

FACTORS THAT FOSTER LATINA, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER, NON-
TRADITIONAL STUDENT RESILIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THEIR
PERSISTENCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

by

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A.A., Barton County Community College, 1996

B.A., Kansas State University, 1998

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

This qualitative case study focused on 11 non-traditional, ELL, Latinas within a community-based, teacher education program. The purpose of the study was: (a) to explore the various internal characteristics and external factors that foster Latina, English language learner (ELL), non-traditional students' resiliency in reaching and remaining in college and (b) to determine what ways these internal characteristics and external factors influenced participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education. The researcher utilized two primary sources of data, (1) an autobiographical, qualitative survey, and (2) individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews. As a secondary source, the researcher used academic documents to provide context for student success in the program.

The internal characteristic of *sense of purpose and a future* (demonstrated in participants' determination, identity, and responsibility) proved to be most protective for participants' resiliency. *Caring relationships* (with the features of: *consejos* (advice or homilies), quality not quantity, and high expectations in the context of care) proved to be the most significant external factor for fostering participant resiliency. The study also identified the overarching emergent theme of *advocacy inspired by hardship* found among participant discourse. Within this theme, findings indicated that, as a result of their cultural and experiential understandings, participants were able to enact culturally responsive teaching with their Latino/a students. Furthermore, participants demonstrated a strong sense of agency to improve the education outcomes of culturally and

linguistically diverse (CLD) students and a desire to advocate specifically on behalf of ELL, Latino/as students.

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Approved by:

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Dr. Margaret Gail Shroyer

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Dedication

To Mar, Leilani, and Kai. I love you so much.

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

In the contemporary United States, race is both a matter of social identity and institutionalized social structures.... How people are treated in institutional settings is the product of deeply rooted racialised (and gendered and classed) social practices that shape how they view themselves and the world around them and how they act in the world (Powers, 2007, p. 115).

We as a nation have created a social problem of epidemic proportion. The stigmatization, marginalization, and miseducation of Latino/a, English language learner (ELL) children in US public schools has deteriorated the seals along the educational pipeline for this growing population. These inequities have allowed many opportunities for young Latino/as to slip through the cracks at critical junctures along the way. While many colorblind idealists and proponents of meritocratic social, educational, and political systems argue that race is merely a phenotype (therefore having no place in conversations regarding access and opportunity for the culturally and linguistically diverse) many others would argue that *race* plays a key role in shaping the daily experiences and life trajectories of every individual in this nation (Guinier & Torres, 2003; Powers, 2007).

Latino/a, ELL students' identity, self-worth, cultural consciousnesses, and life aspirations are shaped within the often unwelcoming, social, and political context of US schools, therefore, how they and their families are viewed and treated by the dominant culture and how they are guided by educational institutions has a significant impact on their educational choices. For students to understand who they are, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, they must understand the historical, political, and social factors that influence how they are perceived, valued (or devalued), and defined within the current US culture. Critical educators and emancipatory educational institutions strive to engage students as active participants in the learning process, not as passive receivers of

previously constructed “truth”. Proponents of critical pedagogy believe that students have a right to experience schools that validate them, challenge them, and inspire them to utilize their cultural and experiential knowledge to understand new content and contexts.

An emancipatory education is one that honors and nurtures students’ individual ways of knowing through ongoing dialog and provides opportunities for students to make connections between their own personal situations and struggles and those within the larger society. More specifically, this type of education serves as a vehicle for upward mobility and liberation for the oppressed and marginalized. Ultimately, an emancipatory education empowers students to redefine themselves and the populations/groups they represent in educational and social spheres and gives them the language to challenge *deficit perspectives* and dominant discriminatory ideologies. While such liberating and empowering educational experiences are often rare for Latina, ELL students within our current K-16 school system, there are those who succeed and persist in education despite the odds against them.

The investigator of this study seeks to discover the factors that influence Latina, ELL students’ resilience in education and desire to persist in teacher education. Through learning about their personal histories and life experiences, the researcher hopes to identify the most salient personal, familial, cultural, and educational events that shaped who these women are as learners and as future teachers.

Within this chapter is (a) an overview of the issues established in the literature, (b) a statement of the problem, (c) a synopsis of the research design, research questions, data collection and analysis, (d) the significance of the study, (e) limitations and delimitations of the study, (f) the definition of terms, and (g) a summary.

Overview of the Issues

Latina, ELL females who desire to gain a college degree have a uniquely complex and daunting task before them as they struggle to navigate the historical, cultural, and institutional barriers on their pathway to the baccalaureate. These barriers have a long established history—deeply rooted in racism, sexism, and classism. The social construction of race and race relations in the United States was founded upon the early European capitalist system of the colonies (Darder, Torres, & Gutiérrez, 1997). This capitalist system – orchestrated by the White, male, landowners – shaped political, social, and economic realities, which, in turn, influenced the purpose and design of educational institutions in the US. By design, these institutions supported the subjugation and discrimination of Natives, Africans, Mexicans and other non-Whites not only in practice but also in formal policy.

Still today, mainstream social, governmental, and educational institutions continue to discount and silence the voices and perspectives of diverse populations (Da Silva Iddings, 2005; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). While in theory the US education system is a place for equal opportunity for all children, underlying vestiges of racism based on deficit and hegemonic perspectives continue to shape policy and practice regarding diverse students at every level K-16 (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

The collective experience of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in US educational institutions is complex and varied, yet the literature speaks to overarching factors that significantly impact CLD student outcomes, such as the quality and cultural competency of teachers and the social and cultural climate of schools. For

the non-White and language minority student, schools can serve as unfamiliar, suppressive, and often hostile environments that, instead of promoting liberation and growth, promote feelings of marginalization and inferiority (Kubota, 2004; Nieto, 2004; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). For Latino/as, the common mixture of ineffective English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programming, remedial coursework, lack of opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities or gifted programs along with teachers' low expectations and pressure to fully assimilate often results in a negative *self-fulfilling prophecy* (Gay, Dingus, & Jackson, 2003; Herrera, 1995).

These damaging experiences can leave permanent scars, which inhibit healthy identity development as well as inhibit the development of resiliency characteristics such as social competence, the ability to problem solve, autonomy, and a sense of purpose (Benard, 1991, 2004). The literature describes how Latino/as often experience a *borderlands struggle* as they work to reconcile conflicting messages being transmitted from the dominant US society regarding who they are and their worth (Anzaldúa, 1987; Elenes, 1997; Giroux & McLaren 1992; Macedo, 2006). Due to the *institutional deafness* they often experience in schools, many young Latino/as endure this struggle in isolation leaving them voiceless and powerless (Da Silva Iddings, 2005; Palmer, 2003).

Latino/a students who do endure the odds at the K-12 level and successfully enroll in college often report unique external factors within their family, culture, community or school that had a protective effect on them and fostered personal resilience (Benard, 1991, 2004). This resiliency is critical to student survival in institutions of higher education as well—as these environments are often saturated with many of the same destructive hegemonic, Eurocentric philosophies as K-12 schools. Latino/as

students' poor integration and resulting attrition from college explains why they constitute only 16% of the total Latino/a population age 29 and under having a bachelor's degree—despite their increased numbers within the K-12 ranks (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

While resilient Latino/as do go on to pursue college degrees, frequently the process, context, and timeline by which they complete their degree look quite different from White, middle class traditional students. Latina females in particular, for a wide range of social, cultural, and economic reasons (discussed in Chapter 2), often do not achieve their academic goals along traditional pathways and timeframes (Driscoll, Sugland, Manlove, & Papillo, 2005; Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Struggles with racism, financial challenges, negative experiences in school, gender role expectations, teen pregnancy, and religious pressures have been identified as factors that can hinder Latinas' achievement and life trajectories (Brewster, 1994; Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Levitt, 2002; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Palmer, 2003; Simoniello, 1981). At the same time, strong family and community networks, a rich cultural heritage, powerful experiences as mothers, nurturers, and teachers in the home, and the development of endurance through opposition also influence Latina achievement in positive ways (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005; Rueda, Monzó, & Higareda, 2004; Valenciana, Weisman, & Flores, 2006; Villenas, & Deyhele, 1999).

For the positive reasons described above, a growing number of Latina students are enrolling in college as non-traditional students after working as service laborers or caregivers in the home for a period of time. While many Latina students commonly must perform the juggling act of managing family, work, and school responsibilities, research

suggests that these non-traditional student experiences are what drive them to endure hardships in pursuit of a better life and a better future (Shroyer, Yahnke, Morales, Dunn, Lohfink, & Espinoza, 2009; Simoniello, 1981).

Many bilingual Latinas find viable employment as paraeducators within the schools within their communities. As they begin attending college they are able to earn the course credits necessary to qualify for such positions in which the demand for bilingual skills is so high. As they learn the system and become connected, their value within the school grows exponentially. The literature supports that their common experiences as struggling CLD students in school, as wives and daughters who show leadership within the home, and as nurturers to their children and extended family provide them with sociocultural expertise. Additionally, as connected advocates who care about the well being of Latino/as in their communities, as feminists who challenge dominant views about women's place in society, and as cultural brokers for the increasing number of CLD children they work with in schools; bilingual, Latina paraeducators exist as assets in schools for addressing the staggering disparities in academic achievement for Latino/as (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dee, 2004; Dillworth & Brown, 2008; Genzuk & Baca, 1998; Monzó & Rueda, 2001; Rueda, et. al., 2004). Some argue that due to Latina, ELL, non-traditional students' common struggles with language, acculturation, socialization, and education – Latino/a paraeducators can relate to Latino/a, ELL students like no one else can (Monzó & Rueda, 2001; Rueda, et. al., 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Mainstream, monocultural educators' discomfort and uncertainty in dealing with the diversity of today's schools is well documented in the literature (Carr & Klassen,

1997; Delpit, 1995; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Grant & Gillette, 2006; The Holmes Group, 1995; McNeil, 2000; Nieto, 2004; Norwood, 1998; Sleeter & Thao, 2007; Walker, Shafer, & Iams, 2004). This discomfort is well founded given their often inadequate preparation to effectively address the complex needs of cultural and linguistic minorities within our US school system (Carr & Klassen, 1997; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; The Holmes Group, 1995). This problem is a result of not only the lack of emphasis placed on diversity and the development of cultural competency within traditional teacher preparation programs but also a result of who and how colleges of education tend to recruit and support students within their programs. To ensure that our nation's children have skilled and culturally competent teachers, extensive and comprehensive reform efforts are needed. While the breadth and depth of literature supporting alternative methods for the education, preparation, recruitment, retention, and mentorship of CLD students through the educational pipeline is growing (discussed in Chapter 2), institutions of higher education (IHEs) and more specifically, US colleges of education, have a long way to go in creating a skilled, culturally competent and diverse teaching force that can effectively teach the children of today.

Because our nation's schools are drastically changing, our teaching force and the way we prepare them must change drastically as well. By recruiting and retaining a new kind of student, the Latina paraeducator, colleges of education can increase greatly the number of bilingual and bicultural students in their programs. To effectively recruit and retain Latina non-traditional students (more specifically paraeducators), it is critical for IHEs to better understand how these students enter and progress through college and the various obstacles they face on their road to earning a bachelor's degree. Additionally, it is

crucial for colleges of education to take the lead in reforming curriculum, instruction, programming and advising to develop and to nurture more effectively cultural competency among future teachers as well as to graduate a more diverse teaching force.

More research is needed to determine the various factors that foster resiliency among Latino/a, non-traditional students in higher education. Furthermore, key factors that influence Latino/a paraeducators in particular to pursue a four year teaching degree and what drives them to persist in teacher education despite the odds has been explored very little by researchers whose focus is on teacher preparation reform (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Romo, 2005; Rueda, et al., 1999; Von Destinon, 1990).

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to explore the various factors that foster Latina, English language learner (ELL), non-traditional students' resiliency, and ultimately, their persistence in teacher education. The purposeful sample chosen for this study is 11 Latina, ELL, non-traditional, students who participated in a unique, distance-delivered, 2+2, elementary education program offered by Kansas State University in partnership with two community colleges, Dodge City Community College and Seward County Community College. This program, called *AccessUS*, is offered as part of a larger K-16 simultaneous renewal grant through the Department of Education called the *Equity & Access Partnership*. The overarching grant served as the support structure for *AccessUS* as it provided the financial and human resources needed to sustain the program. The Latina, ELL, non-traditional students within the program served as an ideal population to study, as they possessed all the characteristics of interest (Latino/a, bilingual, first-generation, paraeducators).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the various internal characteristics and external factors that foster Latina, English language learner (ELL), non-traditional students' resiliency and ultimately their persistence in teacher education. The researcher used a variety of qualitative methods for the collection (surveys and interviews) and analysis (categorical aggregation, open coding) of data within the study to answer the following research questions:

1. *What internal characteristics and external factors foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resiliency in reaching and remaining in college?*
2. *In what ways do these characteristics and factors influence participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education?*

The researcher allowed these questions to guide the development of tools for the study (survey and interview tools). Because Benard (2004) distinguished between internal characteristics and external factors within the resiliency framework, the researcher felt it necessary to maintain this distinction as she shared the results of her study.

Data Collection and Analysis

To answer the identified questions, the researcher utilized two primary sources of data, (1) an autobiographical, qualitative survey (see Appendix D), and (2) individual in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews (see Appendix E). To provide context for the primary sources of data, the researcher used participants' academic records (transcripts) as a secondary source. Given the breadth and variety of qualitative data collected for this study, the researcher employed multiple methods for data analysis, based on Creswell's (2007) recommendations, utilizing a blended theoretical framework

based on the established literature in the areas of resiliency, Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT), and Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit).

Significance of the Study

In this study, the researcher investigated the key elements that influence ELL, Latina, non-traditional students' resiliency in higher education and desire to pursue, and persist in, teacher education. To do so, she will gather information about the life histories and educational experiences of 11 Latina, ELL, non-traditional students within a distance-delivered, elementary education program offered by Kansas State University. Using a qualitative, case study approach, the researcher explored the development of student resiliency and persistence; meaning the personal, familial, cultural, and educational experiences that shaped who these women are as learners and future teachers.

By studying this particular population, the researcher seeks to contribute to the current literature base regarding Latino/a student recruitment and retention as well as to identify the need for diversification in teacher preparation programs. Additionally, by contextualizing Latina, ELL participants' transitional experiences into the US culture and educational system within larger social, political, and historical contexts, this study has the potential to offer insights relevant to the field of LatCrit particularly as it focuses on issues related to immigration, culture, and language for Latino/as in this country (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Boundaries of the Study

The researcher acknowledges that this study is limited to a specific bounded system and its participants therefore the research findings cannot be generalized to all

ELL, Latina, non-traditional students or to all teacher education programs or grant-based projects. The population of this study is limited to those participating in and graduating from the *AccessUS* distance-delivered, elementary education program offered by Kansas State University, Dodge City Community College, and Seward County Community College, Spring 2006 to Spring 2010. She recognizes that even within this unique subgroup of the US population, there exists a wide range of diversity in personal background, immigration history, access and opportunity, and educational experience among them. She also acknowledges that teacher education programs, recruitment and retention initiatives, and grant-based teacher education reform projects can look quite different from region to region and campus to campus. However, the researcher's intent is for readers to transfer the findings where similar participant and program characteristics occur. Findings from the study may provide readers in similar contexts with new understandings regarding this population and with new ideas for improving recruitment, retention, and preparation programs to successfully increase the diversity and cultural competency of their teaching force.

The researcher also recognizes that data collected in this study will not provide an inexhaustible list of characteristics or factors that foster ELL, Latina, non-traditional student resilience nor can it fully explain all the ways in which these familial, cultural, historical, and educational experiences influence participants' persistence in teacher education. However, within the scope and sequence established, the data collected through autobiographical qualitative surveys and qualitative, semi-structured interviews illustrated the key elements that influence ELL, Latina, non-traditional students' resiliency in higher education and desire to pursue, and persist in, teacher education

within this context.

Finally, it is important to note that as a previous staff member on the *Equity & Access Partnership*, the researcher had a positive existing relationship with participants in the study prior to collecting data. Therefore, response bias is a reasonable risk that the researcher had to consider as she structured and conducted the study. Survey and interview questions were crafted to lessen the impact that response bias might have on the participants.

Definition of Terms

2+2 teacher education program: 2+2 teacher education programs, also known as “career ladder” programs, are often targeted at paraprofessionals who are taking coursework at a community or two-year college and desire to complete a four-year or professional degree from a university upon completion of their general education coursework.

Attrition: For the purposes of this study, the term attrition is used to describe the withdrawal and or resignation of students from IHEs (Tinto, 1975).

Borderlands struggle: This term established by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) is used to describe the process that many Latino/a go through to reconcile their identity with the conflicting realities they face as minorities in US society. The concept of the *Borderlands* captures the feelings of fluidity and displacement felt by many Latino/as and can be described as the discourse of people who “live between different worlds”.

Cultural Capital: First identified and described in detail by Pierre Bourdieu (1979) cultural capital is anything determined as high cultural knowledge, which could give a person the advantage in social or financial contexts.

Cargas: This is the Spanish word for *burdens* and is used to describe those aspects of the Latino culture that tend hinder student success (e.g. gender role expectations) (Herrera et al., *in press*).

CLD: This acronym stands for *culturally and linguistically diverse*, and is used in reference to those individuals whose culture and/or language is different from the White, European, English speaking majority population.

Deficit perspective: Gorski states that it is a perspective from which “scholars explain varying levels of opportunity and access (educationally, professionally, and in other spheres) among groups of people by identifying deficits in the cultures and behaviors of the underprivileged group. Scholars using the deficit perspective blame oppressed people for their own oppression by drawing on stereotypes and assumptions usually unsupported by research and disconnected from a larger systemic analysis” (Gorski, 2005, p. 8).

Demographic divide: A term used by scholars to describe the “disparities in educational opportunities, resources, and achievement among student groups that differ from one another racially, culturally, linguistically, socioeconomically, and geographically” (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005, p. 41).

Distance-delivered: This term is used to describe the unique course delivery method used by Kansas State University for the *AccessUS* program. The courses were designed by Hills State in collaboration with partner community colleges and delivered via a variety of methods (e.g. polycom, partial face-to-face, video, online, etc.).

ELL: This acronym stands for English language learner, and is used in reference to those individuals who are in the process of learning English and whose native or primary language(s) is something other than English.

External or environmental factors for resilience: Bonnie Benard (2004) identifies three protective factors within a student's environment that work together to foster resilience. They are: (a) caring relationships with parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who take on roles as mentors, pathfinders, arbitrators, and role models, (b) high expectations from parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who challenge students while providing both structure and support, and (c) opportunities to participate and contribute within contexts where students can voice their opinions, make choices, be imaginative, work with others collaboratively, and give back to their communities (Benard, 2004). The student's family, school, and community as part of a dynamic protective process offer these factors.

Gender role expectations: This term describes those expectations placed on males and females within the Latino/a culture and result in culturally determined behaviors. For Latinas in this study, they challenged gender role expectations from within and outside their culture as they took on new roles as college students.

Generational status: For the purposes of this study, the term generational status is used to refer to how many generations of a participant's family have lived in the United States prior to her birth. For example if her parents were immigrants, she would be considered "first generation," if her grandparents were immigrants but she and her parents were born in the US, then she would be considered "second generation".

Hegemony: The social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group over subordinate groups.

IHEs: This acronym stands for *institutions of higher education* and is used to describe any college, university, or trade school attended at the post-secondary level.

Institutional deafness: Within the context of this study, the term institutional deafness is used to describe a defense strategy used by White-majority individuals to shield themselves from the realities of racism. It results in the unwillingness to acknowledge that racism and inequality is imbedded in the political, social, and economic institutions that maintain society (Da Silva Iddings, 2005).

Integration: Integration is the act or process of a student becoming incorporated as an equal into a campus or college community. For the purposes of this study, negative integration is used to describe the common experience of Latino/a students when entering IHEs.

Internal or personal characteristics for resilience: According to Bonnie Benard (2004), there are four internal characteristics that foster resiliency in students who historically are at risk of failure: (a) social competence in the form of responsiveness, empathy, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humor, (b) problem solving skills such as abstract thinking, developing alternative solutions, planning, and goal setting, (c) autonomy in the form of independence, a strong sense of self and identity, and a sense of mastery, and (d) a sense of purpose and future which includes a strong sense of educational achievement, strong goals, persistence, and a positive view of the future.

Intersectionality: This is a term used by Delgado Bernal (2002) to explain the precarious position of Latina females in US society as they often experience racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression (such as gender-role stereotypes) simultaneously.

Latina/o: For the purposes of this study, the researcher uses the term Latino/a to refer to those individuals living in the United States who are of Latin American origin. As clarified by Gouveia, Powell, and Camargo (2005), the term Latino/a has become the most widely accepted term used to describe individuals who were “born in Latin America or who trace their historical, cultural, and linguistic roots to peoples living within the current or past borders of that region” (p. 3). This term is used in place of the term *Hispanic* as being more inclusive towards those of indigenous heritage whose primary language may or may not be Spanish.

Latino gender roles expectations: This term refers to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors identified historically, traditionally, and/or culturally as either female or male within the Latino culture. These gender expectations are implicit in every aspect of daily life and can be restrictive for females in particular.

Machismo: A concept closely associated with gender role expectations, machismo is a term used to describe Latino males’ traditional roles as dominant and superior to females’ roles (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). The term connotes a sense of toughness and arrogance on the part Latino males.

Monocultural: The term monocultural is used to describe those individuals who know little about other cultures or populations and typically have ethnocentric views about their native culture or country of origin (Darder, et al., 2004; Nieto, 2004).

Paraeducator: Paraeducator is a term used to describe specifically those paraprofessionals within a school working as educational support staff for teachers in the classroom.

Persistence: For the purposes of this study, persistence is defined as the continued enrollment in and completion of coursework within a defined program of study at the college level. Persistence and resiliency are correlated and interconnected for participants within this study (Benard, 2004; Stieha, 2010; Tinto, 1975).

PRAXIS I: This term is another name for the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), which is the first of several exams in the PRAXIS Series created by Educational Testing Service. This exam is used to evaluate, rank, and place students in teacher preparation programs.

Racialization: Omi and Winant (1986) use this term to describe the social processes that establish racial identity and group classification in this country.

Regalos: This is the Spanish word for *gifts*. In the literature, it is used as a figurative descriptor for those positive aspects of the Latino culture that nurture or promote student success.

Resiliency/Resilience: Is the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles. To thrive, mature, and increase competence, a person must draw on all of his or her resources: biological, psychological, and environmental (Gordon, 2000). According to Henderson and Milstein (2002), it is “the capacity to spring back, rebound successfully, adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social and academic competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply the stress of today’s world” (p. 7). According to Benard (2004), resilience in students is

fostered by both internal characteristics within the student and external factors within their environment.

Self-fulfilling prophecy: The classical notion introduced by sociologist Robert Merton (1957), which established that a student's perception of a situation or of treatment received influences his or her behavior as to make those perceptions reality.

Social Capital: The researcher uses the network analysis of social capital put forth by Stanton-Salazar (2001) to describe the methods and opportunities students from various social and cultural backgrounds possess and utilize to access power and privilege. For the purposes of this study, the researcher argues that the social networks and cultural resources held by Latino/a, ELL students are not typically considered of value in the dominant culture nor are they validated or enacted as useful tools by teachers in educational settings (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

White privilege: As described by Peggy McIntosh (1988), White privilege is the often-invisible set of unearned privileges enjoyed by those who are White in US society. These advantages play out at all levels of daily life and tend to leave people of color at a disadvantage.

Xenophobia: Xenophobia is the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign. Within the context of this study xenophobia is used in reference to the White, monolingual, majority population's fear of Latino/a (Spanish speaking immigrants) in the US.

Researcher Perspective

The investigator approached this current research with the acknowledgement that her identity influences her interpretation of the literature and the current national

challenges facing Latinos/as in education. Mezirow (1991) uses the term *meaning perspectives* to describe how personal histories and cultural models influence one's way of interpreting identity and reality, both individually and collectively. These meaning perspectives often are flawed and incomplete, yet they guide not only our attitudes and actions, but also our expectations and interpretations of other individuals or groups (Mezirow, 1991; Wortham, Allard, & Mortimer, 2006). As a bi-racial Latina who grew up in the rural Midwest as part of the only family of color in her hometown, the researcher understands that this work is highly personal. Her childhood experiences with poverty, discrimination, racism, and cultural isolation shaped who she is and how she views the world.

Summary

In this qualitative case study, the researcher sought to uncover the various internal characteristics and external factors that foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resilience in higher education as well as what ways these factors influenced participants' desire to pursue, and persist in, teacher education. The researcher further explored how these internal and external factors influenced participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education.

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the key elements of the study to be conducted with 11 Latina, ELL, non-traditional students participating in the *AccessUS* distance-delivered, elementary education program offered by Kansas State University in partnership with Seward County Community College and Dodge City Community College. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to this study, including the following: a brief summary of Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT), and Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit); the historical context of race in education; the current US teaching

force; Latino/a identity development in the context of the US education system; the changing landscape of teacher education; the role of the CLD teacher; Latino/a student access and success in teacher education; Latino/a student attrition and integration; exemplars for CLD student retention; the *cargas* (burdens) and *regalos* (gifts of the culture) that non-traditional Latinas bring to the teaching endeavor, and a summary. In Chapter 3, the investigator establishes the research methodology used, which includes the research design, theoretical framework for the study, context for the study, and the setting as well as a description of the research population, data collection, development and use of instrumentation, and data analysis. Finally, the researcher addresses issues of trustworthiness and provides a summary to end the chapter.

CHAPTER 2 - Review of the Literature

Within Chapter 2, the researcher provides an overview of key historical, social, and political factors responsible for the current recolonization and miseducation of Latino/a children in the US educational system using tenets of Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit to frame the discussion. She considers how these factors are perpetuated throughout the K-12 school system and the ways in which accumulated disadvantage (the negative effect of repeated occurrences of an act or circumstance that makes achievement unusually difficult) limits Latino/a, ELL students' access to higher education and upward mobility (Meriam-Webster, 2008). The researcher discusses how and why discrimination, White male privilege, and institutional racism are reproduced in colleges of education and teacher preparation programs across the country. Based on the literature, she then proposes critical considerations for systemic reform in teacher education and strategies for colleges to prepare teachers to work in our increasingly diverse schools. Using Critical Theory, CRT, LatCrit she establishes a need for recruiting a new kind of student (non-traditional, bilingual, Latinas) into teacher education as well as alternative methods for retaining and supporting them to graduation. Finally, the researcher outlines the potential challenges to this reform as well as the distinct and numerous benefits that can come from such efforts toward addressing the gaping holes along the educational pipeline at every level for Latino/as.

Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and LatCrit

Critical Theory

The term Critical Theory was used to describe the social science of Jewish thinkers in the 1930s and 1940s that challenged social and political forces such as capitalism, positivism, and materialism (Wiggershaus, 1995). This Neo-Marxist sociology came out of the Frankfurt School of thinkers associated with the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt. As stated by Giroux (2001),

What critical theory provides for education theorists is a mode of critique and language of opposition that extends the concept of the political not only into mundane social relations but into the very sensibilities and needs that form the personality and psyche (p.5).

Giroux asserts that the Frankfurt School critical theorists' acclaim lies in their "refusal to abandon the dialectic of *agency* and structure (i.e., the open-endedness of history) and their development of theoretical perspectives that treat seriously the claims that history can be changed, that the potential for radical transformation exists" (p. 5).

The works of Brazilian philosopher, Paulo Freire, galvanized the application of similar social and psychology theory in relation to education. This activist and scholar is known world-wide for his liberating teaching of adult illiterates in Latin America beginning in the late 1950s. His teaching and activism best showcased in the book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) has since inspired several generations of educators and scholars to continue this work for those "submerged in a culture of silence" across the globe (p. 30). Critical pedagogues such as Peter McLaren, Michael Apple, Joe L. Kincheloe, and Henry Giroux have applied the tenants of critical theory specifically to *critical pedagogy*, which they established as more than just a teaching approach.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a generative and recursive school of thought that continues to challenge US notions of democracy, ethics, and economics in relation to education for all. Critical pedagogy calls for each of us to consider, evaluate, reflect on, reconceptualize, and actively respond to social, political, economical, and educational systems that classify, exclude, and dominate. As described by Wink, “Critical pedagogy forces educators to look again at the fundamental issues of power and its relationship to the greater societal forces that affect schools” (2005, p. 31). In doing so, the current education system can no longer be seen as inert, a world in which all students have equal access to a normative education. Public education is a social and political construction, historically based on an industrial model for educating the masses (Clinchy, 1993; Larson & Ovando, 2001; Leland & Kasten, 2002).

In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire (1996) articulates this as a banking model for education, a system where the keepers of knowledge, teachers, place static concepts into receptacles, the empty minds of children, who can then use that knowledge (a white male interpretation of history, psychology, science, economics, etc.) as “truth” at a later time. This “educational” process, devoid of reflection and mutual construction, is the antithesis of a system where critical pedagogy is central to teaching and learning (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). Critical pedagogy places great emphasis on language and the power that it has to create, redefine, and liberate as well as the power it has to destroy, oppress, and marginalize (Giroux, 2001; Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Macedo, 2006; Wink, 2005). It is this understanding of the power of the spoken and written word that comes from critical reflection. True educative experiences can foster this only when democratic,

dialogic, relationships exist between the student and the teacher (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1996; Wink, 2005). For the oppressed, the liberating educator serves as a buttress in their struggle for self-identification, self-determination, and self-emancipation (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2001; Maldonado et. al., 2005). As promoted by the influential civil rights activist Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Folk School (now the Highlander Researcher and Education Center), “in order for educational and political change to be effective, it had to begin with the people themselves- a particularly significant tenet of critical pedagogical thought” (in Darder, et. al, 2003, p. 3).

Critical Race Theory and LatCrit

Critical Race Theory, with its roots in critical legal studies and radical feminism, birthed from the provoking work of Derrick Bell in the 1960s and others such as Kimberle Crenshaw, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado in response to the ebbing civil rights era in the 1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This school of thought was developed more fully through the later works of Richard Delgado and other scholars such as Jean Stefancic, Mari Matsuda, and Angela Harris. The field of CRT was broadened to incorporate Asian American, Indian/Indigenous, Latino and Queer sub-groups, which address legal issues related to immigration, language discrimination, homophobia, patriarchy, and native sovereignty (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical Race Theory parallels critical pedagogy in many ways, but places particular emphasis on the interdisciplinary study and deconstruction of racism as a historical, political, and social force that pervades the everyday experiences of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This force is seen and felt in the establishment of capitalism and meritocracy as the great equalizers in American society (Delgado Bernal,

2002; Taylor, 2009). From popular media to the highest levels of our US judicial system, it is a subversive and dominant force that requires us to name it, and actively challenge its established position in our everyday lives. Critical Race Theory challenges the notion of every man/woman's equality under the law (Bell, 1989). It calls into question the espoused "colorblindness" of US institutions established on assumed objectivity and requires that the experiences of people of color be brought into historical and political conversations to illuminate the subjective and skewed nature of so-called American "equality" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Kubota, 2004; Larson & Ovando, 2001). Critical Race Theory serves as a valuable lens for evaluating the ways in which the subordination of people of color, women, and the poor are created and maintained in the United States (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).

