Latinx teacher advocates engaged in social justice agendas: A LatCrit perspective

by

Pedro Espinoza

B.S., Kansas State University, 2002
M.S., Kansas State University, 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Abstract

Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students has been a challenge for many years. Classroom teachers and certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers struggle staying current with the pedagogical approaches and strategies to work with this student population. In order to help CLD students succeed in the classroom, teachers may implement effective teaching strategies. Additionally, teaching without knowing the students' background knowledge can be problematic to all students. This study explored (a) how teachers who graduated from a federally funded bilingual and bicultural education program engage in justice agendas for their CLD students (b) the things these in-service teachers attribute as barriers and support systems in their social justice work (c) the educational strategies the in-service Latinx teachers value in their role as advocates in their social justice work.

In order to examine the participants' experiences regarding social justice, I used Qualitative and Critical Qualitative Research (CQR) as my overarching framework. Additionally, I used Critical Race Theory (CRT), but more specifically Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) as my theoretical framework and trenzas y mestizaje (braids and mixture) as my methodological framework. My methodology was based on testimonios collected through the methods of individual pláticas and group pláticas (formal and/or informal conversations) elicited by the use of tesoros (treasures). Through CQR, my data was viewed through the lens of Trenzas y Mestizaje and LatCrit. These methodological and theoretical frameworks resulted in analysis of my data through braiding the participants' experiences and/or testiminios.

By combing through data of the transcribed testimonios collected from the pláticas, I identified and braided the following prominent emerging themes: (a) Tesoros from students and families, (b) Relationships, (c) Advocacy for CLD students: High expectations of all students, (d)

Barriers as pre-service and in-service teachers: Resilience, (e) Support system as pre-service and in-service teachers: hechale ganas/work hard, (f) Effective classroom strategies, (g) Importance of parent and family involvement. Each of these themes is presented and analyzed.

All seven emerging themes help to illustrate the types of barriers the participants encountered during the process of becoming teachers and during their professional careers. These themes illustrate the type of support the participants currently receive and have received from their colleagues and administrators. Additionally, these themes depict the type of support the participants provide for their CLD students and families and explain different ways the participants personally relate to their students. Individually, all the themes are outlined and discussed. Additionally, the following recommendations for future research are also discussed: (1) More quantitative and mixed methods studies are recommended, (2) Implementation of classroom observations, (3) Selection of participants from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, (4) Provide more federal funding for pre-service and in-service programs to support current and future teachers of color. Furthermore, the following three recommendations for practice are also addressed: (1) Recruitment and retention initiatives for teachers of color, (2) Provide opportunities for growth and professional development for teachers working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (CLDs), (3) Identify significant online educational strategies to implement with CLDs.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation

To mis cuatro tesoros, Zayra, Adaly, Giovanni, and Jonathan,

I hope someday I will be reading one of your dissertations!

To my wife,

Who encouraged me and believed in me;

To my parents, brothers, and sisters;

Who never doubted me;

My love for all of you!

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Contextual Overview

I begin this study addressing my subjectivities through the rigor of the study and intense self-monitoring. Subjectivity is a form of personal judgment that comes about through innumerable interactions within society, which influences a person's perspective, experiences, feelings, beliefs, and desires (Solomon, 2005). As an insider, I used my cultural knowledge as a guide to build good rapport with the participants. Peshkin (1993) states that subjectivities cannot and should not be eliminated from qualitative research. Continued self-awareness, consistency, and systematic self-monitoring can curb subjectivity in research. Peshkin noted that mindfulness allows the researcher to "shape what is seen and its meaning so as not to exorcise one's subjectivities, but to exercise one's subjectivities" (Peshkin, 1993, p. 21). By stating that I am a cultural insider, a former English Language Learner (ELL), and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, I exercised my subjectivities. I remained self-aware, consistent, and self-monitored in order to allow balance between the awareness of subjectivities and actions based on said subjectivities.

My investment in this study is two-fold: (1) professional responsibilities and (2) my personal belief that I am in this profession to help pre-service and in-service ESL teachers succeed. My professional responsibilities and expectations of my duty as a former recruitment and retention specialist was to help students succeed after recruited and accepted into the Bilingual/Bicultural Education Students Interacting to Obtain Success (BESITOS) program at Kansas State University. Additionally, in a similar position as the former Associate Director of Recruitment and Retention and Instructor of ESL Culture and Language, ESL Methods, and ESL Practicum, once again, some of my roles and responsibilities included retaining and teaching

students that worked in obtaining an elementary and/or secondary education degree and planned to obtain their ESL endorsement.

Consequently, I prioritize the retention and education of students as part of my professional role and responsibility. However, meeting the needs of students throughout their educational careers was my primary role, which required collaboration, leadership, advocacy, and communication. Collaboration between instructors, professors, and me was vital for students' success. I provided leadership in my roles as the coordinator and instructor of this program, modeled successful persistence and advocacy, provided excellent communication between the students and professors, identified best practices, and successful strategies for persistence. These processes ultimately led to students' graduation, then becoming in-service ESL teachers. I considered retention and graduation of these students mutually dependent and as a result, I am invested in facilitating successful strategies related to persistence at this institution.

As a Latino, bilingual, and former ELL, I can relate to the participants through personal and cultural knowledge. According to Sensoy and DiAngelo "Personal and cultural knowledge are the explanations and interpretations people acquire from their personal experiences in their homes, with their family and with community cultures" (2012, p. 8). Most of the participants share these commonalities with me. Being from a Latino background and sharing similar cultural knowledge allowed me to relate to participants and share our tesoros during our pláticas. Additionally, being Latino and bilingual made me a cultural insider, which impacted my study positively. As Bhattacharya states:

> Other scholars demonstrated clearly when cultural outsiders from a dominant group chose to study a culture about which they had no real understanding and could not understand from their subjective positions that they had done damage and produced

> oppressive, incorrect, and dehumanizing accounts of cultures they had studied. Thus, many communities prefer insiders to conduct research about the communities instead of outsiders producing accounts that lead to further oppression. (2017, p. 116)

My goal as a cultural insider is to create a comfortable environment where the participants feel as if they are having a regular conversation with friends. Having the same ethnic background as the participants does not make me more knowledgeable about the feelings, values, and practices of the participants; however, it is acknowledged for the integrity of the study. Researchers often hold misconceptions about participants' feelings, values, and practices based on influences such as assumed cultural knowledge (Brizuela, Stewart, Carrillo, & Berger, 2000). I am a Latino male, former English Language Learner (ELL), and English Language Teacher; therefore, I took my personal knowledge and experiences into consideration. However, I was diligent not make any assumptions about me as the researcher having personal knowledge of other ELLs. To clarify my subjectivities, I share my story below.

I arrived to the United States at the age of 11. As a former ELL, I realized it was difficult to understand other people that did not speak Spanish. Kansas became my home away from home after the summer of 1987 when my parents informed me that they had enrolled me in school.

School was difficult because there were only two other students in the whole school who spoke Spanish and only one of them was in the same grade as me. This student helped by interpreting some of the content covered in classes. Once the teachers realized that English was my second language and that I was not fluent in English, they placed me in the ESL program. This was a pull-out program, which consisted of taking me out of the mainstream/inclusive classroom and working with an ESL teacher and other ESL students. I thought we would be

working on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, but instead we drew, colored, worked on puzzles, and played games. This time out of the inclusive classroom was not productive. Luckily, I was in this program only two years. Other students remained in the program for three or more years.

My two years in the ESL program were in 6th and 7th grade. During this time, I missed important content in science, history, and language arts classes. I only attended math, art, and physical education with the rest of my peers.

If teachers would have been better prepared and were more informed in second language acquisition, they could have been better advocates for me, other ELLs, and our families. These teachers were unprepared and unaware of how to differentiate their instruction for ELLs. They were often insensitive to our needs and the needs of our parents.

Comments were made about us that were inappropriate. For example, some teachers would say, “If they don’t care enough about their kids’ education, there is no point in inviting these parents to parent/teacher conferences.” Or, “I heard him speaking English on the playground; why does he not participate in class?” These teachers did not realize that my father worked the night shift, and that even if he was able to attend a parent teacher conference, he did not speak English; neither did my mother. Furthermore, they were not aware of the difference between the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), which usually takes from two to three years to develop and the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which take from five to seven years to develop. BICS is the basic language used for social conversations, like the teachers witnessed me using on the playground, and it is much easier and faster to acquire than the academic language needed for the classroom.

Thirty-two years later, some teachers who are not certified to work with CLD students are still making these assumptions and comments about their students. One example provided by Herrera and Murry (2005) is "if they [CLD students] would just learn English everything else [in their school performance] would just fall right into place" (p. 12). My personal experience and the lack of knowledge and preparation in the field overall are some of the reasons I chose to pursue this study.

Additionally, I drew from and Chicana Feminist Epistemologies (CFE), specifically Trenzas y Mestizaje, to further explain my pedagogies from the home. I come from a family of ten, seven sisters and two brothers. My father was the provider and my mother was a stay-at-home mom. Although, my father was always working, my mother was home encouraging all of us and advising all ten of her children. Being one of the youngest, my mother would always sit me next to her when she was braiding my sisters' hair and providing consejos to them. Although my family was very poor, my mother always advised us to be clean, brush our hair, work hard, and most importantly do well in school. She would tell us to be respectful of our elders, teachers, and all other professionals. This advice helped me do well in school simply by paying attention to my teachers, demonstrating respect, and listening to their directions. The same consejos were provided to all children of the family, I was fortunate enough to listen to this advice many times during the braiding of my sisters' hair. My mother only completed first grade of elementary school, but she is one of the brightest persons I know. Although she was not able to provide me with academic support, the encouragement and personal consejos were more than plenty to help me succeed.

My subjectivity is grounded in two personal beliefs: (1) Some pre-service teachers that receive pedagogical strategies to work with CLD students act as advocates for social justice

agendas; (2) There are barriers and support systems in the educational system that educators encounter in their justice work. As a Hispanic male and a former ELL, I realize these are my personal views and this is a form of empathy. It may also be considered a skill related to my ethnicity and job responsibilities.

Background

Recent data from the 2016 Census Bureau shows that 65.5 million U.S. residents five years and older speak a language other than English at home (Zeigler Camarota, 2017). These Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) residents/students attending school have different levels of proficiency of the English language. Some may be at the beginner level, others may be at the intermediate level, while some can already be at the advanced level. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), in the fall of 2016, the percentage of public-school students who were ELLs increased in most states except in nine. In 2016, the ELL student population was higher in the lower grades than in the in the higher grades. For example, 16.2 percent of kindergartners were ELLs, compared with 8.5 percent of 6th graders and 6.9 percent of 8th graders. By the time they reached the 12th grade, only 4.1 percent of students were ELLs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Some of the reasons for the lower percentage of ELLs in the higher grades could have been that they would have obtained language proficiency and exited from the English as a Second Language (ESL) program before reaching the higher grades. At a smaller scale, specifically, the Kansas City public schools have about 15,568 total students and one out of five students' primary language is something other than English. At least 50 different languages other than English are spoken by the ELLs. Furthermore, the Kansas City School District provides support to their ELLs by having a variety of language services such as: Co-Teaching, Pull-Out, Shelter English for grades 7-12, Sheltered Math, Science and Social

Studies for grades 7-12, New Americans Program for grades K-12, Long Term ELL Program (7-12), Dual Language Program, and Immersion Method (Kansas City Public Schools, 2019). These programs seem to be tailored to meet the ELLs language and academic needs. Nevertheless, the representation gap has been and continues to be a major issue regarding the progress of ELLs, especially ELLs from a Hispanic and/or Latino Background. In a study conducted in Tennessee, Black students randomly assigned to a black teacher in the lower elementary grades K-3 were 7% more likely to graduate from high school and 13% more likely to enroll in college than their peers who were not assigned to black teachers. A similar study in North Carolina found that by having a teacher from the same background as students, every 10-percentage point increase in Black male drop-out rate decreased by almost 5% and the intention to go to college increased by 2% (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay & Papageorge, 2018).

I use the Kansas City public schools once more as a statistical example to demonstrate the need for teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds and languages. In the 2017-2018 school year, the Kansas City Public School District reported having 2% Asian teachers and 3% Asian students, 31% Black teachers and 57% Black students, 5% Hispanic teachers and 27% Hispanic students, 61% White teachers and 10% White students, 1% other teachers and 3% other students (Kansas City Public Schools, 2019). The most noticeable representation gap is the one of Hispanic students and Hispanic teachers. On the other hand, white students made up only 10 percent of all public-school students.

Getting to know CLD students is a step forward toward effective implementation of classroom strategies and activities. Gay (2014), states that cultural congruency between home and school leads to cultural respect, personal validation, and academic success for CLD students. In other words, teachers can provide support to CLD students by valuing their background and

ethnicity and seeing them from an asset perspective instead of a deficit perspective. Furthermore, recurrent formative assessment monitors students' progress and provide ongoing data for further instruction (Herrera & Murry, 2016). These seem to be a few of the effective strategies for teachers to consider when working with CLD students.

Historical Context

After receiving my Bachelor's degree in May of 2002 in Secondary Education with an emphasis in Spanish and English as a Second Language (ESL), I started teaching Spanish at an Institution of Higher Education (IHE). While teaching, I was also working on my master's degree in second language acquisition. In 2004, I started working with pre-service teachers and taught seminars regarding advocacy in education. From 2007-2010, I became the coordinator of the Bilingual/Bicultural Education Students Interacting to Obtain Success (BESITOS) program. Two of my main responsibilities with BESITOS were recruitment and retention. From 2010-2016, I taught four of the five ESL classes at the university required to receive an ESL endorsement. I taught ESL/Dual Language Methods, ESL/Dual Language Linguistics, ESL/Dual Language Assessments, and Culture and Language in Classroom Practice. From 2016-2018, I was a certified ESL teacher at a middle school. During these two years I worked with CLD students from 6^{th}-8^{th} grade. For the past seventeen years I have taught ESL, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and Spanish at the middle school and university levels. Currently, I continue teaching and supervising pre-service teachers at the university level.

During my past seventeen years of teaching and advocating for students at different levels, I learned that getting to know the students and differentiating instruction is essential for their success. Viewing CLD students' cultural and linguistic background as an asset and not a deficit perspective empowers them to feel valued.

In this study, it is important to provide context and information about BESITOS because I interviewed former students from the BESITOS program. BESITOS was a scholarship program implemented from 1997-2013, in the College of Education at Kansas State University. It was designed to recruit, retain, and graduate students from underrepresented groups and prepare them for careers in elementary and/or secondary education with an emphasis in ESL.

Through the process of weekly seminars, these pre-service teachers were prepared to serve and work with CLD students.During the seminar, some of the topics discussed with these pre-service teachers were regarding the implementation of educational strategies. These participants also critically analyzed research and wrote for academic and professional purposes. Additionally, during these seminars the students discussed topics regarding their own cultural identity and agency as educated pre-service teachers from diverse backgrounds. Other academic support provided to the BESITOS students included: (a) a computer lab, (b) established class cohort groups, and (c) peer-to-peer and university tutoring.

Taking into consideration the burden and difficulties some students were having to leave their home towns to attend Kansas State University, the program directors used the BESITOS framework and wrote more grants to request Title III funds for 2 +2 projects. Some of the burdens, to mention a few, included; (a) language barrier, (b) being away from family and friends, (c) Not understanding the educational system from the United States, and (d) attending a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) (Shroyer, Yahnke, Morales, Dunn, Lohfink, & Espinoza, 2009). Some of these participants had only been in the United States for a few years and were having difficulties comprehending the academic language. Also, Latinos/as grow up in very close-knit families. Since some of these students had only been in the United states for three or four years, they also had difficulties understanding the U.S educational system and becoming

acculturated into a PWI. Therefore, the feeling of home sickness, missing family and friends, and the topic of wanting to be home to help their parents arose on a regular basis.

Title III funds were provided for four other BESITOS projects. Kansas State University, in partnership with community colleges in Southwest Kansas and Donnelly College in Kansas City, housed these 2+2 projects from 2004-2013. In other words, modifications and adaptations were made to the program to meet the students' cultural needs, help them succeed, and complete a bachelor's degree. Students from these projects received the same financial support as those attending Kansas State University. These projects were considered grow your own teacher projects because at least half of the scholarship recipients were non-traditional students. These non-traditional students had children and were already working in the schools as paraprofessionals. The 2+2 BESITOS projects allowed the students to take classes in the partner community colleges for the first two years, then transfer to Kansas State University to complete their bachelor's degree. These types of projects made the transition to the university much easier. The students got to know each other well while taking classes at the community colleges and would transfer in cohorts (Shroyer, Yahnke, Morales, Dunn, Lohfink, & Espinoza, 2009). Class cohorts also helped the students feel more comfortable and welcomed at the university.

The program had a great success rate with over 75% of the participants graduating with an education degree. After graduating, many of them received a full-time teaching position and 35 of them continued working on their master's degree. Twenty-one of these participants have now obtained a graduate degree and continue working as teachers and/or advocates in the state and in the nation. As former BESITOS student, coordinator and associate director, I consider myself an insider. I am one of the first graduates from this program and from 2004-2013, I worked directly with these students.

Statement of the Research Problem

This research is needed, because of the need to study a group or population of marginalized English Language Learners (ELLs). It is imperative that more research is conducted on effective strategies and support systems provided to ELLs. We need to take into consideration that although many ELLs are born in the United States, they still seem to struggle acquiring and learning English. According to Sousa (2011), about 76 percent of the elementary-age ELLs and 56 percent of middle and high school ELLs were born in the United States. Although, about "80 percent of the parents of these ELLs were born outside of the United States" (Sousa, 2011 p. 1). Additionally, about 80 percent of the ELLs speak Spanish as their first language, 8 percent speak Asian languages, and 12 percent speak other languages. Since I and about 90 percent of the BESITOS participants are bilingual in English and Spanish, I felt compelled to employ Chicana Feminist Epistemology (CFE) in education to deconstruct and reconstruct non-Eurocentric knowledge systems. The CFE anti-oppressive framework allowed me to address the unique cultural knowledge the participants bring to the education system. According to Calderon et al. (2012), CFE was conceptualized in education by Delgado Bernal in 1998 as a response to the ineffectiveness of both mainstream education research and liberal feminism scholarship to address the types of knowledge and experiences Chicanas bring to "educational institutions and research" (p. 515). Many students of color are not performing as well as they could in school settings where teaching and learning are approached solely from the "perspective of Eurocentric values, assumptions, beliefs and methodologies" (Gay, 2014, p. 354). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2019) evidence demonstrates that minority teachers of similar backgrounds as their students may have higher expectations of their students than nonminority teachers. Evidence also shows that having a

teacher of the same race/ethnicity can have positive impacts on students' attitudes, motivation, and performance (NCES, 2019). This still remains a main concern since the percentage of white school teachers at K-12 level still remain over 80 percent and the percentage of Latino/Hispanic teachers has only increased from 6 to 9 percent in the past twelve years (NCES, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers who graduated from the BESITOS federally funded bilingual and bicultural education program navigated educational structures, while becoming teacher advocates who were engaged in justice agendas concerning their CLD students in a midwestern state.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways do the participants engage in justice agendas for their students?
2. What do the participants attribute as barriers and support system(s) in their justice work?
3. What significant educational strategies do the participants value in their role as advocates in their justice work?

Methodology

The methodological framework I implemented with this research is Trenzas y Mestisaje. Trenzas means to braid multiple strands together and is considered a CFE. Margaret E. Montoya first conceptualized trenzas as an analytical frame of intersectionality, "a multimethodological approach of pláticas (popular conversations), and the active engagement-voices" of her researcher self and her participants (Gonzalez, 2001, p. 645). Furthermore, trenzas challenge dominant society's indifference to non-English speakers and that the culture lived and learned by

women requires different languages (Montoya, 1994). Before trenzas y mestizaje and other CFEs appeared in academic literature there was the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (Calderón, Delgado Bernal, Pérez Huber, Malagón & Nelly Vélez, 2012). Anzaldúa's theoretical concepts of Nepantla, El Mundo Zurdo, and Coyolxauhqui, were utilized to address issues related to oppression and social justice research (Calderon et al., 2012). Additionally, these theoretical concepts provided a foundation for my study and I utilized them to understand and explain how Nepantleros/as can provide advocacy for the participants' CLD students and families. Furthermore, the concept of "El Mundo Zurdo" helped me explain the ways teachers and school personnel should view and value different ideas and perspectives in order to provide the appropriate support to parents and families (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002).

Mestizaje, the Spanish word for mixture, also considered a CFE, is a "consciousness of an ethical commitment to egalitarian social relations in the everyday political sphere of culture" (Gonzalez 2001, p. 646). Trenzas y mestizaje allowed exploration of the experiences of Latinos/as former BESITOS students as they continue to navigate the education system as in-service ESL teachers. Trenzas y mestizaje as a CFE is not new; however, it is a methodological framework that is rarely used to understand the experiences of Latinx in-service teachers. According to Delgado Bernal 2002:

> There is not just one raced-gendered epistemology by many that each speak to culturally specific ways of positioning between a raced epistemology that omits the influences of gender on knowledge production and a White feminist epistemology that does not account for race. (p. 107)

This CFE framework of trenzas y mestizaje, through the process of individual pláticas, and group pláticas allowed me to weave and interconnect stories of the support they provide to

their CLD students. Calderón, Delgado Bernal, Pérez Huber, Malagón & Nelly Vélez (2012) state that feminists of color in education have drawn on alternative systems of learning that hold the potential to disrupt "Western colonial assumptions" (p. 514). Additionally, I argue that CFE frameworks are also appropriate to examine the experiences of both male and female Latinx teachers. Both, male and female, obtain knowledge from home or pedagogies of the home through the process of consejos, cuentos, and pláticas (Delgado Bernal, 2018).

Trenzas y Mestizaje were informed by the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and more specifically, Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit). Critical Race Theory began as a movement in the mid-1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, this movement is a "collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 2). Although, CRT began in the field of law, today in the field of education, scholars and theorists use CRT to understand issues of school discipline, ranking, disagreement over curriculum, and history (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). LatCrit is considered a subgroup of CRT because it addresses similar issues, although, Latinx scholars also study immigration theory and policy along with language rights and/or discrimination based on national origin (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Together, CRT and LatCrit offer an interdisciplinary approach that can help critical scholars and educators understand and improve the education experiences of students of color (Malagón, 2010). CRT and LatCrit are described in more detail in Chapter 2.

Since over 90 percent of the former BESITOS students are Latinx, I was compelled to use critical qualitative research to view my participants' experiences through the lens of trenzas y mestizaje and LatCrit. Trenzas y Mestizaje in concert with LatCrit was informed by testiminios. Testiminos provided the opportunity to collect data through the process of pláticas while using

tesoros as a strategy to trigger the individual and group pláticas. In Chapter 3, I provide a comprehensive explanation of my methodological framework and methods of data collection. Furthermore, I include a figure of a prism to explain the framework. I also provide a figure explaining the process of the individual and group pláticas.

Definition of Research Terms

Advocates: People that publicly support a particular cause. In this case teacher advocates.

Barriers: Barriers can be obstacles that prevent improvement or access. "Some barriers for ELLs can be immigration status and language" (Soltero, 2011, p. 170).

Justice Agendas: A list of things to be considered or done in a just manner, "especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020).

Participants: A person or people who take part in something. In this study the participants were former BESITOS students.

Significant Educational Strategies: Strategies that have meaning to the students.

Students: Scholar and/or learner.

Support System (s): "A network of people who provide an individual with practical or emotional support" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020).

Teacher parity: Having teachers from the same race and cultural background as the students (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Linsay & Papageorge, 2018).

Definition of Cultural and Pedagogical Terms

Carne asada: A steak cut into thin layers usually served with rice and beans.

Coatlicue: "An autochthonous earth god/dess. According to Aztec mythic history, Coatlicue (Kwat-LEE-kway), whose name means 'Serpent Skirts,' is the earth goddess of life

and death and mother of the gods. Coatlicue has a horrific appearance, with a skirt of serpents and necklace of human skulls. According to some versions of the story, after being impregnated by a ball of feathers, Coatlicue was killed by her daughter Coyolxauhqui and her other children" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 242).

Confianza: Trust

Consejos: Advice

Coyolxauhqui: "According to Aztec mythic history, Coyolxauqui (Ko-yol-sha-UH-kee), also called la diosa de la luna (goddess of the moon), was Coatlicue's oldest daughter. After her mother was impregnated by a ball of feathers, Coyolxauhqui encouraged her four hundred brothers and sisters to kill Coatlicue. As they attacked their mother, the fetus, Huitzilopochtli, sprang fully grown and armed from Coatlicue, tore Coyolxauhqui into more than a thousand pieces, flung her head into the sky and her body down the sacred mountain, and killed his siblings (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 243).

