assessment, classification, and verification of emergent categories and concepts. Theoretical sampling involves the collection of more data in order to clarify categories and ideas. In this way, the investigator returns repeatedly to the data and data collection in order to sample emergent theoretical constructs. As outlined by Glaser and Strauss, the specific procedure for analysis consisted of:

1. I began with some concepts or ideas about the phenomena that were gathered from the current literature, observations, and so on. Bruyn (1966) refers to

these as "sensitizing concepts." Some of the sensitizing concepts for this study included acculturation, adolescent development, coping skills, and ecological theory. They served to guide me and offered a frame of reference.

2. The data provided emergent categories, which represented conceptual components that were coded. The eight categories that emerged from the data included: access, adaptation, family relations, Latino culture, language, gender relations, immigration, and interethnic relations.

3. Properties of the categories emerged and were coded as such. For example, language emerged as a category for the more newly arrived participants. Some of the properties that emerged were expression and vulnerability. A property for the category of family relations was separation. The categories and properties were labeled with numbers for the categories and letters for the properties (e.g., 1a, 1b, etc.).

4. The emerging categories and properties developed into concepts that were compared and, if indicated, combined with previous ones. This type of analysis ensured that the focus group guide was relevant and signaled for any changes that were indicated. Ideas about repeated emergence of categories and concepts were documented. Categories and properties that emerged from the less acculturated groups were compared to those of the more acculturated ones. Strauss & Corbin (1994) continued to build on their original theory and methodology by including "theoretical codes," which refer to how the relationship between the codes is conceptualized.

5. The procedure continued with the combination and integration of categories and their properties. Possible relationships between category to category and category to property were examined.

6. Cross analysis of groups took place, comparing the group's categories and properties. Themes emerged from this process. Cross analysis between the individual interviews and focus groups also took place.

7. The collection, coding, and analysis of data continued to theoretical saturation. This term refers to the analysis that proceeds to the point when coding generates the same properties, without the addition of new ones (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It can also be the case that if any new properties emerge, they do not add any new information. In relation to focus groups, saturation involves the researcher's empirical confidence that new groups no longer produce novel information. Saturation was evident by the 10th focus group. Saturation was also evident in the individual interviews by the third meeting.

8. Tentative hypotheses and theoretical propositions were formulated by the repeated appearance of categories and properties. Tentative discovery of underlying similarities and principles emerged.

Charmaz (2004) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommend initial line-by-line analysis in order to keep the researcher close to the data and for the encouragement of an analytic stance toward the data. Line-by-line analysis leads to the development of codes; and, once categories and properties have been repeatedly identified, "focused coding" highlights the most frequently emerging categories and properties. Focused coding is less general and yields progressive conceptualization of the data. Line-by-line analysis and focused coding were used when handling data. Analysis also included the search for

internal convergence and external divergence (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 1990). This examined both how internally consistent or separate the categories were from each other. Another analytic strategy includes the search for negative cases and alternate explanations, which involves identifying the exceptions and exploring other plausible accounts for the relationships developed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Marshall & Rossman; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton). Thus, as the data was analyzed, I also critically evaluated the emerging concepts or themes by considering alternative explanations. For example, why was the social environment of the school apparently more of an issue for certain focus groups and not others? Negative cases and alternative explanations were explored, identified, and described. I accounted for and demonstrated how the data exemplified the explanation chosen as most plausible.

Analysis with focus groups also includes other considerations. Morgan (1997) contended that it is important to keep in mind that neither the group nor the individual is the unit of analysis. This especially relates to coding the data from the focus groups. He recommended that all references to a particular code be mentioned, whether it was done by individuals or mentioned by the group. I conducted a simple count of codes in order to examine how many times a code emerged. While qualitative research does not generally emphasize quantity, a simple count can give weight to the perceived significance of a code or theme, as well as guard against bias and making assumptions about the data that do not exist (Miles & Huberman, 1984). All individual and group expressions of a code were noted by the use of counts to summarize the data. Focus groups were first analyzed by group and then across groups.

The two interviews with the guidance counselors and the Welcome Center teacher were analyzed using the same procedures outlined above. The individual interviews were also analyzed by case analysis and cross-case analysis methods.

Analysis of Student Information Forms

A third research assistant, who was an undergraduate student of psychology with some experience in the analysis of data, joined the research team in January 2006. She coded the data from the Student Information forms. I conducted frequencies and cross tabulations on these data.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study involves the degree that a reader is convinced that the data and findings are credible (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Janesick, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In addition to credibility, trustworthiness incorporates the dependability and confirmability of the data, analysis, and findings. The design of my study sought to address these issues in the following ways:

- The first focus group served as a pilot group in order to ensure the questions were well understood by the participants and to identify any other modifications needed (Janesick, 1994). This increased the trustworthiness of the study by ensuring the relevance of the questions being asked.

- The presence of a research team permitted a more thorough confirmatory process. A research assistant experienced each focus group while

documenting the content of the focus groups on a laptop. This helped to preserve the integrity of the data, as well as to increase the overall trustworthiness of the investigation and its findings. By being present at each focus group, the research assistant also helped to ensure that bias from me was not interfering with the conduct and interpretation of what was heard and seen.

- The involvement of a professor with an extensive background in focus groups and the Hispanic population also contributed to the trustworthiness of the results. He also read each transcript, participated in the coding process, and attended three focus groups, as an observer and a participant.

- By using constant comparative analysis, the data and codes were simultaneously examined for the fit between the Interview Guide, codes, and emerging categories and properties. Cross-case analysis also increased the trustworthiness of the findings (Huberman & Miles, 1994).

- The documentation of participants' responses on the poster paper served to confirm what I heard.

- The study took place in two locations as a way to test for the confirmability of findings.

- The research assistants and I are all Hispanic and fluent in Spanish.

- A second research assistant, who was not present at all the focus groups, continued to code each focus group transcript independently. This lent an additional confirmation of categories, properties, and theoretical implications as they emerged.

- Recordings (both digital and audio) and field notes preserved the integrity and accuracy of the data (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999). The integrity of the data was further secured by storing the audio tapes and transcripts in a locked cabinet with a key that only I possess.

- Debriefing sessions after each focus group also helped confirm the accuracy of the observations. In addition, peer debriefing helped me check for bias and distortion and explored the need for methodological adjustments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- The use of quotes in the written report increases trustworthiness as they express the experience of the participants in their own words (Adler & Adler, 1994).

- Triangulation represents another way to increase the trustworthiness of findings. It represents an attempt to validate results against at least one other source (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A comparison of the consistency of the data obtained at different times, by different people exemplifies the use of the triangulation of qualitative data sources (Janesick, 1994; Patton, 1990). By conducting multiple focus groups in two different schools, I was able to compare and contrast the responses from the different groups and schools, which enhanced the convergent validity and credibility of the findings. The comparison of the individual and focus group interviews describes methodological triangulation, as well as triangulation of data (Janesick; Patton). The inclusion of individual interviews with the school staff was designed to increase confirmation and trustworthiness of the data

obtained from the student participants. This eliminated any possibility that the responses from the students were not unique in some way.

- Attending to internal and external homogeneity further increased the trustworthiness of the data analysis. Internal homogeneity refers to the extent to which data belonging to a category holds true. External heterogeneity involves the extent to which differences among categories are clear and how much they overlap (Patton, 1990). Multiple coders facilitated this process. The member of the research team, who entered the analysis process after the initial codes were established, used the available codes and properties. However, discussion about the appropriateness of the codes for the emerging data was continuously reviewed throughout the study by all members of the research team.

- The search for negative cases or cases that do not fit the patterns identified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) added to the credibility of the results.

- Seeking alternative explanations of the findings helped further assess the credibility of the data (Patton, 1990). As the themes were collected and findings emerged, alternative ways of organizing and explaining the data were considered (Patton; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The credibility of the results is enhanced when the researcher attends to instances when phenomena do not fit the general observations made and explores whether the data supports other competing explanations. The reasons for the deviation may provide alternative explanations, or the absence of

deviations will increase the confirmability of the results of the study

(Patton).

Summary

The design and analytic strategies of the study have sought to facilitate the emergence of rich data that would fill a gap in knowledge about how young Hispanic adolescents adapt to living in a new culture. The attention to elements of trustworthiness in the design, analysis and findings of the study increased the confidence in the credibility and integrity of the research study, as a whole. While the study examined Hispanic adolescents in one community, the results were compared and contrasted with other research studies conducted in communities similar to the participants of the present study (Cortina & Gendreau, 2003; Gil & Vega, 1996; Gonzáles et al., 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) for the possible extrapolation of findings. The "bottoms-up" approach previously mentioned (Betancourt & López (1993) advocates the observation of a particular cultural group before its applicability can be considered across groups or constructs. On a more limited, local level, the increased understanding and knowledge gained from the study will inform the targeted schools about the ways Hispanic adolescents adjust to their new environment, as well as how that adaptation can be facilitated.

Chapter 4: Characteristics of the Participants

The Student Information Forms provided data on various characteristics of the participants (see Appendix Q for demographic information). Of the 53 participants, roughly 47% were male (n = 25) and 53% were female (n = 28). Most of the participants were between 12 and 13 years old, although the ages ranged from 12 to 16 years. The participants were divided almost evenly between the 7th and 8th grades, with 49% of the students in the 7th grade (n = 26) and 51% of the students in the 8th grade (n = 27).

Fifty-three of the 54 students reported their country of birth. The majority of the participants were born outside of the United States (64%, n = 34) with 28% originating from Mexico, 23% from the Dominican Republic and 7% from Honduras. Of the participants born in the US (n = 18), almost half of their parents were born in Mexico (mother, 47%; father 45%). Slightly over a quarter of the parents were born in the Dominican Republic (mother, 26%; father 28%) and Honduras had the next highest number in terms of parental birthplace (mother 9%; father 7%).

The representation of Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Honduras indicate that the nationalities of the focus group participants reflected the distribution of Hispanic groups found in the city where the schools were located. As previously noted, the 2000 United States Census (US Census Bureau, 2000a) reported the largest Hispanic groups in the city were Mexicans (39%), Dominicans (15%) and Hondurans (8% of the Central American population). The distribution of the participants' countries of origin followed these larger city demographic trends, with the exception of Puerto Ricans, who comprised 17% of the city's Hispanic population and were underrepresented in the sample (2%, n = 1).

Of the 34 focus group participants born outside of the United States, over half of them (n = 21) were living in the United States less than two years, indicating a fairly recent group of arrivals. Three focus group participants were born in the United States, but returned to Mexico before the age of two and then immigrated back to the United States. Twenty-two (65%) of the 34 participants born outside of the United States reported immigration from an urban environment, and 13 (24%) from a rural environment.

Seventeen of the 36 parents of the US-born participants were born in Mexico, six in the Dominican Republic, five in Puerto Rico, two in Ecuador, two in Honduras and one in Guatemala. One parent was African American and one European American. All but five students had both parents born outside of the United States.

To gain a better understanding of the participants' language skills, the students were asked a series of questions about their Spanish and English language usage (see Appendix R). One question asked about perceived verbal language proficiency. Ninety one percent (n = 48) participants considered their ability to speak Spanish as good, very good or excellent. Another question asked about usage of language in the home. Forty seven percent (n = 25) of the participants reported speaking only or mostly Spanish, 49% (n = 26) reported speaking both Spanish and English, and only two students (4%) reported speaking mostly or only English. When asked about language usage with friends, 32% (n = 17) of the participants reported speaking only or mostly Spanish with friends, 58% (n = 31) reported speaking Spanish and English with friends, and 9% (n = 5) reported speaking mostly English or English only with friends.

The participants also answered a question about how well they thought they read English and Spanish. Fifty five percent of the participants (n = 29) considered their

ability to read English as good, very good, or excellent. Eighty seven percent of the participants (n = 46) reported that their ability to read Spanish was good, very good or excellent. One final language question asked the students about the language of their dreams. Twenty-two participants (42%) reported dreaming in Spanish, 11 (21%) reported dreaming in English, and 17 (32%) reported dreaming in both languages.

Two questions gathered information about the extent to which focus group members participated in after school activities (see Appendix R). The data revealed that the majority of focus group members did not participate in after-school activities. For example, the first question asked about general participation in after-school activities and revealed that the large majority (75%, n = 40) reported no participation in after-school activities, while 24% (n = 13) reported participation in after-school activities. Of the 40 students who reported no participation in after-school activities, 70% (n = 28) were born outside of the United States and 30% (n = 12) were born in the United States. For those participants (n = 12) who responded that they did participate in after-school activities, 50% (n = 6) were born outside of the United States and 50% (n = 6) were born in the United States. Thus, it appears that country of birth did not make a difference among the focus group participants who participated in after-school activities. Yet, it appears that birth outside of the United States has a greater association with a lack of participation in after-school activities.

A second question asked more specifically about after-school sports participation. Again, most focus group members (68%, n = 36) indicated no participation, with 32% (n = 17) reporting involvement in after-school sports activities. Examining the participation rates by birthplace revealed that 62% (n = 10) of the students who participated in after-school sports were born outside of the United States. Of the 36 students who did not

participate in after-school sports, 67% (n = 24) were born outside of the United States and 33% (n = 12) were born in the United States.

In addition to examining patterns of after-school participation by birthplace, these responses were also calculated by gender. The results indicate that for general participation in after-school activities, of the 13 students who reported participation, 61% (n = 8) were female and 38% (n = 5) were male. Although most of those who participated in after-school activities were female, gender was more evenly distributed amongst the 40 non-participants, with 50% (n = 20) being female and 50% (n = 20) being male. Thus, the data reveal no clear pattern between gender and participation in after-school activities for this group.

Finally, patterns of after-school sports participation were also examined by gender. The data indicates that for the 17 students who reported participating in after-school sports, 47% (n = 8) were female and 53% (n = 9) were male. Among the 36 students who reported no participation in after-school sports, 56% (n = 20) were female and 44% (n = 16) were male. Therefore, it appears that gender does not play a decisive role in the participation in after-school sports for this group of students.

In summary, the responses from the student information forms indicate that most of the focus group participants were born outside of the United States in Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Honduras. The majority of the participants born in the US also reported these countries as their parental countries of origin. Participants' ages clustered between 12-14 years and were of almost equal gender distribution. In reference to language usage, a large majority of the participants believed they were fluent in Spanish. Almost half considered themselves fluent in English. About one half of the participants spoke mostly Spanish at home, while almost one half reported speaking both English and

Spanish at home. Most of the participants spoke in Spanish and English with friends.

Similarly to verbal abilities, the large majority of the participants reported they read

Spanish well and slightly over half reported they were proficient English readers. The

focus group participants reported that they mostly dreamt in Spanish. Finally, the

majority of this group of students did not participate in after-school activities. These

characteristics of the focus group participants provide the background reference

information for the following results of the analyses.

Results of the Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

Fifty-three students attended the 10 focus groups, ranging from 2-8 participants

(see Table 1). Four out of the 10 focus groups were conducted in Spanish. I could not

determine the number of students attending a focus group before each meeting. Even with

confirmations established with parent and student the night before the group, or on the

same day, there were students who changed their minds or decided not to attend at the

last minute. While a group of 2 or 3 participants is not considered the ideal number for a

focus group, I decided it was best to offer the opportunity to participate in a focus group

to the students who did present themselves. Whenever possible, researchers aim for the

optimal number of participants, but sometimes the number of individuals who appear for

a focus group results in limitations (Bloor et al., 2001).

Table 1

Number of Students Who Signed Up and Participated in Focus Groups

Group	Number signed up	Participants	Group language
1	6	5	Spanish
2	8	8	English
3	7	6	English
4	5	5	Spanish
5	7	3	Spanish
6	8	6	Spanish
7	9	7	Spanish
8	8	2	Spanish
9	9	7	English
10	10	4	English
Total	77	53	

The results from the data emerging from the 10 focus groups and three individual interviews were analyzed and coded for emergent categories and their properties. These are found in Table 2.

Table 2

Open Coding - Student Experiences of Acculturation

Categories	Properties
Access	Education, goods & services, stores, economic resources, better life, housing, freedom, transportation parks health care, technology
Adaptation	Coping strategies, peer group, environment, behaviors, school, rules, climate, food, hard work, constraints, changing identity, reference group, pride, appearances, bicultural identity, language
Family Relations	Separation, reunion, reconfiguration, conflict, parenting styles, sibling relations, family obligations, changes in family members
Latino culture	Food, music, accents, different meaning of words, pride, appearance, bicultural identity, religiosity, cultural self-perception, customs
Language	Express, understand, defend, learn, vulnerability, frustration and anxiety
Gender relations	Intergenerational cultural differences
Immigration	Documents, the trip
Interethnic relations	Within-group, between-group, discrimination, stereotypes, cultural messages from media

Through the process of axial coding and the constant comparative method

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I identified the relationships between and across categories and

properties, organizing them into their respective themes and sub-themes. The themes and

subthemes will form chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 and are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Chapter Headings (Themes and Sub-Themes

Chapter Headings (themes)	Chapter Sub-headings (sub-themes)
Chapter 5: Crossing Borders - The Road to the American Dream	Crossing Borders • Unauthorized Entry • Authorized Entry The Honeymoon and Posthoneymoon Phases • The Honeymoon - Access to the American Dream • Posthoneymoon phase – Making the Grade • Unsafe Neighborhoods • "They Judging a Book by its Cover" En Route to a Bicultural Identity • Lost in Translation • Spanish as a Second language • Living in Two Worlds
Chapter 6: All in the Family: Changes in the primary support system	• Family as Primary Support System • Separation, Reunification and Reconfiguration • Evolving Parenting Styles • Family Obligations
Chapter 7: "Social" Studies: *Crossing Racial and Ethnic Boundaries*	• Racial Toe Stepping • Ethnic Toe Stepping
Chapter 8: What Schools Can Do	• Teach Us • School-Student Relations • School Climate • Support Services

The organization of the chapters is meant to evoke movement; the movement

from one country to another, the movement involved in change, the movement of

adolescence. Beginning with the trip to the US, the chapters progress to cover various

aspects of crossing cultures through the eyes of the fifty three focus group participants

and three members of the school staff. Because the participants ranged so broadly in the length of residency in the US, a longitudinal portrait of change emerges.

The results of the focus groups and the individual interviews of the school staff provided data about how the participants perceived the experience of acculturation within the contexts of school, family, neighborhood, and US society. Spanish was spoken in six of the ten focus groups, representing the more recently arrived participants. Because these students were instructed in Spanish, while they were learning English, they attended bilingual classes, and will be identified as the bilingual class focus group participants. English was spoken in the four remaining focus groups that contained students who were born in the US or who had a more extended length of US residency. These students were instructed only in English and will be referred to as the monolingual class focus group participants, even though they may have been bilingual. The three members of the school staff were interviewed individually and will be referred to as Mr. A, Ms. B, and Ms. C. The findings from their interviews will be interspersed throughout the chapter. All the names of the student participants presented in the chapters are pseudonyms.

Palpable differences emerged between the recently arrived and more acculturated participants. The bilingual class participants were preoccupied with adapting to a new environment perceived as full of hope and promise. The more acculturated participants were involved in adjusting to an environment they perceived as discriminatory. Overall, the bilingual class participants appeared to be comparing their situation to their home countries, while the monolingual class participants were comparing themselves to the wider society. Differences were also evident in how the two sets of groups presented themselves behaviorally. Whereas, the bilingual class participants were generally reserved and respectful, the more acculturated students were assertive and opinionated.

Nonetheless, the participants generously shared their thoughts, perceptions, and experiences.

Chapter 5: Crossing Borders: The Road to the American Dream

.The first section of Chapter 5, *Crossing Borders*, focuses on the immigration

experiences of the students and the consequences attending an unauthorized versus an

authorized entry to the US. The themes and sub-themes are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Crossing Borders

	Unauthorized Entry	**Authorized Entry**
Bilingual	Stress and trauma during trip	Less stressful trip High cost and waiting time for entry
Monolingual	Blocked access to rights and privileges	Access to rights and privileges
Staff	Trauma of trip Blocked access to rights and privileges	

Crossing Borders

   Unauthorized Entry. Five of the six bilingual class focus groups and one of the

four monolingual class groups discussed issues related to immigration. Because over half

of the participants had arrived from their native countries less than two years prior to the

focus groups, experiences associated with immigration were still recent. Consequently,

the trip to the US was a major topic for the newly arrived participants. Many of the

students from Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala entered the US without legal status. The

nature and experience of the trip to the US largely depended on the absence or presence

of legal documentation for entry, or "los papeles" (the papers). Foremost, an illegal entry

into the US exposed the students to trips across the border that involved various levels of

risk and danger. In some cases, more than one border had to be crossed. In other cases,

students used various modes of transportation such as airplane flights, cars, vans, buses

and walking during their trip to the US. In the cases of illegal crossings, fear and anxiety were often associated with the trip. While not all of the students who crossed the border found the experience especially anxiety-producing, most of the reports included highly stressful experiences due to the elevated levels of risk during the trip.

Alberto, a 15 year old Mexican student is an example of a student who crossed the border illegally. He walked across the border with his mother during a trip that lasted three days and two nights. At the time of the focus group he had lived in the US for two years, one year in Oregon and one year in New Jersey. Alberto's experience during his trip to the US illustrates the kinds of threats to safety a border crossing can present:

> En el desierto, puro seca, piedras, hay serpientes también, es peligroso y cuando llega la noche, te duerme, duerme por una o dos horas, después te levanta a caminar otra vez. Yo me acuerdo que me dormí una vez y ellos se habían ido. Me quede. Y después, estaban contando cuantos éramos, y dice mi mama, faltaba uno, y era yo que faltaba. El señor [volvió]me levantó, me tira una bolsa porque me quede bien dormido, por poco me quedé.
> (In the desert, very dry, rocks, there are also snakes, it is dangerous and when nightfall arrives, you sleep, you sleep for one or two hours and then you get up and walk again. I remember that I fell asleep one time and they had left. I remained. Afterwards, they were counting how many we were, and my mother said, somebody is missing, and it was me who was missing. The man [returned] awakened me and threw a bag at me because I was so asleep. I almost remained behind).

In addition to almost being left behind in the desert, Alberto's story reveals some of the other implications of an illegal status for youth. Once over the border, Alberto traveled to Oregon, where he did not attend school, but was employed full time on a farm for one year. An aunt advocated for him and arranged for his move to New Jersey, where he registered in school. Clearly, minors without legal documentation do not have the same claims to the protections that a legal status confers. Aside from the employment of minors that would otherwise be prohibited in the US, the lack of legal protection of youth potentially exposes them to other types of harm and abuse. One of the members of the

school staff, Ms. B, shared her experiences with students who had been traumatized

during the trip over the border:

> So, we have that whole issue and many of them I've referred and are suffering with post traumatic stress disorder and, you know, they've described behavioral problems, and a lot of it comes from leaving one place of origin to a new country, but another thing is the way they got here. I mean I have students who made it through the tunnels that they just discovered in California; they actually told me about them before I even saw them on the news. This class not so much, but, like there's 16 boys in this class, but last year, I had fifth grade bilingual and there was one girl that would not adjust and was having a hard time, was struggling and we finally got her to open up. She had been raped; she came with other people, not with any family members and was raped by several different men along the trip. I had another one who had told me she had been raped several times in her transition to come to this country and then dumped off in the streets of wherever, you know, a call was made to some family member to go pick her up and it's a car to car exchange once you get into the country. The kind of backgrounds, it's just horror story upon horror story and the things that they go through to get here are very difficult.

The observations shared by Ms. B. also indicate how experiences during the trip

to the US can affect adjustment to school and academic functioning. One of the students

in Ms. B's quote had difficulties adjusting to school. In addition to the fear produced by

the potential for physical harm, an additional risk during a border crossing involved the

possibility of being caught by immigration officials. The consequences of being detained

are great in terms of the large sums of money lost by the families and the prospect of

being forced to return to their country of origin. Jacinto, a 14-year-old student from

Mexico had been returned once prior to his successful crossing. When he was asked

about how he crossed the border and if he, too, had walked across the border like so

many others, he shared the following:

> Yo no caminé,….Corrí. Así que ya me habían agarrado una vez. Así que corrimos al carro y ahí nos escondimos.
> (I didn't walk…I ran. They had already caught me once. So we ran to the car and there we hid).

Other students shared their experiences:

Difícil, viajar en puro carro. Es peligroso porque si nos encuentra la migra, lo
regresan para atrás.
(Difficult, to travel only by car. It is dangerous because if the immigration
officials find us, they turn you back).

Yo nerviosa porque si nos volvían a regresar, era mucho dinero para mi papa.
Volvernos a regresar difícil también porque yendo y viniendo, muy largo el viaje
e incomodo.
(I was nervous because if they returned us, it was a lot of money for my father. To
return us again is also difficult because you are going back and forth; the trip is
very long and uncomfortable).

 Si, porque cuando nosotros vinimos fueron dos días y una noche, era un desierto.
En el día hacia demasiado calor y de noche demasiado frío…el camino largo, si
regresábamos otra vez para atrás, teníamos que caminar otra vez el mismo, difícil
caminarlo.
(Yes, because when we came it was two days and one night, it was a desert.
During the day it was very hot and at night, very cold …the trip was long. If they
returned us again, we would have to walk it again, difficult to walk it)

Another risk factor involved the unscrupulous behavior of the people, *coyotes*,

hired as guides across the borders. Some incidents were reported where money was

taken, or additional sums of money were demanded during the trip. The participants and

the other members of the traveling parties were at the mercy of the coyotes, who held the

power to abandon them at any point along the trip and to subject them to any type of

conditions during the trip. Elena, age 12, who had arrived to the US two years prior to the

focus group, described this type of experience. She had traveled from Guatemala across

the border to Mexico before entering the US.

El viaje fue difícil para mi porque cuando nos vinimos al aeropuerto de México,
un avión hasta, yo no se como se llama, después, el coyote nos llevó a un pueblo
que se llama Los Nacos y allí fuimos a tratar de saltar una tela bien grande y yo
no podía entonces nos agarramos el bus hasta Los Ángeles y en Los Ángeles nos,
un señor nos engañó que era el coyote y nos quitó todo el dinero y después
pasamos la frontera que ahí sufrí bastante porque allí, nos tiraban así, y también
sufrí bastante cuando yo me subí al carro, bastante gente venia arriba, yo estaba
llorando.
(The trip was difficult for me because when we reached the Mexican airport, a
plane, to, I don't know how it is called, after, the coyote took us to a town called
Los Nacos and there we tried to jump over a large fence and I couldn't. Then we
took a bus to Los Angeles and in Los Angeles, a man who was passing for a

coyote deceived us, and he took all the money and then we crossed the border and there I suffered a great deal because they left us there like that. I also suffered a great deal when I got in the car, many people were in the car...I was crying)

The consequences of an undocumented status go beyond the experiences of the trip. Some of the participants expressed cognizance of how their unauthorized status denied them assurance of certain opportunities and protections conferred to legal residents, such as the freedom to travel. One of the most painful aspects of this type of status involves the inability to visit loved ones in their home countries. "Aunque queramos viajar a México, no se puede, viajar para entonces cruzar otra vez, para regresar, vamos a tener que cruzar de nuevo la frontera." (Although we want to travel to Mexico, you can't, to travel then to cross again, you can't return, we would have to cross the border again). Aside from the travel restrictions, the consequences for the future of the students with an illegal status are profound. This was particularly raised in one of the monolingual class focus groups where several of the students expressed awareness of the limited access to certain jobs and higher education without legal documentation. The following is an excerpt from the monolingual class focus group where the subject was discussed.

> #2 - Opportunities, if we are legal, like for colleges, some people can't go to college because they can't afford it…
> JV – And why else can't they go to college, you were saying…
> #2 - And they don't got papers, the legal documents. Cause in some works, you get paid more, but they want legal papers.
> #6 - Let's just say that they don't have papers, right? … Let's say you have the money to pay everything, right, but they still won't allow it because you don't have, you don't have legal papers… why wouldn't you, if you have the money. It's not like, 'cause I think the only thing that matters in this country is money.
> #2 - You see people that don't have papers, they really want to become something in their lives, and people that have papers, they don't take the opportunity, they are like, "ah, whatever." Some people be like that. They have papers and they don't take advantage of the opportunities.

In the above excerpt, the students recognized the barriers to employment and higher education without legal documentation. These participants found the blocked access difficult to understand, especially when they perceived that there are those who don't take advantage of the opportunities. Despite the motivation and the ability to pay for a higher education, access is still denied to illegal residents. A similar concern about blocked access was voiced by Mr. A, one of the interviewed staff members.

> I have one student here, two students that came and said they want working papers and I asked them, "Do you have a social security number?" And they said "No." I said, "You can't work;" that's the first thing they're going ask for, the social security number. They don't realize that the limitations that they have, I don't think … and it's hard because a lot of the students they're here since they're little kids and they might not know they're illegal because a lot of them have been here since the second grade, third grade, so all that they know is the US, and that's what they remember and they going to face hard consequences when they finish high school, when they cannot go to college and it's going to be hard to find a job. Something that I think, even though, perhaps, they know what illegal is, but they don't nothing else because they've always been here, so it is something very, very difficult. because let's say they get deported, they get deported to where? Because they don't know their country, you know, they only know …, they don't know nothing else. So, it's quite a hardship, I think, very difficult.

While, previous quotes indicate that some students are aware of the constraints resulting from an undocumented status, Mr. A introduced the idea that some youth who have been in the US for many years may not realize they do not have legal documentation. The reality of an illegal status became tangible for his student when he was seeking a summer job.

In summary, the participants who lacked authorized entry into the US and crossed the border were exposed to significant risks to their physical and emotional well-being. In addition, as one school staff member cited from her experience, the stress and psychological trauma experienced during the trip had the potential to interfere with academic performance and the overall adjustment to the new country.

Authorized entry. Those students who entered the US with a legal status described relatively less stress associated with their trip. They did not have to be concerned about embarking on a dangerous journey or being caught by immigration officials. There was one exception. A brother and sister from the Dominican Republic had a stressful plane ride due to inclement weather. They had never traveled by plane and their first experience produced a great deal of fear. The greater challenge voiced by the documented students was in the length of time and money that legal entry entailed. One student had waited for seven years before the immigration documents were finalized. Other students had similarly experienced long delays in the attainment of legal entry, resulting in extended periods of separation from parents or other family members. Ana, a 14 year old student from the Dominican Republic spoke to this point:

> A mi difícil, si, porque hay que hacer mucho papeleo, dura mucho, para nosotros duró casi cuatro años, para los pasaportes y la visa, lo encontramos, ya lo logramos.
> (For me, difficult, yes, because you have to do a lot of paperwork, it takes a long time. For us it took four years, for the passports and the visa. We finally got it, we succeeded).

> Another student from the Dominican Republic shared similar sentiments.

> A mi, mi mama tuvo que casarse con mi papa en Santo Domingo, después tuvo que gastar mucho dinero y eso, la boda, y después venir aquí, a inmigración a pedirnos, y después, tuvo que gastar mucho dinero y ella fue muchas veces a Santo Domingo, cada vez que tenía que ir al consulado, tuvo que ir al consulado a sacarnos el pasaporte, el dinero para ir a Santo Domingo y volver para atra, ella tuvo que gastar mucho dinero, cogió prestao. Ella lo pagó todo, ella dice que contar que nos tuviera aquí a nosotros.
> (For me, my mother had to marry my father in Santo Domingo. She then had to spend a lot of money, on the wedding, and then return here, go to immigration to put in a request for us and then, she had to spend a lot of money and she went to Santo Domingo many times and each time she had to go to the consulate, had to go to the consulate to get the passport, the money to go to back and forth between here and Santo Domingo. She had to spend a lot of money, she borrowed money. She paid for everything, she said, as long as she had us with her).

Despite the extended waiting periods to enter the US, at least the documented participants were assured the rights and protection offered to legal residents. The participants with authorized documentation were largely from the Dominican Republic. Most of these students generally had parents or grandparents who themselves had legal documentation and had many years of residency in the US. For the most part, the participants with an authorized entry appeared to have entered homes with greater financial stability than those students who entered illegally. As one of the participants remarked, "cuando yo llegue aquí yo tenía mi casita, mi camita" (when I arrived here, I had my house, my bed), implying that he walked into a comfortable situation. The documented participants were also aware of their freedom to travel and receive government sponsored financial aid for higher education.

In summary, the above section has presented the participants' views and experiences related to a documented versus undocumented entry into the US. Entering the US illegally placed the students in dangerous situations and in some cases, affected their emotional well-being and school adjustment. The documented participants had relatively less stressful trips, but the process leading to entry was long and costly. Aside from the trip, the illegal entrants pointed to the blocked access to rights and privileges that are typically conferred to those with legal status. The monolingual and bilingual participants were aware of the advantages of a legal status in terms of access to better paying jobs, university admission, and receipt of financial aid. The ability to freely travel to their home countries was another advantage the undocumented participants wished they could enjoy. On the whole, the discussion about immigration status permitted the documented and undocumented participants to mutually increase their understanding of each group's experience.

The next section, *The Honeymoon and Posthoneymoon Phases,* begins to cover some of the experiences of the participants once across the border and engaged in the process of adjustment to a new country. The honeymoon phase refers to how the newly arrived participants perceived and experienced their new environment. The posthoneymoon phase refers to a more acculturated view of the US and includes the participants' experiences within the contexts of school, neighborhood, and society. Table 5 provides a summary of the themes and subthemes pertaining to this section.