First introduced to the field of education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995), CRT continues to shape educational theory in substantial ways. These authors and others use CRT to understand how the confounding forces of racism, capitalism, classism, and sexism limit access and success for women and children of color in education. Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), considered a "close cousin" to CRT, focuses on the various ways that the US educational system suppress and discount the lived experiences and cultural identities of certain racial and ethnic groups (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Further, researchers such as Solórzano, Yosso, and Delgado Bernal consider how these factors impact CLD individuals' transition to and success in higher education. In particular, Daniel Solórzano, Sylvia Hurtado, and others have studied how campus climate and interpersonal interactions for Chicano/as at college influence their integration and

persistence as students and faculty (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 2008; Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, & Oseguera, 2008; Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002).

Delores Delgado Bernal utilizes CRT, more specifically LatCrit, to establish and consider the value of new critical *raced-gendered epistemologies* for validating students of color as “holders and creators of knowledge” (2002, p.105). Ladson-Billings (2000) describes the term *epistemology* as “a ‘system of knowing’ that is linked to worldviews based on the conditions under which people live and learn” (as cited in Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 106). She further states that there are many systems of knowledge that do not align with the dominant Euro-American epistemology, yet historically, educational theory (positivism, constructivism, postmodernism) has drawn almost exclusively on the history and experiences of White males. Delgado Bernal utilizes this understanding in conjunction with LatCrit, which “elucidates Latinas/Latinos multidimensional identities and can address the *intersectionality* of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression” they experience (2002, p. 108). Her study questions the Eurocentric ideology of academia, which has established “whiteness” as normative, neutral, and the defining canon for what is valued as *capital* in education. Her use of a Chicana feminist epistemology illustrates the protective power of community/family knowledge and collective experience for Chicana/os when confronted with deficient perspectives stemming from “Eurocentric epistemologies of white superiority” and capitalist individualism (2002, p. 112).

Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit provide a strong theoretical foundation for examining the current recolonization and miseducation of Latino/as at the K-12 and university levels. They also promote the thoughtful reevaluation and reconceptualization

of Latino/as' capacity and agency to transform current systems that marginalize and devalue the cultural and social capital they bring to educational research and practice (Apple, 1995; Darder, et. al., 2003; Giroux, 2001; Maldonado, et. al., 2005; Villenas, & Deyhele, 1999).

Historical Context for Race in Education

In *Cast, Class, and Race*, originally published in 1948 and again in 1970, Oliver Cox presents a framework for understanding race relations in the United States. Here he argues that US race relations were established upon the colonial systems of the early 1600s when Europeans utilized race to justify capitalist systems that kept “labor and other resources freely exploitable” (Darder, Torres, & Gutiérrez, 1997, p. 33). Racial subordination not only created a population of workers who could be manipulated and exploited, it also worked as a divisive tool to keep oppressed groups segregated (Cox, 1970; Darder, et. al., 1997). This capitalist system shaped political, social, and economic realities, which in turn influenced educational tendencies throughout the 1600s (Marsh & Willis, 2007).

While the first schools in the colonies served the exclusive needs of the elite, in the mid 1700s, discussions and debates surrounding who, what, and how children should be “taught” surfaced as considerations for a more broad-based system for education began. Of course, White male landowners acted as the initial architects of education in the colonies who had their own best interests in mind. These interests shaped dominant perceptions toward not only freed slaves but also indigenous peoples and other groups who later immigrated or whose lands were appropriated by the United States (Darder et. al., 1997; Villenas, & Deyhle, 1999).

Additionally, colonization and forceful seizure of land West and South continued to fuel the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy. The resulting racialization (racial categorization and racial discrimination (Miles, 1989)) of Natives and Mexicans as lower class and caste (less than human) was solidified as governmental policy supported and validated the oppressive actions of the White colonists. Two telling examples of this were the enactment of the oppressive Marshall Trilogy laws in the 1820s and 30s for Native Americans (Taylor, 2009) and government's blatant violations of the Treaty of Hidalgo for Indigenous Mexicans beginning in the 1850s (Darder, et al., 1997; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Immigration, which has been a social and economic factor since the colonial days, also continues to influence perceptions of race and class as well as the purpose of public education in the US. While US colonization and discrimination based on race officially ended in the US with the civil rights era, it is argued that educational policy continues to serve as a tool for forceful cultural and linguistic oppression (Bartolomé & Macedo, 1997; Ladson Billings, 1998; Macedo, 2006; Powers, 2007).

It is arguable that the correlation between power and policy has changed very little since the early days of the colonists. For example, by implementing an industrial model for education in the mid-nineteenth century, policymakers felt that they could efficiently utilize schools as mass machines for social control and social reproduction that could support and perpetuate the current economical and social order (Clinchy, 1993; Leland & Kasten, 2002). In our recent history, we as a nation were willing to acknowledge and evaluate the ineffective nature of this model for non-majority populations only when demographic changes threatened to jeopardize this order. Reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), *The Condition of Education* (1992) published by the

National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE), and Kozol's 1985 book titled, *Illiterate America*, brought to light the significant gaps in achievement between the white, middle to upper class children, and children who are culturally and linguistically diverse or come from poverty. These reports not only outlined the exponential growth of these diverse populations in the United States, but also provided resulting impact scenarios for their lack of successful integration on our future economy (Kozol, 1985; National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE), 1983, 1992). As a result, federal mandates such as the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001* were established with fear and trembling to track the progress of these growing non-majority populations and ultimately to ensure our nations' ability to compete in the global market (NCEE, 1985). Tragically, as is often the case with broad-based, top-down policy change, NCLB legislation continues to serve as a significant illustration of the disconnect between US policymakers, the holders of power, and the diverse populations that such legislation was intended to "support" (Duncan-Andrade, 2005).

Notions of equality, individualism and difference-blind institutionalism—hallmarks of mainstream US culture – all impact the day-to-day implementation of educational policy, which often leaves diverse schools, families, and students essentially powerless to address their most significant needs effectively (Kubota, 2004; Larson & Ovando, 2001). More specifically, as concerns over immigration from Mexico have increased, the political climate has shifted in favor of xenophobic policies that label all Latino/as as disadvantaged and in need of assimilation (Macedo, 2006). Anti-immigrant and English-only legislation serve as primary examples of forced hegemony (Suarez-Orozco, 1998). As noted by Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas (1999), in highly diverse states

such as California, “Chicana/o students struggle for equity and social justice in the classroom and at the state and national levels as legislation such as Propositions 187, 209, 227 assaults their identity, national origin, and culture” (p. 32).

The Educational Institution

The educational institutions in the United States for reasons stated above have historically discounted and purposefully silenced the voices and perspectives of diverse populations (Da Silva Iddings, 2005; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). While in theory the US education system is a place for equal opportunity for all children, underlying vestiges of racism based on deficit and hegemonic perspectives continue to shape policy and practice regarding diverse students at every level K-16 (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For the non-White minority student, schools can serve as unfamiliar, suppressive, and often hostile environments that, instead of promoting liberation and growth, promote feelings of marginalization and inferiority (Nieto, 2004; Kubota, 2004; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). As described by Larson and Ovando (2001), “When inequity has been institutionalized, teachers and administrators no longer have to be biased to continue biased practices; we merely have to do our jobs and maintain the normal practices of the systems we have inherited” (p. 3).

Holding to a colorblind philosophy based on notions of assumed equality, the system perpetuates assumptions that the US educational experience is and should be normative and uniform for all students. Larson & Ovando (2001) state, “If we deny difference matters in our society, we may logically conclude that universal policies lead to neutral non-discriminatory and objective practices in schools” (p. 69). This colorblind philosophy in education only superficially eludes to equality; in reality it affirms cultural

and linguistic discrimination and discounts the diverse backgrounds and unique academic needs of non-majority students and families within schools. Villenas and Deyhle (1999) argue that the colorblind phenomenon in schools not only perpetuates white privilege based on middle-class mainstream norms, but also, in many cases, it enforces “genocidal domination” (p. 417).

Many researchers have documented the fact that the overall climate of schools exist as incubators for attitudes and ways of thinking about race and class that in turn affect teaching and learning (Baker, 1986; Banks & Lynch, 1986; Benard, 1991; Carr & Klassen, 1997; Garcia & Van Soest, 1997; Ladson Billings, 1998). Consequently, CLD students often are labeled and tracked (placed in lower-level, remedial coursework) based on perceived ability, resulting in students’ overrepresentation in special education, underrepresentation in gifted education, and placement in remedial classrooms with the lowest level curriculum and the least qualified teachers to effectively support their diverse learning needs (DaSilva Iddings, 2005; Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Oakes, 2005; Palmer, 2003; Villenas & Deyhle, 1997; Walker, et. al., 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Sadly, the labels placed on Latino/as, like many other subjugated groups, have proven to be a self-fulfilling prophecy in many cases (Gay et al., 2003; Herrera, 1995).

Herrera et al. (*in press*) identify the term *pobrecito syndrome*, which can be used to describe the assumption that Latinos are ill equipped and inadequate within the realm of formal schooling. When educators look at students through a deficit lens, comments like, “he did a good job for a Mexican student”, or, “that course would be way too hard for her” are not uncommon (Herrera et al., *in press*).

Another concept that negatively shapes teachers' meaning perspectives towards Latina/os is the notion of a *manaña syndrome* (Herrera et al., *in press*; Herrera, 1995). This is a label, implies that Latina/os are lazy and put off everything "for tomorrow" and is a common conception that many educators develop regarding the academic and social behaviors of Latina/o students who are disengaged in school (Herrera et. al., *in press*; Herrera, 1995). Several studies have disproven this assumption that Latina/os, as an overall group, are disinterested in learning (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Valencia & Black, 2002). Researchers have found that the reasons for Latinos underperformance and disengagement in formal education are much more complex than merely a "lack of interest". Many argue that when teachers expect less of students, they get less (Driscoll et. al., 2005; Monkman, Ronald & Theramene, 2005; Palmer, 2003; Valencia, 1997). It is easy to see how opportunities for academic, social and extracurricular activities are not offered or made known to students based on teachers' assumptions about their abilities. Kimweli & Richards (1999) further press the issue by claiming that inaccurate assumptions are to blame for the lack of mentorship and grooming for college received by ethnic minorities.

Latina/o Identity and Education

The effects of such accumulated disadvantages can be seen in the academic achievement of Latino students into young adulthood. For example, currently only 58 percent of all Latino/a students graduate from high school on time, compared to 78 percent of Whites (Editorial Projects in Education, 2008) and only 20% of them leave high school prepared to enter college (Greene & Winters, 2005). Clearly, this factor directly impacts the demographic make up of college campuses as well as the workforce.

Fry (2003) substantiates this with Latino/as constituting only 7 percent of all students entering college and only 16% of the total Latino/a population age 29 and under having a bachelor's degree (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

Some studies state that these grim statistics are a direct result of the ineffective, and in many cases, damaging school experiences Latino/as have as culturally and linguistically diverse students in the US (Nieto, 2008; Portes, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999). Those who hold the power in American society are the ones who are heard. Time and again, the voices of Latinos/as and their diverse perspectives are non-legitimated in schools regardless of whether those voices speak in English or Spanish (Hobson-Horton & Owens, 2004; Palmer, 2003; Valenzuela 1999). Schools often serve as the great equalizer in that educators hold the power to determine what is valuable in their learning community, i.e., whether the students' culture and language is considered capital (Stanton Salazar, 2001; Monkman et al., 2005). Because of their educative and social experiences in American schools, many Latinos/as lose their *voice*. The *institutional deafness* they face in schools often makes students become passive. They learn not to assume that teachers will help them and do not request help (Da Silva Iddings, 2005; Palmer, 2003). Within the colorblind Western canon of education in the United States, there is little room for the accommodation of these diverse youth.

Many studies identify strong correlations between identity development based on these experiences and Latino/a academic and social integration, goal attainment, and persistence in education (Benard, 1991, 2004; Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Romo, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Von Destinon, 1988). Those Latina/os who are unable or unwilling to give up their culture, language and accent often

struggle against the devalued, deviant, and deficient identities that dominant society projects onto them and their families (Aguilar, MacGillivray, & Walker, 2002; Baker, 1996; Fuligni et al., 2005; Palmer, 2003, Suarez-Orozco, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). They often must deal with limited socioeconomic and sociopolitical opportunities, which impact not only their education but also other factors such as equitable wages, housing, legal and social services, and health care (Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Taylor, 2009).

Those who choose to or are pressured by external circumstances to fully assimilate and let go of their first language upon entering US schools face similar issues to varying degrees. However, oftentimes these students also must cope with feelings of isolation, confusion, and segmentation of self as they work to define who they are in a new land as well as make sense of conflicting messages being transmitted from the dominant US society (Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Elenes, 1997; Macedo, 2006; Palmer, 2003). Regardless of how much or how little Latino/as assimilate, they, to some extent, go through this process of reconciling their identity with the conflicting realities they face as minorities in US schools. Scholars such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and C. Alejandra Elenes (1997) describe this as the *Borderlands* struggle. The concept of the *Borderlands* captures the feelings of fluidity and displacement felt by many Latino/as in this country and can be described as “the discourse of people who live between different worlds” (Elenes, 1997, p. 359). Those students who are able to negotiate this struggle, developing and maintaining a bicultural identity as a result of personal, familial, and/or environmental factors, fare much better than their counterparts (Benard, 1991, 2004; Portes, 2008; Trueba, 2002).

Prior to the 1990s, most persistence research involving students of color took a deficit approach when considering statistics on academic performance and integration, which primarily blames personal pathologies and/or familial dysfunction for students' lack of persistence in education (Ceja, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Rausch, Lovett & Walker, 2003; Valencia, 1998; Valencia & Black, 2002). Over the past two decades, many researchers have challenged the deficit perspective for studying student persistence and have instead begun looking into the protective nature of personal, familial, and institutional factors for fostering resiliency in students of color (Benard, 1991, 2004; Ceja, 2004; Driscoll et al, 2005; Fuligni et al., 2005; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Henderson & Milstein, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Portes, 2008; Valencia & Solórzano, 1998).

In her extensive research with students over the past eighteen years, Benard (1991, 2004) challenges the label *at risk* for students of color or those who come from poverty. Her framework identifies four internal factors and three external factors that foster student resiliency. She describes internal factors as those characteristics that an individual possesses that promote resiliency in the face of struggles. The four personal (internal) factors include: (a) social competence in the form of responsiveness, empathy, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humor, (b) problem solving skills such as abstract thinking, developing alternative solutions, planning, and goal setting, (c) autonomy in the form of independence, a strong sense of self and identity, and a sense of mastery, and (d) a sense of purpose and future, which includes a strong sense of educational achievement, strong goals, persistence, and a positive view of the future. External factors are those

aspects of an individual's environment or family that are conducive to building resiliency.

The three environmental/familial (external) factors that are said to be protective for students are: (a) caring relationships with parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who take on roles as mentors, pathfinders, arbitrators, and role models, (b) high expectations from parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who challenge students while providing both structure and support, and (c) opportunities to participate and contribute within contexts where students can voice their opinions, make choices, be imaginative, work with others collaboratively, and give back to their communities (Benard, 2004). There is a dynamic and synergistic relationship between these two types of factors as one's internal characteristics are directly correlated to the types of environmental factors that he or she is exposed to. Conversely, how one responds to adversity and poor environmental factors is correlated to the types of personal strengths that he or she possesses as an individual (Benard, 2004). This framework provides a strong counter narrative to the dominant discourse of deficiency and cultural incongruence used when studying non-majority populations in education.

It is important to note however that the way in which Benard constructed and defined the term *autonomy* is from a White, European cultural frame. For example individual independence (an element of autonomy according to Benard) among young people is not encouraged or often demonstrated within the traditional Latino cultures (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Latino/as tend to be much more relational as their cultures are built on notions of the *collective*, which runs counter to US, capitalistic and individualistic ideals (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Furthermore, it is arguable that the concept

of individual independence is also a male-dominant characteristic, as research points to the fact that women tend to be more relational in nature (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976).

First established by Jean Baker Miller (1976), relational theory identifies the differences between how women and men develop psychologically. In her research, Miller determined that relationships are central to women's lives in that women's psychological development is dependent much more on connection rather than on separation (Miller, 1976). Relational theory suggests "women develop a sense of self-worth when their actions arise out of connections with others (Calhoun, Messina, Cartier, & Torres, 2010). Miller, Jordan, Kaplan, Stiver, and Surrey expanded relational theory into *relational-cultural theory*. They did this by reshaping, broadening, and deepening the theory to include voices of diversity, which were initially missing from the discourse (West, 2005). Cultural-relational theory acknowledges the value that diverse perspectives add to discussions of identity development within the context of US society.

Similarly, several scholars such as Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco (1995), Trueba (1991), Delgado Bernal (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001), Delgado-Gaitlan (1994), and others also have taken an additive approach when studying Latina/os in particular. Their studies focus primarily on the role that ethnic identity development, Latino/a teaching and learning, and Chicano/a or Latino/a ways of knowing play in fostering resilient characteristics in young Latino/a adults (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Elenes, 1997; Elenes, Gonzalez, Delgado Bernal, Villenas, 2001; Fuligni et al., 2005; Gándara, 1995; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Gloria Valdes (1996) provides a clear example as she articulates the difference between a White mainstream definition of being educated and what it means to

be “*una persona bien educada* (a person with education)” (p. 125). Within Latino/a family educational practices, it is the family’s responsibility to ensure that the children are educated in context, which requires that children develop book knowledge as well as cultural understandings, manners, and moral values (Valdes, 1996; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). This context-based education is often carried out by the family through narratives or *consejos* (Delgado-Gaitlan, 1994; Elenes et al., 2001; Villenas & Dehyle, 1999). *Consejos* (advice or homilies) are the means by which family members “transmit to their children the cultural values and morals that will guide them in good behavior and in making good decisions” (Villenas & Dehyle, 1999, p. 423). Powerful messages about the importance of gaining an education, personal responsibility, respect, and hard work are transmitted to children through these narratives and they are often of vital importance to students’ mental and physical well-being when encountering challenges and oppressive situations (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Palmer, 2003; Villenas & Dehyle, 1999).

While some critics hold to the historic belief that clinging to one’s home culture leaves individuals “victimized, stunted, and segregated” (Chavez, 1992, p. 49), this body of research on the power of family narratives provides a strong argument for nurturing Latino/as’ native language as a protective factor. It also points out the detrimental effects that loss of one’s native language can have on Latino/as’ development. It further establishes the benefits of maintaining a child’s Spanish language as they learn English. Students not only make connections and transfer concepts more efficiently (Cummins, 1996; Collier & Thomas, 1988), they also preserve the vital link between themselves and familial/cultural ways of knowing that foster resilience (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Portes, 2008; Valdes, 1996; Villenas & Dehyle, 1999).

Teacher Education

The Changing Landscape

As research on Latino/a educational and familial practices has become more prevalent, reflective practitioners have made strong efforts to restructure public education and to challenge teacher preparation to improve conditions for CLD students in schools K-16. However, vestiges of racism and privilege remain deeply rooted in not only the formal policies of the educational institution but also in the minds of individuals who enter and exit the system. Many scholars and practitioners such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, Linda Darling Hammond, Mary E. Dilworth, Geneva Gay, Lisa Delpit, and Sonia Nieto have contributed much to the field based on their work regarding teacher quality and its complex relationship to race, culture, and class. Much of what we have learned calls for reform in policy and practice related to issues of diversity, teacher identity development and critical reflection, social justice, and access. Such reforms focus on: (1) increases in the overall cultural competency of all pre-service teachers through extensive multicultural education training (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Grant & Gillette, 2006; The Holmes Group, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), (2) targeted recruitment of students and faculty of color into the teaching profession (Achinstein, et al., 2010; Dee, 2004), and (3) improvement of retention and support programs for Latino/a students in teacher education (Moll, 2009; Reyes, 2007; Rueda et al., 2004).

Despite the research that supports the need for increased exposure to, understanding of, and access for students of color, systemic change is often slow and inefficient as change agents struggle to shift priorities and institutional beliefs about the necessary structure and content of educational programs (Grant & Gillette, 2006; The

Holmes Group, 1995; Nieto, 2004). However, given the exponential growth of diverse populations and the historic inability of schools to effectively education them, as described above, faculty and policymakers at IHEs are feeling pressure to accept responsibility for their part in the *demographic divide* (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Gay & Howard, 2000; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Given that the demographics of teacher preparation programs have changed very little over the past 60 years (almost 90% are white females) and given that the meaning perspectives teachers hold toward non-majority students play such a large role in shaping the quality of schools, one would question why outdated, monocultural models for teacher education continue to proliferate (The Holmes Group, 1995; Mezirow, 1991; National Education Association, 2004; Nieto, 2004, 2005; Walker et al., 2004). Traditional programs often require only superficial coverage of the historical, political and cultural contexts for race in US education and little if any opportunities for students to critically reflect on their own racial identities and biases (Carr & Klassen, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Grant & Gillette, 2006; The Holmes Group, 1995). While these experiences may increase awareness, and in some cases tolerance, they cannot, however, move educators beyond the surface to consider and address the underlying issues of inequity, discrimination, White privilege, and institutional racism that permeate our schools (Chang, 2003; Nieto, 2004; Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Several studies have documented monocultural teachers' negative feelings toward working with diverse student populations in their classrooms (Carr & Klassen, 1997; Delpit, 1995, Grant & Gillette, 2006; Nieto, 2004; Walker et al., 2004). This factor may likely be the result of a lack in field experiences that provide pre-service students

substantial opportunities to work directly with children that come from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Carr & Klassen, 1997; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; The Holmes Group, 1995). As stated by The Holmes Group, “Educators, even gifted ones, aren’t born with the ability to teach what they don’t know” (1995, p. 45). Therefore, it is no surprise that many teachers feel as though they have not been adequately prepared for the range of cultural and linguistic diversity they face upon entering the classroom.

These inadequacies not only are related to a lack of exposure to effective strategies for teaching content to CLD students, but also a lack of understanding in how to connect with and understand CLD students and parents in their schools (Carr & Klassen, 1997; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Walker et al., 2004; Wayman, 2002). As argued in above sections, this cultural disconnect leads to underestimations of students’ abilities and lessens chances that the teachers will be will able to validate and utilize diverse students’ knowledge and skills in meaningful ways (Baker, 1996; Carr & Klassen, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez 1992; Nieto, 2004; Noddings, 1992; Walker, et al., 2004). Albert A. Goodson, a historic musician and writer during the Harlem Renaissance described the ideological and philosophical orientation of African American teachers as advocates for Black children in segregated US schools. He argued that historically, Black teachers owned the responsibility of improving the conditions for African Americans in their communities and that education was seen as an *emancipatory endeavor* for the uplifting of their race. In the 1997 book, *How long? How long: African-American women in the struggle for civil rights*, author Belinda Robnett documents the pioneering contributions of African American women to racial uplift throughout the Jim Crow era. The ideology of education as a tool for uplift carried on into desegregation as

African American educators focused on nurturing students to be independent and self-reliant as well as to take action against all forms of oppression in hopes of true democracy (Crocco & Waite, 2007; Norwood, 1998). This ideology is not unlike that described in Chicana feminist, LatCrit, and critical care pedagogies.

While we know this type of pedagogy has proven powerfully effective in the past with subjugated groups, given the political, social, and historical context of race in public education today, some scholars have questioned whether or not any of the tenets of education for racial uplift can be taught by our current, predominately White teaching force (Norwood, 1998; Wilson Logan, 1998). Scholars such as Lisa Delpit (1995), Grant & Gillette (2006), and Villegas & Lucas (2002) argue that liberating pedagogies can be learned but only when educational programs provide pre-service teachers ongoing opportunities to develop deep understandings of race and racism in education, as well as how inequality is reinforced through historic power relations. It is only through deconstructing personal biases and reconstructing new philosophical perspectives on diverse student learning that educators will be able to critically question their teaching approaches and the overall system of education. For example, in a study conducted by Rochelle Gutierrez (2006), White educators were able to accelerate urban Latina/o students through upper level mathematics curriculum by providing them access within a culture of respect and possibility. Teacher leaders within this study were particularly skilled in differentiated instruction and liberating pedagogy. They viewed students' bilingualism as a vital, integrated resource in the classroom, not a hindrance (Gutierrez, 2006).

The CLD Teacher

In addition to increasing pre-service teachers' cultural competency, another IHE approach to addressing the cultural disconnect between educators and the diverse students they serve is to rethink *who* they recruit into the teaching force. In efforts to increase the diversity of their various programs, colleges have developed a variety of affirmative action and targeted recruitment campaigns to attract CLD students to their campuses (Madkins & Mitchell, 2000). In a comprehensive national study, Gay, Dingus and Jackson (2003) found that students of color benefit from teachers of similar racial/ethnic backgrounds in a variety of relevant ways. This study supports existing research that claims teachers who share cultural and linguistic backgrounds with their students possess culturally contextual understandings and skills that they can utilize in effectively supporting like-cultural students (Darder, 2001; Gordon, 2000; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Valenciana, et al., 2006). Similarly, Gay et al. (2003) state, "Many teachers of color have inclinations to embed culturally responsive nuances into their teaching styles, especially when teaching students from their own ethnic groups" (p. 11). One study found that the mere presence of racial minority teachers generates a "role-model effect that engages student effort, confidence, and enthusiasm" (Villegas & Clewell, 1998, p. 121).

Beady and Hansell (1981) and Ladson-Billings (1994) found that African American teachers tend to have an appreciation for the Black student experience and are more likely to use culturally relevant pedagogies and to hold higher expectations for Black students than White teachers do. Further, Genzuk, Lavadenz, & Krashen (1994)

and Palmer (2003) document the unique cultural connections of Latino educators with their Latino students and the strong role they can play in fostering student success.

Within their study of two Latino/a community-driven, small urban schools in Chicago and Brooklyn, Anthrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus (2006) found that communities of color understand caring “within their sociocultural, gendered, and economic contexts and believe that caring traditionally has existed within differential economic contours for disenfranchised communities...” (p. 412). As a part of this study, the researchers did a comprehensive analysis of caring research in the field of education and settled on *difference theory* within the caring literature as the most compelling, which challenges well-intentioned, *soft* caring that is rooted in pity (Valenzuela, 1999). They support Audrey Thompson’s (1998) claim that there is a colorblind undercurrent within White feminist notions of caring as “an emotion-laden practice characterized by low expectations motivated by taking pity on students social circumstances (Anthrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006, p. 411). They put forth instead a theory of *critical care* that integrates Thompson’s critique of colorblind forms of caring with Latino/a *funds of knowledge* articulated by Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) and Stanton Salazar’s notions of cultural and social capital (2001). Anthrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus argue that within these culturally enriching Latino learning communities, authentically caring relationships develop between teachers and students. It is through *hard* caring, “characterized by supportive instrumental relationships and high academic expectations” that Latino/a students flourish (p. 413). Other researchers have added that by having these relationships with role models *who look like them*, that Latinos/as are able to consider a

variety of *possible selves* or potential roles that they could hold in the future (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Haag, 1999; Villegas & Clewell, 1998).

Despite these considerations, it is important to keep in mind that roughly 90% of all teachers in the nation today are White females of European ancestry (National Education Association, 2004) and CLD students make up over 40% of the US public school population (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). It is also important to acknowledge that while a teacher may be CLD, he or she may not know and understand what it means to be culturally competent. There are many Latino/as in the field of education who buy into the dominant ideology and become the oppressor as well (Chavez, 2002).

While becoming a teacher is arguably one of the most rewarding professions one could pursue, the low status placed on teaching in our society and the accompanying low salaries tend to make education a challenging field to recruit talented minority students into (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Ingersoll, 2003; Valenciana et al., 2006). Due to these and additional factors, the average annual turnover for all teachers within the profession is approximately 30% (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005).

Latino/a Student Access to and Success in Teacher Education

Student Integration and Attrition

For over thirty years researchers have extensively studied a range of factors for the overall low retention of college students. Vincent Tinto, in his early research, provides one of the first frameworks for understanding college persistence and attrition (1975, 1993). He established that student attrition from college was based on the complex relationship between individual student characteristics and the college environment. In

his model, students are more likely to remain in college if there is a fit between the individual's academic ability and personal motivation and the school's social and academic characteristics. Student characteristics such as prior school experiences and family background in conjunction with the student's goal commitment and commitment to the institution influence how the student will perform in college as well as how well the student will integrate into the college. While Tinto does acknowledge that faculty interactions and the social climate influence the student's positive integration, the responsibility of successfully adjusting to and negotiating through these elements of campus life is placed primarily on the student.

Because Tinto's original study was done with primarily traditional aged, majority residential students, specific attention to extraneous factors such as work and family responsibilities or financial and cultural struggles was not given (Stieha, 2010). However, seminal studies by scholars such as Astin, Bean, Bergerson, Guiffrida, Pascarella & Terenzini, Metzner, Von Destinon, and others have added to the research base by establishing a solid foundation for understanding the various academic, social, institutional, and financial factors that influence the persistence of various populations in higher education. Findings suggest that lack of knowledge of how to get into college, delayed entry into college, part-time enrollment, working full-time, having a GED or alternative diploma, familial and personal financial struggles, having children, and being a single parent are key factors that affect one's social and academic integration to a campus and often limit success (Astin, 1975, 1993; Tinto, 1975, 1987/1993; Bean, 1980, 1982; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bergerson, 2007; Guiffrida, 2005, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, 2005; Von Destinon 1988, 1990).

College Access and Success

Those most likely to possess characteristics that limit success are non-traditional students, students who come from poverty, and those who are the first person to go to college in their family (Harvey, 2003). However, there are additional studies that focus more specifically on the confounding factors that challenge CLD college students in particular (Genzuk, 1997; Genzuk & Baca, 1998; Genzuk & French, 2002; Green, Marti, & McClenney, 2008; Hurtado, 1997, 2008; Kimweli & Richards, 1999; Maldonado et al., 2005; Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003; Tinto, 1993; Von Destinon, 1988). These studies help us understand the dynamics at play when considering the low number of Latino students, in particular, entering and persisting in college.