Cuentos: Short stories

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD): "A preferred term for an individual or group of individuals whose culture and language differs from that of the dominant group" (Herrerra & Murry, 2016, p. 5).

Educación: Education. Educated academically or well behaved.

El Mundo Zurdo/The Lefthand World: "Has various ethical, epistemological, and aesthetic definitions. Most generally, El Mundo Zurdo represents relational difference. Applied to alliances, it indicates communities based on commonalities, visionary locations where people from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs and concerns coexist and work together to bring about revolutionary change" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 243).

English as a Second Language (ESL): "A programing model in which linguistically diverse students are instructed in the use of English as a means of communication and learning. This model is often used when native speakers of multiple first languages are present within the same classroom" (Herrera & Murry, 2005, p. 9).

English Language Learner/s (ELL/s): "Individuals who are in the process of transitioning from a home or native language to English" (Herrera & Murry, 2005, p. 9).

Greñas: tangle of hair.

Group pláticas: Group of people having a formal and/or informal conversation on a topic of their choice.

Huitzilopochtli: "An Aztec sun god and god of war. He Sprang, fully developed and armed, from his mother, Coatlicue, and dismembered his sister Coyolxauhqui" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 245).

La amistad interview: During this phase of the interview/plática participants and researcher begin sharing their experiences.

La comida: Sharing of food.

La despedida: This phase of the plática can serve to disengage the interviewee from sharing their testimonios. It is likely that additional key contextual data may continue being shared during this phase.

La entrada: Phase of la plática that serves as the "relational preliminaries" before beginning the actual plática/interview (Valle & Mendoza, 1978, p 34).

La invitación: An invitation to a specific event.

La llegada: The arrival.

Mascaras: masks.

Mestizaje: The Spanish word for "mixture," mestizaje (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 245).

Nepantla: A Nahuatl word meaning "in-between space" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 245).

Nepantleras/os: A term Anzaldúa coined to describe a unique type of mediator, those who have survived (and been transformed by) their encounters with/in nepantla. Nepantleas/or are threshold people, living within and among multiple worlds; through painful negotiations, they develop what Anzaldúa describes as "perspective[s] from the cracks". (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 245).

Pláticas: Formal and/or informal conversations.

Reflexión: Reflection.

Tesoros: Tangible or intangible treasures of valuable artifacts.

Testimonios: A critical Latin American oral tradition practice, that links "the spoken word to social action and benefits the oral narrative or personal experience as a source of knowledge" (Benmayor, et al., 1997 p. 153).

Trenzas: The braiding of strands of hair.

Una persona educada: An educated person, referring to a person of character, and a person holding himself or herself to high standards (Prieto Cortez & IDRA 1997).

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was that my participants were from only Latinx background who were graduates of the BESITOS program. Although they were bilingual and bicultural, I did not explore other cultural issues related CLD students from different cultural backgrounds. Second, by using CFE specifically drawn from Gloria Anzaldúa's decolonizing epistemologies, such as nepantla, El Mundo Zurdo/The Left Hand World, and Coyolxhauqui, I have limited this study to Mexican American/Chicano cultural knowledge. Another limitation

was the different types of resources available to the participants that may influence their teaching.

Statement of the Significance of the Study

The findings from this study can be of benefit to teachers, principals, and all people working with CLDs. Studies such as this one that involve participants from CLD backgrounds working with CLDs may be of value to all people working with CLDs from around the world.

Organization of the Study

This study explores the experiences of three former BESITOS students who are now in-service K-12 teachers working with CLD students. The research explores a CFE methodological framework of trenzas y mestizaje and LatCrit as a lens to view the participants' experiences. These personal and professional experiences were braided through the process of testimonios by using the participant's tesoros during the individual pláticas, group pláticas, and observations. This dissertation was organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction, including historical context and initial background information. Chapter 2 reviews the literature of the theories and prior relevant research and details relevant empirical studies. Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive explanation of the multimethodological frameworks and explains in detail the data collection process through individual pláticas, group pláticas, and observations. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the findings, a narrative of participants' experiences and participants' testimonios. Chapter 5 presents a traditional analysis of the findings and research questions with emergent themes. Additionally, Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of the findings, including recommendations, and conclusions from the research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This literature review begins with an overview of Critical Race Theory, from which Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) derives. This is followed by two major sections; (1) The first section addresses Latino Critical Race Theory; (2) The second section provides a substantive relevant explanation of empirical studies that inform the purpose of this study and the gaps in the research literature.

Critical Race Theory

Since this is a critical qualitative study, I looked at the participants' experiences through a LatCrit lens. LatCrit is a derivative of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Thus, in order to understand LatCrit fully we first must understand CRT. Historically, CRT was developed in the mid-1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, "Critical Race Theory is an intellectual movement that is both particular to our postmodern and conservative times and part of a long tradition of human resistance and liberation" (Crenshaw, 1995, p. xi). Critical Race Theory surfaced from a previous movement in Critical Legal Studies and progressed to become its own entity (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The basic tenets of CRT are to foster an approach that includes concepts, methodology, and pedagogy, while incorporating the role of race and racism and attempting to eliminate prejudice and subordination based on class, gender, and sexual orientation (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Additionally, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state that although not every member may subscribe to every tenet, they provide the following propositions or elements: (1) racism is ordinary, not aberrational, (2) interest convergence or material determinism, (3) "social construction" which refers to race and races are products of social thought and relations, (4) differential racialization, (5) intersectionality and anti-essentialism, and the final element of (6) voice of color (pp. 7-9).

To explain the first proposition, “racism is ordinary, not aberrational,” Delgado and Stefancic (2001), provide two examples, the first one is “color-blind,” which refers to specific forms of discrimination, such as mortgage redlining or the refusal to hire a more qualified person from a diverse background rather than a white high school dropout (p. 7). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001):

> Color-blind, or formal, conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination, such as mortgage redlining or the refusal to hire a black Ph.D. rather than a white high school dropout, that do stand out and attract our attention. (p. 7)

The interest convergence or material determinism feature further promotes racism in the interest of white elites. An example provided by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), is that the *Brown v. Board of Education* litigation may not have been for the desire to help blacks, but instead more of self-interest of elite whites (p7). Additionally, Bell (1980) explained that the Brown decision represented the interest convergence between blacks and middle- and upper-class whites:

> principle of "interest con- vergence" provides: The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites. However, the fourteenth amendment, standing alone, will not authorize a judicial remedy providing effective racial equality for blacks where the remedy sought threatens the superior societal status of middle-and-upper class whites. (p. 523)

Social construction or race and races are products of social thoughts and relations, in other words, race and races are categories designed by society and can be controlled, or retired when convenient (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, Ortiz and Jani (2010) point out that race is typically determined by the dominant group using socially constructed systems such as

"empirical based knowledge" and law to advance and protect its interest (p. 178). For example, in the history of the United States, race and racial groups have been defined differently in order to determine who is included or excluded from the dominant group. Ortiz and Jani (2010) state that the excluded racial groups unfortunately receive fewer social resources and opportunities and have less access to social goods.

A similar and more recent element further explained by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), is called "differential racialization," which refers to ways in which the dominant society categorizes minority groups at different times (p. 8). For example, at some point in time society may have had little use for Chinese people, but much need for Mexican bracero/agricultural workers. Intersectionality and anti-essentialism are closely related to differential racialization although no person has a single particular identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). For example, different people may have overlapping identities such as a Latina female, may be a single mother, and working class.

Intersectionality is another element and was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991, 1993) and defined as an "analytical tool" that rejects the disjunction of identity categories, as it recognizes the heterogeneity of various race-sex groups (Simien, 2007, p. 265). Critical Race Theory along with LatCrit have been the focus on the intersections of oppression from multiple types of identity, including ethnicity, culture, nationality, and language issues experienced by people of diverse backgrounds.

The "voice of color" is one of the last elements presented by Delgado, et al. (2012, p.10). This element refers the experiences that black, Latino/a, and other writers and scholars from diverse backgrounds have survived and may be able to inform their white counterparts about

matters that whites are unlikely to know. This occurs through storytelling, which may also be myths, allegories, and represents the counterstory.

These tenets, propositions, and/or elements are applicable to a wide variety of marginalized and underrepresented communities, but Latino communities also have some culturally situated issues of oppression. These issues are part of a LatCrit agenda, which is discussed in the section below.

Latino Critical Race Theory: LatCrit

This section addresses LatCrit, its history, tenets, and suitability to this study. This onto-epistemology can be its own methodology. I use both critical qualitative research and LatCrit as a lens to interrogate the production of experiences for those, who on a regular basis, negotiate social justice due to their racialized identity (Denzin, 2017). Furthermore, critical qualitative inquiry requires understanding and awareness of the need to rectify inequalities by giving opportunities to the voices of least advantaged groups (Denzin, 2017). As a cultural insider, I was able to investigate below the surface when considering the issues and experiences the participants encountered in their social justice agendas when navigating oppressive spaces and providing support to their CLD students.

The LatCrit scholarly movement emerged in 1995 and is now being used worldwide to investigate and compare patterns of subordination reflected globally (Valdés, 2005). Additionally, LatCrit is comprised of a group of activist scholars from different places, such as Puerto Rico, Mexico, and other Latin America countries, and with similar beliefs such as fighting for social justice (Valdés, 2005). LatCrit can be used to reveal the ways Latinos/as experience race, class, gender, sexuality and specifically to reveal issues Latinos/as experience

regarding immigration status, language, ethnicity, culture, and social justice (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Solorzano and Yosso (2001) define LatCrit in education as the following:

> A LatCrit theory in education is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact on the educational structures, processes, and discourses that effect People of Color generally and Latinas/os specifically. Utilizing the experiences of Latinas/os, a LatCrit theory in education also theorizes and examines that place where racism intersects with other forms of subordinations such as sexism and classism. LatCrit scholars in education acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize co-existing with their potential to emancipate and empower. LatCrit theory in education is conceived as a social justice project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community. LatCrit theory in education is transdisciplinary and draws on many other schools of progressive scholarship. (p. 479)

Latino/a Critical Race Theory "can address the concerns of Latinos/as in light of both our internal and external relationships in and with the worlds that have marginalized us" (Hernandez-Truyol, 1997, p. 885). Latinos/as have been marginalized for years and treated as lesser citizens through assimilation. This caused them to lose their culture and language.

Since LatCrit is more specifically focused on issues such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, advocacy, I used LatCrit as a lens to explore the participants' experiences of social justice advocacy as a result of their preparation when working with CLD students. Often CLD students have little to no advocates in school and their educators frequently

lack strong pedagogical strategies. Therefore, LatCrit was the most appropriate framework to explore the different ways advocacy and pedagogy were enacted by ESL teachers. LatCrit as a framework also counters dominant ways of constructing knowledge. Most qualitative texts do not make space for culturally situated inquiry, let alone inquiry informed by LatCrit. Specifically, LatCrit has compelled me to discover a methodological framework that is situated within the multiple, complex, and contradictory cultural landscape of the Latinx community.

In a study conducted by Pérez Huber (2010), CRT was used as a lens to examine the intersectionality of multiple forms of oppression within the lives of People of Color. Since the participants in Pérez Huber's (2010) study were from a Latino background, she used LatCrit to examine the intersectionality issues related to some Latinos, such as immigration status, language, ethnicity and culture. Ten undocumented Latina college students were the participants for the study. Through Chicana Feminist Epistemology (CFE) testimonios, Pérez Huber, collects the participants' stories of their P-12 education process and their experiences as illegal immigrant college students. The participants had arrived to the U.S between the ages of six months to nine years old. Pérez Huber (2010) further explains that the intersections of race and immigration status were best viewed through a LatCrit lens because it allowed her to also use the racist nativism lens to explain a situation between one of the Latina participants and the well-being of a "white native teacher" (p. 86). Of all the barriers explained in this study, the one that was identified as the most difficult barrier was paying for college tuition. These participants were not allowed to receive state or federal financial support because of their immigration status. These participants were able to pay their tuition with out of pocket money, money raised through fundraisers, and raffles they organized.

In a different study by Delgado Bernal (2002), CRT and LatCrit are used as a lens to examine how a race gender epistemology provides a different understanding of the experiences and knowledge that Chicanos/Chicanas bring to their formal schooling. Additionally, this research demonstrated that CRT and LatCrit give acceptance to culturally and linguistically relevant ways of "knowing and understanding and to the importance of rethinking the traditional notion of what counts as knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 117). In this study, Delgado Bernal also uses feminist epistemologies, often obscured, to explain the ways of how cultural knowledge contributes to the educational success of some students and provides a list of specific initiatives educational institutions and universities can implement to provide support to these underrepresented and marginalized Chicano/Chicana students (2002).

The first initiative recommended by Delgado Bernal (2002) is to use and view the students' bilingual skills as an asset instead of a liability. She explains that bilingual students can be hired as tutors in the universities' language department. These students' bilingual skills and family knowledge can also be incorporated and utilized to translate institutional informational documents to send out to parents and families. Providing institutional information in the families' native language allows parents to better understand the formal education process and it helps them to be more involved in their children's education (Delgado Bernal, 2002). This type of support fosters family and school relationships, which are important at all levels of schooling. According to Nieto (1996), students of color often feel that they must choose either between family and culture or school success. Delgado Bernal explains how some studies have demonstrated that Latino/Latina students become better adjusted to college by maintaining a supportive family relationship (2002).

Delgado Bernal explains Latino/Latina students that maintain supportive and positive relationships with parents and families not only become more adjusted to college but are also more likely to graduate (2002). One of the last initiatives mentioned in Delgado Bernal's study is that the national movement to dismantle race-based admissions policies ignores current societal inequalities and that the admissions process is based on a very "Eurocentric measure of knowledge" (2002, p. 117). One recommendation made in Delgado Bernal's study is that if race or ethnicity are not part of the admissions process, that educators need to think of creative and original ways to move away from a solely Eurocentric measure of knowledge to one that considers and values knowledge prominent from communities of color (2002).

Social Justice

Social justice is frequently understood as the concept of fairness and equality for all people regarding their basic human rights (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). According to Nieto and Bode (2008), social justice is a term associated with an equitable education, which means providing each student opportunities to achieve their potential by giving them access to the resources, "services and social and cultural capital of a society" and also valuing and taking into consideration the culture and ethnicity of each student (p. 11). In this study, social justice was mostly referred to the rights of CLD students to receive a fair, effective, and inclusive education. According to Nieto (1996), most teachers want to provide the best education for their students but unfortunately teachers are not the ones in charge or even part of the development of policies and practices being implemented in their schools. Through the process of case studies, Nieto (1996) explores and explains some key components that teachers and schools can do to provide successful academic environments for all students.

One key component is to allow and encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities or in other activities beyond academics. Nieto (1996) explains that such types of activities helps remove students from negative peer pressure and develop a sense of belonging by obtaining leadership qualities and skills. For some students belonging to or being part of extracurricular activities, such as music classes, sports, and/or church groups allows them to spend their time wisely and effectively instead of participating in less productive activities. Although Hurtado and Carter's (1997) research, focuses on Latino college students. Hurtado and Carter (1997) state that understanding students' sense of belonging, may be a key factor to understanding how social and academic experiences, along with college transition and racial climate negatively impact these students.

The second key component explained by Nieto (2006) is the importance of incorporating family, community, and school in the lives of students. All parents have high expectations for their children and value education, but show it in different ways. For example, some parents from low social economic status or working class may not be able to help their children with their homework, but can provide moral support by encouraging them and believing in them. Since some of these parents may not give their children "tangible guidance," these students may lack a sense of direction (Nieto, 1996).

The last key component is having teachers that are compassionate and caring, (Nieto, 1996). Teachers were described as caring by demonstrating to their students that they cared about them by implementing engaging and motivating classroom activities. Others teachers were viewed as caring by participating and being involved in the students' community through the process of certain activities. And, teachers who understood and valued the students' culture were also viewed as compassionate and caring to the students (Nieto, 1996).

Quality Education for CLD Students

A quality education can mean different things to different people. Two terms used incorrectly and usually interchangeably are equal education and educational equity (Nieto & Bode, 2008). “Equity is the process; equality is the result” (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 11). In other words, equal education can mean providing the same resources to all students and an equitable education is providing the appropriate resources to those that need them and during the time of need. This process would require getting to know students’ background knowledge and their educational needs. Matias (2013) states that culturally responsive teaching is not only a pedagogical methodology for taking action against the racist practices of classroom teaching, it is also an approach to reconstruct knowledge that was initially marginalized due to systemic racism. Matias (2013) further explains that culturally responsive teaching developed as a result of racist practices, which did not consider nor acknowledge the importance of the racial and cultural experiences CLD students brought into the classroom.

Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt, and McQuillan, (2009) emphasize the importance of incorporating social justice as part of the curriculum. In their study they show that teacher candidates focus on ensuring students’ learning through the process of social justice agendas (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). Not enough teacher programs exist that prepare teachers to teach for social justice. Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) mention that teacher education programs in the past have combined their efforts with national organizations such as the National Association for Multicultural Education, the Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education, The National Network for Educational Renewal, and several committees and special interest groups. By challenging the inequities of school and society through social justice education, teaching becomes about enhancing students’ learning and their life chances (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009).

McIntyre, Rosebery, and González (2001) refer to something similar called the sociocultural approach, which refers to learning taking place by obtaining social interactions among the individual/student, society, and the community. “Funds of knowledge” is the type of knowledge obtained in the students’ homes and communities; therefore, all students will have different types of funds of knowledge (McIntyre, Rosebery & González, 2001, p. 3). Ovando and Collier (1998) refer to a similar crucial principle, but refer to it as “prior knowledge” (p. 66). By implementing this principle in the classroom, teachers allow students opportunities to learn from their peers’ rich linguistic and cultural life experiences they each bring to the classroom. Ovando and Collier further explain that in order to activate students’ prior knowledge, classrooms must be more student-centered and teachers must become active partners in the learning process (1998). Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers help students make connections from their prior knowledge to the new knowledge.

Herrera (2016) explains that funds of knowledge is the type of knowledge students obtain from their families at home, and prior knowledge is obtained or learned from being part of a community. Herrera further expands on the type of knowledge students possess and explains another type of knowledge, which she refers to as “academic knowledge (2016, p. 80). Academic knowledge is learned/acquired in a formal educational setting (Herrera, 2016). When teachers consider CLD students’ academic knowledge, they need to take into consideration the academic knowledge they obtained in their first language and second language. Marzano (2004) states that the students’ academic knowledge about the content is a big indicator regarding how well they will learn new information relative to the content. Gay (2000) also states that when academic knowledge and skills are meaningful, appealing, and relatable and are established within the lived experiences of the students, these skills are learned faster and more thoroughly.

Additionally, Yuan (2017) states that teachers and/or professors need to recognize that minority students have and bring rich funds of knowledge to their education learning experiences, therefore teachers need to modify their approaches to instruction in order to meet their students' linguistic and cultural needs. Yuan (2017), further explains that CLD students' cultural knowledge and background knowledge usually conflicts with the academic knowledge and this makes their education experience more difficult.

Teacher Readiness to Work with CLD Students

There seems to be a misconception and misunderstanding about whose responsibility it is to help ELLs succeed in school. Research concerning this issue indicates that it is everyone's responsibility. Parents, administrators, and teachers must work collaboratively to help ELLs succeed. More specifically, some studies indicate that all teachers must be prepared to work with CLD students. Hopkins et al. (2019) state that availability or lack of resources can affect students' achievement, but strongly believe that teacher quality is one of the strongest school-related predictors for student success. Zhang and Stephens (2013) state that both pre-service and in-service teachers should learn how to teach the content and the language to CLD students. According to Zhang and Stephens (2013), one of the biggest challenges teachers face is knowing and addressing the differences between linguistic and academic skills. In the past two decades, research indicates that all teachers need preparation in developing specific skills and dispositions to work with CLD students (Hopkins et al., 2019). Additionally, in a study by Master, Loeb, Whitney, and Wyckoff, (2016) they mentioned that teacher experience made a big difference in teacher effectiveness by having clear objectives and implementing frequent assessments. Furthermore, teachers with more knowledge and experience were more effective and proficient in working with all students, including with CLD students Masters, et al. (2016).

Recent research has been analyzed and summarized regarding culturally and linguistically responsive teacher preparation and frameworks have been developed to provide support in preparing teachers to work effectively with CLD students and families. García, Arias, Harris Murri, and Serna (2010) developed a framework and their research provides helpful information regarding teacher preparation that focuses on preparing culturally and linguistically responsive teachers. Since the CLD student population has increased tremendously in one decade from 14 million to 65.5 million from 2006-2016 and bilingual programs have diminished, classroom teachers have become the primary individuals responsible for providing most of the instruction to CLD students (García et al., 2010).

Other reasons suggested by García, et al. (2010) for providing teacher preparation to white mainstream classroom teachers to work with CLD students are: (a) the pressure school districts are receiving from the No Child Left Behind Act to place CLD students in mainstream classrooms, and (b) the cost factors associated with providing effective services to students. Additionally, the debate continues over how to best educate CLDs. Some believe that using the students' primary language through bilingual education is the best way to provide effective support while others believe English is learned at a faster rate and more effectively through using English only strategies. Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) indicate that regardless the method of instruction implemented to work with CLDs, teachers need special preparation and skills to effectively provide support to these students. Most successful teachers of CLDs have distinguishable pedagogical and cultural expertise and knowledge as well as the ability to engage with parents and families (Gándara et al., 2005). Marrun (2018), suggests that in order to create a positive and safe school and classroom environment, effective educators of CLD students should engage in critical self-reflection through the process of multicultural education and culturally

responsive teaching. Marrun (2018), further explains the importance of learning and pronouncing CLD students' names correctly. Through critical reflection, teachers can demonstrate cultural sensitivity and also become aware of the importance of learning their CLD students' names and identities (Marrun, 2018).

Educators who work directly with CLDs tend to be advocates for these students. According to Heineke, Coleman, Ferrell, and Kersemeier (2012), well-informed teachers who are also knowledgeable about language policy guidelines and conscious of the linguistic needs of CLDs can better advocate for classroom and program resources. These teachers are also able to differentiate instruction, develop and implement effective methods, strategies, and techniques with CLDs as well as work with parents and communities (de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007). Krashen and Terrell (1983) identify the natural approach theory to provide support and guidance for teachers working directly with CLDs. The natural approach divides the stages of second language acquisition into preproduction, early production, speech emergence and intermediate fluency (Krashen & Terrel 1983). Herrera and Murry (2016) expand on the process of linguistic dimensions of the natural approach by adding the stage of advance fluency. Being familiar with and knowledgeable about the natural approach and the stages of second language acquisition can be beneficial for all teachers working with CLD students and help them implement the appropriate strategies and activities according to their English language proficiency.

Besides being knowledgeable, teachers are expected to be empathetic, caring, and willing to build good rapport with their students. Irizarry and Raible (2011) state that positive experiences with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other school officials working with Latino and CLDs can help them succeed academically through caring relationships. Irizarry and Raible (2011) add that Latino and CLDs can become empowered by helping them remove the

barriers that exist in schools and beyond, through culturally responsive and critical pedagogical approaches.

Risk Factors Affecting CLDs' Academic Performance

In many instances, teachers place, the blame on parents and/or in the school's administration for the students' low achievement, then parents blame teachers for the lack of success of their children. Although in some studies, especially in the study conducted by Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005), teachers do not blame parents and/or families for the lack of student achievement, rather teachers realize that the lack of assistance from these families can be related to parents' work, language, and cultural barriers. According to Gándara et al. (2005), all students especially CLDs are more successful when all entities collaborate and help remove student barriers. Other challenges mentioned by Gándara et al. (2005) are the struggles to communicate and/or connect with students' families and communities. The lack of time to cover the subject matter along with language development was another concern expressed by the teachers. Additionally, factors that seem to create frustration for teachers of CLDs are the wide ranges of English language proficiency in the classrooms and the lack of resources to provide effective strategies for these students (Gándara et al., 2005).