Table 5

The Honeymoon and Posthoneymoon Phases

	Honeymoon - Access to American dream	**Posthoneymoon - Making the grade**	**Unsafe neighborhoods**	**"They judge a book by its cover"**
Bilingual	Positive about school Access to multiple opportunities High motivation Protection by US laws		Theft Assault Constraints on social relationships	Discrimination
Monolingual		Discrimination School climate	Theft Shoot-outs Gangs Poor housing	Discrimination Stereotypes Media
Staff	Bilinguals motivated and positive	Overcrowded housing Entry with lower academic skills Monolinguals low motivation	Gangs	

The Honeymoon and Posthoneymoon Phases

Honeymoon Phase—Access to the American dream. However arduous the road across the border, the majority of the bilingual class participants believed the US held the promise of new opportunities and a brighter future. The newly arrived students looked to the US as the provider of educational opportunities unparalleled in their countries. The importance of education was prized as the vehicle leading to economic stability and an improved quality of life. Overall, the bilingual class students expressed positive attitudes toward school and were eager to learn. They expressed high motivation to succeed and high hopes for the future. Maria, a 12-year-old student from the Dominican Republic shared her thoughts:

> Antes de yo venir a este país me habían dicho que era mejor porque así la vida sería mejor. Entonces uno hace los estudios acá. En vez de hablar un idioma, hablaba dos idiomas, porque el idioma de uno es español, ¿no?, y mi padre me decía que uno podía aprender otro idioma. Podría ir a la universidad y tener mejores cosa que el otro país y también que dijo el que también que el trabajo es mejor que el país de uno.
> (Before coming to this country they had told me that it was better because life would be better. Then one can study here. Instead of speaking one language, you can speak two languages, because one's language is Spanish, and my father used to tell me that one could learn another language. One could go to the university and have better things than the other country and he also told me that work is better than in one's country).

A better quality of life was associated with the presence of wider employment possibilities, the mastery of two languages, and a university degree. These ingredients were seen as resulting in a higher economic standard of living. Ana, a 14-year-old student from the Dominican Republic, who had just arrived two months prior to the focus group, also expressed her view of the school as a safe haven:

> Yo me siento muy bien porque estar aquí en esta escuela como si yo estuviera en mi casa. Me cuidan; me protegen de todo mal y escucho mucho a mi maestra y a todos los maestros por darme esa oportunidad de yo volver a la escuela. Para mi es importante, echar para adelante para que mi familia no pase hambre, ni trabajo tampoco, cuando yo sea una persona ya grande.

(I feel very good because being here in this school is like I was in my home. They take care of me; they protect me from harm and I listen a lot to my teacher and all the teachers for giving me this opportunity to return to school. For me it is important to move forward; so that my family will never be hungry, or go through a lot either, when I become a grown-up).

Ana anticipates that her academic and financial success will also benefit her family. Various students hoped to improve the lives of their families and felt a deep sense of obligation to helping them. There was appreciation for the sacrifices that parents had made and a desire to demonstrate their gratitude with future financial gains. Ana further elaborates on the benefits of an US education:

A mi me ayudan mucho progresar y para yo hacerme ciudadana aquí, para yo poder hacer una carrera, para no pasar vergüenza que no sé leer, no sé sumar, y ya yo sé todo eso, y uno va progresando, y la vida de uno va cambiando.
(They help me a lot to progress and to become a citizen here, so that I can have a career, so that I will not be ashamed of not knowing how to read or add and I now know all of that and one progresses and your life starts changing).

A mi me ayuda aquí la escuela, a mi me ayuda mucho también a entender las cosas y me ayuda también aprender el abecedario en ingles, me ayuda mucho también, le dan oportunidad para que uno aprenda la computadora, cuando uno este en la high school. También le dan oportunidades para que uno aprenda a conducir.
(The school here helps me a lot to understand things and helps me also to learn the alphabet in English; it also helps me very much have the opportunity to learn the computer, when you are in high school. Also, you are given the opportunity to learn to drive.

Ana sees her US education as leading the way to citizenship and to useful skills, such as driving. Aside from the advantages of an education, Ana is also grateful for the consistent access to food at lunchtime. She explained:

Si, pero aquí no se acaba la comida, pero allá llevaban una caja por dos cientos niños, y si se acababa, no le importaba, lo dejaban ahí tirado, pasando hambre. Pero aquí no; todo lo que desea. Aquí es todo por la regla, cuidan a los niños, no lo maltratan, allá si los maltratan.
(But, here, the availability of food does not end, but over there, they would bring one box of food for 200 children and it would finish. They didn't care, they would leave you there hungry. But not here, whatever you want. Here it is all by the rule, they take care of the children, they don't mistreat them. There they would mistreat them.

Despite their illegal status, many of the bilingual class participants perceived a

future fully open to all possibilities. Alberto, the 15-year-old Mexican student, shared

similar expectations:

> Si, cambiar la vida. Del trabajo. Lo que se necesita es el inglés para conseguir un
> buen trabajo. Y también, la escuela es buena para llegar a ser algo en la vida,
> como abogado, para ir a la universidad. Llegar a ser abogado.
> (Yes, to change my life and work. What you need is to know English to get a
> good job. Also, the school is good in order to become somebody in life, like a
> lawyer, to go to the university; become a lawyer).

Part of the excitement about being in the US and attending school here, was the

opportunity to learn new information, and to become computer literate. Many of the

students had limited access to computers in their home countries. They expressed

eagerness to learn about the US and the rest of the world. These are some of their

comments:

> Aquí aprende nuevas cosas como la historia de los Estados Unidos, es cosa nueva
> para uno y también las costumbres y muchas cosas.
> (Here, you learn new things like the history of the United Status, it is something
> new and also the customs and many things).

> Otras clases nuevas aquí, como … te enseñan más que en otros países, entonces
> aquí aprendes más cosas
> (Other new classes here, like … they teach you more than in other countries, then
> you learn more things here).

> Para mi las cosas mas fáciles son que hay mucha tecnología para hacer cualquier
> cosa. Aquí dan muchas buenas oportunidades, la vida aquí es fácil.
> (For me the easiest things are that there is a lot of technology to do anything.
> Here, you are given good opportunities, life here is easy).

For the most part, the bilingual students reported the quantity and quality of

instruction was greater in the US than their home countries. One student from the

Dominican Republic received only a half day of school in his home town. The

availability of transportation to and from school was also valued by the bilingual class

participants. In their home countries, schools were often located a long distance from

their homes, and transportation was not provided. This topic was discussed in three of the

six bilingual focus groups. Ana and her brother spoke about their daily trip to school:

> Yo tenía que caminar como dos horas para llegar a mi escuela porque yo vivía en un campo que le llamaban Jardines y la escuela quedaba en la ciudad. Y yo tenía que caminar desde allá hasta la escuela. Me levantaba a las cinco de la mañana a caminar y llegábamos a las siete. Nos tomábamos dos horas, caminando yo y el. (I had to walk about two hours in order to get to my school because I lived in a rural area that was called Jardines and the school was in the city. I had to walk from there to the school. I would wake up at 5:00 a.m. and walk and we would arrive at 7:00 a.m. It would take us two hours to walk).

The access to an education, transportation, food, and technology represented the

positive side of immigration for many of the participants. Several students reported

another favorable aspect of living in the US; the unexpected presence of other Spanish-

speaking students and teachers. Before moving to the US, various students reported being

afraid that only English would be spoken in school. They were relieved to find bilingual

instruction and Spanish speakers in the community. This appeared to facilitate the

participants' adjustment and to reduce the anxiety about living in a new culture. Maria, a

13-year-old student from the Dominican Republic and Antonio another 13-year-old

student from Mexico, both had similar expectations:

> M. - Yo cuando llegué a este país, yo pensaba que se me iba a ser difícil a aprender ingles, aunque yo sabía un poco. Yo pensaba que a mi las clases en la escuela me iba a tocar todo en ingles y que yo no iba a aprender o a entender a los maestros, pero no me pasó así.
> (When I arrived in this country, I thought that it would be difficult to learn English, even though I know a little. I thought that my classes in school would be only in English and that I would not be able to learn or understand the teachers, but it didn't happen that way).
> A. - También a mí, como este es un país que hablaban ingles, así pensaba que me iban a poner en clases de ingles, y yo estaba bien nervioso.
> (Me too, since this is a country that speaks English, I thought I would be put in English classes, and I was very nervous).

Clara, another seventh grade student from Mexico, was also under the same

impression:

Yo creía que aquí, cuando yo iba a llegar iba tener que esforzarme para aprender mucho ingles y entenderlo rápido porque yo creía que la escuela no era bilingüe. (I thought that here, when I was going to arrive, that I would have to force myself to learn a lot of English and understand it quickly because I thought the school would not be bilingual).

The participants appeared to know little about their prospective homes prior to moving to the US. Once here, the bilingual class students were also pleased with the legal protection given to children. Four of the six bilingual class focus groups discussed the various ways US laws protect children. For example, several of the students reported the accepted use of physical punishment by the school staff toward the students in their home countries. They were relieved to find that the corporal punishment of children was not generally implemented in US schools. Other students believed that the laws also prohibited any kind of physical punishment by parents. While US laws were perceived as protective of children, some of the school rules baffled the students, such as suspension for both parties involved in a fight, even if one was reacting in self-defense. A few participants reported that school rules for behavior were not clearly communicated to the new students when they entered the schools.

Overall, the bilingual class students communicated a positive impression of their new school environment and high motivation for academic success. Two of the school staff members remarked on the motivational drive of the newly arrived students. Ms. C and Ms. B confirmed what the previous quotes expressed:

Ms. C—The thing that I admire the most is that the majority of the students are like the mailman, they're here everyday. They are here everyday. I mean, it's snowing, it's raining, it's below whatever, they're here. That is one of the strengths that they have here. When you have parent conferences, the parents show up, a lot of the parents are here.

Ms. B—They also come in with an incredible amount of hope, a lot of hope and all of them see the US as something positive, all of them see the US as something better than where they were. As many problems as I can find with the school system here, comparing it to other school systems, where my own children go, it's

still 100 times better than the schools they were at…To me, not having hand soap in the bathroom is a big deal, to them, it's like, they're glad the toilet flushes. So, they're definite survivors, they definitely look at the US as something positive.

Ms. B refers to the concept of relativity, where the more recently arrived students are making comparisons to their home countries, while she is making comparisons to the wider society. Relative to the limited access to a wide range of educational opportunities in their home country, the participants see the US as a cornucopia of possibilities. The posthoneymoon phase moves toward a more of a comparison to the wider society. The next section will focus on a more acculturated view of the school experience and some of the challenges to academic success faced by the students.

Posthoneymoon Phase—Making the Grade. The monolingual class students expressed fewer positive comments about school and did not communicate the sense of excitement about school that the bilingual class participants imparted. As a whole, they were more focused on aspects of the school environment, such as the perception of discrimination by school staff. This was raised in two of the four monolingual focus groups in two separate schools. The issue emerged from one bilingual class focus group, as well. The participants perceived discrimination from teachers, administrators, and security staff. In both schools, the students felt that the African-American security staff offered preferential treatment to the African-American students. These are two of the comments made about this issue:

> One time I was eating candy and they put me in detention and this kid he was African American, he was eating candy and they didn't put him in detention and I was like that's not fair.

> I noticed that too, he got a warning. We get one warning and we go to the office, while others say, they give them several warnings, the kid keeps on doing it and they do nothing about it.

Some of the monolingual class participants also believed that the European-American teachers discriminated against the Hispanic students. Nancy, age 14, a second generation Honduran student expressed her perception of how Hispanics and African Americans are viewed by the some of the school staff:

> They think that Hispanics and Black people we dirty and all of that just because we powerless. They think we got our skin is like dirt and that is what I am saying.

Nancy's powerful quote communicates her beliefs about the demeaned status of darker skin, which she sees as perceived to be associated with dirt and powerlessness. Later in the focus group, Nancy expressed other perceptions about how the newly arrived Hispanic students are treated by school staff:

> What I'm saying, though, white teachers what they're supposed to understand is that, for example, for Hispanics, when you're new to this country, and when they come to school, though, white teachers should, supposed to understand that right now, the Hispanics, it's their first time being in this country, they should be easy on them instead of being strict. Just because they don't understand the language, what you speaking to them, though, it doesn't mean people call them dumb and take him out in school, or send him back to another different grade.

 Patricia, in another focus group, echoes similar sentiments:

> Here, when like some students are talking Spanish, like a little word, like they say in Spanish, like 'what's up, or how are you?' the teachers get mad and think they're like cursing, but they use it, like very little and the teachers begin to get mad.

Ernesto, a Mexican student who immigrated to the US six years prior to the focus group meeting, described his experiences with one teacher who made remarks about the Mexican student:.

> Last year I had her for _____ too and she always, could treat me nice, and my friend that he's also Mexican and then other Mexican students, they used to behave bad, she would say, "you're the worst Mexican, or Hispanics that I ever met" Why does she have to say that, why doesn't she just say student?

Perceived discrimination from school staff was reported as a major theme by the participants in both schools. However, many of the monolingual class students and a few

of bilingual class students of the middle school (Jones School) also expressed an

increased level of dissatisfaction with their school building as compared to the

participants of the Jones school. The middle school had just opened in September, 2005,

when recruitment began for the focus groups. The school is temporarily housed in a

former warehouse building while a new school is constructed. Aside from the issues of

discrimination common to both schools, the participants in the middle school reported

that the building was too large and contained too many students. The instability that

attended the opening of the school may have also contributed to the negative experiences

the participants reported in relation to school climate. Various participants voiced their

concerns about frequent fights, acts of vandalism and inadequate lunchroom and recess

facilities. Here are some of the comments made by the students:

> I think yesterday, my teacher's class they had a substitute yesterday too and in the morning we came in, all the desks were thrown, all the books were everywhere. We were the last class to leave and they blamed it on us, we had to clean it up and it was all a mess, all the books in the desk were thrown, all the literature books were thrown, there was a lot of garbage and the seats were everywhere, some desks were flipped around and they made us clean it up.

> I remember in _____[school] like rarely there were fights and here like every week, there's like two fights every week, that's crazy and after school, I think it was two days ago, when they took the same bus, when they got off the bus, they started a fight,

> I know somebody that they had a Northface jacket, I know two people, one of them that got their Northface jacket stolen and the other one, somebody took her wallet out of her jacket and only left her bank account card in it, they took the wallet, and it had $24.00, I think.

These quotes highlight how school climate, as a contextual issue, affects the

academic experience of students. The participants from the Smith School, containing a

kindergarten through eighth grade configuration, did not express any concerns about

fighting within the school building. The school climate appeared to be perceived as more

stable. For the middle school participants, school climate raised additional issues of concern aside from the perceived discrimination from school personnel.

The school staff participants presented other challenges to academic success that the student participants did not raise. Two of the school staff participants believed that some of the students' housing situations were a challenge to academic success. Ms. B and Ms. C reported that it was common for the more recent arrivals to find themselves living in overcrowded housing with multiple dwellers sharing an apartment. This type of living arrangement placed some of the students in potentially precarious situations with the other adults in the household, some of whom were strangers. Ms. B and Ms. C shared the following:

> Ms. B—There's a whole boat of problems that they come in with and a whole load of concerns and you know many of them are sleeping in kitchens or in the hallway, or wherever, a lot of them, I see the leases that are in their files, they have to show a copy of proof that they live in district and their lease might be $1200, $1400 for an apartment and they wind up sharing that with other families because who's going to be able to afford, as an immigrant, scratching around for work, $1200, $1400, so they're sharing their spaces with other people, too, not the best situations. So far, the girls that are here seem to be OK, but in, last year, I had several girls that had all kinds of abuses and things going on because they were in a situation where they were with other people, in the same living space. So, they have a lot of things to deal with when they come in and then that's what the teacher has to deal with and you have to get passed all that before they can learn.

> Ms. C—Also, we have families that have too many people living in the same household that are not blood related or even friends, it's just the son of a friend that I had in Mexico called me up and said, Johnny, who is 18 wants to come over and then things happen. And there's all kind of abuse and the parents say you know, if Johnny, who's 18, comes to live with us, maybe I can leave those 13, 14 year old with him, while I go to work, that's when things happen.

Ms. B and Ms. C work in different schools and their comments about the housing situation of some students were unsolicited. The potential for sexual abuse of girls both during the trip and on the other side of the border is a factor that that the two staff members had encountered in their schools.

In addition to the housing conditions, there was one other factor all three staff members voiced as posing a challenge to the students' academic progress. They reported that many of the newly arrived students entered the school system with below grade level skills in comparison to US educational standards. The Welcome Center was created as an attempt to educate the students who had not attended school regularly or who had been provided with limited instruction in their home countries. However, one of the school staff reported that the number of these un-graded classrooms was insufficient to meet the needs of the large numbers of students with lower grade level skills. Lower academic skills sometimes resulted in placement in lower grade levels or retention in a grade. Ms. B has had experience with the ungraded and bilingual classes. She reported the following:

> I've seen a lot of Mexicans, but I've also seen a lot of Hondurians coming in lately, Dominican Republic, many of them come by airplane and have family members here, so they adjust a little quicker, but those that I'm getting lately are the kids who at the lowest part of the totem pole as far as education. They were either in the countryside or in another area where the educational system was not really enforced and they're all coming from countries that don't have compulsory education; they don't have to go to school. So, there's gaps in the education, some cases there was no education.

> And last year, in my fifth I had a student who was placed in my classroom, that's the other thing; they never have room in any of these programs. They know that the kids come throughout the year, we now have one Intake Center, we're supposed to have two Intake Centers at this level, at this grade level, you know this age level.. And last year in my classroom, I had a boy was placed in my class who was 14 or 15 years old, same situation I have with two of the students in here, could not read and write, could copy letters, so he had had some education in the Dominican Republic, but could not read or write, did not have phonic sounds or anything like that.

While the students did not voice concerns about low academic skills, the members of the school staff found this to be an important issue for the academic success of the Hispanic students It is unclear how the cumulative effect of retentions and lower grade level skills affect student rates of academic achievement and overall adjustment. Another staff member discussed student motivation in relation to academic achievement. Whereas

the newly arrived students were seen as motivated for academic achievement, Ms. C

found some of the more acculturated ones to possess less initiative. In the following

quotes, Ms. C implied that a lack of motivation contributed to lower academic

achievement among some of the eighth grade monolingual class students in her school:

> The students that belong to the Rhyme program, we went to Dupont the other day and it was very motivational because this is to encourage minorities to become engineers and there are minorities in there, motivating the students and telling them, you know, knowledge is power and very motivational, but then, again, to motivate them to have the grades to be able to apply and be accepted into the program, that's the biggest challenge.

> Later in the interview, Ms. C noted that thirteen of the 84 monolingual class

eighth-grade students in her school were failing language arts literacy:

> That is the interesting, because the monolingual students, if you look at the list, I think all but 2 have Spanish last names, so they're monolingual in the sense that they speak enough English to be in a monolingual class, culturally speaking. Culturally speaking, they're Latino children and with parents that don't speak English. So, I tell the parents, you don't have to speak English because my mother didn't speak English and my mother worked very hard. A lot of these students are like, students that I see on a regular basis, you almost want to tell them, "what's wrong with you, do you want to repeat, is that where you're heading for?"

Ms. C appears to be assigning a lack of motivation as a cause of academic

underachievement. However, it is conceivable that lower academic achievement may

influence attitudes toward school, especially given that thirteen eighth grade students

failed language arts literacy. The cumulative effect of below grade level academic skills

may have several consequences for school performance.

In summary, the student participants spontaneously raised the issues of

discrimination by school staff and school climate as part of their posthoneymoon

perception of school. From the perspective of the school staff, entering US schools with

lower grade level skills posed a significant challenge for the academic success of

Hispanic students. Finally, overcrowded housing was also cited as a factor in the

academic functioning of students due to its potential threat to their well-being.

Unsafe neighborhoods. The safety of neighborhoods also influenced aspects of

the students' lives. Participants from the monolingual and bilingual classes reported

incidents of physical assault, theft of bicycles and fights in their US neighborhoods. Not

all the students considered their new environment as dangerous. There were three

bilingual class participants who reported relatively more dangerous communities in their

home countries and felt greater protection in their new environment. However, most

comments about neighborhoods referred to more threatening environments. For several

of the bilingual participants, the threat of bicycle theft was enough to bar their use in the

community. One student's bicycle was almost stolen and, as a result, he would only ride

his bicycle if accompanied by a family member. Arturo, a 12-year-old Dominican student

born in the US described his experience with a shootout:

> Cause there's been lately a lot of shoot-outs last year…. One happened right in
> front of my building, "boom" I was playing baseball, I hear, boom, boom. I look
> and the dude he put it in his pocket and he just ran through the park and I went
> down cause I didn't want to get shot and then I went back inside with my
> grandmother. "Are you OK, OK, OK?" I said "yeah." And then the other
> occasion was when they had a shoot-out right in front of my grandmother's house
> and an old lady, I think she was in back of them and she got through here like
> that, bloop, bloop and it came out through there and um, that's about it and this
> old crippled guy came out of his apartment with a machine gun out of his
> building, he started shooting crazy…

When the students were asked how these incidents made them feel, they said:

> You are just going to get involved in one of them one of these days, you are going
> to get hurt.

> You don't feel protected no more.

> Not only physically, but emotionally, mentally, you can get traumatized…. Like a
> shoot-out, that could have traumatized him. You could be traumatized. You may

not notice it today, as young life but when you get older you're not going to feel safe, you are always going to have fear.

These comments refer to the potential long term effects of living with exposure to violence. In the midst of an unsafe environment, most students did develop friendships and found ways to socialize with peers, but the sense of caution about trusting others, and the sense of danger in the environment appeared to constrain their social relationships. They could not freely ride their bicycles to meet with friends, visit friends as often, or feel they could trust others easily.

The presence of gangs in the community was noted by Mr. A as a threat to the safety and well-being of Hispanic youth:

> I have seen a lot of students that even though they are not involved in gangs, they admire what they get out of it, the colors, the prestige, the recognition by them, but, it seems likes they're good candidates for gangs, to be gang affiliation, but they are not yet, but it seems like, admiring that part of it, it might be open the doors to join the gangs.

Mr. A believes that gangs may attract students who are in vulnerable positions. Gangs additionally affect the safety of the students due to the violence they perpetrate within the community.

Thus far, the participants have discussed aspects of school and community that affect their lives. In the next section, they consider their position within the wider society.

"They Judging a Book by its Cover". The issue of societal discrimination spontaneously emerged in all four of the monolingual focus groups and one of the bilingual class focus groups. The monolingual class students discussed this issue at length and with great passion. It was striking how similar the discussion about prejudice and stereotypes was across the monolingual class focus groups in both schools. The participants generally felt they were negatively judged by their color, dress, and cultural

background by US society, in general. In terms of skin color, the participants believed

that their devalued position was associated to the negative perception of African-

Americans held by the US. Foremost, the participants felt strongly about the injustice

surrounding the assignment of negative characteristics to their Hispanic identity. Ada, a

seventh grade student, living in the US for the past 11 years expressed her ideas:

> I get treated differently because I am part of a minority group so whenever people
> from different minority groups come, we collide, they think of me as a negative
> person and they get my culture confused with others because of my appearances. I
> get treated and labeled because of one person's actions and there's a lot of
> negative expectations of me. Also because of appearances they'll think that I am
> somebody else, they will treat me way differently than a normal person.

In another focus group, Clara echoed a similar sentiment by saying; "That we are

expected, most of us, to do less with our life than other people." Ada and Clara appear to

believe that negative expectations are assigned based on assumptions about people with

darker skin color. Furthermore, as Ada said, "one person's actions" are generalized to the

rest of the population resulting in stereotypes. Other comments follow:

> Yeah, and if you're like Hispanic and you're skin is dark, they'll think that you're
> Black and some people still are racist and they begin treating you like nothing,
> like dogs, or garbage and they be giving you the worst that they can give, instead
> of the best.

> Like when I'm with my dad in stores and places, like most people don't treat him
> the same because he's dark 'cause from where he's from in the DR, most of the
> people are dark over there and my dad is real dark and they don't treat him the
> same, they think he's from another race, but really he's Dominican and they get
> shocked when they find out what they think he is, he's… Say like certain people
> they'll treat them like a certain way, though, like small things, they'll give them
> more manners, they won't give like attitude, like with my father like they'll rush
> them with all the stuff and give him attitude.

Once stereotypes are established, negative behaviors are seen as inherent parts of

the group's identity. Two students observed that stereotypes are assigned to other ethnic

groups, as well. For example, Italians are associated with the mafia and Colombians, to

drugs. The stereotypes associated with Hispanics involved laziness, theft and other

criminal behavior. Several of the students felt that the media reinforced the stereotypes. According to these participants, television news reports, in particular, emphasized crimes committed by Hispanics and disproportionately blamed crime on Hispanics. The following are additional comments about the prevalence of stereotypes:

> Sometimes, let's say, most of the time, they say that Hispanic women don't go to college and end up being housewives or pregnant or in the streets using drugs, selling their body.

> If there was a store full of Americans and one Hispanic, they would watch the Hispanic that is innocent. They would watch the Hispanic more than the American and the American will be guilty probably of stealing something and they will be busy looking at the Hispanic, like they are going to steal something and they don't notice that the American is doing something, but the Hispanic is not.

> Ada expressed the emotional effect of feeling discriminated.

> Like most of the time, like me and my sister and my cousin, most of the time we're together. Like most of the time if we've been stressing about, we sit down and talk about it, we discuss whether it is right or not and we have our own opinions and come up with conclusions. It usually results in Ok, just forget it, it's not really worth stressing over. It's amazing how they try to be like us and they are gonna discriminate us. So most of the time when we be discussing that, it usually results in "just forget about it" cause it really isn't that important. It just interferes with your everyday life.

Nine participants reported that either they or their family members experienced acts of discrimination. One student reported that his father was not hired for a job because he is Hispanic. Another student believed that she was struck in the park by another student because she is Hispanic. Ada had this experience in the mall and in New York City:

> Um, pretty much what I said by appearance, you know in the mall, where everybody interacts and everything? When me and my sister and some of her friends go, people from other races they looked at us like we were crazy or something like that. When we walk into the store, me and some friends, they look at us like we're like gangsters or stuff like that. We are going to go rob their stores or something, when we're they're trying to buy something. So pretty much because of the way we are looking, or whatever, the way we are or the way we

speak they are going to think that we are going to cause trouble. Like when I went to the city this last year me and my mom were crossing the street and some white guy stuck his head out the window and started yelling at us you've gotta get off the street because we're Hispanic. You don't see that in New Brunswick, 'cause here in New Brunswick it's like people from different races, you know. When we go somewhere out of the city, we get discriminated against. We get judged on the way we be looking.

Cindy, a 13-year-old seventh grader, is of European-American and Puerto Rican parentage. She has formed a strong identification with her father's Puerto Rican heritage. She expressed the emotions she experienced with an act of discrimination:

> One time me and my dad we were in Texas because he had to go to a conference and we were walking around, we had never been to Texas and these people they like, they are really racist, we were walking around and everybody was yelling at my dad, "go back to PR, you don't belong here." I got so pissed, I felt like hitting somebody or crying and then I was watching the news and there was a teacher and they were saying that they should go back to their country, they don't belong here and I got so pissed and I started crying and I wanted to go to that person and start yelling at them, or something like that cause I felt so mad. I felt like I shouldn't even be here because, I should just go back.

The observation and experiences with discrimination appeared to leave Ada and other students feeling marginalized by the wider society. Ada also felt offended when the term "you people" was used as a reference to Hispanics. She believed this type of identifier failed to appreciate individual differences without pre-conceived notions about group behavior.

The sections about the honeymoon and posthoneymoon phases have captured the perceptions and experience of the newly arrived participants, as well as the more acculturated ones within the contexts of school, community and US society. The bilingual class students were generally optimistic and positive about school. They appreciated the opportunity to access an education that would lead them to a successful career. The monolingual class students focused more on the school climate and perceived discrimination of Hispanics in school and US society. Discrimination clearly emerged as

a major theme among the monolingual class participants in the contexts of school and society. Discussion about community life was raised by the bilingual and monolingual class participants. Both groups reported generally unsafe neighborhood environments. Finally, the school staff discussed the effect of overcrowded housing on student safety and the challenge of entering US schools with below grade level skills.

Being on the other side of the border also involves the development of a bicultural identity. The following section focuses on the elements of that process, summarized in Table 6. *Lost in Translation* refers to the various aspects of acquiring English as a second language. *Spanish as a Second Language* refers to the declining use of Spanish by the more acculturated participants. *Living in Two Worlds* involves the negotiation of cultural aspects of US and Hispanic culture. This subtheme also includes the ways the monolingual class participants attempted to strengthen their Hispanic ethnic identities.

Table 6

En route to a bicultural identity

	Lost in Translation	**Spanish as a Second Language**	**Living in two worlds**
Bilingual	Communication Social and emotional consequences of lack of English More English Instruction		
Monolingual		Losing Spanish More Spanish instruction	Loss of Spanish Generational tensions Negotiation of different cultural values Pride and heritage
Staff			Showing respect

Lost in Translation. Central to the development of a bicultural identity is the acquisition of the English language. The bilingual class participants cited the process of a gaining mastery of a second language as the most difficult challenge to their adjustment to a new culture. English language acquisition was raised in each of the bilingual class focus groups. Most of the bilingual class participants were well aware that English language proficiency was critical to their future success in the US. Even though they lived in a largely Hispanic community, they saw the importance of learning English. One student expressed it this way:

> Para mi también es muy importante aprender el ingles, porque en esta cultura, sin el ingles uno no es nadie, porque así uno puede encontrarse un trabajo mejor.
> (For me it is also very important to learn English because in this culture, without English, you are nobody, because this way one can find a better job).

However, the acquisition of English was most often described as difficult. Beyond the basic components of "expresar y entender," (express and understand), the participants also discussed the emotional and social consequences of a lack of English proficiency. The limited ability to communicate with the larger society also had implications for the participants' social interactions with others. Limited English fluency constrained social relationships. Beginning with expressive and receptive language skills, these students had the following comments:

> Aprenderlo, como se pronuncian las palabras y como se escribe, eso es difícil, es fácil para el que lo sabe, para el que lo esta aprendiendo, es difícil.
> (To learn it, how to pronounce the words and how to write it, that is difficult, it is easy for one who knows it, but for the one who is learning it, it is difficult).

> Mal, te dicen algo, tú como te quedas en el aire, no entiende y no sabe como responderle. (Bad, they tell you something, you are left in the air, you don't understand and you don't know how to respond to him).

The experience of blocked communication emanates from an inability to enter into verbal interactions. As the second quote conveys, the participant feels lost, as if

suspended in air. Antonio, an eighth grade student from the Dominican Republic, who arrived to the US seventeen months prior to the focus group meeting, described his experience with trying to speak in English:

> Algunas veces como yo trato de hablarlo, pero la palabra no me sale, entonces yo me calmo, y me tardo mucho para hablarlo, me calmo para un rato, entonces pienso la palabra y vuelvo y la digo.
> (Sometimes I try to speak it, but the word doesn't come out, then I calm myself, I wait a long time to speak it, I calm myself a while, then I think of the word and I return to say it).

Antonio needed to calm himself when the words in English were difficult to express. Eleven of the 28 bilingual class participants cited other feelings, such as anxiety and fear as associated with the inability to communicate in English. Words used to describe these feelings included "asustado" (afraid), "incomodo" (uncomfortable) and "nervioso" (nervous). One of the sources of anxiety involved some of the participants' perception of being placed in a vulnerable position, rendering them unable to "defenderse," to defend themselves in social situations. Six of the participants referred to these feelings. These are some of the quotes that illustrate the vulnerability experienced by the participants:

> Como que el sabe ingles, y yo no puedo.
> (Like he knows English, and I can't do it).
>
> Puede ayudar a defenderse en ocasiones difíciles.
> (It can help [knowing English] in defending yourself in difficult situations).
>
> Se pone uno nervioso, uno no sabe lo que dicen.
> (One gets nervous; you don't know what they are saying).
>
> Yo no se, yo me asusto. Quiero saber obligatoriamente lo que ellos están diciendo.
> (I don't know, I get scared. I must know what they are saying).

These quotes reflect an experience of being in a disadvantaged position. Those who speak English appear to have the upper hand in the social interaction. Not only was

fear and anxiety experienced, but feelings of frustration and anger were experienced

when the students' ability to communicate to others was blocked:

> Si uno quiere expresarse y no puede por no saber por no saber el idioma, eso te
> frustra.
> (If you want to express yourself and you can't because you don't know the
> language, that frustrates you).

> Aja, yo me enojo a veces porque a veces me preguntan cosas, direcciones, y me
> da coraje no entender y no poderle contestar, pero a la vez me pongo a pensar, ya
> aprenderá, tranquila.
> (Yes, I get angry sometimes because sometimes they ask me things, directions,
> and I get angry that I don't understand and I can't answer, but, at the same time, I
> start to think, you will learn, calm yourself).

Four students in four separate focus groups were embarrassed by their lack of

English proficiency. This feeling was expressed with words such as "ponerse rojo" (to get

red) and "avergonzado" (ashamed). Additionally, the shame related to a lack of English

language skills appeared to carry an implication of being perceived as less intelligent.

The students appeared to perceive English language proficiency as possessing a higher

value. Ana, a 14-year-old participant from the Dominican Republic, had only been living

two months in the US at the time of the focus group meeting. She expressed her

sentiments as follows:

> A mi también me da vergüenza porque como yo no sé ingles, y también todo el
> mundo me dice algo y yo no sé que contestarle porque no sé lo que me dicen. Yo
> bajo la cabeza y camino, y ellos me quedan mirando y yo no sé lo que decirle. Eso
> me da mucha vergüenza, pero yo le estoy echándole muchas ganas a las clases y a
> todo para que en un mañana ya sea una persona inteligente.
> (I also get embarrassed because since I don't know English, and also everybody
> says something to me and I don't know what to answer them because I don't
> know what they are saying. I lower my head and walk, and they stay looking at
> me and I don't know what to say to them. That makes me very embarrassed. But I
> am trying hard in the classes and at everything so that someday I will be an
> intelligent person).