Unfortunately, there are added layers of discrimination and elitism that are unique to institutions of higher education, which make equal access a lofty goal. Johnston & Viadero (2000) claim that the erosion of Affirmative Action is compounding the discrepancy in the representation of Hispanic populations on college campuses and the gap in both student and faculty achievement. The literature suggests that a significant issue is the lack of proper advisement in the admissions and enrollment processes (Gore & Metz, 2008). This problem hits the Latino/a ELL population particularly hard as many struggle with not only the complexity of the tasks themselves (as most students do) but also with the challenge of completing the task in their second language with little or no native language support (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Katz, Joiner, & Kwon, 2002; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Schwartz, 2000). Both the spoken and unspoken language of the US culture proves difficult for Latinas/os trying to negotiate academia. Unfamiliarity with college policies and procedures hinders their access to the knowledge

and experience needed to take full advantage of educational, social, and professional opportunities in college (Katz et al., 2002; Monkman et al., 2005; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Schwartz, 2000).

For example, the process of seeking financial aid and scholarships is confusing and difficult for those native to the United States let alone for those learning the language or new to the college system in this nation. This serves as a huge deterrent to Latino/as applying for and receiving financial support (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Other factors such as the cumbersome processes involved in transferring from a community college and the poor articulation of coursework into four-year programs upon entry are substantial barriers. These factors are of particular concern for Latino students as 66% of Latino/a graduates begin at the two-year college level compared to 45% of their White peers (Harvey, 2002).

Another factor impacting Latino/as' success in institutions of higher education is the failure of colleges to engage and socially integrate particular sectors of the student body in meaningful ways (Schwarz, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). White students and Latino/a students have very different experiences on US campuses and as seen throughout the educational system K-16 – the racial climate of the educational environment is a strong predictor of success (Suarez-Orozco, 1991; Giegerich, 2004). Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso (2000) discuss how *micro-aggressions*, verbal and non-verbal, racially motivated comments can affect academic performance and achievement in students of color in college. Additionally, studies by Madkins & Mitchell (2000), Locks et al. (2008), Maldonado et al., (2005), and Villegas & Lucas (2002) found that a negative campus climate, cultural isolation, and lack of strong social networks of support

served as even greater hindrances for Latino students in many cases than did administrative or academic challenges. This is a highly salient point given the limited number of students of color in most education programs.

Campus Diversity

Gay, Dingus, & Jackson (2003), along with other researchers have found that, much like at the K-12 level, meaningful relationships tend to be forged between people of similar cultural backgrounds at the college level as well; therefore, it is valuable for students of color to *see themselves* in the faculty and student body (AACTE Report, 2004; Baneri, 2003; Benard, 1997). Tragically, as of 1992, Latinos comprised about 3% of full-time instructional faculty and staff in higher education (Gay et al., 2003). In a 1995 report by The Holmes Group, the authors advocate for colleges of education to target their recruitment on CLD faculty in order to change the monocultural landscape of education programs. Having a critical mass of multicultural faculty and staff who are knowledgeable in issues of diversity and access and are able to share their understandings and experiences with other faculty and the students they teach can make a significant impact in effectively shifting the climate of a college or program (The Holmes Group, 1995, Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005).

In an exhaustive evaluation of the literature, Cole (2007) found that attending a diverse campus that allowed for opportunities to interact with CLD students and to engage in discussions about race with someone from another racial group provided multiple benefits to *all* students. He identified over eight distinct ways in which these experiences benefit students' overall intellectual and emotional development as well as their comfort with and openness to diverse perspectives. Increases in critical thinking,

learning outcomes, academic development and positive self-concept are of just a few of the positive effects of campus diversity found in the literature (Antonio, 2001; Astin, 1993; Chang, 2003; Cole, Bennett, & Thompson, 2003; Gurin et al., 2002; Milem et al., 2005).

To make strides toward creating a diverse community on community college and university campuses, researchers argue that the overall intent and structure of diversity initiatives and more specifically retention programs need serious reconceptualizing (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006; Elenes, Gonzalez, Delgado Bernal, & Villenas, 2001; The Holmes Group, 1995). Elenes et al. (2001) state that in order for transformative change to occur, IHEs must take a comprehensive and holistic approach when enacting new diversity related programs and policies. Many community colleges in rural regions of the state have been identified as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). However, with this distinction comes a responsibility to *serve* the increasing number of Hispanic students enrolling—something that many colleges are just learning how to do. One element that is critical regardless of the size and location of the IHE is institutional commitment. Commitment to diversification at all levels is critical and the responsibility of implementing the changes should not rest solely on the shoulders of the faculty of color.

This process often requires ongoing professional development for faculty and staff to promote the enhancement of cultural competencies and research based understandings of diverse student experience in higher education. These understandings inform policy analysis and program reform, which are also critical components in transforming programs to promote diversity. Faculty and administrators must look

critically at current policies and requirements of their college with a different lens to consider the ways in which they are limiting access for students based not on intellectual potential or ability but based on differences in language and culture.

Increasing Access in Teacher Education

Studies such as those done by Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall (2006) and Gitomer, Latham, & Ziomek (1999) are helpful in illuminating specific barriers that CLD students face in gaining access to and completion of their teacher licensure. Overall, their findings echo the works of Brown (2000), Khisty (1997), Khisty & Viego (1999), and Mouschkovich (2002), which identify mathematics and academic language as the primary gatekeepers for English learners' success in higher education; but, they also establish that the stringent requirements and standardized tests serve as huge stumbling blocks for CLD students pursuing a teaching degree. For example, hard line policies that limit acceptance into educational programs based solely on timed exam scores such as the PRAXIS I discount the intellectual capacity of CLD students who do not come from the cultural or linguistic background for which the exams are tailored (Bennett et al., 2006). Traditional programs rarely take into account a CLD student's quality grades in key content courses such as algebra, statistics, speech, and English composition when determining their mastery of the basis skills thought to be assessed by the PRAXIS I. Some progressive institutions have implemented multiple pathways for entry into their education programs. They consider timed, formal PRAXIS I scores as just one of several indicators of a CLD student's readiness to begin professional coursework (Holmes & Morales, 2007).

In addition to the difficulties faced in gaining entry to education programs, the expense of testing is significant. Because education is an applied major, the amount of “red tape” in gaining a formal licensing is also an expensive and arduous task. The process demands that students be well informed and astute in navigating the system in order to keep up with the deadlines and testing requirements for gaining state licensure upon graduation. Unfortunately, most programs have much to learn about how effectively to support CLD students and their families in navigating this complex process. Some argue that this factor for retention must be addressed if students are to be successful (Bennett et al., 2006; Herrera et al., *in press*). Additionally, bilingual academic tutoring, counseling support structures, and CLD student-led organizations that are designed in culturally relevant ways provide a vital service to students struggling with difficult content, language barriers, and/or personal challenges such as homesickness, isolation, or cultural incongruence (Bennett et al., 2006; Herrera et al., *in press*; Maldonado et al., 2005).

Overall, as supported by the literature in above sections, IHEs and more specifically colleges of education have a great deal to learn about how to connect with, support, and integrate Latino/a students and communities into the fabric of the institution. While more the exception than the rule, there are some institutions and educational programs that have been able to effectively rethink how they should prepare, recruit and retain pre-service teachers to support the growing number of diverse students in our schools (Genzruk, 1997; Genzruk & Baca, 1998; Genzruk & French, 2002; Herrera et al., *in press*; The Holmes Group, 1999; Moll, 2009; Reyes, 2007; Rueda et al., 2004).

At the institutional level, these education colleges and programs tend to have strong connections to local communities and collaborative partnerships with local schools. Such partnerships provide rich opportunities for pre-service students and education faculty to work with CLD children during field experiences as well as opportunities to really understand and support community learning through summer and after school programs and family math & science nights (Shroyer, Ramey-Gassert, Hancock, Moore, & Walker, 1995). Some dedicated institutions also have established equity councils at the university and college level to provide cultural advisement as well as faculty exchanges with historically-black and Hispanic serving institutions (The Holmes Group, 1995).

At the program level, there are several effective examples provided in the literature. For example, the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at the University of El Paso recruits first-generation, “situationally marginalized” Latino/as into community cohorts on their campus (Reyes, 2006). CAMP provides the students with multiple forms of human resources such as counselors, administrators, mentors, instructors and peers that help them navigate the process of entering and succeeding in college (Reyes, 2007). These networks of people share their academic knowledge and experiential wisdom with CAMP students to foster the development of resilient characteristics and positive student identities in college. While CAMP focuses resources primarily toward first year students, the program monitors students’ progress throughout their college experience and the effects of relationships built carry the students well beyond their freshman year.

Maldonado et al. (2005) conducted a study at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin at Madison that considered the positive effects of college based, student-initiated, retention projects (SIRPs) on CLD student retention,

integration, and self-empowerment. These projects primarily were aimed at “transforming campus structures, policies, and practices” and designed to promote student retention and academic success (p. 606). The researchers used cultural and social capital (methods and opportunities students’ from various social and cultural backgrounds possess and utilize to access power and privilege (Stanton- Salazar, 2001)) as the conceptual framework for understanding the ways in which these programs validated and redefined CLD student leadership and agency on their campuses. This work approached Tinto’s (1993) notions of social integration from a different perspective, arguing that student-constructed and student-led social networks such as SIRPs prove much more powerful than institutionally defined programs in developing the kinds of connections, relationships and understandings needed for CLD student groups to be successful in college.

The *African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American Student Programs* (AHANA) at Boston College also has proven successful by providing entering diverse students with a comprehensive six-week, *Options Through Education* (OTE), transitional summer program just prior to their freshman year. The OTE program extends on into the students’ first year of coursework and is established on elements such as strong institutional commitment, comprehensive services, dedicated staff, faculty support, ongoing data collection and analysis, and significant monitoring and mentorship (Brown, 2000). Researchers also have documented the effectiveness of similar programs that work with low-income Mexican American non-traditional students at the community college level (Avalos & Pavel, 1993; Nora, 1990). Two effective programs, The *Puente* and *Enlace* studied by Nora (1990), provide financial assistance as well as academic support

to increase community college students' odds of persistence and successful transferral to a four-year college.

More comprehensive programs such as the *Bilingual Education Students Interacting to Obtain Success* (BESITOS) Program at Kansas State University provide similar networking, advising, and social and academic support for elementary and secondary education students throughout their entire course of study (Herrera & Morales, 2005; Herrera et al., *in press*). This program, as many retention initiatives, is funded primarily by federal Title III grants, which enables BESITOS to provide not only academic and human resources for students but also financial advisement and scholarships. The program utilizes unique, culturally responsive recruitment and retention methods that have proven successful with Latino/a students and families. For example, the use of *bilingual home visits* to meet with the parents of potential BESITOS students prior to joining the program builds strong trust relationships and the use of *targeted language and culture seminars* throughout the students' degree program provides students with the opportunities to accelerate their academic language skills as well as learn about their cultural history and identity in relation to the American education system (Herrera & Morales, 2005; Herrera et al., *in press*). These seminars develop student understandings of their cultural identity and agency as educated Latino/as. It has proven to be a distinctive and highly effective model (with a 90% retention rate) but due to the significant human and financial resources needed to maintain it, such a program would be difficult for institutions to replicate or sustain without external funding.

To summarize, an important and consistent theme seen across a majority of promising programs is the students' participation in situated, *social-psychological*

contexts (social contexts in which group dynamics, interactions and personal exchanges are familiar) and that are culturally relevant and tailored to address their specific needs as CLD learners (Myers, 1993; Reyes, 2007). The *structural elements* or activities needed for an effective program, include: (1) holistic evaluations of students (based on more than just GPA and test scores) for determining their admission into the program(s) (Herrera et al., *in press*), (2) student commitment to diversity and a service ethic as important selection criteria, (3) the development of study cohort groups, which serve as academic and social support networks for students as they progress through their programs (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), (4) comprehensive financial and academic advising support (August & Hakuta, 1997), (5) bilingual tutoring for key gate keeping courses and licensure exams (Herrera et al., *in press*; The Holmes Group, 1995), (6) the purposeful use of CLD faculty mentorship (August & Hakuta, 1997; Katz et. al., 2002), (7) the establishment of work study opportunities for CLD students within the college (Tinto, 1975; Herrera et. al., *in press*), (8) ongoing monitoring and diagnosis of student progress (Katz et. al., 2002; Maldonado, et. al., 2005), (9) structured opportunities to dialog in their native and second language about personal and academic challenges faced as CLD students on campus (Maldonado, et. al., 2005; Reyes, 2007), (10) inclusion of students' families in program events and activities (Chopra et. al., 2004; Herrera & Morales, 2005), (11) flexible scheduling of course offerings, (Shroyer, et al, 2009) and finally (12) safe spaces within the college where CLD students can meet and organize community and campus service efforts or activities (August and Hakuta, 1997; Herrera, et. al., *in press*).

Although most colleges and programs espouse a commitment to diversity and a desire to increase the number of CLD students on their campuses, traditional programs often are unwilling to (or unaware of the need to) transform their policies and procedures or to invest in their minority students to the degree needed to successfully retain them. Latino/a college students are clearly a complex, heterogeneous group that does not fit the traditional mold, however, there is much that IHEs could be doing to target and retain various subgroups within this population. Genzuck (1997) claims that those institutions willing to provide integrated and culturally responsive programs for Latino/a students see significant gains in their retention. Genzuck & French (2002) and Genzuck and Baca (1998) further argue that colleges of education are missing opportunities to increase significantly their diverse and bilingual student populations by overlooking the Latino/a non-traditional pool. They state that Latino/a paraeducators, in particular, as a group have gone largely unnoticed as an untapped resource for the teaching field.

The above research suggests that it is the language, culture, gender, parental role(s), and life experiences of this particular subgroup of Latino/as that make them both one of the most difficult and the most effective populations to retain in teacher education today.

The Non-traditional Latina

The existing literature and documented narratives of Latino/as in this country depict the various ways in which the Latino/a family and culture provides both *regalos y cargas* (gifts and burdens) to their children (Anzaldúa, 1987; Herrera et al., *in press*). Economic struggles, experiences with racism, negative experiences in school, gender role expectations, and religious pressures have been identified as factors that can hinder

Latinas' achievement and life trajectories. At the same time, strong family and community networks, a rich cultural heritage, powerful experiences as mothers, nurturers, and teachers in the home, and the development of endurance through opposition (resistance) also influence Latina achievement in positive ways.

Potential Cargas

Large families still are valued by Latinos/as in general—as exemplified in the Mexican American population where 60% of all households have five or more people in the home (Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004). While these large family units serve as a great source of pride and support for the members, they can transfer certain beliefs and behaviors that challenge Latinas in achieving their academic goals along traditional pathways and timeframes (Driscoll et. al, 2005; Ginorio & Huston, 2001).

Strong ties to the Roman Catholic faith are also quite common among the Latino/a population (De la Garza et. al., 1992; Diviney, 2004; Levitt, 2002). Close to two-thirds of all Latinos identified themselves as Catholic in comparison to 21% of White European Americans (Levitt, 2002). For many Latino/as, the Catholic Church serves as a site of social citizenship and transnational membership where Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and others join together under similar faith and traditions (Levitt, 2002). For these reasons, religion can play a powerful role in shaping not only the beliefs but also the actions of Latino/as – both negatively and positively (Levitt, 2002). In a study by Shroyer et al. (2009), Latina students recognized their faith in God as one of the key factors that motivated them to persist toward their educational goals. “Religiosity” faith, or spirituality also has been identified as a contributor to one’s sense of purpose (an

internal factor) and has been found to “correlate with health-risk behavior reduction” by Benard within her resiliency framework mentioned previously (2004, p. 33).

However, in some instances, as in traditional Roman Catholic communities, Latino/as can hold specific beliefs against the use of birth control for females yet all the while considering discussions about sex and sexuality culturally and religiously unacceptable (Ceja, 2001; Haag, 1999; Schwartz, 2001). This is believed to be at least one factor in Latinas having the highest fertility rate of all minorities (Ginorio & Houston 2001; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004). Given the findings listed above, it easy to see how the issue of teen pregnancy serves as a major stumbling block for Latinas in pursuit of a college degree after high school. Currently “52% of Latina teens get pregnant at least once before age 20—nearly twice the national average” (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (NCPTUP), 2008, p. 1). While birth rates have gone down for all other racial/ethnic groups, the Latina birth rate has remained largely the same (NCPTUP, 2008).

Another concept seen within the Latino/a culture that can serve as a *carga* and a *regalo* for students is the idea that family advancement is more important than individual advancement (Ceja, 2001; Driscoll et al, 2005; Welch, 1992). It is typical for families to stay together and work together as an extended unit, especially those that are made up of first- and second-generation immigrants (Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Simoniello, 1981). These ideals are built not only on long histories of difficult conditions for their families in previous countries of origin, but also on the struggles they face as immigrants, minorities, and migrant workers in this country (Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Simoniello, 1981). This cultural norm helps us understand the belief, as seen within some

Latino families, that individual improvement that distances one from family is unfavorable (Ceja, 2004; Simoniello, 1981). This concept most significantly impacts Latinas – both in their relationship to their parents as single women and in their relationship to their spouses once married.

The literature identifies three additional aspects of this Latina reality that challenge their upward mobility as individuals. Firstly, females at times are expected to assume support roles in helping raise siblings, cousins, nieces, and nephews or to do domestic labor that contributes to the family; these expectations differ dramatically for women and men (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Palmer, 2003; Pidcock, 2001; Simoniello, 1981; Smith, 2002; Weiler, 2000). These gender role expectations can result in what Simoniello describes as, *double jeopardy* for Latinas attempting to pursue an education. She describes it as “sexism in the context of racism,” (Simoniello, 1981, p. 135). The young women also are more likely than men to serve as language brokers within the home, translating and negotiating on behalf of their parents, which can take time away from school and studying (Smith, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). However, these roles benefit Latinas in some ways as they develop “soft skills” in communication and gain knowledge of how social and institutional systems work (Smith, 2002).

Secondly, marriage and motherhood are held in the highest esteem in Latino cultures. This ideal proves to be quite a positive *regalo* (gift) for Latina/os in general but for Latinas graduating from high school, childbearing is considered their right of passage to becoming a woman and can conflict with their desires to go to college (Brewster, 2005). The results of this cultural belief can be seen more frequently in those neighborhoods where girls have few examples of women choosing to postpone

motherhood for education (Brewster, 1994; Ceja, 2001; Palmer, 2003; Simoniello, 1981).

Thirdly, for those Latinas who do enroll in college, they often must negotiate the conflicts that arise between these traditional roles and their role as a student within the US college system (Palmer, 2003; Johnston & Viadero, 2000). This conflict creates what Simoniello (1981) calls a *duality of roles*. This is an expectation that Latinas will excel in both school and family roles. This pressure is placed upon them by both their family members, who sacrificed to let them go to college, and by the institution that considers their admittance to college as an undeserved favor (Simoniello, 1981). Caught between the role of a family member and the role of a student within a larger system, Latinas can experience anxiety, criticism, and isolation on both sides (Palmer, 2003). These feelings are amplified and compounded in situations as described in previous sections, where the environment of the IHE is unwelcoming and lacks diversity (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Locks et al., 2008; Madkins & Mitchell, 2000; Maldonado et al., 2005; Solórzano, et al., 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). While none of these trends, characteristics, beliefs, or norms can be assumed for all Latino families or for every Latina student, they do shed light on the potential challenges that Latinas often must reconcile in order to balance the pressures and expectations of outside forces and their personal desire to attend college.

It is evident from the research that many Latinas are not able to overcome the myriad of academic, societal, and cultural challenges as young adults. Therefore, either by choice or by circumstance, many delay their college education resulting in only 4% of all Latino/a college students completing their bachelor's degrees through the "traditional path (enroll within one year of high school graduation and attain a postsecondary credential within the 'scheduled' time frame)" (Excelencia in Education [EIE] Fact Sheet,

2007; Santiago, 2008). However, they can be seen within the growing numbers of non-traditional students returning to school and enrolling in community colleges and universities across the country. As of 2003-2004, 61% of all community college students and 35% of university students were identified as non-traditional (based on age, marital status, or parenthood) and 14.4% were of Latino/a or Hispanic heritage compared to 9.8% at four-year institutions (NCES, 2006). Alternative programs such as online programs, distance-based programs, and 2+2 programs (2 years at a community college and 2 years at a university) are popular among this population, as they tend to be more flexible and easier to work in to busy schedules.

While non-traditional students in general are likely to have much more complex work and family schedules to coordinate as a result of having children, spouses, and full-time jobs, many studies have found them to be committed to class attendance and participation even though many are unable to attend college full-time (Genzuk & Baca, 1998, Genzuk & French, 2002; Shroyer et al., 2009). It can be argued that the life struggles they have experienced as young parents with only a high school diploma or GED is what motivates them to return to school.

In a study by Shroyer et al. (2009), non-traditional Latina college students stated that the “juggling act” they performed daily to maintain their multiple roles as parents, spouses, daughters, employees, and students was the most difficult challenge to remaining in college. However, they also stated that it was their responsibilities to their families and children that drove them to endure hardships in pursuit of a better life and a better future (Shroyer et al., 2009).

Not surprisingly, non-traditional Latina college students in this study also related that financial struggles to pay their tuition, daycare, mortgage, and household expenses threatened their persistence and at the same time reinforced their need to complete their

degree (Shroyer et al., 2009). These women's stories are not uncommon and *poverty* often serves as a significant influencer in the lives of Latinas (Gorski, 2008; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Taylor, 2009). Montemayor & Mendoza (2004) give some clarity in their research to the complex implications that poverty has on Latino/a student success. As alluded to in previous sections, differential compensation for the same work, especially for Latina immigrant women, and discrimination regarding job placement and searches are just a few of these realities (Census Bureau Report, 2003; Montemayor & Mendoza, 2004; Simoniello, 1981).

These personal, cultural, and societal factors, coupled with common negative school experiences K-16, paint a bleak picture for Latinas overall. However, despite all of these potential threats to their successful completion of an education degree, Hispanic (Latino/a) students report being “more engaged” in college than their White peers (CCSSE, 2005). Based on the literature within this chapter, there exists a wealth of experiences that not only foster resilient characteristics in them personally but also equip them with the unique knowledge and skills to be effective teachers for the growing number of CLD students in our nation's schools. It is through their personal struggles to dismantle within-group and outside-group gender role stereotypes, as well as their resistance to racism, classism, discrimination, and oppression that their identities as liberating educators are forged.

Potential Regalos

The benefits of Latino/a teachers' cultural and linguistic backgrounds within the classroom are evident based on the provided literature, as their heritage can prove beneficial in connecting to students of similar heritage. Furthermore, their experiences as

struggling CLD students in school, as wives and daughters who show leadership within the home, as nurturers to their children and extended family, as connected advocates who care about the well being of Latino/as in their communities, as feminists who challenge dominant views about women's place in society, and as cultural brokers for the increasing number of CLD children they work with in schools, *all* make Latina paraeducators assets in schools for addressing the staggering disparities in academic achievement for Latino/as.

It is argued that due to Latina non-traditional students' common struggles with language, acculturation, socialization, and education – they can relate to their Latino/a students like no one else can (Monzó & Rueda, 2001; Rueda et al., 2004). They are able to empathize with and relate to students as they fight through issues such as challenging math coursework, state assessments, and standardized entrance exams. Because they themselves have had to work to overcome these challenges, they are able to share with students key resources and strategies (in their native language) needed in order to be successful (Rueda et al., 1999; Rueda et al., 2004).

Furthermore, these bilingual/bicultural Latinas often live and exist within the communities of their students and often times have many years of experience within the local school system (Rueda et al., 2004). As a result, they possess valuable knowledge of the community culture(s) as well as the culture of the school and can serve as a vital resource in bridging the gap between these different worlds—not only for the districts who desire to reach out to Latino/a parents but also to the parents who desire to better support their children's education (Rueda et al., 2004; Valenciana et al., 2006). Because they and their families live and work within the diverse communities that feed into the

schools, they are familiar with the daily routines, cultural practices, and lived realities of their students. Due to their parallel struggles as subordinated members of society, they are “better prepared to provide instruction that builds on their [students’] resources and engages them” (Rueda et al., 2004, p. 55).

Rueda et al. (2004) use the term *sociocultural scaffolding* to describe the type of culturally responsive teaching exhibited by Latina/o teachers and paraeducators when using their cultural and community knowledge to build conceptual understandings for their Latino/a students. This scaffolding serves as a significant mechanism for moving students through the *zone of proximal development* as described by Lev Vygotsky (1994), a concept further developed by Barbara Rogoff (1995) and Linda Goldstein (1999). In a study by Palmer (2003), Latino/a students describe this care and personal connection between school staff and students as *confianza*, which is established through extreme trust, high expectations, vulnerability, and an authentic ethos of care when building relationships. Teachers who lack an understanding of a student’s culture, language, or community are much less likely to be able to or see the value in establishing these close relationships even though they are often vital to CLD student success (Monzó & Rueda, 2001).

Valenciana, Morin, & Morales (2005) assert that in order to advance CLD student achievement, teachers must promote political awareness and bicultural identity development by validating students’ cultural and linguistic identities and emphasizing social praxis, all while explicitly teaching methods for participating in the dominant culture. Furthermore, they challenge colleges of education by stating “diversifying the

teaching force and expanding the field of possibilities and dreams for minority students is but one step towards critiquing and resisting oppressive school structures” (p. 97).

Summary

The breadth and depth of literature supporting alternative methods for the education, preparation, recruitment, retention, and mentorship of CLD students through the educational pipeline is growing daily. Studies showcasing the positive impacts of in-service and pre-service teachers of color on educational institutions K-16 provide strong evidence for colleges of education to rethink completely policy and practice. Numerous and notable scholars in the field have established the power of an *education as racial uplift* ideology and that such culturally contextual ideologies can flourish when CLD teachers, who know and understand their roles as liberating educators, are able to rethink and redefine the educational climate and structure of their schools.

Moreover, the body of literature discussed in this chapter establishes that innovative and comprehensive teacher education programs can develop similar understandings and competencies among traditional, majority students; but in order to do so these programs must look and act markedly different than they have in the past. Colleges can no longer settle for band-aid approaches to inclusion and multicultural education within their programs and expect transformations in teacher perceptions to occur. Given the complexity of diversity in US educational history, it is clear that a single three-credit course on teaching CLD students is not enough. Critical pedagogy and a social justice philosophy must be the foundation for all academic learning and professional activity within the programs – not merely alluded to in a mission statement. In order to develop liberating educators, colleges must institutionalize strong and

integrated programs that allow *all* students to develop deep understandings of race, culture, gender, and class in the context of education as well as self-awareness of their own identities while learning the content and methodology within their given discipline.

Furthermore, the literature indicates that this critical consciousness and commitment to diversity should guide the hiring and professional development of faculty within the college as well – allowing for different perspectives to be shared on current racial, economic, and political issues in education. Studies suggest colleges who commit to re-envisioning teacher education by ensuring that cultural and linguistic diversity is prominent in both the faculty and study body will see the benefits at every level (Gurin et al., 2002; Milem et al., 2005). Because our nation's schools are drastically changing, our teaching force and the way we prepare them must change drastically as well. By recruiting and retaining a new kind of student, the Latina paraeducator, colleges of education can increase greatly the number of bilingual and bicultural students in their programs, who if prepared properly, will be able to impact significantly the marginalization and miseducation of Latino/as students in our nation's schools.

CHAPTER 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the internal characteristics and external factors that foster Latina, English language learner (ELL), non-traditional students' resiliency, and ultimately, their persistence in teacher education. Latina, ELL, non-traditional students have unique cultural, social, political, and educational experiences that can both hinder and promote their desire and ability to persist in higher education. These experiences inform and shape their individual and collective identities as women of color and guide their personal and professional career paths. To understand how Latina, pre-service teachers interpret, define, and reconcile the various messages they receive from their family, culture, community, and schools, this study drew from the personal narratives and life histories of eleven Latina women on their journey to becoming bilingual educators. Through qualitative methods of inquiry, the researcher sought to uncover the most salient factors that foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resilience focusing particularly on how these factors have influenced participants' persistence in pursuing teaching as a profession.

Research Design

In this study, the researcher utilized a qualitative, case study approach. To better understand the complex and varied range of human experiences studied in the social sciences and in applied fields such as education, qualitative research methods have become increasingly more important (Marshall & Rossman, 1994). A qualitative design that is limited to a set of cases allows for the rich interpretation of participant perceptions

shared through individual and collective stories (Creswell, 2007). According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), it is through these stories that “the important events and experiences in a person’s life are told in ways that capture the person’s own feelings, views, and perspective” (p. 12). Therefore, a qualitative, case study is the most fitting approach for this study.

As defined by Creswell, a case study is “an exploration of a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (1998, p. 61). These sources can include but are not limited to individual and group interviews, observations, and written artifacts. These data can be drawn from a bounded system or case that is situated with a defined physical, social, and historical context and may involve a range of features such as individual persons, distinct events, or specific activities (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, Feagin, Orum, and Sjoburg (1991) assert that case studies characteristically endeavor to understand interrelated cultural systems of action from a holistic perspective. The use of a case study approach implies the researcher’s concern with understanding the dynamics within these systems of action as participants engage in activities that are shaped by their individual and collective identities and the social, political, and historical contexts in which they live. Bounded by geographic location, time, and context, the case in the study includes Latina, ELL, non-traditional students within a teacher education offered through Kansas State University. As illustrated in the previous chapter, this specific type of student, due to her unique background, language, geographic location, and school and professional experiences, often develops distinct skills for successfully coping with and navigating through the politically charged and racialized context of the American K-16 education system.

Purpose of the Study

Therefore, the researcher chose to focus the case initially on the unique and complex interactions among *internal student characteristics* such as one's social competence, ability to problem solve, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and the *external factors* such as caring relationships, high expectations held by others, and opportunities for participation and contribution (Benard, 2004). Then, the researcher sought to explore how these various elements motivated Latina, non-traditional students to persist in college and influenced them to consider teaching despite the struggles and often negative experiences they endured as K-12 students.

Research Questions

The researcher chose a qualitative paradigm as it allows for depth in inquiry and provides rich data for thick descriptions and rich interpretations of phenomena that would otherwise be difficult to explore using quantitative methods. As stated, within this case study the researcher sought to answer the following research questions: *What internal characteristics and external factors foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resiliency in reaching and remaining in college? And, in what ways do participants' internal characteristics and factors from their external environment influence participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education?*

Theoretical Framework of the Study

To explore fully the influential experiences and critical incidents that have defined the varied paths of the Latina, ELL, non-traditional students to becoming teachers, the study is framed within the contexts of resiliency theory, Critical Theory,

CRT and LatCrit. The researcher utilized resiliency theory as a tool at the micro level to understand the participants and their direct environment. She then used Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit literature as a tool at the macro level to understand the systems within which the participants exist and act. Within this context the researcher was able to understand and interpret the wide range of participant responses, which often included the social and psychological effects of being members of the non-majority population.