The lack of teacher preparation, lack of language and culture knowledge, not having enough time to teach the content matter, and language development, along with different levels of English language proficiency are some of the factors affecting the performance of CLDs. In addition, García, Arias, Harris Murri, and Serna (2010) mention five other factors affecting CLDs' academic performance: "[1] these students usually come from low income families, [2] parents have a low level of education, [3] parents' English language proficiency, [4] mother's marital status at the time of birth and [5] the majority of these families also have an ethnic/racial

minority status" (p. 134). Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students on average, "exhibit three of the five risk factors at higher rates than native English speakers, they seem to be at a greater risk for academic underachievement" (García et al., 2010, p. 134). According to Olvera and Olvera (2012), students of color, especially, Latino students come from a low socioeconomic status. In 2002, Latinos' poverty rate was at 21.8% and within Latino children ages (0-17) this poverty rate increases to 33.2% (Olvera & Olvera, 2012). If these challenges and barriers are not addressed, by the time CLD students, reach the legal dropout age, they tend to become extremely overwhelmed and dropout of school. These barriers tend to affect CLD students, especially Latino students, at a higher rate. In 2008 the dropout rate for Latinos was at 38% (Olvera & Olvera, 2012). Additionally, dropout rates for Latinos living in poverty are twice the dropout rate of other students at the same income level (National Center Educational Statistics, 2013).

Other barriers and risk factors that may affect CLD students' academic performance, especially CLDs that have immigrated to the United States can be (a) separation from parents, (b) separation from family caretakers, and (c) reunification with parents (Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010). Separation from parents may take place when parents leave their home country leaving some or all children behind with siblings while they get establish in the United States. Although reunification with parents can be exciting, leaving caretakers, siblings and friends behind can also be stressful and create emotional problems, which may affect these students' academic performance (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010).

Language proficiency is another barrier CLD students must face and eventually overcome in order to perform well in school. According to Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010), in the year 2007, "Fifty-two percent" of foreign-born students over the age of five were considered Limited English Proficient (p. 18). Limited English proficient students are considered to be at a

very low level of English Proficiency. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010) states these CLD immigrant students may also suffer and experience some type of discrimination or racism. These are additional challenges that teachers encounter and must prepare for in order to provide the appropriate guidance and educational opportunities to their CLDs. Facella, Rampino, and Shea (2005) also mention that a great number of CLD students that need extra second language support are being transitioned to mainstream classrooms where the teachers do not necessarily have the resources or support the meet these students' needs. Additionally, Facella, et al. (2005) state CLD students will fall behind unless they are provided with second language support.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching

In recent years with the implementation of the new Common Core standards, more white mainstream classroom teachers are expected to learn specific ways to work with CLDs. Bunch (2013) suggests that teachers need to be prepared to teach English differently than most mainstream teachers do, which will require teaching to deliberately provide opportunities for language and literacy development. Bunch (2013) further proposes that mainstream classroom teachers do not need to have specific "pedagogical content knowledge about language as second language teachers do," but rather be knowledgeable about pedagogical language, which can be integrally connected to the subject areas they teach (p. 299). In other words, academic content vocabulary should be explicitly taught in all core subject areas. Gay (2003) conducted a study where multicultural education was implemented with CLD students and the difference it made. For example, students were more likely to successfully performed with more efficacy on all levels because there was congruence between the students' cultural background and school experiences (Gay, 2003). Moreover, multicultural education, makes schooling more relevant and effective for CLD students. In this study, during the process of ten years, teachers translated

adapted, and embedded Yup'id cultural knowledge in math, literacy and science curriculums. The teachers and the elders from the Yup'id community were in communication, collaborated and learned from each other on how best to meet the students' needs through the process of traditional and cultural knowledge.

Amaro-Jiménez (2011) describes a service learning project developed and implemented, which was an after-school program run by the public library from that community. This program benefited both the pre-service teachers and the students with whom they were working. Amaro-Jiménez (2011) mentions that 95% of these school children were CLD and that the program personnel had never worked with CLDs and were not prepared to meet their academic needs. Through, the process of this sixteen week after school volunteer program, the pre-service teachers were paired with a CLD student and they learned specific strategies to implement with them and in the process got to know them and their families. After the sixteenth week time frame, these pre-service teachers were better able to understand the children they served (Amaro-Jimenez, 2011). According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), effective teacher education programs stimulate a deep understanding of and respect for children. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), further state that effective teacher education programs also provide the ability to diagnose students' strengths and readiness as well as their needs, and strong understanding of how to "build curriculum that will foster learning" from different starting points and take into account children's cultural context (p. 119). From the perspective of Darling-Hammond and Bransford, I agree that the service learning project by Amaro-Jimenez seems to be effective.

Another recommendation, not so much as a specific strategy or strategies, but more for a teaching practice, is made by Geneva Gay (2002). Gay proposes teaching through culturally responsive teaching. Gay (2002), defines culturally responsive teaching as:

> Using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly. (p. 106)

In order to help students make connections from the academic content to the real world, teachers must be familiar with the students' background knowledge. Vygotsky (1962) further states teachers can help take students to their next level of understanding or zone of proximal development by getting to know the students' background knowledge. According to García, et al. (2010) this type of teaching reformulates the classroom into a more learner-centered classroom and a community of learners in which all students interpret and reinvent their own experiences.

Another top researcher who similarly believes in the strengths and assets of cultural and background knowledge is Gloria Ladson-Billings. Ladson-Billings states that when she tried to make a pedagogical change in 1990, she asked herself not what was wrong with African American learners, "but instead what was right with these students and what happened in the classrooms of teachers who seemed to experience pedagogical success with them" (2014, p. 74). This question allowed Ladson-Billings to develop the teaching practice, or approach which she named "culturally relevant pedagogy" (2014, p. 74). According to Siwatu (2007), other researchers that have advocated for the implementation of equitable and culturally sensitive practices are: Gay (2000), Irvine (1990), Ladson-Billings (1994a, b), Shade, Kelly, and Oberg

(1997). Some researchers such as Gay (2000) refer to this method as *culturally responsive teaching*, others such as Mohatt and Erickson, (1981) refer to it as *culturally congruent instruction,* Au and Jordan (1981) refer to it as *culturally appropriate instruction* while (Jordan, 1985: Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987) refer to it as *culturally compatible instruction* (Siwatu, 2007). More recently, Paris Django (2012) refers to this approach as *culturally sustaining pedagogy.* Paris along with other researchers developed these concepts and or approaches in order to respond to detrimental and tenacious ideologies embedded in sanctioned educational practices that openly dismiss the multicultural and linguistic realities of CLD students. Siwatu (2007) further states, that although there may be different names to this approach, there is a general agreement that the cultural responsive pedagogy approach concentrates on the following four characteristics: (1) uses student cultural, background knowledge, experiences, and learning preferences as a mechanism to the teaching and learning process, (2) incorporates students' cultural orientations to design culturally compatible classroom environments, (3) provides students with multiple opportunities to show what they have learned using a variety of assessment strategies and techniques (4) provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to function in mainstream culture while at the same time helping students maintain their cultural identity, native language and connection to their culture, in other words, it helps students to acculturate and not assimilate into the mainstream culture. This approach, along with the biography driven culturally responsive instruction approach mentioned by Herrera (2016), views students' background knowledge from the asset perspective instead of a deficit perspective. It provides opportunities for the students to activate their background knowledge, make connections to the real world, and it provides many opportunities for the teachers to check for students' understanding through formal and informal formative and summative assessments. On

the other hand, if CLD students are misrepresented and their background knowledge is not valued, this misrepresentation can create a cultural deficit model and strengthen negative teaching attitudes (Yuan, 2017).

Effective Strategies to Implement with CLD Students

Many Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students have many obstacles and barriers to overcome in order to be successful academically. Culturally responsive teaching, taking the students' background knowledge into consideration and teachers' self-reflection are a few recommendations made by researchers to help provide some support for CLD students. Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2012) state that there are several concepts that are foundational components of instruction for CLDs and being familiar with these concepts is important for all teachers, especially the teachers working directly with this student population. The concepts proposed by Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2012) are: (1) L1, which refers to the students' first language, (2) L2, which refers to the students' second language, (3) Basic Interpersonal communication Skills (BICS), which are the second language skills acquired and used in social situations, (4) Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which are the cognitive and academic language skills, (5) Acquisition vs Learning, (6) Stages of second language acquisition and (7) Proficiency levels. Haynes and Zacarian (2010) also mention the importance and learning the same concepts mentioned by Ferlazzo and Sypnieski. After becoming familiar with the concepts proposed by Ferlazzo and Sypnieski, teachers of CLD students will then be able to search and implement effective strategies to meet their CLD students' needs. Haynes and Zacarian (2010) state that after the teachers have the knowledge of the foundational concepts, they can then concentrate on developing specific strategies such as develop a good and safe classroom environment to help enhance CLD students learning, engaging lesson plans, implement different

grouping configurations, implement effective in context vocabulary strategies, design writing appropriate writing strategies depending on the students English language level.

For effective reading strategies, Krashen (1999) recommends taking the "whole language into consideration" (p. 26). Krashen (1999) defines "whole language as providing comprehensible texts" to students (p. 27). In other words, Krashen (1999) recommends taking the comprehension hypothesis into consideration when developing literacy, which means providing students with interesting text they can relate to, understand, and make connections to the text. Facella, Rampino, and Shea (2005) conducted a study in two different school districts in the Massachusetts to compile a list of effective strategies being implemented with their CLD students. In this study Facella et al. (2005) interviewed ten prekindergarten through second grade teachers from each school district. These school districts were selected for having a high population of CLD students. Some recommendations and effective strategies these teachers identified were (a) making constant modifications to their lesson plans, (b) activating students background knowledge, (c) implementing appropriate developmental strategies for the students' level of second language acquisition, (d) have knowledge of how students acquire language, and (e) take into consideration how much English is spoken in the home. The specific strategies that seem to be effective and work well with the CLD students in Rampino et al.'s (2005) study were "(1) gestures and visual cues, (2) repetition and opportunities for practicing skills, (3) use of objects, real props, and hands-on materials and (4) multisensory approaches" (p. 211).

Zhang and Stephens (2013) state that besides having knowledge of second language acquisition, teachers working with CLD students must also learn how to scaffold learning in the mainstream classroom. Scaffolding usually occurs after teachers become familiar with and get to know the students' academic and linguistic background knowledge. Lewis-Moreno (2007)

suggests that teachers and school districts should take an "ecological approach" instead of the "medical method", in other words, teachers should view CLD students' cultures and languages from the asset perspective instead of a deficit perspective (p, 773). Lewis-Moreno (2007) add that mainstream classroom teachers who implement the ecological approach usually take the initiative to learn and meet the needs of CLD students in their classrooms and not solely depend on the English as a Second Language teacher. An effective reading strategy mentioned by Lewis-Moreno (2007), is "a reading partner program" (p. 773). This reading and listening strategy requires pairing middle and/ or high school CLD students with CLD elementary students. According to Lewis-Moreno (2007), using level appropriate children's literature benefits older students by practicing their speaking skills and the younger students benefit by practicing their listening skills.

Teacher Parity

Teacher parity refers to having teachers from the same race and cultural background as the students (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Linsay & Papageorge, 2018). Unfortunately, teachers of color only constitute about 18% of the teaching force (Kohli et al., 2018). Although these teachers of color have good intentions and want to advocate for their students, they themselves encounter resistance and barriers that make teaching more difficult. Studies have revealed that most teacher training lacks structural and racial analysis of inequity and it is mostly designed for white teacher candidates (Kohli et al., 2018). Samora (1963) states the American school system, either public or parochial, functions best when "conforming middle-class administrators and teachers declaring middle class values address themselves to middle-class students who possess similar value orientation or are in the process of acquiring it" (p.144). This means that since

lower-class and students of color do not fit these characteristics, these students are less likely be properly educated and more likely to drop out of school (Samora, 1963).

The U.S educational system has and continues to maintain and intensify racial inequity such as segregation and discrimination, the uneven distribution of school resources, and a Eurocentric curriculum that is insensitive to the needs of CLD students (Kohli et al., 2018). According to Kohli et al. (2018), such practices and injustices have resulted in "school pushout, disproportionate representations in remedial and gifted courses and inequitable graduation rates for students of color" (19). For the reasons previously mentioned and to help improve the academic experience for students of color, Kohli et al. (2018), suggest that many teachers of color choose teaching as a career. Kohli et al. (2018) further state that research demonstrates that teachers of color seem to have higher academic expectations for students of color.

Lack of resources, segregation, and discrimination are only a few barriers standing in between students of color or CLD students and academic success. Another barrier affecting the success of these students is having an under-equipped teaching force to serve our current diversifying classrooms (Kohli, Nevárez, & Arteaga, 2018). Kohli et al. (2018) suggest that teacher parity can be a step forward toward improving the academic experience of students of color. Studies have demonstrated that teachers of color have higher expectations of the learning of students of color and "heightened awareness of educational injustice and racism" (Kohli et al., 2018, p. 19). Dimaria (2013) states current trends indicate that by 2020 the percentage of teachers of color will drop to an all-time low of 5% of the teacher total force and the percentage of students of color will exceed 50%. Dimaria (2013) further states that students of color perform better academically, personally, and socially when they are taught by a teacher from their own ethnic background. White teachers, even if they receive specific training on how to work with

CLD students, still seem to lack the awareness of whiteness. In Matias' (2013) study, in order to help teacher candidates become emotionally responsive and culturally responsive, she listens to White teacher candidates share their counterstories to help them better prepare, acknowledge, and cope with their complicit role in maintaining White supremacy. According to Matias (2013), this sharing and being aware of their whiteness is important before attempting to teach students of color. Besides learning about other cultures, responsive pedagogies and languages, White teachers must also prepare emotionally and mentally to deal with their whiteness "a social construction that embraces white culture, ideology, racialization, expressions and experiences, epistemology, emotions and behaviors that get normalized because of white supremacy" (Matias, 2013, p. 69). Matias (2013), further explains that culturally responsive teaching is not necessarily teaching better, but rather a civil rights movement so children of color are no longer denied a right to a fair education because of systemic racist practices.

Teachers of Color seem to have their own challenges and barriers before becoming in-service teachers. They must also go through the process of a Eurocentric curriculum and must overcome internalized racism. Kohli (2013) operationalizes internalized racism as: (1) a phenomenon that, like racism, impacts all communities of color; (2) can be caused by cumulative exposure to racism; and (3) results in the "conscious or unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy" where the culture, values, and beliefs of the dominant culture are prioritized over the culture values and beliefs of racial minorities (p. 4). Hipolito-Delgado (2016) on the other hand states identity development provides support to overcome internalized racism. Unfortunately, many people, after moving to the United States, or from generation to generation, lose their first language and most of their culture to the point that they struggle with their own identity.

In a study by Kohli, Navárez, and Arteaga (2018), the research addresses a teacher professional development setting called the Institute for Teachers of Color Committed to Racial Justice (ITOC). Kohli et al.'s research is aimed to support justice-oriented students of color as advocates in racialized school environments (2018). One of the participants in the study, like many of us, felt as if his instructors and the curriculum was guided by and only addressed equity at the surface level, and catered to his white colleagues (Kohli et al., 2018).

On the other hand, teacher programs from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) seem to be very effective and offer a more holistic approach to preparing teachers to help them meet their students' needs (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2018). In most cases, these programs serve a more racially and socioeconomically diverse population of preservice teachers, which demographically, closely matches today's U.S. K-12 classrooms (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2018). These MSIs view talent and/or knowledge differently than PWI institutions, therefore they concentrate and view these future teachers as possessing a set of assets and skills that will help them with the battle of teaching for justice in today's school setting (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2018).

In other words, these future teachers from diverse backgrounds have to overcome similar obstacles and challenges as their future students. Philip and Zavala (2016) mention a study of a pre-service teachers of color, the barriers, issues, and anger that these students experience and feel by living in a racist society. According to Philip and Zavala, this pre-service teachers of color identify with many other pre-service teachers of color and CLD students because they have experienced or can relate to the marginalization they may have experienced in school (2016). Furthermore, in their study Philip and Zavala (2016) mention another barrier that students of

color must overcome in their journey of becoming teachers, which occurs when these students of color challenge teacher education spaces that historically have excluded and/or silenced them.

According to Petchauer & Mawhinney (2018) in the 2012-2013 academic year, MSIs produced 8.6 percent of all four-year teaching degrees. Goral (2015) adds that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) provide the majority of the nation's African American and Hispanic teachers. According to Goral, HBCUs and HSIs account for only "3 percent" of the nations' institutions of higher education (2015, p. 10). Historically Black Colleges and Universities produce about 51 percent of the nations' African American teachers and HSIs produce about 90 percent of the nations' Hispanic teachers (Goral, 2015). It is unfortunate that the majority of these teachers of color graduate from this small subset of institutions, which means that without these MSIs, the pipeline for teachers of color would more than likely disappear (Goral 2015).

Through the process of using an analysis of the Measures on Effective Teaching (MET) longitudinal database, Cherng and Halpin (2016) address the questions of "why the demographic divide is so concerning and why CLD students have more favorable perceptions of minority teachers than white teachers" (p. 407). Cherng and Halpin (2016) refer to the demographic divide as the racial ethnic discrepancy in teacher and student populations. According to Cherng and Halpin (2016) "in New York City, 85% of public-school students are students of color, but only 40% of teachers are teachers of color—a difference of 45 percentage points" (p. 407). The MET study collected data from 2,756 teachers in 317 schools in 6 U.S school districts during the academic years of 2009-2011. Some of the results consisted of students performing better academically, and being more favorable of teachers of similar race or ethnic background than White teachers (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Other reasons mentioned were that teachers of color

served as role models for CLD students, were more sensitive, and knowledgeable of the cultural needs, and could motivate these students to aspire academic excellence (Cherng &s Halpin, 2016).

Another study that has shown teachers of color being more effective in improving the academic performance and educational experience of students of color is by Cheruvu, Souto-Manning, Lencl, and Chin-Calubaquib (2015). According to Cheruvu et al. (2015), teachers of color are more effective at "setting and maintaining high academic standards, engaging in culturally relevant pedagogy, developing caring and trusting relationships, serving as advocates, mentors, and cultural brokers and working for social reform" (p. 238).

All studies conducted regarding the importance of teacher parity seem to have similar results and similar findings. Achinstein, Ogawa, and Sexton, (2010) have also conducted research about the importance of diversifying the teaching workforce in order to remedy the ethnic and/or racial gap and to promote culturally responsive teaching. Teacher parity advocates and research suggest that teachers of similar racial and ethnic background as their CLD students, produce higher results on standardized test scores, better attendance, retention, advanced-level course enrollment, and improve the college-going rates for students of color than White teachers Achinstein et al. (2010). Proponents of teacher parity do not promote employment segregation or do not state that White teachers cannot work effectively with students of color. These teacher parity advocates simply state demographic discrepancy between the "racial and cultural backgrounds of teachers" and CLD students may contribute to the failure to provide students of color opportunities to learn (Achinstein et al., p. 72). Unfortunately, research also states that not only recruitment, but also retention of teachers of color has been an issue in the past. A large number of teachers of color leave the teaching profession before retiring. Achinstein et al. (2010)

categorize the following school conditions that affect teacher retention rates in the availability of three forms of resources, which are, (a) financial capital, ((b) human capital and (c) social capital.

Financial capital is related to salaries and instructional resources that affect teacher retention. In other words, higher teacher pay is used as recruitment and or retention incentive (Achinstein et al., 2010). Human capital refers to the type of personal and professional knowledge of teachers. Novice teachers tend to suffer higher turnover because they tend to be less experienced and possess less pedagogical awareness than seasoned teachers (Atchinsteing et al., 2010). Social capital refers to providing opportunities for professional development and opportunities for teachers to collaborate, network, and learn from each other (Atchinsteing et al., 2010). Human capital and social capital seem to be connected in the sense that novice teachers can be paired and/or mentored by more seasoned teachers in order to have higher retention rates.

Parent, Family, and Community Involvement of CLD Students

Research has and continues to demonstrate the importance of parent, family, and community involvement, for all students. Bryan and Holcomb-McCoy (2010) describe school, family, and community partnerships as:

> Collaborative relationships in which school personnel, students, families, community members, and other stakeholders work jointly and mutually to develop and implement school-and community-based prevention and intervention programs and activities to improve children's chances of academic, personal/social, career and college success. (p. 1)

Although, all students benefit from the collaboration of all participants and schools, there are different factors that affect the parent, family, and community involvement of CLD students.

One of the factors negatively impacting these families is their immigration status. In the 1997, Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) Newsletter, a school opening alert was sent to all parents regarding the *Plyler vs. Doe* case. This case states that "undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents" (IDRA, 1997, p. 5). Parents and families seem to be hesitant to directly participate in school related activities if any family members are undocumented.

Larrotta and Yamamura (2011) recommend schools get to know the parents and families in order for parent involvement to be meaningful. Similar to the education philosophy of getting to know your students, parent involvement practices should also include and engage parents by getting to know their needs, resources, and talents, (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011). Regularly, most forms of parent involvement cater to middle-class, two-parent families and usually require parents to be fluent in English. Larrota and Yamamura (2011) further recommend for parent involvement to be designed with diverse families in mind, in other words taking into consideration low-income families, single-parent families, and families of whom English is not their native language.

Olvera and Olvera (2012), also state that students are more likely to succeed and make academic gains when educators and families work well together. Furthermore, Olvera and Olvera mention the importance of getting to know the parents and families with who teachers are working. Olvera and Olvera (2012) recommend using Epstein et al.'s (2002) framework and adapt the six types of collaborative expectations and/or outcomes to work with Latino culture and other cultures. Following are the six collaborative expectations or outcomes recommended by Epstein et al. (2002): (1) parenting, (2), communication, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at

home, (5) decision-making and (6) collaborating with the community (Olvera & Olvera, 2012). These expectations can serve as a framework and guide for school professionals to get to know the parents, families, and communities they are serving. For example, in the Latino community, respect and education are closely associated. Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, and de Lardemelle (2010), mention that in the Latino culture, respect for teachers is considered paramount and respect is best demonstrated by entrusting the teachers with all matters regarding education. This trust factor may often seem to educators that parents are not very involved in their children's education (Landemelle, 2010). Although Latino parents may not be able to provide academic support to their children, it is important to know about the other type of support they inculcate to their children. Prieto Cortez (1997) states that Latino parents, including mothers, teach their children about being *una persona educada/*o person of character and integrity. Besides getting to know parents' assets and needs, schools should use creative approaches and design programs that will fit and meet the needs of their parents, families, and communities.

In this chapter, I explain the importance of having a good understanding of CRT in order to understand LatCrit. Additionally, I discuss how LatCrit can be used to reveal the ways Latinos/as experience race, class, gender, and sexuality. More specifically, LatCrit has been used to reveal issues Latinos/as experience regarding immigration status, language, ethnicity, culture, and social justice. In this chapter, I use LatCrit as a theoretical framework and a lens to view my participants' experiences. Furthermore, this chapter provides a review of the literature and prior relevant research on the following six topics: (1) quality education for CLD students (2) teacher readiness to work with CLD students, (3) risk factors affecting CLDs' academic performance, (4) culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, (5) teacher parity, and (6) parent, family, and community involvement of CLD students.

Chapter 3, provides a comprehensive explanation of the multimethodological frameworks of Trenzas y Mestizaje and how these frameworks are utilized in a prism to help the researcher view the participants' experiences. Testimonios and the process of data collection through individual and group pláticas are also explained in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers who graduated from a federally funded bilingual bicultural education program navigate educational structures, while becoming teacher leaders who are engaged in justice agendas concerning their Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students in a midwestern state.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Chapter 3 provides the details of the methodology for this research. The following topics are addressed: (1) suitability of qualitative research, (2) purpose of the research and research questions, (3) research design of the study and rationale, trenzas y mestizaje, (4) trenzas, (5) meztisaje, (6) methodology, testimonios, (7) gaining access and participant selection, (8) research site, (9) methods of data collection, (10) individual pláticas with tesoros, (11) group pláticas with tesoros, (12) observations, (13) data management and analysis, (14) data analysis, (15) data representation, (16) reciprocity and ethics, (17) quality and trustworthiness (18) triangulation, (20) transferability, (21) reflection for credibility, and (22) timeline for completion.

Suitability of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an overarching term of many approaches and methods to conduct studies of natural social life (Saldaña, 2011). Depending on the purpose of the project, qualitative research can have multiple goals. The results are often composed of vital representations and presentations of noteworthy findings from the well-grounded combination of data that may include: documents from cultural observations, evaluation of the effectiveness of programs or policies, illustrations of human meanings, and the initiation of social justice (Saldaña, 2011). Since I collected testimonios, using pláticas, from three current ESL teachers qualitative research was the most appropriate for my study. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible…qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 4)

Beyond using qualitative research to aid with gathering, interpreting, and analyzing data, qualitative research is also employed to explore a problem and/or issue (Saldaña, 2011). Qualitative studies have many different choices of approaches, therefore, a researcher must select the approach or approaches that are most useful to his or her field (Sullivan & Bhattacharya, 2017). For instance, qualitative research can be interpretive, critical, and deconstructive (Denzin, 2017). Additionally, qualitative research has three broad purposes, (1) to understand, (2) interrogate, and (3) deconstruct. My research was informed by Latino/a Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), therefore it was situated to interrogate. Bhattacharya (2017) states qualitative researchers conduct studies to "interrogate" (p. 19). My goal in this research was to highlight assumptions and/or stereotypes regarding race culture and/or language.