Alberto, a 14-year-old student from Honduras expressed similar feelings:

> Cuando uno habla mas ingles ya uno sabe comunicarse, pero con los niños que
> casi no hablan ingles, ellos casi siempre pierden los grados, como "yo no hablo

ingles," no hacen nada, siempre están solos, le dan pena preguntar, o se creen que no pueden.
(When one speaks more English, you already know how to communicate, but with the children that hardly speak English, they almost always get left back, like "I don't speak English," they don't do anything, they are always alone, they are embarrassed about asking, or they think they can't do it)

The above quotes illustrate how some students may withdraw from certain social situations with English-speaking peers due to the lack of English fluency. The various implications of a lack of English fluency help explain the newly arrived students' eagerness to master the language. In order to attain English proficiency at a quicker pace, some of the students expressed a desire to receive more English instruction in school than was being offered. English language proficiency would diminish the anxiety, frustration, embarrassment, and vulnerability the participants experienced. Social relations with English-only speakers would be less constrained and fraught with suspicion and distrust ("I don't know, I get scared. I must know what they are saying").

The lack of English proficiency is also related to more practical affairs that pertain to feeling defenseless within the environment. Marisol felt especially vulnerable in the event she was lost in her new environment:

Por ejemplo si te pierdes…y tu no sabes hablar el idioma, como va a preguntarle a la gente? Es importante aprender el idioma.
(For example, if you get lost….and you don't know how to speak the language, how are you going go ask people? It is important to learn the language).

The thought of losing your way and being unable to communicate rendered the presence of other Spanish-speakers in school and the community a relief and a surprise to many of the participants:

Yo pensé que era todo en ingles, y yo por eso no quería venir aquí.
(I thought it was all in English, and that is why I didn't want to come here).

Yo pensaba que yo no sabia mucho ingles, entonces yo pensaba que todas las clases me la daban en ingles, entonces no fue así. Me mandaron a la clase

bilingüe. Me pusieron allí y me hablaron en español. Yo pensaba que era todo en ingles.
(I thought that I did not know much English, and then I thought that all the classes would be in English, then, it wasn't like that. They sent me to the bilingual class. They put me there and spoke to me in Spanish. I thought it would be all in English).

In summary, the bilingual participants cited the lack of English proficiency as the most challenging part of adjusting to US culture. The inability to communicate in English imposed limits to social interactions with non-Spanish speakers. Moreover, the feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, frustration, and vulnerability seemed to contribute to distancing behaviors from the non-Spanish speaking peers. However, the anxiety about the inability to communicate in English appeared to be diminished by the presence of other Spanish-speakers. Several of the students expressed pre-immigration anxiety about being in classes that would be taught only in English. While learning English was expressed as a major goal of the bilingual class participants, the monolingual class students had their own ideas about a second language.

Spanish as a second language. A theme that emerged for the students in two monolingual class focus groups involved the decline of Spanish language fluency with increased levels of acculturation. In one monolingual focus group, the participants voiced a desire to increase Spanish language proficiency. The participants acknowledged that they were losing their ability to speak Spanish fluently. While Spanish was the primary language spoken in the home, the participants spoke English in school and with friends. Lisa, a 13-year-old seventh grade student, who was born in the US of Honduran parentage, felt the pressure around the issue of language:

See like, at home, I feel like I'm in an environment of Hispanics, sometimes in school I feel like different, like American. I mostly speak English in school. I mostly speak Spanish in my house because that is what my parents taught me and

they want me to learn new words, and stuff and my father gets mad when I don't pronounce a sentence right, like in Spanish, if I say something like weird, he'll start screaming at me; you need to learn Spanish, I talk Spanish for a reason and you should too. I'm used to English, cause that' what I do 30 hours a week. I talk a lot of English, not as much as Spanish.

Lisa is expected to maintain Spanish fluency by her father, but she finds that difficult when she is increasingly immersed in English. Lisa's quote also points to the potential for tension to develop between parents and children around the issue of language. Later in the same focus group, Lisa made a recommendation that would strengthen her Spanish-speaking skills:

Talk more Spanish; pick a class like in New York we used to have a Latin class, not like Greek. We should get a Spanish class so they can teach us more Spanish. They should teach us more Spanish. What if you don't understand in the future, we are going to have to learn somewhere because our parents are not going to be there forever.

Lisa also seemed to have felt an obligation to retain the Spanish language and feared that if she didn't learn it soon, she could lose it. Declining verbal abilities in Spanish affected a few of the participants' interaction with parents. Lourdes, who was also born in the US, raised the issue of intergenerational communication:

Here in monolingual, they always talking in English and English, but if you go to your house, and your mom wants to know a word, but you can't say it in Spanish, you know the meaning of the word, but you don't know how to say it in Spanish.

There is potential to have communication constrained between parents and children when the words of the once commonly shared language are forgotten by the children. For those students who felt comfortable in both languages, their self-perception appeared to be enhanced. Marisa, also born in the US of Puerto Rican and Guatemalan parentage, recognized the advantages of being bilingual:

When you go somewhere and they talk English and you speak both languages that makes you feel good because when you work and you speak both languages

maybe they pay you more and sometimes it helps other people and you can teach them Spanish or English.

The issue of language held different meanings for the bilingual and monolingual participants. For the bilingual class students, the lack of English proficiency raised feelings of vulnerability and affected their ability to function in US society. On the school level, the absence of English fluency further affected their ability to verbally interact with English-only peers and staff. The importance of language for the monolingual participants was related to their interest in strengthening their ethnic identities. As a component of a bicultural identity, gaining Spanish language proficiency appeared to enhance their self-concept. Additionally, Spanish fluency improved communication with their parents.

Living in two worlds. Other than learning more Spanish, the monolingual participants sought to strengthen their cultural identities via other channels. Students in two monolingual class focus groups sought stronger identifications with their particular Hispanic ethnic group. In one of the groups, two of the students expressed a desire to learn more about their cultural history and heritage. In the other group, most of the students believed that their school ignored their particular Hispanic ethnic group, bestowing too much attention to the Mexican population. The participants in this focus group asserted that the important holidays of their ethnic groups were not recognized by the school during the morning announcements. Cultural celebrations are usually acknowledged during this time and such holidays as the independence day of the Dominican Republic were not announced. Two participants expressed how they perceived the situation:

> When there's assemblies, the only main flags you see is the Mexican and American flag. There's Puerto Rican, Dominicans that come to this school, too. What about those people? Whenever there's a flag parade, you see those flags all the way in the back where people can't see them anymore. Mexico and America is right there. I don't mind the American flag, but, you know, why does it have to be only Mexico? Why can't it be the other flags, too? We all want to represent for our country. It's like an offense to us.

> We'll be in assembly and people will bring those big flags to show "viva," wherever they're from. And they'll say, don't do that because it's disrespectful. You only represent Mexico, you don't let us represent where we're from. So, why should we even be coming here because you only do Mexican stuff and you don't do anything for Puerto Ricans, or Dominicans and it's not right.

The participants also expressed their particular group identity by displaying various symbols of ethnic heritage, such as small flags on their backpacks or on bracelets. It was interesting that during the focus group, the participants drew the flags of their countries of origin while they spoke. They expressed a strong desire to display their pride in their heritage through these various symbols.

Other students reinforced their ethnic identities when they returned to visit their native countries or their parents' country of origin. For those students who have legal documentation, trips to the parental home country are possible. Three students reported that they had visited their parental country of origin. For example, Josefina, a 13-year-old seventh grade student, was born in US, of African-American and Dominican parentage. She has developed a strong connection to the food, music, and culture of the Dominican Republic. In the following quote, she expresses her desire to spend more time on the island in order to obtain a deeper connection to her heritage:

> I told my mom that I want to go live in the Dominican Republic for a while because like to learn new things, like I haven't really been there. I was only there in my mother's stomach. I haven't really saw how it looks. So, I told my mom I want to go live down there for a while because I know everything that I hear, what they teach in school and outside of school, like when I'm dancing with my friends. Now, I want to go to the Dominican Republic and learn new things and learn new dances, and stuff.

Dania, age 12, has been in the US for most of her life and expresses similar sentiments:

> Yeah, because I go to the Dominican like once a year and like every time I go I feel better about myself, going back to my country and learning new things about it. Like if I never go, what's the whole point of being Dominican? I don't know anything about it then. But I go every year so I learn new things about it. I go to paradises and I hear all kinds of music, see dances, eat their food and everything. So I learn new things.

Dania's comments point to how her strong, positive identification with her Dominican roots is enhanced by the frequent trips to visit the island. "Learning new things about it" is a way to discover aspects of your family history and of yourself, as well. Dania equated the increased knowledge about the Dominican Republic with greater feelings of self-esteem. Music, dances and customs, as representations of culture, serve as identifiers of her heritage. However, for some students, visiting their parental home country was associated with less positive experiences. For some of the acculturating participants, visits to the home countries were reminders of how they were evolving during the process of cultural change with the pull and push of two cultures. Some students experienced a sense of rejection from the people in the parental home country. For example, Elisa was born in the US, returned to Mexico at the age of two years, returning to the US at the age of eight years. She is one of the few students who is here legally and able to visit Mexico:

> I'm not as comfortable because learning a new language. I am changing because I am living here and maybe if I go back, maybe people will not treat me like they used to. I'm changing and they're the same.

Elisa has not been fully comfortable during the process of learning English in the US, but she is also concerned about how others in Mexico will receive her. She is "learning a new language," that takes her away from her roots. Elisa realizes she is

changing and senses the creation of a rift between herself and the people she once lived

with. Later in the focus group, she spoke about her experience during a visit to Mexico.

> Sometimes even your own family, 'cause some people, people from your town, you go spend 2-3 years here and you go back and you dress the way you were dressing here, then they tell you, "oh, you're a gringa, you're not like us anymore, you don't speak like us, you are different. You be happy like a gringa, or whatever.

Elisa felt that signs of identification with European-American culture, through

dress or changes in behavior, were unwelcome by her family and resulted in rejection.

For Elisa, there is a sense of "we" and "them" when her family says "you're not like us

anymore." Elise is not fully comfortable in either world.

Cindy, the participant with a European-American mother and Puerto Rican father

visited Puerto Rico and was also called a *gringa*. Similarly to Elise, Cindy finds the label

offensive. The label *gringa* creates a separation between these participants and the

parental culture:

> Yeah, they will call me that 'cause everybody was Hispanic, they would be calling me "la gringa," or whatever, and I said "just shut up," just because I'm half white doesn't mean you have to call me like that, it's really disrespectful.

Other participants felt welcomed during visits to the parental countries of origin.

They considered those communities as safe havens where they could play freely outdoors

for long periods of time, unlike their US neighborhoods. One student, Raul, who

regularly visits family in the Dominican Republic, expressed it this way:

> I go mostly every, I like it over there because you don't have to worry about all the stuff that you worry about like in America. In America, you have to worry about going outside and wondering what's going to happen to you. In the Dominican Republic, if you go outside, you don't have to worry because most of the people that are bad they are not around in that kind of part where you be at. They probably come out at night, you don't worry in the daytime and plus there's freedoms that you have over there.

Visiting the countries of origin can provide varying experiences in the quest to clarify and establish the participants' place within two cultures. Living in two cultures can involve differing meanings attributed to the same behavior, based on cultural expectations. This was especially problematic in school if the staff did not understand the different cultural meaning of the behavior. Gabriel, age 13, who had arrived from Guatemala four years before the focus group meeting, gave an example of how a nonverbal communication can have different meanings for two cultures:

> Una vez… cuando a uno lo regaña uno mayor, uno agacha la cara en mi país, y aquí, 'look at my eyes,' pero eso no es mi costumbre, yo agacho la cara, tuve un problema con un maestro porque no, mi costumbre es de agachar los ojos, la cara. cuando me están regañando. Me puse en problema.
> (One time… when one gets reprimanded by an elder in my country, one lowers your face, and here, 'look in my eyes,' but that is not my custom, I lower my face. I had a problem with a teacher because I didn't; my custom is to lower my eyes, my face, when I am being reprimanded. It caused a problem for me).

Nancy, who was born in the US of Honduran parentage, also faced the same dilemma. How does one meet the different expectations of each culture?

> In our country in order to show an adult respect is by looking down, but here in the US, you show the person that you respecting them and that you are hearing what they saying, you have look them straight in the eyes, so that's what I'm saying, at home my mom is yelling at me, she like 'why you looking at me?' I like, 'that's how the teachers tell me to do, in order to show respect to an adult you have to look straight in the eye,' She says 'no, no, no, in my home, you gonna do whatever I say, look down." OK, I'm looking down, and then when I come to school. Though I follow my mom's, whatever she tells me to do when I was younger, now that I'm older and then the teachers start yelling at me and you get in trouble, like I'm trying to do the, trying to show you the respect that you want, but how am I gonna do it when there's two different ways that you have to show respect?

One of the members of the school personnel also remarked on this issue of differing cultural expressions of respect. She has tried to explain the difference to the school administrators when they are disciplining students:

> I find, when they first get here, for about a year or so, depending on the teachers in the situation, in a self-contained classroom, definitely, in a situation where they're switching classes, not so much, but I find that the Latino kids have more

respect for their teachers, for the administration, for their elders. As much as I have, I have one child out now, on another three day suspension, he's three years in the country, still gets into trouble and everything, but I have to say, regardless of the trouble he's been in, the administration talks to him, he puts his head down in shame. When I explain to the assistant principal, "please look at me." Well, Hispanics don't look in the eye when they're in trouble, you put your head down, you don't look at your elder in the eye, you get in trouble, it's a lack of respect. So, they definitely show a lot of respect for their elders.

In addition to variation in ways that respect is expressed, the students discussed other differences they perceived between US and Hispanic values. For example, the students spoke about the high level of materialism in US culture. This topic was raised in two of the four monolingual class focus groups. Some participants thought that children in Hispanic countries were more appreciative of their possessions, while US children took them for granted. The students appeared to be weighing the gains and losses involved in a bicultural identity. While they possessed more in material goods, a sense of their value appeared to have been lost. Here are some of the comments they made:

> The thing I like about DR, the kids over there, they don't take stuff for granted over there, they cherish everything that they get. As of over here, the kids they, most kids they, like money to kids over here is nothing, but for kids that get it in the DR, they'll kill to have money and like they cherish what they have, that's what I like about over there.

> I think that here many people care more about getting money than about their family. In Mexico, they might not have, or in other Hispanic, they do not care about the money as long as they have the family together. I think that some Hispanic people try, when they come here, they have family, that they try to give them the best because they didn't have it, but it actually makes it the worse because they might have everything in the world, but not their love. So, I think that many people should evaluate how they think about giving their kids.

In summary, living in two worlds includes the negotiation of two languages and two sets of cultural values. For the bilingual class participants, gaining English proficiency was on the top of their priority list. On the other hand, some of the monolingual class students were losing proficiency in Spanish, but interested in gaining better mastery of the language. Beyond language, various monolingual class participants

demonstrated interest in strengthening their Hispanic ethnic group identity either by clamoring for greater recognition of their particular group, or by wearing symbols representative of their countries of origin.

Another major issue that involves both sides of the border was that of the family. The following chapter will cover the changing dynamics of the family during the process of acculturation.

Chapter 6: All in the Family: Changes in the primary support network

The family was a topic raised in all of the bilingual class focus groups (6) and three of the four monolingual class focus groups. The results clustered around three sub-themes. When asked about what helped them when they were going through difficult experiences, most of the participants considered their families as their primary support network. As a major coping strategy, changes in the family dynamics would consequently affect the management of stress. Second, the newly arrived students reported mostly about issues related to the separation, reunification, and reconfiguration of their families. The immigration process resulted in multiple changes in the configuration of families over time. Third, the monolingual class participants focused on different family issues relating to how culturally bound parenting styles affect intergenerational relations. Table 7 summarizes the subthemes emphasized by each group.

Table 7

All in the Family

	Family as Primary Support	**Separation, Reunification and Reconfiguration**	**Evolving Parenting Styles**	**Family Obligations**
Bilingual	Family as major source of support	Loss Changes in family configuration		
Monolingual	Family as major source of support		Intergenerational issues related to acculturation Differing cultural values Gender issues, Family obligations	Family obligations - parents and students
Staff		Reconfiguration, Gender issues		Parents' work hours and - student supervision, Responsibilities placed on students Effect on school.

Family as Primary Support

While the participants cited a variety of coping measures, the family was

mentioned most frequently (nine out of ten focus groups) as the primary source of

support. Some of the other coping strategies included talking to friends, going to school

and listening to music. Even when the participants did not directly turn to the family in

times of stress, some of the coping strategies still involved the family. For example, two

of the participants looked at pictures of the loved ones they had left behind in their home

country as sources of comfort when experiencing feelings of loss. Family support

extended beyond the nuclear family to a range of other relatives. Grandparents, aunts, and

cousins were included among those accessed in times of stress. The participants

considered their family as a major facilitator in their adjustment to a different culture. For some students, a high level of family support served to mitigate the difficulties experienced in the adaptation process. Here are some of the comments they made:

> Para mi no ha sido difícil, como uno se acostumbra mucho a estar aquí, que mi abuela me ha enseñado, me ha dado consejo como vivir aquí, yo lo he llevado en mi mente, los consejos, y los seguidos a así me acostumbre muy rápido a vivir aquí.
> (For me it hasn't been difficult, one gets used to being here, my grandmother has taught me, she has given me advice in how to live here. I have kept their advice in my head and I have followed it and that is how I have I got used to living here quickly).

> Mi mama, mi abuela, mis tíos, mi hermano, mi otro hermano, y mis estudios, me gusta estar mas con mi mama. Pero también me gusta que mi mama y mi papa estén juntos, porque entre los dos me pueden apoyar, apoyar a mis hermanos y así vivir feliz de la vida.
> (My mother, my grandmother, my uncles, my brother, my other brother and my studies, I like to be more with my mother. But I like to have my mother and father together because between the two of them, they can support me, support my brothers and so live happily).

> Acostumbrarme aquí es estar con toda mi familia juntos. Yo me acostumbro más con ellos, en parte nos llevan a conocer otros sitios, vamos a la familia de mis tíos, mis primos y me acostumbro más.
> (To get used to being here is to be together with all of my family. I can get accustomed better with them, partly because they take us to learn about other places, we go to the family of my uncles, my cousins and I adapt better).

> Family members are seen as facilitating the navigation through the new culture.

They advise, expose the participants to the new environment, and incorporate many relatives in the process of adjustment. However, some of the students left their closest relatives in their home country and had to find ways to ease the pain of loss while they established new supportive relationships. The following excerpt from a focus group highlights some of the measures used by the participants:

> #3—También nosotros como mis abuelitos nos mandan fotos de ellos acá. Mi mama tiene retratos allí, pues en la pared. Como yo y mis otros dos hermanos grandes, estamos en un cuarto, y mi mama y mi papa en otro cuarto, y mi mama nos da fotos de ella porque dice mi abuelita que no nos olvidemos de ella porque ella nos crió.

(Also, for us, our grandparents send us pictures of them. My mother has pictures there, on the wall. Since my brother and two older brothers are in one room, and my mother and father in another room, my mother gives us the pictures of her because she says that we shouldn't forget our grandmother because she raised us).
#1—Cuando yo me siento así triste, cuando me quiero regresar a mi país, yo a veces le hablo por teléfono, miro fotos o cuando hablo con ellos me siento mas mejor.
(When I feel sad, when I want to return to my country, I sometimes call on the telephone, look at pictures and hen I speak to them, I feel better).
#2—Yo casi todos los días les hablo. Los únicos días que no les hablo es a veces los domingos porque con mi papa y mi mama salimos. El domingo es el día que mas salimos y no les puedo hablar porque tal vez venimos muy de noche y aunque aquí son dos horas mas adelantadas, pero tal vez ellos ya están durmiendo.
(I talk to them almost every day. The only days that I don't speak to them is sometimes on Sundays because I go out with my father and mother. Sunday is the day we go out and I can't speak to them because perhaps we get home late and although here it is two hours ahead, but perhaps they are already asleep).

Photographs and communication by way of telephone are additional ways to maintain the connection to loved ones and to continue to access them as sources of support. Family also helps in the adjustment process by providing words of support to the participants. Sometimes participants derived encouragement and motivation by the example their family members provided. Diana, a 13-year-old monolingual class student sees a purpose to her mother's scolding:

I think many kids lose out on their childhood when they have to work because they don't get to play outside or be with friends and all they have to do is work. I think that my mom, some Hispanic parents, they do push you and do yell at you for not getting good grades because they don't want you to end up like them.

Paul finds inspiration in the example of fortitude his mother offers.

My mom, I know, like the main thing that helps me go on like every day is my mom because my mom she's no longer with my dad and my dad doesn't live around here, he lives like in another state, so my mom has to raise, my mom has six kids, so she has to raise them all by herself and she has a job and she has to manage six kids, so to me that helps me go to sleep, like when I'm down and out and I know, I say to myself I can't do this, I have to think of my mom, she's says it to herself everyday, but she keeps making it by herself.

While the presence of supportive family members was seen as a shield against stress by

the majority of the participants, the students from the bilingual class focus groups had their primary support system shaken during the immigration process. They had to sever close family relationships, due to their own immigration or the immigration of significant family members to the US.

Separation

Five of the six bilingual focus groups largely spoke about the separation, reunification, and reconfiguration of their families. Twenty four of the 28 bilingual class participants reported having been separated from either their mothers or fathers. This number does not include the students who did not report a separation. There was one participant who had been separated from her mother for ten years before they were reunited. Some of the participants hardly knew their fathers because they had left for the US when they were very young. Separations occurred either because parents left for the US, or the participants immigrated to the US, leaving parents and other family members behind. The pattern of immigration generally involved one or both parents leaving the student with a grandparent or other relative in the home country. The parents who had immigrated illegally were consequently unable to return to their home countries to visit their children. Conversely, the parents with legal status were at least able to visit their children periodically. Most of the students experienced the loss of their mothers more deeply. Juan, a 14-year-old from the Dominican Republic, had arrived to the US seventeen months prior to the focus group to live with his father. He spoke of the experience of leaving his mother:

> A mi afecta más por mi mama porque con ella fue que yo me crié el mayor tiempo, con ella yo estaba impuesto, ella no me hablaba como muy fuerte igual que mi papa. Siempre me quería quedar con ella y la quería mucho, y mi abuela.

(It affects me more because of my mother, because she was the one who raised me for the most part, I was used to her, she did not speak to me as strongly as my father. I always wanted to stay with her and I loved her a lot, and my grandmother)

Another focus group member agreed with him.

Igual que yo, yo me llevaba mas con mi mama que con mi papa porque como mi papa es mecánico, mi abuelo tiene un taller de mecánica, so, mi papa siempre como el pasaba, antes que yo me iba para la escuela, el se iba para el trabajo, y volvía como a las seis, siete, ocho de la tarde o noche, so pasaba mas tiempo con mi mama, so me acostumbre mas a ella.
(Me, too, I got along better with my mother than my father because since my father is a mechanic, my grandfather has a mechanic's shop, so, my father always left before I would go to school, he would go to work, and he would return like at six, seven, eight at night, so I spent more time with my mother, so I got used to her more).

Although some of the students felt closer to their mothers, fathers were also missed:

Yo también extraño a mi papa. Yo quiero que el este juntos con nosotros aquí, pero el ha hecho viaje, pero no ha podido cruzar para acá.
(I also miss my father. I want him to be together with us here, but he's planned a trip, but has not been able to come over here).

Porque yo, a mi me gusta estar con mi papa, el viene cada, el vino el otro año y el viene otra vez, y yo quiero que como mi mama y mi papa estén juntos, que no estén separados. (Because I like to be with my father. He comes every, he came the other year and he will come again, and I want my mother and father to be together, not separated).

Focus group participants were separated from their parents and siblings at varying points of development. Some parents left the participants when they were very young, resulting in the participants' development of very strong bonds to the relatives who cared for them in their parents' absence. Grandmothers were often charged with parental responsibilities. The close attachment to grandmothers was expressed by the following focus group participants. Elsa, a 12-year-old from Mexico shared what it felt to leave her grandmother:

Al siguiente día nosotros nos íbamos a venir, entonces fue, nos despedimos, yo no quería venir, pero tenía que hacerlo. Me dolió mas dejar a mi abuelita porque ella

es muy ancianita y yo la quiero mas que no se porque ella me crió desde que yo tenia 3 años y hasta los 11 años. Yo le tuve cariño más a ella.
(The next day we were going to come, then we said goodbye. I did not want to come, but I had to do it. It hurt me more to leave my grandmother because she is very old and I love her more than I don't know what because she raised me since I was three years old until 11 years old. I had more affection for her)

Sara, a 12-year-old Mexican student, here in the US for two years prior to the

focus group, expressed similar sentiments:

> También porque mi abuelita me cuidó y yo me vine cuando tenia 11 años para acá, y ahora tengo 12. Cuando yo me vine yo sentía algo así mal que a mi abuelita le iba a pasar algo …. Pero lo pasó… entonces como mi tía y mi otra tía, mis dos tías están en México y yo le dije que la cuidara. Mi mama siempre le manda dinero a ella que compre su medicina y dice me abuelita que ella quiere que yo me vaya mas para allá. Pero mi mama dice que no, hasta que este grande.
> (Also because my grandmother took care of me and I came here when I was 11 years old and I now am 12 year. When I came, I felt something bad like something was going to happen to my grandmother… but it passed. Then, since my aunt and my other aunt, my two aunts are living in Mexico and I told them to take care of her. My mother always sends her money so that she can buy medicine and my grandmother wants me to go live with her. But, my mother says no, until I am big).

In their home countries, most of the participants were surrounded by extended

family members, who were closely involved in their daily lives. Social activities included

aunts, uncles, and cousins, widening the field of loss. The following quotes speak to the

separation from extended family members:

> Difícil a dejar mi tía, mi abuelito.
> (Difficult, to leave my aunt, my grandfather).

> Para mi fue difícil también a dejar mis tíos, dejar a mi familia, a Santo Domingo, porque eso es muy difícil También acostumbrarme a vivir aquí, dejar a mi hermana, yo tengo una hermanita de cinco anos. Fue difícil, porque yo no la vi. Cuando venia para acá, mi papa no me la llevo a ver. Fue muy difícil para mí.
> (For me it was also difficult to leave my aunts and uncles, leave my family Santo Domingo, because that is very difficult. Also, to get used to living here, leave my sister. I have a little sister five years of age. It was difficult because I didn't see her. Before I left, my father did not take me to see her. It was very difficult for me).

For the participants who are in the US illegally, it is conceivable that some of the separations will be permanent, especially regarding the relationship with grandparents, who would most likely remain in their countries. However, loss and separation from family members at the point of immigration was followed by reconnection to other family members once in the US.

Reunification

Most of the participants described the reunion with family members as a happy occasion. Some students had been longing to be reunited with their parents for many years. For others, the reunion proved more challenging. Because the students had not lived with their parents or other family members for long periods of time, they had to adjust to living with people they may have only spoken to on the phone, or seen in photographs. Liliana, age 13, had arrived in the US nine months prior to the focus group. She and her sister had lived with their grandparents in Honduras before immigrating to the US. Their parents sent enough money to provide for a financially comfortable standard of living, but that was not enough to make them happy:

> Yo si tenía porque ellos nos mandaban dinero, o sea, teníamos dinero y todo, pero no teníamos a mi papa, ni a mi mama, o hermanos. Lo que nos faltaba a mi y mi hermana
> …En Honduras tenia todo como le dije solo no tenia a mis padres.
> (I did have [financial security] because they used to send us money, in other words, we had money and everything, but we did not have my father, nor my mother, or brothers. What my sister and I were missing in Honduras were our parents).

Later in the focus group, Liliana spoke more about the early separation from her parents and the reunion:

> Cuando mi papa se vino para acá yo tenia tres años… así no me acordaba, estaba muy pequeña. Mi mama se vino cuando yo tenía cinco años. Y cuando estábamos nosotros allá en Nueva York ella nos miro, nos reconoció… porque ella nos había

visto por foto, verdad, y por video, entonces y de ahí todo feliz. De primero, cuando nos miraban nos pusimos a llorar de la alegría, se sentía bien bonito.
(When my father left to come here, I was three years old, so I don't remember, I was too little. My mother left when I was five years old. When we were over there in New York, she looked at us, recognized us… because she had seen us in pictures and video, then from there all was happy. At first, when they saw us, we started to cry from happiness, it felt so good).

Liliana had lost both her parents through immigration at an early age and despite her comfortable standard of living, she wanted to be with her parents. Ana, age 14, from the Dominican Republic, had been in the US for two years at the time of the focus group. She expressed her happiness at being reunited with extended family members:

Cuando yo tenía ocho anos, ocho años que yo no veía a mi abuela ni a mi abuelo y cuando lo ví, me puse bien alegre. Me puse muy feliz cuando lo ví..
(When I was eight years old, eight years that I didn't see my grandmother or my grandfather and when I saw them, I became very happy. I was very happy when I saw them).

Other comments from focus group participants included:

Es fácil estar con mi familia y hermanos porque estamos juntos ahora todos, mi papa y mi mama.
(It is easy to be with my family and my brothers because now we are all together, my father and my mother).

Yo aquí estoy feliz. Yo ya me acostumbre porque aquí estoy con toda mi familia, mi mama, mi papa, mis hermanos. Pero extraño más a mi abuelita (de mi mama).
(I am happy here. I am already accustomed because I am with my whole family here, my mother, my father and my brothers. But, I miss my grandmother most).

The above participants reported overall positive results to the reunification process. However, there was one participant, Jacinto, age 13, who felt that his mother had changed and was not as emotionally available as she once was:

Para mi fue negativo porque mi mama no es como era antes, que nos hacía caso y nos llevaba a todo lugar. Ahora le hace caso a su marido.
(It was negative for me because my mother isn't the way she used to be; she used to pay attention to us and would take us everywhere. Now, she pays attention to her husband).

Jacinto implies that his mother's change in behavior is related to the presence of his step-father in her life. Like Jacinto, some students found a newly configured family once they arrived in the US.

Reconfiguration

For participants like Jacinto, the adjustment to a newly configured family was a major challenge to the overall adjustment to a new environment. Examples of the reconfiguration of families included mothers who were living with new partners in the US or participants who were sent to live with unfamiliar relatives. For Jacinto, not only had his mother changed, but he also had to adjust to a step-father he found disagreeable. In the following quote, Jacinto describes the difficult relationship that has developed with his step-father:

> Mi mama me dice que me tengo que controlar con Javier, mi padrastro… Porque le grito, yo me llevo nada con mi padrastro, nos peleamos, le digo cosas y mi mama me dice que me tengo que controlarme… Porque allá yo no tenía a mi padrastro, yo feliz, tenía mi mama, con mi tía. Era yo allá mas libre Yo no peleaba mucho, como peleo aquí con Javier, me sentía allá mas contento allá que aquí. (My mother says that I have to control myself with Javier, my step-father … Because I yell at him, I don't get along with him at all, we fight, I tell him things and my mother tells me that I have to control myself. .Because over there I didn't have a step-father, I was happy, I had my mother, and my aunt. Over there I felt a greater freedom. I didn't fight a lot, like I fight here with Javier. I felt happier there than here).

Jacinto's situation poses multiple challenges. Jacinto is a participant who crossed the border illegally, after making one unsuccessful attempt. Upon his arrival to the US, he is reunified with his mother. He is simultaneously introduced to his step-father. Jacinto is told he must get along with his step-father, whom he dislikes and his anger is palpable through his report of yelling at him. These challenges are in addition to the challenges of learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture, and achieving academic success.

Among all of the focus group participants, Jacinto gave the impression of being the

unhappiest with his situation:

Gabriel, from the Dominican Republic echoed similar sentiments about his step-

father:

Yo tengo mi papa que vive en Santo Domingo y es ciudadano Americano, y
entonces mi mama, yo tengo un padrastro, entonces cuando yo llegué aquí yo no
me llevo, no me llevo, con el, hasta la fecha.
(My father lives in Santo Domingo and is an American citizen, and I have my
mother. I have a step-father, then, when I arrived here, I don't get along, up to this
point, I don't get along with him).

Gabriel also found a reconfigured family when he arrived to the US. His situation with

his step-father was further complicated by his desire to be with his father.

Samuel, age 14, from a different focus group, arrived from the Dominican

Republic three years prior to the focus group. He found himself living with a side of the

family he was unfamiliar with:

Pa' mi no es fácil porque es diferente con la familia, con otra familia que sea su
familia.
(It is not easy for me because it is different with the other family.

Carmelo, another classmate from the Dominican Republic, agreed:

También como uno estaba acostumbrado a la otra familia y se va acostumbrando
a la otra familia y cuando va a otra nueva familia, uno se siente como frustrado,
nervioso o algo así, pero después uno se acostumbra.
(Also, when you are used to the other family and when you go to a new family,
one feels, like, frustrated, nervous, or something like that, but you get used to it).

Samuel and Carmelo express anxiety, difficulty, and frustration in relation to

having to adjust to a newly configured family that included members they did not know.

One other student, in a similar situation, remarked about how his new family in the US

had different habits and behaviors than the family he was accustomed to in his home

country. Sometimes, the participants found different parenting styles in the new families.

One participant, who was sent to live in the US with his father, felt that his father was

harsher in his parenting approach, while his mother was more "suave," or softer in terms of discipline.

