The Importance of Presence: Immigrant Parents' School Engagement Experiences
Gustavo Pérez Carreón; Corey Drake; Angela Calabrese Barton
American Educational Research Journal; Fall 2005; 42, 3; ABI/INFORM Global
pg. 465

American Educational Research Journal
Fall 2005, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 465–498

The Importance of Presence: Immigrant Parents' School Engagement Experiences

Gustavo Pérez Carreón
University of Texas at Austin
Corey Drake
Iowa State University
Angela Calabrese Barton
Teachers College, Columbia University

The authors have been engaged in research focused on how parents in high-poverty urban communities negotiate understandings and build sustaining relationships with others in school settings. In this article, the authors draw upon ethnographic methodology to report on the stories of three working-class immigrant parents and their efforts to participate in their children's formal education. Their stories are used as exemplars to illuminate the challenges immigrant parents face as they work to participate in their children's schooling. In contrasting the three stories, the authors argue that parental engagement needs to be understood through parents' presence in schooling, regardless of whether that presence is in a formal school space or in more personal, informal spaces, including those created by parents themselves.

KEYWORDS: immigrants, parents, urban education

GUSTAVO PÉREZ CARREÓN is a doctoral student, Department of Educational Psychology, School Psychology Program, University of Texas, Sanchez Building, 504, Austin, TX 78712-0383; e-mail: *gpx@mail.utexas.edu*. His areas of specialization are school psychology, immigrant families' patterns of acculturation, resilience processes among marginalized youth, and trauma recovery of victimized youth and families.

COREY DRAKE is an assistant professor of mathematics education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Iowa State University, N158 Lagomarcino Hall, Ames, IA 50011; e-mail: *cdrake@iastate.edu*. Her research interests focus on parental engagement, teacher thinking and teacher learning in elementary mathematics education reform, and elementary mathematics education in urban contexts.

ANGELA CALABRESE BARTON is an associate professor of science education and coordinates the Programs in Science Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, 412 B Main Hall, Box 210, 525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027; e-mail: *acb33@columbia.edu*. Her areas of specialization include urban science education, and critical/feminist approaches to science education.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Over the past 4 years, we have been conducting research focusing on parents' involvement in their children's schooling. In an effort to gain a broader understanding of parental involvement, we have examined how parents in high-poverty urban settings negotiate common understandings regarding beliefs and practices and establish sustained relationships with each other and with various actors within the school (teachers, administrators, and their children), especially when their beliefs and practices differ from the expectations held by these audiences. This work has led us to profoundly question what we mean by—and what we look for in our research of—parental involvement, regardless of where that involvement takes place.

It became clear to us within the first few months of our research that neither the researchers nor the participants (parents, teachers, administrators, and policymakers) shared a common understanding of what was meant by parental involvement or, as we have come to label it, "parental engagement." This same lack of cohesion exists in the literature on parental involvement (Christenson & Hurley, 1997; McCarthey, 2000). It also became clear to us early on that parental involvement could not be examined separately from either "what" parents were supposed to engage in (e.g., science class, parent-teacher conferences, bus line policies) or "how" parents managed to create or accept opportunities for engagement. Furthermore, with few exceptions, the parental involvement literature refers to "parents" in a homogeneous manner, with little attention paid to the experiences of immigrant parents.

Therefore, in this article we report the stories of three working-class immigrant parents and their efforts to be involved in their children's formal education. We use these parents' stories to shed light on the challenges immigrant parents face as they work to participate in their children's schooling as well as to offer a new way of understanding such parental involvement. In contrasting the three stories, we argue that parental involvement or engagement needs to be understood through parents' *presence* in their children's schooling, regardless of whether that presence is in a formal school space or in more personal, informal spaces, including spaces created by parents themselves.

