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Designing Opportunities for Family Engagement
within Elementary Schools Serving Latino Immigrant Populations

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DESIGNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FOR LATINOS ABSTRACT

Latino immigrant students and families are among the fastest growing populations in the United States, but are among the most academically vulnerable groups. Though they initially enter the country brimming with hope and optimism surrounding their hopes for their children's educations, Latino families quickly become frustrated with and disengaged from their children's schools. This capstone explores the particular challenges faced by Latino immigrant families as they learn to navigate American elementary school systems as well as their particular strengths that enhance their children's chances for academic success. This capstone also proposes that teachers and schools engage in culturally responsive practices in order to better engage Latino immigrant families in school and thus assist in their transition into vibrant, active members of American society.

Keywords: family engagement, Latino immigrants, elementary schools, cultural responsiveness

Introduction & Rationale

As Kamases Mara, a former Fijian prime minister and president, once said, "The family teaches us about the importance of knowledge, education, hard work, and effort." Family does more than teach and shape us as human beings, however, often serving as the singular constant through all of life's changes, joys, and difficulties. As such, families are important sources of support for their children as they grow and develop into both people and as learners. It is easy to imagine, then, the powerful impact family members might have upon a child's academic success. The educational community almost universally recognizes family engagement, broadly defined as the resources that parents invest into their child's learning experience (Calzada, Huang,

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Hernandez, Soriano, Acra, Dawson-McClure, Kamboukos, & Brotman, 2014), as a powerful contributing factor creating positive relationships between children, learning (i.e. cognitive growth), and schooling (i.e. successful navigation through school as an institution).

As early as pre-kindergarten, parent engagement has been found to enhance children's motivation to learn (Christenson, 2000) and promote social and emotional competencies, emergent skills that are necessary for later academic success (Pianta, Rimm-Kaufman, & Cox, 1999). The extent to which parents value and get involved with their child's education beginning in preschool has been shown to predict better academic achievement over time (Barnard, 2004; McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). Further, in her ethnographic study entitled *Unequal Childhoods* (2011), Lareau describes how children can learn from their parents' successful navigation of institutions such as school and, through knowledge gleaned from observation of their parents' efforts, grow to become advocates for their own success within schools and other institutions. Such an enormous body of literature has emerged supporting family engagement in education (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Epstein, 1991; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005; National Center for Family Community Connections with Schools, 2002) that a vast majority of school districts in the United States have drafted family engagement policies, plans, and programs, often co-authored with families themselves, into their district policies (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005).

Jeynes (2005) suggests that the impact of family engagement may be most impactful for African American and Latino students, who are already at an increased risk of marginalization and disenfranchisement from and in school. I choose to focus upon Latino immigrant families within this paper because Latinos are the nation's largest immigrant group and one of its fastest

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growing and younger populations; Latino population growth between 2000 and 2010 accounted for more than half of the nation's population increase, and of the nation's 40 million immigrants, nearly half (47%) are Latino (Pew Hispanic Center, 2012). Both the sheer size of the Latino population as well as its youthfulness imply that the well-being of the Latino community, especially that of Latino children, is relevant to the future economic and social health of the United States (Perez, 2004). However, Latino students face particularly alarming chronic underachievement in American public schools. They are the more likely than any other minority group to drop out of high school and, according to National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, only 14% of Latino fourth graders are reading at proficient levels; 57% of Latino fourth graders are reading below even basic levels, indicating that these students are most likely unable to read in either English or Spanish (Hill & Torres, 2010). There is a multitude of impediments to Latino youth's educational progress such as poverty, segregation, parental education, language, documentation status, English-language learning, teacher preparedness and expectations, and lack of student engagement and social supports (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009). Latino students are not the only ones confronting marginalization in and from schools; despite initial high expectations surrounding their children's educations in the United States, Latino immigrant parents and caregivers soon report similar levels of frustration and disillusionment with American public schools (Calzada, Huang, Hernandez, Soriano, Acra, Dawson-McClure, Kamboukos, & Brotman, 2014).