Ms. B, who has had extensive experience with the newly arrived Hispanic students, echoed the challenges of the participants in relation to the reconfiguration of the family:

> Then you have children who possibly, in their country, were left with either one parent or a grandparent, or family member back in their country and then are now coming to be with a different family member or parent, um, you know that's not the easiest thing. We have several students in this class who have been struggling behavior-wise and we find out that their parent was not the parent who raised them, you know they were raised by a grandparent, someone else, so that whole respect that gets built, the trust that gets built, that affection is isn't there yet.

Ms. B alludes to the connection between students who are having difficulty adjusting to reconfigured families and their expression of distress through negative behaviors in school. The transfer of authority from the parental figures in the home country to the newly established authority figures was not necessarily a smooth process. Because the family was considered the primary source of support for the participants, the experiences of loss and destabilization of the family had the potential to affect the overall adjustment to school and the US.

Family issues were equally important to the monolingual class participants. However, they focused on intergenerational issues related to acculturation.

Evolving Parenting Styles

Three out of the four monolingual class focus groups discussed family related issues. While the bilingual class participants were busy adapting to the changes caused by

the separation, reunion, and reconfiguration of their families, the monolingual class

students were focused more on inter-generational parenting topics. Because these

students had been born in the US, or had spent a longer period of time residing here, the

negotiation of the values and expected behaviors of the two cultures received greater

attention. Tensions were reported when students moved away from some of the cultural

expectations of their parents, such as traditional gender roles, or overprotection. Some of

the monolingual class participants felt more constrained in relation to the amount of

freedom they were permitted by their parents. For example, one female participant spoke

about the parental rule forbidding a sleep-over at a friend's house. In the following quote,

Ms. C, commented on how tensions can develop around the issue of parental restrictions:

> They feel that their parents don't understand them because they want to do things, things are different, and sometimes, Latinos tend to overprotect in a way also, and they want the 13-year-old to stay home cleaning and helping with the little brothers and she wants to have time to go to the movies and go out with her friends. So, at times, they rebel.

> In terms of the gender issues alluded to by Ms. C, some of the participants

disagreed with the traditional male-female roles their parents expected from them. The

participants in one monolingual class focus group debated this issue intensely.

Specifically, the female participants were offended by the greater freedom given to the

boys in the family. Elizabeth, a second-generation Dominican, expressed her views on

the matter:

> The boys get more freedom because if you are outside your house with a boy, he drops you off, your mom comes out, you get in trouble. If it was a boy with a girl, the boy with the girl, they won't do nothing. They keep saying,"I don't want you to get raped. I don't want a guy to hurt you." The guys hurt girls feeling, but their parents don't say anything to them.

> Lourdes, age 13, another student from Honduras expressed similar sentiments:

About my brother, he's 15 now. When he was 13, he had a girlfriend, my mom was like "oh my God, my son is growing up, I want to see your girlfriend" and then now I'm 13, if I go out with somebody, no, wait till you get 15.

Lisa, age 13 and also born in the US, had a similar experience:

When my brother was 13 years old, he had all the freedom. He used to come at 12:00 at night. When I come home at 6:30, my mom starts screaming at me and I'm 13 years old. And I call her, I do everything. My brothers never called her once. I leave the number on the fridge, I am with this person, no, they still go get mad at me. At least I came home six hours earlier than them.

Even Cristobal, one of the males in the focus group, agreed with the above comments:

Boys have more freedom than girls. They get to do whatever they want and girls have to stay in the house cleaning. The thing is your parents don't want you to make the same mistakes they made when they were young.

As Elizabeth mentioned, and Cristobal alluded to, the restrictions placed on girls

are attributed to the need to protect girls from sexual involvement or assault. However,

Elizabeth remarked that "mothers are too overprotective because we only have one life"

indicating that the restrictions was justified. Similar to Elizabeth, other participants

struggled between understanding the reasons for their parents' overprotection and

protesting against it:

#3—I think all parents, all around the world, there could be differences, but not that much, a few differences. Cause Hispanic parents they are different because, we are different from American. They will always like to protect us; they want the best for us.
#4—Even if they go overboard, it's for our protection.
#7—Parents think being overprotective is a good thing, but like kids don't think that's a good thing, either way kids are going to do it and they are going to do something worse than they were planning to do. Parents think that being over protective is a good thing, keeping the child from harm but the child feels like running away. What they couldn't take upon their parents, they take upon their teachers and others and that is not right.

Lisa (#7), a second-generation Honduran student, asserts that too much

overprotection can lead to more serious problems for a daughter. The possibility of

rebellion and negative school behaviors are posed as possible outcomes to this type of parent-child conflict. Here, also, a participant links the relationship between tensions at home and behavior in school. Feelings related to family tensions can be displaced on to the school environment.

The monolingual class participants appeared to disagree with some aspects of traditional parenting and favor others. Some monolingual class participants believed that as parents became more acculturated; they became somewhat over-ingratiating with their children and lax about behavioral standards. This issue was voiced in two of the monolingual class focus groups. In general, the participants perceived differences between the children raised in the US and those raised in their parental home country. Children raised in the US were considered undisciplined by several of the focus group participants. They related this to the parents' tendency to over-gratify their children's demands for material goods and a lack of sufficient discipline. Some of the students also believed that US laws shaped parenting behaviors. Benito, a 14-year-old participant who arrived from Mexico five years ago, expressed his views:

> Estamos hablando de América. Ahora vamos a decir algo, si viene un niño aquí que viene de un país de allá, viene aquí, es mas educado que un niño que nació aquí porque el niño que nació aquí no le enseñaron a respetar, le dieron permiso para hiciera desorden. Aquí, los niños que nacen aquí, les dicen, "no haga eso," lo siguen haciendo. En mi país tenemos una costumbre que cuando vamos a una casa uno no toca nada… aquí entra a una casa y coge todo. Ahora, dígame, si Ud. le dice a un niño aquí, "te voy a pegar, te voy a castigar porque lo estas haciendo mal", {el niño}"te llamo la policía;" ¿Como un niño va a respetar a un padre? La ley aquí protege mucho a los niños por eso ahora hay mucha delincuencia porque no le dan el permiso a los padres para que sus hijos vean.
> (We are talking about America. Now we are going to say something; if a child comes here from a country over there, comes here, is better disciplined than a child born here because a child born here is not taught to respect, they gave him permission to be disruptive. Here, the children born here, they are told, "don't do that" they keep on doing it. In my country, we have a custom that when we go to a house, you don't touch anything and here, you enter a house and take everything. Now tell me, if you tell a child here, I am going to hit you, I am going to punish

you because you are misbehaving, [the child] "I will call the police." How is a child going to respect a parent? The law here protects the children too much, that is why there is so much delinquency now because they don't give parents permission to discipline their children).

Benito made several points. First, that he sees US born Hispanic children as less respectful of adults and property. Second, he seems to allude that the lack of discipline is associated to the US laws which protect children. In his view, when a child can threaten a parent that he or she will call the police if he/she is physically punished, parental authority is undermined. Thus, while some of the bilingual class participants embraced the protection of children by US laws, this student perceived that there was a negative side to the over-protection of children. Benito was not the only participant who voiced this belief. As the following excerpt from his focus group revealed, the use of physical punishment was perceived as an essential and accepted part of discipline by these monolingual class participants:

> #4—Que aman a los hijos, no porque le quieren dar, pa' que ellos aprendan. (They love their children, not because they want to hit them, so they can learn). #6—I think here in the US, they protect the kids too much , they protect them too much that why they take advantage of the power. As the kids grow older they realize, they say, "I can get anything." In other countries, Hispanic countries, they have it the hard way, they have to learn. Let's say they come from real poor family, right, and then they come to the US and this is different, they going to see everything is corrupted here. They are going to come with better manners because in their countries they had a hard life and here they have it easier.

To these students, it appeared that learning "the hard way" instills greater discipline. These participants believed that exposure to other behaviors and values in the US loosen the standards established in the home country. On the other hand, Ms. C found that some of the newly arrived students are less disciplined. Her comments related to children who were left in the care of family members when their parents immigrated to the US:

They have been left with the grandparents; they went to school, if they went, whenever they wanted to go. They come in with all these issues, they don't know the parent because the parent left ten years ago, to be able to give them a better life, but in the mean time, the grandmother felt sorry for this poor kid, the mother left him with me, I'm going to give you love and they define love by allowing the child to do whatever he wants and its hard to tame those children.

This staff member may be referring to cases, where, in fact, the children were undisciplined by their caregivers in the home country. Once in the US, these students may resist discipline from their parents. Ms. C was the only participant who voiced this perception. Ms. B found the recent arrivals to be more respectful. Ms. C is demonstrating that there is variation in behavior, depending on the experiences of the student with parental figures before their arrival to the US.

Family Obligations

The issues discussed here demonstrate how the level of responsibility held by parents and children can shape the nature of family relationships. Specifically, economic conditions help to determine how many hours the parents work and how much responsibility is placed on the participants. The members of the school personnel raised this issue more often than the students. One staff member cited concerns about how parental work schedules affect the level of supervision received by students after school. Sometimes, long work hours limited the parents' and students' involvement in after-school activities. The financial obligations of the parents included monetary contributions sent to the home countries to assist family members. Additionally, work schedules could result in additional family responsibilities for the students. Two of the three staff members made the following comments:

Ms. A—Some of these parents have two jobs. I don't know how they do it. I talk to parents that tell me, you know I go from 5 to 4 and then I come home for an

hour and then I leave again and I come back at 10:00 and I don't know how they do that. In the mean time, they have to send money back to their country; they have to support the family here. But, the institution of the family gets torn apart.

Mr. B—I see parents that come to school, they are really engaged, they are home when the students are home and they are not working three jobs, they are only working one job and they know what the students are doing, the students behave better than those ones that the parents are working all the time. It's like a correlation between lack of supervision and behavior. And that happens a lot with the Latino students, which most of the parents are working a lot; they are more or less raise themselves.

Both of these comments make reference to the effects of long work hours on family life and on the student. For one, the parents' daily contact with their children is minimized. Mr. B associated the lack of supervision of the students' after school hours to negative behavioral outcomes in school. Mr. B also indicated that there is range of parental work schedules; resulting in the existence of parents who work one job and are able to have increased supervision of their children. Diana, an eighth-grade Mexican student, born in the US, spoke directly about the effect of her father's long work hours on their relationship:

My dad works two jobs, one in the morning, one in the afternoon. I only get to see him, I only have an hour, but I don't really get to spend time with him because he's always, he's sleeping, and resting and eating. So, I can't bother him and my mom, only gets to work full time in the morning…

Diana explained how her father's two jobs limited her contact with him. Long work schedules not only affect the relationship between parents and students, but sometimes resulted in extra responsibilities for the student. Students who must serve as babysitters for younger siblings after school are not able to participate in after-school activities. Ms. C also commented on this issue:

And I have kids who are responsible for little kids till late hours, so they can't participate in after school activities and therefore, we have to re-educate the parents that this child's main focus is the education and activities at school.

The challenge is how to relieve students of family responsibilities when they perform an essential function in the family? Mr. B. further noted that some parents equated a 15–year-old adolescent with an adult status and therefore, expected the student to assume a greater level of family responsibility:

> I see also something that for Latinos, males and females, in general, that once they reach the age of 15, they see them as an adult and some of them I don't think are ready to carry that responsibility of helping in the house, and raising the rest of the brothers and sisters. And they see them, you are a man and a woman already, you are 15 or 14, or whatever, so you are part of the family. We have a few students they're 16 and they are working already because they have to help in the house. They looking at the prospective of dropping out of middle school because they have to work. So, it's that sense that you reach 15, and you are already, you have to help us take care of the family kind of thing. Some of them are not mentally prepared to do that, they're still kind of immature.

Mr. B's quote indicates that some students have difficulty fulfilling all of their responsibilities in school when they have too many obligations at home. Nancy, a second-generation Honduran participant offers thoughts that echoed a similar perception:

> The school should help us out though about giving less homework because some of the teenagers after school, they have another life, they have to go work in order to live and survive, in order to live in a decent place, sometimes their parents cannot afford when they go to college, the student is really serious about your education. Teenagers have to start at a young age in order to, they have to start working in a young age in order to get what you want, sometimes your parents cannot afford what you want, need for school, the materials, the books, everything. So that's why I'm saying the schools should be more easier on us.

> Nancy also points to how heavy familial obligations may interfere with the fulfillment of school responsibilities. She alludes to her perception of the school staff as insensitive or unaware of the particulars of a student's life. The following participants spoke directly about other adolescents who must work:

> Sometimes Hispanic teenagers are different from American teenagers. I know these people, they came from Mexico, he is 16, he came with a friend and his sister, it's a boy, he is 16 and has to work everyday so that he can send money to Mexico. He has to support himself and his family are in Mexico.

> I know this girl that she is 14 and she don't come to school and she go to work. She has to send money to her parents in Mexico.

While overly burdening family obligations can have a deleterious effect on academic performance, Mr. B's following quote acknowledges that there is a positive aspect to developing a strong sense of responsibility. Mr. B suggested that a sense of obligation to the family can be a motivating factor, a force that helps to "move them along":

> I would think because, even though it could be negative or positive, the sense of responsibility that's a strength they bring into, they see, "I have to be successful to help my family, my mom, or whatever, because I don't want her or him to be working in the factory for the rest of their lives. So, that's a very good strength because they have this responsibility early in their age, that is something that will move them along. That's a very good strength, I think.

In summary, the issues raised by the participants related to family relations point to the importance of family, as sources of support and inspiration for the participants. The bilingual class participants focused on the process of separating from family members in their home countries and establishing new families in the US. The monolingual students emphasized intergenerational issues during the acculturation process. As acculturation progressed, the participants appeared to increasingly compare themselves to the wider society. They questioned traditional beliefs regarding such areas as gender and styles of parenting. Some of the monolingual participants also considered the positive aspects of more traditional child rearing practices, such as inculcating respect for adults. Those monolingual class students who believed that more acculturated children were showered with too many material possessions, associated thi type of parenting behavior to a reduced impetus to strive. Their responses demonstrate how parents and children evolve and change over time during the process of acculturation. Finally, family obligations were seen by two of the staff members as over-burdening the students and interfering

with extracurricular school activities. This section has shown how the economic needs of a family shape parent-child relationships.

Outside of family relationships, peer relations were frequently discussed by the participants. The next chapter will focus on this topic.

Chapter 7: "Social" Studies: Crossing Social, Racial, and Ethnic Boundaries

Some aspect of peer relations was discussed during each of the ten focus groups. Table 8 summarizes the sub-themes that emerged from the discussions on this topic. The *environmentally challenged* sub-theme refers to the social constraints imposed by the changes in climate and the nature of the US communities the bilingual participants settled in. *Racial toe stepping* focuses on the tensions cited between the Hispanic and African American students. Both the bilingual and monolingual participants discussed their interactions with the African-American students. *Ethnic toe stepping* refers to the tensions between the Hispanic sub-groups. Overall, the monolingual class participants gave peer relations the most attention, covering a wider range of relationships across multiple groups. Two of the members of the school staff also offered their perceptions of the relations between racial and ethnic groups.

Table 8

Social Studies — Crossing Social, Racial and Ethnic Boundaries

	Environmentally challenged	**Racial toe stepping**	**Ethnic toe stepping**
Bilingual	Cold weather Anonymity Trust Less freedom to socialize	Tensions Bullying Vulnerability Mutual defensiveness	Miscommunication
Monolingual		Tensions Bullying Vulnerability Identification with African-Americans.	Tensions Perceptions of Mexicans and various Hispanic sub-groups
Staff		Tensions Perceptions	Tensions; between bilingual and monolingual Hispanic gangs Skin color

Environmentally Challenged

　　　　All of the bilingual class focus groups discussed the challenges of adapting to US

winters. The cold climate was described as constraining in the sense that the participants

had to spend so much time inside their homes. More time indoors meant less time

socializing with peers. In their home countries, many of the bilingual participants had

spent a great deal of time outdoors playing volleyball, soccer, or baseball. This is an

excerpt from one of the focus groups:

> #2—A mi me aburre estar en casa todo el día, muchos días sin clases, yo me
> aburro.
> (It is boring to me to be in my house all day, lots of days without classes, I get
> bored).
> #3—Yo también, como en el invierno estas casi en tu casa metido y es aburrido.
> (Me too, like in the winter, you are stuck in your house and it is boring).
> #6—Yo jugaba pelota to' los días pero aquí no se puede porque hace mucho frío.
> Eso era mi vida. Porque yo iba a la escuela en la tarde, podía jugar en la mañana y

> cuando salía podía jugar otra vez, entonces cuando yo pase a la mañana, en la tarde jugaba pelota, hasta la noche.
> (I used to play baseball everyday, but here you can't because it is too cold. That was my life. Because I would go to school in the afternoon, I could play in the morning and when I finished, I could play again, and then when I was changed to the mornings. I would play baseball until the night).

In their home neighborhoods, increased time outdoors allowed the participants to engage in social activities in spontaneous ways within their communities. Additionally, many of the recent arrivals originated from smaller, closely knit communities where the inhabitants knew each other on a personal level. One student, Martín, from an isolated, rural setting in the Dominican Republic, came from a town so small that there were no street names or street lights. He found the transition to his new community quite difficult. Most of the bilingual participants originated from more developed towns, but ones still containing a network of family and friends closely involved with the participants on a daily basis. Many of the participants were surprised that people did not greet each other on the streets of their new neighborhoods. In their home countries, most families knew each other for long periods of time, resulting in a greater sense of freedom to socialize with friends. Families did not question their children's safety in neighbors' homes. In their new environment, the participants felt constrained. They were not free to go out into the community and visit friends and they felt that establishing trust in others was more challenging. Elisa was born in the US, but returned to Mexico when she was 2 years old. She remained there for nine years before moving to the US again. She was still adapting to the different community environment:

> What I meant by different environment is that in Mexico, the streets you know everybody in the streets, you interact with them, you play with your friends, they are your friends. Here in the US, most of the people you see are strangers, you don't know them, or sometimes they look at you like you are something else and by limited, in Mexico I could just go to the store by myself and I could find some friends, or the person who works in the store, he knows me and we could talk. Here, I can't do that.

Other participants made similar comments:

En México, como ahí es más pequeño adonde yo vivía, pues ahí todas las
personas yo las conozco desde cuando estaba chiquita y yo se que podía confiar,
los conozco.
(In Mexico, since where I lived it was smaller, well, there; I know them since I
was little and I know that I could trust, I know them).

Yo, allá con mis amigas yo confiaba mas porque ellas, como estaban cercas de mi
casa, yo podía ir a la casa de ellas, ellas iban a la mía, y conocía a sus papas y
todo y ellas eran, si tu decías algo, ella no lo decían a nadie.
(There, I trusted my friends more because, since they were close to my house, I
could go to their houses and they came to mine, and I knew their parents and
everything, and if you said something, they wouldn't tell anybody).

These students are also talking about trust, or "confianza" and how intimacy in

personal relationships is easier to establish in a smaller, more familiar context. Because

personal community ties and trust in others were diminished in their new neighorhoods, a

few of the students were also concerned about how they would be found if lost in a

community where they felt anonymous:

"Y allá si alguien de su familia se pierde, uno chiquito, ya la mayoría todo le
conocen, aquí no, si se pierde, tiene que andar buscando.
(Over there, if someone in your family is lost, someone small, most people know
him, not here, if you are lost, they have to go looking for you).

You can get raped, or killed, or robbed and over there, if you go missing, they
actually do help to search for you. Right here, I don't say that they don't care, but
not many people, they go "I don't know that person, so why should I really help?"

The above quotes imply that personal relationships within a community contribute

to a sense of caring about your neighbors' well-being. For the less acculturated

participants, neighborhood ties are seen as looser in the US. The experience of anonymity

is seen as breeding a lack of concern about your neighbors. Trusting relationships are

more difficult to establish in this context. Together with the lack of English proficiency,

the cold climate, and the danger in the community, the participants' social interactions

were constrained in ways they had generally not experienced before. Peer relationships were further challenged by the tensions that developed between groups.

Racial Toe Stepping

The African-American population has been gradually waning in the local school district, and increasingly replaced by the influx of Hispanics. In some schools in the district, this has resulted in the African-American students becoming the minority group in the school. While the Jones school is predominantly Hispanic, the middle school (Smith School) has a higher proportion of African-American students.

Six of the ten focus groups reported tensions between the African-American and Hispanic students. In school and in the community, the Hispanic participants developed a generalized perception of African-American peers as the "trouble-makers," who picked on the Hispanic students, bullied them and provoked fights. As the tensions and divisions between the African-Americans and the Hispanic students developed, physical altercations took place in school and spilled over into the community. The following excerpt from a focus group at Jones School (middle school) highlights a discussion that centered on the participants perceptions of the African-American students:

> #6—Algunas personas de aquí le gusta pelear mucho, aunque a uno le gusta
> pelear pero…. Aquí gente busca problemas por el gusto.
> (Some of the people here like to fight too much, even if you like to fight, but….
> Here, people look for trouble just because they want to).
> #5—Por dársela como que es mejor.
> (Just to show they are better).
> #2—Casi la mayoría son las personas morenas.
> (Mostly, the majority are African-American.
> #3—Luego que este, son muy peleones.
> (They are argumentative/fighters).
> #5—Como si uno lo mira mal de una vez.
> (Like if you look at them the wrong way).
> #3—No mas si lo miras así, ya tienes un problema. Mejor es no hacerle caso.

(You only have to look at them and you have a problem. It is better to ignore
        them).
JV—¿Te has pasado a ti (#5 y #6)?
(To #5 and #6, has this happened to you?)
#5—Y aquí en la escuela, muchas veces. Yo no le hago caso, con tal que no me
toquen a mí.
(Here in the school, many times. I don't pay attention, as long as they don't touch
me).

A focus group participant from the Smith School presented a similar theme.

Observando, a veces que cuando nosotros nos paramos aquí en los árboles, ahí
salimos a jugar, las niñas, las negritas, a veces van allá a buscar problemas. El
security viene a separarnos.
(I have observed that, sometimes, when we stand by the trees, when we go out to
play, the girls, the African-American girls, sometimes they go to us to look for
problems. The security guard comes to separate us).

These participants attempted to cope with racial tensions through avoidance. Eye

contact, or a look, was interpreted as a provocation or personal attack. Some of the

students responded by ignoring the behaviors and others were ready to fight if they felt

attacked. One student reported repeated incidents of bullying. These quotes represent a

sample of perceptions, experiences, and feelings voiced in one of the monolingual class

focus groups in the middle school:

Los morenos (the African-Americans), you have to do whatever they say because
if not they going to either punch you, or like everybody like, they going to call
their friends to beat you up, all of them, you can't do nothing, except just tirarle
botella, roca…(throw a bottle, or a rock)

Ok, yo soy una victima… si dicen que supuestamente somos iguales como uno va
a permitir que alguien lo…. Le dicen "oh you Indian…. Oh, you Mexican." Le
pegan a uno y le dicen si you say anything we'll kill you. Eso es muy fuerte.
We'll kill you.
(Ok, I am a victim… if they say we are supposed to be equal, how are you going
to permit someone to…. They call you "oh you Indian…Oh you Mexican." They
hit you and they tell you that if you say anything, we'll kill you. That is hard.
We'll kill you).

You get scared.

Excuse me, can I say something? Nosotros los Hispanos siempre jugamos en el patio, cuando ellos no tienen pelota, ellos nos la quitan a nosotros…. Para no tener problemas con ellos, las dejamos, los security le decimos, los security la agarran para tras, y de nuevo nos la quitan. No nos dejan divertirnos.
(Excuse me, can I say something? We, the Hispanics, always play in the yard. When they [African-Americans] don't have a ball, they take it away from us … To avoid problems with them, we let them. We tell the security guard, they bring the ball back to us, but they take it away again. They don't let us have a good time).

In these quotes, the participants expressed a sense of frustration and helplessness about the situation. One of the participants perceived a discrepancy between US ideals of equality ("if they say we are supposed to be equal") and their every-day experiences with other students. The behaviors of some of the African-American students were seen as an exercise of power, "to show they are better." One of the students, Gabriel, a short Mexican student who was the target of repetitive bullying, felt that students needed to speak up, "but if you stay quiet, they will continue to do it." However, they generally felt at a loss about how to address the problems with school personnel.

While many of the participants attempted to avoid interaction with the African-American students, Teodoro spoke of how the Hispanic students could potentially influence the interaction to a more positive outcome by taking a less defensive position:

Como si tu tratas de ser amigable, ellos son amigable, pero si tu como trata de ser como rechazando la persona y como que tu te concentra que tu no sabes hablar ingles, y tu dice no se, no se, como si tu tratas mas, como que ellos son mas amigable contigo y te ayudan un poco.
(Like if you try to be friendly, they are friendly, but if you, are like rejecting of the person and if you concentrate on how you don't know English and if you say "I don't know, I don't know, if you try more, like they {African-Americans] are friendlier with you and they help you a little)

Teodoro believed that if you attempted to communicate with the African-American students, it is possible to receive a friendlier response. He also implied that the lack of English proficiency affects social interactions if one is concentrating on the

inability to speak English. The above quotes suggest that a defensive stance develops between both parties that contribute to the tension between groups. Furthermore, from the participants' perspective, defensiveness emanates from feeling vulnerable and threatened.

Some participants had their own theories of why the African-Americans "disrespect" the Hispanic students. A few students felt that the African-Americans were making Hispanics experience the discrimination they had experienced in the past. One student stated that the African-Americans were taking their hard earned freedom "overboard," implying that they were taking too much liberty. Raul had the following to say about this issue:

> I'm adding to what he said, the reason why now the Blacks are disrespecting Hispanics is because back in the days they felt that nobody was paying attention to them, they felt nobody gave them the opportunity, now that Martin Luther King made this whole integration stuff, now they think it's their time, it's their time in the world that they can do whatever the Caucasian people did to them. The Hispanics have to go through what the Blacks had to go through back in the days.

Raul implied that the Hispanic experience of victimization by the African-Americans is a rite of passage to earn a place in US society. He believed that African-Americans were now feeling empowered and this included the discrimination of Hispanics as some kind of retribution for past offenses made by the European-Americans.

The relationship between the Hispanic and African-American students was also discussed by the three staff participants. Here are Mr. A and Ms. B's. comments:

> Mr. A—The Latinos that just came to the US, they see African Americans as aggressive people instead of that's part of the culture. They see them the way they speak, the way they behave is they are aggressive, they trying are trying to threaten, I think they feel threatened by them, but that's the way they are, it is part of getting adjusted to it. So, I think once they learn the culture and they learn more the language, they will get used to it. Because that is what it seems like the students think.

> Ms. B—Yes, and most of the arguments and the fights in the school, I mean it's starting to calm down a little bit, but it was really scary for a while there, it was

> very Black-Hispanic, the kids were saying, I had one boy who was beat up in a park, by a nice gang of boys [sarcasm]and a lot of situations that have happened this year, just, it became, I'm hoping it's calmed itself down, but it did start to become very racially divided amongst the kids. It was a very black on this side, Hispanics on this side; it was like a race war. We actually heard a couple of kids use that verbiage, "race war." As a new immigrant, I'm teaching in class everybody is equal. Black History month, I'm teaching you the struggles that the Blacks had and how it relates to what you're going through, and how Black Americans had all these struggles, all these things they had to overcome, that they fought for rights for all of us and you, as a Hispanic are being stepped on now. Those kind of things in a school make it a little difficult.

Mr. A also spoke to how vulnerability influences social interactions. The Hispanic students feel they are in a vulnerable, threatened position due to their perception of the African-American students as aggressive. Ms. B echoed the students' view of a rite of passage, "you, as a Hispanic, are being stepped on now." She seemed to agree with Raul that African American students are treating Hispanics as they have been treated, a necessity in the process of integration into US society. Ms. B explained further:

> I can only imagine it's the same thing in _____in that it seems like the African American population fought for their space and pulled themselves to have this space, rent and whatever else they had to do and now all these immigrants are coming in and taking their space and the money from the schools, the clinics and whatever other programs are available, now have to be shared with another set of immigrants. And it's not going to change, everybody's got their turn.

Ms. B believes that the African-American population views Hispanics as encroaching on their "space." She implied that this may be a source of resentment that contributes to the tensions between the groups. However, some of the participants also acknowledged the influence of African Americans on Hispanic students. Some of the participants remarked about how a portion of the Hispanic student population had adopted African-American styles of dress, hair, and behavior. Elizabeth, a 14-year-old, second-generation student of Honduran parentage and Samuel, a 13-year-old Mexican student explained:

E—There is three things, there's "wanna be's." If you see a Mexican dressed up as a gang member, Oh you wanna be Black. And Hispanics want to blend with them.

S—Something that really gets me mad is that some people sometimes they deny who they are just because they want to be like somebody else, for example, some Hispanics try to become cool and pretend their black so they could fit in, but is it really worth it to deny your own heritage just to be something else that you're not?

Both of these participants refer to the efforts of some Hispanic students to "blend," or "fit in" to the wider social landscape. However, Samuel viewed this type of behavior as a disloyalty to one's own heritage. In terms of ethnic identification, sometimes participants considered themselves as Hispanics in the collective sense, and at other times, they identified themselves by their particular Hispanic sub-group. Within group diversity was accompanied by other issues.

Ethnic Toe Stepping

Tensions within the sphere of social interactions were not limited to those between Hispanic and African-American students. Five of the ten focus groups (Two bilingual and three monolingual) discussed within group relations. In addition to tensions between the various Hispanic ethnic-sub-groups (e.g. Mexicans, Dominicans, etc), two of the focus groups discussed the tensions between the students in the bilingual and monolingual classes. One aspect of these tensions included the area of verbal communication. Due to the evolution of the Spanish language across diverse geographical locations, some words have attained different meanings, or new words have been created among the different Hispanic ethnic groups. Words with multiple meanings sometimes resulted in miscommunication during verbal interactions. This is a portion of the discussion that took place in one of the bilingual class focus group.

#3—También es como un idioma, varias palabras que significan otras cosas en otros países.

(Also, in the language there are various words that mean other things in other countries).

#1—Aparte, en unos países si tú dices una palabra que significa una mala palabra en otro país, te toman mal a ti. En tu país es buena palabra.

(In addition, in other countries, you say a work that means a bad word in another country; they interpret it the wrong way. In your country, it is a good word).

JV—¿Y están hablando entre Hispanos o entre Hispanos y no Hispanos?

(And you are talking about Hispanics and Hispanics or Hispanics and non-Hispanics?)

#3—Hispanos, algunos tienen, pueden ofenderse porque no conocen su cultura.

(Hispanics, some of them can be offended because they do not know your culture).

#5—Y si uno dice una palabra todos se entienden toditos, pero si uno lo dice aquí, ¿que dijo el?

(If you say a word [back home], everybody understands, but if you say it here, they say, "what did he say?")

The misunderstanding of certain words in Spanish among the Hispanic ethnic groups adds another layer in the process of verbal communication. Not only do the bilingual class participants have to learn English, but they are confronted with variations within the Spanish language, as well.

In two of the five focus groups, the participants reported an assignment of a hierarchical order to the Hispanic ethnic groups in the schools and community. Mexicans were considered holding the lowest status, while, at least as reported in one group, Puerto Ricans were assigned a higher value. Some students allegedly denied their heritage in order to have a more favorable position within the hierarchy. Ada, who arrived from the Dominican Republic 11 years ago, and Cindy, a US born student of Puerto Rican and European-American parentage expressed these phenomena clearly:

C—I have something kinda off topic. There's people and they'll say that they're something that they're not. They'll say that they're Puerto Rican, but they are Mexican. They'll just say it, because they don't want to be labeled as Mexican, they think that Mexicans are bad, or whatever, and they tell you "oh you're PR?" I say, no, "I'm Mexican." "But you said you were Puerto Rican." I don't say anything about it to anybody and it gets me pissed because you shouldn't be lying

about who you are because you should be proud of who you are, instead of denying it.

A—There's a lot of people, they are mixed. I've seen this a lot. They take the most famous part of their heritage, whatever, and they isolate the other one and say they are that. Like if you are Honduran and Venezuelan. They will be what is wanted and they'll forget they're Venezuelan. Even though, I oppose to that, because it's not very right, because you are made both of your mom and dad, whatever, you should be able to be proud of representing both sides of your families. No matter how different they are.

According to these participants, some students tried to disassociate themselves from a heritage they perceived as devalued and less accepted by peers. Negative community perceptions contributed to the low status of Mexicans. Ada reported that she heard comments about Mexicans "destroying the community." The stereotypes of Mexicans as gang members and lazy were reported, as well. However, some students questioned these assumptions and expressed disagreement with the negative comments. As one US born Dominican participant, Arturo, voiced, "I gotta ask a question, what's so wrong about Mexicans, what's wrong about Mexicans?"

In two of the five focus groups, the participants discussed tensions between the bilingual and monolingual class students. Their comments offered some explanation for the animosity between the newly arrived and more acculturated groups.

#6—What I think, it's because we're in monolingual class and we take our classes in English… they are in bilingual class and take all their classes in Spanish; they think that they are …

#4—Smarter than us

#6—They think that we are smart and we're denying our heritage. So that's where, they think we are denying that we're Hispanic and trying to be something we're not.

The same issue was raised in another monolingual class focus group. Diana, age 14, a US born Mexican student, talked about the tensions between the "bilinguals" and "monolinguals" in a similar way to the previous group:

At _____ School, there wasn't really no bilinguals, so we're not really used to having bilinguals in our school. It was all regular, nobody, if you talk Spanish,

you talked Spanish with your friends, not like classes talking Spanish, so it kind of weird for us, for me I'm kind of OK with it, as long as they don't start talking about me or get intimate. I would become friends with them, but some of them just think that they're all that, which I don't like.