In my study, I collected, reported, and explored in an in-depth manner, the experiences of three K-12 teachers, therefore, the interpretation of personal stories validated the choice to use qualitative research for this type of inquiry. Qualitative researchers desire to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Additionally, Bhattacharya (2017) explains that, "if the purpose of a qualitative study is to *interrogate*, then the researcher is assuming that the experiences people have are based on their gender, age, race, sexuality, and other forms of identification with various social categories" (p. 19). Having the knowledge and experience as a cultural insider, I have the passion and need to interrogate the participants' experiences in the educational system regarding fairness related to race and

language, and report how three K-12 teachers, with the appropriate education from the BESITOS program, can use their advocacy skills in order to navigate oppressive spaces and manage to provide support to their ELLs.

Through the lens of Critical Qualitative Research (CQR), I examined participants' experiences regarding social justice. Critical refers to questioning, regarding equity and social justice, leading to critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Denzin (2017) adds that CQR requires an awareness of the needs to rectify inequalities by giving "precedence … to the voices of the least advantaged groups in society" (p. 8). Denzin (2017), further explains that critical research promoted struggles for power and cultural capital for the poor, non-Whites, women, and gays. Through the lens of CQR, I analyzed the experiences of my participants and their social justice agendas in education.

Matias and Mackey (2015) present a study of critical qualitative research in education. Their study consisted of specific strategies implemented in a teacher education course designed for preservice teachers. These preservice teachers were white, middle-class women who had rarely any experience with relationships with people of color, but intended to teach in urban schools with a high enrollment students of color. In this course, pedagogical strategies were designed to support curricular inclusion. Matias and Mackey indicated that this course helped frame a pedagogical strategy of "self-interrogation of whiteness" and this strategy can be implemented in other teacher education courses throughout the nation (2015, p. 32). Future teachers interested in multicultural, and English as a Second Language (ESL) education can benefit from taking such a course before working with students from diverse backgrounds.

There is a current need for critical qualitative researchers' work to influence policy as it relates to social justice issues. Qualitative research designs must be intentional about employing

a critical lens as a means to co-construct narratives that liberate participants from the system of oppression that they unknowingly struggle with and resist on a daily basis (Banda & Flowers, 2018). Through critical qualitative research, I collected stories otherwise not heard and presented them. Furthermore, by looking at the issues through a critical qualitative research lens, I explained how participants have overcome some of the systemic barriers and how they have utilized their former education and advocacy skills in education to provide support for their English Language Learners (ELLs). Further, critical qualitative research is relevant for this study because it is a culturally grounded study of three K-12 teachers and their cultural contexts within which they engage in social justice agendas as a result of their prior education. Details about research design are explained later in this chapter. In addition to the study being informed by qualitative inquiry, it is informed specifically by the multimethodological framework of Trenzas y Mestizaje.

Purpose of the Research and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers who graduated from a federally funded bilingual and bicultural education program navigated educational structures, while becoming advocates engaged in justice agendas concerning their CLD students in a midwestern state.

The following three research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways do the participants engage in justice agendas for their students?
2. What do the participants attribute as barriers and support system in their justice work?
3. What significant educational strategies do the participants value in their role as advocates in their justice work?

Research Design of the Study and Rationale: Trenzas y Mestizaje

In this section I describe Trenzas y Mestizaje, the overarching methodological framework, which is culturally resonant with the participants and me, the researcher. It was important to select a methodology that was culturally congruent with the participants and me. Cultural congruity is a theoretical framework first utilized by Gloria and Robinson Kurpius (1996) to contextualize the understanding of Chicanos/as' culture of origin and its assets in contrast to the cultural values upheld by institutions of higher education's dominant white culture. Additionally, trenzas y mestizaje is in direct alignment with tenets of LatCrit and critical qualitative research, which call for disrupting dominant whiteness-centered narratives about knowledge construction of people's experiences. This is paramount, especially when privileged frameworks are incongruent with the ways in which members of the Latinx community construct knowledge and meaning about their lives. Thus, I am compelled to draw from culturally situated understanding for the methodological framework. Such framework is trenzas y mestizaje. While this is not entirely my creation, it has not received as much methodological attention in education or in critical qualitative inquiry as it should. Therefore, in this study I center this framework as a contribution to the body of research and research literature.

Before trenzas y mestizaje appeared in academic literature, there was the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (Calderón, Delgado Bernal, Pérez Huber, Malagón & Nelly Vélez, 2012). Anzaldúa's powerful insight speaks directly to the work of Chicana education scholars "committed to anti-oppressive social justice research and guided by Chicana Feminist Epistemological frameworks" (Calderón et al. p. 514). Specifically, Anzaldúa's scholarship served as a guide and helped other scholars create paradigms that are aligned with her work, especially her theoretical concepts of Nepantla, El Mundo Zurdo, and Coyolxauhqui (Calderón, et al., 2012).

Nepantla is a Nahuatl word which means “in the middle of it” or middle ground and it describes an in-between space. For Anzaldúa, nepantla is “the threshold of transformation” (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 56). With nepantla, Anzaldúa emphasizes and expands the “spiritual, psychic, supernatural and indigenous dimensions” (Keating, 2005, p. 7). The participants and their students similarly, live in the middle or in between languages, school community, and home community among others. Anzaldúa (2015) utilizes only the feminine form of the word Nepantlera/s because she writes from the female perspective, but Nepantleros/as can be both male and/or female. Nepantleros/as understand that in order to make changes in the schools, in society, and transform the system, they need to build bridges within the community and the world and must observe the system from different perspectives. Anzaldúa (2015) mentions that nepantleras should view the world from a “nepantla perspective” or from different points of view rather than from just a “single culture or ideology” (p. 82). Additionally, as agents of “conocimiento” knowledge, nepantleras unveil how underrepresented and marginalized cultures see the real world (Anzaldua, 2015, p. 83).

El Mundo Zurdo or the The Left Hand World, when referred to alliance, indicates communities based on commonalities or a visionary place where people from diverse backgrounds with different needs and concerns can unite and work together to make a difference and make a major change (Anzaldúa, 2009). El Mundo Zurdo, creates an idea for relational understanding of differences. Anzaldúa and Keating (2002) note that differences become less threatening when viewed from a broader perspective. In El Mundo Zurdo, everyone’s ideas, experiences, and perspectives are valued and taken into consideration. Furthermore, Anzaldúa and Keating (2002) state that this visionary place is where difference functions do not exclude but act as an invitation for community-building and major change. In the field of education

theoretically, Anzaldúa's Mundo Zurdo could refer to all entities involved in the education system, such as, teachers, principals, and parents among others, working in alliance to make a major change in the education of all students, specifically, English Language Learners (ELLs).

Coyolxauhqui according to Aztec mythic history, was the goddess of the moon and when she tried to kill her mother, Huitzilopochtli, her brother, decapitated her (Anzaldúa, 2015). Huitzilopochtli tossed Coyolxauhqui's head into the sky and threw her body down the secret mountain breaking into many pieces (Anzaldúa, 2015). Anzaldúa (2015) states, "Coyolxauhqui represents the psychic and creative process of tearing apart and putting together (deconstructing/constructing)" (p. 50). Additionally, Coyolxauhqui represents destroyed, defective, incomplete, and "unfulfilled promises" as well as blending, perfectness, and wholeness (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. xxi). Anzaldúa (2015) uses the Coyolxauhqui process to explain the colonization of Mexican culture and land by the U.S.

Mexicans were colonized when they were stripped, cheated, and robbed of their land. "They/it took our land (our actual bodies), then our cultures through commercialization" (Anzaldúa 2015, p. 49). Anzaldua's comparison paints a vivid picture of Huitzilopochtli representing the U.S and Coyolxauhqui representing Mexico and the Mexican culture. Mexico has been colonized by Europeans in two different instances. First with the conquest of the Aztecs at the beginning of the 16th century by the Spaniards. In 1521 the first Mestizo was born, the first Mexicano of mixed Indian and Spanish blood. The second time of colonization was in 1848 when the U.S. invaded and absorbed Mexico's Northern states, such as Texas, New Mexico, California, and Colorado to mention a few. On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed and this document created a new U.S. minority group (Anzaldúa, 2007).

Besides taking the land with the support of the Texas Rangers, the U.S imposed White Supremacy (Anzaldúa, 2007).

Trenzas y Mestizaje as a decolonized methodology combined can serve many purposes, including its recognition as a multimethodological approach (Gonzalez, 2001). Ríos (2016) states that from the Indigenous Studies perspective, decolonization is more territorial, such as land and knowledge. Ríos (2001) further explains that Indigenous Studies realize and recognize that settler nations continue to take/rob the resources such as "land-based, cultural knowledge" (p. 113) such as the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. Mexicans that remained on the north side of the border were forced to assimilate, many of whom lost their language and cultural knowledge.

Gonzalez (2001) conceptualizes trenzas y mestizaje and utilized this multimethodological approach as transformative means that dissolved the lines through multidimensional, relational, and collaborative qualitative strategies with those most directly involved in the study and practice of education. Trenzas y mestizaje and other Chicana Feminist Epistemologies (CFEs) were first introduced in education by Delgado Bernal (Calderon, et al., 2012). Similar to Anzaldúa's El Mundo Zurdo and other Chicana scholars, CFEs challenge traditional ways of knowing and expand educational research by contributing different perspectives.

In this study, I use trenzas y mestizaje as my methodological framework. Trenzas y Mestizaje as a framework allows me to work with the multiplicity of cultural heritage and identity as well as the braided discourses that shape those identities. Additionally, trenzas y mestizaje as a methodological framework challenges and resists traditional methodologies, which often misrepresent or omit the experiences or knowledge of Latino/s (González, 2001) or engage in tokenization, cultural stereotyping, and caricature. Similar to González (2001), I have

crafted a prism to look through the lens of trenzas y mestizaje informed by LatCrit, in order to build a trenza that includes three braided strands relevant to the participants' social justice advocacy, pedagogical training, and navigating supportive or oppressive spaces through testimonios. Using the prism, I was able to view the participants' experiences through the lens of trenzas y mestizaje and LatCrit and collected the participants testimonios through the process of individual and group pláticas. After collecting the participants' testimonios, I combed through the data and created three different strands. The first strand was regarding the barriers and support system the participants encountered in their professional careers. The second strand dealt with the social justice advocacy they provided to their CLD students and families. The third and last strand was related to the educational advocacy skills they received as pre-service and in-service teachers to prepare them to work with CLD students. The strands of each participant's testimonios were then weaved into a trenza. Figure 3.1 offers a visual representation of such braiding.

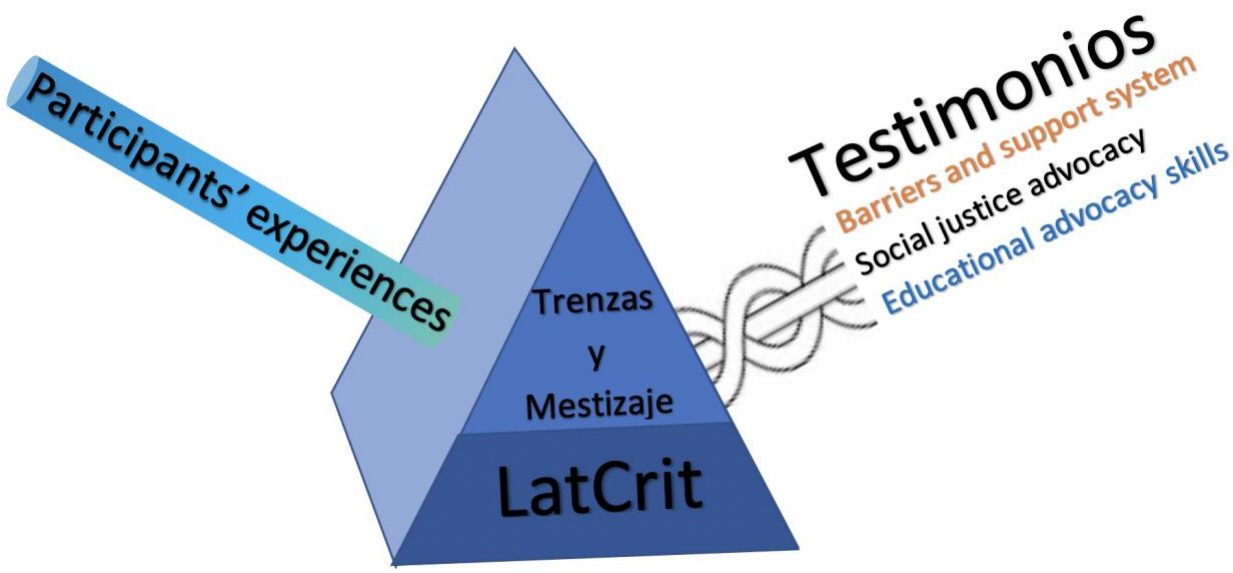

Figure 3.1 Trenzas y Mestizaje Prism. © Pedro Espinoza 2020.

In this section, I have discussed the culturally grounded methodological framework of trenzas y mestizaje. I then explained the use of a prism to help me as the researcher view the participants' experiences through the lens of trenzas y mestizaje analyzed and interpreted with LatCrit. My theoretical framework, LatCrit is explained in Chapter 2.

Decolonizing theories and methodologies challenge objectivity and introduce a sense of political urgency to address educational inequities in Latinx communities (Calderón, et all., 2012). Anzaldúa (2015) states, "I use cultural figures to intervene in, make change, and thus heal colonialism's wounds" (p. 44). Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas are a few Chicana scholars that have utilized decolonizing theories and methodologies to heal colonization and to help us interpret and see what happens in the world from a different perspective. These Chicana scholars write from a feminist perspective on pedagogy and epistemology.

Trenzas

To explain the conceptualization of trenzas y mestizaje, one needs to understand the terms used separately and entangled with each other. First, trenzas means to braid multiple strands together and is considered a Chicana Feminist Epistemology (CFE). Montoya (1994) was one of the first scholars who conceptualized trenzas. Montoya uses trenzas to braid and/or unbraid Latina stories and legal discourse. Additionally, she uses trenzas as a conceptual metaphor to emphasize her growing sociopolitical consciousness about intersectionality and othered identities as a first-year law student at Harvard (Quiñonez, 2016). Furthermore, Montoya (1994) states that trenzas challenge dominant society's indifference to non-English speakers and the culture lived and learned by women requires different languages. Four years later, Gonzalez

(1998) drew from Montoya's (1994) work with trenzas in relation to feminist subjectivity and deconstruction of normative discourses using language, images, and masks:

> One of the central issues of feminism is the cultural construction of subjectivity. Language, images, and masks are key factors in that de/construction. For Latinas, the endeavor entails the use of Spanish with English. New narrative forms give power to stories that fashion new authentic identity, an identity made stronger and more resilient because it braids together the disparate. Our conceptual trenzas, our rebraided ideas, even though they may appear unneat or greñudas to others, suggest new opportunities for unmasking the subordinating effects of legal discourse. Our rebraided ideas, the trenzas of our multicultural lives, offer personally validating interpretations. From a discursive space formerly denied to Latinas are regenerative acts which can transform self-understanding and reclaim for all Latinas the right to define ourselves and to reject uni-dimensional interpretations for our personal and collective experience. (p. 85)

Montoya (1994) utilizes trenzas along with mascaras y greñas and recounts and rebraids her stories in two languages (English and Spanish) in order to challenge and/or exercise against cultural and linguistic domination and create new spaces for Latina voices. Since I am bilingual and bicultural I was able to braid my stories in English and Spanish as well. For this reason, I can relate to Montoya's stories about masking my identity in order to preserve linguistic and cultural heritage. I was able to comprehend the meaning of Spanish words that have difficult translations into English and even after these words are translated the meaning is not the same. I was able to relate to the participants' stories/cuentos and was able to platicar with them and simultaneously share my stories, my testimonios, my tesoros while carrying a formal and or informal plática.

Another scholar who draws from Anzaldúa and specifically from Montoya is Francisca E. González. González (1998), through the process of narratives, expands on the concept of trenzas. She examines how "Mexicana identities" are created, shaped, and developed (p. 81). More specifically, González (1998) examines the trenzas/braids of multiple identities among eight young high school age Mexicanas as they reached womanhood in the U.S society. These young Mexicanas had been in the United States from two to seven years. González collected her data through two group pláticas or popular conversations as she explains it. González (1998) began the pláticas by first explaining to the participants the meaning of Mexicananess. She also asked the participants what it meant to be Mexicana. During these pláticas, the participants shared feelings of gender, language, and racial discrimination from people of different cultures, including their own culture. The young Mexicanas mentioned being discriminated against by students of different cultures, including by students of their own cultural background. These young Mexicanas were discriminated against by the Chicanas that had assimilated into the U.S. culture and unfortunately lost their native language. González (1998) claims that through the process of feelings and meanings braided with CRT and trenzas, the feminist analytic lens informed the research about these young women and their multiple identity formations. Additionally, these young Mexicanas were able to create agency for themselves by valuing and being proud of and knowledgeable about their personal and cultural background along with advice they received from their elders.

Recently in the field of education, Quiñonez (2016), uses trenzas as a metaphorical and analytical lens in order to understand the experiences and perspectives of Latino/a teachers. For the purpose and goal of using trenzas, Quiñonez (2016), organizes her work in three different strands. In the first strand she introduced trenzas as a metaphor. In the second strand, she

described trenzas as a working process; in the third strand, she explained how she used trenzas to make sense of the data collected and build theory. Trenzas were utilized to examine the lives of Latino/a teachers working in public U.S schools. The three strands/categories examined by Quiñonez (2016) were the Latina/o teachers "personal, professional and community experiences" (p. 343). By using trenzas, Quiñonez (2016) realizes that these three categories, although viewed as separate, can also be interwoven strands of identity. In other words, trenzas can be used as a methodological framework for different purposes.

Another scholar that has utilized trenzas in the field of education is Francisca Godinez, formerly known as González, to inform her research in order to understand the lives of young Mexicanas (2001). Gonzalez refers to trenzas as multiple identities and as an analytical approach to help her braid several theoretical frameworks in qualitative inquiry. An example provided by Quiñonez (2016) is when Gonzalez (2001) braided her "Chicana world view, barrio motherhood, and qualitative researcher identities together and used a combined interpretive theoretical lens of critical race theory, Latina/o critical theory, and feminist perspectives to study the experiences and perspectives of Latina youth" (p. 341). These young Mexicanas had cultural knowledge shaped by consejos and educación. Although their parents did not have much knowledge of the U.S. education system, they were able to teach them about educación, which in this case it refers to behavior. In other words, if you behave well, tú eres bien educado, you are well educated.

Mestizaje

Mestizaje, the product of racial hybridity, is a term mostly used in relation to the Americas. Mestizaje similar to trenzas, is considered a Chicana Feminist Epistemology (CFE). Muñoz (2018) states that mestizaje broadly refers to the following two sets of ideas:

"on one hand, processes of race mixture, that is, mixture of both human substance and culture that emerged with the 16th-century Spanish invasion and subsequent colonial period (1510-1810): and on the other, discourses of inclusion and belongingness to the nation" (pp. 387-388). In other words, if people were of a mixed race, Spanish and Aztec, they were considered inferior and were viewed as savages. The mestizo was viewed as inferior and as ignorant compared to the Spaniards. Mestizaje was created in Mexico, Central America, and South America with the arrival and colonization of the Spaniards. In Mexico, one of the first Mestizos by the name of Martin, was born to Hernan Cortés and a native American woman by the name of Doña Marina.

Muñoz (2018) identifies two mestizajes in the history of the Mexican American people. The first one is described as the Spanish-Catholic conquest of Mexico, which consisted of not only physical, but also cultural violence (Muñoz, 2018). When the Spaniards conquered and colonized Mexico, they created Mestizaje and mandated a new language to be spoken. Mexico's new language became Spanish. Shortly after the conquest the Aztec population was reduced from twenty-five million to seven million. The second type of mestizaje is the "Nordic-Protestant conquest of Mexico," which did not approve of ethnic mestizaje and tried to maintain a pure European society (Muñoz 2018, p. 87). As an analytical lens, the ideology of mestizaje has been identified with the process of transculturation and within the Chicano/a critical discourse. Mestizaje has also been used to articulate multiple and relational identity positions (Pérez-Torres, 2006). Specifically, critical mestizaje represents the struggle for power, place, and "personhood arising from histories of violence and resistance" (Perez-Torres, 2006, p. 51).

Mestizos have been treated and seen as less than human. Mestizos have struggled and continue to struggle to obtain agency, but their resiliency and cultural pride have provided them with the energy to continue the struggle for social justice. Additionally, cultural mestizaje can

provide authenticity to the participants' testimonios. Although Montoya (1994), uses the French word métissage to refer to mestizaje, she states that métissage moves us to possess language, reinvent it, then redefine it to give meaning. She further states that métissage creates "discursive spaces" for sharing stories from the point of view and in the words of the "subordinated" (p. 151). By using mestizaje along with other decolonizing methodologies, such as trenzas, testimonios, and pláticas, the participants had the language and cultural knowledge to express freely and tell their stories from their perspective.

Methodology: Testimonios

Looking at the participants' experiences through the LatCrit lense and using trenzas y mestizaje as my methodological framework led me to use testimonios as my methodology. Testimonios allowed me to collect the data elicited by the use of tesoros during the individual pláticas and group pláticas in order to braid issues related to social justice, advocacy, pedagogical strategies and navigating oppressive spaces. These shared experiences are considered the participants' braided testiminios regarding system barriers and support, social justice advocacy, and educational strategies.

Testimonio is a critical Latin American oral tradition practice that links "the spoken word to social action and benefits the oral narrative of personal experience as a source of knowledge, empowerment and political strategy for claiming rights and bringing about social change" (Flores & Benmayor, 1997, p. 153). Testimonios were first used to convey the enduring struggles of people who have experienced persecution by governments and other socio-political forces in Latin American countries (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Flores Carmona, 2012, p. 364). As a process, collecting testimonios is the act of recovering and collecting silenced or untold stories through the use of tesoros during individual and group pláticas (Delgado Bernal, et al., 2012). A

key contribution of testimonios is to unfold the experiences into a narrative that conveys personal, political, and social realities (Delgado Bernal, et al., 2012). Furthermore, testimonios are part of shared experiences of a group of people (Delgado Bernal, 2018).

Scholars have used tesimonios in education in concert with Chicana/Latina feminist theories. For example, Delgado Bernal, et al., (2012) provide some specific examples of how a number of scholars present their own testimonios in education. They mention teachers providing their testimonios as educators committed to compassionate pedagogy and transformative teaching. Furthermore, Delgado Bernal, et al., (2012), state:

> They shared how their experiences as child translators, young activists, children of caring immigrant parents, college students in predominately white universities, and racialized, gendered, and classed Chicanas inform their pedagogy of nepantla in teacher education classrooms. (p. 366).

In Delgado Bernal's 2006 study, testimonios illuminated how reductive and ineffective policies and classroom practices negatively impacted the Latino/a educational pipeline, Latinas' teachers work, and relationship in the classroom. The use of testimonios allowed the two teacher educators to share their compelling stories and commitment to pedagogy and transformative teaching to their work as college students and later as teacher educators at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) (Prieto & Villenas, 2012).

Another example of the use of testimonios is the collaborative work of Espino, Vega, Rendón, Ranero, and Muñiz (2012). These scholars narrate their own testimonios and provide an intergenerational perspective. The scholars explain how testimonios allow them to listen, learn, and obtain knowledge from their elders they would not obtain from schools or academic settings. Espino et al. (2012) add the process of "reflexión" to testimonios and explain how this process

can be practiced to proclaim and encourage "healing pathways for our fractured minds, bodies, and spirits" (p. 446).

Testimonios have also been used in language and literacy practices to explore the experiences of immigrant and transnational language arts students (Calderon, et al., 2012). Through the process of testimonios, by writing in English and in Spanish, most research "challenged dominant conceptions and productions of theory, knowledge, and pedagogy (Calderon, et al., 2012, p. 525). Similarly, in this study, I wrote in English and Spanish to capture the participants' experiences and the way they live and communicate with their ELLs. Testimonios were collected via individual and group pláticas. Some testimonios resulted from the tesoros each participant brought to the pláticas.