Parents and Their Involvement in Urban Schooling

Parental involvement has long been considered a central factor related to better outcomes in children's education (Berger, 1995). High levels of parental involvement have been shown to correlate with improved academic performance, higher test scores, more positive attitudes toward school, higher homework completion rates, fewer placements in special education, academic perseverance, lower dropout rates, and fewer suspensions (Christenson & Hurley, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Few educators would argue against the benefits of parental involvement in schooling. However, the concept has not been challenged in school

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

discourse or in the literature, and thus it is difficult to establish a common language regarding parental involvement in education. Reform policy documents have addressed the role of parental involvement in schooling both in general (e.g., National Education Goals Panel, 1999) and within subject-specific contexts (e.g., National Research Council, 1996). However, the vague language of these policy recommendations contributes to the lack of common ground when it comes to understanding parents and their involvement in urban schooling. Nonetheless, the general message across these documents is widely consistent: Parental involvement is important and valued by actors within schools, and it contributes to the growth and development of children. As noted in a 1999 National Education Goals Panel report, "by the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (p. vi).

Simply stating that parental involvement benefits children does not explain *how* involvement becomes such a positive force. As with any human action, parental involvement is not a fixed event but a dynamic and ever-changing practice that varies depending on the context in which it occurs, the resources parents and schools bring to their actions, and the students' particular needs. Traditionally, schools have put in place structures and activities intended to support parental involvement. Examples of these activities include, but are not limited to, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) committees, scheduled teacher-parent conferences, school festivals, classroom or office volunteer activities for parents, and field trips (Peña, 2000).

As parents enter these traditional spaces of involvement, they do so with limited power to define their roles or actions (Fine, 1993). They are expected to agree with and support the structures and dynamics already in place. Parents who go along with what the school asks are seen as "good"; those who dissent are considered "problematic" (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Previous studies have documented this lack of equity in parent-school relationships. For example, Weiss and Edwards (1992) found that many parents did not perceive the activities organized by the school as true venues of participation. Instead, they identified other activities, such as family counseling and adult education programs, as more effective in allowing them to support the educational experiences of their children. Williams and Stallworth (1984) reported that the most common answers parents offered when asked what is missing from their involvement in their children's school referred to more power in decision-making processes and a more equal partnership with the school, one that did not center around fault-finding conversations.

This approach to understanding parental involvement relies primarily on a deficit model of how and why parents are involved in the schooling of their children, especially in high-poverty urban communities (Gutman & McLoyd, 2000); for example, if parents do not participate in school-sanctioned ways (e.g., family science night), their children's educational growth may suffer. Or some parents may lack the knowledge, skills, or social

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

support network to overcome participation barriers. Indeed, few studies have reported on initiatives including parents as equal partners and decision makers (see Civil, Andrade, & Anhalt, 2000, for an exception to this claim). Attendance may be high at parent-school activities, for example, but parents have minimal opportunities to help make decisions, voice concerns, or effect school change. Parents might express their interests and concerns, but the agenda is still set and controlled by the school. Deficit models for understanding parents and education position parents as subjects to be manipulated or without power to position themselves in ways they see fit. These models do not take into account the networks of individuals and resources that frame the scope, focus, and purpose of participation or the unique experiences that frame parents' beliefs and forge capital (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992).

Thus, despite wide agreement on the value of parental involvement, it has been difficult to construct a nondeficit account of this concept grounded in everyday practice. Parents' roles and involvement in schools have been understood largely in terms of "what parents do" and how that fits or does not fit with the needs of the child or the goals of the school. Even in those studies in which the school (rather than the parent) is taken as the unit of analysis and attention is paid to how school expectations and activities either fit or do not fit what parents may have to offer, it is assumed that the cultural worlds of schools and parents interact in only prespecified ways. The result is that we know a great deal about what school structures, programs, and activities promote parental involvement in education in reform-based settings, but we know much less about the sense that parents make out of these structures or programs or how they use them to promote their children's education.