A staff member also voiced his observations about the tensions within the Hispanic student population.

Here in _____school, it is strange. I have seen two things; I have seen a division between bilingual students, the ones that they are very low proficiency in English and students that are Latinos, but they speak more English. It's like a big division, like them and us and we have some problems within, at the beginning of the year, between Latinos and African Americans and it was strange that all the Latinos that were fighting with the African American, they were all in Bilingual classes…None of the Latino students in monolingual classes, none of them were fighting. So, it was a big, it is a strange division between the ones that just arrived and the ones that are here already. So, it is strange, within the same group of Latinos.

Mr. B's comments suggest that the more acculturated Hispanic students are less likely to fight with the African-Americans. These students may be the ones described previously as adopting more of the African-American dress and behavior. Consequently, the bilingual class students would see them as disloyal Hispanics.

On a more general level, perceptions of the various groups among the students appear to be at the heart of the tensions reported. For example, the students in monolingual classes see the students in bilingual classes as presuming superiority over the other group. From the bilingual class perspective, the monolingual students are denying they're Hispanic heritage. From the monolingual class perspective, the bilingual class students think "they are all that." Being on the defensive ("as long as they don't start talking about me or get intimate") appears to be born from the various assumptions made by the various groups.

The presence of gangs was another aspect of within-group relations that was raised in two of the monolingual class focus groups. Gangs with varying identities fight

among themselves to strive for dominance in the community. Participants in one focus

group made the following comments:

> #7—That even Hispanics are against other Hispanics.
> #2—Like gangs, let's talk about gangs now. You see a lot of Hispanics fighting Hispanics… I think that is kind of dumb, if they are from the same race, it would make sense if it was against a different race…but, against each other…
> #6—It doesn't make sense…
> #4—But the problem is that *some* Hispanic people like looking for trouble.

While these participants are opposed to within group fighting, one participant considers

fighting as justifiable if it took place against a "different race."

Two of the three staff participants also felt that the influence of gangs posed a

challenge to the Hispanic youth in their community. Mr. B offered these comments:

> I have seen a lot of students that even though they are not involved in gangs, they admire what they get out of it, the colors, the prestige, the recognition by them, but, it seems likes they're good candidates for gangs, to be gang affiliation, but they are not yet, but it seems like, admiring that part of it, it might be open the doors to join the gangs.

Mr. B refers to students who are not directly involved with gangs, but who are at

risk for gang involvement. Gangs may appear to be symbols of prestige for some

students. For other students, gangs contribute to negative stereotypes about Mexicans.

One student, Antonio, felt that one of the reasons Mexicans are discriminated against in

the community is due to being associated with gang membership:

> I think that many people think that because you are Mexican, that you are going to start trouble because there's a lot of gangs, but not all of them are Mexican, there's a lot that also Dominican, and Puerto Rican, so I don't think that people should be judging Mexicans, like 'oh, don't mess with her, or him because they're going to start problems, or don't get along with them.' I don't think that's fair because you don't really know them. Like, somebody could look tough and everything and they might not be, they might be actually scared of somebody smaller than them. I don't think that's right.

Similar to other participants quoted, this student felt that it is unfair to conclude or

assume gang membership on the basis of appearance or a Mexican heritage.

Another form of within-group tension involves skin color. While this issue was discussed by two of the participants, it is worth noting considering the importance of the topic across cultures. One of the staff members gave an example of the discrimination of darker skin among the Hispanic students:

> But, the preconceived notions of the darker skin, that's still a big thing for many of them. They got on the case of one of the boys in here, who's from Mexico, who happens to be darker skin, he has indigenous hair, if I can even try, not to stereotype him, but what you would consider indigenous hair, very straight, dark, jet black hair, that's the hair he has, but then he has black skin tone, like a black person would and then very indigenous features. It's just very strange to look at him, it takes you a while to get adjusted to the features and the skin and the hair. Then I met his mother and his mother looks just like him and they're obviously indigenous, I'm not sure what area of Mexico, but they probably go back to one of the old indigenous cultures, who were in the sun all the time. But, in here, they started on him about being black.

Cindy, age 13, the student who was born in US with Puerto Rican and European-American parentage, has felt some rejection from her peers because her mother is European-American and Cindy is of lighter skin color:

> I think that because my mother is Caucasian, if somebody just sees me they think I'm white and you're not so great because you're just white and not Puerto Rican. I'm like, "well I am Puerto Rican so you are just going to have to deal with it" because they think because I'm half white that I'm nothing. They see me as white; they don't see me as anything else.

Cindy also felts judged and demean based on her European-American background. This type of marginalization of students by students has contributed to the tensions reported by the participants.

In summary, the participants voiced their concerns, perceptions, and ideas about the nature of social interactions between African-American students and Hispanics, as well as peer relations among various Hispanic sub-groups. The defensive stance between groups, misperceptions, and miscommunications appear to contribute to the tensions within social interactions, creating fragile relationships. Generalizations and stereotypes

have developed between the groups, promoting and perpetuating misperceptions. One

participant expressed his appeal for an end to peer-group tensions based on shared human

experiences:

> Some people may say that just because you are a different race and you are from a
> different country, they say you are different, but basically we're all the same, we
> are all human beings. For example, if someone punches me I'm going to feel pain,
> if somebody punch the person, they are going to feel the same thing I did, so I say
> we're all the same, why fight about it.

The participants expressed their concerns, but also provided suggestions for

improving their schools. The following and final chapter reports the findings in this area.

Chapter 8: What Schools Can Do

When asked about what their schools could do to facilitate the adjustment of
Hispanic students, the study participants offered a variety of recommendations,
summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

What Schools Can Do

	Teach us	**School-student relations**	**School climate**	**Support Services**
Bilingual	Teach new information Teach English Prepare for future Group meetings	Interest Respect	Control fighting	Group meetings
Monolingual	Teach more Spanish Control fighting in school More interaction between groups Group meetings	Respect Ethnic group validation	Control fighting More interaction between groups	Group meetings
Staff			More interaction between groups	Group meetings New entrant screening Collaboration with other districts

Teach Us

The bilingual participants were essentially satisfied with their education and
schools. They primarily expected their schools to provide an education leading to a
successful career and they believed their hopes would be fulfilled. Because they

understood the importance of acquiring English-language proficiency, many of the participants were eager to learn English. Two of the bilingual group participants went as far as to recommend an increase in English-language instruction.

Aside from learning English, many of the bilingual class students expressed the expectation that the school would provide opportunities to learn new information. Antonio, age 13, who had arrived from Mexico seven months before the focus-group meeting, expressed his expectations:

> De que te enseñan de todo, de que puedes aprender lo que no habías aprendido en México, diferentes materias.
> (That they teach you everything, that you could learn what you did not learn in Mexico, different subjects).

Carlos, a 14-year-old student from the Dominican Republic, who participated in another focus group, agreed:

> A mí, los estudios, que me enseñen cosas que yo no sabía, como aprender más de esta cultura que la misma propia de uno.
> (For me, the instruction, that they teach me things that I did not know, like to learn more about this culture than our own).

These are two other comments expressed in another focus group:

> Le brindan mejor educación.
> (That they offer a better education).

> Mejores clases que en el país de uno
> (Better classes than in our own country).

Many of the bilingual focus group participants sought a goal oriented future with a variety of occupational interests envisioned. They expressed an interest in future college attendance. The following excerpt from a focus group exemplifies the participants' hopes for the future and the role of school in securing their goals:

> #6—Como, por ejemplo, en la universidad, preparar la gente para la carrera que van a ser,
> (For example, the university, prepare people for a career they want).
> JV—¿Qué pueden hacer ellos para ayudarte en eso?

(What can they do to help you in that?)

#7—Enseñarnos, muchas cosas, diferentes cosas.

(Teach us, many things, different things).

JV—¿Alguien más sobre que puede hacer la escuela?

(Anyone else about what the school can do?)

#6—Además de enseñarnos, prepararnos para nuestras carreras, para el futuro, medicina, doctora, matemáticas.

(In addition to teaching us, prepare us for our careers, for the future, medicine, doctor, math).

The adjustment to a new school and culture also include an understanding of the rules of conduct in the new environment. Various bilingual class participants were confused or unaware of certain rules in US schools and in the community. Liliana, a recent arrival from Honduras recommended that the school teach about rules and expectations for behavior:

También diciéndole también lo de aquí, que aquí no se le puede pegar a un niño
(Also, telling them about living here, that you cannot hit a child here).

Other participants were not initially aware that both students would be suspended if they fought, even if one student provoked the incident. The newly arrived participants appeared to feel that they were entering an environment where the expectations were not clearly communicated to them.

School-Student Relations

The quality of teacher-student relations was discussed in one bilingual class and three of the monolingual class focus group participants. Generally, the bilingual class participants made positive comments about teachers. However, a few of the students recommended that their teachers demonstrate a greater interest in them personally and in their cultures. Carlos and Ramiro illustrated this point in the following quotes:

C—Para mi sería mejor que los maestros supiera un poquito sobre mi cultura, para que ellos sepan lo que a mi no me pueda gustar, que ellos le agradan de mi, cosas así.

(For me it would be better if the teachers knew a little more about my culture, so that they might know what I might like, what they like about me, things like that). R—Como que te conozcan mas porque como antes, antes, los first day of school, ellos siempre te preguntan de donde tu era, que te gustaba, pero ahora casi no, solo te preguntan tu nombre, de donde tu eres, y que edad tiene. Como antes te preguntaban mas cosas, que cosas te gustaba, que materia te gustaba. Eso era mejor porque el maestro conocía más a los niños.

(Like that they know you better because at one time, on the first days of school, they would always ask you where you were from, what you liked, but now, it hardly happens, they only ask your name, where you are from and your age. They used to ask you more things, what you liked, what subject you liked. This was better because the teacher knew the students better).

C—Como el problema que uno tiene, hay a veces que yo tengo problemas y ellos no saben porque yo lo tengo. Hay veces que los maestros me dicen, so saben que problema yo tengo, entonces yo me encojono, me da rabia, no me cabe el maestro, eso lo que me esta pasando últimamente con la de ESL.

(Like the problem you have, there are times when I have problems and they don't know why I have them. There are times when the teachers tell me, they don't know what my problem is, then I get angry, I don't like the teacher, that is what is happening to me lately in the ESL [English as a Second Language] class).

Carlos and Ramiro described teachers who appeared distant and disconnected from their students. They preferred teachers who demonstrated a personal interest in them. When Carlos had problems, the teacher did not seek to understand the reasons for his behavior. Carlos was also looking for some positive feedback from the teachers when he expressed an interest in knowing "que ellos le agradan de mi" (what do they like about me).

Some of the participants from the bilingual and monolingual classes believed that the attitude of the school staff toward the students needed improvement. These participants felt that the teachers failed to consider them with "respect" in various ways. One issue raised by some of the monolingual class participants is how teachers frowned on the use of Spanish in monolingual classes. This is especially significant given that some of the monolingual class students expressed a desire to further develop their Spanish language skills. Some of the monolingual participants felt that their Hispanic identities were not respected. While both schools celebrate Hispanic heritage month,

which is meant to validate ethnic identity, the participants believed that the staff members

communicated contradictory messages. Elisa, a Mexican student, experienced some of

the comments from teachers as a sign of rejection:

> Actually trying to accept them, how they are. Some teachers they actually tell you that since you are in America, you should act like an American and when you're in your country, act like you're in your country. And I feel very sad for them 'cause if they went to another country, and they told them that, they wouldn't feel very comfortable and they want to get out as soon, as quick as possible. I feel that way when they tell me I should stay where my parents are from and that's that.

> Elise added the following recommendation:

> They could let the kids give their own opinions about how they feel and the teachers when they ask you something, like when it's your independence how you feel? And you say something and they change it all the way around. They don't give you the opportunity, they should let us express how we feel and when somebody wants to say, "I am this" they should say, "Ok, you are this and we accept you as you are and not tell you, oh, you shouldn't be that, you should be like us, you're less because you're that, or we're more because we are African, or whatever we are.

Along with this request for acceptance, some of the monolingual class students

specifically recommended that their school announce significant holidays belonging to

the various Hispanic ethnic groups during the morning announcements. This

recommendation further highlights the participants' desire for the recognition and

affirmation of their heritage.

School climate

Focus group participants and school staff recommendations converged in the

recommendation for the amelioration of tensions between the various groups. Many of

the participants were in agreement with having all cultural identities recognized. One

recommendation made by the participants included the addition and extension of cultural

celebrations through activities involving all groups. One student, Antonio, a seventh

grade monolingual class student, considered school the natural setting for improving

inter-group relations when he said, "I think school is made so everyone can be together,

for everyone to get along." Another monolingual class student, Samuel, offered

additional ideas:

> The question is, how can school help us, right? I think that since, as a Hispanic,
> and there are different types of people, race of people here. I think the school
> could help us like, help us understand and interact with each other so that way we
> could understand, instead of always fighting, we could understand each other
> instead of fighting. So far, it doesn't seem to be working.

> Ramiro, in another focus group, offered his thoughts:

> Como eso es muy bueno, cuando hay history month, que hay black history,
> Spanish history porque así uno conoce mas la cultura de otra persona y los
> entiendo mas a ellos, so cosas así, y como compartir mas con ellos. Eso ayudaría
> mas a las personas.
> (It is very good when there is history month; there is black history, Spanish
> history because that way you know about other people's culture and understand
> them better. Things like that, and how to share more with them. That would help
> people more.)

The above quotes reflect a desire on the part of some of the participants to learn

and understand more about the various groups in the schools as a way to increase positive

interaction among the groups. This is an insightful recommendation given that the groups

are inadvertently segregated within the schools. One of the staff members, Mr. B, spoke

to this same issue:

> I would think if they have more activities with the monolingual students. Because
> right now, the bilingual students they do everything with the bilingual students
> and they never mix with the other students. So, I think, if they mix with the other
> students, perhaps in the specials, or some classes, they do some kind of transition
> activities together like I don't know, they take English once a week together or
> something, they're able to relate more because they don't really relate at all. Even
> the monolingual Latino and monolingual African Americans, they don't relate at
> all. I think if they do more activities together, I think they would be able more
> have a sense of "we're here, we are all the middle school." It's not like the
> bilinguals, we are all here, all students kind of thing. I think some mixing between
> classes or something.

For participants who attended the Smith school (middle school), school climate included the degree of fights that frequently erupted in the school. Many participants remarked about this issue and looked to the administration of the school to take charge of the problems in the school. As one focus group participant remarked, "debían de tener como mas control" (they should have more control), indicating that the school administration lacked effective interventions to stabilize the environment. Many of the middle school students made recommendations pertaining to ways to improve the school building, such as with the provision of lockers and an attractive outdoor area for recess periods.

Support Services

Finally, the participants from the bilingual and monolingual classes welcomed the opportunity to share their experiences in the focus groups. Many of the participants considered group meetings as an outlet for feelings, ideas and as a problem-solving modality. Various students asked about the availability of additional meetings. Here are some of their comments:

> A mí, como aquí en la escuela me ayudaría más así como programas como Usted que nos reunió aquí para platicar y eso nos ayuda mas, así puedes platicar todo lo que te pasa y por lo que pasaste.
> (For me, a program like this would help me more, like you, who brought us together to talk and that helps us more; that way you can talk about everything that happens to you and what you went through).

> #1—I think that we should have a program like this one, we get to talk about our culture and we could.
> #2—Feel better. Like what we feel inside about being Hispanics.

The school staff also felt that group meetings would be helpful to the students, especially the newly arrived ones. Although guidance counselors and social workers are available in each of the schools, the routine tracking of new students as they enter is not

provided. All three members of the school staff recognized the benefits of the availability

of a counselor to address the issues of newly arrived students. The adaptation of students,

who have experienced traumatic trips, or other stressors, would be potentially facilitated

with the access to a school counselor. One of the members of the school staff, Ms. B, had

the following to say about the availability of a counselor for the new entrants:

> Yes, you don't know, [counselor can] figure out what their transition was, figure out what, some of them come in with. Some people can come from a country and be at the upper echelon and come in with money and walk into a house that's ready for them, come into school and have all the materials, and all that. But, I mean a counselor can more readily ask questions and assess without everyone knowing what the needs are. If you don't have a jacket, they were afraid to say anything. Do you need jackets, do you need school materials, do you need pencils and pens and paper, what do you need? What can we do to help get adjusted here? Not only that, sometimes, there's stuff going on at home.

Ms. B describes the importance of assessing for concrete needs, such as winter clothing,

in addition to screening for stressful family situations. She also points to the variability

within Hispanic immigrant youth entering the school. There are some entrants who arrive

with sufficient economic and family resources who would not require as much assistance

as those who enter with more challenging situations.

In view of the multiple challenges schools face in the process of educating

acculturating youth, Ms. B also suggested the need for a greater amount of collaboration

between other districts with similar populations:

> I know people who work in other districts, I'm not saying they're all perfect, they're not, but some of the things that they have done, trial and error, and used and is now working, those are the things that we need to start looking at, the other models and see what's working and how are they transitioning their children and how are there scores are going up and ours aren't. What are they doing that's different? What books are they using? What programs are they using? How are they setting up their classrooms? How is their time for classes divided up?

Ms. B suggested that school districts can learn from each other through joint

collaboration. The cross pollination of ideas and experiences would help administrators

and educators address the complex issues that a largely immigrant student population presents.

Summary of Main Findings

The main findings of the Crossing Cultures study are broadly represented in issues of loss and the negotiation of two cultures. The more specific findings are listed below.

- The bilingual class participants focused more on immigration issues and the immediate issues related to adjusting to a new culture. Learning to speak English was defined as the most challenging task, followed by family separation issues.

- The more recent arrivals tended to compare their new situations with life in their home countries.

- The bilingual class participants found the reunification with family members and educational opportunities as the positive aspects of immigration.

- The bilingual class students were largely satisfied with their schools. They were optimistic about their futures and appreciative of the opportunities available to them in the US.

- The monolingual class participants tended to look at their situations in relation to the wider society.

- The monolingual class participants focused more on school climate and discrimination in the schools and society.

- The monolingual class participants discussed the negotiation of the different values associated with a bicultural identity and how they relate to intergenerational issues.

- The monolingual class participants reported tensions within the Hispanic student population and between the monolingual and bilingual classes.

- Participants across the monolingual and bilingual class focus groups reported tensions between the Hispanic population and the African-American population.

- Participants across the monolingual and bilingual class focus groups used the support of family and friends as primary coping strategies.

- The responses from the school staff participants clustered around the educational challenges faced by the Hispanic students as influenced by immigration, housing situations, and family stressors.

- The school staff also cited tensions between the African American and Hispanic students, among the Hispanic ethnic groups and between the monolingual and bilingual classes.

Chapter 9: Discussion

The purpose of *The Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt* study was to explore the processes related to Hispanic adolescent adjustment to US culture. More specifically, the research project sought to identify the factors that affect the development of Hispanic youth as they adapt to a different culture. Through the use of focus groups, the study captured the perceptions and experiences of 53 student participants at varying points of residency in the US. In addition, the three individual interviews with the school personnel provided the perceptions of adults who have worked with Hispanic students for extended periods of time. Aside from a greater understanding of how cultural change and developmental processes interact, the study was designed to provide the schools with interventions that would hold the potential to facilitate the adaptation of acculturating Hispanic youth.

The student participants voiced those aspects of their lives they considered as most influential. The general results of the study concurred with some of the most recent child development research pointing to the importance of contextual factors in the everyday lives of youth (Lerner, Lerner, De Stefanis & Apfel, 2001; Quintana et al. 2006; Spencer, 2006). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory (1979) provided a relevant theoretical framework for understanding contextual influences during adolescence. Ecological theory outlines four successive layers of context that encircle adolescents' lives. The first layer, the microsystem involves the adolescent's immediate context, such as family, school, and peers. For example, the following quote by one of the students highlights the importance of family:

> My mom, I know, like the main thing that helps me go on like every day is my
> mom because my mom she's no longer with my dad and my dad doesn't live

around here, he lives like in another state, so my mom has to raise, my mom has six kids, so she has to raise them all by herself and she has a job and she has to manage six kids, so to me that helps me go to sleep, like when I'm down and out and I know, I say to myself I can't do this, I have to think of my mom, she's says it to herself everyday, but she keeps making it by herself.

The mesosystem is the second layer of contextual structures and is comprised of multiple microsystems represented by two or more settings involving the adolescent. In the following quote, one of the school staff participants provided an example of a mesosystem involving the interaction between home and school:

Then you have children who possibly, in their country, were left with either one parent or a grandparent, or family member back in their country and then are now coming to be with a different family member or parent, um, you know that's not the easiest thing. We have several students in this class who have been struggling behavior-wise and we find out that their parent was not the parent who raised them, you know they were raised by a grandparent, someone else, so that whole respect that gets built, the trust that gets built, that affection isn't there yet.

The third layer, the exosystem incorporates two or more settings, where, in at least one, the adolescent is not directly involved. This can be seen in the relationship between home and a parent's place of employment. This student's quote demonstrates how her father's work hours affect family life:

My dad works two jobs, one in the morning, one in the afternoon. I only get to see him, I only have an hour, but I don't really get to spend time with him because he's always, he's sleeping, and resting and eating. So, I can't bother him and my mom, only gets to work full time in the morning…

Bronfenbrenner's fourth layer, the macrosystem is comprised of general, stable patterns of organization—such as laws, customs, media, opportunity structures, beliefs, and so on—that are common to the youngster. For example, the following quote describes one of the student's beliefs about discrimination:

Yeah, and if you're like Hispanic and you're skin is dark, they'll think that you're Black and some people still are racist and they begin treating you like nothing,

like dogs, or garbage and they be giving you the worst that they can give, instead of the best.

Overall, the major themes voiced by the participants were embedded in the contexts of family, school, neighborhood, and US culture.

The discussion of the major themes will be organized around the research questions that guided the study. Research questions were as follows:

1. How do middle school Hispanic immigrants describe and perceive the immigration and acculturation experience?

2. What aspects of the immigration/adjustment experience do the participants consider most difficult or stressful?

3. What coping strategies does the targeted group employ during the acculturation process?

4. Do the male and female participants differ in their perception of stressors and use of coping strategies?

5. What strategies do the participants and school personnel see as facilitative of the adjustment process?

6. How do the contextual factors of school, family, and community impact on the acculturation process for the targeted participants?

7. What can schools do to facilitate the adjustment process of Hispanic adolescents?

Questions two, three, and seven will form the sections of the chapter. The discussion of the first, fifth and sixth questions will be subsumed under questions two, three and seven in order to avoid redundancy of related content. The fourth question was not answered due to the absence of gendered focus groups. Following the discussion of the results, the limitations of the study will be addressed along with the theoretical,

research, practice, and policy implications of the study. Finally, the chapter will end with concluding remarks.

<div align="center">What Aspects of the Immigration/Adjustment
Experience Do the Participants Find Most
Difficult?</div>

Bilingual Class Participants

 Language. The bilingual participants cited the process of acquiring English language proficiency as the most difficult aspect of adjusting to the US. While this is not surprising, the results elucidate and highlight the social dynamics of verbal interaction, beyond the comprehension of words. The participants articulated these dynamics through the words "entender, expresar y defenderse" (understand, speak, express and defend). Many of the participants associated the inability to communicate in the language of the majority with feelings of vulnerability. In particular, the participants perceived the African-American students to have the upper hand in social situations because they spoke English. Vulnerability appeared to lead to various responses in social situations such as avoidance, withdrawal, defensiveness or hostile responses on both sides of the interaction. Additionally, for some of participants, limited English proficiency was connected to diminished intelligence and a lower social status, which contributed to feelings of embarrassment.

 There is little in the research literature that records the experiences of acculturating youth in relation to the process of English language acquisition. Two research studies documented the social/emotional implications of limited English

proficiency. Streng et al. (2004) interviewed ten Hispanic adolescents in the mid-west

about their experiences as newly arrived immigrants. A theme of social isolation emerged

in relation to a lack of English proficiency. Valencia and Johnson (2006) also found that

the lack of English proficiency was a barrier to school involvement among the

participants in their study. Similar to the *Crossing Cultures* project, these studies

highlight the role of language in social interactions.

Based on the social disadvantage of limited English proficiency, it is

understandable that several of the newly arrived participants advocated for increased

English instruction. Their eagerness and desire to learn English was clearly expressed.

This would contradict the popular belief among segments of the US population that

Hispanic immigrants are unwilling to learn English (Cornelius, 2002).

Contrary to public perceptions, the bilingual participants understood the

importance of learning English not only for the purposes of social discourse, but because

it was critical to their future success in the US. Additionally, the inability to speak

English constrained and shaped social interactions. While there are a variety of factors

contributing to peer relations, the absence of a common language to equalize the playing

field appeared to contribute to the between-group tensions reported by the participants.

Immigration. The bilingual participants identified the trip and initial entry into the

US as a major challenge to their psychological resources. Attention to pre-immigration

and immigration factors is considered important for the understanding of the overall

adjustment of youth to US culture (Guarnaccia, 1997; Guarnaccia & Lopez, 1998). While

the initial entrance into the US incorporated various levels of stress for the participants,

those who entered the country illegally faced the greatest level of threats to their well-

being. They began their trips with the knowledge that they were transgressing laws that

govern immigration. There were dangerous aspects of the trip. Alberto who was almost left behind in the dessert offered the most poignant example of the risks faced by youth who enter the US without legal documentation. The school staff confirmed the kinds of experiences cited by the participants. Ms. B., in particular, reported first-hand experience with students who had been traumatized during the trip to the US. In one particular example, a student displayed significant difficulty adjusting to school due the sexual assault she experienced during the trip.

A search for investigations about the experiences of youth during border crossings revealed scant attention to the issue. While the mental health risks of highly stressful trips to the US for immigrants and refuges are acknowledged (Guarnaccia & Lopez, 1998; Nicholson, 1997; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001), there is little specific documentation of the experience of youth from their own reports. Nicholson (1997) found that many of the 447 adult Southeast Asian refugees continued to suffer significant psychological symptomotology nearly twenty years after traumatic pre-immigration experiences. However, the results of the study also indicated that current stressors experienced by the participants were stronger predictors of negative psychological outcomes than pre-immigration trauma. The concept of stress pile-up (McCubbin et al., 1980) due to the accumulation of stressors over time may help explain how current stressors were more significant for Nicholson's participants. In the *Crossing Cultures* study, it was unclear whether present or past stressors held more weight in terms of the psychosocial adjustment of the participants. However, many of the participants were candidates for stress pile-up given the multiple stressors they faced in the past and present.

While the documented participants reported less dramatic trips, the immigration laws that dictate the process of admission into the US directly affected them, as well. The lengthy processing of documents led to extended separations from parents and other family members. Notwithstanding the legal obstacles for the documented students, they enjoyed the opportunity to visit their home countries. They also had access to the rights and privileges conferred to all legal residents. In the present study, the documented participants also appeared to enter situations with greater financial stability.

Despite the hardships related to immigration, the bilingual participants presented an optimistic and positive view of their new school and environment. This led to the association to a honeymoon period, or an initial period of pronounced positive feelings and perceptions communicated by the newly arrived students about their new home. In the limited research on the topic, mixed results have been demonstrated. In a randomly selected, non-clinical sample of Southeast Asian refugees, Rumbaut (1985) identified an initial period of euphoria lasting about six to nine months. However, among her sample of refugees in New Zealand, Pernice (1996) did not find any support for a migratory experience characterized by an initial predominance of positive affect. The apparently contradictory results may underscore the variety of experiences among immigrants and refugees precluding generalizations. The refugee experience, alone, has its own unique aspects that may distinguish it from the general immigration experience. Nonetheless, the positive quality of attitude and affect among the newly arrived participants in the *Crossing Cultures* study stood in stark contrast to the more acculturated ones.

Separation, Reunion and Reconfiguration. The bilingual students also considered the separation, reunion, and reconfiguration of family members as a difficult aspect of their adjustment to the US. Whereas, this result was not particularly surprising, the

number of participants who reported separation from at least one parent was striking. This does not include those participants who did not reveal separations during the focus groups. Moreover, the staggered immigration, where parents left their children for various lengths of time with surrogate caretakers, resulted in additional separations when the participants left their home countries to immigrate to the US. Current research (Mitrani, Santisteban & Muir, 2004; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001;Suarez-Orozco, Todorova & Louie, 2002); confirmed the staggered pattern of immigration seen in the *Crossing Cultures* study among a large portion of the families moving from Mexico, Central America and parts of the Caribbean. Yet, the prevalence and effects of separations between Hispanic youth and their parents have received little attention in past research.

More specifically, the immediate and long term mental health outcomes of familial separations related to immigration are unclear. One empirical study was conducted by Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie (2002), which combined quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the prevalence and effects of parental separation for 385 recently arrived immigrant youth in a non-clinical population. The authors found that 90% of the Hispanic youth had been separated from one or both parents during the immigration process. While youth who had not been separated from a parent were less likely to report depression, the results of this longitudinal study did not indicate a clear relationship between separation and psychological symptoms. There were youth who experienced negative psychological sequelae as a result of parental separations, but there were youth who had made positive adjustments despite the familial disruptions. The importance of studying non-clinical samples in order to reveal the wide spectrum of adjustment outcomes is highlighted in the Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie study and

the *Crossing Cultures* project. While it is difficult to know what the effects of familial separations were in the present study, there were students who discussed positive, postimmigration family situations.

Aside from the separation of family members, the nature of pre-immigration and post-immigration family relationships was also highlighted in the *Crossing Cultures* study. Examining the quality of those relationships further advances the understanding of adjustment outcomes for the newly arrived participants. In his clinical work with Hispanic families, Falicov (2002) found that the attitudes of the surrogate caregivers responsible for the children remaining in the home country was an important factor that contributed to the adjustment of youth once they reunited with their parents in the US. In the present study, the influence of the reunion and reconfiguration of family members was illustrated. Two participants were in conflicted relationships with their step-fathers. Other participants encountered different parenting styles with fathers they had never lived with. Some participants moved into homes with unfamiliar family members. Thus, the present study's participants faced multiple adaptational demands which included the acquisition of a new language, adjustment to a new school and set of peers, as well as a newly configured family.

In one of the few studies about preimmigration and postimmigration family relationships, Smith, Lalonde, and Johnson (2004) conducted a retrospective analysis of Afro-Caribbean immigrants who had settled in Canada. The families of the participants in that study had also immigrated in the staggered manner found among many Hispanic youth. The results of their study illustrate the significance of how youth perceive and understand their parents' motivation for leaving them in their native countries. The authors of the study found that a more successful reunification process was attained by

those participants who had understood their parents' departure for the US as driven by parental sacrifice. Thus, the study suggests that those youth who can perceive their parents' departure as an act of love as opposed to an act of rejection have a better chance of achieving a more satisfactory adjustment.

Smith, Lalonde, and Johnson (2004) also found that the length of the parental separation, as well as the incorporation of new members into the family during the child's absence, reduced the chances for successful reunions. Their results further indicated that the family reunification process was more challenging for older children. Thus, age, lengths of separation and reunification factors appear to be important mediating variables when examining adjustment outcomes. This is especially relevant for the participants in the present study, who, as adolescents, had established lives in their native countries and reported varying family reunification experiences.

Consistent with one of the reports from a staff member in the *Crossing Cultures* study, Smith, Lalonde, and Johnson (2004) found that older children with extended separations from their parents were more likely to resist the discipline of their parents once in the US. Ms. C had cited how some of the newly arrived students had difficulties accepting the authority of the parent after lengthy separations. She associated some of the behavioral problems exhibited by some of the immigrant youth in her school with varying forms of family conflict. The scope of the present project did not permit an exploration of the effects of parental separation on parent-child conflict. However, given the prevalence of parental and family disruptions, it is an important factor in adaptational outcomes and represents an important topic for future research.

While separation from parents is a powerful emotional event in a child's life, the context of the separation holds the key to understanding what factors emerge as risk

markers. The limited research indicates that length of separation, age of separation, the nature of the reunification and reconfiguration of the family, as well as the attitudes transmitted to the youth by the surrogate caregiver about the immigrated parent contribute to the success of the reunion with the parent(s) in the US. Continued research using non-clinical samples will contribute to a more precise identification of the protective and risk factors that combine to determine adjustment trajectories.

Monolingual Participants

   Discrimination. Discrimination emerged as a central theme in the *Crossing Cultures* research study, confirming current research findings. Developmental research affirms the importance of discrimination as a contextual factor in the lives of minority youth (Brown & Bigler, 2006; McLoyd, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Quintana et al., 2006; Shaunessy, McHatton, Hughes, Brice & Ratliff, 2007; Streng et al., 2004; Valencia & Johnson, 2006). Despite discrimination's significance, little attention has been given to developing youth's perceptions of discrimination (Brown & Bigler, 2006). The short-term and long-term effects of discrimination on such areas of development as self-identity, academic achievement, and overall functioning remain unclear. In relation to Hispanic youth, one study conducted by Valencia & Johnson (2006) found that discrimination was most frequently cited as an obstacle to involvement in school activities in their sample of 277 Hispanic middle and high school students in North Carolina.

   In the present study, discrimination was raised as an issue primarily by the monolingual class students. In comparison to the bilingual participants, the more acculturated participants expressed a heightened awareness of discrimination and the

stereotypes projected by society. They also asserted a higher degree of moral objection to stereotypes and discriminatory behavior. The eighth grade social studies curriculum may contribute to the participants' perceptions. The curriculum covers US history, including instruction about the constitution. One student's assertion of "we're supposed to be equal," appears to indicate an increased awareness of the contradiction between US ideals and everyday reality. While the bilingual class participants are taught the same eighth grade social studies curriculum, their limited exposure to discrimination in the US may help account for the reduced level of discussion on the topic. Brown and Bigler (2006) propose that increased sensitization to discrimination may take place when children experience an early exposure and understanding of others' false perceptions. Due to their extended length of residency in the US, the monolingual participants appeared more acutely aware of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. Various participants or their families had direct experience with discrimination. For the monolingual participants, to "judge a book by its cover" meant to have preconceived notions about their character and behavior projected on them by society. They believed that their personal identities were rendered invisible because of the stereotypes generated by the wider society.