In this methodology section, I explained the meaning of testimonios, the cultural history and roots of this methodology process. I have also provided examples of how testimonios have been used in other types of research to collect participants' experiences and how this methodology applies to this study.

Gaining Access and Participant Selection

This study consisted of three participants from three school districts in a midwestern state. In this research within the K-12 education system, I focused on three teachers that received formal training through the BESITOS program and through the process of testimonios, I examined the ways in which they engaged in justice agendas for their students. Furthermore, through the process of testimonios, I identified what these teachers attributed as barriers and support system in their justice work and the educational strategies they valued in their role in their justice work. Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) agree that through the process of pláticas, testimonios about topics such as educational successes and challenges, migration and

immigration among other topics can be shared, which is appropriate for this study regarding the use of pláticas as a platform to share testimonios. Pláticas and tesoros are further explained in the data collection section.

This study consisted of conducting research with teachers at the K-12 educational level therefore, I conducted two individual pláticas with a participant working at elementary level, another participant was from the middle school level and the third participant was from the high school level. After conducting all the individual pláticas, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' experiences, I invited all three participants along with two other participants to have two group pláticas. All five participants were former BESITOS graduates teaching at different grade levels. The group pláticas consisted of five participants total. All of them were suitable for the selection criteria. During the individual pláticas the participants were asked to bring five tesoros with them to elicit the pláticas and during the group pláticas the participants were asked to bring three tesoros. I also had my tesoros to share my testimonios with the participants during the individual and group pláticas.

I was interested in how the participants at each school engaged in justice agendas with students, particularly with CLDs, staff, and community members in their specific locations. Selecting participants who could offer valuable information regarding advocacy for CLDs and their families was sought. Purposeful selection of participants allowed for the most meaningful and insightful study (Merriam, 1998). Gaining an in-depth understanding of the experience teachers have implementing strategies guiding CLDs was best served by selecting participants who are familiar with implementing specific strategies and serving CLDs. With that in mind, the participants for this study were three BESITOS graduates that received teacher preparation and

education certification from a four-year institution and from a federally funded bilingual/bicultural education program.

In addition to purposeful selection, participants were also selected using a criterion-based sampling process (McMillan, 2012). Participants met the following criteria: (a) certified teacher instructing an inclusive class (a mixture of ELLs in the class with their monolingual English-speaking peers), (b) graduated from the bilingual/bicultural program from the midwestern university, (c) has worked with CLDs and their families for at least three years and (d) works with CLDs in a midwestern state.

The research attempted to explore if and how the participants were being and have become "nepantleros/as" (advocates) to their students. Participants were provided with a space to share testimonios that were braided using the trenzas y mestizaje framework. Participants shared their unique experiences of working with CLDs. These experiences/stories were then viewed broadly through a LatCrit lens, which focused on the intersections of oppression from multiple types of identity, including ethnicity, culture, nationality, and language issues experienced by people of diverse backgrounds and more specifically through a trenzas y mestizaje perspective. Broadly, I situated the experiences against the landscape of whiteness-centered social and cultural spaces and discourses. Therefore, attention to issues of racism, xenophobia, heritage, language, and cultural erasures were the primary points of focus. Participants were encouraged to share testimonios in relation to systemic barriers and support, their social justice advocacy, and their educational strategies. These testimonios were analyzed as s collectively braided strand or trenzas.

Participants were selected from a larger pool of teachers meeting the criteria. From the main pool of one hundred and five participants, one potential participant from three different

schools was selected. The selected participants were contacted through an email solicitation. Based on the responses from the solicitation email, I selected three to five participants and followed up with a phone call.

For attrition purposes, when more than one participant from the district or school agreed to participate, I selected one and retained the remaining participants as potential replacements. If there were no responses to the email, I planned to contact the respective participants and repeated the process until a participant was selected. After potential participants were identified, through their consent to volunteer as a response to the solicitation email, I contacted the participants by making phone calls to set up a meeting. These meetings took place at the site most convenient to the participant. During the meeting I further explained the study, participant expectations, and the risk and benefits to the participant. Additionally, during these meetings, the participants were invited to my home to conduct the individual and group pláticas.

I invited the participant to review the informed consent form and answer any and all possible questions regarding the study, expectations, and details outlined in the consent form. Only after the potential participant was fully satisfied with all responses, I requested a signature on the consent form. I signed the consent forms and a copy was provided to each participant. Participants were informed that they could leave the study at any time without penalty. Table 1 explains the step by step process of participant selection.

Table 3.1 Participant Selection

1. Identify three participants who potentially offer support to CLDs and their families.
2. Two individual plática per participant were conducted. Participants were from different grade levels: One participant was teaching at the elementary level, another at the middle school level and the third participant was teaching at the high school level.
3. Two other participants were invited for the group plática. These participants were teaching CLDs at different grade levels. The total of five participants and the researcher were included in the group pláticas.

4. To identified participants, email solicitation letters were sent out to 105 former bilingual graduates. Information about these potential participants was gathered from the database maintained by the director of the program.
5. Participants were selected based on sampling and criterion-based sampling. These specifications were provided in the email solicitation in step 2. Purposeful sampling involved (a) teachers who have a history of implementing strategies and techniques that are helpful for CLDs and (b) participants who are familiar with implementing specific strategies and serve the target population. Criteria-based sampling involved: (a) certified teacher instructing an inclusive class (a mixture of students that involve CLDs included in the class with their monolingual English-speaking peers), (b) graduated from the bilingual/bicultural program from the midwestern university, (c) the teacher has been working/teaching CLDs and their families, and (d) works with English Language Learners in a midwestern state.
6. For attrition purposes, I selected at least six to eight participants and retained them as potential replacements.
7. I repeated the email solicitation process until I obtained a response from at least three participants from three different schools and one from each level of education (K-6, 6-8, and 9-12).
8. Based on email responses, I selected five participants: three for the individual pláticas and and two others for the group pláticas and followed up with a phone call to selected participants to schedule a face-to-face meeting.
9. During our meeting, I explained the study, expectations, risks, and benefits to participants.
10. Participants reviewed the provided consent form, and I answered questions they had at the time.
11. After all questions were answered to their satisfaction, they were asked to sign the consent form and a copy was provided to them.
12. Participants were informed that they could leave the study at any time without penalty.

After the participant selection process was completed, all participants were asked to provide dates and times for the individual pláticas. At this time, the participants were also informed of the data collection process, which consisted of individual and group pláticas in order to collect their testimonios by using five of their tesoros.

Research Site

For the individual and group pláticas, the participants were invited to a carne asada at my house. These participants were expected to be working at different levels of the K-12 education

system. One participant at the elementary level, another at the middle school level, and the third participant at the high school level.

Methods of Data Collection

The data collection methods include two different types of pláticas. Table 3.2 offers an account of anticipated raw data collection. The duration of data collection was 12 weeks. The individual pláticas and group pláticas took place in June, July, and August of 2020. Description of various forms of data collection are offered next.

Table 3.2 Data Inventory

Data Inventory		
Data Source	Number of pages	Total number of pages
• Two 1-1.5 hours audio recorded individual pláticas (6 total individual pláticas)	• 10 pages per 1-1.5 hour transcription	• 10 x 6 = 60 pages
• Two 2-2.5 hours audio recorded group pláticas. participant.	• 20 pages per plática	• 20 x 2 = 40 pages
• Peer Debriefing	• Six 30-minute sessions 10 pages per 30 minutes of transcription	• 10 x 6 = 60 pages
• Researcher Log Reflections	• 3 pages per week—Study duration 16 weeks	• 16 x 3 = 48 pages
• Member check each individual plática (30 minutes each)	• 10 pages per 30 minutes transcription 6, 15-minute member checks	• 6 x 10 = 60 pages
	Estimated Total Pages	**328 pages**

In the reflective field log, I recorded my thoughts about the participants' advocacy for CLDs in regard to social justice. In this log, I wrote down everything that came to mind before and/or after collecting any other type of information. This log guided my reflection and ensured I did not forget any information. This field log guided my reflection in nature (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In the descriptive part, I wrote about the setting, people's actions, and conversations before, during, and after the pláticas occurred. In the reflective part I wrote down any ideas or concerns I had.

Individual Pláticas with Tesoros

In this research, I refer to pláticas as an interview/conversation that can be from semi-structured to unstructured. A significant difference is that the role of the interviewer/researcher and the interviewee/participant can be switched during the conversation in order to provide an environment of confianza y respeto (trust and respect), but with the researcher always guiding the conversation. Bhattacharya (2017) states that conversations and/or interviews can take place in different forms in qualitative research and can be a form of interview that can vary from informal talk to formal semi-structured or structured interviews. Additionally, Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) identify la plática as a more suitable form of engaging with the Latino/a population. In other words, pláticas are interviews that incorporate the cultural factor within the interview and modify the structure in order to gain trust.

According to Valle and Mendoza (1978) the most important ingredient in plática is trust. I am using pláticas as one of my data collection methods instead of interviews for the following reasons: (1) pláticas are more personal than an interview and it allows the participant to be creative and tell their own stories without much guidance from the interviewer, (2) pláticas allow

the participants to ask questions of their own and make it seem more like a conversation than an interview.

In qualitative research, elicitations can be considered another way of becoming informed, (Bhattacharya, 2017). Therefore, I conducted the study in a natural setting, my house, which allowed me to collect data through individual and group pláticas to analyze words and facial expressions and evaluate participants' different points of view on the barriers and support system in their justice work. Simultaneously, these individual and group pláticas allowed me to identify the educational strategies and preparation the participants valued in their role as social justice advocates.

In order to personalize the individual pláticas, I asked each of the three participants to bring five to six tesoros. Tesoros are treasures or pieces of evidence provided by someone, in this case students' or parents' gifts to the participant were considered tesoros, especially if they have a great meaning behind the gift's value. The participants' experiences were triggered by these tesoros, in other words, tesoros created a context for the participants to speak about their experiences while sharing their personal testimonios. These elicitaions/tesoros were pictures, videos, letters, and objects that were meaningful and had sentimental value to the participant (Bhattacharya, 2017). Other items that can be considered tesoros can be students' work saved by the participants, or an item or object constructed collaboratively by students and the participants.

Two pláticas were conducted with each participant. These pláticas lasted from 2-3 hours. During the pláticas, the participants were invited (La Invitación) to a carne asada (cookout) at my house. This type of environment made the participants feel safe and comfortable. Normally, Latinos/as, feel privileged when they are invited to a carne asada at someone's house. Once someone is invited to such an event, they are considered alguien de confianza/someone that can

be trusted. Valle and Mendoza (1978) first introduced the Plática Methodology and describe the three phases of data gathering as La entrada, the amistad interview, and la despedida. Valle and Mendoza (1978) further explain that la entrada phase is useful to engage the interviewee and serve as the "relational preliminaries" before beginning the formal interview or plática (p. 34). The amistad interview is considered the formal interview/pláticas. During this phase the participants and/or the researcher begin sharing their experiences. Additionally, Valle and Mendoza (1978), view la plática as a component to build rapport with the participants while reinforcing mutuality and reciprocity.

This method of data collection was culturally and linguistically appropriate for my research in order to obtain the participants' testimonios of their personal experiences as English Language teachers. The despedida phase of the plática served to disengage the interviewee from sharing their testimonios. This phase includes "observance of culturally appropriate parting rituals including partaking of food, or modest gifts," it is likely that additional key contextual data may continue flowing during this phase (Valle & Mendoza, 1978, p. 34). For this reason, I started audio recording and taking notes of the pláticas at the beginning of la llegada phase and continued audio recording until the participant actually left my place. Valle and Gloria Bensussen (1985) identify the plática process as a social network paradigm used to build good rapport, which was crucial to developing social network intimacy and unity with the Latino population. I helped my participants feel more comfortable by sharing some of my testimonios through the pláticas using some of my tesoros during la amistad interview. This testimonio included my experiences as a former ELL and later as an English Language teacher. Fierros and Bernal (2016) have also used the three phases of la plática in some of their work, consisting of la entrada, an amistad interview, and la despedida.

My contribution to research is adding la invitación, la llegada, and la comida as three additional phases to the plática methodology as shown in Figure 3.2. La invitación requires the testimonista/researcher to invite the participants to a specific event, in this case, a carne asada, where the pláticas take place. La llegada is the arrival of the participant/s. This is culturally grounded in that in some cases Latinos greet each other with a hug and in some cases a kiss on the cheek to greet the participants. By now the researcher and the participants would have built rapport so this demonstrates confianza y respeto, trust and respect. Since confianza y respeto has been established at this point, it is common to share food, "Me dió nopalitos y tamales. (She gave me nopalitos and she gave me tamales)" (Valle & Mendoza, 1978, p. 26). La comida refers to the sharing of food, in this case a carne asada, which I prepared for the participants. A carne asada is a type of steak cut in thin layers, which would then be placed in a tortilla to form a taco. Usually carne asada is served with rice and beans on the side and pico de gallo for those that like spicy food.

Additionally, I added the process of using tesoros during the plática to obtain testimonios from the participants. Figure 3.2 provides the process of the plática and demonstrates how all of the six phases can be considered nonlinear and organic.

Figure 3.2 Phases of la plática. © Pedro Espinoza 2020

Group Pláticas with Tesoros

Interviewing/platicando with these Latinx participants was most appropriate to optimize positive outcomes and results of equity in their classrooms. Additionally, by listening to the participants' stories while answering my questions and providing information regarding their tesoros, through individual pláticas and group pláticas, I examined the type of support they provide to their CLDs. Appendix B provides a list of structured prompts and questions used during the individual and group pláticas. Furthermore, LatCrit allowed me to use pláticas and narrative to examine instances of race and racism (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Dixson and Rousseau (2006) assert that race remains a problem in society particularly in the education system.

After conducting the individual pláticas with three participants, I asked participants to bring three of their tesoros to two group pláticas. The group pláticas were conducted in a group of five participants. Platicas can be considered conversations carried out among people or professionals to discuss their academic day, week, semester, year, and/or professional life in general. Participants who have a profession in common usually are interested in sharing their tesoros. The group pláticas followed the same process as the individual pláticas.

During the invitación phase, I invited the three main participants to return and be part of two group pláticas. Additionally, I invited two more former BESITOS participants to share their testimonios by using their tesoros during the group pláticas. Since this time there were five participants, I asked them to bring only three of their tesoros to share with the rest of the group. I anticipate each participant to talk about his/her tesoros for at least 15-20 minutes. Combined, this took at least 75-120 minutes total for each group plática. Participants were provided with the opportunity to continue discussing their tesoros even after other participants had discussed theirs.

La llegada phase in this case was slightly different because I anticipated each participant to arrive at a different times. In the Latino culture, when people are invited to a specific event some people will arrive right on time, while others may arrive five, ten or in some cases up to fifteen minutes later. Since this was anticipated, I planned on starting this phase after everyone arrived.

These pláticas were informal, but at the same time, I collected valuable information because the participants shared their testimonios and spoke from the heart. They were in a comfortable environment sharing truthful, realistic, and valuable information with me and with each other. Similar to the individual pláticas, I continued taking notes of these pláticas until the last participant left.

Data Management and Analysis

The data managed and analyzed for this study was testimonios, individual and group pláticas. I took detailed notes during the individual pláticas and group pláticas. Furthermore, I personally transcribed and coded all testimonios and pláticas. Since participants' consent was provided, I took pictures of some of their tesoros.

Data management involved both printed and digitally collected raw data. As represented in the data inventory, individual and group pláticas, and field notes were required organization and management. Printed and soft copies of data were stored in folders and organized for each participant. These folders were stored in a secured locked file cabinet and the soft copies were saved in my computer. For security purposes, the electronically stored data were password protected as well as the devices in which they are stored. Electronic data was backed up daily in an additional storage source (external hard drive) in case the laptop crashed or was lost.

For journal entries and field notes, I used my laptop, which provided convenient recording space. Additionally, I used a digital recording device that allowed me to make voice memos while taking notes for further expansion of discussions and ideas.

I used NVivo to assist in analyzing, managing, and organizing my data. According to Creswell, "NVivo can display graphically the codes and categories" (2007, p. 167). Additionally, this coding program can retain the information in the language provided by the participants. All participants are bilingual and I wanted to provide them the opportunity to communicate and share their testimonios without having to translate specific words. Along with narrative analysis and categorical aggregation, Nvivo supported in capturing the true meaning of part of the stories, which could possibly be told in Spanish. Furthermore, data analysis of each testimonio was completed separately and data was processed using trenzas. Notes were taken by

the researcher. Participant and researcher discussions took place after each plática and during data analysis. After the pláticas were completed with one participant, I continued with the second and third participant.

Data Analysis

All my data was analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns (Merriam, 1998). Data analysis requires organizing all the data that I have seen, heard, and read in order to make sense of what I have learned (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). During the data analysis, conducted ongoing examinations and interpretations of the data in order to reach tentative conclusions and continue to refine my research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). This process allowed me to compare the data as soon as I collect it. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), "data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds" (1992, p. 127). During the analysis I looked for themes that may emerge as well as differences and similarities. Furthermore, in order to make sense of the information collected from the testimonios, I constantly interacted with the information throughout the research process. Since so much data was collected through group and individual pláticas, in order to prevent chaos and not become overwhelmed, I used Hancock and Algozzines' guidelines to simultaneously summarize and interpret my data. The recommended guidelines are the following:

1. Ongoing refinement of the study's fundamental research question in light of data obtained early in the investigation.
2. Constant focus on the research questions being investigated.
3. Collection and interpretation of only those data that are potentially meaningful to the research effort.

4. Develop a method for labeling, storing and gaining access to information acquired during the research effort.
5. Use all available resources that can assist in the collection and interpretation of information. (2006, pp. 56-57)

Quiñonez (2016) also uses trenzas/braids as an organizing structure for the multiple layered analysis process. My testimonios and my participants' testimonios were interwoven and interconnected into trenzas.

Data Representation

Data representation is important in order to reveal the world in various ways (Eisner, 1998). In the research community, there is no standard format in reporting qualitative research (Merriam 1998). In order to identify patterns in the data, I collected enough participants' testimonios and used LatCrit to explain those patterns. Furthermore, this allowed me to depict the participants' experiences of working with CLDs and their families. Excerpts from the individual and group pláticas were presented as evidence of my findings. Additionally, I combed through the data of the transcribed testimonios collected from the pláticas and identified prominent emerging themes. Finally, I completed a final report explaining the findings of the research.

Reciprocity and Ethics

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained before beginning the study. According to Creswell (2007), "permission needs to be sought from human subjects review board, a process in which campus committees, review research studies for their potential harmful impact on and risk to participants" (p. 123). Although in qualitative research, the risks and/or dilemmas might be different, ethical dilemmas are likely to arise depending on the collection of

data and dissemination of findings (Merriam, 1998). All guidelines and protocol were followed in order to obtain permission before collecting any data. After obtaining IRB approval, I contacted all participants and started scheduling times and days for the individual and group pláticas.

Before I started the pláticas process, I contacted the participants and informed them that all files would be password protected in a secured location and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities and secure their anonymity. Additionally, during our face-to- face meetings, participants were informed of the logistics of participating in the study and its purpose. After the participants were informed and agreed with the process of the research, they were asked to sign a letter of consent. The participants were also be informed about the option to withdraw at any time without repercussions.

Quality and Trustworthiness

In this section, I discuss the due diligence efforts I made in this study to indicate trustworthiness. First, I clearly stated the purpose of the study and my invested interest in it. Second, while starting to analyze the data, I took a closer look at my subjectivity, beliefs, and assumptions about the topic of my study. Furthermore, during this study, I provided a clearly written research purpose and questions. Third, the research design is meaningful and serves the purpose of the study. Additionally, I used purposeful and criterion sampling strategies that were appropriate for the study, and managed, collected, and analyzed data carefully. Finally, I maintained log of daily activities and a reflective personal log with detailed field notes. Additionally, in order to demonstrate credibility, I utilized triangulation. Triangulation assumes that if two or more sources of data collected, or researchers coincide on a similar conclusion, then the conclusion is more credible.

Triangulation

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend three activities to increase the probability of producing credible findings: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. Prolonged engagement is the investment of time to achieve the purpose of the study. To become better informed in the field, I engaged in data analysis that provided an in-depth saturation of the data. This involved detailed data analysis and explanation using triangulation and/or crystallization. Merriam (2009) explains that triangulation is the use of multiple data sources to confirm findings. Furthermore, "Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 7). Triangulation occurred during the comparison of the pláticas, testimonios, and field notes.

For the purpose of this study, I triangulated findings through multiple data sources such as writing log, pictures and/or audio recordings, six individual pláticas, and two group pláticas. According to Tracy (2010), "Crystallization encourages researchers to gather multiple types of data and employ various methods, multiple researchers, and numerous theoretical framework" (p. 844). Furthermore, crystallization is not used to provide a singular truth, but it allows for a more complex, detailed, but still partial understanding of the issue (Tracy 2010). As the research develops, new possible issues were observed and appropriate steps were taken to triangulate these findings among other data sources.

Rich rigor as described by Tracy (2010) as one of her eight criteria for excellence in qualitative research includes an integration of theoretical constructs, data, and time in the field, sample selection strategies, presentation of rich contexts, and transparency in data collection and analysis processes. According to Tracy (2010), the other seven criteria for excellent qualitative research are: (1) worthy topic, (2) sincerity, (3) credibility, (4) resonance, (5) significant

contribution, (6) ethical, and (7) meaningful coherence (p. 840). A worthy topic can be conceptually compelling and can also develop from societal or personal events Tracy (2010). The topic and study I have selected have grown from personal events and have the potential to provide authentic and relevant education to the learner. Furthermore, sincerity can be attained through honesty and transparency. By expressing my subjectivity and addressing my membership role, this research was marked by honesty and transparency about my goals and intentions (Tracy, 2010). Furthermore, by having a good understanding of the culture's vocabulary and grammar skills, I was able to provide the reader with a thick description of the data. In order to obtain transferability, I used trenzas y mestizaje governed by testimonios and looking at the participants' experiences through a prism using a LatCrit lens. By using this process, I braided the participants' experiences regarding, barriers and support system, social justice agendas, and educational strategies.

Transferability

Transferability is achieved as the story of the researcher overlaps with his or her own situation and instinctively applies the research to his or her own action. This process was done through individual and group pláticas with participants. My intention with this research is to provide a significant contribution and knowledge in order to improve the teaching practice and generate on-going research for current and future students. Furthermore, I took into consideration the different variations of practices regarding ethical research. In qualitative research, "procedural, situational, relational, and exiting ethics are practices" or steps that attend to ethics (Tracy, 2010, p. 847). In other words, all data was secured in a locked file cabinet and password coded computer. I critically reflected and took into consideration that each ethical circumstance is different in order to make the correct ethical decisions. I involved and inform the participants

about the possible consequences for violating anyone's privacy. Finally, I informed the participants about my plans with the data that was collected and how it will be presented. The appropriate steps were followed with the IRB and participants were notified about any possible consequences of the research. This research was presented as testimonios are told without negatively portraying anyone. Lastly, I provided meaningful coherence by utilizing member checks. The goal is not to obtain a single truth but instead provide space for additional data (Tracy, 2010).

Reflection for Credibility and Rigor

Engaging in reflection as a researcher is another method for ensuring credibility and rigor. Reflexivity is "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Additionally, "member reflections allow for sharing and dialoguing with participants about the study's findings, and providing opportunities for questions critique, feedback affirmation and even collaboration" (Tracy 2010, p. 844). As a reminder and support, I used a personal log. I took notes and constantly reflected on experiences and assumptions during the research process. I also conducted member checks. Furthermore, rich rigor and sincerity in the data collection and data analysis process, reflective journaling, and peer debriefing added to the rigor and trustworthiness of this research. When applying all the techniques mentioned above, significant rigor and credibility was added to this study.

Timeline for Completion

After obtaining IRB permission, the data was collected beginning with an individual and group pláticas. In June 2020, I scheduled a day and time for each participant to come to my house for the individual pláticas. These pláticas took place in June, July and August 2020. There were the total of six individual pláticas. Along with the individual pláticas, two group pláticas

also took place in the months of June and July 2020. Two group pláticas were conducted with five participants. Two other participants were invited to participate in the group pláticas. These participants were also former BESITOS students. All my data was collected from the individual and group pláticas and from the fieldnotes. After collecting all my data, I analyzed and reported it. I defended my dissertation in October 2020.

Chapter Summary

Trenzas y Mestizaje has been explained and defined as the methodological framework, which was used to braid the participants' testimonios after analyzing and interpreting the participants' experiences through a LatCrit lens. The methodological framework is governed by testimonios as the methodology with the intention of examining the experiences of three K-12 teachers as they engage in social justice advocacy, discuss barriers and support system, and explain how they used their educational strategies to navigate oppressive spaces in order to provide advocacy for their CLDs and their families.