Resiliency theory has been applied to groups in a variety of contexts over the past 20 years (Benard, 1991, 2004; Ceja, 2004; Fuligni, et. al., 2005; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Henderson & Milstein, 2002). However, the field of LatCrit is somewhat new and its potential as a theoretical perspective is just now being realized. LatCrit to this point occupies a small niche within the larger field of CRT; both of which have roots in Critical Theory.

While Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit all address unique aspects of the historical, political, societal, and educational experiences of oppressed and marginalized populations in the United States, they rest upon a similar philosophical paradigm- which actively challenges established systems and institutions as well as “Americanized” notions of democracy, ethics, meritocracy, and equality. Critical Theory emphasizes the generative power of language and *voice* as a social force. This force can define/redefine *reality* and accepted *truth*, and can be used to both liberate and to oppress (Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Wink, 2005). Critical Race Theory (with its origins in formal law), addresses the legal and political constructs that have defined race and class historically in this country and works to deconstruct the systems of racism, classism, and sexism that impact the everyday experiences of people of color (Bell, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic,

2001). In the realm of education, theorists utilize CRT to examine how these systems of oppression shape policy and practice within schools and ultimately limit access and success for women and children of color in schools. Latino Critical Race Theory, focuses more specifically on the complex issues that result from racism that targets the culture, language, and immigrant status of Latino/as in this country (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Furthermore, LatCrit provides the theoretical basis for considering how these discriminatory factors impact the social, psychological, and educational development of CLD individuals within an educational system (K-16 and beyond) that is based on dominant Eurocentric ideologies.

While the areas of Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit provide the language and context to discuss and deconstruct the ugly truth and grim realities faced by subjugated populations in our society, they also provide a counter narrative to the dominant “deficit” discourse used to describe people of color. This counter narrative elucidates and validates the lived experiences and rich assets of oppressed peoples. Resiliency theory also is based on a similar construct that confronts dominant, Eurocentric assumptions and deficit perspectives held toward non-majority populations. It does this by providing a solid framework for identifying positive personal, familial, and institutional factors that foster resiliency in individuals despite the odds against them (Benard, 1991, 2004; Ceja, 2004; Fuligni et al., 2005; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Henderson & Milstein, 2002).

By joining resiliency theory, Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit, the researcher was able to establish a sound argument for reconceptualizing CLD students’ (namely Latinoa/s) capacity and agency to transform current systems that marginalize and devalue the cultural and social capital they bring to the educational endeavor (Maldonado et al.,

2005; Villenas & Deyhele, 1999). Therefore, the researcher utilized this theoretical basis as an integrated lens for considering the influential factors for resiliency in ELL, Latina, non-traditional students as well as how these factors impacted students' desire to pursue teaching as a profession.

Contextual Information for the Study

A detailed description of the case and its setting is advocated by Creswell (2007). Therefore, given that this case study is bound by geographic location, time, and a unique context, it is important to define in detail the physical, political, and social setting in which it is situated. The case involved eleven Latina, bilingual/ELL, non-traditional students within a distance-delivered, 2+2, teacher education program. In this collaborative program, students attended a community college for the first two years and earned the last two years of university-level coursework via distance education options offered by Kansas State University.

Students in this study earned their first two years of general education credits from one or both of two regional partner community colleges in southwestern Kansas. The two partner community colleges are Dodge City Community College and Seward County Community College. The four-year university, Kansas State University, served as the degree-granting institution within the 2+2 program. Kansas State University is located in the northeastern part of the state and is roughly 230 miles from Dodge City Community College and 312 miles from Seward County Community College.

The southwest region of Kansas where the participants live has experienced dramatic increases in CLD populations, mostly of Mexican heritage, in the past ten years. Development of the beef and chicken industries has brought factory workers and their

families to rural areas, that until recently, have been populated primarily by third and fourth generation White farming families of European descent. According to the most recent census, Kansas has experienced significant increases in the Hispanic population, which is now over 300,000 people. This number is even 10.8% higher than Census Bureau estimates (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Such significant increases in the Latino/a population in a short time, specifically in the southwest region, have made it difficult for districts to respond. They are scrambling to address the lack the faculty and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs to effectively support the influx of diverse children in the schools. This trend has become common for many states in the Midwest. It has been suggested “the nation will need to hire over 2 million teachers in the next ten years” (e.g., National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1997, p. 15-16). High turnover rates and the mismatch between the aging, monolingual teaching force and the young and growing ELL student population (primarily of Mexican heritage) has made maintaining a *highly qualified* faculty next to impossible, especially in these very rural, isolated schools (Ingersoll, 2003).

Districts in the Midwest have had to rely more and more on bilingual paraeducators from the local communities to bridge the divide between the incoming Spanish-speaking students and school personnel. These paraeducators are responsible not only to provide ESOL support and bilingual instruction in key content areas but also to conduct new student intakes, work with Spanish speaking parents, translate district materials and even provide language support in medical and legal situations within the district (Black, 2002; Genzuk & Baca, 1998; Monzó & Rueda, 2004; Rueda et al., 2004). These are significant responsibilities, especially for paraeducators who have had limited

college or professional training themselves. Despite this dilemma, as part of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, states are required to track and report their progress in providing K-12 students with highly qualified teachers and to show targeted efforts toward ensuring all educators within each district are qualified in their content area(s) (USDOE, 2006).

Therefore, federal and state agencies are looking broadly to IHEs for effective ways to promote the academic success of CLD populations in their most needy regions (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Herrera & Morales, 2005; The Holmes Group, 1995; McNeil, 2000; USDOE, 1998). To address these measures, IHEs and local educational agencies (LEAs) have enlisted support from federal programs such as Department of Education Title II programs to fund partnerships that promote reform in pre-service and in-service teacher education. Ideally, these funded initiatives are designed primarily to promote the diversification of the nation's teaching force, improve pre-service teacher education programs, and/or provide quality in-service teacher professional development that will equip all educators with the skills they need to successfully teach all students (Gutierrez, 2006; Hussar, 1999; Valenciana et al., 2006).

This study is focused on Latina, non-traditional students in a 2+2, distance-delivered, elementary education program called *AccessUS* within one such federally funded partnership project. The overarching project, called the *Equity & Access Partnership* was lead by the four-year university, Kansas State University. This overarching grant facilitated and financed a collaboration for K–16 school improvement across seven institutions (Shroyer et al., 2009). However, in designing the recruitment

and retention components of the 2+2 *AccessUS* program specifically, grant leadership at Kansas State selected two of their partner community colleges and three surrounding school district partners to work with, all located in the southwest part of the state. The significant distance between Kansas State University and the region created a variety of issues for facilitating such a program (Shroyer et al., 2009). Yet, the remoteness of the region and its lack of access to a four-year university, which serve as major hindrances to teacher recruitment and retention for these districts (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Gutierrez, 2006; USDOE, 1998), made this area an ideal location to offer a 2+2, distance-delivered program for Latina, ELL, non-traditional students in elementary education.

Funding for the *AccessUs* Program was provided in part by the state legislature, which covered a small portion of students' tuition and some technology support. However, the facilitation costs were significant due to the amount of traveling and technological support and time needed to offer the upper-level university coursework. The faculty involved in the *Equity & Access Partnership* from Kansas State University and the partner community colleges designed and delivered the upper-level education courses at several locations and through a variety of modalities such as PolyCom, on-line, and face-to-face (see Table 3-1).

Table 3-1 Details for AccessUS Coursework

Course	Method	Instructors	Site
Art for Elem.	Adjunct Face-to-Face (90%) PolyCom (10%)	K-12 Teacher from Garden City KSU Faculty (Advising)	Dodge City
Music for Elem.	Adjunct Face-to-Face (90%) PolyCom (10%)	Community College Faculty from Dodge City KSU Faculty (Advising)	Dodge City
PE Methods	Adjunct Face-to-Face (80%) PolyCom (20%)	K-12 Administrator from Garden City w/KSU Faculty (Advising)	Dodge City
Math for Elem.	Adjunct Face-to-Face (70%) PolyCom (30%)	Community College Faculty from Garden City KSU Faculty (Advising)	Garden City (students drove to instructor's location)
Educ. Psychology	PolyCom (50%) K-State Online (40%) Face-to-Face (10%)	KSU Faculty	Manhattan, Dodge City, and Liberal
Exceptional Child	PolyCom (50%) K-State Online (40%) Face-to-Face (10%)	KSU Faculty	Manhattan, Dodge City, and Liberal
Teaching Diverse Learners	Adjunct Face-to-Face (50%) PolyCom (50%)	K-12 Administrator from Liberal	Liberal
Teaching as a Career	Face-to-Face (100%)	KSU Faculty	Dodge City
Sexuality & Health	K-State On-line (100%)	KSU Faculty	n/a
Block A	K-State Online (60%) Face-to-Face (30%) PolyCom (10%)	KSU Faculty (3 faculty co-teaching)	Manhattan (2 weeks face-to-face) Garden City & Liberal (Poly-com, K-State online)
Block B	Face-to-Face (100%)	KSU Faculty	Dodge City & Liberal

While state legislative funds provided student scholarships of up to \$750 a semester to offset the expense of these courses, student tuition costs increased significantly in the last two years of the program because the *AccessUS* program was required to run all upper level coursework through the university's distance education division. Vital program components such as on-site university supervision and tutoring

and academic support for the students also required significant funding that had to be covered by the larger umbrella *Equity & Access Partnership*.

Setting

After establishing the unique context of the program in which the students were participating, it is important also to describe the specific characteristics of the institutions involved. Dodge City Community College, one of the two community colleges involved in this study, has been identified as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). It has a total student population of a little over 1,812 and averages a yearly Hispanic student population 27.9% (Dodge City Community College website, accessed on 2/6/2010). The town, Dodge City, has a population of 25,700 as of 2008, 43% of which is Hispanic (Citydata.com, accessed on 2/6/2010). The second community college involved in this study, Seward County Community College, the more distant of the two, is a bit smaller with a total student population of 1,687. This community college averages a yearly Hispanic student population of 23% (Cappex College Diversity Profile website, accessed on 2/20/2010). Liberal, Kansas, the town in which it is located, has a total population of 20,100 with a Hispanic population of just over 43% as of 2008 (Citydata.com, accessed on 2/6/2010).

The percentages of Latino/as on these two campuses are significant (27.9% and 23%) given that there are only 265 colleges in the entire US that are designated as HSIs with 25% or more (Santiago & Andrade, 2010). However, this number is on the rise with 67 colleges very close to receiving the HSI designation at 20-24% and another 109 colleges at 15-19% (Santiago & Andrade, 2010).

As stated previously, Kansas State University is a land grant institution known for

its agricultural programs. The town in which the university is established, Manhattan, has a population of over 52,000 and the student body of the university adds another 23,000 to this number when in session. Kansas State students represent all 105 of the state's counties, all 50 states in the US, and more than 109 countries (University Fact Sheet, accessed 2/6/2010). Despite this geographical diversity, of the 18,500 undergraduate students currently attending Kansas State University, only 706 (or 4%) identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino (University Fact Sheet, accessed 2/6/2010).

As of 2007, only 44 (or .03%) of the roughly 1,500 undergraduate students in the College of Education identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (Comparative Enrollment Rates Report 2008, accessed 12/6/2010). Recent data for the college also illustrate the lack of diversity at the faculty level with 93.4% of the education faculty being White, 5.5% Black, 3.3% Asian, and 2.2% Hispanic (College of Education Profile Report, 2009). It is important to consider the distinct difference between the amount of diversity at Kansas State University and that at the community colleges involved in the partnership (see Table 3-2) as faculty from Kansas State learned a great deal in the process of developing and facilitating the upper-level coursework offered for the *AccessUS* students.

Table 3-2 Latino Student Populations

Institution	Students Identified as Hispanic/Latino
Dodge City Community College	27.9%
Seward County Community College	23%
Kansas State University	4%

The College of Education at Kansas State University, nationally recognized for its PDS model, utilizes *Danielson's Framework for Teaching* (Danielson, 2007) for the

implementation and evaluation of all clinical and field-based experiences (Darling-Hammond, 1994; The Holmes Group, 1995). It offers a Bachelor's of Science degree in Elementary Education (K-6) and a Bachelor's of Science in Secondary Education (7-12). Elementary education students can choose from 7 areas of concentration (English, ESOL, Mathematics, Modern Language, General Science, Social Science, or Special Education) (College of Education website, accessed 2/6/2010). The elementary education major at Kansas State currently has the second largest enrollment of undergraduate students on campus and the secondary education major has the fifth largest (University Fact Sheet, accessed 2/6/2010). Both programs require that students complete 53-55 hours of general education coursework, and pass all three sections of the PPST exam prior to officially applying to the College of Education.

Among these general education courses are College Algebra, Statistics, and English Composition 1 & 2. Both secondary and elementary students must have a grade of C or better in these key courses to qualify for admittance. While the participants in this study were responsible for meeting all the same requirements as traditional on-campus students in elementary education, some exceptions were made to allow some students to begin pre-professional coursework having yet to pass all sections of the PPST due to the time constraints associated with grant funding for the program.

The *AccessUS* students, just like on-campus elementary education students, completed a series of pre-professional courses, such as *Educational Psychology* and *The Exceptional Child*, and began courses related to the ESOL area of concentration, such as *ESOL Methods* and *ESOL Linguistics*, in preparation for entering their final three *Blocks* of professional coursework. Block A, the first professional block, includes *Science*

Methods for 3 credits, *Mathematics Methods* for 3 credits, and a 1 credit field experience course. Block B includes *Reading Methods* for 3 credits, *Language Arts Methods* for 3 credits, *Social Studies Methods* for 3 credits, and a 1-credit field experience. The final Block C, the *Student Teaching Internship* semester, consists of 16 credit hours of field experience where the students spend at least 16 weeks, full-time in an elementary classroom observing and teaching along side a cooperating teacher. Once successfully completing this process and associated portfolio requirements, students are eligible for graduation. Participants in this study had just completed their Block C *Student Teaching Internship* when interview data were collected.

Research Participants

As previously stated, the primary goal of the *AccessUS* program was to address the need for ESOL/bilingual teachers in the region by graduating a cohort of students from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education with an ESOL/ Bilingual endorsement. The initiative targets bilingual, paraprofessionals from the partner districts and bilingual non-traditional students enrolled at either Seward County or Dodge City community colleges that were interested in becoming licensed teachers. The initial number of students signed up for the *AccessUS* program in the Spring of 2006 fluctuated between 20 and 25 the first two semesters, however once the program was in full progress, it had 20 committed students from four different towns in the region who were taking courses at either one or both community colleges. All 20 of the students had some college credit prior to joining the cohort; however, the number of transfer hours that could fulfill course requirements varied greatly across the group.

Due to several critical challenges such as scheduling conflicts with work and family, significant course loads, and financial struggles over the high tuition, five students dropped from the program between the second and third year -- lowering the enrollment to fifteen. Also in the third year, a student who began her program on campus at Kansas State needed to move back to the region due to family reasons so she joined the *AccessUS* program in the Fall of 2009 bringing the cohort number back up to sixteen. Twelve of the final cohort of 16 women were non-traditional, bilingual, ELL, Latina students of Mexican heritage. The remaining four women are non-Latino/a and non-ELL. One of the Latina participants was unable to participate due to schedule conflicts and family travel plans; therefore, given the parameters of the study, the researcher identified her purposeful sample as the remaining 11 Latinas within the *AccessUS* cohort.

Of the eleven Latinas, four students were themselves immigrants to the United States, six were first generation natives, and one was a second generation native. Three of the four immigrants moved to the US as children and one moved to the US as an adult. Seven of the eleven began attending US public school in kindergarten, one in pre-kindergarten, one in 5th grade, one in college. The final participant was a transnational student, who entered US public school and then left numerous times during her K-12 years. Four of the eleven Latinas were placed in ESOL pullout programs, seven of the eleven were in English-only immersion programs, and zero were placed in bilingual programs upon entering school in the United States. At the time of the study, all eleven women were fully bilingual in Spanish and English.

All eleven women were identified as non-traditional students due to age, marital and/or parental status, or financial independence. Their current ages ranged from 22 to

47 with the average age being 31. All eleven of the women were heterosexual, eight of the eleven were married, nine of the eleven had children, and two were single parents. While the large majority of the students had some experience working in schools, daycares, or preschools only six of the eleven were full-time ESOL or SPED paraeducators during their final semesters of coursework. One student was a full-time school secretary, one was a full-time administrative assistant, one was a long-term substitute teacher, one was an in-home daycare provider, and one worked full time for a cell phone company but had previously worked at a pre-school for two years (see Table 3-3).

Table 3-3 Student Demographic Information

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Marital Status	Parental Status - # of children at each level	Birth Place	Number of Years Living in Kansas	Mother Occup. (M) Father Occup. (F)	Hrs per week worked while in college	Immigrant or native citizen?	Grade you entered US schools	ESOL Support
Gloria	35	married	2 elem	Kansas	35	(M) Cook (F) Beef plant worker	40 hrs	1st gen native	K	none
Juanita	24	married	1 elem	Illinois	23	(M) Walmart employee (F) Beef plant worker	40+ hrs	2nd gen native	K	none
Betty	22	married	none	Mexico	14	(M) Maid (F) Beef plant worker	35 hrs	immigrant	5th	little
Laura	29	married	1 elem	Mexico	19	(M) School cafeteria manager (F)	40 hrs	immigrant	2nd, 4th & 7th	none
Aurelia	30	married	3 elem, 1 toddler	Mexico	not available	not available	35+ hrs	immigrant	K	ESL pullout- 3yrs
Sophia	47	single	1 adult	Mexico	7	not available	40+ hrs	immigrant	College	none
Alejandra	26	single	none	Colorado	not available	not available	40+ hrs	1st gen native	Pre-K	ESL pullout- 7yrs
Anna	27	married	2 elem	Mexico	26	(M) Stay at home mother (F) Construction worker	45 hrs	1st gen native	K	ESL- 3yrs
Yolanda	37	married	1 elem, 2 teen	Texas	not available	not available	25 hrs	1st gen native	K	none in elem some in middle
Janie	27	married	1 elem	Kansas	27	(M) Stay at home mother (F) Beef plant worker	40+ hrs	1st gen native	K	ESL pullout- 4yrs
Susana	35	single	2 teen	Arizona	not available	not available	35+ hrs	1st gen native	K	none

Because the program was offered within the construct of a federal grant, it was restricted to a tight timeline requiring that students take significant course loads each semester to complete their program of study (see Appendix A) within the term of grant funding. While the program staff and grant administrators made strong efforts to spread the coursework out over the four years of the program, due to personal and external conflicts, and the fact that some students started out with fewer of the general education courses completed, some students were unable to keep up with the cohort early on, which made their course loads in later semesters even heavier.

While the *AccessUS* students took lower-level courses at the partner community colleges and upper-level K-State courses within this distance-delivered program (therefore they were not physically on campus), it is important to note that these students still were held to the same standards as on-campus K-State students. Within the teacher education program at K-State, students are required to maintain, at minimum, a 2.5 GPA for all coursework and a 3.0 GPA in core methods courses to stay in the program. Targeted individual tutoring support was provided to those participants who had specific weaknesses in English or mathematics to develop the necessary skills to pass general education courses required for entry into the teacher education program. Four of the five students needing this support utilized these services; however, one student was unable to attend tutoring due to her hectic schedule and family commitments.

Data Collection

Data for the study came from two primary sources, (1) an autobiographical, qualitative survey primarily designed to gain demographic and historical information on the students and their families (Dillman, 2000) and (2) individual in-depth, semi-

structured, face-to-face interviews (averaging 45 minutes to an hour and a half long), with limited follow-up interviews via phone and email (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990). The researcher also used academic records (transcripts) as a secondary source to contextualize student progress within the degree program to aid in the interpretation of data from primary sources.

As members of a cohort within a grant-based project, students provided written permission for all written and electronic materials (both course- and program-related) to be used for research purposes. The overarching grant, the *Equity & Access Partnership*, followed the guidelines for research involving human subjects established by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Kansas State University. While the researcher was employed by and worked within this grant project, for this particular study, she completed an addendum (Appendix B) to the existing IRB to gain approval to collect data particularly related to students' personal characteristics and family history.

Each of the eleven participants was sent a letter of invitation to participate in this case study (see Appendix C) and an individual consent form, which included information regarding participant rights to anonymity and confidentiality (included in IRB Addendum). The researcher also gained additional permission to access academic information on participants during the individual, face-to-face interviews. The researcher will continue to store all consent forms separately from interview data collected. All audio files (cassettes and digital recordings), transcriptions, and pertinent student artifacts are stored securely in a locked file cabinet and/or on a password-protected computer in the researcher's office. As part of the audit trail, the researcher will retain all data and associated materials for a three-year period after which she will destroy them.

Piloting of Instruments

To increase the validity of the designed instruments, the researcher piloted both the autobiographical survey questions and the semi-structured interview questions with a small sample of four individuals with characteristics similar to the study population (non-traditional, Latino/a, ELL students). This piloting process consisted of two iterations, conducted in December, 2009 and February, 2010. In the first iteration, the individuals were asked to interpret the questions and provide feedback on question clarity and structure. In the second iteration, individuals were asked to describe what they thought the questions were asking and to provide personal responses to the questions. Both steps were of critical importance to ensure that the questions were understandable and focused and related well to the overall research questions. Two of the four participants felt that the wording of some questions felt “cold” and might make students uncomfortable who have family members who are undocumented. Therefore, slight modifications were made to make the survey in particular to less formal and more dialectic based on pilot participants’ feedback.

The Autobiographical Qualitative Survey

The autobiographical, qualitative survey, designed using Don Dillman’s tailored design method for conducting mail and Internet surveys served as the initial data collection tool in the study (Dillman, 2000). The survey was distributed to all eleven participants in order to gain critical demographic and historical information on them and their families. The survey comprised of theory-driven, primarily open-ended questions that urged the women to share, *in their own words*, how they identified themselves and

described their family structure and history, as well as how they recalled and interpreted their educational experiences in US schools.

Given the sensitive nature of the research topic and the characteristics of the research population, it was critical that the researcher made efforts to develop a survey that showed positive regard for participant involvement and validated participant experience while being relatively easy to complete (Dillman, 2000). Therefore she chose to provide questions in a written format using an online, qualitative survey instrument (see Appendix D). This was intended to ensure consistency as well as to allow respondents time (three weeks) to consider fully the questions and to consult family members for specific information regarding their history and immigration to the US if needed.

By utilizing an autobiographical, electronic survey to collect initial data, the researcher saved time, as this demographical and historical information provided vital context when conducting the individual, face-to-face interviews. The survey questions covered a broad range of topics related to participant's personal and familial history. Demographic items included age, marital and parental status, financial independence, immigrant status, and household structure. Additional information about students' work situation, daily schedules, and family responsibilities outside of school were included. Finally, the students were asked to recall and briefly recount their K-12 educational experiences as ELL students by describing the types of ESOL programs they participated in, what grade they entered US schools, and the process they went through to learn English. To preserve anonymity throughout the research process, the researcher also

asked each student to select a pseudonym for herself that was used consistently in documentation throughout the study.

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview

The qualitative, semi-structured interview was selected as the second collection procedure for this case study to gather rich responses focused on participant life histories, details of experience, and reflection on meaning (Seidman, 1991). The researcher allowed the theoretical framework and related literature to shape the composition and key components of the interview instrument (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990). She also incorporated elements from existing instruments (one interview instrument and a survey questionnaire) used previously within the college in similar studies of Latina students. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for use in analysis (Spradley, 1979).

The interview process consisted of three stages. Once the autobiographical, qualitative surveys were collected, the researcher contacted the eleven participants to determine an interview schedule. She negotiated times and established a three to four day period in the spring, 2010 to travel to the region to conduct the interviews face-to-face. While the interview questions were presented in English, participants were given the opportunity (and did) move between English and their native language of Spanish when necessary to express their ideas and feelings fully. Given that participants were fully bilingual and they were aware that the researcher was not, five of the eleven participants code-switched throughout the interview; providing responses in Spanish and then clarifying in English.

The first part of the interview process (approx. 10 minutes) involved clarifying

any unresolved or missing information from the participant's personal background information. The researcher then used the semi-structured interview instrument (*see Appendix E*) to inquire into the participant's life history (related to key family, culture, language, and K-12 educational experience) that impacted the participant's perception of their individual characteristics, and personal resilience as a Latina student in higher education. Final questions related to the individual's decision to enter teacher education and what role, if any, her cultural and educational experiences as an ELL, Latina had on her decision to pursue education as a profession. This process was guided by participant responses to initial interview questions as well as by the participants' written responses to previous survey questions.

According to Patton (1990), the purpose of conducting in-depth interviews is not to test hypotheses or to evaluate participant characteristics but to try to understand the experiences of the participants and the meanings they found in those experiences. After initial interviews are complete, follow up snowball interview questions may be sent either via phone or email to gain the clarification and saturation needed to determine emergent patterns across the data collected (Creswell, 1998).

Academic Records

Academic records (cumulative grade point average (GPA) scores) served only as a secondary source of data in this study. Student transcripts were accessed to provide context for participants' success in their various courses and to determine their overall success in the teacher education program.

Data Analysis

Data were collected from eleven ELL, Latina, non-traditional students in a 2+2, distance-delivered, elementary education program. In case study research, Moustakas (1994) outlines two descriptive levels for the data collected: In Level I, “the original data is comprised of naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue. In Level II, the researcher describes the structures of the experience based on reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant’s account of story” (p. 13). Given the breadth and variety of qualitative data to be collected for this study, for Level II, the researcher will employ multiple methods for data analysis utilizing a theoretical framework based on the established literature.

The researcher approached analysis with Creswell’s four recommendations in mind: categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, establishment of patterns, and naturalistic generalizations (2007). She first read all surveys, artifacts, and interview transcriptions multiple times and then began to organize and classify the data. Benard’s (2004) model for resiliency provided the initial, formal coding structure (see Table 3.1). As recommended by Creswell (2007), this *categorical aggregation* positioned the data for *direct interpretation*, which he describes as a “process of pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways” (p. 163). This process aided in the initial coding needed for addressing research question #1.

Table 3-4 Initial Coding Categories

Resiliency Framework Categories (Benard, 2004)	
1) Internal Characteristics (a) social competence (b) ability to problem solve (c) autonomy (d) a sense of purpose	2) External Factors (a) caring relationships (b) high expectations (c) opportunities for participation and contribution

Once the researcher completed the first round of analysis, she considered those items that were cross-coded under more than one category. A brief discussion of these cross-coded themes is provided in Chapter 5. The researcher then utilized Critical Theory, CRT, and LatCrit to inform the second round of analysis based on Creswell's third and fourth recommendations (establishment of patterns, and naturalistic generalizations). This served as a vital lens for interpreting additional themes and emergent patterns within the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Creswell (2007) advocates that the researcher construct a grid or matrix for organizing and illustrating the relationships among themes and the correspondence across established categories (See Table 3.4), which was most helpful in addressing research question #2. This structure for organizing the data lent itself to performing Creswell's fourth recommendation, making *naturalistic generalizations*. This benefited not only the researcher but also will benefit others researching similar populations or contexts that may find the case study applicable to the work that they are doing. It is through these naturalistic generalizations that the researcher established in great detail the extent to which the findings could be applicable beyond the case.

Table 3-5 Data Analysis Matrix

Sources of Data	Data Analysis Strategies (Creswell, 2007)	Alignment to Theoretical Framework (Initial Coding Categories & General Themes Explored)
autobiographical, qualitative survey	Categorical Aggregation Direct Interpretation Establishment of Patterns Naturalistic Generalizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social competence ○ ability to problem solve ○ autonomy ○ a sense of purpose & a future • External <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ caring relationships ○ high expectations ○ opportunities for participation and contribution • family history in the US • student identity - <i>borderlands</i> • language use & student <i>voice</i>
in-depth, semi-structured interviews	Categorical Aggregation Direct Interpretation Establishment of Patterns Naturalistic Generalizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ social competence ○ ability to problem solve ○ autonomy ○ a sense of purpose & a future • External <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ caring relationships ○ high expectations ○ opportunities for participation and contribution • student identity – <i>borderlands</i> • student identity- <i>intersectionality</i> • language use & student <i>voice</i> • student capacity as <i>holders & creators of knowledge</i> • student <i>agency</i> as teachers
Academic Records	Categorical Aggregation Direct Interpretation Establishment of Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ability to problem solve ○ autonomy ○ a sense of purpose & a future

Trustworthiness

To support the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher will consider Lincoln & Guba's (1985) four criteria for establishing trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability.

Credibility (equivalent to internal validity in quantitative research) in qualitative, naturalistic research is established through the use of several techniques that increase the likelihood that the findings and resulting interpretations will be credible and accurate (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To appropriately deal with credibility in the study, the researcher will employ the methods of prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. As a support staff member within the Equity & Access Partnership grant for the past four years and as a coordinator for the *AccessUS* program since its beginning in 2006, the researcher has invested significant time in learning the culture of the participants and building trusting relationships with them. Triangulation will be established using multiple data sources and multiple methodologies to ensure that participant perceptions and experiences are accurately and consistently reflected in the data. The researcher will also use peer debriefing with an outside expert as a strategy to ensure that her methods for collection and interpretation are sound. Finally, at various stages of the process, the researcher will ask participants/stakeholders to member check typed transcriptions of their own interviews as well as the documents of analysis and findings once complete. Member checking gives participants the opportunity to add clarification and provide corrections to ensure that the researcher's documentation and interpretation of their experiences are accurately represented.

Transferability in qualitative research, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is quite different from its counterpart in quantitative research, external validity. Due to the context-specific nature of qualitative research, within the naturalistic paradigm, the researcher can establish transferability only by "set[ting] out working hypotheses together with a description of the time and context in which they were found to hold" (p. 316).

Therefore, to establish transferability for this study, the researcher will provide “thick descriptions” of the context, geographic location, time, and population involved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 136). These thick descriptions of key elements within the study provide inquirers with sufficient information to determine the “fittingness” or “degree of congruence” between the originating context of this study and a secondary or “receiving” context in which they may apply the findings (p. 124).

The concept of *dependability* in qualitative research is closely tied to credibility. While the process of establishing credibility often can establish dependability as well, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of “overlap methods,” “stepwise replication” and “inquiry audits” as further measures for verifying that a study demonstrates dependability (p. 317). Essentially, these activities are designed as a “means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change” (p. 299). In theory, by doing so, the researcher was able to establish dependability so that if future researchers were to replicate the study within a closely similar context, using a population possessing the same key characteristics, the findings would be similar.