Clearly, the American public school system is facing a crisis when it comes to engaging both Latino immigrant families and students. I will use this capstone as an opportunity to explore the particular lived experiences of Latino immigrant families (my learners) and specific

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programs and practices schools and teachers might implement (curriculum) in order to better engage Latino immigrant parents and families. I limit my exploration of these programs and practices to those designed for elementary learning contexts in the United States primarily because families tend to be more engaged during their child's elementary years (Crosnoe, 2005) and secondly because I hope to use this capstone to inform my future practice as an elementary school teacher. Research has proven the great value of active, sustained, genuine family engagement in children's educations. If teachers and schools can chart a path towards establishing deeper connections with Latino immigrant families in order to provide Latino students with early, constant positive scholastic support by caring and responsive individuals (i.e., family members and teachers), Latino immigrant students might be better situated to thrive in their school environments, thus potentially improving their educational prospects and future possibilities (Garcia-Reid, Peterson, & Reid, 2015).

Terminology & Framework

First, it is important to explore who the term *Latino* describes. *Latino* refers to Cubans, Central Americans, South Americans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans. It is a distinct term differing from *Hispanic*, the term historically used to describe people from these areas. However, many consider *Hispanic* an inadequate term for use as a total population descriptor because it does not distinguish between unique identities (i.e., language, social, political, historical, and personal) of individuals from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Stavans, 1995). Rather, *Hispanic* reflects these peoples' historical

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roots founded in Spanish colonialism while *Latino* reflects their shared Latin cultural roots (Dotson-Blake, Foster, & Gressard, 2009).

Second, it is important to thoroughly explore what specifically is meant by the term *family engagement*. Though the educational community seems to be in large agreement concerning the positive benefits of family engagement, what is exactly is meant when we describe ‘family engagement’ can quickly grow murky. Even the term itself is not cemented within educational canon; the phenomenon is often simultaneously referred to as *parent involvement* or some other arrangement of the words *parent*, *family*, *engagement*, and/or *involvement*. (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005). Terminology is important, here; though both of the dominant terms used to describe the family’s role within their child’s educational experience (*family engagement* and *parent involvement*), they often describe two very different forms of familial interactions with scholastic personnel and institutions.

According to Gerardo Lopez (2001) and others (Ferlazzo, 2011; Henderson, 2007), ‘parent involvement’ is all too often understood in terms of specific practices to be performed by parents, such as organizing bake sales and fundraisers and/or attending PTO/PTA meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and various school events such as ‘literacy night’ or ‘meet-the-teacher.’ The term denotes exercises like serving as a member of parent advisory councils, volunteering as a ‘room mom,’ or performing activities within the home to supplement instruction such as supervising and assisting with homework. In summation, Lopez describes how, historically, parent involvement has been restricted to a scripted role to be “performed” rather than unrehearsed activities that parents and other family members routinely practice (Lopez, 2001, p. 417). Consequently, parent involvement, in the traditional sense, has become a

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“privileged domain signified by certain legitimate acts; to be involved is to be subjected to these ‘social regularities’ (Foucault, 1972) that engender the rules and roles of involvement behavior,” (Lopez, 2001, p. 417).

Not all families have equal access to the appropriate forms of social capital (i.e., value found among and within social networks and interpersonal connections), cultural capital (i.e., non-financial social assets including education, style of speech, dress, and/or cultural fluency that promote social mobility beyond economic means), or physical (e.g. money, time, labor) capital necessary to fulfill the roles typical to parent involvement (Anyon, 1980). Moreover, appropriate forms of capital must be paired with a willingness and opportunity to perform such tasks (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Some academics (Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Valdes, 1996) have asserted that traditional involvement roles may be outside the cultural repertoire of some families - especially already marginalized families who may have limited exposure to schools, lack of socioeconomic resources, and/or prior negative experiences with school organizations (Lopez, 2001). As a result, a dominant “deficit narrative” circulates through American schools, labeling these families as either “unable” to support their children scholastically or, worse, as parents or families who simply “don’t care” about their child’s education because they cannot or do not participate in a socially-mandated, prescribed way (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005).