This research was conducted over a period of 12 weeks in the summer 2020. This study was conducted through, individual and group pláticas while using tesoros to collect the testiminios and weaving all strands to create trenzas. After the data was collected, it was analyzed using the coding program NVivo. This program helped me retain the information in the language provided by the participants. Furthermore, I used trenzas to comb through the data in order to analyze and interpret it. Braiding of the trenzas supported the ongoing examination and interpretation of the data to help me reach conclusions. The findings were reported using one testimonio of the collective braided testimonios. Additionally, I have provided information on reciprocity and ethics and trustworthiness and rigor. The findings are detailed and reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers who graduated from the BESITOS federally funded bilingual and bicultural education program navigate educational structures while becoming teacher advocates engaged in justice agendas concerning their CLD students in a midwestern state. Using a Critical Qualitative Research (CQR) approach in individual and group páticas with five K-12 teachers from different schools and different school districts in the state of Kansas, data was collected to determine the type of support these teachers provided to their CLD students and families. Through the lens of CQR, I collected the data through the process of testimonios, pláticas, and tesoros. The data was analyzed using the trenzas methodological framework. This process was explained in detail in Chapter 3. The following three research questions provided a structure and guided the study.

1. In what ways do the participants engage in justice agendas for their students?
2. What do the participants attribute as barriers and support system(s) in their justice work?
3. What significant educational strategies do the participants value in their role as advocates in their justice work?

five individual pláticas took place in June and July of 2020. One individual plática and two group pláticas took place in August 2020. Two individual pláticas were conducted with three of the five participants and two group pláticas were conducted with all five participants. Tesoros were used to elicit the individual and group pláticas. Tesoros are considered special artifacts. In other words, these artifacts have sentimental value to the participants. During the individual pláticas, participants were asked to discuss five of their tesoros. During the group pláticas, each

participant was asked to discuss three tesoros. These elicitations/tesoros consisted of pictures, thank you cards, toy rings, and other objects that was meaningful and had sentimental value to the participant. Additionally, semi-structured and guiding questions (Appendix B) were created for the pláticas (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Each individual plática took 80-90 minutes and each group plática took 90-100 minutes.

The participants were invited to my house. Four individual pláticas took place at my house; two were conducted in the participants' homes; and one participant was pregnant and could not travel because of Covid-19 and her due date being so near. For convenience purposes, the group pláticas were conducted at one of the participants' home. The pláticas were audio recorded and I also used voice typing in Google docs. I then transcribed the pláticas using the typed Google document and the audio recording.

To check for accuracy and conduct member checks, I provided a copy of the transcribed document to the participants. Participants were informed and asked to make revisions and/or corrections to the documents if necessary. All the participants were in agreement with the way the document was transcribed, therefore no changes were made to the original document provided to the participants.

A Brief Description of the Participants' Ethnic Background and Participation in the BESITOS Program

To have a better understanding of the participants, it is important to understand their ethnic background and their participation in the Bilingual/Bicultural Education Students Interacting to Obtain Success (BESITOS) program. Over two-thirds of the BESITOS students were bilingual Latinx students working on an elementary and/or secondary teaching degree. All five of my participants, former BESITOS students, are currently Latinx teachers working in K-

12 schools and have taught more than three years. All five participants were English Language Learners and first-generation college students. Additionally, two participants are male teachers and three are female teachers.

The BESITOS program was briefly described, in Chapter 1. All the participants were selected from the larger BESITOS population. I had a criteria selection, which required the participants to be Latinx with at least three years teaching experience at the K-12 level. All five of my participants have been teaching from 8-17 years at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

The participants whom I interviewed and/or had the pláticas with continue working on their education. Three of the five participants have a Master's degree, one of them is 9 credit hours from obtaining her Master's degree, and one started her Master's in the Spring of 2020. All five participants continue working in the classroom with CLD students and provide support to their families.

Demographic Information

The demographic data for all participants were collected during the individual and group pláticas. Three participants participated in the individual pláticas; each of these participants works at a different level in the K-12 education system. In other words, one participant teaches in an elementary school, another one in a middle school, and the third one in a high school. Additionally, two other participants were part of the group pláticas. All five participants are Latinx teachers and have worked with CLD students for three years or longer. Although four of the five participants were born in the United States, they consider English to be their second language and are now bilingual in English and Spanish.

All participants but one, were part of the same third cohort in the BESITOS program. One participant was part of the first cohort of the BESITOS program. Four participants have been teaching from seven to eight years and one of the participants has been teaching for seventeen and a half years. All five participants were first generation college graduates. Although all participants currently work with CLD students, two of them are General Education classroom teachers and three of them are English Language Teachers.

Table 4.1 presents the demographic details for all five participants: (a) Self-Identification; (b) Major, (c) First Generation College Graduate, (d) BESITOS Cohort, (e) Degree Obtained, (f)Languages Spoken, (e) Years of Teaching Experience, (f) Teaching Field, (g) Teaching Level.

Table 4.1 Participants' Demographic Information

Pseudonym	**Pablo**	**Jesús**	**Carmen**	**Sara**	**Yadira**
Self-Identification	Latino Male	Latino Male	Latina Female	Latina Female	Latina Female
Major	Secondary Education	Secondary Education	Elementary Education	Elementary Education	Elementary Education
First Generation College Graduate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BESITOS Cohort	Cohort 3	Cohort 3	Cohort 3	Cohort 3	Cohort 1
Highest Degree Obtained	Bachelors + 20 Graduate Credit Hours	Master's Degree	Bachelors + 3 Graduate Credit Hours	Master's Degree	Bachelors + 24 Graduate Credit Hours
Languages Spoken	English and Spanish	English and Spanish	English and Spanish	English and Spanish	English and Spanish
Years of Teaching Experience	7 ½ years	8 ½ years	7 years	7 years	17 ½ years
Teaching Field and/or Area of Concentration	Bachelor of Science in Education-Secondary: Business	Bachelor of Science in Education-Secondary: Business	Bachelor of Science in Education-Elementary: English for Speakers of	Bachelor of Science in Education-Elementary: Modern Language	Bachelor of Science in Education-Elementary: English for Speakers of

Pseudonym	Pablo	Jesús	Carmen	Sara	Yadira
			Other Languages		Other Languages
Teaching Level	Middle School	High School	Elementary School	Elementary School	Elementary School

In summary, all participants in this study identified themselves as Latino/a. By the time this study was conducted, all participants had worked with CLD students and their families and some participants, although they are teaching in a general education classroom, continue advocating for their CLD students and families. One participant is currently teaching in a general education classroom, but she is the only bilingual staff member besides the English Language teacher. Therefore, this participant provides considerable support to CLD students and families, especially translating.

Personal Representation of the Participants

The following segment provides information collected from the participants during the individual and group pláticas regarding the barriers they encountered as pre-service and in-service work as educators. Since one of the goals of this study is to acknowledge the types of barriers the participants encountered during their pre-service and in-service work along with the types of support systems they received to help them overcome these barriers, I requested each participant to discuss and/or share their experiences as undergraduate students and professional educators. A brief description of the personal experiences of the five participants is provided in the section below.

Pablo

Pablo's experience as an undergraduate was mostly positive besides the few barriers he encountered as an undergraduate student. Pablo mentioned that as an undergraduate living away

from home and not being able to work was very difficult for him. He believed that not being able to work and contribute to the family income placed too much pressure on his parents. The faculty and staff from the BESITOS program provided him with the support and advice he needed to see himself as a professional and family contributor in the near future.

As an in-service teacher, one of the barriers he discussed was the lack of collaboration with colleagues. He mentioned the school was too big and most teachers were not supportive and did not want to collaborate with him. Not being able to work together with others was a difficult situation for him because he could see that others teaching in the same areas would share ideas and learn from each another.

Jesús

One of the barriers encountered by Jesús as an undergraduate student was acceptance. He felt that no matter what he did and how hard he tried, he was never accepted by his White peers. Additionally, he expressed feeling discouraged since some of his professors viewed him as inferior and not capable of producing quality work. He mentioned that BESITOS faculty and staff along with his mother encouraged him and told him "hechale ganas" (apply yourself and/or work hard) and not to worry too much about other opinions because the people that really want him to succeed are the people that truly care about him.

As an in-service teacher, Jesús continues "hechandole ganas" for himself and for students that struggle with learning English and/or students that have difficulties learning the content. He stated, "I believe that if provided with the resources necessary, everyone is capable of succeeding." He advises his students and tells them, "Que con ganas, todo se puede" in other words, where there is a will there is a way. Jesús continues to struggle and has barriers similar to those as an undergraduate. He shared that some of his colleagues and administrators do not take

his knowledge and ideas into consideration because of his ethnicity. He has shared similar ideas with some of his colleagues and not taken into consideration until the same, or similar idea is shared by a white colleague. He stated, “This brings back memories of my undergraduate years when my ideas were not considered.”

Carmen

Carmen had a great experience as an undergraduate. She could not think of any barriers besides some of her classes being difficult for her, but with tutoring support she was able to succeed and complete her studies. She is appreciative of all the support she received from all her peers, BESITOS faculty and staff, and expressed the love she had for her alma matter. She loved her experience so much in the university and in the town and hopes to move here someday.

Similarly, to her undergraduate experience, her experience as a regular classroom teacher has been positive. She expressed her satisfaction in the classroom and in the school. She loves the support she receives from colleagues and supervisors. She mentioned, “My first year teaching, I did not get much support from my principal, but I think it was because it was her first year as well. After the first year, I felt she took my ideas and my opinions more into consideration.” Another reason Carmen mentioned for not receiving support was her newness. She stated that she did not have much to share with others because she was learning the system.

Sara

Sara’s undergraduate experience was positive. Two of her siblings were in college for the last three years of her college career. They were very close and spent a lot of time together. The three of them provided support to each other and encouraged each other. Sara indicated that her parents were also very supportive of them, “They are very excited we are all studying to be teachers.”

Sara is currently an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and has worked with Kindergarten - 5th grade CLD students. She has received support from colleagues and supervisors. Sara feels welcomed, appreciated, and valued in her school. She stated, "Usually when I express my ideas to my colleagues and supervisor, they take them into consideration and agree with the recommendations I make."

Yadira

As an undergraduate Yadira was told by one of her professors, "Maybe this is not the right time to continue with your studies." This statement crushed her, but she was able to overcome her feelings at the time and informed the professor that this was the time. She said, "I feel that this is the perfect time and I want to continue working hard to demonstrate to my daughter that I am capable of becoming a teacher so one day she can be proud of me." Yadira had always wanted to be a teacher and she was not going to let comments such as this one ruin her dreams of becoming a teacher. She stated, "I also had another professor that was very supportive and even allowed me to bring my daughter into the classroom and use her as model to discuss the stages of life." Yadira's parents also encouraged her to continue with her education and advised her to apply herself, "hechale ganas and continue working hard so you and your daughter can have a better future."

As an in-service teacher, one of the factors of the many barriers shared by Yadira was related to her identity. She shared, "Since many teacher aides in my school districts are Latinos/as, I have been asked if I am a teacher aide because of my last name and the color of my skin. This person did not bother to ask if I was a teacher, she automatically assumed that I was an aide." Another barrier expressed by Yadira was her frustration with not being valued and her ideas and opinions not being taken into consideration until similar ideas were brought up by

white teachers. Something that has helped Yadira overcome these barriers is her resilience and the need she feels to advocate for her students. Yadira stated, “These students remind me of myself; I wish I would have had someone advocate for me and understand the struggles I went through while learning English.”

Using Trenzas to Braid the Findings, Emergent Themes Related to Research Questions

By using a LatCrit lens and combing through data of the transcribed testimonios collected from the pláticas, I identified and braided the following prominent emerging themes: (a) Tesoros from students and families, (b) Relationships, (c) Advocacy for CLD students: High expectations of all students, (d) Barriers as pre-service and in-service teachers: Resilience, (e) Support system as pre-service and in-service teachers: hechale ganas/work hard, (f) Effective classroom strategies, (g) Importance of parent and family involvement. Each of these themes is presented and analyzed in succession.

Research Question 1

In what ways do the participants engage in justice agendas for their students?

Tesoros from Students and Families

During our individual and group pláticas all participants discussed their tesoros/treasures and/or special artifacts. These special artifacts consisted of thank you cards, students’ pictures, year books, handmade bracelets, handmade rings, foods from around the world, and many other artifacts the participants treasure, and have kept in their possession for many years. Jesús states the following about one of his tesoros,

> I get those thank you letters one that especially always sticks with me is one that was handmade by one of my students. She was a student that did not have a lot when she

> moved to the United States and at the end of the year she made me this like crazy thank you letter. I could tell she put a lot of thought and effort into making this letter/card. She bedazzled the card. Her effort into making the card is what showed me that she was really thankful for everything that I did for her. Every year, I place this card in my classroom to remind me of her and to remind me of the reason/s why I do what I do every day.

Sara explained, "I have this card one of my students gave me for Valentines Day and in the card, she calls me mom. I felt like a role model to her and like a mom to her and many other of my students." All five participants shared the significance of these tesoros and the reasons why they had kept them.

One participant mentioned that one of his tesoros was intangible. He stated,

> Although this tesoro is intangible, I have great memories and I learned a lot from my students. This tesoro is food. You know that we love sharing food and one of the ways my students like to show their appreciation is by bringing food to the classroom. I have students from many parts of the world and many different cultures in my class so I had the opportunity to try Vietnamese, Chinese, African, Spanish and you name it, many different types of foods.

After this participant mentioned this tesoro in the group pláticas, all other participants agreed and could relate to these experiences. They also agreed that not only their students would like sharing and bringing food to the classroom, but also many parents would invite them to their homes to eat and to family gatherings. They expressed the importance of confianza/trust, therefore, this finding aligns with the LatCrit tenets of language, ethnicity, and culture.

All participants brought five tesoros to the individual pláticas and three tesoros to the group pláticas. One of the participants has been teaching for over seventeen years and she

brought a tesoro from her first year of teaching. This demonstrates how much these participants treasure these items from their students and families. Yadira indicated feeling the same way now as she did seventeen years ago after she reads the letters from her students. Yadira stated,

> I remember my student's face every time I read this letter. It is letters like this one that keeps me motivated to continue teaching. At times, it may seem like a lot of work and things may be difficult, but every year I get these special gifts from my students that show me how much they love me and I use these tesoros to stay motivated and continue providing the best support possible for my students and their families. Sometimes my students tell me they want to buy me expensive gifts and I feel bad because although the majority of them come from low socioeconomic families, they want to demonstrate their love by providing me with expensive gifts. I tell them that sometimes gifts that come from the heart are worth a lot more than expensive gifts.

Sara could relate to Yadira's story. Sara mentioned that one day one of her students brought her a gold diamond ring and she had to contact the student's mom to ask her if she knew where she got the ring. The mom stated the ring was hers. This student loved Sara so much she gave her mom's wedding ring. Fortunately, Sara got in contact with the student's mom and the ring was returned.

All participants that worked with elementary age students agreed having similar experiences as Sara. They all received expensive gifts from their students and they all had to call parents to check where these items came from. All participants indicated feeling loved by their students. They received many tesoros and some of these tesoros were non-tangible. Sara recalls, being called mom by one of her former students. She mentioned feeling loved by this student and she also loved this student as if she was her own daughter. These are the type of relationships the

participants indicated having with their students and the type of tesoros they have collected and remembered during their teaching careers.

These participants indicated applying for administrative positions and coordinator positions with the hope they could provide support and advocacy at a bigger level. They mentioned wanting to make changes in the school and district level to accommodate the needs of CLD students and their families, but unfortunately, they did not receive these positions. All participants mentioned they continue taking graduate classes to further their education with the hope to some day obtain administrative positions.

Relationships

Building positive relationships with students was something mentioned by all five participants as a key factor for success in the classroom. Jesús indicated he would allow his students to bring authentic food from their home country and they would work on pronouncing the names of the foods. He felt this helped him to get to know his students better. Jesús stated,

> In the Latin culture this is what we do, we eat food and build relationships, during this time trust is built. Once you have that trust, I mean those kids will do anything for you. I have kids that have even defended me. Being a very effective high-quality teacher alone is not enough, you can know everything, but it's not enough, at the end of the day those kids want someone to listen to them. And yea, once you build that trust and they can trust you then you take the time to really see what is going on in their lives and get to know them and they build that trust with you and that is when, learning actually begins.

Carmen, Sara, Pablo, and Yadira all agreed and shared their experiences with building relationships with their students. All four participants stated, "Building relationships helps you make connections with your students." Carmen stated,

> We need to build relationships with our students from the beginning of the school year. This will not only help you get to know your students' needs, but it will also help you make connections with them. I can relate to many of my students, I know their struggles, not only with the content, but also learning English. I listen to them and their struggles. Kids just want someone to listen to them, many times that is all they want. These students don't get that at home, they are not getting that anywhere else and so when they come to school, some teachers are just pushing them away instead of listening to them. I like to listen to them and get to know them and I let them know I have high expectations for all of them.

Yadira shared some of the struggles her students were going through and even more in the spring 2020 semester during the Covid-19 Pandemic. She indicated that having a good relationship and building trust was extremely crucial during these difficult times. Yadira stated,

> Now more than ever is the time to really get to know your students and build positive relationships with them. If you have a good relationship with your students, they will trust you and also share their needs. This spring semester when our whole school district went to online teaching I already knew the type of support my students were going to need. For example, I knew that some students had access to internet at home and many of them did not. Luckily for these students our school district was able to provide them with a hotspot. It was difficult to work remotely with my CLD students because I have many non-English speakers. These students benefit from a lot of interactive activities and cooperative learning. They need opportunities to practice their second language. Fortunately, my teacher aides, my colleagues, and I were able to provide some of these opportunities remotely. Since I/ we knew our students and their needs, we were able to

act quickly and think of the online resources we could use to provide support for our students.

All participants expressed their satisfaction with the type of support they provided to their students. They all felt prepared and knowledgeable about the content and strategies they have been implementing in their classrooms. Building positive relationships and gaining the students' trust were two recurring themes during our individual and group pláticas. Sharing similar experiences regarding language, culture and ethnicity, allowed the participants to build positive relationships with their students.

Research Question 2

What do the participants attribute as barriers and support system(s) in their justice work?

Advocacy for CLD Students: High Expectations of All Students

A recurring theme while discussing advocacy for students and families by all participants was the concept of having high expectations of all students. The saying "hechale ganas" resonated in this theme and in the support system theme. Hechale ganas is a common phrase used by Latinx people to tell each other to work hard and not give up no matter the circumstances. On a regular basis, this is one of the best advice and/or motivational words people can provide to others. One of the participants mentioned that one of his teachers made a difference in his life just by believing in him and telling him he could do anything he put his mind to. Jesús remembered that one of his elementary teachers had high expectations for him and one day she gave him a book. The book was titled *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* by Dr. Seuss. This was an experience Jesús never forgot. He treasured the book so much because this gift made a big difference in his life. He states,

> One of my favorite books was a book that was given to me, especially since I came from a low-income family. I was the first one to ever graduate from college and so when I was in high school I did not think college was an option for me. Every time I had this feeling I thought about my teacher and the book she gave me because it showed me that there was an opportunity for me and I just always remembered this book. It just kind of reminded me that just because I came from nothing that it was still possible for me to go to school and do something with my life. even though I was poor and grew up poor.

Jesús likes to share his story with his students and has high expectations for all students. He hopes that this story inspires them to go to college. He further states, "A teacher believed in me and now it is my job and responsibility to believe in my students." All five participants stated they had at least one teacher and/or counselor encourage them and believe in them. These teachers helped the participants believe they could go to college and obtain a degree even if they were from a low socioeconomic status. Yadira, stated, "My high school counselor encouraged me to apply for scholarships and to pursue my education." Pablo, Sara, and Carmen also mentioned they had at least one teacher in their lives who believed in them and encouraged them to attend college. All participants recall having a teacher, counselor, and/or school official as a role model and advocate.

Pablo further indicated,

> I don't mind sharing my story with my students that I was poor and that I was also a CLD student. I like to share my story with my students, especially my students that are undocumented and they also share stories with me. I want to be a good teacher and advocate and hopefully I can make a difference in some or all of my students' lives. They tell me that there is no reason for them to even think about attending college since they

are undocumented. I encourage them and tell them that anyone can attend college. I also refer them to my school counselors so they can obtain more information.

All five participants indicated feeling some type of connection to their students. Yadira felt she could relate to many of her students and the struggles she went through while learning English. All participants mentioned having a role model implementing social justice by providing guidance and encouraging them to stay in school, and attend college.

Barriers as Pre-service and In-service Teachers: Resilience

The participants all had similar barriers to overcome as pre-service and in-service teachers. Some of the barriers indicated by the participants were: Immigration status, being a second language learner, coming from low socioeconomic status, not getting academic support at home, and being first generation students. All five participants mentioned that although, they did not receive academic support from their parents and/or families, their families were always there encouraging them and telling them "hechale ganas/work hard". Yadira stated,

> My parents did not or do not speak English, therefore, my siblings and I knew that they could not help us with school work or could not help us fill out any paper work regarding financial aid. Resilience is what got me to where I am today. I could hear my parents encouraging me and telling me hechale ganas mija. As an undergraduate student, I encountered some difficulties because I did not understand the system. Now as a teacher I have encountered different barriers. I have been teaching for seventeen and a half years. I see myself in my students. I see them struggling with school work and many of them do not receive academic support at home. I know that it is not because their parents don't want to help them, but even if they want to they can't because their parents do not speak, read, or write in English. I try to be a support system and an advocate for these students,

but many times my ideas have been shut down either by administration or by other colleagues.

The other four participants could relate to Yadira's experience. They stated, they had similar barriers as pre-service teachers and now as experienced in-service teachers their ideas continue to get shut by administrators and/or other colleagues. Pablo stated,

> Administration had no control of their staff, teachers were so mean to each other, it was hard for me to leave this school because this school had such good kids and the kids needed good teachers, they needed people to believe in them and I knew I was making a difference, but it was hard for me because you know as teachers, we are always giving, giving, and giving. In a way we also need to recharge and when you work with people that don't support you or people that are always putting you down it's hard to do a good job. Teachers were mean. I had teachers that would come up to me and start yelling at me in front of the students and just going off on me and being completely unprofessional.

Three of the five participants mentioned feeling pretty discouraged by the barriers keeping them from providing support to their students. They believed they could really make a difference if they could incorporate different ideas into the curriculum and use strategies appropriate for their CLD students, but they were not supported and/or their ideas were not taken into consideration. Some of the barriers mentioned by these participants similar to their students were related to immigration status, language, ethnicity, and cultural background.

Support System as Pre-service and In-service Teachers: hechale ganas/work hard

All five participants received some type of support throughout their lives. Before entering college, they were all encouraged by their parents to attend college and study hard in order to become somebody important in their lives. Yadira stated, "My parents told me study hard so

some day you don't have to work as hard as we do." Additionally, Jesús mentioned always being encouraged by his mom telling him to work hard and not give up until he accomplishes his goal of becoming a teacher. He stated, "My mom, would tell me that I could do anything I wanted to do, that just because I was poor now did not mean I was always going to be poor and that someday, I could be teaching and encouraging kids like me."

As pre-service teachers, all participants mentioned receiving support from faculty and staff from the BESITOS program and some professors from Kansas State University. Sara stated,

> If it wasn't for the BESITOS program, I would not be teaching now. I was not certain how I was going to pay for college. Besides the financial support, I also received a lot of academic support and learned a lot of great strategies to implement with my students. I really didn't like the BESITOS seminar, but now I realize that all these activities and topics we discussed in the seminar had so much value. I feel that I am more knowledgeable and can be a better advocate to my CLD students because I learned many of these things in the seminar.

Páblo, along with the rest of the participants agreed with Sara. He indicated,

> if it wasn't for the BESITOS program, I would not be teaching today. I had already dropped out of college and it was the BESITOS coordinator that convinced me and my parents to return to school and finish my degree. I was so glad I had these type of people in my life. I feel like if I still need something, I can reach out to them and they will help me out. These are the type of people I consider family because they could have just left me alone and not worry if I came back to school or not, but they convinced me and now I know it was one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

As in-service teachers, all participants have received some type of support from colleagues and administrators. The type of support varied, two of the five participants felt they had a great support system in their schools. They had a great relationship and support system with other colleagues and administrators. Two other participants indicated only having support from a couple of teachers teaching in the same content area as themselves. One participant on the other hand, had a negative experience his first two years of teaching. This experience forced him to leave this school. Jesús seems to be much happier where he is now. Jesús stated,

> I am very happy where I am now. I have been at this school for almost 7 years. I don't know if I ever want to leave because I have been able to really feel like I belong here. I feel like I have always been supported here. I think a lot of that has to do with the people you surround yourself with, people that is going to support you and help you. At this school I have been very fortunate to have that with my colleagues and that is something I did not have at my first school.