The final criteria for establishing trustworthiness, *confirmability*, can be described as the procedure used to document and examine not only the “process” but also the “product—the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations” of a study or inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318). The researcher addressed confirmability by maintaining a clear audit trail. Original survey documents, audio recordings, and transcriptions serve as evidence of the research process. Furthermore, to increase the strength of the audit trail, the researcher also took field notes during the individual interviews. These, along with mapping and organizational notes taken when identifying emergent themes and patterns in the data and notes made from the researcher’s own reflections, will be preserved and included in the audit trail.

Summary

The qualitative, naturalistic, research methods employed in this study were intended to answer the following research questions: *What internal characteristics and external factors foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student in reaching and remaining in college? And, In what ways have these characteristics and factors influenced participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education?* Within this chapter, the researcher provided a detailed context for the study and the education setting in which it was situated as well as a description of the unique population being studied.

This chapter also included a detailed discussion of the design of the study and the specific methods for data collection and analysis. Data collection instruments were based on the work of several scholars of qualitative research. The autobiographical, qualitative survey was designed following Dillman's Tailored Design Method, the semi-structured interview instrument was designed using the recommendations of Bogdan & Biklen, Creswell, and Patton, and the consideration of participant materials and artifacts was based on recommendations given by Lincoln & Guba. For analysis, the researcher utilized methods established by Creswell, Lincoln & Guba, and Miles & Huberman.

CHAPTER 4 - Findings

In this qualitative case study, the researcher explored the various factors that foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional students' resiliency in education and ultimately their desire and ability to persist in teacher education. In order to do so, the researcher collected two primary sources of data; autobiographical surveys and semi-structured interviews. Student academic transcripts were used as a secondary source to give context to participants' success in the degree program. For the primary sources, an autobiographical survey provided critical demographic and historical information about each participant and her family as well as an account of her educational experiences as an ELL Latina in US schools.

Secondly, the researcher scheduled and conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each participant, ranging 45 minutes to an hour and a half in length. The interviews were designed to gain an understanding of how each participant's life history and educational experiences impacted her personal resilience as a Latina student in higher education. Additionally, through the interview process, the researcher sought to uncover the key reasons for each student's decision to enter teacher education and what role, if any, her cultural and educational experiences as an ELL, Latina had on her desire to pursue education as a profession.

With Creswell's four recommendations for qualitative analysis in mind (categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, establishment of patterns, and naturalistic generalizations), she approached data analysis in two ways. First using Benard's resiliency framework (Benard, 2004), the researcher was able to identify those key

internal characteristics and those key external factors that fostered participants' resiliency on their journey to reaching and remaining in college. During initial analysis, the researcher found that those data identified as "outliers," that did not fit neatly into established categories, specifically related to issues of language and culture. The researcher took this finding into consideration as she began the second round of analysis. With Critical Theory, CRT, LatCrit, and general literature on Latino/a education as the evaluative lens, the researcher sought to make meaning of these outlying elements that proved salient to the Latina, ELL students in this study. Through open coding methods she gave structure to these "outliers" as additional themes and sub-themes emerged from the data.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study in three major sections. In order to give context for the results, the author begins with a review of the pertinent demographical information from the participants and a brief description of their personal and educational experiences as ELL Latinas in rural, southwest Kansas. In the second section, the researcher shares those data aligned with Benard's framework and considers the effectiveness of the model for this particular population. Finally the third section discusses the findings according to emergent themes within the data based on open coding.

Demographic Information

Eleven Latina, ELL, non-traditional, students participating in *AccessUS*, a unique distance-delivered, 2+2, elementary education program, made up the sample studied. These women represented a wide range of ages and backgrounds with the oldest being Sophia, a 47 year old who immigrated from Mexico at age 22 and the youngest being

Betty, a 22 year old who immigrated from Mexico as a 5th grader. Four of the eleven participants are immigrants, seven of the eleven are first-generation native-born citizens, and one is a second-generation native-born citizen. Laura, one of the four immigrants, lived as a transnational for most of her childhood. She attended school both in Mexico and California until her family settled in southwestern Kansas her 7th grade year. All eleven of the women came from homes where Spanish was the primary language spoken but only five of the eleven participated in some form of ESL program in US public school. All but three of the participants described their experience of learning English negatively. Many shared that they “struggled” not only learning the language but also understanding other subjects in school due to their lack of proficiency in English. Five of the eleven related that this struggle continued to impact their confidence as a learner on into adulthood. All eleven women are identified as non-traditional students due to age, marital and/or parental status, or financial independence. Eight of the eleven are married, nine of the eleven have children, and one is single parent with children still living at home.

Given that southwestern Kansas is primarily a rural, agricultural area, jobs are limited primarily to labor, service, and factory occupations. Those living in this region of the state, specifically Dodge City, Liberal, and Garden City, often refer to it as the “golden triangle”. This is due to the fact that by the year 2000 the Great Plains region’s large-scale feedlots “accounted for almost half of the cattle marketed in the United States” (Warren, 2007). As a result of this major shift in the cattle raising industry, the major packing companies such as IBP and Cargill soon followed by moving their beef processing facilities into to area to increase efficiency. In order to make up for local labor

shortages in rural Kansas, companies recruited immigrant and migrant laborers who were willing to work under the difficult conditions of processing plants (Warren, 2007). Many Mexicans, who were previously migrants, chose to settle down and raise families in the region. A majority of the participants in the study have parents and siblings who worked or continue to work in the beef packing plants and three of the participants themselves worked “on the line” for a period of time. A detailed demographic breakdown of the participants is provided (see Table 3-3).

Lack of access to post-secondary educational institutions is another issue for people living in southwest Kansas. Many of these women had waited years for an opportunity to earn their bachelor’s degree. Because of their desire to be involved in education, the majority of the women worked in schools in some capacity prior to beginning the *AccessUS* program. Because the program was solely for elementary education, all participants were working toward an elementary degree even though three of the eleven had interest and experience in working with middle school and high school aged students.

Findings

In the following section, the researcher presents the findings of the study in two formats. First, using Benard’s resiliency theory, she categorized those data identified as internal characteristics and external factors that foster resiliency in individuals. As described in Chapter 3, the researcher sought to determine the usefulness of Benard’s model, originally developed for studying diverse, urban *youth*, for answering research question 1: *What are the various factors that foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resilience on their path to entering and persisting in college?*

Second, the researcher conducted a second round of analysis using open coding to identify emergent themes and sub-themes among the data. Critical Theory, CRT, LatCrit, and Latino/a education literature informed this second round of analysis. Based on the nature of the questions asked, the researcher was able to answer research question #2: *In what ways do participants' internal characteristics and factors from their external environment influence participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education?*, from the findings of the second analysis.

Benard's Resiliency Theory

The internal characteristics identified by Benard as fostering resiliency in students are: (a) social competence in the form of responsiveness, empathy, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humor, (b) problem solving skills such as abstract thinking, developing alternative solutions, planning, and goal setting, (c) autonomy in the form of independence, a strong sense of self and identity, and a sense of mastery, and (d) a sense of purpose and a future which includes a strong sense of educational achievement, strong goals, persistence, and a positive view of the future.

Benard also identified three protective factors within a student's environment that work together to develop resilient characteristics in youth, which in turn foster their resilience. They are: (a) caring relationships with parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who take on roles as mentors, pathfinders, arbitrators, and role models, (b) high expectations from parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who challenge students while providing both structure and support, and (c) opportunities to participate and contribute within contexts where students can voice their opinions, make choices, be imaginative, work with others collaboratively, and give back to their communities (Benard, 2004). The

student's family, school, and community as part of a dynamic protective process offer these factors.

As stated previously, the researcher wanted to investigate how well this model applied for understanding the ELL, Latina student in rural Kansas. It is important to clarify that the autobiographical survey focused primarily on participants' cultural background and K-12 experiences while the interview questions focused on their more recent experiences as non-traditional college students. Given that the participants had just successfully completed their degree a month prior to the interviews, it is not surprising that all four internal characteristics and all three external factors were found among participant interview data in relation to their final years of college. However it was surprising that the researcher found limited data related to participants' K-12 experiences that could be coded as "protective" or positively influencing the development of resilient characteristics.

When asked to talk about their college aspirations and their future roles as educators, participants provided responses rich with examples of resiliency. Yet when asked to describe their K-12 educational journey and the process in getting to college, the participants shared experiences that were filled with threats to their resiliency. In light of this distinction, to answer research question #1 the researcher focused on those data indicating characteristics and factors that fostered or threatened students' resiliency in successfully *reaching* and *persisting* in college. The internal characteristic identified by Benard found to be most protective for participants in reaching and persisting in college in this study was their *sense of purpose and a future* and the external factor found to be

the most protective was the *caring relationships* participants had with others (see Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Benard's Resiliency Framework (2004) - Order of Significance

Internal Characteristics: Number of participants who identified (+) or (-) for each characteristic		
(e) A sense of purpose and a future	(+)	11
(f) Ability to problem solve	(+)	6
(g) Autonomy	(+) 5	(-) 6
(h) Social competence	(+)	3
External Factors: Number of participants who identified (+) or (-) for each factor		
a. Caring relationships	(+) 11	(-) 9
b. High expectations	(+) 9	(-) 9
c. Opportunities for participation and contribution	(+)	7

At the outset of the study, the researcher intended to focus only on those aspects within the students' lives that *fostered* student resiliency. However, given the nature and complexity of the experiences shared by the women in this study, the researcher felt that in order to honor the participants' experiences and to fully understand the strength of the resilient characteristics and factors found, it was vital to present findings related to those aspects that *threatened* student resiliency as well. For example, participants shared many instances where caring relationships and high expectations served as protective factors for them, but they also shared many accounts of how the *lack* of caring relationships and *low* expectations from others served as significant threats to their success. In other words, for many of them, the very people that should have held high expectations and developed caring relationships with these students (teachers, counselors, parents, spouses) did not.

Therefore, because the data provide a distinct dichotomy for three of the seven categories (1 internal, 2 external) (see Table 4.1), the researcher chose to report both the positive/protective and the negative/threatening evidences found within these categories. A detailed breakdown of the data aligned with each internal characteristic and each external factor is to follow.

Internal Characteristics

Internal - Sense of purpose and a future. Benard described students with the internal characteristic of a sense of purpose and a future as possessing a strong sense of educational achievement, strong goals, persistence, and a positive view of the future (2004). As stated previously, this internal characteristic was found to be the strongest of the four among participants with all eleven women demonstrating a sense of purpose and a future. Among the data, the researcher identified instances where all eleven of the participants demonstrated persistence through a wide range of personal, social, and educational struggles in their journey to reach college and remain in college. When describing the ways in which they overcame these struggles, participants made statements such as, “I’m not a quitter. That’s what my parents showed us... If you want something, just keep on going. Don’t quit. They [parents] said it’s not going to be easy, but you can do it” (Sophia, interview), and “I never gave up” (Betty, interview), which demonstrated their persistence. From their discourse, it was clear that these women had been taught to take on challenges as opportunities, as represented in the following statement, “There are walls in our road to success but they are not so big. If we try hard, we can jump them, go around [them], or bring those walls down” (Sophia, survey).

Ten of the eleven women made statements indicating that their desire to make a better life for themselves and their families motivated them to do well in school. Many shared childhood memories of their family's struggle to survive, which greatly impacted their outlook on life. The following quote demonstrates one participant's sense of purpose as she evaluated her family's situation, "Just seeing how they [my parents] struggled, how tired they were after working at Excel or National Beef. All the hours they spent down there and how tired they were... I just didn't want that for myself..." (Betty, interview). Betty knew she wanted more out of life than working long hours at the beef packing plant for minimum wage. Similarly, another student shared her sense of purpose and a future in this way:

I worked hard in school to someday help my single mother get out of poverty. I strived to learn English to help her. I would translate, write, and help her with bills. My older siblings ended up in bad situations—from prostitution to jail. I was the one that felt responsible to help them out. Even though I had my own teen issues with gangs and drugs, I kept my head up and decided that I needed to do something positive with my life for my own kids' sake someday. (Aurelia, survey)

Aurelia, like many others, knew that education was the key to improving her family's situation. As illustrated in this excerpt, many of the women had to take on important responsibilities within the family at a young age, which two participants described as requiring them to "grow up" faster. However, as in the case of Aurelia, her need to be responsible for the family served as a protective element for keeping her in school.

Also related to the internal characteristic of sense of purpose and a future, eight of the eleven women spoke about their personal dreams of going to college and their goals of completing a degree as highly motivating, even though none of them went to college full-time right after high school. Although they postponed their dreams of going to

college to enter the work force or to start a family, these women kept the goal of gaining a college degree in front of them, as seen in the following excerpts.

I've always wanted to go back to college. I've always known I was going to be a teacher, but I got married early and had kids and it wasn't until after my husband passed away...that I got back into college because that was what I wanted to do... I always realized that if I wanted to achieve something academically, that was going to have to come from in here [placing her hand over her heart]. (Susana, interview)

Susana spoke with an unwavering sense of purpose in everything she said despite the uncertainty of life as a single mom. Similarly, another student illustrated her sense of purpose and a future with the following statement specifically regarding her goals:

I had a good job but I just wasn't happy and it was still lingering there, the goal and the idea of getting my bachelors [degree]... I was just unhappy at my job and I thought, "you know what, this is a better time than ever to go back to school. (Yolanda, interview)

This student evaluated her situation at the time and made the decision to go back to college in order to fulfill the "lingering" desire to be a college graduate.

The above quotes indicated participants' sense of purpose and a future as they reached and persisted in college. However, as referenced earlier, the participants also spoke at length about their sense of purpose and a future as *educators*- particularly of Latino/a students. Therefore, the researcher will discuss these data in a later section related to the theme *teacher agency for racial uplift* found among the data during open coding.

Internal - Ability to problem-solve. The internal characteristic found to be second in order of importance within this study was students' ability to problem-solve. Benard defined ability to problem-solve as being capable of abstract thinking, developing alternative solutions, planning, and goal setting (Benard, 2004). In this particular study,

abstract thinking did not come up as an indicator of this characteristic, however planning and developing alternative solutions did for six of the participants. The following examples demonstrate how many participants worked to overcome what they considered to be their “greatest challenge” in school – learning the English language.

One student demonstrated her problem solving skills in overcoming this challenge in this way, “I understood that in order to get good grades and excel, I needed to spend more time on reading the material and comprehending it” (Anna, survey). Another student stated, “I used the dictionary... I studied the base words on the board, and I focused on how the teacher spoke and read. I did a lot of reading aloud to hear myself talk” (Aurelia, survey). Though it had been many years since they struggled in first learning English, the participants provided extreme detail when describing how they overcame the challenge, which indicated how significant the experience was for them.

The second example given by three of the eleven participants within this category of ability to problem-solve related to the process they went through to resolve identity struggles as young people. The following quote illustrates how one participant worked through her feelings of inferiority as a non-White student.

I overcame this by just learning that I didn’t have to look or act like the rest of the students. I had to tell myself I was smart and could do what the rest of the students did no matter what my color was (Juanita, survey).

Juanita went on to say in the interview that many Latino/as struggle with issues of inferiority for various reasons. This quote demonstrates how she, as a student, personally resolved this challenge.

While only six participants shared examples of problem-solving during their K-12 years, interview data related to participants’ experiences later in their college years

indicated that all eleven of the participants utilized problem-solving skills. As non-traditional students in college they had to manage their family, work, and school responsibilities. Participants spoke about the “juggling act” required to successfully maintain all three of these responsibilities. Data related to participants’ triumph over adversity will be discussed later within the theme *ganas* found during open coding.

Internal - Autonomy. Benard’s internal characteristic of autonomy ranked third highest in importance within this study for fostering resiliency. In her research, Benard found that students demonstrated their autonomy through independence, a strong sense of self and identity, and a sense of mastery—all which have a protective effect on them educationally. As mentioned in a previous section, the concept of autonomy can be demonstrated in more relational terms within other cultures. However, based on Benard’s definition, only five of the eleven women shared responses that indicated that they possessed the characteristic of autonomy during their K-12 or early college years. Of the five participants that shared positive examples of autonomy, the majority of the responses identified were associated with students’ sense of self and cultural identity. Conversely, six of the eleven provided responses coded as evidence of a negative sense of self and cultural identity. Additionally, these six women also made statements that indicated uncertainty directly related to school and their abilities as students.

Positive examples of autonomy found among the data most frequently were associated with students’ identification with their Latino/a heritage and their ability to draw strength from their cultural history. Participants made statements such as, “Mexicans don’t give up. If you jump the fence once, you do it again. Like Pancho Villa said, “I rather die on my feet than live on my knees [in] servitude” (Aurelia, survey),

which demonstrated her sense of identity and her independence as a Mexican American. Similarly, one student shared, “I love my culture and I am really proud of being a Hispanic” (Alejandra, survey). Another participant, a biracial Latina, described how she came to know and understand herself in high school by saying, “I found myself becoming more comfortable with who I was and found that it was not necessary for me to explain ‘what’ I was to anyone. I was just myself” (Susana, survey).

As this quote implies, many of the participants underwent a process of resolving their cultural duality as Latinas living in the US. In Susana’s case, she struggled in elementary school as an ELL student yet found comfort in building friendships with other culturally and linguistically diverse students as she got older. She talked about how she became an “ESL teacher early on” and that she gained confidence through these relationships with other ELL students in school.

Internal - Lack of autonomy. While three of the eleven women in this study shared that they had always done well in school and felt confident in their abilities as students, others shared a very different experience. Lack of autonomy, demonstrated as a negative sense of self, was shared by six of the eleven participants. These women indicated that they dealt with self-doubt and low self-esteem due to negative K-12 experiences (e.g. ineffective teachers, inability to fit in, peer social issues, language learning struggles, etc.). Participants shared struggles they faced as Latina, ELL students which directly impacted their sense of self and identity as well as their independence and sense of mastery as students. One participant stated, “The greatest challenge for me was getting to feel equal to the white students. I wanted to feel as smart as them and look like them” (Juanita, survey). Others, when asked if they believed that they would be

successful in school, made statements such as, “I did not know what was to come of me” (Betty, survey), and “I always felt that a bachelor’s degree was for someone very smart. Not that I felt less [but] it just seemed almost impossible” (Yolanda, interview). A final example below demonstrates both positive and negative aspects related to autonomy. It also illustrates a distinction between issues of language and culture and issues of poverty as well as the impact that both aspects can have on student resiliency.

I always enjoyed school despite the stuff that went on. I used to think that college was for people who had money, and people who had legal documents. I did not think that poor people could afford college. I always dreamed of being someone with a career. (Aurelia, survey)

The lack of confidence and the level of uncertainty regarding their future success in school were quite high among the six participants who indicated negative experiences related to autonomy.

It is necessary to note however that it was through the process of experiencing success in college that many fully developed their confidence academically. As a result, their sense of self and identity improved and their overall confidence as individuals increased by the end of their program. This dynamic mentioned in connection with their later years in college will be discussed further in later sections related to the themes *cultural duality* and *language as power* found during open coding.

Internal - Social competence. The fourth and final internal characteristic recognized by Benard as fostering resiliency is social competence. Responsiveness, empathy, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humor were identified as indicators of this internal characteristic of social competence among students. In this study, only three of

the eleven shared experiences that demonstrated their social competence as a protective characteristic in the years leading up to their entrance into college.

Students who did describe situations and experiences that indicated social competence primarily talked about how they helped their fellow ELL classmates who had similar struggles in school. The following quote is an example of how one student demonstrated empathy and caring for other ELL students.

I was in a [sophomore] geometry class, they had newcomers in there. No para support [and the] teacher didn't speak their language, nobody was helping them... So they would ask me... I would translate for them and I would tell them what they had to do... She [the teacher] would get upset because she said I wasn't the para and I wasn't the teacher. I said, "Well somebody needs to tell them!"... At the time I didn't know what I know now about ESL, you know, but I'm like "They don't know what to do." (Janie, interview)

Later in the interview Janie talked about how one of her teachers told her often that she needed to become a lawyer because she was always standing up for others and challenging authority. She shared that her desire to help others kept her involved in school. This in turn fostered her resiliency.

As is the case for all of the internal and external factors, there is a great deal of additional coded data related to students' social competence later, as they finished out their programs. All eleven of the participants stated that their experiences and struggles help them relate to and empathize with the CLD students they worked with in the classrooms. These data will be shared later within the theme of *teacher agency for racial uplift* established during open coding.

In summary, the internal characteristic found to be most prevalent among participants in this study was a sense of purpose and a future. While this internal characteristic proved most salient, the data indicated that each of the participants'

individual characteristics were developed, supported and/or augmented by external factors within the participant's environment (e.g. by caring relationships with parents or high expectations and support from teachers). This trend supports existing literature, which states that the most resilient students develop/possess these internal characteristics within the context of very supportive external factors where they feel authentic connections to adults (Benard, 2004, Brown, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Noddings, 1992; Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris, Jones, Tabor, Beuring, Sieving, Shew, Ireland, Bearinger, & Udry, 1997).

External Factors

In the section to follow the researcher will document findings related to the external or environmental factors that impacted participants' resiliency in this study. Both positive and negative external factors for resiliency were found among the data. As stated previously, although Benard is purposeful in focusing on the positive aspects of historically underserved and underrepresented students and their environments, in order to accurately document and interpret the lived experiences of participants in this study, the researcher felt it important to report both the negative and the positive examples coded within each of the three external factor categories.

External - Caring relationships. In this study, of the three external factors identified by Benard, the most important factor was caring relationships. When studying those factors within the home, school, and community that are protective for students, Benard found that parents, teachers, and non-parent adults who care, play a pivotal role in moving students from risk to resiliency. Adults who develop caring relationships with students often serve as role models, pathfinders, and mentors who make authentic

connections to students (Benard, 2004). In these roles, individuals are able to develop internal characteristics of resilience in students.

This factor proved most influential to participants in this study, as all eleven women in this study shared examples of caring relationships with parents, teachers, spouses, cohort members/friends, or siblings. The data indicated that when these relationships were positive, participants benefited greatly. However, when negative, these relationships had lasting negative effects on the women in this study. The researcher will share examples related to participants' positive caring relationships, then she will provide examples of the ways that the lack of caring relationships threatened the resiliency among participants.

The researcher found that caring relationships were protective and influential for the educational success of participants. Ten of the women made statements related to positive relationships with parents, seven of the eleven with teachers, six with their spouses, six with cohort members/friends, and five with siblings.

While the participants shared how their parents sacrificed for them as children and later provided critical support in the way of childcare for the grandchildren, evidence of caring relationships with parents leading up to their college years most often took the form of encouragement or *consejos* (words of wisdom or advice). For example, participants' parents often encouraged them to be good students and quality human beings. Many described how their parents were not familiar with college or how to be successful in it, yet they did encourage them to study, work hard, and not give up, as evidenced in the following quote.

My mom, she always pushed me. She always talked about her experiences and how she wanted to go to college and get her nursing degree in Mexico. But

because of her experiences with my grandpa... she only finished high school and she always wanted to go to school.... (Betty, interview)

For this student, as with many of the others, her parents gave up their dreams of gaining an education in order to work and provide for their children when coming to the US.

Caring relationships with spouses also served a critical role in participants' ability to reach and remain in college. One participant described how her husband demonstrated he cared in this way, "My husband.... motivating me, taking care of things when I couldn't... There's a lot I couldn't do. It's amazing... My husband learned how to do everything, with no complaints" (Gloria, interview). Another participant shared how her husband was her biggest cheerleader. In the following excerpt, she emphasized that he understood how important it was for their entire family that she go to college.

My husband, he's been wonderful through everything. He's like, 'Oh you're so smart. You can do it.' ...When there were the times I'd feel like, 'Oh gosh I don't want to do this. I can't do it,' he's like, 'Yes, you can. I know you're smart. He's the one that's made me change the way I look at myself. I just see myself that I've gained a whole lot.... I knew I always wanted to go back, but he just kind of pushed me and said, 'You have to.' ...[For] our daughter. He wanted her to, you know, just have a better life I guess... He just always worried. He's like, 'Well how about if something happened to me. How would you support her? You have to get an education. You have to finish. It's important, both for both you and her, okay?' (Juanita, interview)

In Juanita's situation, it is important to note that her husband is currently an undocumented immigrant. Later in her interview Juanita shared the financial and emotional struggles that she and her husband were facing due to his current immigration status. She described the difficult process they were going through to gain his legal residency. Despite the struggles, Juanita shared that her husband remained hopeful for the

family primarily as a result of Juanita's education, which in turn fostered Juanita's resiliency.

While just over half of the participants talked about caring relationships with teachers, for the seven women who did, their positive experiences were extremely powerful and protective for their academic success. Four participants described a K-12 teacher while four described a college level instructor. Three of the seven shared that they experienced a caring teacher relationship at both the K-12 level and the college level. The following excerpt by Anna demonstrates the kind of positive impact her high school teacher had on her:

She [my teacher] made a difference in me. She made me see school differently and want to excel... Because she motivated me. And so I remember, oh that was such a good feeling! ...I want to do that someday... From there on I always wanted to be a teacher. (Anna, survey)

Anna's experience with a caring teacher motivated her to do well in school but it also inspired her to one day become an educator.

In addition to relationships with K-12 teachers, participants later developed caring relationships with support staff within the *AccessUS* program as well. Six of the eleven related positive experiences with instruction and advising staff at the college level that encouraged, inspired, and/or pushed them to succeed. The following excerpt illustrates the importance of caring relationships with college instructors.

She's awesome [her instructor and program advisor]. I think she's the greatest teacher that I have known. I told her, 'You know what? You're my role model. I want to be like you.' She's professional, she cares for her students, she'd do everything for her students. She's an awesome instructor (Sophia, interview).

Responses about grant staff came up in the interviews when asked about what program elements were the most important to their success. Among the list of items, including targeted advising, tutoring support, and consistent monitoring of progress, participants shared that the staff's caring, "hands on" approach was critical to their retention.

As part of the *AccessUS* program, these women worked together in the same cohort for over three years. Through interactions in classes, group projects, and program meetings they developed bonds and friendships with others in the group. These relationships also served as a protective factor for many of the women in the program. Six of the eleven participants in this study talked about caring relationships developed with cohort members, which is represented by the following quote, "My friends [in the program], you know, they were always influencing [me]... I mean, if one was down the other one's like, 'No, you have to deal...' We were always pushing one another" (Betty, interview). Similarly, another participant stated that when she was ready to drop out of college the "bonds" that she formed with the others in the cohort helped her to persist. While two participants complained about issues such as gossiping among the members, the large majority of responses associated with relationships within the cohort were highly positive.

Participants also discussed how caring relationships with siblings benefited them in school. Five of the eleven indicated that siblings were critical to their academic success. One participant shared that because her mother did not have the "correct tools to help [her] achieve academically," her siblings were in charge of working with her. She went on to say, "They would read to me and [they] helped me with homework" (Yolanda, survey). Another student shared that her brother demonstrated that he cared by supporting

her in the decision to go to college, “My brother, the oldest, he was very excited... He’s like, ‘That’s awesome’” (Juanita, interview). Others provided examples of how encouragement from siblings helped them believe in themselves, which fostered their resiliency.

External - Lack of caring relationships. The data indicated that a lack of caring relationships was just as influential on resiliency as the existence of caring relationships for the women in this study. Participants shared experiences with teachers, parents, and spouses that threatened their resiliency. Nine of the eleven women shared instances coded as a lack of caring on the part of teachers. Based on the data, teachers often held assumptions about participants as culturally and linguistically diverse students. One participant shared that because of her background, she was “often looked at as not being very smart” (Laura, survey) despite her good grades. According to participants, teachers’ negative assumptions influenced the types of advising and supports teachers provided them. One student reflected on how Latino/as were treated in her school and the impact that lack of caring relationships with teachers had on her.

[I did] not have mentors that motivated me in achieving success, such as motivating me [to] believ[e] in myself and my capabilities. There were not many teachers or counselors that told me that I could go to college... If I could have had some sort of guidance and encouragement of what I was capable of, I would have applied myself.... (Yolanda, survey)

Yolanda indicated that as she looked back on her K-12 school experiences, she realized that her lack of confidence was tied to the fact that she had little support or guidance from teachers. She also shared that aside from two African Americans, all of her teachers were White during her K-12 years. She shared that she believed that as a Hispanic, she was “expected to either be a housewife for work at some sort of plant” (Yolanda, survey). She

felt that her lack of Latino/a role models limited her frame of reference for Latinos' capabilities and hindered her ability to set high goals for herself.

Four of the eleven women in this study shared situations that demonstrated how their spouses or significant others were a also threat to their resiliency in some way.

Juanita's husband himself was not a threat, however, his legal status and the fact that he could not find work was a huge stressor for Juanita. As a result, she ended up having to take on two jobs in addition to going to school full-time. This in turn, threatened her resiliency. For others, it was spouses' general lack of support for participants' desire to get a college degree that hindered them, as evidenced in the following quote:

The very biggest [barrier] would be... I would have to say my husband. He's not always been supportive, you know?... [He said] "You know you're not going back to school. No you're not. You're not." And I'm like, "Why not?"... Because you know us Mexican gals have to ask permission.... (Laura, survey)

With this quote, Laura implied that her husband believed in traditional gender roles for women, which impacted his willingness to support her decision to go to college. She further explained that the main issue he had with her going to school was that her attention would be taken away from caring for him, their son, and the home while in school.

In the same way, four of the eleven women shared instances where their parents served as threats to their academic success, primarily because they did not see the value in their daughters' academic achievement. One participant related her experience this way:

My parents never encouraged me to go to college or even mentioned it to me... The machismo of my father... It affected me more when I was single. My husband has luckily changed that for me. He is not the machismo type. I have seen things in a different perspective because of him. (Juanita, survey)

Juanita described how when she was single, she was pressured by her father to get married young. Similarly, the other student shared that traditionally, when Mexican girls get to a certain age, they are “expected to get married and let their husbands take care of them” (Anna, survey).

For the third student, it was her mother that threatened her resiliency. The participant shared her experience in this way:

You know, [my mom] saw me struggle and stuff, but I don’t think she really understands and I don’t think she ever did. You know, when I showed her my poetry or my straight A’s or whatever, she would be like, “Oh well that’s good, show me how smart you are. Here, go work [do chores],” ... Instead of encouraging me when I would come and show her these things, she would almost like want to put me back down a notch... I thought, “You know what, this is the way you’re going to reward me for getting A’s?”... That’s when I stopped [caring]. I just gave up. I was like “Whatever, I’ll just get D’s or C’s”. Enough just to pass. (Susana, interview)

For this particular student, her negative relationship with her mother dramatically affected her success in high school. Later in the interview, Susana further explained that her mother dealt with issues of inferiority related not only to her ethnicity (being Mexican) but also her socio-economic status as a minority Latina in Kansas. This sub-theme will be addressed in greater detail under the theme racism and issues of *intersectionality*, found among the data during opening coding.