An in-depth understanding of parental involvement requires the study of parents' practices in relation to the beliefs that motivate and sustain these practices as well as the cultural capital that parents possess and activate to orchestrate them. By "cultural capital," we refer to the material resources, social networks, beliefs, and personal life orientations on which people draw to direct their actions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988). At the same time, practices of parental involvement must be studied in connection to the spaces in which this involvement takes place, along with the physical, material, and organizational boundaries embedded in these spaces. We use "space," as opposed to field or context, because we want to invoke the symbolism suggested by that term. We want to explicitly link our use of "space" with particular activities and underlying structures familiar to agents within school systems and families (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Such a view of parental involvement exposes the interactive dynamic central to understanding parents' actions. On one hand, parent practices are transformative in that they not only affect parents' sense of the world (in this case, the schooling world)—and their sense of themselves in the world—but also shift the dynamic structures and boundaries of the spaces in which actions take place. On the other hand, parents' practices are positioned in specific ways by the discourses and actions of other school actors with whom parents converge in specific spaces and situations.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

On the basis of our research involving parents in high-poverty urban schools, we developed the "ecologies of parental engagement" (EPE) model (Calabrese Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004) to explain how parents' practices in relation to their children's schooling can constitute a transformative process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interaction with schools and school actors. We use the term *ecologies* because it focuses on the entire system—parents in relation to their environment. At the same time, we focus on engagement rather than involvement: "Involvement" has been used to describe the specific things parents do, while "engagement" also includes parents' orientations to the world and how those orientations frame the things they do. Likewise, we want to imply that the concept of parental involvement goes beyond an individual and his or her participation in an event. It also includes the 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. In the remainder of this article, we use the term *parental engagement* to refer to parent school involvement practices embedded in cultural spaces.

Poor and Working-Class Immigrant Parents' School Engagement

Latino students constitute the fastest-growing student group in the United States, and this demographic change is greatly affecting the social composition and overall organization of schools (Trueba, 2004). This growth continues to be fueled by present waves of immigrants. It is estimated that, of every six children residing in this country, one lives in an immigrant-headed household (Fuligni, 2001; Landale & Oropesa, 1995; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). The majority of new immigrant families are non-English speakers from Latin America, Asia, and the Afro-Caribbean region. Their presence is being felt beyond the traditional immigration destinations (i.e., California, Texas, Florida, and New York) into all parts of the United States.

These immigrants face the daunting task of structuring new lives for themselves and their families in a culture unknown to them. To be successful parents, they must develop new understandings about the world, establish new social networks, acquire 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. Adaptation to life in the United States is particularly challenging for poor and undocumented parents who have difficulty finding a job that pays a living wage and must cope with the physical and emotional stress of establishing a new life in a culture 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).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The tensions embedded in the experience of immigration are highlighted in immigrant parents' efforts to engage with their children's schools. It has been consistently demonstrated that immigrant parents place a high value on the education of their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Trueba, 1999; Valdez, 1996; Villanueva & Hubbard, 1994; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Yet, while most immigrant parents initially express satisfaction with their children's schools—especially if the schools in their home country were poorly staffed, classes were held irregularly, or education was costly—they often become frustrated with the educational experiences of their children (Ramirez, 2003; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Trueba, 1998). For instance, they believe that the curriculum is not challenging and their children are studying material they already know, they view the school environment as hostile or violent, and they report that their children are taunted because of their accent or the kinds of clothes they wear.

As parents orchestrate actions to improve the quality of their children's schooling, they often realize the space for engagement is not equitable. Immigrant parents find that their beliefs and actions have less power than those of other school actors (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Meyers, Dowdy, & Paterson, 2000; Olmedo, 2003; Peña, 2000; Valdez, 1996; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Boundaries that position them in the lower slots of the power hierarchy manifest themselves in dimensions of language, cultural capital, and social networks. First, because of their limited familiarity with English, parents find it difficult to understand and express their views and concerns regarding the schooling of their children. Language is also an instrument of identity and power, and thus immigrant parents lose some of the authority they had in their home countries because they lack knowledge of the nuances of language called for in particular situations, such as talking to a teacher or requesting a schedule change (Trueba, 2004). Immigrant parents often must rely on their children as translators with other school actors, altering the natural power structure within both the family and the school.