Aside from societal discrimination, the participants reported experiences with discrimination within the local contexts of school and community. Both the bilingual and monolingual participants perceived discrimination by school personnel and their African-American peers. In the Jones School, particularly, where the population was more diverse, the participants reported tensions which were associated with physical altercations and in some cases, bullying behaviors. While more research is needed to identify the effects of discrimination on adolescent well-being, Fisher, Wallace and

Fenton (2000) found that distress related to peer discrimination negatively affected self-esteem and academic functioning.

A surprising result from the data was the tensions reported within the Hispanic school population among the Hispanic sub-groups. While the diversity within the Hispanic population is great, given that the students are nested in a different culture, it would seem that the broader commonalities between the groups would result in a more united in-group in the face of discrimination and their relations to the African-American students. The conflicts between the Hispanic sub-groups appeared to revolve around misperceptions about the meaning of behaviors. For example, some of the monolingual participants believed that the bilingual students perceived them as disloyal to their ethnic identities because they dressed like African-Americans. A monolingual student felt that the bilingual students thought they were "all that." In their qualitative study of ten immigrant Hispanic adolescents, Streng et al. (2004) also found that the more acculturated Hispanics in their study rejected the new Hispanic entrants. Similar to the dynamics of the Hispanic and African-American tensions, themes related to social hierarchy such as superior versus inferior social positions abounded. This is consistent with the concept of stigmatization, where individuals or groups are demeaned and excluded by other individuals and groups (Major & Eccleston, 2005).

The issue of language emerged here, as well, with perceptions of superiority associated with the English proficient Hispanic students. Streng et al. (2004) found comparable results. One of their participants echoed similar sentiments to those reported in the *Crossing Cultures* study*:* "Because they already know two languages they feel superior to you and they joke about you whenever they want." (p. 411).

Some of the monolingual participants also reported within group categorization of Hispanic ethnic groups in a hierarchical manner based on the perceived value of certain groups. Mexicans were placed on the bottom of the hierarchical ladder due to the reputation of gangs and other negative behaviors in the community. While Mexicans were perceived to have less social status, some of the participants in one school resented the disproportionate amount of attention they believed Mexican students were receiving from the school administration during Mexican holidays. The phenomena of tension within the Hispanic ethnic groups do not appear often in the research literature. However, two studies confirmed the existence of the tensions within Hispanic groups found in the *Crossing Cultures* study. Quiroz (2001) and Henze, Katz and Norte (2000) also found tensions between the newly arrived and more acculturated students.

Skin color was raised as another within-group source of tension by a staff member. Ms. B cited the example of negative comments made by some of her students about a very dark skinned Mexican youth. Rothe (2005) further confirms the existence of within group discrimination based on skin color with a clinical example of a Puerto Rican adolescent who was rejected by a Cuban youth because of her darker skin color. Hall (1994) refers to the "bleaching syndrome" among Hispanics to describe the perceived value of lighter skin. The within-group discrimination based on skin color found in the *Crossing Cultures* study is consistent with the literature on the intraracial preference for lighter skin found within the African-American community (Thompson & Keith, 2001). Within group discrimination further exemplifies the variation within the Hispanic population and the need to address the differences as well as the similarities when conducting research

Interethnic relations are an aspect of school climate that has received increasing attention as schools struggle to address tensions between groups of students in diverse school settings. The results of the *Crossing Cultures* study not only highlighted the issue, but helped to identify some of the perceptions that fuel and maintain the conflicts. Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Brown, 2000) offers a theoretical framework for understanding group relations. Based on the premise that people aspire to maintain positive social group identification, Social Identity theory asserts that this results in bias toward their group. The association of favorable attributes to one's group is associated with higher individual self-esteem. A negative outside opinion of one's group can lead to separation from the group or the search for positive qualities within the group. According to Social Identity Theory, sometimes a group is reclassified into subcategories, as seen in the example of the categorization of Hispanic sub-groups based on ethnicity, or level of acculturation. It is conceivable that because Hispanics are discriminated against by the larger society, ethnic groups attempt to carve out unique positive identities that separate them from the stigmatized group.

Consideration also needs to be given to developmental issues. Scholars who study ethnic identity indicate that by the senior year in high school, ethnic identity is better established and a favorable sense of ethnic identity appears to lead to more positive out-group perceptions (Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997). Early adolescence may be prone to greater variability in social categorization perceptions due to the developmental flux of this period.

The monolingual participants raised important issues that have significant implications for their overall adjustment. A greater understanding of how discrimination affects adolescent well-being is important because it is unclear if perceptions of

marginalization influence the ways acculturating youth integrate into the wider US society. Research on intergroup relations is important because it has implications for peer relations and aspects of school climate. Given the increased diversity of school populations throughout the country and globally, the *Crossing Cultures* study underscores the need to identify models of interventions that address inter-group tensions. Additionally, more research needs to be conducted to identify the impact of peer discrimination on such areas as academic functioning and emotional well-being.

    Bicultural identity. As more acculturated Hispanics, the monolingual students raised various aspects of negotiating the intersection of two cultures. One of the main features of the bicultural identity theme involved the negotiation of values discrepancies between Hispanic and US cultures. For example, three of the participants spoke of the Hispanic cultural practice of averting eye contact by lowering the head as a sign of respect for authority which has a contrasting meaning in school. Some of the female participants voiced opposition to traditional Hispanic gender roles that bestow greater freedom to boys in the family. Yet, other female participants seemed to accept the restrictions as part of the parental intent to protect them.

    Intergenerational values discrepancies have been found among minority and majority youth (Phinney, Ong & Madden, 2000; Portes & Zady, 2002). The questioning and reassessment of parental beliefs is considered an inherent part of adolescent development. In the present study, the values discrepancies centered on the over-protection of girls and the greater freedom given to boys. Some of the female participants voiced opposition to traditional Hispanic gender roles that bestow greater freedom to boys in the family. In comparison to the boys, the girls were restricted to the home and domestic duties more often and were not permitted to date as early as boys. Divergence

from traditional values is an important area of research because it can lead to family conflicts, which are associated with markers of psychological well-being such as self-esteem (Portes & Zady, 2002) and anxiety, depression and conduct problems (Ary et al. 1999; Lau et.al., 2005; Pasch et al. 2006). From what the participants of the *Crossing Cultures* study shared, the perception of the parental child rearing practices influenced the degree of tension the values discrepancy generated. For example, while some of the participants did not agree with the level of restriction their parents imposed, it appeared to be more tolerated if the intent of the practice was motivated by the intent to protect them. The gender socialization differences found in the *Crossing Cultures* study is consistent with other studies that have found similar gender role expectations for adolescent dating in Hispanic families across levels of acculturation (Raffaelli, 2005; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). In comparison to female Hispanic adolescents, girls in the larger US society begin to date at an earlier age (Raffaelli, 2005).

However recent studies with community samples have revealed that intergenerational gaps in acculturation between adolescents and their parents do not necessarily result in conflict or negative psychological outcomes (Lau et al., 2005; Pasch et al., 2006). Santisteban and Mitrani (2003) observed a wide variation of responses to acculturation by family members based on a variety of individual, familial, and cultural factors that combined to affect adolescent adjustment. Gil and Vega (1996) suggest that intergeneration conflicts may have a temporal element. In their research with Cuban and Nicaraguan youth, intergenerational acculturation conflicts were high for the first 2 years of settlement and lower for the 3rd through 10th years, rising again past the 10th year of immigration.

A surprising result from the data included some of the monolingual students' perception of child protective laws in the US. While the bilingual participants generally perceived the US as protective of children, some of the monolingual participants believed that child protective laws undermined the authority of their parents. Interestingly, physical punishment was not perceived necessarily as a negative child rearing practice, but as an expression of love and as an effective form of discipline. Furthermore, the participants, and likely their parents, appeared to believe that any kind of physical touch as a form of discipline was illegal in the US. Children in the US were seen as having the power to call DYFS (Division of Youth and Family Services) and thereby diminish parental authority. If this is a common belief within the community, it can have a serious effect on parents' perception of their position of authority in the family. Given the illegal status of many Hispanic parents and the fear of government intervention within the family, such a misunderstanding about child protective laws could have a detrimental effect on the disciplinary power of some parents. While there has been a greater emphasis on intergenerational values discrepancy in the study of acculturation, the foregoing example of intergenerational values accordance indicates that despite a higher level of acculturation, the next generation may maintain certain values. This is based on the findings which indicate that more acculturated youngsters tend to endorse mainstream values at a faster rate than their parents (Fuligni, 1998a).

A component of a bicultural identity also involves the extent to which elements of the native culture are incorporated into the overall self-concept. Ethnic identity includes cultural behaviors, a sense of group membership and positive feelings about individual group membership (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). As a developmental process, ethnic identity is explored and affirmed during early and middle

adolescence (Phinney, 2003; Quintana, 2007). In the *Crossing Cultures* study, many of the monolingual participants demonstrated a desire to strengthen ethnic group identity. Some of the participants sought to attain this by advocating for increased Spanish instruction. Other students protested about the lack of recognition given to their ethnic group's significant holidays. Still other participants expressed eagerness to learn about their ethnic group's history and visit their parental home countries. One student expressed pride in her bilingual fluency. Shaunessy, McHatton, Hughes, Brice, and Ratliff (2007) also found a sense of pride in bilingual fluency expressed during their interviews of sixteen Hispanic adolescents. Consistent with the *Crossing Cultures* study, Romero and Roberts (2003) found that US born adolescents in their study felt pressured to learn more Spanish. In the *Crossing Cultures* study, according to the students, some of the parents were dismayed about the participants' loss of Spanish language proficiency. Quiroz (2001) found similar overall struggles to define ethnic identity in her study of 27 Puerto Rican and Mexican adolescents.

Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Brown, 2000) can again offer some understanding related to ethnic identity formation. A positive regard for ethnic group affiliation appears to function to maintain higher levels of self esteem. However, self-categorization also seems to be fluid phenomena. In the present study, the participants appeared to move from identification with Hispanics as a group, to their ethnic groups. Some of the participants spoke about Hispanic identification with African-American dress and behavior which further indicates that identity among Hispanics may be multicultural.

The issue of ethnic identity is important because adolescents, who have a positive regard for their group affiliation, tend to have higher levels of self-esteem (Phinney,

Horencryk, Liebkind, and Vedder, 2001) and higher levels of overall well-being

(Quintana, 2007)). In their study, Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett & Sands (2006)

found that positive feelings about ethnic identity were also associated with better grades.

Yet, a negative feeling toward one's ethnic group does not necessarily lead to self

derogatory attitudes (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001). Clearly, there are

other mechanisms that interact with ethnic identity and psychological well-being

In the present study, a bicultural identity also appeared to have its painful aspects.

This was observable in the participants, who visited the native country and felt rejected

because of their more acculturated, "gringa," status. As acculturating youth strive to

strengthen their bicultural identity, the prevalence of rejection from the native culture is

unknown. Furthermore, it is not clear how this rejection may affect self-concept

development.

The advantage of a positive sense of ethnic group affiliation was not well

understood in all schools. For example, some of the participants reported that several

teachers frowned upon the use of Spanish or that staff members opposed the display of

ethnic group symbols. Research on Hispanic youth can be used to foster a better

understanding of how ethnic group pride buffers the effects of discrimination and fosters

a stronger sense of identity. Such findings may help members of school staff appreciate

their students' search for ethnic identity as an important developmental process.

Neighborhood

Both the bilingual and monolingual participants cited the neighborhood as another

important contextual factor in their everyday lives. Adolescent development researchers

have been paying increasing attention to neighborhood processes and their relationship to

a variety of outcomes. Neighborhood disadvantage characterized by high concentration of poverty, unemployment and a high incidence of crime have been directly and indirectly associated to less effective parenting behaviors, educational outcomes and internalizing symptoms, such as depression (Bowen, Bowen, & Wate, 2002; Deng et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). On the other hand, coethnic communities have been found to buffer of the effects of cultural change (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zhou, 1997). Thus, the neighborhood is seen as powerful mediating factor that contributes to adolescent development.

The *Crossing Cultures* participants lent support to the growing body of evidence on the influence of neighborhood on developing youth. Various bilingual participants discussed the "confianza" (trust) they had in their friends and neighbors in their native countries. In their home countries, they were free to socialize with peers due to their long standing relationships and familiarity with the other community members. In the US, they felt confined to their homes partially because of the neighborhood crime, which added to the constraints imposed by a lack of English and US cultural proficiency. For example the high likelihood of having their bicycle stolen, meant that the participants limited or refrained from bicycle use. The participants in a study conducted by Gonzalez-Ramos and Sanchez-Nestor (2001) similarly expressed a lack of trust within the neighborhood due to the incidence of crime. As found in the *Crossing Cultures* study, neighborhood factors constrained social relationships and extracurricular activities outside of school. The fear associated with unsafe neighborhoods conceivably has the potential to affect parenting behaviors, as well. In response to safety issues, parents may restrict their children's activities, further limiting extracurricular activities that serve to promote social skills. While neighborhood safety is of concern to most parents, Hispanic parents may not

have the financial resources to pay for extracurricular activities that would provide the additional peer interaction outside of school. Additionally, older siblings may have to care for younger ones while parents work. Examining the influence of neighborhood processes is a prime example of how studying the interaction of the ecological domains of family, neighborhood, and school contributes to a fuller understanding of the effect of environment on developing youth.

The Second Generation Effect

The *Crossing Cultures* study revealed clear differences between the bilingual and monolingual students, not only in terms of the themes that emerged, but in attitudes and outlooks. The optimism of the newly arrived participants was in contrast to the less positive outlook of the more acculturated students. For example, a tone of cynicism is revealed in such comments as; "I think that here many people care more about getting money than their family." Discrimination appeared to contribute a large share of the perceptual differences among the monolingual participants. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) refer to "social mirroring, "or the development of a self-concept that is shaped by the attitudes and beliefs of the wider society. They suggest that the disparagement acculturating youth receive from society forms a part of their identity. However, the role of discrimination in shaping adjustment outcomes is not clear. The ways that youth respond to discrimination may have more of a deciding factor. Some of the participants were propelled by discrimination to "prove them wrong." As they compared themselves to the wider society, poor neighborhoods, overcrowded schools, and poor housing situations may combine with discrimination to negatively affect their view of their situations and futures.

A study that addressed this phenomenon was conducted by Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2006). They analyzed the narratives of Mexican adolescents living in Mexico, as well as first and second-generation Mexican adolescents living in the US. The authors used the same projective measure for all the groups to elicit perceptions about achievement aspirations. They found that the Mexican and Mexican immigrants were more optimistic about the future and eagerly asked for help from others. On the other hand, the second generation Mexicans revealed themes involving discouragement and diminished expectations for the future. They asked for help from adults less frequently and expressed self-doubt more often.

Acculturation research has documented a higher incidence of negative psychological outcomes with increased levels of acculturation into the mainstream society (Gonzales et al., 2000; Gonzales & Kim, 1997; Harker, 2001). Rumbaut (1994) found a decrease in self-esteem among Hispanic youth born in the United States. Substance abuse among United States-born Hispanics is generally higher than for those born in another country (Vega, Gil, & Kolody, 2002). More recently, the National Latino and Asian-American Study (NLAS) reported that US-born Hispanics, particularly third generation ones, were at a significantly greater risk for developing psychiatric disorders than their first generation counterparts (Alegria et al., 2007). Within-group variability was indicated by the finding that Mexicans and Cubans tended to have a reduced incidence of psychiatric disorder when compared to Puerto Ricans, who had the highest incidence of psychiatric disorder. Regardless of age and date of immigration, first generation immigrants had a lower lifetime incidence of substance abuse disorders. While the study was comprised of an adult sample, this type of research is needed for Hispanic

youth. The NLAS study confirmed differences found between immigrants and more acculturated Hispanics.

With particular attention to Hispanic youth, educational achievement, as another measure of adolescent well-being, has also shown consistent declines in association with increased generational status (Buriel, 1993; Fuligni, 1998a; Gonzales et al, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut (2001). Other researchers have found that immigrant students possessed a strong drive for academic achievement and performed at higher levels than children born in the United States with immigrant parents (Gonzales et al., 2000). Members of the school staff in the *Crossing Cultures* study confirmed the high motivation of the newly arrived Hispanic students. While the reasons for the failing grades in language arts literacy for 13 of the 34 monolingual eighth grade students in the Jones School are unknown, these students represented the more acculturated group of eighth-grade students. Acculturation researchers continue to posit that the declines in the indicators of well-being among Hispanic youth may be attributed to the decreasing adherence to the native cultural values that have provided a buffer against the stressors involved in acculturation (Gonzales et al, 2000; Harker, 2001).

The *Crossing Cultures* study provided a window into the perceptions of Hispanic students across the acculturation spectrum that may partially explain the declines in well-being documented by various research studies. The changes in perception involve the growing sense of marginalization expressed by the participants. This may be partially related to their growing awareness of discrimination and the contradiction between US ideals about equality and the reality. For those participants who know that their career aspirations will be trumped without legal documentation, an uncertain future may lead to a gradual change in outlook. As the participants begin to compare their situation with the

wider society, a decrease in optimism may result. The effects of higher levels of acculturation highlight the need to separate the generations for a clearer understanding of how the process of acculturation over time contributes to developmental outcomes.

School Personnel Participants

The three members of the school staff who were interviewed individually as part of the triangulation of data sources, echoed, and thus, confirmed some of the perceptions of the student participants. The trauma of the trip, issues of family separation, reconfiguration, and reunion, between group and within group discrimination were themes also presented by the school staff participants. However, they also raised different issues. All three of the school staff participants spoke about the lower grade level academic skills among the newly arrived students. This was not only presented as an educational challenge for the school district, but as also having important consequences for the academic, social, and emotional development of the students. One participant, Ms. B, believed that the district needed to increase the number of ungraded classrooms that are designed to instruct new entrants based on their skill levels. Otherwise, students were retained or placed in lower grades with younger children. Consequently, older students have been educated with younger children, at incongruous developmental levels. These placements can potentially embarrass the older students, compounding the effects on academic achievement.

The low academic skills of immigrant students have not been examined sufficiently as a risk factor for negative psychological outcomes. However, Cortina and Gendreau (2003) studied the educational outcomes of Mexicans in New York City. Similar to the *Crossing Cultures* study, they also found a high number of youth with

either no prior education or low levels of education upon immigration to the US. They also found that Mexican-born students tended to finish high school more often than their US-born counterparts. Consistent with Ms. B's report in the *Crossing Cultures* study, Cortina and Gendreau found that students who entered the US schools with literacy in Spanish had a better chance to be academically successful in the US. Furthermore, those students, who arrived during early or late adolescence, without prior schooling, were more vulnerable to poor academic outcomes. The Mexican population in New York City studied by Cortina and Gendreau is similar to the participants of the present study.

Another theme that emerged from the school personnel was the additional risk factor imposed by crowded housing arrangements. The long parental work hours, the presence of strangers in the apartments and crowded circumstances were associated with an increased risk for sexual abuse. While it is generally acknowledged that many immigrant families live in multiple family households, the increased risk for sexual abuse has not emerged in the research literature. A question about the adolescent's living arrangements would be an important question to include in any screening measurement of risk factors for the well-being of immigrant youth.

Participation in After-School Activities

The Student Information form gathered data about the participants' attendance in after-school activities. The majority of the participants did not participate in sports or other after-school programs. There was no difference in rates of participation across generations or gender. Bacallao and Smokowski (2007) also found that participation in school related activities was uncommon among the twelve, undocumented immigrant adolescents they interviewed. In the *Crossing Cultures* study, the reasons for lack of

participation were not directly queried. However, one student spoke broadly about how some students have familial responsibilities after school. The school staff also cited the same reason as an obstacle to participation in after-school programs. Other participants noted that some students work after school in order to provide financial assistance to their families. Outside of what the participants reported, a factor to consider is whether the after-school activities were of sufficient interest to induce participants' attendance. It is also unknown whether the students participated in community sponsored sports activities. During the recruitment process, telephone conversations with the parents of the participants indicated that some of the parents were uncomfortable with their children coming home on the late bus or walking home in the dark after the focus group meetings, especially since it was getting dark earlier. Some parents would only allow their children to participate if they were available to pick them up at school or meet them at the bus stop. The limited participation in after-school activities is a prime example of how different aspects of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem (1989) interact to affect an outcome for Hispanic youth. Parental work schedules may require students to care for younger siblings. The neighborhood context imposes its own constraints and the financial situation of a family may require a student to work.

Thus, the advantages of participation in after-school activities were not available to the students in the present study. For example, team sports have been associated with higher levels of academic achievement and self esteem (Bowker, 1996; Pedersen & Seidman, 2004). While there are no apparent negative effects of non-participation in after-school activities, the participants in the study did not gain the advantage of the self-esteem enhancement that sports activities provide. In addition, students were not

attending the available academic support provided by after-school programs. More research is needed to uncover why students do not participate in after-school activities.

Summary

The participants framed their issues of concern within the layers of context that affect their daily lives. The results of the *Crossing Cultures* study have confirmed similar findings in the acculturation literature related to the family disruptions experienced during the immigration process, ethnic identity, intergenerational issues and the second generation effect. However, the *Crossing Cultures* study has identified specific areas that have received little research attention in the past. For example, current research tends to focus on values dissonance between the generations, but the results of the *Crossing Cultures* study indicate that there is values concordance, as well. One finding that was not found in the acculturation literature involves some of the monolingual class participants' views of child protective laws as undermining parental authority. This was in strong contrast to the perceptions of the newly arrived students who welcomed the child protection laws of the US. This type of perceptual change was illustrated often in the study across various domains and contributes to an increased understanding of the subjective experience of Hispanic adolescents over time. The study offered a window into the qualitative changes in attitude and outlook the participants experienced as they acculturated.

The dangers experienced by the undocumented participants during border crossings, the profound effects of societal discrimination, the potential for sexual abuse in crowded housing situations, and within group discord are other important findings that contribute to the acculturation literature on Hispanic adolescents.. They are important

because they have the potential to affect the academic functioning of Hispanic youth, as well as their overall well-being. The study emphasizes the need for additional research to better understand how the issues identified specifically influence Hispanic youth adjustment. Particularly, how does the increased sense of marginalization expressed by the more acculturated participants affect academic functioning and future aspirations?

What Coping Strategies Does the Targeted Group

Employ During the Acculturation Process?

The monolingual and bilingual participants consistently cited the family as the primary source of support during stressful experiences. Family remains one of the most significant influences in an adolescent's life (Frydenberg, 1997) and serves as a cushion against stress (Crean, 2004; Printz, Shermis, & Webb, 1999) across cultures. Acculturative stress, in particular, can be ameliorated by the presence of family support (Compas, Hindren & Gerhardt, 1995; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Hovey & King, 1996). The centrality of family may be heightened for Hispanic youth due to the cultural value of familialism, which emphasizes the importance of loyal and interdependent relationships within the nuclear and extended family (Marin & Gamba, 2003). *The Crossing Cultures* participants underscored the importance of family as a facilitator of coping.

Coping processes that include active attempts to solve problems or master stressors have consistently been associated with adaptive adjustment in youth (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsorth, 2001; Crean, 2004; Gonzales, Tein, Sandler & Friedman, 2001). Some researchers have included the use of family as an aspect of social support (Crean, 2004) in their assessment of coping strategies. Other research defines active coping as including social support, without specifying the

involvement of family versus peer, or the engagement of both, in the process of coping. In one of the few studies that directly measured Mexican American adolescents' perceived stress and coping, Kobus and Reyes (2000) found that family support followed active coping as the most commonly used strategies among the adolescents in their study. These authors conceptually separated family support from active coping. Research focused on coping processes currently lacks clarity in the use of definitions, categories and subtypes of coping strategies (Compas, 2001). Despite the confounding of terms, researchers have generally associated family support with adaptive coping responses (Portes & Zady, 2002) and as a cushion against stress (Crean, 2004, Printz, Shermis, & Webb, 1999).

Consequently, based on the reports given by the student participants in *the Crossing Cultures* study, the use of family, as an active, engaged form of coping would indicate a potentially protective measure when faced with the challenges of acculturation. When family members were accessed in times of stress, the participants found encouragement, inspiration and a purpose for working hard in school. Interestingly, the second-generation participants also reported the use of family more often than other coping strategies, indicating the continued importance of family as primary sources of support with higher levels of acculturation.

Considering the centrality of family, conflict, loss and changes in this domain would potentially threaten the availability of a main coping mechanism. The broad nature of the question about coping in the present study did not provide more specific information about coping processes among the participants. For example, it is unclear how family is used in the coping process, or how and when other coping strategies are employed in the absence of family as a source of support. Nonetheless, the results are of

particular importance to schools and helping professionals involved in assisting Hispanic youth adapt to US culture.

Clearly, immigration and acculturation pose additional stressors not experienced by mainstream youth. Acute life stressors, such as immigration, are considered significant risk factors for adolescent symptomotology (Crean, 2004). While the presence of multiple, simultaneous risk factors has been associated with negative psychological outcomes (Rutter, 1999), family support is one factor that appears to provide a buffer against acculturation stress.

The concept of resilience, as an aspect of coping, has attracted increased attention by scholars who study developmental processes. Defined as an ability to overcome adversity, resilient individuals are able to resist the negative outcomes of experiences associated with a high risk for psychopathology (Rutter, 1999). Resilience refers to relatively positive outcomes emanating from the individual's competence and employment of effective coping strategies (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltman, Thomsen, & Wadsorth, 2002). Resilience is thought to also include family support (Condly, 2006). Many of the students in *the Crossing Cultures* study demonstrated resilience in various ways. Despite the adversity they faced during their pre-immigration and immigration experiences, the bilingual participants remained unshaken in their hope and positive attitudes about their futures. The more acculturated participants showed resilience in their attempts to establish a positive ethnic identity that may serve as a buffer against discrimination. Research on Hispanic youth has tended to focus on negative psychological symptoms to the under-emphasis of their strengths (Morrobel, 2004). While the risk factors faced by Hispanic youth are multiple, there is sufficient indication that positive developmental outcomes occur in a portion of the population. In their five

year experience helping Hispanic immigrant youth adapt to the US, Gonzalez-Ramos and Sanchez-Nestor (2001) found a great deal of resilience in the students' ability to master their negative experiences in positive ways.. What is unclear is what are the specific personality attributes or environmental conditions that promote resiliency.

What Can Schools Do to Facilitate the Adjustment Process of Hispanic Adolescents?

The participants offered several suggestions that schools could implement to facilitate the adaptation of Hispanic youth to the educational environment. These suggestions revolved around language instruction, inter-group relations, educational and supportive services. Improving school environments is important because school adjustment is a major developmental task.

Academic Instruction

When the bilingual participants were asked what schools could do to help them adjust to the US, they simply asked to be instructed. The newly arrived participants' high motivation for academic achievement and openness to learning is a resource that the schools can capitalize on. Particularly with regard to English language instruction, various bilingual students clearly advocated for greater instruction in this area. After-school English instruction may provide the newly arrived students the opportunity to gain proficiency of the English language more quickly. Due to their high motivation, the newly arrived students would most likely accept an extended school day.

Likewise, after-school programs can offer Spanish language instruction for the more acculturated students. Many of the monolingual class participants expressed an interest in learning more Spanish, as well as increasing their knowledge about their ethnic

heritage. Given their interest in establishing a bicultural identity and the apparent benefits this confers for their psychosocial adjustment, schools have the opportunity to offer activities that can strengthen students' self-concept. High interest activities may attract more students to after-school programs. The use of peers as adjunct instructors may provide the additional advantage of increasing peer interaction. Programs that include language instruction may also be of high interest to parents, resulting in a greater impetus to find ways for the students to attend after-school programs. An extended day for all immigrant students would solve the issue of child-care coverage after school.

School Climate

The monolingual participants attending the Jones School (middle school) voiced the most concerns about school climate. The Center for Social and Emotional Education (2007) defines school climate as incorporating the quality of the relationships within the schools, and the students' and staff's perceptions of the physical, emotional, and social safety within the school environment. Among the elements of school climate, the participants cited the presence of discrimination and unfair discipline in their schools. Incidents of multiple fights, theft, bullying and a sense of chaos were particularly reported in the Jones School. The school staff confirmed the presence of fighting in and outside of school. Additionally, a few of the participants reported disengaged teachers that appeared disinterested in them as individuals.

While the participants did not offer any specific recommendations for improving their school climate, various students in the Jones School called upon the administration of the school to intervene more effectively. The opening of the Jones school, as a new middle school, may have contributed to the school climate at the time of the study.

Nonetheless, the participants formed impressions of an administration that was failing to take charge of the situation. Along with school administrators, students can help find solutions to problems in schools. The under-utilization and under-estimation of the input students can provide results in missed opportunities to join forces with the student body to find ways to improve the learning environment. I found the student participants to be insightful and easy to engage once an adult was truly interested in what they had to say.

The student participants did have suggestions regarding the amelioration of inter-group tensions. One recommendation was to increase the contact between students of varying groups. Some of the students in the Jones School and a staff member believed that there was insufficient interaction between groups due to the segregation of student groups within the building. Even in the more homogenous Smith School, the bilingual and monolingual students had little interaction. Several research studies have found support for theories proposing increased contact between groups as a way to decrease tension (Connolly, 2000; Goldsmith, 2004; Henze, Katz, & Norte, 2000). While some researchers believe that contact alone is insufficient to reduce tensions, it is considered an important feature within a larger strategy (Connolly, 2000). Goldsmith (2004) found that interracial and inter-ethnic friendliness and conflict occur simultaneously and that the existence of both in a school needs to be examined. In a study completed by educators examining school climate, personal interactions between students during the school day and in after-school activities increased the likelihood of positive relations (Henze, Katz, & Norte, 2000). Consequently, it appears that the organizational structure of schools can inadvertently influence how varying groups interface during the school day. Moreover, various students expressed a genuine interest in learning about other cultures and welcomed such school-wide events, as African-American or Hispanic heritage week. The

improvement of inter-group relations may require a variety of interventions. Given that much of the intergroup tensions were fueled by misperceptions and misunderstandings, greater dialogue between groups may foster increased communication and serve to dispel myths.

There is insufficient research to postulate specifics about how negative school experiences affect the trajectory of a student's academic functioning. Quiroz (2001) conducted a study involving written autobiographical narratives completed by twenty seven Puerto Rican and Mexican students in the 8th grade and in the 11th grade. Negative descriptions of their school experience emerged in the 8th grade and were magnified by the 11th grade. The participants of Quiroz's study were similar to those of the *Crossing Cultures* project in that they were also predominantly a Hispanic, low income school population. The adolescents in Quiroz's study similarly spoke of disengaged, distant teachers. Quiroz further found a pronounced drop in the level of optimism about future vocational aspirations between the 8th and 11th grades among the participants. Keeping in mind that many Hispanic students succeed academically, there is still a disproportionate number that do not graduate from high school. For a portion of the Hispanic youth population, negative school experiences may contribute to progressive disengagement from school. A systematic evaluation of school climate will help schools formulate interventions that will create positive academic environments.

Support Service

The student and staff participants generally welcomed the focus groups in their schools. Many of the participants believed that the groups would assist students with acculturation issues and the adaptation to US culture. From the researcher's perspective,

the provision of supportive services to Hispanic youth provide them with the opportunity to address stressors in a timely manner with the goal of better psychosocial adjustment to school and the US. The results of the *Crossing Cultures* study indicate that the focus group discussions offered students an opportunity to process, share and integrate their experiences.

One example of a program that has offered direct services to immigrant youth in their schools is Project Mi Tierra/My Country (Gonzalez-Ramos, Sanchez-Nester, 2001) in New York City, a school-based program created in joint partnership between an urban school of social work and the school district. Housed in an elementary school, the project has offered short term groups, mentoring programs, workshops for parents and field trips to the university involved in the project. In addition to discussing topics related to immigration, the groups have also provided a forum to address within-group tensions. The teachers, who have referred students to the program, have reported improvement in academic performance and levels of socialization among the program participants. The parent workshops have also been well attended.

In summary, the following recommendations for schools were generated from this study:

- Conduct a psychosocial assessment of new entrants in order to screen for trauma and other risk factors that would affect adjustment
- Assign a buddy to new entrants
- Provide orientations to the new entrants to review school procedures and rules
- After school programs to include English and Spanish instruction, possibly provided by peers

- Increase interaction between groups

- Increase cultural sensitivity of school staff

- Assess school climate and develop improvement plan

- Collaboration with other school districts to identify effective interventions

No doubt schools are charged with a tall order; they must provide an education that will prepare students for the work force, while managing all of the personal, family, and social difficulties that are enacted in the classrooms and school halls. With increased understanding of how the educational setting affects acculturating youth's school engagement, schools can develop more supportive learning environments. Comprehension of the how acculturation issues affect academic progress help schools to tailor education to the needs of the students. For example if school staff understand that supporting Hispanic adolescents' ethnic pride helps establish a more positive self-concept, they may be less inclined to discourage expressions of ethnicity.