External - High expectations. The second external factor that fostered resiliency among participants was high expectations. According to Benard, “clear and positive expectations that not only structure and guide behavior but also challenge students beyond what they believe they can do” are highly protective and influential for moving students from risk to resiliency (Benard, 2004, p. 73). Participants shared examples of high expectations placed on them by parents, teachers, and/or spouses, which encouraged

these women to believe in themselves and not give up. As in the case of caring relationships, the reverse is also true, in that low-expectations had a negative impact for the women in this study. Participants described how the low-expectations of others led to a “low self-esteem” and served as a self-fulfilling prophecy. In the paragraphs to follow, the researcher will share data coded as evidence of high expectations for participants and then those data that indicated low expectations.

Nine of the eleven students within this study shared ways that parents, teachers, and spouses held high expectations for them in school. Four of the nine talked about high expectations from parents and four talked about high expectations from teachers, and two talked about high expectations from their spouses. We know from the literature that within the Latino/a culture, cultural norms related to negative gender roles and minimal educational expectations do exist, however, nine of the eleven women in this study shared counter narratives to negative stereotypes about Latinos.

Sophia, who is 47 years old, shared one such counter narrative. She described at length her memories of studying at the table with her father as a child in Mexico. The following quote exemplifies how her father held high expectations for her and her siblings:

I always remember my parents. For them education was really important especially for their girls... My dad, he always made sure everybody at the beginning of first grade knew how to write, read, and [do] a little bit of math... Every night after dinner we'd sit around the table and everybody had a notebook and [he would say] “Okay let me check your notebook”, and it was hard because [he would say] “Okay this is wrong, you need to redo it”. (Sophia, interview)

Sophia recounted the pressure she felt to do the work correctly. Other participants described their parents' expectations more generally, saying that their parents continually pushed them to “do well” and expected them to graduate.

According to the data, teachers' expectations also played a major part in the academic success for four of the eleven participants. The following example illustrates this point.

I know there's one that I will always remember, Mrs. Deidra, she was my sixth grade teacher. If it weren't for her I wouldn't have graduated [high school]. But she saw something in me that... I don't know what she saw, but if it wasn't for her... She is one that always told me, you know, 'Janie you can finish high school'. I'm like, "No I can't". And it was because so many teachers had already told me, "Oh you girls, you're Latina so you're just going to get pregnant and get married anyway, so you're not going to finish high school." (Janie, interview)

This excerpt indicates both the positive and negative perceptions held by teachers. The narrative offered by the one teacher, Mrs. Diedra, was in conflict with those offered by others regarding Latina students in that school. However, Janie shares that Mrs. Deidra's belief in her played a significant role in her completing high school despite the low expectations held by many other teachers.

External - Low expectations. In contrast to the many positive effects resulting from high expectations, ten of the eleven participants also shared many ways in which parents', spouses', and teachers' low-expectations had lasting negative effects on participants' motivation, identity, and confidence as learners. Eight of the eleven women said that they experienced low-expectations from one or more of their K-12 teachers. Four others experienced low-expectations from college faculty, and two experienced this both at the K-12 and the college level. The following quote is indicative of the low-expectations held towards the Latino/as students:

Going through school there was a lot of racist teachers, you know? I'll never forget. I had taken honors classes and [I was a] great student. [But] I remember my high school counselor told me community college is where I needed to go

and to prepare myself to become a secretary, you know, “lots of great jobs around Dodge, [like] beef packing plants.” (Gloria, interview)

This quote illustrates how a counselor’s low-expectations shaped the advice given to the student regardless of the student’s high GPA. Similarly, another student shared that teachers did not believe that she “had the potential to make something out of [her]self.” She went on to say, “I believe that I had this self-fulfilling prophecy whereas no one (not even myself) believed in my capabilities and that I could not amount to anything” (Yolanda, survey). Others made statements about how teachers expected “them [Hispanics]” to “fail” and “drop out” before graduating.

Parents’ low-expectations also were mentioned by four participants as threatening their resiliency. These women described how one or both of their parents held low-expectations for them in school as females and the impact it had on them.

Well my parents... I don’t think they value an education as much because even growing up and... growing up through high school and through middle school I was never motivated, you know, to have good grades and I was never expected to do well. I did, but it wasn’t something that was even expected. In fact, I was like the only one to graduate from high school out of my family, out of a family of five... I just think our culture is more like, okay you get to a certain age, you get married, you stay home, and the man provides. (Anna, interview)

For Anna, it was difficult for her to see herself as a high school graduate let alone a college student, given that no one else in her family had graduated from high school. Other students implied that their lack of support at home stemmed from their parents “traditional” Mexican views, their parents’ lack of education themselves, and/or because they did not understand the world of academia or the purpose of a college degree. This sub-theme of traditional, Latino cultural norms relates to the broader theme of *borderlands* found during open coding, which will be discussed in a later section.

External - Opportunities to participate and contribute. This factor is the third and final external factor identified within Benard's resiliency framework. Benard clarified that by providing creating safe environments and contexts where students can voice their opinions, make choices, be imaginative, work with others collaboratively, and give back to their communities, resiliency can be enhanced among youth (Benard, 2004). In families in particular, Benard indicated the protective factors of "participation and contribution depend on parents being able to provide children with both responsibility and autonomy (p.57)."

In the current study, it is important to keep in mind that several interview and survey questions related specifically to participants' roles as parents, spouses, daughters, interns, and teachers. Therefore, it not surprising that participants spoke a great deal about family responsibilities. It is also not surprising that the researcher found a great deal coded as opportunities to participate and contribute that had to do with events and experiences later in the participants' program (e.g. experiences as parents and paraeducators). However, in order to effectively answer Research Question #1, the researcher primarily focused on those data that fostered or threatened participants' resiliency in *reaching* and *persisting* in college. In the section to follow, the researcher will share data that demonstrated participants' opportunities to participate and contribute to their families and then those opportunities to participate and contribute via their involvement with classmates, students, and community members.

The researcher identified the external factor of opportunities to participate and contribute among the discourse of seven of the eleven participants. These women shared stories about the impact that their college attendance had on either their own children

and/or their siblings. They spoke about how they served as a “role model” for family members who did not see a college education as attainable prior to their enrollment. The excerpt below illustrates one participant’s impact on her siblings.

Well I would’ve been the first one to do that in my family... I’m the oldest and so I was giving that example. I remember taking my younger brother because I knew about all these trips [through Upward Bound]... We went all the way to Kansas City to go look at some schools and I remember entering and me and him being the only Hispanics and you see all these families that were white with their kid, and it was just me and my brother... So he went to Winfield [on soccer scholarship] and he felt weird because he felt like he was the only Mexican and he really was at the time. And I told him, “No, just keep going”, and he graduated! (Alejandra, survey)

For this student, being a role model and helping her family members navigate college was an important way she contributed to the family.

Five of the eleven women shared examples of how their families provided opportunities for them as young people to be responsible and helpful for the betterment of the family unit. For example, participants indicated that they developed solid communication and financial management skills at an early age due to their roles as language brokers in the home. Because the participants primarily were members of immigrant, Spanish-speaking families, they were often required to handle many adult responsibilities for their non-English speaking family members, as evidenced in this quote.

Many parents love their children but they don’t show them what life is all about. Being the daughter of immigrant parents really forced me to have responsibilities that quite frankly I may not have been ready for. Such things as paying the bills, getting loans, filling out financial aid, etc. prepared me to be an adult at a young age. Not that I am complaining, it just forces you as a person to take matters seriously and that life is not just about having fun as a teenager, that it really is about learning to be an adult and moving forward with what you know. (Janie, survey)

Interestingly, the data indicated that these contributions/responsibilities, while taxing, helped develop the communication, organization, and writing skills of the participants, which in turn fostered their academic success and resiliency.

Four of the eleven women shared ways in which opportunities to participate in cultural traditions helped them appreciate their heritage, which in turn developed characteristics of autonomy. This was relevant given that opportunities to connect with key aspects from their culture had a protective effect on participants. For example, by participating in their family traditions and religions, students developed a sense of pride and an improved self-image, which gave them strength to endure hardships. The following quote illustrates how one student benefited from opportunities to practice Mexican cultural traditions with her family.

I believe that my family is traditional Mexican and I like my culture. I love the food we cook and my aunts cook... We go to Mexico to celebrate a lot of special days that my parents celebrated when they were younger like the Day of the Dead in Mexico. The whole town goes to the cemetery at night and there are a lot of decorations and candles, people singing and firecrackers with many different foods... My aunts make cheese and we get special leave to make gorditas de orno, which are really good bread and we use the leaves to cook them. We also make our own tortillas and eat cactus. I love my culture and I am really proud of being Hispanic. (Alejandra, survey)

It is clear from this excerpt that this student benefited from her opportunities to participate in the traditions of their culture. She went on to state that she and other Latino/as in Dodge City shared similar cultural experiences so they tended to “hang out” together. This clustering provided Alejandra with a network of support and friendships that she cultivated through like interests, which ultimately fostered her resiliency.

In relation to others outside the family, five of the eleven women described how they developed an interest in teaching through their experiences helping classmates in

school. The following excerpt illustrates how one participant began contributing to the well-being and learning of ELL classmates who did not speak English while she was still in middle and high school, “Many of my friends that I had were Panamanian and they were black and they didn’t speak a lick of English so I had to help...I became an ESL teacher really early on.” (Susana, interview). Similarly, the following quote relates how one participant and her family contributed to their community by providing language support to non-English speaking neighbors and friends:

I know how people who don’t speak English feel and I try to help as much as possible and so does everyone in my family. Our neighbors know we are here and other people do too. Usually we have people come ask us to interpret a letter or to call somewhere for them or fill out an application. (Alejandra, interview)

This participant understood the important role she played for many in her community. She went on to share how she appreciated the many opportunities that programs such as Upward Bound gave her and her siblings so she wanted to in turn help others. All but two of the eleven women in the study also indicated that they currently are or recently had volunteered at their church in various roles. Serving primarily as Sunday school teachers, the women felt that contributing to their church was an important role played in their community.

These data indicated that seizing opportunities to participate and to contribute to the wellbeing and educational outcomes of others served as a highly protective factor for participants not only for completing high school but also for enrolling in college. Participants shared a great deal about their desire to contribute and improve the lives of their families and their desire to make a difference for others as educators.

Cross-Coded Themes

As the researcher neared completion of the initial analysis using Benard's framework, she began to see interactions between and across internal characteristics and external factors. While implications for these interactions between and across categories (internal characteristics and external factors) will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, it is important to provide some clarification and an example here to illustrate the point.

As stated previously, when looking across all data, the researcher found that all eleven of the participants demonstrated positive, protective effects of the external factor of *opportunities to participate and contribute* by the end of their program. Data indicated that this was due to their later experiences as parents, paraeducators, and student interns within the schools. Ongoing interactions with children and the opportunity to work with them in the context of schools significantly impacted participants in positive ways.

Also, among the data cross-coded, the researcher found that it was the participants' care and respect for parents and family and their empathy for others that motivated them to contribute their skills to the family, school, and community and to engage in various protective behaviors. Participants' responsiveness to social situations as well as their desire to help other ELLs navigate cultural and linguistic struggles played out *in context*. As the participants acted upon these opportunities they demonstrated the internal characteristics of *social competence*, a *sense of purpose*, and in some cases *autonomy*. Through such findings, the researcher became intrigued by the complex interplay between and among these identified characteristics/factors. What did not fit neatly into the established coding structure was equally interesting.

Emergent Themes

Upon completion of initial analysis, the researcher prepared for the second round of analysis by first considering all those themes noted as “outliers” during initial analysis. Interestingly, those themes found in the data, which did not fit nicely into one of Benard’s categories overwhelmingly related to language and culture. The outlying themes were interrelated. For example, participants discussed the impact that general racism, linguistic isolation, and cultural duality had on their identity development as ELL, Latinas in the rural Midwest.

Keeping these “outliers” in mind, the researcher then began open coding, allowing additional themes to emerge. Within the interviews especially, these women shared detailed accounts of their struggles as Latina, ELL children and young adults in the US. From these shared cultural and educational experiences, the researcher identified the overarching theme of *agency inspired by hardship* that could be attributed to the complex interplay of participants’ internal characteristics and those external or environmental factors that shaped who they are as culturally and linguistically diverse women.

When reflecting on their own experiences in schools as children and now as teachers, ten of the eleven participants’ spoke from a social justice/social transformation perspective. All but one of the eleven women shared multiple ways in which they wanted and hoped to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for other Latino/as, a concept similar to *racial uplift* discussed in Chapter 2. Data indicated that participant experiences (both positive and negative) as Latina, ELLs served as the driving force

behind their desire to impact educational change for other culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Within this overarching theme of *agency inspired by hardship*, the researcher identified six sub-themes found among the data in this study (see Table 4-2).

Table 4-2 Sub-Themes Related to Agency Inspired by Hardship

1. Ganas – desire & determination despite adversity (11)
2. Racism and issues of intersectionality (11)
3. Cultural duality – A borderlands existence (8)
4. Language as power (10)
5. Culturally relevant teaching = effective teaching (10)
6. Agency as teachers- racial uplift (10)

Although, many of these individual sub-themes aligned with findings from existing literature, the researcher identified a unique dynamic as a result of the interactions between these sub-themes that proved significant for participants within this study, which is participants' *agency inspired by hardship*. In the sections to follow, the researcher will share data that illustrate each of these six sub-themes that informed and helped develop these women into advocates for social transformation and racial uplift.

Ganas

While the participants' background and childhood experiences varied greatly, a resounding theme, related to one's drive and desire to triumph over adversity, proved salient for all eleven Latina women in this study. The researcher identified this sub-theme as *ganas* (a Spanish word to describe one's desire, will, and/or effort) because

participants attributed their desire and drive to persist primarily to their ancestors and cultural heritage. This sub-theme can be illustrated by the following quote:

Being brought up with a single parent, where nothing was given to me without sweat and tears, helped me fight for what I wanted. When I was in elementary school, my siblings and I had to work in the fields to earn money for back to school clothes and other supplies. I don't resent not being able to enjoy my summer vacations, because this part of my life helped make me strong and fight for what I believe in. It helped instill in me that nothing comes easy! While going to college there were times that I wanted to quit. There were times where it was really hard trying to do homework, raise children, and work. However, I kept thinking about other obstacles that I had overcome in my life and I kept fighting! (Yolanda, survey)

This student used memories of her and her family's past struggles as motivators for her current challenges. Another woman stated it this way, "The ability to endure and overcome tragedies, obstacles, and hardships in an innovative way is a cultural strength that has positively influenced my success" (Susana, survey), while another said, "It is the *ganas*, the drive that my family instilled in me to reach for my dreams and to work hard for what I want" (Janie, interview). As these quotes indicate, participants developed their desire and determination through personal adversity and the hardships that their families endured when coming to the US.

Four of the eleven participants also demonstrated the sub-theme of *ganas* when describing how they coped with the multiple responsibilities of being a mother, wife, full-time employee, and a full-time student. One student shared how this juggling act was one of the most difficult aspects of going to college. She said, "I guess just juggling everything... The mom, the wife, the student, everything, it was just hard. Then plus working... just managing all those responsibilities" (Yolanda, interview). She went on to say that her children and husband always reminded her of the end result (earning a

degree), which motivated her to continue. Another student described how she managed to juggle her multiple responsibilities in this way:

I'm here to prove myself to me and to my son... I'm willing to work hard for what I need to do and that is, you know, you wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning to finish homework and then you do your cooking and then you, you know, head him out to school and then go to school or go to work or you know, going to bed at 3 o'clock in the morning. (Laura, survey)

Regardless of how difficult the struggle, Laura was determined to be successful for herself and her son.

Racism and intersectionality

Another significant sub-theme found among the data related to racism and issues of intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term used in this study to explain when Latinas and other non-majority individuals experience discrimination and oppression due to race, socio-economic status, gender, and other factors, simultaneously. All eleven women in this study shared experiences and situations where they had to cope with racism and issues of intersectionality.

Ten of the eleven participants shared various ways that their cultural and linguistic background as well as their experiences with poverty gave them a lens to better understand ELL, Latino/a students' struggle with the affects of intersectionality in US, monolingual schools. One participant, a former gang member, described how she is able to relate to students through her own experiences.

I can relate and not on a good level... But I know how to reach them [troubled Latino/as]. I know what I needed. I know what I lacked when I was going to school. I know what kind of, motivation, what kind of talking, we don't do as teachers... People [students] are like, "You can't change. I'm in it [gang lifestyle] forever"... But you have to tell kids, you know, "That's a choice,"... "Where is that going to take you in the future?" and say "How can you help them [your parents] if they're working for you, how can you help? Do you think you can help

them by acting this way, by making these choices or is there something else you can do?”

...It's not just talking. It's how to talk to their person, you know, to their character. Talk to their heart... [We] always talk about reaching kids... That's the way to reach them. (Aurelia, interview)

As this quote implies, many troubled Latino/as often lack someone who can reach out to them. During her interview, Aurelia described her thoughts and how she felt when gang life was her reality. She said that as a Latino/a student, no one ever spoke positively to her about her future or asked her what *she* wanted out of life. As a Latina from extreme poverty, she lived day-to-day with little consideration of the future until her boyfriend, now husband of several years, challenged her actions and poor decisions. Having lived at the intersection of being a poor, minority female, Aurelia understood the challenge of overcoming such odds.

Seven of the eleven participants shared at length their experiences with racism and discrimination as Spanish speaking Latinas in particular. One participant described an experience she had when she first came to the US as a college student.

When I was taking classes in New Mexico, I remember one of my instructors told us to write an essay, but it wasn't exactly an essay. It was like a... only a writing and we were supposed to tell about an experience we had in the past when we were a child and so when I gave my paper to her, she was reading my paper and she said, "So you're from Mexico?" and I said, "Yes" and she got my paper, threw it in the trash, and she said, "You know what? You need to go back to Mexico. That's where you belong." (Sophia, interview)

She furthered discussed how that experience as a non-traditional, ELL, Latina single mother drove her to work even harder in order to prove to the instructor that she belonged in college and was capable of succeeding. This quote also relates to the sub-theme *ganar* described previously.

Another participant shared a similar experience with racism, but at the elementary school level.

There was a teacher who was very mean but nice to the other students. She threw milk at me because she would make me drink it but I did not like white milk. I would get scared with her and sometimes not want to color and she would make me color and I remember one time she broke the [crayon] because she was holding it with me and it broke and she got mad. She was racist because that's how she was with me and another friend who was also Mexican. She even took us [during summer school] to go clean her yard outside her house because she lived a block away. (Alejandra, survey)

This quote demonstrates not only the teacher's racism but also an act of boundary crossing by making them do yard work for her during summer school.

While several of the women shared instances where they themselves experienced discrimination, they also shared situations that occurred when working in schools where they witnessed racism among teachers and acts of discrimination towards Latino/a students. The following excerpt is an example of one participant's frustration with a teacher's racist stereotyping as they prepared for parent teacher conferences during her student teaching internship semester.

When we were planning for the parent/teacher conferences I said, "...Are we going to show the parents their artwork for part of the conference?" ... It was a dinosaur. If they could be a dinosaur, what kind of dinosaur would they be? What would they eat?... It was a drawing, and then their paragraph...She's like, "Oh no most of them are Mexican..." she didn't say Hispanic, "Most of them are Mexican, they can't even read English anyway..." I was so disappointed. (Anna, interview)

The most frustrating aspect of this situation for Anna was that the teacher was herself, bilingual so she actually could have interpreted the students' paragraph for the parents but did not even consider this as an option when planning.

Although participants spoke at length about their experiences with racism and intersectionality as Latino/as from low socio-economic status within the White dominant culture, eight of the eleven also shared a great deal about traditional gender roles and oppressive cultural norms that exist within their own Latino/a culture. From their personal experience and from their experience working with Latina students in the schools, several of the women in this study said that the topic of sex is commonly taboo in their culture. One student suggested that parents' tendencies to avoid discussing the topic of sex, especially with their daughters, continues to have major negative implications for Latina high school completion. She shared her concern in this way:

And I think especially for Latina's, there's a lot of girls... I knew like with me I didn't have [the talk]... I was more close to my dad than my mom, but there was never that sex talk... I've noticed that a lot of the girls are the same way... And I think because it might be the culture, I don't know, I thought it was just because me and my mom, but now as I've gotten older the same things too, with my sister... Now with the girls at the school, the same things are happening and so I'm seeing that it's not just me and my mom and my sisters. (Janie, interview)

Janie went on to say that Latinas getting married early and to older men was also a problem tied to cultural norms and gender roles. Women's tendency not to challenge authority, and piety, were also sexist cultural norms that one participant associated with being Latina.

One participant gave another example of male-dominant cultural norms and gender role expectations by saying that two of the traditional Latino men she dated questioned why she wanted to pursue a career instead of getting married. She, along with two other participants, discussed the traditional concept of *machismo* among the Latino

males in their life. The following excerpt illustrates the issue of gender role expectations experienced by participants.

It's not that I'm going to be better... it's not that. It's just... Well he's a Mexican so you wouldn't... he has things that I'm supposed to do, you know? Before I could even start [college] it was like, "You know you're not going back to school. No you're not. You're not." And I'm like, "Why not?" It's like... and all of a sudden he's like, "Okay maybe you [can]..." Because we were just on and off, off and on with jobs and I thought... He's like, "Maybe you should go back to school," so that's when I started full-time because otherwise it was like three hours here, three hours there because I was trying to convince him... Uh huh and it's not a bad thing because it's respect, but it's... Sometimes it's like you're just there to obey... But [now] I'm like, "I am not letting this go. You deal with it." (Laura, interview)

This participant went on describe how she persisted despite the pressure to conform to a traditional female role. Laura further reflected how she regretted her marriage but not the outcome of marriage, her son. By her gaining an education, she hoped to be a role model and to influence her son's perspective of not only women but also of Latino/as in general.

Cultural duality - A borderlands existence

A third sub-theme identified during open coding related to participant identity development as Latina, ELL students. This sub-theme relates to participants' cultural duality or how they as ELL, Latinas exist in the "borderlands" between their native Latino/a culture and the white dominant culture of the US. Eight of the eleven participants described feelings of isolation, self-doubt, frustration, and loss as they struggled to resolve the disconnect between their native culture and the dominate culture of US schools. One participant, who came to the US as a fifth grader, described her struggle this way:

I felt so isolated with no escape... All I wanted at the time was white and educated parents. I was always questioning myself [and] why my family wasn't like my friends' family. I also felt embarrassed because I felt darker than my

friends and my hair was darker and everyone noticed...I felt inferior to my classmates [be]cause by culture and my language wasn't good enough to please anyone. (Betty, survey)

Betty confessed that at times she dealt with feelings of shame and resentment about being Mexican on into her college years. According to Betty, it was through the elementary education program, particularly the course, *Teaching Diverse Learners* that she was finally able to truly appreciate her culture and not be "embarrassed" of herself and her language when interacting with "people from other races."

Another participant spoke about life as a biracial, military child. Spending most of her early years at home with her Mexican mother while her white father was overseas, Susana described her struggle in the *borderlands* this way:

Because I was raised in a bilingual home...we would speak a lot of Spanish... I remember times [in school] where I was like, what does that mean, you know, and when I would ask questions... they would try and explain it like I should understand and it still didn't make sense. [I lacked] the prior knowledge [and] the vocabulary... oh the frustration! And it just turned into resentment the older [I] got. (Susana, survey)

Later Susana continued by sharing how this resentment turned into aggression as she got into middle school and high school. Later, during her time as a paraeducator and a long-term substitute teacher, she said her principal always gave her the troubled students. She stated it was due to her childhood experiences as an ELL that she was able to connect with these students when others couldn't, as illustrated by this quote:

I love and understand the "bad kids"... I know that it's because of frustration. I know it comes either from frustration with their family [or] frustration and disappointment with themselves. I know it is frustration because they don't have a role model. I know it's frustration because they don't have anybody that values academics maybe around them or near them and maybe because nobody's ever trusted them. (Susana, interview)

This ability to understand the borderlands existence and to relate to troubled students shaped her pedagogy and sense of agency, which in turn led to the effective teaching of these students. The topic of effective teaching for culturally and linguistically diverse students will be discussed further within the sixth sub-theme, *culturally relevant teaching*.

Language as power

A fourth significant sub-theme found among the data relates to the unique power of language (for better or worse) to define identity and determine value for the Latinas in this study. Similar to the above quotes by Susana, nine of the eleven participants expressed low self-esteem or uncertainty regarding their abilities in school- particularly related to successful use of the English language. Participants shared how they were chastised and punished for speaking Spanish in and outside the classroom. One stated that she and her other Mexican classmates constantly were told, “You can’t speak Spanish,” even when they were at lunch or at recess. She said, no matter the context, “We’d get in trouble for speaking [Spanish]” (Yolanda, survey).

Another student described the difficult transition she experienced related to language when entering US schools at age six. She said that while she received ESL support in the way of a pullout program for three years, she hated it because they were not allowed to speak Spanish even though all of the students were Spanish speakers. The following quote illustrates the isolation and disillusionment often experienced by participants when entering US schools.

I would feel frustrated and alienated from everyone else. I would hide in the tractor tube on the playground and cry all through recess because I could not associate with anybody else... I was frustrated because I could not ask questions! I pointed to things I did not understand... A Laotian girl taught me

verbally how to name objects during recess, so I would not cry. She tried to help me learn words everyday and quiz me on the things she taught me. (Aurelia, survey)

Through the help of her Laotian friend, Aurelia was able to gain significant ground in learning English but only after many months of painful struggle and frustration. As was the experience for Aurelia, three other participants indicated that when their first experiences in school were negative, threatening, or damaging, they disengaged and lost their confidence as learners.

Participants also talked about experiences outside of school where they saw language used as a tool to devalue and stratify. Often as one of the only members in their family that spoke English, many of the participants had to accompany their parents as interpreters while they ran errands. Many served in this way from the time they were very young. In this role, participants witnessed racism first hand. One participant shared her painful memories of language discrimination and how she learned from the experiences.

I tried to ignore when people gave me dirty looks or didn't like to help me. I always had to go with my mom to help her interpret but white people sometimes just didn't help or ignored us. Now I know how to defend myself better from any discrimination. (Alejandra, survey)

Others described similar experiences growing up, as many participants served as language brokers for their immediate and extended family. One participant recalled taking on the responsibility of reading and paying bills for her parents as a young girl – a responsibility she still maintains as a married adult.

Ironically, this role of participants as language brokers can be seen in the context of schools as well. One student described how one moment she was getting in trouble for asking another Spanish speaking student a question and the next minute she is being

called to the office to serve as an interpreter for the principal. She said, “When they needed a translator... This was the time when they would praise me and said positive words about my language and culture” (Betty, survey).

Another student mentioned interpreting in the school and how she struggled staying caught up in other content areas because she was always getting pulled out the classroom. She described her experience this way:

They would pull us out to a different room in the school and play games...I was excluded from other important content that I should have learned while in grade school instead of play games like UNO or memory... I was in that program [ESL pullout] until 5th grade. In 6th grade I was already interpreting and I would get sent to the office to help interpret a mother...It just took so long for me to learn because none of my ESL teachers spoke Spanish and in all my classes there was never a Spanish speaking person in the classroom. (Alejandra, survey)

In this quote Alejandra not only described her lack of support as an ELL but also implied that there is value in having a Spanish speaking teacher or paraeducator in the classroom. Many of the participants indicated that through their college coursework, they fully realized the importance of not only dual language support but also teacher validation of students’ native language and culture in the classroom. The following quote by Juanita illustrates this point further.

Being Latina, being bilingual. Having the kids relate to you, I mean especially [in] the primary grades, where these kids come in and they have no one they can relate to... They look at you and they’re just like, “Oh you speak Spanish?” “Yeah, I speak Spanish”. They’re like, “Oh my gosh, so you know what this means?”...And they just get so excited, you know, that their teacher speaks Spanish and I just think that, kids need to see that... Not to be ashamed that they know two languages because sometimes you have those kids that aren’t sure if they should be speaking both languages... They need to know that it’s a good thing. (Juanita, interview)

As indicated by this excerpt, many of the participants were able to make cultural connections with their Latino/a students. In her interview Juanita emphasized the importance of supporting students' English language development while simultaneously validating the use of their native Spanish language.

Another participant shared how she saw students' overall academic growth and development hindered due to teachers' lack of support and use of student's native language. She shared her frustration in this way:

[For] my students that are struggling in the classroom because they don't speak English, being able to communicate with them in Spanish and help them in Spanish, I think that's a plus... There was this little boy, we were doing a paper... they were supposed to... do a writing, so he approached me. He said, "Ms. Reyes can I write this in Spanish? I don't know how to do it in English," and I said, "Sure." Well for me it was important for [him] to do it, to express himself... Then one para[educator] was there and she said, "He's not supposed to be doing this in Spanish." So she went and told my teacher and she said, "Yeah you were right. Spanish is not allowed." So he didn't write it in Spanish, but he also didn't write it in English. (Sophia, survey)

Despite the established rules in the classroom, throughout the course of the year, Sophia stated that she was informally able to support this student's learning and language development by making connections between concepts in his native language and the new English language. She lamented over lost opportunities for ELL students due to damaging language policies by saying, "I always think about how much kids miss because they're really bright and they know the ideas, but they don't know that they know them because they don't know them in English" (Sophia, survey). Sophia demonstrated her agency by indirectly challenging current school policies and procedures for working with ELL students. She indicated that her ability to speak Spanish and make

critical connections for her Spanish-speaking students during instruction was a definite “plus” in the classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching = Effective teaching

The sub-theme identified during open coding related to students’ intuitive and learned understanding of how to support Latino/a, ELL students in the classroom. Data indicated a patience and willingness to support diverse students as a result of understanding their backgrounds. As in the case of Sophia, all but one of the women in this study discussed ways in which they used linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge to effectively teach their Latino/a students. The following quote demonstrates one participants’ frustration with teachers’ general lack of understanding and low expectations for their Latino/a students.

I want to be a teacher not just to teach content. I want to... help them from where they are in my classroom [to] where they can go next... and that’s what I think some teachers [don’t do], like yeah they might know the content, but if they don’t have a heart to see that there’s a student that’s struggling or... like a lot of [teachers] don’t know the family...

I do home visits as a family liaison and I’m like, if only the teachers knew what these kids are going through, like could they be a little bit compassionate? There’s some [that say], “Oh well they have three strikes and they’re out.” Its like, how can you give a kid three strikes?... Don’t give up on them, you know? And it’s frustrating because that’s I think a lot of our kids and I see that a lot, especially with our Latino males at the middle school. It’s sad and then I tell myself, but then we wonder why we have this gang issue... Because that’s who is there [for them], you know. They don’t have anybody else. Nobody cares. (Janie, interview)

This participant worked at the middle school as a paraeducator during her time in the AccessUS program. While in the schools, she witnessed teachers’ negative attitudes towards and lack of confidence in their Latino/a students.