Second, the cultural capital that immigrant parents activate to orient their actions often differs from the forms of capital recognized and valued in the school's cultural world (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Chu Clewell, 2000). As immigrant parents engage in specific practices aimed at supporting their children's schooling, they draw upon their unique life experiences and expectations of the future to structure what they do and how they do it. Some immigrant parents may place great emphasis on strict discipline and completion of homework, while others may emphasize to their children the importance of respect over attributes such as leadership and self-initiative (Reese, 2002). In general, immigrant parents have limited knowledge of the "invisible codes of power" embedded in school cultures (Delpit, 1988), a limited understanding of the curriculum and organization of U.S. schools, and a lack of awareness of their rights as parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990), all of which constrain the questions they might pose and the critiques they might make of schooling practices.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Finally, many of these parents experience immigration as a process of isolation that makes it difficult for them to create social support networks that can sustain their efforts in regard to engaging in their children's schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Trueba, 1998). In many cases, immigrant parents work long hours at job sites away from their communities or hold jobs in the service sector that allow little schedule flexibility to meet with other parents or school actors. Other parents perceive that they are not respected or are marginalized by school actors, and thus they have little motivation to participate in school-parent activities (Ramirez, 2003; Tapia, 2000; Valdez, 1996).

In spite of the structural barriers to successful school engagement just discussed, many immigrant parents position themselves with power—even if this power is limited—within the school space (Trueba, 2004). Their optimism, determination, strong sense of self, and goal-oriented practices serve as powerful counterforces in less-than-optimal circumstances. The question, then, is why some immigrant parents manage to have stronger, more powerful, and more successful school engagement experiences than others. We claim, on the basis of the EPE framework, that successful engagement experiences are not related to parents' personality traits (i.e., some parents can do it and some parents cannot); instead, they are the result of a process in which parents and schools interact in particular spaces, using specific forms of capital, to create a level of engagement that truly benefits a child's school experiences.

In light of the findings described here, we believe that there is a need to improve our understanding of parental engagement by analyzing immigrant parents' interactions and relationships in schools in high-poverty urban settings. We are particularly interested in what it means to understand parental participation as a distributed, dynamic, and interactive process. Thus, our goal in this article is to provide an understanding of immigrant parents' engagement in urban schooling through use of the EPE framework (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004).

Method

Celia, Pablo, and Isabel (all names are pseudonyms), the three parents whose stories we present here, were members of a group of 17 immigrant parents who participated, along with a group of nonimmigrant parents, in a 3-year research project funded by the National Science Foundation. This project was designed to investigate how parents living in high-poverty urban centers perceive their school engagement experiences. We purposefully selected these three parents' stories as exemplars because they reflect a range of experiences as well as use of different forms of capital and approaches to establishing a school presence and voice. The study took place at two elementary schools in a mid-sized city located in central Texas. Both schools are located on the city's "East Side," known for being home to a growing number of immigrant families who have moved to the city motivated by the availability of jobs in the construction and service industries. These two particular schools were selected because they served a high-poverty population

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(more than 90% of the student body was eligible for the free lunch program), their staff members' official responsibilities included serving parents (i.e., they were parent liaisons), and they were involved in science education reform practices.

We invited parents to participate in the project through letters sent home with their children, flyers posted at the schools, presentations we made at parent-related events at both schools, and direct invitations from their children's teachers (all in both English and Spanish). Initially, parents were asked to commit to four of five available "conversation groups." As a means of maximizing participation potential, these conversation groups were held in the evening, and each parent was compensated for taking part. We also provided free baby-sitting services throughout and assisted some of the parents in making transportation arrangements.