Rather than adhere to traditional notions concerning how parents ‘ought’ to be involved in their child’s education or to narratives classifying families with less access to the social, cultural, and physical capital valued by mainstream (i.e., white, middle-class) American society as ‘without’ or ‘unable’, within this paper (and within my general pedagogical philosophy) I

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adhere to the notion that *all* parents and/or family members are able and equipped to contribute to their child's education, a belief better characterized by the term *family engagement* (Ferlazzo, 2011). Ferlazzo describes schools striving for parent involvement as "leading with their mouths - identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute," (Ferlazzo, 2011, p. 12). Schools striving for family engagement, however, tend to "lead with their ears - listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about," (Ferlazzo, 2011, p. 12). The goal of this particular brand of family engagement, he says, is not to serve clients but to gain partners. The way to build effective family engagement is to require the school to develop a relationship-building process focused on listening. It is through listening that schools and teachers can best work with parents to chart the most effective path of success with and for students (Ferlazzo, 2011). Rather than concentrating only on describing the specific things parents *do*, Carreon, Drake, & Barton (2005) describe family engagement includes both specific practices as well as parents' orientations to the world and how those orientations frame the things they do. They argue that family engagement goes beyond participation in certain events, but extends to "situations or contexts involved in an individual's decision to participate in an event, including his or her relationships with other individuals, the history of the event, and the resources available to both the individual and the event designers," (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005, p. 469). For the remainder of this capstone, *family engagement* refers to family school involvement practices embedded in cultural spaces.

Further along in this paper, I will connect these culturally embedded spaces with those core tenets typical to culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), loosely defined as a "pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents

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to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes,” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17-18). Ladson-Billings goes on to further conceptualize the term as a “theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate,” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). Note that I will connect these two frameworks later on in this paper; here, I simply take the opportunity to very briefly describe the theoretical underpinnings of each in order to better inform the entirety of this capstone.

Exploring Latino Immigrants’ Experiences in The United States and with American Schools

Each year, thousands of Latino immigrants pour into the United States in search of the fulfillment of ‘The American Dream,’ or “the premise that one can achieve success and prosperity through determination, hard work, and courage,” (Hill & Torres). In 2014, 46% of immigrants (19.4 million people) reported having Hispanic or Latino origins (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Though they are initially filled with hope and optimism for the potential America holds, these immigrants face the daunting task of structuring new lives for themselves and for their families in a culture, and more often than not, language, unknown to them (Crosnoe, 2005). To be successful parents, Latino immigrants must “develop new understandings about the world, establish new forms of cultural capital (e.g. learning English), and learn new ways to function, including determining how to access medical and educational services for their children,” (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005, p. 469). Adaptation to life in the United States is particularly challenging for poor and undocumented parents who have difficulty finding employment paying

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living wages. Carreon, Drake, & Barton (2005) describes how pervasive xenophobia permeating mainstream American society also results in poor, often undocumented Latino immigrants grappling to learn how to cope with:

...the physical and emotional stress that welcomes their labor but rejects, openly or covertly, their presence. Regardless of how hard they strive, they will always be positioned as outsiders by certain structural forces in the host society; yet, because their immigration experiences have profoundly affected their ways of seeing and being in the world, they typically do not feel that they could return to their home country and fit in there the way they previously had (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001),” (p. 469).

In short, Latino parents and other family members often experience feelings of isolation and disenfranchisement when confronted with assimilating into mainstream American society (Crosnoe, 2005). And, despite Latino parents’ initial optimism surrounding the American educational system and a high value placed on the education of their children, this sense of isolation and disenfranchisement often seeps into school settings as well (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Trueba, 1999; Valdez, 1996). Latino immigrant parents and family members hold assumptions and expectations based on their own schooling experiences from their countries of origin; all too often, however, these perspectives are neither heard nor understood by those in power (e.g. teachers, administrators) at their child’s school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2011). For example, in Mexico, children cannot be promoted from one grade to the next without acquiring and mastering the appropriate grade-level skills. In American elementary schools, contrastingly, teachers must prove that a student is not socially or emotionally ready for the next grade in order to retain a student; students are often promoted from one grade to the next regardless of whether they master the skills for their grade level (Roybal & Garcia, 2004).