Another student described how she planned to encourage her Latino/a students and hold high expectations for them.

I don't want to give up on a student and not think that [he or she] can do it. I mean because I know they need those positive role models, those motivations to keep them going and to hope. I want to give them that equal opportunity. I mean to believe in themselves and that they can do it. (Yolanda, interview)

She went on to describe an instance where she acted on this desire during her student teaching semester and was able to help an ELL student.

[There was] one student, Daniela, who struggled but she was so smart. She just struggled with saying some of the words, and reading some of the words or understanding some of the words... [I was] able to talk to her in Spanish and to explain it to her in Spanish. That's what I'm going to bring into the classroom. (Yolanda, interview)

Yolanda said that her cooperating teacher appreciated having her in the classroom and told Yolanda that she was able to make progress with several of the Latino/a students that she had struggled to reach.

Another participant, Alejandra, shared at length the various ways she was able to effectively teach and support the Latino/a, ELL students in her classroom. She described an instance where she was able to incorporate not only students' native language but also their funds of knowledge to effectively teach a concept.

When I was there with my class [during student teaching], our students scored so high, they did so well and I think I helped them a lot. We were talking about wheat and they didn't know what wheat was and I told one of my little students she then knew what wheat was and she said, "We have some at my house", I was like, "You do? Can you bring some tomorrow?" and she said, "Yeah". And so the next day for show and tell, I told my Spanish-speaking students this is what wheat is and they've seen it before... "Oh it's el trigo!", like "Yeah, that's what the English is... Wheat." and they're like, "Oh!" and so it clicks and they realize they already know. (Alejandra, interview)

In this case, through the use of native language and experience, students were able to connect new vocabulary with their previous knowledge.

One woman further indicated that effective teaching involves more than just knowing the content and the language. She clarified that in order to make a difference for struggling Latino/a students in particular, teachers must make connections and demonstrate that they care, as seen in this detailed excerpt:

So to me, I know all that background for a reason. [I] can personally connect and I don't see that [in school]. So, I think in a sense, that's what teaching is about. It's not just on the content part, but you have to know how to reach your kids on that level. How to say, "Hey Juanita, how are you? How's your mom? Is she feeling okay? How are her hands?" because a lot of our kids their parents [work in] the packing plants. So you've got to know how to reach them, you know, "Did your dad find a job?" You know, because of the papers, the legal system. "Are you guys doing okay?" And you don't have teachers asking that because they don't understand. You know, [students say] "No my dad doesn't have papers to be here. They might take him away someday." You know, what are you going to say, "Let's just hope not!" and move on?

No, you know, if the kid is telling you [that], they're sharing a little bit of them. How can you touch that, you know? "No mijo, you know, he needs to keep looking. Tell your mom to go to these places and these places, to find things," you know? I know where to get food; I know where to get second hand clothes, you know, because I've been there. "Tell them I said that you need to go to this one [thrift shop]. Shop on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and this one's a better one... If you're very desperate go to that one, but go to this one on these days," you know, "Before 10 o'clock you go there," you know. (Aurelia, interview)

As this excerpt illustrates, due to connections within the community and her own hardships, Aurelia possessed knowledge of students' families and knowledge of avenues for accessing resources that proved highly beneficial in connecting with and supporting her students. Throughout her interview Aurelia emphasized that cultural connections, high expectations, and authentic caring were the most critical elements for retaining Latino/a students.

It is important to note that while these women described at length the ways that their personal experiences, language, and culture informed their understandings for how to connect with and effectively support Latino/a, ELL students, seven of the eleven women referenced the importance of their education coursework in developing their own skills as learners.

Participants indicated that their ESL endorsement courses and their multicultural course in particular helped them better understand themselves as well as their students. The courses provided the space and opportunity to process their K-12 experiences as ELL students as seen in this quote, “When I started learning about ESL children, about the different needs... The difference between survival, playground, [and] academic language, I understood why I was so frustrated all the time” (Susana, survey). With these realizations, participants better understood “what they missed” in schools. They pointed out that these courses taught them specific strategies for effectively teaching CLD students by utilizing their language and culture as assets/tools in the classroom.

Agency as teachers for racial uplift

As indicated, many of the participants felt a desire and a responsibility specifically to help Latino/a and ELL students in and outside the classroom. The sixth sub-theme, teacher agency for racial uplift, is used to describe participants’ development of voice to advocate for themselves as well as their Latino/a and ELL students. The data indicated that ten of the eleven participants came to a realization during their educational program that they had not only the knowledge but also the power as educators to impact change for culturally and linguistically diverse students in schools. One participant

related how gaining an education made her more confident to speak out on behalf of ELL students.

At school their ESL program... The way they deal with the ESL students and the newcomer students, it's not to where it should be. They're very... I don't think they get the help they need and they don't do the services [that students] need to be getting, you know? And so I think it's helped me voice out my opinion more and say, 'No' you know, "This isn't right," you know... but I don't think it's caused conflict. I think it's made people open their eyes, you know what I mean? Just like, I'm not this quiet little girl anymore. (Janie, interview)

With this quote Janie indicated a shift in her identity. She became much more assertive in challenging deficiencies within the school as they related to ELL students.

Similarly, another participant described an instance where ELL students were being assessed in Spanish incorrectly based on regional, linguistic variation and she was able to determine the errors and report it to her administrator. She shared her frustration with the situation and the teachers administering the exam in this way:

So... they [the students] would get it wrong and that's why their score was low because of how they have it there [on the test]. They don't even have like the alphabet for them to say so like they're assuming they don't know it... They just think, "oh they're low, they don't know." Yeah, there are some [teachers] that are like, 'Oh well I'm ESL endorsed and I know Spanish, I could read this in Spanish...' But if you're not going to read it right then what help are [you]? I mean, I understand we do need ESL people...[To] at least know something does help, but I think that's why we need a lot of like Latina's to be teachers because I know that that would be a big help. (Alejandra, interview)

As this quote suggests, Alejandra felt that while monolingual ESL endorsed teachers were beneficial, Latino/a, ELL students benefit a great deal from teachers who know and understand their native language. Her understanding of the Spanish language helped her to identify the problem; and her willingness to speak up regarding the problem demonstrated her agency on behalf of Latino/a students at the school.

Another student voiced her concern about how schools were failing their Latino/a students. She indicated that teachers' inability to relate to diverse students served as a major hindrance to Latino/a student persistence. She said,

There's a lot of students that are not graduating and they're not going to school or they're dropping out, especially Hispanics or you know, diverse students. You mainly have white teachers that Hispanic/ Latino students do not relate to and they don't see themselves as being someone else and when you have someone that can speak their language or that at least can relate to what they're going through, I mean, that pushes those students and they open up to you in a way that they are willing to try. (Betty, interview)

Betty went on to describe how she wanted to be the one to show students "how to be successful" in not only school but also life. This desire to improve the educational and long-term outcomes for Latino/a students was evident among participant discourse.

Data also indicated that participants' passion and sense of responsibility to improve the educational experiences and resulting outcomes of Latino/a, ELL students inspired and motivated them to be educators. Participants demonstrated this sub-theme in their discourse in the following way:

The struggling I faced in school... I want ESL students to be cared for and loved in schools. This could make a difference in their lives... I always felt that I'm capable of doing this and that is why I chose this career and I love it! (Betty, survey)

Another student stated "I want to be a teacher to help students learn English faster and I know that I needed someone who spoke my own language when I was younger. Plus I would be a good role model" (Alejandra, interview).

As seen in these and earlier quotes, participants frequently referenced being a positive example for Latino/a students. The notion of providing students with opportunities to *see themselves* in professional positions of authority also was considered

of great importance to many participants. One participant stated that she wanted to give back by helping other Latino/a students the way some of her teachers helped her. She said,

All the teachers I looked up to and felt most comfortable with were minority teachers. My belief has always been to give back to students what I was once given, that is, a love for education. To believe in themselves, and to [have] a safe classroom where they are challenged to do their best. (Yolanda, survey)

As these above quotes demonstrate, participants felt strongly about advocating for and supporting the Latino/a students in their classrooms. As this participant described, they plan to demonstrate their support by creating environments where their students experience high expectations as well as high levels of encouragement. Through their stories, these women aptly described what has been, and to great extent, continues to be missing for Latino/a, ELL students in schools.

As a result of key internal characteristics and external factors, these women moved from risk to resilience while gaining confidence in their positions as bilingual educators, change agents, and role models for Latino/a students.

Summary

In the above sections, the researcher first provided a brief review of the case study and the research participants. She then shared data that aligned with the various internal characteristics and external factors for resiliency found among the ELL, Latina participants in the study. Findings suggested that within this established framework, the most salient internal characteristic for fostering resiliency was participants' sense of purpose and a future. The second characteristic, in order of importance, was participants' ability to problem solve, third was their autonomy, and fourth was their social

competence. The most salient external factor for fostering resiliency found among participants was their *caring relationships* with parents, teachers, spouses, cohort members/friends, and/or siblings (see Table 4-1). The second factor, in order of importance, was high expectations held for them by parents, teachers, and spouses. The third factor of importance for participants in this study was opportunities for participation and contribution in the home, school, and community environments.

The researcher identified examples of both positive/protective characteristics and factors as well as negative/threatening characteristics and factors for three of the seven categories (1 internal, 2 external). Based on the findings related to internal factors, participants demonstrated a lack of autonomy slightly more than they demonstrated having autonomy. This is significant as it is the only internal characteristic for which negative examples were found. Conclusions drawn from this finding will be shared in Chapter 5.

Based on findings related to external factors, participants' environment played a significant role in either fostering or threatening their resiliency. Among the data, the researcher found a great deal of both positive and negative examples for two of the three external factors (see Table 4-1). All eleven students shared examples of caring relationships with at least one adult. However, nine of the eleven also shared examples of a lack of caring relationships with a parent, teacher, or spouse. Similarly, there were an equal number of positive and negative examples of high expectations held by parents, teachers, and spouses found among participant discourse.

The factor of opportunities to participate and contribute had only positive codes and was found in seven of the eleven women's discourse. The opportunities they

described related primarily to participants' involvement in helping their non-English speaking parents, fellow students, and neighbors.

In looking across all participants, only one woman demonstrated all four internal characteristics identified by Benard. Two participants demonstrated three of the four characteristics, five of the eleven demonstrated only two of the four characteristics, and two demonstrated only one of the four characteristics (see Table 4-3). The one internal characteristic found to be extremely significant in all eleven women was a sense of purpose and a future.

Of the three external factors identified by Benard (2004), the one factor found to be the important among these women was caring relationships. High expectations were found to be second in importance and opportunities to participate and contribute were found to be third in importance for fostering resiliency among participants. All eleven of the women described at least one caring relationship with a teacher, a parent, a spouse, or a cohort member/friend that positively influenced them as a student. All but two of the eleven women described situations representative of two of the three external factors. In other words, nine of the eleven participants had at least two major factors within their environment that fostered their resiliency. Four of the eleven women indicated that, as a student, they had all three factors at work in their environment; caring relationships, high expectations from others, and opportunities to participate and contribute (see Table 4-3). As stated previously, the conclusions drawn from these findings will be shared in Chapter 5.

In the second round of analysis, the researcher identified emergent themes among participant discourse. For these non-traditional, ELL, Latinas, their language and culture

played a critical role in shaping their experiences and interactions as students not only at the K-12 level but also at the college and professional levels. Through open coding, the researcher identified the overarching theme of *advocacy inspired by hardship* seen throughout participant discourse. This resounding theme captured the essence of participants' past experiences and future goals particularly as Latina, ELL, educators.

Table 4-3 Characteristics and Factors by Participant

Name	Internal Characteristics	External Factors
Gloria I(2/4) E(2/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	ability to problem solve	high expectations
Juanita I(2/4)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	ability to problem solve	
Betty I (2/4) E (3/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	ability to problem solve	high expectations
		opport. to participant & contribute
Laura I(2/4) E(1/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	autonomy	
Aurelia I(3/4) E(3/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	ability to problem solve	high expectations
	autonomy	opport. to participant & contribute
Sophia I(1/4) E(3/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
		high expectations
		opport. to participant & contribute
Alejandra I(3/4) E(2/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	autonomy	opport. to participant & contribute
	social competence	
Anna I(2/4) E(2/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	ability to problem solve	high expectations
Yolanda I(1/4) E(2/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
		opport. to participant & contribute
Janie I(3/4) E(3/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	autonomy	high expectations
	social competence	opport. to participant & contribute
Susana I(4/4) E(2/3)	a sense of purpose & a future	caring relationships
	ability to problem solve	opport. to participant & contribute
	autonomy	
	social competence	

The researcher also identified six interacting sub-themes among the data: 1) *ganas* – desire & determination despite adversity, 2) coping with racism and issues of intersectionality, 3) cultural duality – a borderlands existence, 4) language as power, 5) culturally responsive teaching = effective teaching, and 6) agency as teachers for racial uplift. All six of these sub-themes proved salient among participant discourse, with data from at least eight of the eleven participants supporting each one (see Table 4-3).

Eleven of the participants spoke about their desire and determination (*ganas*) to succeed despite the odds they faced in reaching college. All eleven women also spoke at length about their various experiences with racism, and issues of *intersectionality*. Struggles with discrimination from those outside their culture and struggles with sexism (primarily in the form of gender role expectations) from those within their culture proved to be the most significant barriers to overcome for the ELL Latinas related to this sub-theme. *Cultural duality* and issues of identity (*borderlands*) also surfaced as a major theme in the data for eight of the eleven participants. They described how their experiences with racism and sexism sent them mixed messages about what was of value within the context of school, which effected how they viewed themselves and their abilities. These women described their experiences in the borderlands as painful and highly influential on their identity. This theme ties back to the theme of *ganas* in that these very experiences are one of the key elements that fueled their desire to succeed.

Connected yet still distinct from the theme of intersectionality is the fourth theme of *language as power*. Ten of the eleven women identified ways that they experienced language as a tool to oppress, control, and stratify. All four of the above mentioned themes inform and impact the fifth and sixth theme: *culturally responsive teaching* =

effective teaching, and *teacher agency through racial uplift*. Ten of the eleven women shared examples of effective teaching through the use of their native language and cultural ways of knowing. These same ten women also spoke about the responsibility they carried as Latina educators to make a difference for Latino/a students. Because of their unique and often difficult experiences in schools as ELL Latinas, these women were inspired and driven to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of Latino/as students.

In Chapter 5 the researcher will discuss the various conclusions and implications to be drawn from the above findings. She will also reflect on what the study left undiscovered and considerations for further research.

CHAPTER 5 - Conclusions, Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

Educational institutions across the continuum (K-16) continue to struggle in adequately meeting the needs of the increasingly diverse student populations in US schools. While significant efforts have been made to address the achievement gap between white, monolingual students and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, an increasing number of CLD students are falling through the cracks (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). Correspondingly, due to complex social, historical, and cultural issues discussed in Chapter 2, institutions of higher education continue to struggle in recruiting, developing, and retaining culturally competent educators who are equipped to improve the educational outcomes of CLD students (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Kubota, 2004; Ladson Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

There is a growing body of literature that documents the benefits of increasing the number of teachers of color in schools as a method for addressing the issues described (Achinstein et al., 2010; Anthrop-Gonzalez and De Jesus, 2006; Darder, 2001; Dillworth & Brown, 2008; Gay et al., 2003; Genzok, Lavadenz, & Krashen, 1994; Gordon, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). However, more research is needed to better understand what keeps CLD students in schools, what influences them to pursue the teaching profession, and what unique assets they bring to the teaching endeavor. In relation to Latino/as specifically, more research is needed to (1) determine the various internal characteristics and external factors that foster resiliency among Latino/a students in reaching college,

and to (2) understand the key factors that influence Latino/a, ELL students to pursue and persist in earning a four-year teaching degree.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the various internal characteristics and external factors that foster Latina, ELL, students' resiliency in reaching college and ultimately their pursuit of and persistence in teacher education. For the sample, the researcher selected 11 Latina, ELL, non-traditional, students participating in a unique distance-delivered, 2+2, elementary education program offered by Kansas State University in partnership with two community colleges, Dodge City Community College and Seward County Community College. This program, called *AccessUS*, was offered as part of a larger K-16 simultaneous renewal grant through the Department of Education called the *Equity & Access Partnership*.

For this particular study, the researcher asked the following qualitative research questions:

- 1.) *What internal characteristics and external factors foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resilience on their path to entering and remaining in college?*
- 2.) *In what ways do participants' internal characteristics and factors from their external environment influence participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education?*

To answer these questions, the researcher utilized two primary sources of data, (1) an autobiographical, qualitative survey and (2) individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews. She also used academic documents such as transcripts as a secondary source to provide context for the students' success in the teacher education program. Given the

breadth and depth of the data collected, the researcher employed multiple methods of data analysis.

For initial analysis, the researcher utilized Bonnie Benard's resiliency framework to consider those internal characteristics and those external factors that fostered resiliency among participants in the study. She then followed with a second round of analysis using open coding methods. With "outliers" from the initial analysis and general themes from the literature in mind, this round of analysis was intended to further uncover those elements in participants' experiences that proved most influential to their desire to pursue and persist in teacher education.

The findings of this study will be helpful for K-16 educational leaders who desire to improve the educational outcomes of Latino/a, ELL students in US schools. By identifying those factors that fostered resiliency among Latina students in southwestern Kansas, the researcher was able to identify what benefits and what threatens Latina, ELL academic success in this region. This has implications for K-12 leaders as they consider options for teacher professional development as well as school program improvements targeted at increasing the educational outcomes for their Latino/a students. Furthermore, by investigating the key elements that impacted Latinas' desire to pursue and persist in earning a teaching degree, the researcher was able to identify not only what families, schools, and communities can do to encourage Latina/os to enter teaching, but also what Latina, ELL non-traditional students have to offer the teaching profession. This finding has implications for university leaders as they search for ways to increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of CLD students as well as to increase the cultural competency among all teacher candidates.

In this chapter, the researcher provides readers with the following: an introduction; conclusions & discussion first regarding the model then regarding emergent themes; implications & recommendations; and suggestions for further research.

Conclusions and Discussion

Applicability of the Resiliency Framework

Conclusion A

By using Benard's resiliency framework for initial analysis, the researcher was able to determine the usefulness of this model for studying resiliency among non-traditional, ELL, Latinas living in the rural Midwest. Based on the findings, the researcher found the framework to be generally helpful as a lens for evaluating those aspects of families, schools, and communities that are protective for non-majority students. However, in this study participants also demonstrated a lack of these protective characteristics and factors, which influenced their resiliency. In other words, these women also gave many examples of experiences that served as threats and were consequently just as important to understanding this population. Therefore, to code these data, the researcher had to establish binary codes, positives (+) and negatives (-), for three of the seven categories in which the researcher found this dichotomy (see Table 4-1).

Another aspect of the model that was problematic related to Benard's definitions for the various categories. While each of the four internal characteristics and three external factors are distinctly different within Benard's framework, the researcher found significant interactions among and between the seven categories, which made initial coding of some data difficult. Also, some of the indicators included in her definitions did not apply at all to the participants in this study. For example, Benard found sense of humor to be characteristic among students who have a sense of purpose and a future. In this study, sense of humor was not a significant characteristic found to be protective

among any of the participants. Therefore, the researcher had to slightly modify and/or expand the meanings of each of the characteristics and factors to some extent to accurately represent the data categorized within each one.

A third issue with the use of this existing framework was that the unique linguistic and cultural aspects of the Latina, ELL student experience in the Midwest were not captured within the model. Issues of language and culture, strong underlying themes seen throughout the data, would have been lost if the researcher would have used the existing model as the only evaluative lens. Despite this fact, upon completing the analysis phase of the study, the researcher was able to draw connections between Benard's established categories and the emergent themes identified during open coding. Therefore, as Conclusion A, the researcher found Benard's resiliency framework generally beneficial for the initial organization of the data.

In the sections to follow, the researcher will share additional conclusions drawn from the findings, as they relate to each of the two research questions. In answering research question #1, the researcher drew three specific conclusions about the internal characteristic of *sense of purpose and a future* and one conclusion about the external factor of *caring relationships*. These general conclusions are based on the findings from both rounds of analysis as they relate to research questions #1 and #2.

Research Question #1

What internal characteristics and external factors foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resilience on their path to entering and persisting in college?

Although all eleven participants' demonstrated all four of the internal characteristics identified by Benard as being protective by the time they graduated

college, this was not always the case. For the women in this study, their journey to reach college was filled with hardships and uncertainty. Similar to what is seen in the literature, data from this study indicate that these women experienced, racism, sexism, language discrimination, and the negative effects of poverty. For these reasons, many of them did and still do struggle with issues of cultural conflicts, self-doubt, and lack of confidence in their linguistic and intellectual abilities. However, despite the extreme odds against them, these hardships and challenges provided inspiration to galvanize participants' will to succeed.

As outlined in Table 5-2, the data overwhelmingly indicated that all eleven women demonstrated a sense of purpose as they persisted through a wide range of personal, social, and educational struggles in their journey to reach college and remain in college. Directly connected to their internal sense of purpose and a future, the external factor of caring relationships with family members, teachers and spouses proved critical to the resiliency of all participants in this study. Significant individuals in the lives of these women demonstrated they cared primarily through encouragement and support, and high expectations. Below, the researcher provides a discussion of the three features that made up the characteristic of sense of purpose and a future. She then discusses the three features within the external factor of caring relationships and the impact that these relationships had on participant's sense of purpose.

Table 5-1 Conclusions Related to Resiliency Framework and Research Question #1

Application of Framework	A. Benard's resiliency framework, while useful, did not capture the nuances of language and culture found within the data regarding the ELL, Latina experience in the Midwest.
Research Question #1	B. Sense of purpose and a future proved to be the most significant internal characteristic, demonstrated through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determination

	2. Identity 3. Responsibility
	C. Caring relationships proved to be the most significant external factor, indicated by: 1. <i>Consejos</i> , stories, and personal accounts 2. Quality not quantity 3. High expectations within the context of care

Conclusion B- Internal Sense of Purpose

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that sense of purpose was the most important internal characteristic among participants. Furthermore, there were three features that worked together to shape participants' sense of purpose; (1) determination, (2) sense of identity, and (3) responsibility.

Determination. An underlying element found among discourse in both rounds of analysis was the notion of determination among participants. Coded within the internal characteristic of sense of purpose and a future, and coded within the emergent theme “*ganas*”, all eleven women demonstrated a strong drive and desire to succeed despite adversity. Adversity came in two different forms: social, historical and institutional struggles experienced by the students and their families as members of the non-majority, and educational struggles as ELL, Latinas in predominately White, English speaking schools.

Participants shared examples of how their families endured extreme hardships as immigrants within an anti-immigrant society (Macedo, 2006; Suarez-Orozco, 1998). As children these women watched their loved ones suffer ridicule and discrimination as non-English speaking immigrants. As seen in the literature, racism and oppression based on language and culture resulted in limited socioeconomic and sociopolitical opportunities for them and their families in every facet of life (Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Montemayor &

Mendoza, 2004; Taylor, 2009). They watched their parents struggle in dangerous and inhumane working conditions in order to provide them with improved educational and financial opportunities in the US. Participants indicated that they drew on these experiences for strength when times got tough. They shared that the extreme hardships that they and their families endured in order for them to have access to education kept them focused on the important task ahead of them.

At the individual level, these women described particular struggles as ELL students in school. They related that being a Spanish speaking Latina in dominant, English-only schools was a very solitary and painful existence. As illustrated within the theme of the *borderlands* (Anzaldua, 1987; Elenes, 1997; Pew Hispanic Center, 2009), most often participants' teachers and parents could not understand fully the cultural and linguistic conflicts they were experiencing as young Spanish speaking children within English only schools. While the women witnessed and often shared in their parents' struggles to navigate social and institutional contexts as non-English speaking adults, participants often struggled in isolation as ELL students in schools. Despite these difficult and damaging experiences, the majority of participants shared instances or moments when their struggle turned to strength. They developed not only a will to survive but also a tenacity to succeed in the face of adversity.

Identity. The development of identity, a second element found within the characteristic of sense of purpose and a future, relates to participants' struggles and resulting determination mentioned above. These women's painful accounts of how they "lost" themselves in the borderlands between their native culture and the dominant culture illustrate the tenuous realities they endured as ELL Latinas. Being placed in

environments that discounted fundamental aspects of their identity was devastating to many women in this study. As a result of the damaging, hegemonic, and unjust policies and practices of schools, many of the participants spoke of an altered identity – a shadow of themselves. According to the literature, this is a costly yet common result of these types of experiences (Anzaldúa, 1987; Da Silva Iddings, 2005; Elenes, 1997; Giroux, 1992; Macedo, 2006; Palmer, 2003).

Consequently, in many cases they demonstrated extreme uncertainty; questioning the value of their culture, their language, and their abilities as ELL students. Despite the myriad of issues they faced in developing positive identities as Latinas within a White-dominant culture, the data indicated that participants' abilities to hold fast to their cultural heritage and sense of self, proved highly protective in fostering their resilience. Participants took great pride in their families' cultural heritage. As seen in the literature, participants drew strength from their tight family networks, which helped shape who they were (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). As women within traditional Latino/a families, once they entered college and began earning their degree, many of the participants had to redefine what it meant to be a Latina. A finding that paralleled the literature on Latina gender roles, these women described a sense of obligation to sacrifice for the men in their families and how they struggled to resolve the guilt they experienced for focusing on *themselves* (Ceja, 2001; Driscoll et al, 2005; Welch, 1992). These findings suggested that cultural norms and traditional gender role expectations threatened their resiliency. However, the data demonstrated that participants were able to negotiate and resolve conflicts in order to persist. Findings also indicated that ultimately these Latinas

challenged those norms and expectations that limited them and held fast to those positive aspects of the Latino culture that propelled them forward.

Participants also were able to develop their sense of self and identity by taking charge of their learning as ELLs in schools. The process of learning English and resolving conflicts between their native language and culture and the language and culture of school required them to plan, consider alternative solutions to issues, and set goals for accomplishing tasks. By overcoming each adverse situation, participants gained confidence, which improved their self-confidence and self-image as ELL Latinas. Many of the women, who were previously insecure and unassertive as language minority students, were able to develop a bicultural identity – a theme seen in the literature (Valenciana, Morin, & Morales, 2005). Through this process, they gained voice to speak back to negative stereotypes and discriminatory actions they saw in their homes, schools, and communities. They realized the power of language to either lift up or tear down (Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Wink, 2005). Therefore, as seen in the Chicana/feminist literature, these women utilized their understandings of both languages and their developing sense of identity to challenge deficient perspectives towards Latino/as (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Responsibility. A third element within the characteristic of sense of purpose relates to participants' sense of responsibility as a motivating and protective factor. As referenced within the element of determination, an underlying sense of responsibility permeated their discourse when describing what made them persist in achieving their goal of earning a bachelor's degree. The data indicated that these women persisted as an act of gratitude for the struggles of their past ancestors and as act of commitment to their

immediate families. Participants' sense of responsibility was directly tied to their roles as children of non-English speaking immigrants, as wives, and as parents. Their significant responsibilities as language brokers within their family, school and community, as role models to their siblings and children, and as financial providers for their families kept them focused on their goals.

Conclusion C - External Caring Relationships

For several participants, findings indicated that they demonstrated very few of the internal characteristics (beyond a sense of purpose and a future) identified in the literature to be most beneficial in supporting students' academic success; yet they were successful. This brings into question, what then enabled even the most threatened of the eleven women to persist? One must consider the significant impact that participants' external environment had on their resiliency. The findings point to external caring relationships, demonstrated through encouragement and support, and high expectations, as being intimately tied to and equally as important as participants' internal sense of purpose and a future. Therefore the researcher concluded that the caring relationships described by participants as most vital had three features; (1) caring parental relationships were often demonstrated through *consejos*, stories, and personal accounts; (2) caring relationships with others were often only developed with one to three key individuals (quality not quantity); and (3) when teachers, parents, and spouses held high expectations for students, they demonstrated these expectations within the context of caring relationships.

Consejos, stories, and personal accounts. When discussing the impact of caring relationships, the participants spoke with great emotion. Participants spoke in detail about the *consejos* (advice or homilies) of their parents. These women were given powerful

messages about the importance of personal responsibility, respect, and hard work, which proved to foster their resiliency. Participants' parents shared their desires and dreams with their daughters as well as their struggles in hopes that they would make wise decisions about their future. This finding parallels previous findings related to the power of narrative or *consejos* for teaching Latino/a children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Elenes, et al., 2001; Portes, et al., 2008; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas & Dehyle, 1999).

Quality not quantity. While the seven women who had three or more caring and supporting relationships were also the seven women who later demonstrated the greatest sense of responsibility to support Latino/as students as teachers, it was not necessarily quantity that impacted resiliency. Many participants indicated that it was because of one parent, one teacher, or one counselor, that they were able to complete high school and successfully enter college. Surprisingly, having even just one person who supported them and believed in them made a significant impact on participants. As stated previously, for three of the eleven women, the support and high expectations offered by one teacher was of critical importance primarily due to the fact that their relationships with parents and other teachers were not positive. Echoed in the literature with regard to mentoring, key caring relationships proved to be significantly influential in this study (Brown, 2000, Herrera, et. al., in press; The Holmes Group, 1995; Maldonado, et. al., 2005).

It is important to note also that while all eleven women experienced at least one caring relationship of significance during the years leading up to college, nine of them also experienced negative relationships with one or more individuals close to them. The two women who experienced negative relationships with *three* or more significant people

in their lives (parents, teachers, spouse/boyfriend) were the two who demonstrated the greatest social and emotional issues related to autonomy.

As seen in the literature, such negative relationships coupled with low expectations can lead to maladjustment and a self-fulfilling prophecy for Latino/a students (Gay, Dingus, & Jackson, 2003; Herrera, 1995). While several of the participants struggled a great deal with identity as ELL, Latinas in the US, for the reasons described above, the data indicated these two women, in particular, had the greatest difficulty making decisions in their own best interest. They demonstrated trouble in establishing stable relationships as well as coping with the consequences of their instability. According to their academic records, they were highly capable of successfully completing the program. Also, based on their strong sense of purpose, indicated in the data, they were committed to making a difference for themselves, their families, and their students; yet they demonstrated the greatest risk of dropping out.

It is clear from the findings, however, that caring relationships with significant individuals in their lives had a strong countering effect against the threat of opposing negative relationships as well as against the larger-scale, social and institutional threats mentioned above. Data suggested that caring teacher relationships helped to foster the ability to trust and increased self-confidence among participants. Caring relationships with parents tended to foster autonomy, and a strong sense of cultural identity (as seen in the discussion on identity).