Limitations of the Study

As a qualitative study conducted in one school district, generalizations to the entire adolescent Hispanic population cannot be made based on the results of the *Crossing Cultures* study. However, qualitative research can generate findings that are applicable to other similar populations (Newman & Benz, 1998). Conclusions can be transferred from one context to another (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). For example, other research in the literature indicated some similarities between the low income Hispanic adolescents in their studies and the *Crossing Cultures* study, particularly for those also residing in low income communities. However, Hispanic adolescents, who

attend predominantly European-American or African-American schools, may have a different experience than the participants in the current study.

Despite my attempts to lead the interview in a way to increase every student's participation, there is chance that the focus groups participants may have been overly influenced by other stronger and more assertive students. I attempted to mitigate the monopolization of the more assertive students by actively engaging all the students during the focus interviews and remaining alert to students who tended to dominate the discussion. Furthermore, selection bias may have resulted in the participation of the most outgoing students in the focus groups, or the ones having the most difficulties. I attempted to reduce the influence of these factors by offering pizza, refreshments and free movie tickets to encourage a larger selection of students.

The student participants within each school were familiar to each other. This can be seen as an asset or a potential limitation. Morgan and Krueger (1993) are among the focus group researchers who believe that participating in groups with others who share similar experiences provides a sense of security that fosters verbal expression. On the other hand, some participants may have been wary of sharing experiences and feelings with familiar peers due to the potential for disclosure of focus group content outside of the meeting. Very personal, highly sensitive information was curtailed by me during the focus groups.

Finally, the fact that one of the schools, the Jones School, had just opened during the course of the study may have compounded or influenced some of the participants' views and perceptions about the climate in the school. However, the inclusion of a second school uncovered similarities in the emergent themes among the participants, indicating that the new school building was not over-influencing the results.

Theoretical Implications

Acculturation theory is about the process of change people undergo as they adapt to a new culture. The *Crossing Cultures* research study offered a glimpse of how the participants perceived acculturation at varying point of the process. Theoretically, the present study emphasizes the changes in underlying attitudes and perceptions that appeared to change over time. Differences in perceptions between the first and second generation participants emerged in both schools, in similar patterns. As previously posited, the newly arrived participants appeared to compare their new environment to their native countries. Their positive attitudes and hopeful consideration of their futures was striking in comparison to the more acculturated participants. Likewise, the monolingual class participants appeared to compare their situations to the wider society. They expressed less optimism about their position within a discriminatory society. Acculturation theory is enhanced by the further consideration of the differences between behavioral and attitudinal, and value oriented changes. This would provide a larger window into adaptational processes.

The results of the study also suggest that the fluid nature of acculturation strategies has been under-emphasized. For example, one of Berry's (1993, 1997) acculturation strategies is integration, where aspects of the host and native cultures are incorporated into the evolving acculturated self. While Berry has suggested that multiple strategies may be in use at any given time, acculturation theory has tended to define acculturation strategies into distinct, clearly demarcated categories. People not only may use various strategies at once, but these may change over time. Moreover, it is not clear if acculturating adolescents adopt acculturation strategies differently than adults. Due to their feelings about discrimination, some of the monolingual participants in the *Crossing*

Cultures study appeared to be moving toward Berry's marginalization strategy (rejection of the host culture). However, as a developmental period in flux, adolescents may adopt varying strategies simultaneously and over time. This may be the case for adults, as well, but theoretical formulations need to identify how the process of acculturation differs for children and adolescents.

Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) acculturation strategies directly relate to how intergenerational relations interact with contextual factors. They found that dissonant acculturation (children adopt US culture at a faster rate than their parents), poor schools and weak families were associated to lower academic achievement. The inclusion of contextual influences provides a more comprehensive understanding of how the interplay of various factors during acculturation can affect acculturation strategies.

Aside from the implications of the *Crossing Cultures* study for acculturation theory, the value of using an ecological model to gain a fuller understanding of Hispanic youth development has been exemplified by the study. From a theoretical standpoint, much still needs to be understood about how and why developmental processes interact with the various contextual influences during the adolescent acculturation process. Specifically, how does discrimination shape an adolescent's aspirations, attitudes, and behavior? Does living in an unsafe neighborhood affect developmental outcomes over time? Theoretical postulation suggests that it is the convergence of multiple factors that determines developmental outcomes. Ecological models have advanced the understanding of developmental processes, but individual factors such as temperament and personality need to remain present for a comprehensive understanding of adjustment outcomes. In the end, the identification of those interactions that lead to positive and

negative developmental outcomes would best inform prevention and intervention practices.

Developmental theories also need to continue to maintain awareness of how culturally accepted norms and standards about child rearing and family life in the US affect the assessment of the development of diverse groups. For example, Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie (2002) suggest that conceptualizations of attachment theory embraced by cultures that focus more on the nuclear family stress the threat of negative psychological outcomes from parent-child separations. They suggest that the strong bonds between children and extended family members may reduce the impact of separations related to immigration. Notwithstanding the power of disruptions in the parent-child bond, assumptions that a child will necessarily suffer negative psychological outcomes may be unsubstantiated. Perhaps a child who whose supportive network is confined to the nuclear family will have a higher risk for negative psychological outcomes than a child who is resilient, or has an extensive network of family members involved in their daily lives. Similarly, the family cohesiveness found in Hispanic families may appear as enmeshment based on theoretical postulates concerning separation and individuation. Baer and Schmitz (2007) found that family cohesion appears to operate differently among diverse Hispanic subgroups, further indicating the importance of avoiding assumptions. Current trends in developmental and acculturation theories underscore the need to continue to identify the specifics of how context interacts with individual and developmental factors to determine adjustment outcomes.

Research Implications

The implications of the *Crossing Cultures* study for research involve two words; variability and precision. The results of the study continue to indicate the variability within the Hispanics population. Differences are evident between the Hispanic ethnic groups in terms of history, immigration trajectories, and economic capital (Guarnaccia, 1997). The present study has confirmed the generational differences in the Hispanic youth population that has been found in other research. Separating the group by ethnic group and generation will provide more specific information about outcomes under study.

The *Crossing Cultures* research project advances the study of acculturation by specifying facets of acculturation previously under-studied. For example, the presence of within-group tensions has received little research attention. Due to the insufficient number of studies citing this phenomenon, its prevalence and nature is unclear. The issue has tended to emerge from qualitative studies involving Hispanic adolescents. A better understanding of the dynamics of within-group tensions is needed in order to address the conflicts enacted in schools. Are the tensions a function of attempts to preserve or promote positive ethnic group concepts, as Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Brown, 2000) would suggest, or the establishment of power differentials? This issue will grow in significance as school districts such as the one in the *Crossing Cultures'* study become increasingly diverse in their Hispanic population.

Illegal border crossings by Hispanic youth have also received little attention in the acculturation research. The *Crossing Cultures* study documented the participants' experiences with illegal border crossings. This is a significant factor when assessing for pre-entry factors that have the potential to affect the adjustment of new entrants within the school environment. As seen in the present study, traumatic experiences can affect

postimmigration academic functioning. Research studies interested in the mental health status of acculturating youth need to include specifics about the trip in their measures or interview guides. This is clearly a sensitive area. Participants may not always feel free to disclose an undocumented status, or the powerful negative experiences associated with border crossings. Anonymous questionnaires may yield more data in this area if only prevalence is being sought.

The *Crossing Cultures* study is one of the few research projects that has documented the prevalence and experience of separation between Hispanic adolescents and their significant family members. Greater research in this area provides the opportunity to understand when and how disruptions in the parent-child bond result in negative psychological outcomes. The inclusion of non-clinical samples has revealed a wide spectrum of experiences and outcomes. This finding helps to refrain from over-generalizations about the effects of parental separation on immigrating youth. It will be helpful to more closely study the factors involved in positive adjustment outcomes despite potentially psychologically harmful experiences.

The Cros*sing Cultures* study advances acculturation research by capturing the attitudes and affective experiences of the participants. By including the newly arrived and more acculturated students in the study and interviewing them during one place in time, the study discovered changes in perceptions and attitudes over time. Thus, this type of research design lends itself well to uncovering latent and/or new variables previously unidentified. The value of mixed methods in acculturation research is also well exemplified in the *Crossing Cultures* study. The focus group method provided rich data about the perceptions of the participants and helped to reveal obscured factors. The knowledge derived from qualitative research can be used to improve quantitative

measures. Data uncovered in qualitative studies can add to the specificity of acculturation measures.

The results of the study further indicate that behavioral characteristics representative of acculturation do not necessarily reflect underlying values and attitudes. For example, although the monolingual students spoke English fluently and had adopted other mainstream behaviors, they agreed with their parents' belief in the use of physical punishment as an effective form of discipline. Orientation toward Hispanic or European-American cultural features is not readily apparent solely by behavioral manifestations.

Finally, the *Crossing Cultures* study underscores the need for increased research including non-clinical Hispanic adolescent populations. The research that has been conducted in this way has yielded knowledge about the wide spectrum of adaptational strategies and in adjustment outcomes possible as Hispanic youth engage in their developmental trajectories. Non-clinical populations offer a broader picture of how adolescents address exposure to a variety of contexts and conditions.

Practice Implications

The results of the *Crossing Cultures* research study yielded important recommendations for social workers and other helping professions within schools, agencies, and mental-health programs. Foremost, based on the results of the study, there are additional elements of a psycho-social assessment that can be incorporated when Hispanic youth are being assessed. These include:

- Undocumented versus documented entry

- The nature of the trip

- The nature of preimmigration and postimmigration family relationships (including extended family members)

- Attitude of caretaker toward parents who left

- Length and number of separations

- Youth's understanding of the reasons for separation from parents

- Housing situation

- History of school attendance in native country

The inclusion of the above factors in the assessment of Hispanic youth will provide helping professionals with a more comprehensive understanding of the risk and protective factors that will facilitate adjustment. As the first step in the helping process, a complete psychosocial assessment will best inform preventive and treatment interventions.

Helping professionals also need to be aware of the tendency to base Hispanic developmental and family functioning on European-American oriented conceptualizations. Theories about psychosocial development in terms of the ideal progression along the separation and individuation process may lead helping professionals to overpathologize the close and interdependent family relationships among Hispanic families. Additionally, the more extensive network of bonds within the Hispanic family may be overlooked, inadvertently excluding key members of the family closely involved with the adolescent. Awareness of unconscious assumption about families and development will assist professionals who work with Hispanic youth to conduct a culturally sensitive helping process.

Policy Implications

About one-sixth of the undocumented residents of the US, or 1.7 million individuals are under the age of 18 years (Passel, 2005). This is a sizeable number of youth whose futures remain uncertain due to the current inability to obtain an authorized status in the US. Without a path to legal documentation, these youth will face significant limitations in relation to occupational and educational attainment. They will not be able to obtain a driver's license. They will remain in the shadows of society with blocked access to the benefits and opportunities granted to legal residents. A high percentage of low-wage immigrant employees are undocumented. Due to the continued demand for low-skilled labor (Nightingale & Fix, 2004), undocumented immigrant youth will likely find employment in the service oriented jobs that offer low wages and few, or absent benefits. Low-skilled employment offers few economic advantages. In the US, there are over two million people who are poor, despite the full time employment of at least one member of the family (Nightingale & Fix, 2004). Consequently, youth who enter the low skill job market will have difficulty moving out of the working poor status.

In general, the overall percentage of Hispanic youth living in poverty is high. Hispanic youth below the age of 18 comprise 28% of the children living in poverty in the US (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). Educational policies that provide acculturating youth with the academic support to achieve vocational success will not only move youth out of poverty, but help society meet the increasing demands for high-skilled labor (Nightingale & Fix, 2000)

Finally, given that mental health is a key component of academic functioning, school based mental health programs have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing the emotional well-being of Hispanic students (Garrison, Roy, & Azar, 1999; Gonzalez-

Ramos, Sanchez-Nester, 2001). School-based mental health programs facilitate access to services by helping to overcome such obstacles to care as lack of transportation and health insurance. Students and families can participate in services that take place in a familiar environment. Furthermore, the effectiveness of interventions is maximized by an increased coordination of care among teachers and other school personnel. School-based programs can intervene to prevent and treat a wide spectrum of individual and family issues in order to diminish their effect on academic functioning.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the understanding of how Hispanic youth perceive acculturation and adapt to US culture. Additionally, the results of the study yielded interventions that schools could implement to assist Hispanic youth. The study is important because a sizeable number of Hispanic youth have poor adjustment outcomes. The *Crossing Cultures* study is among the few to report the subjective experience of acculturating Hispanic youth. The study illustrates the complexity of that process and the need to continue to increase the knowledge and understanding of Hispanic youth development.

The study highlights the importance of examining the contextual influences of Hispanic youth's lives in order to broaden and deepen the understanding of how developmental processes interact with the environment. The present study indicates that there is a range of personal and contextual risk and protective factors that interact to influence adjustment outcomes. Further study on resilience and the strengths of Hispanic youth and families will help identify the differences between those Hispanic youth who make a positive adaptation despite a variety of contextual obstacles and those who

develop negative adjustment results. The specifics of how variables interact to determine adjustment remains open for further examination.

The study used focus groups and individual interviews to capture the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Interviews were conducted in two schools in order to compare similarities and differences between groups. The interviews with three staff members also helped to confirm some of the results from the focus groups. Being that research on Hispanic adolescents is limited, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods will continue to provide the depth and breadth that is needed to understand the complexities involved in the acculturation process.

Finally, the study indicates that schools can implement strategies that will promote positive psychosocial development in Hispanic youth. As a microcosm of society and a major socializing agent, schools are in a prime position to facilitate the adaptation of acculturating youth. What schools do today to educate and to nurture the psychosocial development of Hispanic youth will pay big dividends in the future. The goal is to increase the chances that Hispanic youth will experience academic success and become productive US citizens. The costs of neglect in this area will be expensive in terms of the loss in human capital. Some Hispanic youth will succeed academically and vocationally, but statistics indicate that there is a significant portion of this population that will suffer from negative adjustment outcomes and a lack of skills needed to improve their economic situations.

The *Crossing Cultures'* participants have shared their ideas, concerns and experiences. The information they have provided communicates what researchers, schools and helping professionals need to address to assist them. It is up to us to respond.

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APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL

Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt

Background

Hispanics are the fastest growing group of immigrants in the United States and have become the largest minority group in the US (US Census, 2000). The Hispanic population is close to 12% of the total population and is projected to be 25% of the population by 2050. In 2002, 34.4 percent of Hispanics were under the age of 18, compared with 22.8 percent of non-Hispanic Whites (Current Population Reports, US Census, 2002).

[City] has witnessed an increasingly large influx of Hispanic immigrants. In [city], close to 19,000 residents out of almost 49,000 residents, are Hispanics. Many of the [city's] public schools have an overwhelming majority of Hispanic students. A key issue is ensuring that young Hispanic immigrants will become full functioning members of our society, particularly by understanding what factors lead to successful school adjustment of these new immigrants.

Investigators

By building collaborations between the [city] public schools and Rutgers University researchers, we hope to better understand how Hispanic immigrants are adapting to the community and schools and identify additional ways the school system can assist the process. Rutgers University professor, Peter Guarnaccia, Ph.D, along with doctoral students Judith Velez and Igda Martinez, propose a research study to explore and further understand the process of adjustment for Hispanic immigrant youth in [city]. Dr. Guarnaccia is a professor in the Department of Human Ecology and at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research. He has extensive experience conducting

research with Hispanic populations. He has also been part of the research team for Healthier [city] 2010, bringing university expertise to community health issues in a parallel fashion to the proposed project. Ms. Velez is a doctoral student in the School of Social Work at Rutgers University and also works as a school social worker at Pupil Personnel Services in the [city] Public Schools. Ms. Martinez is a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. Both Ms. Velez and Ms. Martinez are Latinas and are committed to doing research that benefits the Hispanic community, especially school age youth (see attached biosketches).

Proposed Project

The proposed study focuses on two [city] schools with large Hispanic populations (Jones and Smith schools) to examine the processes students go through in adjusting to life in the US and adapting to the public school system. The study entails a two-phase process that includes a series of focus groups followed by a self-report questionnaire. Jones and Smith schools are ideal settings because they have students in all stages of the adjustment process from recent arrivals to mainstreamed students. We propose to focus on grades 6-8 as students at this age are both able to report on their own experience and in the beginning stages of adolescence, a broad period of change and adjustment.

Approval from School System, Families, and the Rutgers University IRB

Due to Ms. Velez's working relationships with the principals at both Smith and Jones Schools, she has already spoken with the principals and briefly described the project that we propose. Both Mr. L. H. (the principal at the time at Jones School) and Ms. K. A. (Smith School) expressed support for the project. Approval from the [city] Public School Board was obtained on March 15, 2005. Approval from the Investigation Review Board of Rutgers University has been secured and this establishes clear

guidelines for parental and child consent. No interviews will be carried out without documented consent of parents and assent of students.

Focus Group Study – Fall 2005

Approach: Focus group plan and consent process.

Focus groups are a form of research designed to explore issues from the perspective of participants and to identify research questions important to the community. In our proposal, the elicitation of the students' experiences as immigrants during the focus groups help to identify key themes for the follow-up survey in particular and for future research in general.

Our research study proposes to form focus groups from the seventh and eighth grade classes of Jones and Smith Schools and the Welcome Center for the newly immigrated at Smith School. The focus groups will be comprised of 6-10 Hispanic students from the bilingual and English monolingual classes, divided by gender, except for the Welcome Center, which will contain both male and female students. Thus, we will carry out nine focus groups to represent the grade and program diversity at Jones and Smith Schools. Focus groups usually last 1 1/2-2 hours and would be held directly after the school day.

Recruitment for the focus groups will begin with Judith Velez visiting each class during the homeroom period and giving a brief explanation of the study. Consent forms will be distributed to the students for review and discussion with their parents or guardians. If parents consent to the student's participation in the study, the students will return the consent form to the homeroom teacher for retrieval by Judith Velez. The consent form will include a brief description of the study and contact information for Ms.

Velez. The confidential nature of the data collected will be made clear to the parents and students. Participant responses will be used for research purposes only.

The focus groups will be configured as follows:

- One group of females from the seventh and eighth grade bilingual classes from each school (2).

- One group of males from the seventh and eighth grade bilingual classes from each school (2).

- One group of both male and female students from the Intake Center at Smith School (1).

- One group of females from the seventh and eighth grade monolingual classes from each school (2).

- One group of males from the seventh and eighth grade monolingual classes from each school (2).

Dates for the focus groups will be set with cognizance of school activities and holidays in order to avoid any potential interference of the groups with significant after-school programs. Parents and guardians will receive a reminder phone call from Ms. Velez before the scheduled date of the group. Before the focus group begins, assent from the students will also be attained. Pizza and refreshments will be offered after the group session, along with a raffle for two movie tickets.

A guidance counselor from each school and the Welcome Center teacher will be invited to participate in a 45 minute individual interview in order to gain the perspective of school personnel who are familiar with targeted students needs and issues. Thus, these interviews will be as follows:

- One interview with the guidance counselor from each of the schools (2).

- One interview with the Welcome Center teacher at Smith School (1).

Impact on the schools - Minimal time from the schools' staff will be required for the focus group phase of the study. The teachers will only have to collect the consent forms and keep them for Ms. Velez's retrieval. A private space for the focus groups will be needed that can hold 6-10 students and is available right after the end of the regular school day.

Benefits to the Schools. The focus groups will offer the participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences as immigrants with other students familiar with process of adjusting to a new environment. In addition, data from the groups will help the schools increase their understanding of the Hispanic immigration experience and improve their services to these students.

Survey – Spring 2006

Approach. We would like to administer an anonymous survey to all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students at the aforementioned schools who are in any of the three specified tracks: Welcome Center, bilingual classes, or monolingual classes. The purpose of the survey would be to provide a representative sample of the immigration experiences of students, as well as their social-support systems, their current mental health status, and their academic functioning. We would obtain consent from parents by sending a letter home to all students describing the overall study and the survey in particular. Information gathered from the surveys will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only.

Impact on the schools. To carry out the survey, we would need the schools to provide contact information for the parents of the students we are targeting so that we can send

home a consent letter. In addition, we would like to carry out the survey within one class period.

Benefits to the schools. We would like to integrate our survey and general findings into the social studies curriculum. We would work with the teachers to integrate our findings into a general discussion with the students about immigration in US history. We would also like to share our findings with staff and teachers in order to improve our mutual understanding of Hispanic children and work to encourage their academic success.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this research project with you. Such research studies offer the opportunity to increase knowledge and understanding that can help young Hispanic immigrants in the New Brunswick community better adjust to their new environment.

Biosketches of Project Investigators

Peter J. Guaraccia, Ph.D. (pguarnaccia@ihhcpar.rutgers.edu). Peter Guarnaccia (Ph. D., Connecticut, 1984) is a professor in the Department of Human Ecology at Cook College and Investigator at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Mental Health Research. His research interests include cross-cultural patterns of psychiatric disorders and family strategies for coping with chronic illness, including mental illness. He was a member of the NIMH Task Force on Culture and Diagnosis, which contributed cultural material and guidelines to the DSM-IV. He was also a member of the NIMH National Advisory Mental Health Council's Behavioral Science Workgroup recommending future directions for translating behavioral sciences research into public mental health outcomes. His current research examines mental health among Latino individuals in the United States and in Puerto Rico as part of the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS), a mental health initiative funded by the National Institute of Mental

Health. Recent publications include "Cultural Psychopathology: Uncovering the Social World of Mental Illness" in the *Annual Review of Psychology* (2000, with Steven R. Lopez) and "Research on Culture Bound Syndromes" in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* (1999, with Lloyd H. Rogler). Dr. Guarnaccia edited a special issue of *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* (2003) on "Methodological Issues in the Cross-Cultural Study of Mental Health: Setting New Standards" and has a paper entitled "Towards a Puerto Rican Popular Nosology: *Nervios* and *Ataques de Nervios*" (with R. Lewis- Fernández and M. Rivera Marano) in that same issue. He is coeditor-in-chief of *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*.

Igda Martinez (Imartinez@cshp.rutgers.edu). Igda Martinez (B.A., Douglass College of Rutgers University, 2002) is a project research assistant at the Center for State Health Policy at Rutgers University. Her research interests focus on Hispanic mental health and child and adolescent psychology. Ms. Martinez graduated as valedictorian of her class. She was a student in and teaching assistant for Project L/EARN, a NIMH-funded mental health training program. Ms. Martinez has been involved with research on *ataques de nervios* in children and adults, has assisted in a range of focus groups on Latino mental health issues, and has worked on a variety of projects with the Changing Minds: Advancing Mental Health for Hispanics program. Her honors thesis was entitled "Social and Cultural Aspects of Puerto Rican Youth's Mental Health." Recent publications include "Comprehensive In-Depth Literature Review and Analysis of Latino Mental Health Issues (with P. Guarnaccia and H. Acosta, 2002) and "Comparative Phenomenology of Panic Attacks and *Ataques de Nervios*" in *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* (with R. Lewis- Fernández, P. Guarnaccia, and others, 2002). Ms. Martinez will be entering the Doctoral Program in the Graduate School of Applied and

Professional Psychology, Rutgers University in the fall of 2003 with one of the American Psychological Association Minority Fellowships.

Judith Velez (juvelez@eden.rutgers.edu). Judith Velez is a doctoral student at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. She is a licensed clinical social worker in the states of New Jersey and New York, as well as a certified school social worker in New Jersey. She currently works in the [city] Public Schools. A mental health practitioner for 28 years, she has had extensive experience with children adolescents and their families. Her research interests include adaptational and mental health issues of Hispanic youth within a developmental context and an ecological perspective. She recently published an article with Dr. Judith Baer and Dr. Jonathan D. Prince entitled, "Fusion or Familialism: A Construct Problem in Studies of Mexican American Adolescents" in the *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* (August 2004).

APPENDIX B: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Changing Faces: How Hispanic Youth Adapt

Goal

To increase knowledge related to the factors that facilitate the adjustment and adaptation

into a new culture for young Hispanics in the New Brunswick community. This goal is

consistent with those set out by the Board of Education's January 18, 2005 Resolution to

Support the Rights of Our Immigrant Neighbors.

Proposed Project

The proposed study focuses on two [city] schools with large Hispanic populations and

will examine the processes of adjustment of the students to life in the US The study

entails a two-phase process that includes a series of focus groups followed by a broader

survey. We propose to focus on seventh and eighth graders for the focus groups and

students from the sixth-eighth grades for the survey. This age group has been targeted as

the participants are able to report on their own experience and in addition to adaptation to

a new culture, are entering adolescence, a broad period of change and adjustment. The

focus groups will be divided by gender. This research will provide the foundation for two

dissertations at Rutgers University in Social Work and Clinical Psychology. Both

students are of Hispanic origin.

Approval from School System, Families, and the Rutgers University IRB

Ms. Velez, a member of the [city] Child Study Team and school staff, has already

obtained verbal support for the project from the respective principals, Mr. V. (Jones

School) and Ms. W.(Smith School). [City] school board approval was obtained on March

15, 2005, (see attached) and approval from the Rutgers University Investigational Review

Board secured on May 31, 2005. No interviews will be carried out without documented consent of parents and assent of students. All consent forms, focus group protocols, and survey instruments will be provided to the principals for review and approval before any implementation. They will also be informed of the progress of the project in order to maintain monitoring and authorization from the district.

Projected timeline

We intend to carry out the focus group phase of the study between October and December 2005. We will start the process of obtaining parent permission and inviting student interest for the project in September. The self-report survey will be administered between January and March 2006.

Impact on the Schools

Minimal time from the schools' staff will be required for this research project. Ms. Velez will inform the students of the study during a homeroom period, and consent forms will be distributed at that time. The teachers will only have to collect the returned consent forms and hold them for Ms. Velez's retrieval. Parents will be called by Ms. Velez directly to inform them of the focus group dates. A private space for the focus groups will be needed that can hold 6-10 students and is available right after the end of the regular school day. The surveys will be able to be carried out during a class period.

Benefits to the Schools

Results of this research project will help the schools increase their understanding of the Hispanic immigration experience and improve their services to these students. Results of the research will be shared with the principals and guidance counselors of each school, as

well as any other interested members of the school personnel. Findings will increase

understanding of the processes involved in adjusting to a new environment.

APPENDIX C: RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION

To Complete a Research Study Focusing on Hispanic Middle School Students at Roosevelt and Redshaw School

WHEREAS, the New Brunswick Board of Education has, at its January 18, 2005 meeting, adopted a resolution to respect and support the rights of the city's immigrant population;, and

WHEREAS, the student population of the New Brunswick Public Schools is currently predominantly Hispanic, with numbers of new immigrants increasing on a yearly basis; and

WHEREAS, research related to Hispanic adolescent development has been limited and insufficient to gain a fuller understanding of the adjustment and adaptation processes of immigrant students and how to best help Hispanic immigrant youth successfully integrate into the wider society.

WHEREAS, Faculty and students from Rutgers University have extensive research experience in the adaptation and adjustment of Hispanics to U.S. society and are interested in sharing that research expertise with the New Brunswick Public Schools.

BE IT RESOLVED that a research team from Rutgers University (Professor Peter Guarnaccia, Judith Velez and Igda Martinez) be invited to conduct a research study on Hispanic students in the middle grades of Roosevelt and Redshaw Schools in order to better understand the processes involved in their adaptation to a new culture and to help identify factors that enhance their ability to adjust to those changes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the information gathered from this project be used to develop programs to enhance the adaptation and adjustment process of immigrant children to the New Brunswick Public Schools.

Emra L. Seawood
President

Richard D. Jannarone
Business Admin./Board Secretary

ADOPTED: March 15, 2005

APPENDIX D: MEMORANDUM TO THE TEACHERS

[City] Public Schools
Pupil Personnel Services

Memorandum to the Teachers

To: Names of teachers
         School
CC: Names of guidance counselors
From: Judith Velez
Date:
Re: The Crossing Cultures research project

Although Hispanic youth represent a large increase in the United States population, they are under-represented in the field of research on adolescent development. Hispanic adolescents are undergoing normative developmental processes, as well as adaptation to a new culture. The experience of Hispanic immigrants as they adapt into a new environment is largely undocumented. Aspects of adjustment that facilitate or thwart this process need to be better understood.

I am a doctoral student at the School of Social Work and a member of the Child Study Team at Smith School. In September 2005, I will be conducting a series of focus groups involving the seventh and eighth grade bilingual and monolingual classes. Focus groups comprise a research method involving the exploration and documentation of the subjects' experience, from their perspective. Many research instruments are normed on the experience of a mainstream population, precluding cultural influences. The focus groups will help identify what helps Hispanic youth develop in the context of change.

I plan to conduct four focus groups in Jones School and five in Smith School. The seventh and eighth grade bilingual classes will be broken down by gender to form two groups. The monolingual seventh and eighth grade classes will also be broken down to two groups by gender, totaling four groups. The groups will take place after school and parental consent will be secured before any group takes place.

A second phase of the study conducted by another doctoral student and involving a survey will take place in the spring of 2006. More information will be shared as the particulars are finalized. Please do not hesitate to contact me at Extension 8793 with any questions, or leave me a note in the Child Study Team box.

I look forward to speaking with you more about the project.

APPENDIX E1: BILINGUAL STUDENT CONSENT FORMS (SPANISH)

Bilingual Student Consent Forms (Spanish)
Forma de consentimiento para los padres
Un Estudio de cómo jovenes hispanos se adaptan a los Estados unidos
Investigadora Principal: Judith Velez
Universidad de Rutgers

Su hijo/a esta invitado/a a participar en un estudio conducido por Judith Velez, un estudiante doctoral de la Escuela de Trabajo Social de la Universidad de Rutgers y trabajadora social del Equipo de Estudio del Niño de la Escuela Smith. El propósito del estudio es entender mejor como los jóvenes Hispanos se adaptan a un nuevo país. Para esto, estamos organizando reuniones para escuchar las opiniones de los jóvenes de los grados 7º y 8º en las escuelas Smith y Jones.

Su hijo/a participará con otros jóvenes en un grupo para compartir experiencias, ideas y opiniones de como el/ella se ha adaptado a la cultura de los Estados Unidos. Los grupos tendrán desde 6-10 participantes. Se le pedirá a su hijo/a que comparta sus ideas y sentimientos sobre el tema. La reunión durará aproximadamente una hora y media a dos horas. Tomará lugar inmediatamente después del día escolar en las Escuelas Smith/Jones. Pizza y refrescos (soda) serán servidos durante la reunión. Una rifa para dos entradas al cine también tomara lugar. Se les avisará de la fecha de la reunión..

El nombre de su hijo/a y las opiniones expresadas serán mantenidas completamente confidencial. Confidencial quiere decir que el nombre de su hijo/a no será mencionado en ningún reporte. La información obtenida durante las reuniones será usada solo para el propósito del estudio.

La reunión será grabada en cinta de audio con propósitos de poder recordar y analizar lo que los participantes comparten. Estas grabaciones serán escuchadas solamente por los investigadores de este estudio y serán los únicos que tendrán acceso a estas grabaciones. Todas las cintas de grabación serán borradas un año después de la reunión. Mientras tanto, las grabaciones serán mantenidas con llave en un archivador y solamente el investigador principal del proyecto tendrá acceso a estas cintas de audio.

Participación en grupos como estos no tienen gran riesgo. Aunque es poco probable que su hijo/a tenga una fuerte reacción a lo que se hable en las reuniones, es posible que su hijo/a se pueda sentir incomodo/a al hablar sobre temas personales en las reuniones. Su hijo/a podrá hablar con un consejero en la escuela si el o ella siente la necesidad de hablar mas sobre algún tema.

Al dejar que su hijo/a participe en este estudio, estará contribuyendo al posible desarrollo de programas y servicios que les pueda ayudar a los jóvenes Hispanos en las escuelas. Además, las reuniones les dará la oportunidad de compartir sus experiencias con otros estudiantes que han pasado cosas similares.

La participación de su hijo/a es totalmente voluntaria. Para autorizar que su hijo/a participe en este estudio, usted necesita firmar y regresar esta forma en el sobre adjunto. Ni usted ni su hijo/a serán penalizados si deciden no participar en el estudio. La decisión suya es completamente voluntaria. Usted y su hija/o se podrán cambiar de mente sobre la participación en el estudio a cualquier momento sin penalidad ninguna.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o comentario sobre este estudio, por favor llame a la Señora Judith Velez al numero de teléfono (732) 873-0736. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre los derechos de su hijo/a como participante de un estudio, favor de llamar el Administrador de Programas Patrocinados al numero (732) 932-0150, Ext. 2104.

_____tiene mi permiso para participar en el estudio.
Nombre de su hijo/a

_____   _____
Firma del Padre/Madre o Guardián   Fecha

_____   _____
Investigador Principal   Fecha

Al firmar abajo, doy permiso para que mi hijo/a este grabado/a durante participación en el estudio.

_____   _____
Firma del Padre/Madre o Guardián   Fecha

_____   _____
Investigador Principal   Fecha

Mi hijo/a puede participar en la rifa para dos entradas al cine. Si ☐   No ☐:

APPENDIX E2: BILINGUAL STUDENT CONSENT FORMS (ENGLISH)

Bilingual Student Consent Forms (English)
Parental Consent Form
The Changing Faces: How Hispanic Youth Adapt
Researcher: Judith Velez–
Rutgers University

Your son/daughter is invited to participate in a study conducted by Judith Velez, doctoral student at the School of Social Work of Rutgers University and social worker of the Child Study Team at Smith School. The purpose of the study is to better understand how Hispanic youth adapt to a new country. For this, we are organizing meetings to hear the opinions of youngsters in the seventh and eighth grades of Smith and Jones Schools.

Your son/daughter will participate with other youth in a group in order to share experiences, ideas, and opinions about how he/she has adapted to the United States culture. The groups will include 6-10 participants. Your son/daughter will be asked to share his/her ideas and feelings about the subject. The meeting shall last about 1 1/2-2 hours. It will take place immediately after the school day in Smith/Jones Schools. Pizza and soda will be served during the meetings. A raffle for two movie tickets will also take place. You will be advised of the date.