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Further, Latino immigrant parents are often surprised at the lack of rigor and standards of the schools their children attend (deCarvalho, 2001; Reese & Gallimore, 2001). Many want higher academic standards, stricter dress codes, and stricter expectations for conduct (Levine & Trickett, 2000). Having made great sacrifices for their children to be educated in the United States, they do not want the opportunity to be squandered (Hill, 2009). The disconnect between Latino immigrant parents' expectations surrounding their child's elementary school and what they actually experience may be due in large part to the strong association between minority group status and segregated enrollment in problematic schools; in clearer terms, minority students not only overwhelmingly attend *different* schools from their White peers, they attend *worse* schools (Bankston & Caldas, 1998; Roscigno, 1998), and this phenomenon is especially so for Latino immigrants (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Students tend to do worse in these sorts of elementary schools because such schools have fewer resources, more limited curricula, more learning distractions, and less supportive connections between students and school personnel (Crosnoe, 2005). These schools were also characterized by lower levels of teacher experience and they additionally tended to be much larger than elementary schools than Latino students' peers from other racial/ethnic groups (Crosnoe, 2005). "Given the well-documented tendency for Latinos to rely heavily on social relations and close-knit networks," he writes, "the more impersonal atmosphere of large schools could be daunting to [students] in ways that affect their performance," (Crosnoe, 2005, p. 296).

In addition to different sets of expectations surrounding academic expectations, Latino immigrant parents and family members have difficulty establishing and maintaining active, positive relationships with schools because they often have different constructions of their roles

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as caregivers. Carrasquillo & London (1993), Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba (1991), Delgado-Gaitan (1996), and Valdes (1996) all suggested that Latinos define their place, roles, and responsibilities in their children's education as to meet basic obligations (i.e., ensuring that their children are fed, clothed, and sheltered), to provide emotional support, and ensuring that their children are socialized into familial norms and expectations. Conversely, Latinos typically view schools and teachers as the main force responsible for their child's academic development, and thus may not perceive existing school structures that have historically drawn White parents into schools (e.g. parent advisory councils, PTA/PTO, etc.) as priorities (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Valdes (1996) found that in addition to many Latino parents feeling as if it is not their place to initiate communication and contact with schools, many felt intimidated by schools as well:

Even when asked to come, however, it was often the case that parents did not respond... in many families neither of the two parents felt competent enough to deal with school personnel. They were embarrassed, and found almost any excuse not to go to the school and "ponerse en evidencia" (show how ignorant or incapable they were). Even when some parents were deeply committed to their own children doing well in school, they hesitated to speak to the teacher herself. (p. 162).

In addition to pervasive inconsistencies in parental role constructions between families and schools based on dominant cultural values and lived experiences, linguistic barriers also present a significant obstacle to active, sustained family engagement for Latino immigrant families. If schools do have access to translators, rarely is there enough linguistic support to completely support Latino immigrants who are limited English proficient. The lack of sufficient translators or bilingual staff is more than an inconvenience for Latino parents, it undermines the ability of basic acts of parental engagement to foster relations between parents and teachers and communicate key information (Hill & Torres, 2010). It further adds to Latino families' anxiety

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levels in their interactions with their child's teachers; because of the difficulty or downright inability to communicate, teachers often treat them as if they are incompetent (Hill, & Torres, 2010).

Latino immigrant families also report having difficulty establishing relationships with their child's teacher. Many Latino cultures place a high value on relationships and community, and Latino parents and family members often say they would prefer a more personal relationship with their children's teachers (Trumbull et al., 2003). Rather than feeling as if they are building relationships or partnerships with their child's teacher, parents are often alienated in their interactions with teachers and leave conversations with them feeling inferior and embarrassed (Auerbach, 2002).

The cumulative effect of sensitivities experienced at schools decreases the likelihood that Latino immigrant parents will return and continue engaging teachers and school personnel. Both families and teachers are perplexed by their difficulty establishing productive relationships and interactions between Latino immigrant families and schools (Hill & Torres, 2010). I will use the next portion of this paper to postulate that building and maintaining partnerships with Latino immigrant families might be made easier if American elementary schools engaged in more culturally responsive behavior towards both parents and students.