All five participants agreed that they are currently receiving some type of support from colleagues and administrators and that they feel they have a lot to contribute and also provide support to colleagues that are willing to listen and to accept their ideas. Additionally, all participants, continue feeling that their ethnicity, and cultural background, are factors for not being fully supported or seen as contributors to the education system.

Research Question 3

What significant educational strategies do the participants value in their role as advocates in their justice work?

Effective Classroom Strategies

Before explaining any of the specific strategies implemented in the classroom, all participants mentioned the significance of building relationships and making connections with the students. Pablo and Jesús stated, "If you build a good relationship with your students, you don't have to worry too much about behavior management because at this point the student will do anything you ask of them." Carmen, Sara, and Yadira agreed and Yadira stated,

> It is crucial for all teachers to build good relationships with the students. You get to know them better not only personally, but you also have a better idea about what their needs are. Once they learn to trust you they feel more comfortable telling you about themselves. This helps me to get to know their background knowledge. One of the first things I do in my classroom is implement a strategy to get to know them. I implement the biography card strategy. I learned this strategy in my ESL classes at Kansas State University. I modify this strategy to fit the level of my students. For example, in one of my biography cards, I asked my student to tell me who their favorite superhero was and I printed the body of that superhero and put my students' picture on the superhero's bodies. Then I had them write their personal information in the card.

Sara stated,

> I also use the biography card and other strategies that are going to help me know my students' academic needs. I like to use some strategies to help me find out in which tier my students belong. For example, if they belong in tier-1, tier-2 or in tier 3. After I figure out the tier where they belong, I can get to know the students' needs and where they lack. I really don't like to pull out my students out of their regular classroom

> instruction, but if I feel they can benefit from receiving the extra language support in order to fill the gaps, I pull them out and provide the support needed.

All participants seem to take into consideration and implement Biography Driven Instruction strategies with their students. They get to know their students and their background knowledge. After building a good relationship with their students and getting to know their interests and needs, the participants are able to look for literature and/or books that have stories the students can relate to and connect with. Pablo indicated having a class which consisted of at least 80 to 90 percent Latinx students. To help the students make connections he read passages about quinceañeras, Dia de los Muertos, and other events students could connect with. Pablo stated, "When students read passages they could relate with at least they know what the passages were about, then they concentrated more on learning English. I would also provide the passages to them in their native language first then in English."

All participants were also in agreement on the value of implementing cooperative learning strategies. Jesús indicated,

> Cooperative learning strategies may vary. They can be as simple as asking students to bring a picture from home that is important to them and means something to them, then ask them to share information about their picture with a partner, then in small groups, and eventually with the whole class. In this activity the students are also practicing their listening and speaking skills. Finally, I ask my students to write their story about this picture, therefore just with one picture, the students can get to work with their peers and also work in three of the four language skills (listening, speaking, and writing). To expand on this activity and also to help my students work on their reading skills I ask them to look for pictures and facts of their home towns and/or home countries. I have

> students from many different parts of the world, therefore I want them to share this information with all of us and this helps everyone feel the importance of their country and learn about many other countries.

The type of teaching and teaching strategies discussed by all participants reformulates these classrooms into a more learner-centered classroom and a community of learners in which all students interpret and reinvent their own experiences (Garcia, et al., 2010). All participants were English Language Learners and can linguistically and culturally relate to their students.

Importance of Parent and Family Involvement

Similarly building relationships and making connections with students, it is just as crucial to build relationships with parents and families. By getting to know students' families, teachers are also able to get to know their needs and how to better provide the individual support needed by each family. Sara indicated,

> Building trust with all parents is very important. Parent of our CLD students always demonstrate so much respect and trust us one hundred percent to make all academic decisions about their children. I am not certain if they trust us so much because they don't understand the education system or because I earn their respect. Speaking from experience, my parents always trusted my teachers to do what was best for me, therefore I can relate to many of these parents as well. They learn to trust me as their child's teacher and to do what is best for them.

Carmen mentioned parents being so grateful with her for doing such a great job with their children and they would give her gifts to demonstrate their gratitude. She further indicated, "This mostly happens with my Latino parents. I do receive gifts from other parents during holidays or

special occasions, but from Latino parents, I receive unexpected gifts. I believe it's a way for them to demonstrate their appreciation. I usually have to tell them that I am just doing my job."

The other three participants also shared their ideas for parent involvement. Jesús stated,

> Parent involvement is so important to me because I get to know my students at a deeper level and where they come from. I try to get involved in as many activities outside of the classroom as possible because this is where I see a lot of the parents. One specific thing I like to do at the beginning of the school year, during open house is offer 10 points of extra credit to all students that bring their parents with them. Even if they only bring one parent, I still give them the 10 extra credit points. Unfortunately, the school district now has a rule and/or policy stating we cannot offer extra credit anymore for these types of activities. Any time I meet any of the parents, I like to provide them with my information and I usually let them know I am here for them and their children if they have any questions.

Pablo on the other hand had some negative experiences with some of the parents. He stated,

> My first couple of years of teaching I was really motivated and wanted to contact my students' parents on a regular basis. I knew that usually parents were contacted and received information about how their children were misbehaving and or when they were in trouble. I on the other hand also wanted to contact parents when their children did something good in class or when they performed well in an assignment or project. Then some parents got pretty aggressive with me on several instances and told me not to contact them again. I believe this was also caused by the fact that they were only contacted when their children did something wrong. I wanted to change this, but finally I

> stopped because it happened several times, therefore I decided not to put myself through those types of situations anymore. I understand where some of my parents come from and why they would get upset. Some of them have two or three jobs and probably don't want to get bothered when they are resting. I am still a big believer of building relationships with parents and communicating with them. I do not call anymore, but I still send notes to inform them of their children's progress.

Although Pablo had a negative experience when contacting students' parents, he along with all other participants, believe that parent involvement is imperative to the education of their students. During the group pláticas, all participants shared strategies to implement in their schools about how to reach parents and families. They were very excited about sharing some of these strategies with their administration and hopefully implement them in their schools. All participants indicated they were able to relate to their students' parents and families and engaged in social justice agendas by providing native language support to these families.

Summary

The themes that emerged from the participants' individual and group pláticas were the following: (a) Tesoros from students and families, (b) Relationships, (c) Advocacy for CLD students: High expectations of all students, (d) Barriers as pre-service and in-service teachers: Resilience, (e) Support system as pre-service and in-service teachers: hechale ganas/work hard, (f) Effective classroom strategies, (g) Importance of parent and family involvement.

Overall, the findings were positive about the type of support the participants receive in their current schools. Although some barriers still exist, the participants have learned to manage and overcome them in order to provide support to their students and families. The participants' tesoros from their students and the students' families were some of the special items, which

remind the participants of the reasons why they are teaching. The participants stated, "Sometimes when we feel like giving up and change professions, we look at our tesoros and remember our current and former students and these small gifts mean so much to us." The participants' tesoros, along with being resilient, and hechandole ganas/working hard as K-12 educators with continued support from their families and colleagues with similar agendas as themselves, have encouraged them to continue advocating for their CLD students and families. Additionally, the participants continue to have high expectations for their CLD students and encouraging them to set goals to go to college.

Participants continue providing support to their students to help them overcome language barriers as they did themselves. They provide personal examples and tell their personal success stories to their students to inspire them and motivate them to continue attending school. Furthermore, participants stated that creating relationships with students and families is paramount to making connections and getting to know their needs and strengths. The participants take into consideration the students' ethnic backgrounds and view them from the asset perspective and implement cultural and linguistically responsive teaching in their classrooms. These perspectives allow the participants to implement effective strategies, which allow the students to make connections to their personal lives. These strategies provide opportunities for CLD students to share their knowledge about their cultures and home countries. Biography Driven Instruction allows the participants' students to be proud of who they are and where they come from.

Students' parents and families were considered to play a major role in the education process of CLD students. Although they may not be able to provide academic support to their children on a regular basis, these parents encourage their children and have high expectations for

them. They motivate their children to “hecharle ganas”/work hard and pay attention in school with the hope that someday these children attend college, graduate college, and do not have to work as hard as these parents currently do.

Chapter 5 provides the interpretation and analysis of the participant’s responses along with the interpretations surrounding the findings and research questions and how they relate to the literature. Additionally, Chapter 5 provides suggestions for providing adequate support to CLD students and their families, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

This chapter includes a summary of the results and a discussion of the findings to the barriers five participants encounter in their professional setting along with the types of support these participants received. This chapter concludes with the implications of the findings and recommendations for school districts in the United States to work with CLD students and their families.

Summary of the Results

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers who graduated from the BESITOS federally funded bilingual and bicultural education program navigate educational structures, while becoming teacher advocates who are engaged in justice agendas concerning their CLD students in a midwestern state. Throughout this research, the focus was to examine the experiences of bilingual Latinx teachers working with CLD students. This chapter discusses the findings and future research possibilities to answer the following research questions.

1. In what ways do the participants engage in justice agendas for their students?
2. What do the participants attribute as barriers and support system(s) in their justice work?
3. What significant educational strategies do the participants value in their role as advocates in their justice work?

The following seven themes emerged from the data collected from the research questions. (a) RQ1, Tesoros from students and families, (b) RQ1, Relationships, (c) RQ2 Advocacy for CLD students: High expectations of all students, (d) RQ2, Barriers as pre-service and in-service teachers: Resilience, (e) RQ2, Support system as pre-service and in-service teachers: hechale

ganas/work hard, (f) RQ3, Effective classroom strategies, (g) RQ3, Importance of parent and family involvement.

All five participants encountered barriers in their careers. They all thought of ways to overcome these barriers. They all indicated overcoming these barriers with the support of their families. Four of the five participants also mentioned receiving some type of support from their colleagues and administrators regarding their justice work. Although three of the participants did not receive any support the first two years teaching, at a different school, they are now receiving support from colleagues and administrators. One of the participants had to leave his first place of employment in order to continue teaching and providing support to his students. Discussion and interpretation of the findings, implications of findings, limitations and recommendations, and the conclusion are presented in the following sections.

Discussion and Interpretation of the Findings

All seven themes mentioned in the previous section help to illustrate the types of barriers the participants encountered during the process of becoming teachers and during their professional careers. These themes illustrate the type of support the participants currently receive and have received from their colleagues and administrators. Additionally, these themes depict the type of support the participants provide for their CLD students and families and explain different ways the participants personally relate to their students. Individually, all the themes are outlined and discussed in relation to the germane literature.

Tesoros from Students and Families

The findings of this study explain the value and significance the tesoros/treasures from students and families had for all participants. The significance of these tesoros are explained in the section below.

Participants exhibited all their tesoros (gifts received from students and/or families). Four of the participants had kept these tesoros for 7-8 years and one of the participants had been teaching for seventeen and a half years and had at least one tesoro from her first year of teaching. This finding is consistent with Strauss (2015) who states one of the teachers in the study received a letter from one of her high school students. The teacher states, "By the end of the letter I was sobbing. The impact of this thank-you note has reverberated throughout my career. He is who I recall when I have a student exhibiting some or all of his antics-and his thank-you note is what helps me take the next step on a rough day" (p. 3). All participants have a tesoro or more they revert to when they need to be reminded of the reasons they teach. One of the participants keeps all her annual pictures. Carmen stated, "When I look at my tesoros, I also like to look back at my students' pictures and put that face to my tesoro, even though my students may not look like that anymore, I still like to look at them when they were first graders."

Yadira has thank-you notes since the spring of 2003, her first year of teaching. She stated, "Sometimes, I wish our administrators would take all of these tesoros into consideration during our evaluation process, but even if they don't, these tesoros mean so much more to me." Similarly, in Strauss (2015), one of her participants expresses her vision of discussing gifts/regalos during her yearly evaluations. Strauss' participant states, "My administration and I could extend discussion during my yearly evaluation to include the number of gifts I've received in my teaching career, which stretches back some 16 years now" (p. 1). All participants agreed with Yadira and currently remember and treasure these tesoros a lot more than any evidence a simple data-base could provide during their annual teacher evaluations.

All participants indicated having boxes full of tesoros from their students and families. They have kept them for many years and now they share the stories behind each tesoro with their

children and/or significant other. Carmen indicated, going through these boxes and sharing these tesoros with her husband and parents. Yadira, stated, “When I find these boxes in my garage or in my house, I spend hours remembering my many years of teaching and great moments spent in the classroom and how much I loved these students and how much they loved me.” This ideas and teaching philosophy are compatible with Palmer’s (2010) research, who states, “Like every teacher, I have a box crammed full of students notes and various trinkets. Recently, I sat on the carpet with my daughter and sifted through these mementos, pausing to share the story of each item with her” (p. 11). Additionally, findings in this study showed the importance, value, and meaning these tesoros had in the participants’ lives. These findings align with Palmer’s (2010) research asserting how much her students meant to her and vice versa. Furthermore, Palmer (2010), states,

> Interestingly, few of the artifacts connect strongly to the curriculum. Instead, the majority of the treasures that fill my feel-good box are from students who were grateful that I saw and accepted them. They represent the importance of relationships and a positive classroom culture. (p. 11)

During the individual pláticas and group pláticas, Jesús indicated the importance of building good relationships with his students. He felt more connected with his students and was able to create a good and safe classroom environment.

In summary, findings indicated all participants had tesoros from the first year of their teaching career. Although all participants were evaluated on an annual basis, regarding their effectiveness, these tesoros had much more value than a formal teacher evaluation. As a result, it was found that these tesoros had a tremendous amount of significance to the participants’ lives and professional growth. Throughout the years of collecting these tesoros, the participants were

able to build good relationships with their students. Additionally, the participants were able to connect with their students and build trust/confianza.

Relationships

The findings of this study revealed the significance and importance of participants having a positive relationship with all students. All the participants reiterated and expressed the type of relationships they had with their students. All participants knew their students at a deeper level than just academics. They were aware of students' needs in and out of the classroom. Jesús indicated being able to relate to his students and share similar experiences. He mentioned having a teacher and a great role model in his life. This teacher helped him, believed in him, and provided him with information about college. This finding agrees with Split, Wu, Hughes and Kwok (2012), who claim supportive relationships with teachers tend to promote students' engagement in learning activities and succeed in academic achievement. Additionally, Irizarry and Raible (2011), indicate that caring relationships and positive experiences with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other school officials working with Latino and CLDs can help them succeed academically. Conversely, Split et al. (2012) express how poor relationships with teachers elicit feelings and distress, which may limit students' ability to dedicate energy to academic learning activities. Furthermore, Bernstein-Yamashiro and Noam (2013) stated a lack of connection to caring adults at school is recognized as a reason for student alienation, failure, and unhappiness from school and dropout. Therefore, positive and/or poor relationships with students may impact them in different ways.

Pablo and Jesús stated the majority of their students were from underrepresented, marginalized, and low socio-economic status. Many of these students were also undocumented immigrant students, therefore they seem to have no aspiration and hope to attend college. These

students wanted to learn English well enough to obtain a full-time job, communicate well with people, and earn money. Pablo and Jesús, along with all other participants demonstrated affection and discussed how much they cared for their students. The participants allowed their students to share their stories in the classroom. This seemed to be difficult at first, but once the participants shared their stories, they gained their students' trust. This finding agrees with Split et al. (2012) who state, students who perceive their teacher as caring and accepting are likely to manifest academic and "prosocial goals valued by their teacher" (p. 1181).

Three of the participants, Carmen, Jesús, and Pablo, indicated having conversations with their students regarding college. Jesús expressed the importance of making connections with his students. He indicated sharing his experience before, during, and after college. He currently tells his students the experience he had with one teacher who encouraged him to attend college. This teacher believed in him and saw something in him he did not see himself. Although not many teachers in his high school encourage Latinx students to attend college, Jesús felt the need to connect with his students and convince them to attend college. He provided them with specific information and encouraged them to visit with school counselors. Jesús's students were doing well in his class and he could see the potential in his students. This finding indicated that teachers are not only in the classroom to teach the content, but also to provide support to students regarding their personal and professional lives. According to Mireles-Rios, Simon, and Martin (2019) "many high-achieving Latinx students are not encouraged by their high school teachers to pursue the four-year college track despite being qualified for admissions to such colleges" (p. 127). Furthermore, Mireles-Rios, Simon, and Martin (2019) explain that Latinx students often do not have access to information about the college application process at their high schools.

Similarly to Jesús's teacher, Jesús is now being a role model to his students by graduating from college and building confidence in his students. According to Mireles-Rios, Simon and Martin (2019) teachers have the ability to play a huge role in building students' confidence. "For example, teachers can foster confidence in students by serving as role models and imparting their own academic experiences and stories of success and strife with their students" (Mireles-Rios, Simon, & Martin, p. 127). Furthermore, Irizarry and Raible (2011) add that Latino and CLDs can become empowered by helping them remove barriers that exist in schools and beyond, through culturally responsive and critical pedagogical approaches. All the participants, especially the three working at the middle school and high school level, stated sharing their college experiences with their students and encouraging their students to attend college. These participants are role models, they build trust, positive relationships, make connections, and share their personal success stories with their students.

Advocacy for CLD Students: High Expectations of All Students

To explore one of the research questions of this study, teachers' advocacy initiatives and their students' expectations were examined. The findings demonstrated all participants provided support to CLD students, all students, and their families. All participants went above and beyond their teacher responsibilities to make accommodations, modifications, and to advocate for their students and families. One specific way to advocate for their students was having high expectations for every student. This finding concurs with Rojas and Liou (2016), who claim teacher expectations for student learning is a powerful predictor of their educational achievement. All participants stated getting to know your students, listening to them, and caring about them is very important to earn their trust. All participants stated that after earning their students' trust they will do anything for them and teaching becomes much easier after they have

their trust and attention. Jesús claimed having many students that just wanted someone to listen to them and needing moral and academic support. This finding agrees with Rojas and Liou (2016), who indicate, one of the key elements of high-expectation practices is teacher caring, which contributes to students' awareness of the trustworthiness of the teacher. Caring was discussed as a key element to obtain trust/confianza. After trust was obtained, the participants got to know their students personally and academically. They learned about their background knowledge, education level obtained in their home countries and in the United States. According to Rojas and Liou (2016), teacher caring also refers to providing students with the resources that utilize the prior knowledge and existing social capital as the foundation of education. Yuan (2017) adds that teachers need to recognize that students of color have and bring rich fund of knowledge to their educational learning experiences, therefore teachers should modify their approaches to instruction in order to meet their students linguistic and cultural needs. These participants were able to view their students through an asset perspective lens.

Taking into consideration the students' background knowledge and viewing the students' linguistic and cultural differences are shared ideas by Belcher (2016). Belcher (2016) describes a how having high expectations of all students can be a pathway to success for students in Columbus Collegiate Academy (CCA), an institution in Ohio with the vision to close the achievement gaps in urban education. In this academy, students face challenges such as hunger, trauma, housing instability, and poverty. These challenges along students' low expectations made it difficult for them to visualize college as an option in their future, but all are encouraged to work hard and provided with guidance and advice about how to perform well in school. Students are placed in leadership roles, given responsibilities, and the mission of the academy is to "prepare students for demanding high schools and college" (Blecher, 2016, p. 3). My findings

are aligned with the mission of CCA. All the participants stated the importance of having high expectations for all students.

Jesús, Pablo, and Yadira stated they all had high expectations for all of their students. All participants indicated they had high expectations for all students and they viewed the CLDs' culture and language as an asset instead of a deficit. They got to know their students' background knowledge by implementing certain strategies and allowing them to share their stories in their classrooms. On the other hand, the participants mentioned contrasting ideas from some of their colleagues and schools. They indicated, that some of their colleagues did not believe CLDs were capable of completing some classroom activities and strategies because they were too challenging and required critical thinking. This finding is consistent with the research of Torff (2011), indicated that when challenged with students who appear disadvantaged, teachers often view them as unready for critical thinking activities. Therefore, teachers instead administer easier and lower level activities such as fill in the blank worksheets.

Teacher expectations, either high or low, are related to students' performance. My participants stated their students performed well in their classrooms and were receiving good grades. The students were motivated and eager to learn. According to Carmen, some of her students would tell her that her classroom reminded them of home because they felt safe and they could speak in their first language. All participants allowed their students to use their first language in their classrooms to communicate with each other and/or with them, and to complete their activities. Although these students were performing well in the participants' classrooms, some of them were not obtaining good grades in other classes. These findings are consistent with Williams, Giano, Merten, Herring, Delk, Gallus, Cox, and Shreffler (2020). Williams et al. (2020) state "teacher expectations of high or average performance were connected to higher

student self-perception of ability" (p. 1063). Additionally, Williams, et al. (2020) indicated that prior research has found that teachers may consider student behavior and achievement differently based on "race/ethnicity" and gender of the student (p. 1065). Furthermore, studies have typically confirmed that teachers rate minority students more harshly regarding behavioral and academic performance (Williams et. al., 2020).

All the participants described themselves as being Latinx and bilingual in English and Spanish. The participants stated having students from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, but the majority of them were Latinx students. Having a similar cultural background and being able to relate to the students through stories made it easier for the participants to create positive relationships and make connections with their students. This concept of having a similar cultural and/or ethnic background as your students aligns with the study of Williams et al. (2020), which claims that making connections with academic education has been identified as an important factor for minority students. In addition (Williams, et al., 2020) indicate there is evidence to suggest that ethnic match of students and teachers results in more beneficial perceptions. This finding also aligns with Cherng and Halpin (2016) who state that students perform better academically, and are more favorable of teachers of similar race or ethnic background than white teachers. Furthermore, a diverse teacher workforce benefits Students of Color through compatibility in teacher-student relationships (Plachowski, 2019). All participants indicated being able to relate to many of the issues, situations, and barriers their students encountered and were able to provide support. My findings are consistent with Garza (2019), who indicates that Latinx students who are assigned to teachers who reflect their cultural, racial and linguistic background experience substantial benefits. Additionally, Kohli et al. (2018) indicate that research demonstrates that teachers of color seem to have higher academic

expectations for students of color. Unfortunately, teachers of color account for less than 20% of the teacher population in the United States. Plachowski (2019) indicates that public school Students of Color make up more than 50% of school enrollment and more than 80% of the teacher workforce consists of white females. Additionally, Dimaria (2013) indicates that by the year 2020 the population of teachers of color will hit an all-time low of 5 percent and the percentage of students of color will exceed 50 percent.

Barriers as Pre-service and In-service Teachers: Resilience

In concert with the purpose of this study, barriers of the participants as pre-service and in-service teachers were explored. The findings revealed all the participants experienced similar barriers as pre-service teachers and some similar barriers as in-service teachers. All the participants expressed having a culture and language barrier. These findings are in agreement with the literature of McWhirter, Ramos, and Medina (2013), who indicate that some of the barriers and/ or challenges faced by Latinx immigrant students include language acquisition, isolation, melancholy, poverty, and feelings of not belonging. Additionally, Olvera and Olvera (2012) mentions that students of color, especially, Latino students come from a low socioeconomic status. Yadira shared her memories of the difficulties she had in school most of her life for not knowing English well. She mentioned she would study for many hours in order to do well in quizzes, assignments, and tests. She felt not knowing how to communicate in English well kept her from having many friends growing up. Although, she performed well in sports and this helped her to feel part of a team, this gave her a sense of belonging. On the other hand, Jesús felt he did not belong in his school. He was not involved in extracurricular activities and grew up in a low socioeconomic and single parent home. He shared he grew up in poverty and did not have access to many resources.

The findings also indicate not having enough teachers of similar ethnicity and cultural background as one of the major barriers in the CLD students' educational success. Four of the five participants remember having only one teacher in their Kindergarten through high school education that spoke the same first language as they did and usually these teachers were the Spanish teachers in their high schools. One of the participants grew up in a rural area and attended a small school. She did not recall having a teacher that spoke the same first language as her. These findings are consistent with Garza (2019), whose findings demonstrate Latinx students who are in classrooms with teachers that reflect their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds experience benefits, such as higher achievement scores and are more likely to be placed in more advanced courses. Additionally, teachers that reflect the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds aspire feelings of connectedness and have high expectations for students (Garza, 2019). Furthermore, Garza (2019) indicates that Latinx teachers who share their students' cultural experiences are able to demonstrate and build trust. This confianza/trust as stated by the participants creates and leads to openness and sharing of information as they did in Jesús' classroom. Jesús' students felt comfortable sharing their personal stories about their home countries with the whole class.