Your son's/daughter's name and his/her expressed opinions shall be kept completely confidential. Confidential means that his/her name shall not be mentioned in any report. The information obtained during the meetings shall be used only for the purposes of the study.

The meeting shall be audiotaped for the purpose of recording and analyzing what the participants have shared. Only the researchers of the study shall hear or have access to these recordings. All tapes of the recordings shall be erased one year after the meeting. In the meantime, the recordings will be kept in a locked file cabinet and only the principal investigator of the project will have access to these audiotapes.

Participation in groups like these does not have a big risk. Even though it is unlikely that your son/daughter will have a strong reaction to what is being said in the meetings, he/she may feel uncomfortable talking about personal topics in the meetings. Your son/daughter will be able to speak with a school counselor if he or she feels the need to speak more about a certain topic.

Upon allowing your son/daughter to participate in this study, he/she will be contributing to the possible development of programs and services that can help Hispanic youth in the schools. In addition, the meetings will give the opportunity for students to share their experiences with other students who have gone through similar things.

The participation of your son/daughter is voluntary. In order to authorize the participation of your son/daughter in this study, you need to sign and return this form in the enclosed envelope. Neither you nor your son/daughter will be penalized if the decision not to participate in this study is made. Your decision is completely voluntary. You or your son/daughter may change your mind about participating in the study at any time without any penalty.

If you have any question or comments about this study, please call Mrs. Judith Velez at telephone number (732) 873-0736. If you have any question about the rights of your son/daughter as participants in a study, please call the Sponsored Program Administrator at telephone number (732) 932-0150, Ext. 2104.

_____ has my permission to participate in the study.
Name of your son/daughter

_____   _____
Signature of mother/father or guardian   Date

_____   _____

Principal Investigator   Date

By signing this below, I give permission for my son/daughter to be audiotaped during his/her participation in the study.

_____   _____
Signature of mother/father or guardian   Date

_____   _____
Principal Investigator   Date

My son /daughter may participate in the raffle for two movie tickets. Yes ☐   No ☐

APPENDIX F1: REVISED STUDENT CONSENT FORMS (SPANISH)

Revised Student Consent Forms (Spanish)

Forma de consentimiento para los padres
Un Estudio de cómo jóvenes hispanos se adaptan a los Estados Unidos
Coordinadora del Estudio: Judith Velez
Universidad de Rutgers

Mi nombre es Judith Velez y yo trabajo en la Escuela Smith. También soy una estudiante en la Universidad de Rutgers. Estoy invitando a su hijo/a a participar en una reunión de grupo que es parte de un estudio de la experiencias de los adolescentes Hispanos y como se acostumbran a la cultura Americana. Se le esta pidiendo que su hijo/a participe en una reunión de grupo con otros estudiantes de los 7º y 8º grados, solo un día, después de la escuela. La reunión tomará lugar en la escuela de su hijo/a. Los estudiantes tendrán la oportunidad de hablar de sus experiencias. Yo también estoy interesada en como las escuelas pueden ofrecer mejores servicios para ayudar a los adolescentes Hispanos. Se les servirá pizza y soda a los participantes y cada participante recibirá un boleto para una entrada gratis al cine. La reunión terminará alrededor de las 5:30 p.m.

Todo lo que se hable durante la reunión se quedará con los que asisten a la reunión de grupo. El nombre de su hijo/a no aparecerá en ningún lugar. La reunión será grabada en cinta de audio solo para que yo pueda recordar todo lo que los estudiantes dicen y para que yo pueda mejor estudiarlo. La participación de su hijo/hija es totalmente voluntaria. Si Usted o su hijo/a tienen alguna duda o pregunta, favor de llamarme al numero (732) 873-0736.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre los derechos de su hijo/a como participante de un estudio, favor de llamar el Administrador de Programas Patrocinados al número (732) 932-0150, Ext. 2104.

Favor de firmar este consentimiento si Usted y su hijo/a deciden que el/ella va a participar en la reunión. Su hijo/a puede devolver el consentimiento a su maestro/a y yo lo recogeré. No se puede participar sin su firma de permiso. Yo los llamaré con la fecha de la reunión.

_____tiene mi permiso para participar en el estudio.
Nombre de su hijo/a

_____   _____
Firma del Padre/Madre o Guardián   Fecha

_____   _____
Coordinadora del Estudio   Fecha

Al firmar abajo, doy permiso para que mi hijo/a este grabado/a durante participación en el estudio.

_____   _____
Firma del Padre/Madre o Guardián   Fecha

_____   _____
Coordinadora del Estudio   Fecha

Mi hijo/a puede recibir un boleto para una entrada gratis al cine. Si ☐   No ☐

APPENDIX F2: REVISED STUDENT CONSENT FORMS (ENGLISH)

Revised Student Consent Forms (English)
Parental Consent Form
The Changing Faces: How Hispanic Youth Adapt
Coordinator of the Study: Judith Velez
Rutgers University

My name is Judith Velez and I work in Smith School. I am also a student at Rutgers University. I am inviting your son/daughter to participate in a group meeting that is part of a study of the experiences of Hispanic adolescents and how they get used to the American culture. Your son/daughter is being asked to participate in one group meeting with other seventh and eighth grade students, just one day after school. The meeting will take place at your son/daughter's school. The students will have the opportunity to talk about their experiences. I also am interested in how the schools can offer better services to help Hispanic adolescents. Pizza and soda will be served to the participants and each participant will receive a free movie ticket. The meeting will end at about 5:30 p.m.

Everything that is talked about during the meeting will stay with the group participants. Your son/daughter's name will not appear in any place. The meeting will be audiotaped only so that I can remember everything the students say and so that I can better study what they say. Your son/daughter's participation is voluntary. If you or your son/daughter has any doubt or question, please call me at (732) 873-0736.

If you have any question about the rights of your son/daughter as participants in a study, please call the Sponsored Program Administrator at telephone number (732) 932-0150, Ext. 2104.

Please sign this consent form if you and your son/daughter decide that he/she will participate in the group meeting. Your son/daughter may return the consent form to his/her teacher, and I will pick it up. No participation is possible without your signature of permission. I will call you with the date of the meeting.
.

_____has my permission to participate in the study.
Name of your son/daughter

_____   _____
Signature of mother/father or guardian   Date

_____   _____
Coordinator of the Study   Date

By signing below, I give permission for my son/daughter to be audiotaped during his/her participation in the study.

_____   _____
Signature of mother/father or guardian   Date

_____   _____
Coordinator of the Study   Date

My son /daughter may receive a free movie ticket   Yes ☐   No ☐

APPENDIX G: MEMORANDUM TO THE PRINCIPALS

Memorandum to the Principals

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
School of Social Work
536 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1167

Memorandum

TO: Principal
         School

CC: Guidance Counselor, Nurses

FROM: Judith Velez

DATE:

RE: Focus Group Dates for the Crossing Cultures Research Project

Focus groups are planned for (dates) immediately after school.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

APPENDIX H1: BILINGUAL STUDENT INFORMATION FORMS (SPANISH)

Bilingual Student Information Forms

Información del Estudiante

Edad _____   F _____   M _____

¿En que país naciste? _____

¿Si naciste fuera de los Estados Unidos, de donde viniste?
Ciudad _____   o   Campo_____

¿Si naciste fuera de los Estados Unidos, a que edad viniste a los Estados
Unidos?_____

¿Donde nació tu mama? _____

¿Donde nació tu papa? _____

¿Hablas otro lenguaje además de Ingles o Español? Si_____   No_____
¿Si has contestado si, cual otro idioma hablas? _____

¿Que idioma hablas en tu hogar?
Solamente Español ___ Mayormente en Español ___ Español y Ingles ___
Mayormente Ingles ___ Solamente Ingles ___

¿Que idioma hablas con tus amigos?
Solamente Español ___ Mayormente en Español ___ Español y Ingles ___
Mayormente Ingles ___ Solamente Ingles ___

¿Que tan bien hablas Español?
Excelente _____ Muy bien _____ Bien _____ Mas o menos _____Mal _____

¿Que tan bien hablas Ingles?
Excelente _____ Muy bien _____ Bien _____ Mas o menos _____ Mal _____

¿Que tan bien lees Español?
Excelente _____ Muy bien _____ Bien _____ Mas o menos _____ Mal _____

¿Que tan bien lees Ingles?
Excelente _____ Muy bien _____ Bien _____ Mas o menos _____ Mal _____

¿Cuándo sueñas, en que idioma hablan las personas? _____

¿Participas en algún deporte después del día escolar?   Si_____ No _____

¿Participas en alguna actividad después del día escolar? Si _____ No _____

APPENDIX H2: BILINGUAL STUDENT INFORMATION FORMS (ENGLISH)

Bilingual Student Information Forms

Age _____   F _____   M _____

In what country were you born? _____

If born outside of the United States, what part of the country did you come from?
City_____   or   Country_____

If born outside of the United States, at what age did you come to the United
States?_____

Where was your mother born? _____

Where was your father born? _____

Do you speak any other language other than English or Spanish? Yes ____ No _____
If you answered yes, what other language do you speak? _____

What language do you speak in your home?
Spanish only ___ Mostly Spanish ___ Spanish and English ___
Mostly English ___ English only ___

What language do you speak with your friends?
Spanish only ___ Mostly Spanish ___ Spanish and English ___
Mostly English ___ English only ___

How well do you speak Spanish?
Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____Poor _____

How well do you speak English?
Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____Poor _____

How well do you read Spanish?
Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____Poor _____

How well do you read English?
Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____Poor _____

When you dream, in what language do people talk? _____

Do you participate in any sport after school?   Yes_____ No _____

Do you participate in any after-school activity? Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX I1: REVISED BILINGUAL STUDENT INFORMATION FORMS

(SPANISH)

Información del Estudiante

Edad _____   Muchacha _____   Muchacho _____

¿En que país naciste? _____

¿A que edad viniste a los Estados Unidos? _____

¿Donde nació tu mama? _____

¿Donde nació tu papa? _____

¿Que idioma hablas en tu hogar?
Solamente Español ___   Mayormente en Español ___   Español y Ingles ___
Mayormente Ingles ___   Solamente Ingles ___

¿Que idioma hablas con tus amigos?
Solamente Español___   Mayormente en Español ___   Español y Ingles ___
Mayormente Ingles ___   Solamente Ingles ___

¿Que tan bien hablas Español?
Excelente _____   Muy bien _____   Bien _____   Regular _____   Mal _____

¿Que tan bien hablas Ingles?
Excelente _____   Muy bien _____   Bien _____   Regular _____   Mal _____

¿Que tan bien lees Español?
Excelente _____   Muy bien _____   Bien _____   Regular _____   Mal _____

¿Que tan bien lees Ingles?
Excelente _____   Muy bien _____   Bien _____   Regular _____   Mal _____

¿Participas en algún deporte después del día escolar?   Si _____   No _____

¿Participas en alguna actividad después del día escolar?   Si _____   No _____

APPENDIX I2: REVISED BILINGUAL STUDENT INFORMATION FORMS

(ENGLISH)

Student Information

Age _____   Female _____   Male _____

In what country were you born? _____

At what age did you come to the United States? _____

Where was your mother born? _____

Where was your father born? _____

Do you speak any other language other than English or Spanish?   Yes _____   No _____
If you answered yes, what other language do you speak? _____

What language do you speak in your home?
Spanish only ____   Mostly Spanish ____   Spanish and English ____
Mostly English ____   English only ____

What language do you speak with your friends?
Spanish only ____   Mostly Spanish ____   Spanish and English ____
Mostly English ____   English only ____

How well do you speak Spanish?
Excellent _____   Very good _____   Good _____   Fair _____   Poor _____

How well do you speak English?
Excellent _____   Very good _____   Good _____   Fair _____   Poor _____

How well do you read Spanish?
Excellent _____   Very good _____   Good _____   Fair _____   Poor _____

How well do you read English?
Excellent _____   Very good _____   Good _____   Fair _____   Poor _____

Do you participate in any sport alter school?   Yes _____   No _____

Do you participate in any alter-school activity?   Yes _____   No _____

APPENDIX J1: INITIAL FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE (SPANISH)

Initial Focus Group Interview Guide

-
- **Assent**
- **Name tags and completion of data form**
- **Food and refreshments**
- **Welcome**

Bienvenidos a todos a nuestra reunión acerca de tus experiencias como inmigrantes Hispanos. Este proyecto ha sido aprobado por la Universidad Rutgers y las Escuelas Publicas de ------------. Estamos muy contentos y agradecemos que Uds. han decido participar en esta reunión. Nos interesa mucho escucharlos y aprender de Uds. En verdad Uds. son los que están pasando por la experiencia de ser un inmigrante Hispano adolescente y de manera son los expertos en este tema. Queremos aprender de cómo Uds. piensan y se sienten. Queremos que todos participen y se sientan libre a dar su opinión. Aquí no existen respuestas incorrectas

Favor de recordar de escuchar uno al otro sin interrumpir y con respeto. Para que podamos escuchar lo que cada uno dice, favor de hablar una persona a la vez. Todo lo que hablamos aquí hoy es confidencial, es decir que lo que hablamos no debe de salir de este cuarto. Yo no hablaré sobre lo que se dice aquí con nadie en la escuela. La discusión se esta grabando solo para que no se me olvide nada de lo que Uds. han dicho y para poder estudiarlo mejor después de la reunión. Tu nombre no aparecerá en ningún lugar. Serán identificados solo por un número. Otros grupos tomarán lugar en la nueva escuela intermedia.

- **Introductions**

Este proyecto esta aprobado por la Universidad de Rutgers y las escuelas publicas de -------. El propósito es para entender mejor sobre de tus experiencias como jóvenes hispanos inmigrantes y como se van acostumbrando a un nuevo país. También queremos saber como las escuelas pueden ayudarlos en este proceso. Nuestra reunión durará mas o menos como 1 1/2 a 2 horas. Aunque Ustedes tienen en común la experiencia de ser inmigrantes, tal vez tienen también unas opiniones u ideas diferentes. Vamos a respetar si hay algunas diferencias y escucharnos uno al otro. La discusión se esta grabando solo para que yo pueda recordar todo lo que ustedes dicen y para que yo pueda escucharlo, y estudiarlo mejor. Tu nombre no va a aparecer en ningún lugar, y serán identificados solo por un número. Otros grupos tomarán lugar aquí y en la escuela ------ .

- **General Discussion**

1.¿Que te dijeron sobre tu traslado/cambio a los Estados Unidos y como te sentiste en relación al cambio?

2. Pienses atrás a cuando primero llegaste aquí. ¿Como fue tu experiencia?

3. ¿Que fueron las cosas mas dificiles cuando llegaste aque? Favor de anotar las tres

cosas mas dificiles on la hoja de papel.

4. Cuando personas se mueven/cambian a un nuevo país con un cultura diferente, se tienen que acostumbrar a muchos cambios. A) ¿Cuales fueron eso cambios y B) como dirias que has sido afectado/a por esos cambios?

5. ¿Que es difícil todavía?

6. ¿Que te gustas/no gustas de la vida aquí?

7. ¿Que te ha ayudado a acostumbrarte a vivir aquí?

8. ¿Que te gustaría que la escuela hiciera para ayudarte en el proceso de acostumbrarte a este país?

- **Thank you and distribution of movie tickets.**

APPENDIX J2: INITIAL FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE (ENGLISH)

Initial Focus Group Interview Guide

- **Assent**
- **Name tags and completion of data form**
- **Food and refreshments**
- **Welcome**

Welcome to our meeting about your experiences as Hispanic teenagers. This project has been approved by Rutgers University and the ------------ Public Schools. We are happy and grateful that you have decided to participate in this meeting. We are interested in listening to you and learning from you. In reality, you are the ones who are experiencing being a Hispanic adolescent living in the United States and in fact are the experts on the topic. We want to learn about how you think and feel. We also want everyone to feel free to participate and give his or her opinion. There are no wrong answers here.

Please remember to listen to each other without interrupting and with respect. Please speak one at a time so that we can hear what each person has to say. Everything that is said here is confidential, meaning that what is said here should not be talked about outside of this room. I will not talk about what is said here with anyone in the school. The discussion is being taped only so that I do not forget what you say and so that I can study it better after the meeting. Your name will not appear anywhere. You will be identified by a number. Other groups will be taking place in Smith School and the new Middle School.

- **Introductions**

This Project has been approved by Rutgers University and the -----------Public Schools. The purpose of this Project is to better understand about your experiences as teenage Hispanic immigrants and how you go about adjusting to a new country. We also want to know how the schools can help you in this process. Our meeting will last 1 ½ - 2 hours. Although you have in common the experience of of being immigrants, you might also have different ideas and opinions. If there are any differences, we are going to respect them and listen to each other. The discussion is being taped only so that I can remember what you have said and so that I can listen to it, and study it better. Your name will not appear in any place. You will be identified only by a number. Other groups will take place here and in ---------- School.

- **General Discussion**

1. What were you told about coming to the United States and how did you feel about it?

2. Think back to when you first arrived here. What was your experience like?

3. What were the most difficult things when you arrived here? Please list the three most difficult things on the piece of paper.

4. When people move to a new country with a different culture, they must adapt to many changes. A) What were those changes, and B) how would you say you have been affected by them?

5. What is still difficult?

6. What do you like/dislike about living here?

7. What has helped you to adjust to living here?

8. What would you like the school to do to help you in the process of adapting to this country?

- **Thank you and distribution of movie tickets**

APPENDIX K1: REVISED FOCUS GROUP GUIDE (SPANISH)

Revised Focus Group Guide

- **Assent**
- **Name tags and completion of data form**
- **Food and refreshments**
- **Welcome**

Bienvenidos a esta reunión acerca de tus experiencias como hispanos adolescentes. Estamos bien contentos y agradecemos que hayan decidido participar en esta reunión. Este proyecto ha sido aprobado por la Universidad Rutgers y las escuelas públicas de ------.Estamos interesados in escucharlos y aprender de Ustedes. En realidad, Ustedes son los que están pasando por la experiencia de ser un hispano adolescente viviendo en los Estados Unidos. De hecho, Ustedes son los expertos en este tema. Queremos aprender de cómo Ustedes piensan y se sienten. Queremos que todos se sientan libres para participar y dar su opinión. No hay respuestas incorrectas aquí.

Favor de recordar a escuchar uno al otro sin interrumpir y con respeto. Si hay alguna diferencia de opinión, vamos a respetarla. Favor de hablar uno a la vez. Todo lo que se habla aquí es confidencial, es decir, que lo que se habla aquí no se debe hablar fuera de este cuarto. Lo que se habla se esta grabando solo para que yo no olvide lo que Ustedes dicen y para que yo pueda estudiarlo mejor después de la reunión. Tu nombre no aparecerá en ningún lugar. Será identificado por un nombre

- **Introductions**

- **General Discussion**

1. ¿Cuáles han sido las tres cosas mas difíciles y las tres cosas mas fáciles desde que llegaste aquí? Favor de escribirlas en la hoja de papel.

2. ¿Que te dijeron sobre tu traslado/cambio a los Estados Unidos/que esperabas o te imaginabas de venir aquí?

3. Cuando personas se mueven/cambian a un nuevo país con un cultura diferente, se tienen que acostumbrar a muchos cambios. A) ¿Cuales fueron eso cambios y B) como dirías que has sido afectado/a por esos cambios?

4. ¿Que te ha ayudado a acostumbrarte a vivir aquí?

5. ¿Que te gustaría que la escuela hiciera para ayudarte en el proceso de acostumbrarte a este país?

- **Thank you and distribution of movie tickets**

APPENDIX K2: REVISED FOCUS GROUP GUIDE (ENGLISH)

Revised Focus Group Guide

- **Assent**
- **Name tags and completion of data form**
- **Food and refreshments**
- **Welcome**

Welcome to our meeting about your experiences as Hispanic teenagers. This project has been approved by Rutgers University and the ---------- Public Schools. We are happy and grateful that you have decided to participate in this meeting. We are interested in listening to you and learning from you. In reality, you are the ones who are experiencing being a Hispanic adolescent living in the United States and in fact are the experts on the topic. We want to learn about how you think and feel. We also want everyone to feel free to participate and give his or her opinion. If there is a difference of opinion, we will respect it. There are no wrong answers here.

Please remember to listen to each other without interrupting and with respect. So that we can hear what each person has to say, please only speak one at a time. Everything that is said here is confidential, meaning that what is said here should not be talked about outside of this room. I will not talk about what is said here with anyone in the school. The discussion is being taped only so that I do not forget what you say and so that I can study it better after the meeting. Your name will not appear anywhere.

- **Introductions**

- **General Discussion**

1. What are three things that are easy and hard about being an Hispanic teenager in the United States? Please write these down on your paper.
2. What are the differences between the Hispanic and American cultures?
3. Do you think that being Hispanic makes you the same or different than other teenagers?
4. How about with your parents/guardians, do you think that Hispanic parents/guardians treat teenagers differently or the same as American parents?
5. What helps you as you go through the experiences of being a Hispanic teenager in the United States?
6. What would you like the school to do to help you adjust to American culture?
- **Thank you and distribution of movie tickets**

APPENDIX L1: SCRIPT FOR ORAL ASSENT (SPANISH)

Script for Oral Assent

Tu estas invitado/a a participar en un estudio sobre tus experiencias como Hispano/a en este país. El estudio se conduce por Judith Vélez, un estudiante de la Universidad de Rutgers.

El estudio consiste de participar en una reunión que durara 1 1/2 a 2 horas. Tu nombre no aparecerá en ningún lugar. Antes de la reunión, pido que complete una forma corta con preguntas sobre tu edad, país de nacimiento, etc. La forma se le asignara un número, así que tu nombre no aparecerá aquí tampoco.

Participar en la reunión te dará la oportunidad de hablar de tus experiencias con otros estudiantes que han pasado por cosas similares. Es posible que la información obtenida en las reuniones pueda ayudar el desarrollo de programas o servicios que puedan ayudar a los estudiantes Hispanos.

No tienes que responder a ninguna pregunta que te haga sentir incomodo/a. Si te sientes afectado/a de alguna manera al hablar de tus experiencias, puedes hablar conmigo después de la reunión.

Aunque tu padre/guardián ya ha consentido a tu participación en el estudio, tú puedes decidir no participar. También puedes parar de participar a cualquier momento durante la reunión. Pizza y refrescos/soda se servirán durante la reunión. Al fin de la reunión, tú recibirás una entrada gratis al cine.

La reunión será grabada en cinta de audio solo para el uso mío en el estudio. La grabación no será escuchada por nadie en la escuela.

Si tienes alguna pregunta, yo te la contestaré antes de empezar la reunión.

APPENDIX L2: SCRIPT FOR ORAL ASSENT (ENGLISH)

Script for Oral Assent

You are invited to participate in a study about your experiences as Hispanic teenagers in this country. The study is conducted by Judith Velez, a student at Rutgers University.

The study consists of participation in a meeting that will last 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Your name will not appear in any place. Before the meeting, I will ask you to complete a short form with questions about your age, country you were born in, etc. The form will be assigned a number, so that your name will not appear here either.

Participation in the meeting will give you the opportunity to talk about your experiences with other students who have gone through similar things. It is possible that the information obtained from the meetings will help develop programs or services that can help Hispanic students.

You do not have to respond to any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. If you feel affected in some way upon speaking about your experiences, you can speak to me after the meting.

Even though your parent or guardian has given permission for your participation in the study, you can decide not to participate. You can also stop your participation at any time during the meeting. Pizza and soda will be served during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, you will be given a free movie ticket.

The meeting will be audiotaped only for my use in the study. The recording will not be listened to by anybody in the school.

If you have any question, I will answer it before the meeting begins.

APPENDIX M: CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Consent Form for School Staff

Date

Dear

I am a doctoral student at the School of Social Work at Rutgers University and a Child Study Team member assigned to Smith School. My dissertation will consist of a research study involving Hispanic middle school students. A series of focus groups will be conducted in Smith and Jones Schools including the seventh and eighth grade Hispanic students in the bilingual, English monolingual classes of both schools and the Welcome Center at Jones School. The experience of Hispanic immigrants as they adapt into a new environment is largely undocumented. The purpose of the study is to better understand aspects of adjustment that facilitate or thwart the process of adaptation to a new culture among young Hispanic adolescents.

As a guidance counselor, you are in a prime position to witness how Hispanic students adjust to living in the United States. I am inviting you to participate in a 45-minute interview in order to share your impressions of the process of adaptation to a new country. The interview will be audiotaped only for the purposes of the study. No one will have access to the tapes except the primary investigator.

There are no known risks to your participation in the study. While there are no direct benefits to you, the results of the study will increase knowledge and understanding of Hispanic youth. In addition, it will help inform the school of ways that the adjustment process can be facilitated for successful integration into the wider society.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, without any penalty to you. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind about participation or end the interview at any point. The information from the study will be kept strictly confidential. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link your name to the study.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to call me at (732) 873-0736. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at (732) 932-0150, Extension 2104.

If you agree to participate in the study, please sign below:

Signature_____   Date_____

Investigator signature _____   Date_____

If you agree to have the interview audio taped, please sign below:

Signature_____   Date_____

Investigator signature_____   Date_____

APPENDIX N: INTERVIEW GUIDE – SCHOOL STAFF

Interview Guide – School Staff

1. How long have you worked with Hispanic students as a guidance counselor/teacher?

2. When people move to a new country with a different culture, they must face many challenges. A) What do you think are the greatest challenges or difficulties and B) how would you say Hispanic youth are affected by those challenges?

3. What do you think are the strengths they bring with them from their native countries?

4. What do you think would help them adapt?

5. What do you think the school can do to help these students adjust to life in the United States?

APPENDIX O: INITIAL CODES

Initial Codes

<u>Language/Idioma</u>
Express oneself/Expresarse

Defend oneself/Defenderse

Learn/Aprender

Understand/Entender

<u>Family Relations/Relaciones Familiares</u>
Reunion/Reunión

Separation/Separación

Reconfiguration/

Conflict/Conflicto

<u>Adaptation/Adaptación</u>
Emotional/Emocional

Social/Social

Environmental/Ambiental

Behavioral/del Comportamiento

Academic/Academico

<u>Expectations/Expectativas</u>
School/Escolar

Work or Economics/Trabajo o Economía

<u>Reality/Realidad</u>
School/Escolar

Work or Economics/Trabajo o Economía

Discrimination/Discriminación
>> Within group/Dentro de grupo

>> Between group/Entre grupo

Immigration/Inmigración
>> Documents/Documentos

>> The trip/El viaje

Housing

Access

Latino culture
>> Food/Comida

>> Music/Musica

Isolation or connectedness / Aislamiento

APPENDIX P: REVISED CODES

Revised Codes

1. Access
   a. Education
   b. Services
   c. Family
   d. Stores
   e. Economic resources
   f. Better life
   g. Housing
   h. Freedom
   i. Goods
   j. Parks
   k. Transportation
   l. Health care
   m. Technology

2. Adaptation
   a. Coping
   b. Emotional (including the regulation of affect, isolation, connectedness)
   c. Social (include isolation/connectedness)
   d. Environment (including constraints)
   e. Behavioral
   f. Academic/School
   g. Rules/Standards
   h. Climate
   i. Effort/hard work
   j. Constraints
   k. Changing Identity
   l. Ethnic Identity
   m. Reference group
   n. Pride
   o. Appearances
   p. Bicultural Identity
   q. Language (Spanish fluency)

3. Family Relations
   a. Reunion
   b. Separation
   c. Reconfiguration
   d. Conflict
   e. Parenting Styles (overprotection, trust, punishment, modeling)
   f. Sibling Relations
   g. Family obligations

        h. Changes in family members

4. Latino Culture
   a. Food
   b. Music
   c. Accents
   d. Different meanings of words.
   e. Pride
   f. Appearances (e.g., clothes, physical features)
   g. Bicultural Identity
   h. Religiosity
   i. Cultural self-perception
   j. Customs

5. Expectations vs. Reality

6. Gender relations

7. Immigration
   a. Documents
   b. The trip

8. Interethnic relations
   a. Within group
   b. Between group
   c. Expectation of discrimination
   d. Stereotypes
   e. Cultural Messages (media)

9. Language
   a. Express oneself (includes pronunciation)
   b. Defend oneself
   c. Learn
   d. Understand
   e. Vulnerability/anxiety

10. Dreams

11. What school can do (list)

APPENDIX Q: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics

	N=53	Percent
Gender		
Female	28	53.00
Age		
12 - 13	31	58.00
14 - 16	22	42.00
Grade		
7th	26	49.06
8th	27	50.94
Country of Birth		
Dominican Republic	12	22.64
Guatemala	1	1.89
Honduras	4	7.55
Mexico	15	28.30
Peru	1	1.89
Puerto Rico	1	1.89
United States	18	33.96
Unreported	1	1.89

APPENDIX Q: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (CONTINUED)

Descriptive Statistics (continued)

	N=53	Percent
Parental Country of Birth		
Mother's Birthplace		
Dominican Republic	14	26.42
Ecuador	1	1.89
Guatemala	2	3.77
Honduras	5	9.43
Mexico	25	47.17
Peru	1	1.89
Puerto Rico	2	3.77
United States	3	5.66
Father's Birthplace		
Dominican Republic	15	28.30
Ecuador	1	1.89
Guatemala	1	1.89
Honduras	4	7.55
Mexico	24	45.28
Peru	1	1.89
Puerto Rico	5	9.43
United States	2	3.77

Descriptive Statistics (continued)

	N=53	Percent
Characteristics of Immigrant Students		
Pre-immigration environment		
Immigrated from city environment	22	62.86
Immigrated from rural environment	13	37.14

Length of Residency in the United States

	N=52	Percent
0-2 years	22	62.86
3-5 years	7	20.00
6-8 years	2	5.71
9-11 years	0	0.00
12-14 years	3	8.57
Missing	1	2.86
Total participants	53	

APPENDIX R: PARTICIPANT FLUENCY AND LITERACY IN ENGLISH AND

Participant fluency and literacy in English and Spanish

	N	Percent
Language Most Often Spoken		
Only or Mostly Spanish	25	47.17
Spanish and English	26	49.06
Only or Mostly English	2	3.77
Language Spoken in the Home		
Only or Mostly Spanish	25	47.2
Spanish and English	26	49.1
Only or Mostly English	2	3.8
Language Most Often Spoken with Friends		
Only or Mostly Spanish	17	32.08
Spanish and English	31	58.49
Only or Mostly English	5	9.43
Perceived Level of Spanish Fluency		
Poor or Fair	5	9.43
Good	14	26.42
Very Good or Excellent	34	64.15
Perceived Level of Spanish Literacy		
Poor or Fair	7	13.21
Good	15	28.30
Very Good or Excellent	31	58.49

SPANISH

APPENDIX R: PARTICIPANT FLUENCY AND LITERACY IN ENGLISH AND
SPANISH (CONTINUED)

Participant fluency and literacy in English and Spanish (continued)

	N	Percent
Perceived Level of English Fluency		
Poor or Fair	25	47.17
Good	8	15.09
Very Good or Excellent	20	37.74
Perceived Level of English Literacy		
Poor or Fair	24	45.28
Good	9	16.98
Very Good or Excellent	20	37.74
Language Participants Dream in		
Spanish	22	41.51
English	11	20.75
Both English and Spanish	17	32.08
Missing	3	5.66

APPENDIX S: PERCENT OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING

IN AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Percent of students who participated in after school activities

	School Participation	Sports Activity Participation
Gender/Sex		
Male	5 (38%)	9 (53%)
Female	8 (62%)	8 (47%)
Total[a]	13 (24%)	17 (32%)
U.S. Born		
Yes	6 (12%)	10 (67%
No	6 (12%)	6 (33%)
Total[b]	12 (23%)	16 (31%)

[a] Total number of students in sample = 53
[b] Total number of students in sample = 52

Curriculum Vita

Judith Velez

Education
2008   Ph.D. in Social Work, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

1999   Advanced Certificate in Clinical Social Work, New York University, New York, NY.

1976   M.S.W., New York University, New York, NY.

1974   B.A., Social Sciences, Fordham University, Lincoln Center Campus, New York, NY.

Professional Experience

8/86-present
   Clinical Social Worker, Private Practice, Somerset, NJ
9/89-6/07
   School Social Worker, New Brunswick Public Schools, New Brunswick, NJ.
2/82-6/89
   Psychotherapist and Community Relations Liaison, Brooklyn Center for Families in Crisis, Brooklyn, NY
9/80-6/83
   Psychotherapist, Brooklyn Center for Psychotherapy, Brooklyn, NY
1/77-1/80
   Clinical Social Worker, Interfaith Hospital, Brooklyn, NY
5/76-1/77
   Clinical Social Worker, Brooklyn Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Brooklyn, NY

Research Experience
9/05-2/06
   - Dissertation study (qualitative) – Crossing Cultures: How Hispanic Youth Adapt.
2/01-4/01
   - Qualitative study for Methods class – Hispanic Immigrants: The Mental Health Effects of Leaving Home and Starting Anew in the United States.
7/01
   - Field Researcher – Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Princeton, NJ.

Publications and Presentations
   - Co-presenter at the Sixth Annual Diversity Challenge 2006: Do Immigrants Catch or Carry Race and Culture? Sponsored by the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture at Boston College. Presentation entitled, *The Changing Faces of New Jersey: A Qualitative Study of Adolescents and Their Acculturation Experiences.*

- Baer, J., Prince, J. D., & Velez, J. (2004). Fusion or familialism: A construct problem in studies of Mexican American adolescent. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 26(3), 26(*3)-273.