Culturally Responsive Practices Aimed at Engaging Latino Immigrant Families

I have discussed at length the characteristics typical to Latino immigrants that can serve as barriers to more actively and fully participating in their children's educations according to principles of both family engagement and parent involvement. Rather than fall into the

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dominant, deficit-oriented narrative detailing how *Latinos* might learn or change in order to fit dominant school culture, I instead want to explore how *schools* and *teachers* might grow or adapt in order to take advantage of those characteristics typical to Latino immigrants that are conducive to family engagement.

School administrators and teachers report wanting increased parental involvement in schools, and also report having tried, in vain, to invite Latino immigrant parents into the school. A few ways school personnel report trying to get them involved in schools include: (a) letters sent to the home in two languages, (b) meetings set up in the evenings to accommodate working parents, (c) invitations to pot luck dinners, and (d) flyers put up around the neighborhood about meetings (De Gaetano, 2007). What is interesting about these approaches is that, though certainly well-intentioned, they are aimed at addressing mostly logistical barriers to engagement rather than cultural differences between Latinos immigrants and mainstream Americans.

Latino parents, particularly those who are not proficient in English, may not often attend school events, volunteer, communicate often with school staff, or involve themselves according to traditional, restrictive notions of parent involvement, but they do seem to engage in high levels of home-based involvement by “emphasizing educational values, engaging in educationally relevant home-based activities such as monitoring homework and curfews, and providing educational resources and adequate nutrition and rest for their children,” (Calzada et al., 2014). Roybal & Garcia (2004) outline other cultural strengths of Latino immigrants, highlighting close-knit family ties; strong cultural values and traditions such as respect for elders, harmony with nature, and family unity; resourcefulness and resilience in the face adversity; emphasis on

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relational time and interpersonal relationships, and a respect and admiration for teachers coupled with a strong commitment to the value of an education..

These traits are not necessarily readily visible under the traditional lens of parent involvement, precisely because parent involvement tends to focus on actions and logistics rather than upon personal and cultural insights, expertise, and lived experiences as does family engagement. It is also significant that most of these listed positive activities and values particular to Latino immigrants take place within the home rather than in public spaces like schools. Lopez (2001) argues that "...in the wake of today's rapidly changing social context... schools should begin to identify the unique ways that marginalized parents are *already* involved in their child's education and search for creative ways to capitalize on these and other subjugated forms of involvement," (Lopez, 2001, p. 434).

In order for teachers and schools to begin to discern the specific ways in which their students' parents are involved in their educations, they must first begin build relationships with the families, examine their own cultural biases and assumptions, be proactive and intentional in the ways in which they share information with families as well as with the types of information they share, and provide as much institutional support to families as possible in order to assist them as they navigate American society (Hill & Torres, 2010). Oftentimes, however, teachers find the cultural divide between themselves and their children's families and simply do not know where to begin. I suggest that in order to begin to bridge the cultural gaps between Latino immigrant families and schools, schools should engage in culturally relevant practices.

As mentioned above, culturally relevant pedagogy has been defined as a means to use students' cultures and strengths to bridge cultural achievement, to validate students' life

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experiences by utilizing their cultures and histories as teaching resources, and to recognize students' home cultures and histories, promote collaboration among peers, hold high standards, and connect home life with school experiences," (Young, 2010). It has been proven to serve as a powerful tool to engage marginalized populations of students in schools (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and its core tenets should also serve to better engage marginalized parents in schools. Below I explore how a program designed and implemented by Yvonne De Gaetano utilized culturally relevant principles to successfully engage Latino parents in school (2007).

De Gaetano designed a program entitled The Cross Cultural Demonstration Project in a large northeastern city several years before her article was published in 2007. Her team worked with teachers, administrators, and parents of two urban elementary schools in an attempt to develop and implement a culturally responsive and bilingual approach to teaching in elementary schools. The project's spanned three years and its primary goal was to improve the academic outcomes of English-language learners (the significant majority of whom were Latino) through (a) the use of specific language strategies to enable children to become bilingual and (b) the use of culture as a mediator of learning. The program implemented its target goals through the medium of monthly staff development for teachers, administrators, and parents and through classroom coaching.