The findings also revealed that not understanding the U.S. education system was a barrier in the participants' lives. Although now all participants are in-service teachers that have worked in the professions for more than seven years, they were at one time, first generation, English language learners, Latinx pre-service teachers. Being first generation college students at one point was a huge barrier. They did not have someone to guide them through the process of attending college. They had to navigate the U.S education system on their own. This is consistent with a study done by McWirter et al. (2013), who identified barriers for Latina/o immigrant

students. In this study, some of the barriers identified by McWhirter et al. (2013) were that these students did not understand the U.S education system, lack of parental involvement, and lack of school support for these Latina/o parents and families. This finding aligns with Garza (2019), who states that it is challenging for student to successfully navigate the transition from secondary to post-secondary education, especially for students who do not have friends or family to guide them through this process. Garza (2019) further states, in 2015-2016 close to half "(44 percent) of Latinx college students" were the first in their families to attend college (p. 10).

Jesús, one of the participants, indicated having conversations with his students about college, encouraged them to attend college, but unfortunately a great majority of his students were undocumented. In other words, many of these students are not residents or citizens of the Unites States. For immigrant students, being undocumented is one of the major barriers for not continuing with their college education and this barrier also keeps many of them from graduating high school. The Latinx high school dropout population is close to or more than 40 percent and for Latinx undocumented students the number is even higher. According to McWhirter et al. (2013), for every 100 Latina/o elementary school students only about 60 graduate from high school, 13 obtain a bachelor's degree, and only 0.3% attain a doctoral degree. For immigrant Latinas/os educational attainment is even lower and undocumented Latinx students are the least likely to attend college and/or graduate from high school. All my participants were immigrants or children of immigrants. Fortunately, by the time they attended college they were legal U.S. residents or U.S. citizens; therefore, this was no longer an issue for them. Unfortunately, being immigrants and undocumented continues to be an immense barrier for many of the participants' former and current students. All participants continue to share their stories of resilience, to help motivate and encourage their current K-12 students to remain in school, graduate from high

school, and attend college. My participants had personal experience of being immigrants or children of immigrants, therefore they were able to provide more accurate information to these students about attending college. Although, since my participants were not undocumented students while in college, the participants lacked knowledge of specific requirements for these students and refer them to school counselors. This finding is in agreement with McWhirter et al. (2013), who state that high school teachers and students often misunderstand the possibilities of attending postsecondary education for undocumented students.

Support System as Pre-service and In-service Teachers: Hechale Ganas/Work Hard

To investigate one of the research questions of this study, the support system the participants received as pre-service and in-service teachers was examined. The findings revealed that four out of the five participants received much academic, financial, and emotional support from the BESITOS Program during their undergraduate years. They indicated receiving tutoring support from faculty and staff members from the BESITOS program. They also mentioned learning many strategies in the required English as a Second Language courses. As in-service teachers, the participants continue to implement many of the culturally and linguistically relevant strategies with their CLD students. One of the participants indicated being grateful for the financial support she received from the program, although stated not receiving much academic or emotional support from faculty and staff. The findings are in agreement with research and similar projects/programs that exist and have existed in universities across the United States, such the Platte River Corridor Project at the University of Nebraska (Hof, Lopez, Dinsmore, Baker, McCarty, & Tracy, 2007). This project consisted of a partnership between the university and surrounding public schools. Similar to the BESITOS Program, the Platte River Corridor Project, provided financial and social support to their participants (Hof, et al., 2007). One of the

differences between the programs was that one served pre-service teachers and the other was guided more to in-service teachers. Both programs provided preparation to educators serving CLD students.

As in-service teachers, three of the participants stated not receiving much support from their colleagues or administration. Jesús, Pablo, and Carmen indicated they did not receive much support and felt alienated and unwanted in their schools. Jesús mentioned not wanting to go to the teachers' lounge because the environment was unfriendly. He added that his administrator did not come to his classroom on a regular basis. The only time he would meet with his administrator was during the annual observations and evaluations. Jesús loved working with the students in this school. The school's student population was over 50% Hispanic/Latinx. Although he loved his students and knew they needed his support, the issues with his colleagues and administrators forced him to leave this school after his second year there. This finding is consistent with Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, and Freitas (2010), who state that financial, human, and social capital are some of the reasons for teachers leaving the classroom or switching schools. Additionally, Achinstein et al. (2010) indicate schools that provide opportunities for teachers to network and participate in professional development activities tend to have higher retention rates. On the other hand, within the past eight years, Yadira and Sara stated having great relationships with colleagues and administrators. Furthermore, they indicated having opportunities for professional development and opportunities to attend conferences at least every two years. These two participants felt valued in their schools by their colleagues, administrators, and students.

All participants indicated having their parents' support as pre-service and in-service teachers. While in college, if they felt alienated, lonely, and not supported, they always knew

they could count on their parents' moral support. Although their parents could not provide academic support or advise them on which classes to take, they always encouraged the participants by telling them "hechale ganas/work hard." As in-service teachers, when the participants were going through difficult times and not feeling supported by colleagues or administrators, they knew they could always count on their parents to provide them with the advice of encouragement to continue hechandole ganas/working hard.

Effective Classroom Strategies

The findings of this study illustrate that all participants described their effectiveness as teachers through the implementation of specific strategies, intrinsic motivation for teaching CLD students, and the sense of commitment to being role models to their students. Jesús, indicated using and implementing Biography Driven Instruction strategies. He mentioned the importance of getting to know his students and earning their trust in the process. Jesús enjoyed sharing personal stories with his students in order to build confianza/trust. He had a teacher as a role model who believed in him and encouraged him to attend college, therefore he also felt the need to be a role model to his students and provide them with information and encourage them to attend college. All other participants also stated feeling motivated when they saw the excitement in their students' faces after learning something new. The findings are consistent with Holdsworth and Maynes (2017), who state that human capital or individual qualities of teachers usually determine the impact a teacher will make in the students' lives. Similarly to all the participants, Holdsworth and Maynes (2017) indicate that innovative teachers were motivated by the sense of commitment they have to their students. All participants were able to relate and emotionally engage with their students in many different aspects. Similarly to their students, some of the participants went through and overcame similar barriers, such as a language barrier,

being first generation college students, and being immigrants, or children of immigrants. This finding aligns with Holdsworth and Maynes (2017), who indicate that teachers with high human capital invest themselves when planning and implementing transformational strategies.

Not feeling welcome and/or valued in the school setting was a factor affecting the performance of three of the participants. Pablo and Carmen felt isolated the first year of their teaching profession and Jesús felt isolated and hated the first two years of his profession. These feelings forced him to leave his students, who he loved, behind and move to a different school. This finding contradicts the social capital concept used by Holdsworth and Maynes (2017), who state that social capital relates to the collective power of the group. Yadira has taught in three different elementary schools. Her first five years of teaching she taught in a school where over 60% of the students were Hispanic/Latinx. Over 30% of the teachers were also Hispanic/Latinx, including both of the administrators. Yadira felt comfortable, loved, and she knew she was making a difference in her students' lives. This school was a dual language school, English/Spanish. Yadira, then moved to a less diverse school district and her feelings completely changed from feeling welcomed, loved, and valued to feeling alienated and disrespected. She mentioned that all her feelings came back from when she was a non-English speaking child in school. She felt alienated for not being able to speak English, she would eat lunch alone, and she felt invisible to everyone. The finding contradicts Holdsworth and Maynes (2017), who state that collaboration in the workplace has been identified as one of the key social capital skills, although this finding is in agreement with Yadira's first five years of teaching. On the other hand, Sara's social capital was powerful since her first year in the classroom. Sara felt included in all decision making regarding her school, CLD students, and programs.

The participants have been teaching between seven and seventeen years; currently they expressed feeling the sense of belonging and the sense of being valued. All five participants feel close to the rest of their colleagues and valued by their administrators. They all expressed the sense of feeling like a family. This finding is consistent with López, Basile, Landa-Posas, Ortega, and Ramirez (2019), who state that "familismo" can be considered a form of social capital (p. 88). Familismo is explained by López et al. (2019) as the notion of collectivism, in other words, working together to the benefit and well-being of the community over the individual. The participants currently feel the sense of familismo and indicated that feeling as part of the family is much more important than any classroom strategy. Furthermore, the participants implement the concept of familismo with their students to create a positive classroom environment, make them feel welcome, valued, and to earn their trust. Participants stated that once they have earned their students' trust, they are able to implement specific strategies to improve students' abilities in the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Importance of Parent and Family Involvement

To explore another question of this study, the significance of parent and family involvement was examined. All participants agreed on the value of involving parents and families in their children's education. Although, all the participants explained they knew the gravity of communicating with parents' of CLD students, not all colleagues and administrators knew how to reach these parents. All participants offered their support and expertise of working with these families, but often were turned away or not listened to for different reasons. This finding is in agreement with Colmer (2019), who states that Latinx teachers find themselves in a double bind when they are expected to be committed to the Latinx community while employed and serving a "culturally subtractive education system" (p. 273). Furthermore Colmer (2019)

states, “Latinx teachers are caught between traditional Latinx beliefs, such as familismo and traditional US values of individualism” (p. 273). All participants can relate to the concept of familismo, and understand that as Latinx students and teachers they are expected to put the needs of family before anything else, even if it requires personal sacrifices. Jesús indicated being the eldest of a single parent family with four brothers. He mentioned wanting to drop out of college to work full time and provide financial support to his mother and younger siblings. Fortunately, his mother convinced him to remain in college, graduate, and set an example for his brothers.

As in-service teachers, all participants felt the need to be role models and provide support to all their Latinx and CLD students. This finding is consistent with Colomer (2019), who states that as Latinx teachers become self-sufficient they may feel the responsibility to support their family and families of Latinx students. Unfortunately, although all participants were Latinx, one of them mentioned the difficulties of communicating and reaching Latinx parents and families. Pablo indicated not being able to reach and convince all parents on the importance of their involvement in their children’s education. He stated that some parents were probably tired of other teachers only contacting them when their children had done something wrong. Pablo wanted to communicate with parents and discuss the achievements of their children, but parents always expected to hear only negative comments about their children, therefore they were not very receptive to teacher phone calls. This finding is consistent with Jonak (2014), who states that many educators or school personnel are not prepared to satisfactorily work with students’ families. Gándara et al. (2005), indicates that teachers do not blame parents or families for the lack of student achievement, rather need to understand that the lack of assistance from these families can be related to parents’ work, language, and cultural barriers.

Four participants indicated being aware of best practices and ways to communicate with parents and family involvement. They stated that schools needed to take into consideration the factors and barriers of families of CLD students, such as, language barriers, interests, and possibly transportation issues. This finding aligns with Jonak (2014), who states that involvement of parents from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may be impeded by factors such as being unaware of schools' expectations, language barriers, difficulties finding childcare, and transportation to the schools. All participants stated that their Latinx parents had expressed their feeling of complete trust to them regarding their children's education. All participants expressed sharing their ideas with their administrators for creating an effective partnership with parents and families of CLD students. The participants suggested having meetings with parents during different times and days of the week, including weekends. Additionally, they suggested surveying the parents in order to find their interests and needs. One other suggestion by all participants was to translate information in as many different languages as possible, especially into Spanish since this was the first language of parents of CLDs. The findings are in agreement with Jonak (2014), who states that school staff should be compensated for after-hours parent meetings. Additionally, Jonack (2014) states parents should be provided with options that match their interests and abilities for involvement in ways they can support the education of their children. Furthermore, Jonak (2014) indicates that schools should translate information for families who do not communicate or understand English.

Implications of Ways to Engage in Justice Agendas for CLD Students

In what ways can participants engage in justice agendas for their students? It can be stated that most of the findings from this study correspond with the relevant literature. In order to provide social justice in education, the number of Latinx teachers needs to increase to match the

Latinx student population. Latinx teachers and teachers of color tend to have higher expectations of students of color. Rojas and Liou (2017) state students' educational journey is shaped by the way teachers view them. Additionally, through caring relationships, teachers are capable of perceiving students as assets (Rojas & Liow, 2017). Teachers from similar culturally and linguistically backgrounds tend to have higher expectations of CLD students. Unfortunately, less than 20% of the teacher population are teachers of color (Plachowski, 2019).

Teachers should get to know their students, build trust, and create healthy relationships with their students. After knowing and valuing the students' cultural background, the teachers will be better able to meet their students' needs by implementing strategies the students can relate to and that will help them make connections to the real world. Additionally, trust is a factor that must be obtained by different means. In some instances, teachers can share personal stories and provide support to CLD students to demonstrate they care about their learning. Furthermore, when possible the teacher should provide native language support.

Implications to Overcome Barriers: What Do the Participants Attribute as Barriers and Support System(s) in their Justice Work?

Language and cultural barriers are the most common barriers for CLD students and CLD teachers. All of my participants indicated feeling alienated and not valued. These feelings reminded them of when they were growing up as CLD students. Teachers and administrators should work collectively to create an inclusive environment for all students and teachers. Social capital is a concept highly recommended for retention of teachers, especially retention of teachers of color. When teachers are provided with opportunities to collaborate with other colleagues they feel as if they belong and are more likely to remain in that school.

Other barriers participants encountered were convincing CLD students to attend college. Many of these students are immigrants and undocumented immigrants. Although my participants were informed and knew how to provide information to these students, they still lack some knowledge of how to provide information to undocumented students. If teachers lack the knowledge regarding these topics, they should refer these students to school psychologists or other school personnel that can provide these students with the information they need to make decisions about attending college.

Implications for Significant Strategies with CLDs: Significant Educational Strategies the Participants Value in Their Role as Advocates in Their Justice Work

In order to implement effective strategies with CLD students, teachers need to understand and value their cultural and linguistic background. Only then can teachers see the students from an asset perspective and not from a deficit perspective. The research and participants agree that CLD students possess knowledge in their first language and sometimes they just need language support to be able to transfer their knowledge from their first language to English. Additionally, in order to implement effective strategies for CLD students, teachers must be familiar with foundational components of instruction for CLD students. Haynes and Zacarian (2010) indicate that after teachers become knowledgeable of the foundational concepts, they can concentrate on creating, motivating and engaging strategies with the appropriate accommodations and modifications for CLD students. To help students understand the content and academic words, it is recommended to provide students with interesting texts they can relate to and make connections from the text to the real world (Krashen, 1999).

The participants indicated that using gestures, visual cues, and providing the students with opportunities to practice language skills were very effective strategies to implement with CLDs (Rampino et al., 2005). Furthermore, several other strategies the participants mentioned as being effective were: (1) using different grouping configurations, (2) implementing and using hands-on materials and activities, (3) activating students background knowledge, (4) cooperative learning strategies, (5) allowing their students to share personal stories and (6) allowing their students to use their first language when completing difficult tasks.

Human capital and social capital play a major role in teacher innovation and effectiveness. When the participants expressed concern and feelings of alienation, they also felt they could not provide much support to their students. On the other hand, when the participants started teaching in schools that promoted a welcoming and collaborative environment they felt motivated and more capable of implementing effective classroom strategies.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

A qualitative study was the best option for this research. Given the abundance of qualitative studies more quantitative and mixed methods studies are recommended. For future research, this could be accomplished by incorporating the questions presented in this study and applying them to all teachers working with CLD students. It would be beneficial to study similar concepts regarding teachers from different backgrounds.

The second area recommended for research is the implementation of classroom observations. A classroom observation or two classroom observations of each participants' classrooms is recommended. One classroom observation can be implemented at the beginning of the semester and the second may be implemented towards the end. These observations can be

video recorded to demonstrate evidence of effective strategies implemented in classroom practice.

The third area recommended for future research is to select participants and/or teachers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This will allow opportunities for comparison of needs, barriers of support system provided for teachers and students from different ethnic backgrounds. These barriers could potentially be similar with all students of color, but the ways to overcome these barriers may differ.

The fourth area recommended for future research is to provide more federal funding for pre-service teachers similar to the BESITOS program. This research could include the effectiveness of different programs that exist or have existed in the United States and the difference they have made in the lives of students. Beyond financial support for pre-service teachers, it would be beneficial to find different ways to provide support to pre-service teachers of color.

The fifth and last recommendation for future research is to provide more federal funding for in-service teachers of color. This research may provide strategies for recruitment and retention of teachers of color. Additionally, findings may provide ideas for professional development for these teachers and all teachers working with CLD students.

Recommendations for Practice

One of the recommendations for practice involves the recruitment and retention of teachers of color by school districts discussing the support system provided to these teachers, especially in their first couple of years in the profession. In other words, explaining the recruitment and retention process of teachers of color and discussing the support system they receive in order to work with CLD students.

A second recommendation for practice is to provide opportunities for growth and professional development for teachers working with CLD students. Achinstein et al. (2010) indicate that schools that provide opportunities for teachers to network and participate in professional development tend to have higher retention rates. The participants who left their first place of employment indicated not having any opportunities for professional development or mentors to guide them through their first years of teaching.

With remote learning being now so prominent, a third recommendation for future research is the importance of significant online educational strategies to be implemented with CLD students. This research also should examine what type of support is provided to CLD parents who struggle with technology, language barriers, and come from low socioeconomic status. Future practice requires the collaboration of all school personnel to get to know and understand their student population in order to provide the appropriate support to students and families.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that as a Latinx, former teacher of CLD students, I am passionate about finding quality strategies and best practices to implement with this student population. The research indicates that the participants are currently being supported and taken into consideration when making decisions regarding the CLD programs in their schools. However, some of the findings from this research relate directly to the human capital and social capital of the teachers. Administrators should create a safe and collaborative school environment and provide plenty of opportunities for growth and professional development.

All teachers should have high expectations of all their students, including students of color, and/or CLD students. Mireles-Rios et al. (2019) positive student and teacher relationships

have productive academic outcomes for students. In order to create an effective relationship with CLD students, teachers must earn their confianza/trust by sharing personal stories and by viewing their students as knowledge contributors. Additionally, teachers must demonstrate they care about their students. After trust is gained by the teachers and they get to know their students at an academic and personal level, they can then implement strategies according to their needs.

Similarly in to getting to know their students, teachers must also get to know their CLDs' parents and families in order to understand their needs. It is imperative to involve all parents and families and provide opportunities for everyone to attend meetings and school events, therefore these events should be offered when convenient to the majority of the parents. Despite the barriers encountered by the Latinx teachers, they have overcome them and are now role models to CLD students and their families.

The findings of this study support the efficacy of the BESITOS program and other similar programs that provide the type of financial and academic support pre-service teachers of color need to overcome the barriers they encounter during their educational careers. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate there is a high need for programs such as BESITOS to prepare future teachers with strategies and teaching philosophies that align with the needs of students of color. Research indicates that programs such as BESITOS are a necessity to increase the number of teachers of color, which is now close to or lower than 5 percent (Dimaria, 2013).

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Pláticas Guiding Questions

1. I have shared some of my tesoros with you, will you like to share your tesoros?
2. Why is this item so valuable to you and what does it represent?
3. How were you able to select these five tesoros?
4. Now that we have discussed our tesoros, can you tell me what your title is at the school? For example, (English as a Second Language Teacher, Teacher of English Language Learners, etc.).
5. At your school do you have English as a Second Language pull-out, English as a Second Language push-in or both? If neither, what type of program do you have at your school?
6. Besides teaching, what other responsibilities and or activities are you involved in?
7. Do you consider the program available at your school to be an effective program for your student population? Why or why not?
8. What do you consider as having a support system is available at your school?
9. What are some of the barriers you have encountered during your teaching career and how have you overcome them?
10. If you had the opportunity to make changes to the curriculum and the school setting what would be some of the changes you would make and why?
11. How are parents and families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students involved in your school?

Invitation Email

Dear former BESITOS student:

I am a doctoral student conducting a research study about how teachers who graduated from the BESITOS education program navigate educational structures, while becoming teacher advocates who are engaged in justice agendas concerning their Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Your input may be of great value and further develop a better understanding of how to advocate and provide support fore CLD students.

I will be conducting one individual 60-90 minute long plática with three participants and one group plática with five participants. I will ask each participant to bring five tesoros you would like to discuss during our pláticas. During our group pláticas you can bring one tesoro to discuss with the rest of the group. I will also have some tesoros I would like to share and discuss with all of you. Additionally, I will be conducting two classroom observations of the participants that volunteer to participate in the individual pláticas.

This study poses no known risk to the participants or the researcher. Your identity will be kept confidential and will be protected by taking the following precautions: (a) consent forms and all private documents will be stored in a safe and locked file cabinet, (b) a pseudonym will be assign to each participant, (c) files will only be accessible to the researcher and the researcher's major professor, (d) no personal information or data files will be submitted via e-mail, (e) all data will be coded and this information will also be stored in a secured and locked place, (f) all data will be destroyed three years after the study is conducted.

If you are interested in participating in this study or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at pedro1@ksu.edu or at (785) 341-4018. As soon as I receive your e-mail I will contact you so we can schedule time to further discuss the details of the study.

I look forward to hearing from you and want to thank you in advance for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Pedro Espinoza

Teaching Assistant Professor/COE Diversity Point Person

Kansas State University

Participant Consent Form

Subject: Consent form to participate in the research study: How teachers who graduated from the BESITOS education program navigate educational structures, while becoming teacher advocates who are engaged in justice agendas concerning their Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students.

Dear Teacher,

This study is designed to learn about how teachers who graduated from the BESTIOS education program navigate educational structures, while becoming advocates when engaged in justice agendas concerning their CLD students in a midwestern state. It is expected that the participants' testimonios/narrtives will reflect similar barriers and support as their students currently receive. For example, I am interested in learning how Latinx teachers engage in justice agendas for their students, what barriers they must overcome in order to provide support to their students, and the type of strategies and/or support these teachers provide for their CLD students.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will agree to participate in two individual pláticas and two group plática. Although these pláticas will be informal, they will also be semi-structured and I have created some guiding questions for you. Prior to the pláticas, you will be provided with the set of guiding questions to be addressed. Each individual plática will take 1-1.5 hours and each group plática will take approximately 2-2.5 hours. These pláticas will be audio-taped and transcribed for the purpose of this doctoral dissertation. During our pláticas you may your language of preference English or Spanish or both languages. After the pláticas have been transcribed, you will be asked to review the transcriptions and make any necessary changes.

Your participation and responses will be kept confidential. Additionally, Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and the collected data will be stored in a secured place. If

you have any concerns feel free to contact the Office of Research and Compliance (203 Fairchild Hall) via e-mail at comply@k-state.edu of via phone at (785)532-3224.

Your signature at the bottom of this page indicates you agree to participate in this study. You may refuse to answer any questions or discontinue the pláticas at any time. You may also withdraw your consent to participate without any repercussions. I truly appreciate your interest in participating in this study. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please feel free to contact me if you at any time if you have any questions regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Pedro Espinoza
Doctoral Candidate
College of Education
Kansas State Univeristy
Manhattan, KS 66506
Pedro1@ksu.edu
(785)341-4018

Major Professors: Dr. Todd Goodson and Dr. Kay Ann Taylor

Major Professors' Signature **Date**

_____ _____

By signing below, I indicate my consent to participate in the described research project:

Participant's Signature **Date**

_____ _____

IRB Approval Letter

PROJECT TITLE:

Latinx teacher advocates engaged in social justice agendas: A LatCrit perspective

PROJECT APPROVAL DATE:	05/28/2020	PROJECT EXPIRATION DATE:	11/01/2020	LENGTH OF STUDY:	4 Months

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. F. Todd Goodson

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Pedro Espinoza

CONTACT DETAILS FOR PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

261 Bluemont Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-5300
tgoodson@ksu.edu
(785)532-5904
227 Bluemont Hall
Manhattan, KS, 66506-5300
Pedro1@ksu.edu
(785)341-4018

IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224;
Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

PROJECT SPONSOR: N/A

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

Thank you for volunteering to be participate in this research study. The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers who graduated from the BESITOS federally funded bilingual and bicultural education program navigate educational structures, while becoming teacher advocates who are engaged in justice agendas concerning their Culturally and Linguistically (CLD) students in a midwestern state.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:

In order to assess the impact former BESITOS and K-State pre-service teachers are making in their schools, and their communities regarding instruction to CLD Students. I will conduct a Critical Qualitative Study Using a LatCrit and a multimethodological Chicana Feminist Epistemologies of (trenzas y mestizaje) lens to view my participants' experiences regarding ways they engage in justice agendas for their students, taking into consideration barriers and support system(s) in their justice work along with significant educational strategies the participants value in their role as advocates in their justice work.
I will collect the data through:
Participants' interviews
Focus groups interviews

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES COLLECTED (Describe procedure, storage, etc.):

NA