High Expectations within the Context of Caring Relationships. Current research literature on non-majority student success identifies high expectations as often the most critical factor for supporting student success (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Haag, 1999;

Villegas & Clewell, 1998). Some studies have shown high expectations to be a separate factor, not necessarily demonstrated within a caring relationship. However, in this study, high expectations were slightly less significant of a factor than caring relationships. It is important to note also that high expectations towards participants in this study were demonstrated only within the context of caring relationships. Ironically, these resilient women had more experiences with low expectations than they did with high expectations. This finding validates trends seen in the literature and further supports the importance of care relationships for participants in this study (Gay et al., 2003; Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Villegas & Clewell, 1998).

A final important aspect to consider in light of the findings related to research question #1 is that participants' internal sense of purpose and a future developed deeply within the context of the caring relationships described. The complex and interconnected nature of these two forces can be seen throughout participant discourse. This and the other findings discussed above support and add to the existing literature on student resiliency, particularly for ELL Latinas. These findings have significant implications for K-12 schools, communities, and institutions of higher education, which will be discussed within the section *implications and recommendations*.

Research question #2

In what ways do participants' internal characteristics and factors from their external environment influence participants' desire to pursue and complete a degree in teacher education?

Given the wide range of internal characteristics and external factors identified within the data, and the complex relationships found among them, it is clear that many

features influenced participants' desire to pursue and persist in teacher education. While the data provided many potential reasons why these women would not want to go into teaching, it can be argued that participants' difficult experiences as ELL Latinas in ineffective and unwelcoming schools served as the very reasons why they chose the profession. These experiences served as catalysts; not only by motivating them to make a better life for themselves and their families but also by affirming that they had the power to make a difference in the lives of other Latino/as.

In order to successfully answer the above research question #2, the researcher considered the findings and came to three conclusions. As outlined in Table 5-2, participants' desire to pursue and ability to persist resulted in the following conclusions based on the findings: (1) cultural and experiential understanding, (2) culturally relevant teaching, (3) and sense of agency.

Table 5-2 Conclusions Related to Research Question #2

Research Question #2	D. Due to their unique and often difficult experiences as ELL, Latinas, participants could relate to their ELL, Latino/a students in authentic ways.
	E. Participants were culturally responsive as they utilized their culture, language, and experience to effectively teach their ELL, Latino/a students.
	F. Through a wide range of personal, social, and educational experiences, participants developed a strong sense of agency to advocate for themselves and other Latino/as in their schools and communities.

Conclusion D- Cultural and Experiential Understandings

As immigrants and first generation born natives, these women had many common experiences (positive and negative) in their families, schools, and communities that developed cultural and experiential understandings. Their strong cultural heritage greatly influenced many aspects of their lives and shaped their identities. However, their culturally contextualized identities were often times in direct conflict with the identities being forced upon them by the white-dominant society. Coping with racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of oppression required that they learn to navigate internal and external conflicts as well as come to resolutions about who they are and who they have the potential to become.

As findings indicated, all eleven women in this study drew on their rich history and culture (e.g. the *consejos* of their parents) for strength and focus during difficult times. They also drew on the knowledge and experience gained from overcoming a variety of adversities (e.g. how to access resources as a person from poverty). Participants shared many instances of White monocultural teachers who lacked the ability to relate to the unique cultural and linguistic challenges they faced as ELL, Latino/a students. Interestingly, as mentioned in Chapter 4, one student shared that the teachers who cared

about and supported her the most were themselves minorities (African American). She further indicated that this was likely do to the fact that they “understood what it was like to be a minority.” One could argue that these African American teachers, like the participants who followed them, developed social competence and were able to empathize with ELL, Latino/a students.

Because these Latinas come from a similar cultural background and have endured many of the same challenges (e.g. learning English within an anti-immigrant, English only school), they were able to empathize and intimately understand what ELL students need, yet don’t typically get in schools. Similar to *funds of knowledge* articulated by Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez (1992) and Stanton Salazar’s notions of cultural and social capital (2001), these women approach the teaching of Latino/a with an enriched skill set. Therefore, for conclusion D, the researcher found that the ELL Latinas in this study had both cultural and experiential understandings that served as capital in diverse classrooms settings. With this capital they were able to make strong connections with ELL Latino/a students in authentic ways.

Conclusion E- Culturally Responsive Teaching

Secondly, the researcher further concluded that with these cultural and experiential understandings (both positive and negative) participants not only exhibited empathy towards ELL Latino/a students but also a heightened awareness and sensibility for how best to help them when they were struggling. Additionally, data indicated that participants were able to give structure to their understandings through their education coursework—specifically their ESL courses and the *Teaching Diverse Learners* course. Participants gained confidence and an increased sense of efficacy when they saw the

positive impact that their teaching and interactions had for ELL Latino/a students in their classrooms.

This described sensibility, coupled with their learning from coursework, resulted in culturally responsive teaching practices with their Latino/a students. For the purposes of this study the term is used more generally than it is defined in the literature (Gay, 2000, Ladson Billings, 1994, Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In this study, data indicated that participants demonstrated responsiveness to the unique linguistic and cultural needs of their ELL Latino/a students.

The women shared numerous examples of how they utilized common concepts, stories, or experiences from students' backgrounds to make meaningful connections. They also shared examples of how they used *consejos* and words of advice to direct students in making positive choices. Described as *critical care* in the literature, several of the women demonstrated ways in which they directly challenged students to reach the high expectations they set for them (Anthrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006). As the research indicates, within these authentically caring relationships, characterized by support and high expectations, Latino/a students flourish (Anthrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006).

Additionally, participants gave accounts of how they used students' native language to clarify and elaborate on concepts when needed and the significant impact that minor language accommodations had on student understanding. Participants shared specific instances of how they were able to increase test scores for the Latinas in their classrooms when other teachers were unsuccessful. This finding supports and validates existing literature regarding the importance of native language support for comprehension

among ELL students (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Rueda et al., 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2004). Participants were able to see first hand the potential that being bilingual and bicultural had for improving Latino/a student outcomes (Thomas & Collier, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

Therefore, for conclusion E, the researcher determined that participants demonstrated culturally responsive teaching when using both language and culture as tools for instruction. By actively engaging their cultural ways of knowing and utilizing their native language, participants were able to increase their effectiveness in working with ELL Latino/a students.

Conclusion F- Sense of Agency

As a third and final conclusion, the researcher determined that the participants' various cultural and experiential understandings served as a catalyst for the development of agency among participants. The researcher uses the term agency to describe participants' sense of self-efficacy, autonomy, and power to impact change for themselves and other Latino/as in their schools and communities, (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Maldonado et al., 2005; Villenas & Deyhele, 1999).

As these women neared the end of their educational program, they were able to reflect on the behaviors and attitudes they witnessed towards Latino/a students in schools. They spoke passionately about the damaging effects of the culturally subtractive practices they saw in schools and the extreme need for change (Valenzuela, 1999). More specifically, they shared a desire to combat the low-expectations and deficit perspectives that many teachers held toward Latino/a students and to shift the climate of schools from

environments that devalue CLD students to environments that validate and support them (Gay, et al., 2003, Herrera et al., *in press*, Ladson Billings, 1998; Nieto, 2008).

Participants demonstrated a commitment to being role models and advocates for their Latino/a students. In many cases this commitment translated into leadership on the part of these women. Several participants provided examples of how they voiced their opinions to address the injustices they saw regarding Latino/a students in their schools (e.g. inaccurate testing and lack of teacher training).

This sense of agency seen among the participants echoes themes from the literature regarding self-empowerment, advocacy, and racial uplift among historically oppressed populations (Apple, 1995; Darder, et. al., 2003; Giroux, 2001; Goodson, 1933; Maldonado, et. al., 2005; Robnett, 1997; Villenas, & Deyhele, 1999). Therefore, for conclusion F, the researcher determined that, as a result of their cultural and experiential understandings and training as ELL Latina teachers, these women developed (and demonstrated) a strong sense of agency for ELL Latino/a students in schools.

Implications and Recommendations

Within the conclusions and discussion section of this chapter, the researcher provided specifics implications as they relate to the individual conclusions. Therefore, in this section, she will discuss the overarching implications and recommendations this study has on research and practice. When looking across the data at the various themes and conclusions drawn, the researcher identified one implication related to Benard's resiliency framework as a model for studying resiliency in specific populations. She then identified several implications for K-12 policy makers, administrators, and teachers. Finally she identified three implications for colleges and universities as they consider

ways to improve the recruitment, retention, preparation, and graduation of Latino/a students.

Research Model

Findings of this study indicated that Benard's resiliency framework was a generally effective tool for organizing the data based on internal and external forces of resiliency among ELL Latinas. While this served as a great starting point into the data, the researcher established that the model was not an ideal fit for this particular population given that the unique nuances of language, culture, and experience shared among the data were lost within the seven general categories.

Within the field of education, this finding is significant when considering the development of research models and instrumentation. By identifying the misfit for the elements of language and culture within the model, this study points to the need for culturally-specific models for resiliency that include mechanisms to capture, organize, and understand culturally-specific data related to various populations.

K-12 Schools

Overall, findings and conclusions drawn from this study point to an obvious and critical need for systemic change in perceptions, policies, and practices related to our ELL Latino/a students in schools. Given that internal determination, sense of identity, and responsibility surfaced as the most important characteristics among participants and caring relationships were identified as the strongest external factors for fostering resiliency for the Latinas in this study, the researcher would argue that there is great potential for schools to make a significant impact on Latino/a achievement. Despite the

fact that many in the field of education are overwhelmed and discouraged by the grim statistics, the researcher is encouraged by the findings. Educational policy, curriculum & programming, and hiring & training procedures are the three main arenas in which there are the greatest opportunities to create change.

Study findings as well as existing literature indicates that in order to increase effectiveness with ELL Latinas, schools must develop and nurture caring teacher/student relationships at all levels within the K-12 system (Benard, 2004; Monzó & Rueda, 2001). In this study, caring relationships were often accompanied by high expectations, which also made a significant impact on the participants. It is important to reiterate that in many cases, having even just one caring relationship with a significant individual proved protective for fostering resiliency in students. Therefore, educators, parents, and non-parent adults should be encouraged that, in fact, one can make a difference as an individual. This has implications for teacher and counselor professional development as well as methods for communicating, supporting, and educating parents within our school communities.

Also, there are implications for K-12 policy related to English language instruction and native language use (primarily for content understanding) in the classroom. The researcher would argue that effective reform efforts concerning language would impact not only programming and curriculum decisions but also decisions and actions related to testing. With this, policy makers must acknowledge the growing body of literature that points to bilingual and dual language programs as being highly effective for ELL Latino/a student success (Collier & Thomas, 2004).

At the administrative level, principals and district leaders who are committed to increasing the learning outcomes of Latinos demonstrate this in who they hire and how they train their teachers. Given the remote location in which this study was conducted, the findings suggest that considerations for career ladder and “grow your own teacher” programs should be seriously deliberated. Findings indicated that these women, who lived and worked primarily as bilingual paraeducators in this region for a number of years, were ideal candidates for teacher education. As permanent residents in this majority minority region, the participants understood the backgrounds of the students in the schools and were committed to living and working in these communities upon graduation. This conclusion supports existing literature that points to the paraeducator pool for fulfilling ongoing teacher shortages in hard to staff regions of the country (Achinstein et al., 2010; Genzuck, Lavadenz, & Krashen, 1994; Rueda, et al., 1999; Rueda, et al., 2004).

Additionally, the results of this study indicate the need for educational leaders to invest in the development of their staff’s cultural competency in order to fully understand the unique needs of their CLD student populations. Providing educators with comprehensive professional development (e.g. ESL sheltered instruction and culturally responsive teaching), as well as providing release time for them to actively participate is essential for improving teachers’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward their diverse students. This in turn can have an impact on the overall cultural climate of K-12 schools. The researcher would further argue that changes in teacher recruitment and hiring procedures that focus on diversity is just as important as teacher training. For example,

given the findings of this study, there are significant benefits to having bilingual/bicultural, Spanish-speaking, Latinas in the classroom.

For classroom teachers, these types of reform efforts at the policy level and administrative level have a direct impact on the quality of their instruction and their sense of efficacy with diverse students in the classroom. As related by participants in this study, many White, mono-cultural teachers lacked cultural competency and were unable to connect with their diverse backgrounds. Data indicated that teachers often discounted participants' language and culture in the classroom. The literature echoes the experiences of participants as many studies identified a lack of confidence, lack self-efficacy, of motivation among White teachers regarding their CLD students (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; The Holmes Group, 1995). Existing research indicates that educators who are given opportunities to critically reflect on their own identity and the identity of others, are better equipped to see diversity as an asset not a liability in the classroom (Delpit, 1995; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Teacher Preparation Programs and Institutions of Higher Education

In order to improve the recruitment, retention, preparation, and graduation of Latino/a students across the educational continuum, universities (more specifically, colleges of education) must be willing to break from traditional modes of operation in significant ways. Those focused on reform and the effective diversification of their institutions must also commit key resources such as time and money to the cause in order to see change occur. As stated in Chapter 2 and in the previous section, much of what we have learned about improving the educational outcomes for Latino/a students calls for reform in policy and practice related to issues of diversity, social justice, and pre-

service/in-service teacher professional development. Such reforms focus on: (1) increases in the overall cultural competency of all pre-service teachers through extensive multicultural education training (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Grant & Gillette, 2006; The Holmes Group, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), (2) targeted recruitment of students and faculty of color into the teaching profession (Achinstein et al., 2010; Dee, 2004; Dillworth & Brown, 2008), and (3) improvement of retention and support programs for Latino/a students in teacher education (Moll, 2009; Reyes, 2007; Rueda et al., 2004). Findings illustrate the significant impact that these types of reforms can have on student success. For example, by including specific coursework related to diversity and multiculturalism within their program, participants and fellow students were given an opportunity to critically reflect on their cultural identity and develop skills for effectively working with diverse students. Several of the women spoke about the significant impact that course experiences had on them and their self-image as first-generation, Latinas in education.

In relation to the general recruitment, retention, and graduation of ELL Latinas in higher education, an entire paradigm shift is necessary. Traditional methods of communication and support are no longer effective for recruiting the diverse student populations of today.

Findings indicate that an understanding of Latino/a family dynamics can be very beneficial for effectively recruiting Latino/a students. By making efforts to engage and communicate with ELL Latino/a students' parents and siblings, institutions are able to foster connections that often prove very protective over the course of the students' college career (Sleeter & Thao, 2007). Home visits and campus meetings (conducted by

bilingual student services staff) to support parents in the admissions, financial aid, and advising processes are considered strong indicators of an institution's commitment to engage targeted populations (Herrera et al., *in press*; Smith & Gordon, 2008).

Once Latino/a students are on campus, institutions can demonstrate their commitment to student success by providing a wide range of outreach and support services targeted to students' specific needs. For example, many forward thinking institutions offer targeted tutoring in students' native languages and on-campus childcare for students with dependants (Herrera et al., *in press*; Johnston & Viadero, 2000). As indicated by the women in this study, non-traditional methods of support, (e.g. cohort grouping, academic advising, concentrated tutoring, and program tracking) afforded them through the *AccessUS* program really made an impact on their success.

In summary, while we know there is significant research that supports these recommendations and the need for increased exposure to, understanding of, and access for Latino/as in higher education, systemic change is often slow and inefficient.

However, given the exponential growth of Latino/a populations (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008) and the historic inability of schools to effectively education them (Darder, et al., 1997; Sleeter & Thao, 2007), K-16 educational institutions must take responsibility and ownership of Latino/a student outcomes.

Suggestions for Further Research

While the findings of this study proved significant for understanding characteristics and factors for resiliency among ELL Latinas, further research is needed to look more specifically at those outliers related to language and culture and to consider the most effective way to incorporate them into a model for resiliency. Furthermore,

additional research is needed to better understand the presence of autonomy (which includes independence, strong sense of self and identity, and sense of mastery) or lack thereof among non-traditional, ELL Latinas. Studying the characteristic of autonomy is compelling given that the researcher identified more negative examples than positive ones among the participants in the years leading up to college; but, found at least two examples of autonomy for each participant by the end of college. It is equally compelling to consider the concept of autonomy among this population (Latinas) within the context of relational-cultural theory.

The researcher also sees the need for further investigation of the extremely protective effect that single caring relationships have on the lives of ELL Latino/as. Based on findings from this study, caring relationships affect participants emotionally, educationally, and professionally as the majority of participants indicated that their sense of determination, identity, and responsibility were shaped by the relationships (positive and negative) in their lives.

Finally, the researcher sees great potential in conducting a follow up study of participants after one to two years in their classrooms. She is interested in studying the extent to which participants continue to demonstrate culturally responsive teaching with CLD students and to identify whether participants' sense of agency increases or declines as a result of being in the schools. Such findings could have significant implications for educational institutions as we strive to understand how to motivate and train educators to effectively teach and advocate for ELL Latino/a students in schools.

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Appendix A - AccessUS Program of Study Timeline

Semester	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours
Fall 2006	EDCI 720	ESOL Methods (not official AccessUS course- only 1 student participated)	3
Spr. 2007	DED 318	Instructional Media and Technology (1 st official course offering)	2
Sum. 2007	MUSIC 405	Music for Elem. Teachers	3
Sum. 2007	ART 425	Art for Elem. Teachers	3
Sum. 2007	EDCI 720	ESOL Methods (1 st official course offering)	3
Fall 2007	EDEL 350	Health & Movement Education	2
Fall 2007	EDEL 455	Teaching Diverse Learners	2
Spr. 2008	EDEL 200	Teaching as a Career	1
Spr. 2008	DED 318	Instructional Media and Technology (2 nd official course offering)	2
Spr. 2008	EDCI 720	ESOL Methods (2 nd official course offering)	3
Sum. 2008	MATH 320	Math for Elem. Teachers	3
Sum. 2008	EDCI 740	ESOL Materials for Ethnic Diversity	3
Fall 2008	EDSP 324	Exceptional Child	3
Fall 2008	EDCEP 315	Educational Psychology	3
Fall 2008	EDCI 731	ESOL Linguistics	3
Spr. 2009	EDEL 420 EDEL 470 EDEL 473	<u>Block A</u> Clinical Experience Science Methods Math Methods	7
Spr. 2009	EDCI 742	ESOL Assessment	3
Fall 2009	EDEL 430 EDEL 471 EDEL 472 EDEL 474	<u>Block B</u> Block B Practicum Language Arts Methods Social Studies Methods Reading Methods	10
Fall 2009	EDCI 745	ESOL Practicum	3
Spr. 2010	EDEL 585	Teaching Participation in Elementary School (Student Teaching)	16

Appendix B - Institutional Review Board Addendum

Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects serves as the Institutional Review Board (IRB),

I am writing to request an additional modification to the previously approved IRB addendum for the Equity and Access: Enhancing Teacher Quality through Multi-institutional Partnerships project (IRB Number: 3521.2). This is a Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

An outcome of the *TQE: Equity and Access* project is to “increase the number of students, particularly bilingual and minority students, entering and remaining in 2- and 4-year teacher preparation programs”.

The approved IRB addendum 3521.2 indicated data would be gathered through survey, interview, classroom observation and document review of existing College of Education data and classroom materials produced by students enrolled in courses of *TQE: Equity and Access* faculty participants. At the time of the IRB approval of the addendum, we submitted examples of possible instruments that may be used. This additional modification requests approval of another survey and interview instrumentation that will be used specifically with students enrolled in the alternative licensure program called *AccessUS*.

I have attached a copy of the instruments and consent forms that will be used.

Thank you.

Gail Shroyer, Ph. D.
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Protocol for TQE: Equity and Access Project AccessUS

pre-service student research

Purpose: One outcome of the *TQE: Equity and Access* project is to “increase the number of students, particularly bilingual and minority students, entering and remaining in 2- and 4- year teacher preparation programs”. Through the use of the following protocol and qualitative instruments the project will look at various aspects of the undergraduate student experience for the cohort group called *AccessUS* which is comprised of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD), non-traditional students. The purpose is to gain awareness of the various factors that influence Latina, ELL student success in school K-16 and their persistence in teacher education.

In particular, the **autobiographical survey** will ask each participant to provide critical demographic and historical information about herself and her family as well to recall and interpret her educational experience as an ELL in US schools. This information will provide context for the following semi-structured interview sessions. Through the **semi-structured interview** the researchers seek to understand how each participant’s life history and educational experiences have impacted her individual characteristics and personal resilience as a Latina student in higher education. Additionally, the researchers hope to uncover the key reasons for each student’s decision to enter teacher education and what role, if any, her cultural and educational experiences as an ELL, Latina had on her decision to pursue education as a profession.

The primary research questions to be investigated include:

- *What internal characteristics and external factors foster Latina, ELL, non-traditional student resilience in reaching and remaining in college?*
- *In what ways do these characteristics and factors influence participants’ desire to pursue and ability to persist in teacher education?*

Data Sources: Data for the study will come from two primary sources, 1) an autobiographical, qualitative survey primarily designed to gain demographic and historical information on the students and their families (Dillman, 2000), 2) individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews in person and via phone, with follow-up interviews (using snow ball sampling) via phone or email if needed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 1990). *Academic documents (academic transcripts)* be used to contextualize student progress within the degree program and to aid in the interpretation of student oral narratives and written responses.

1. Autobiographical, survey
2. In-depth, semi-structured interview

Participant Selection: Data regarding participant perceptions will be collected from *TQE: Equity and Access* pre-service students, participating in the *AccessUS* distance-based, alternative licensure program.

- This cohort represents the group of students who entered the program in 2006 and will student teach in spring 2010.

Instrumentation: A copy of the consent form and the instruments designed to obtain feedback from *AccessUS* student participants is included at the end of this protocol.

Procedure: All *TQE: Equity and Access* pre-service students will be briefed on the study and asked to sign the letter of consent prior to initiating this particular research project.

The grades, pre-professional assessments, classroom assessments, and project records of the consenting *TQE: Equity and Access* pre-service students will be requested from College of Education Student Services and College of Education faculty teaching courses in which the consenting student was enrolled.

Interviews will be scheduled with *AccessUS* pre-service students for early Spring, 2010 upon approval of this IRB addendum. The timing of the interviews allows participants to reflect on their personal journey to obtaining a bachelor's degree with the stress of completing coursework behind them. Interviews will be conducted by a graduate student who is also a Program Specialist working on the project. Data from this study will be used as part of the student's dissertation research. Given the nature of the research, it does not have direct impact or relation to students' actual grades within the program therefore participants will be reassured that their comments will not influence their academic standing in any way.

All data collected and research notes will be coded throughout the study to protect participant identify. Documents will be secured in locked file cabinets and electronic data will be stored within a password protected computer network. Interviews will be held in a private office. At no point will individual level information be revealed. Individuals will not be identified in any written reports or oral presentations on the research findings.

Analysis: A qualitative, case study of the educational experiences of the *AccessUS* cohort who represent pre-service, non-traditional, Latina, ELL students as they complete their tenure in a 2+2 distance-delivered teacher education program in the Midwest will be conducted. Data collected from multiple sources will be analyzed to explore relationships among the variables studied and to answer the identified research questions.

Informed Consent

Project Title: *TQE: Equity and Access*

Principal investor(s)

Pat Anderson (USD 475 Geary County Schools)

Duane Dunn (Seward County Community College)

Andy Bennett (KSU Mathematics)

Gail Shroyer (KSU College of Education)

Sally Yahnke (KSU College of Education)

Contact and phone for any problems/ questions: Gail

Shroyer, Director Professional Development Schools, 254

Blumont, 785.537.6737, (gshroyer@ksu.edu)

IRB Chair Contact/Phone Information:

Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research



Purpose of research: The purpose is to gain awareness of the various factors that influence Latina, ELL student success in school K-16 and their persistence in teacher education.

Procedure and method used: 1) an autobiographical, qualitative survey primarily designed to gain demographic and historical information on the students and their families, and 2) individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews in person and via phone, with follow-up interviews via phone or email if needed. Academic documents (transcripts) will be used as a secondary source to contextualize participant success in the program.

Risks anticipated: There are no physical or emotional risks anticipated.

Benefits anticipated: Findings will be used for program modifications, presentations and article publications.

The extent of confidentiality: All data collected and research notes will be coded throughout the study to protect participant identity. Documents will be secured in locked file cabinets and

electronic data will be stored within a password protected computer network. Interviews will be held in a private office. At no point will individual level information be revealed. Individuals will not be identified in any written reports or oral presentations on the research findings.

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is *completely voluntary*. I may elect not to complete surveys or interviews or allow my records to be reviewed by project researchers. I understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty or loss of benefits to which I may be otherwise entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described above. By my signature I acknowledge that I have a signed and dated copy of this consent form for my records.

The *TQE: Equity and Access* office will maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent agreement held by the participant.

Participant name (printed)

Participant signature _____

Date _____

Witness to signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C - Invitation Letter

Dear Student:

I am asking for your help and participation in conducting a research study on the personal, familial, cultural, and educational experiences that shape Latina, ELL, non-traditional students within a distance-delivered, elementary education program offered by a university in the mid-western United States. The purpose of this study is to investigate the life histories and educational experiences that develop resilience and persistence in non-traditional Latina females as learners and future teachers.

The primary methods for data collection will be an autobiographical, online survey and face to face interviews. These methods will allow the researcher to capture the unique voices of the participants. The interview questions will be made available for participants prior to the scheduled interview should they want to read them prior to the session. There are no known risks to either the participants or the researcher. Your identity will be protected by implementing the following precautions: a) consent forms will be stored separately from the interview data; b) audio recordings, computer disks, and transcription materials will be stored in secure file cabinets in the student investigators office on campus; c) files will only be accessible to the principal investigator and the student investigator; d) all data will be coded and identification information will be stored separately from the consent forms and interview data.

As a participant in this study, your unique life histories and educational experiences will help to further develop an understanding of how and what Latina, ELL, non-traditional females in the rural Midwest experience on their pathway to becoming teachers. I am anticipating your desire to be a part of this study. Please contact me as

soon as possible via email (morales@k-state.edu) or by phone (785-532-7737) to inform me of your decision. I will then contact you to further discuss the specific details of the study. Please feel free to contact Dr. Gail Shroyer via email (gshroyer@k-state.edu) or by phone (785-532-6737), should you have any issues and/or concerns. If you have any further questions, or want to discuss any aspect of the research with an official of the university or the Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) committee please contact:

Rick Scheidt, Chair,
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Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost
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Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Sincerely,

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Appendix D - Autobiographical Survey

The **primary purpose** of this study is to gain awareness of the various factors that influence Latina, ELL student success in school K-16 and their persistence in teacher education. This survey is designed to gain critical demographic and historical information about you and your family history as well as information about your educational experience as an ELL student in US schools. This information will provide context for the semi-structured interview sessions that will be scheduled in the Spring of 2010.

Before we begin, there are a few **procedural concerns** I would like to express. First, participation in this survey is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time, or you may elect to refrain from responding to any question. You will not be identified by name on any reports that we develop; however, some of your responses may be included in our report to the funding agency and used in professional presentations or journal articles.

The following survey is based on research conducted by Benard (2004), Delgado Bernal (2002), Kubota (2004), Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso (2000) and Villenas & Deyhele, (1999).

Personal Information

- 1.) Full Name
- 2.) Age
- 3.) Marital Status
- 4.) Parental Status (How many children do you have? Please list their ages)

- 5.) Generational Status (When did your family immigrate to the United States?)
- a.* Who were the first people in your family to come to the US?)
- 6.) How many members do you have living in your home?
- a.* Please list family members (e.g. my mother, husband, 2 children, etc.)
- 7.) Would you describe yourself as the financial or domestic leader in your home or BOTH?
- a.* Who all in your home contributes to household tasks (childcare, cleaning, cooking, etc.)?
- 8.) Up until student teaching, how many hours a day did you work?
- 9.) Can you list any additional activities or opportunities you have to contribute to something outside of parenting, work, and school? (community, church, or family related)?

Cultural Background and Educational Experiences

- 10.) At what grade did you enter US public schools?
- 11.) Briefly describe your educational experience of learning English. Were you in an ESOL program of any kind?
- a.* If so, what was it like?
- 12.) How would you describe your ethnic and cultural background?
- 13.) Can you describe the first time your race or ethnicity (the fact that you were NOT white) was pointed out to you or used to identify you?
- a.* Was it a positive or negative experience?
- b.* How did you react?

- 14.) What were some of your greatest challenges in primary school? Middle school?
High school?
- a.* How did you overcome these?
- 15.) Do you feel like your culture or language was a major factor in your experiences in school in the United States? If so, how?
- a.* Was your background & language viewed as an asset in your school?
- 16.) Did you believe that you would be successful?
- a.* Who instilled this belief in you?
- b.* Who challenged this belief?

College Aspirations

- 17.) Did you always want to go to college? Why?
- 18.) Who at your school, if anyone, spoke to you about college as an option or encouraged you to attend?
- 19.) What aspects of your culture and upbringing have positively influenced your success in college?
- 20.) Have you held roles and responsibilities as a female/daughter within your family that developed skills and characteristics that have contributed to your success?
- a.* If so, can you give some examples?
- 21.) What aspects of your culture and upbringing have negatively influenced your success in college?
- a.* Why did you choose the field of education? Why did you want to become a teacher?

Appendix E - Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-Structured Interview

The **primary purpose** of this of this study is to gain awareness of the various factors that influence Latina, ELL student success in school K-16 and their persistence in teacher education. This interview is to gain an understanding of how your life history and educational experiences have impacted your individual characteristics and personal resilience as a Latina student in higher education.

Before we begin, there are a few **interview procedural concerns** I would like to express. First, participation in this interview is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time, or you may elect to refrain from responding to any question. You will not be identified by name on any reports that we develop; however, some of your responses may be included in our report to the funding agency and used in professional presentations or journal articles. I will audiotape during this session to enable capturing your exact responses so that your intent is maintained. In respect for your time, I will do my best to keep the interview to less than one hour.

The following interview is based on research conducted by Delgado Bernal (2002), Kubota (2004), Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso (2000) and Villenas & Deyhele, (1999).

Motivation and Issues of Identity

1. What spurred you to go back to college?
2. What in your life now drives you or motivates you to keep going when times get tough?

3. Who encouraged you to pursue a college education?
4. Did anything hinder you? What were your biggest barriers to success? (*What about family? What about teachers? Process/Institution?*)
5. Has your personal identity and how you see yourself changed during your experience in college?
 - a. (*prompt: If so, in what ways?*)
6. What made you chose to pursue a teaching degree?

Individual Capacity and Personal Agency

7. What do you feel you bring to the teaching profession?
 - a. (*prompt: How might your cultural and linguistic background impact your teaching?*)
8. What obligation or responsibility, if any, do you feel that you have, in promoting/supporting/improving the position of Latino children and families in your community?