The Cross Cultural Demonstration Project began its inaugural year first by visiting the schools and the neighborhoods they served several times, becoming familiar with the landscape, meeting parents, and conducting observations in the two communities. The schools' principals communicated with teachers their own active roles in their program and also spoke with individual parents, asking them to be responsible for bringing at least one or more parents to the

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initial meeting. The first year's workshops focused on developing and expanding upon the parents' backgrounds and experiences. Each workshop included interactive, experiential learning events and as well as some activities parents might take home to try out with their children. Through the workshop topics, parents remembered their childhood and their learning experiences and spoke about their hopes and dreams for themselves and their children. Towards the end of the first year, conversations gradually shifted from an emphasis on cultural characteristics to an emphasis on parents' relationships with their community.

The second year of the project emphasized parents as capable learners, teachers, and transmitters of culture. Individual workshops included topics such as an exploration of important teachers in parents' lives, the development of first and second languages in children, and role playing different roles parents might play in their children's classrooms. The third year of the program continued to support the parents' role constructions as parents who actively participate in their children's classrooms from either the home or at the school's physical location. Towards the close of the third year, parents were encouraged to brainstorm ways they could continue to be active in the schools and how they might continue to support one another once the project officially terminated.

Parallel to the parent workshops, De Gaetano and her team conducted workshops for teachers, coaching them in new ways to engage parents in their classroom. About halfway through the the program, De Gaetano and her team organized a parent volunteer task force. Parents and teachers met informally in order to collaborative plan ways that parents might observe or volunteer in their classrooms for the remainder of the program. Leaders of the Cross Cultural Demonstration Project made special care to adequately prepare both parents and

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teachers for the parents' new roles as parent observers in classrooms so that both groups felt comfortable.

At the project's close, De Gaetano and her team reflected upon the program's impact. They found that the parents involved in the workshop gained cultural capital through their increased knowledge about the inner workings of schools. This finding is made evident by the parents' comments surrounding the improvement the children's reading groups had made on their reading levels and on the lack of cultural connections to learning in some classrooms. Parents were able to observe classrooms, analyze what they saw, and formulate active roles for themselves within those classrooms. By the third year, parents worked with teachers to support the concepts their children had been taught in school, demonstrated more confidence in their personal abilities and strengths as Latino parents, and discussed issues of concerns they had about the schools and communities in which they lived, a few becoming more active in the community as agents of change. Teachers, too, grew from the experience, expressing gratitude for a greater understanding of the strengths Latino parents might bring to the classroom and capitalizing often upon those strengths in order to supplement, support, and inform student learning.

Limitations and Concluding Thoughts

Family engagement is absolutely essential if minority students, as well as their parents, are to become empowered (Cummins, 1989). De Gaetano's Cross Cultural Demonstration Project exemplifies the ways in which engaging in culturally responsive behaviors (i.e., valuing, seeking to better understand, and implementing practices and pedagogy cultural characteristics of

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specific groups) can mitigate the substantial barriers Latino families face in their efforts to support their children's educations. I must note, however, we must be careful to remember that various specific nationalities and ethnicities make up the Latino minority group, each with its own particular set of values and cultural characteristics. School leaders must be careful to attend not only to general Latino characteristics, but to those of specific nationalities, ethnic groups, and individuals. I must also note that teachers and school administrators must attend to more than just cultural characteristics when working with Latino immigrant families; linguistic differences and status as English Language Learners (ELLs) also significantly impact levels of family engagement.

The United States is, and always has been, a nation of immigrants. It is vital that we remember to incorporate and value the heritage and cultural characteristics of those immigrants if we as a nation are to truly tap into the deep potential these immigrants offer. Hopefully, if teachers and schools navigate better ways to connect with parents, outcomes will improve for both Latino immigrant families as well as for their children.

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