A total of 17 immigrant parents (13 mothers and 4 fathers) participated. We held three rounds of conversation groups, each consisting of five meetings and including a different group of parents. All conversations took place in Spanish and were later translated for the purposes of this research. Translations were assessed by bilingual and immigrant project staff members to ensure accuracy (in regard to both meaning and intention).

We organized each conversation group around a subtheme such as parents' experiences of educational engagement within the school, home, and community or in science and math activities. At the beginning of each session, parents were briefly introduced to the theme of the night, after which one or two open-ended questions were asked to guide the conversation. Once the conversation groups were completed, all parents were invited to return for a series of six meetings designed to (a) assist the researchers in revising their findings and (b) provide a narrative of their personal experience of involvement in their children's schooling. Nine of the 17 parents completed the second part of our study. Parents from all three previous conversation groups were represented.

We labeled this second part of the study *talleres*—the Spanish word for an artist's studio[1]-to mirror the spirit of the study; that is, parents' voices are the essential tools in constructing new ways of understanding relationships between immigrant parents and school actors. We organized the *talleres*/studios under three themes: *platicamos, trabajamos,* and *contamos* ("we talk," "we work," and "we tell"). In the "*platicamos*/we talk" studio, parents discussed the emergent findings from the conversation groups that the research team had shared with them. In the "*trabajamos*/we work" studio, parents worked individually or in small groups generating personal stories regarding their immigration and school participation experiences. Finally, in the "*contamos*/we tell" studio, parents shared their stories with the group and recorded the stories on audiotape, on videotape, or in writing. Parents were compensated for each studio session, and free baby-sitting services were provided. The parents presented diverse stories regarding their engagement within the school space. For some, participating in our study reflected a long-sustained effort to be part of school life. For others—especially those with less

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

flexible schedules, lack of transportation, or more limited knowledge of school structures—their participation in our study was one of only a few formal experiences (and in some instances the first such experience) of school engagement.

Primary data sources were conversation group transcripts, field notes from informal conversations that took place at the beginning and end of each session, and the stories constructed and narrated by parents in the studios. Additional data were derived from school observations, formal and informal interviews conducted with teachers and principals, and, in some cases, visits to parents' homes. To analyze data, we turned to the principles of grounded theory, which is based on the idea that theories are to be built rather than tested (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We worked through three stages of coding: open, axial, and selective. By completing these three coding stages, we were able to label and categorize data, link ideas, and develop a theory that encompassed what we considered to be main categories, ideas, and connections in our data. We paid particular attention to the kinds of capital that parents activated in their efforts to participate in their child's schooling and how that access and activation process was framed by the social, cultural, and physical spaces of schools. In working through our layers of coding, we assessed the importance of different kinds of relationships among our ideas, such as what it means to author a space, how parents authored personal spaces within the larger formal space of schooling, and how parents created new resources within individual and social contexts.

Authoring Engagement Practices: Three Forms of Presence

Celia Montes: "Now I Am Very Brave"

Celia Montes, a Salvadorian woman in her early 40s, came to our meetings after long days of work cleaning houses. She was personally invited to take part in the project by her son's teacher, who described her as "the most involved parent I have." She participated in the first round of conversation groups and returned for each of the *talleres*/studios. In spite of the physical toll that her job exerted on her, she brought an energetic presence to the group and often become the natural leader of the conversation. As she sat in the circle with other parents, she would invariably change from appearing tired and distant at the beginning of each session to being full of intensity as she expressed her ideas, questioned other parents, and challenged or supported their opinions in a clear voice accompanied by firm movements of her head and arms.

Celia is the mother of three children. At the time of our study only Daniel, a 9-year-old enrolled in a fourth-grade bilingual class, was living with Celia and her husband. Her 19-year-old son from a previous marriage lives in El Salvador, and her oldest child is married and lives in the United States.

Barriers to Valued School Engagement

Celia's history of school engagement was framed by a high level of participation in parent-related organized school events. She attended parent-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

teacher conferences, school festivals, and parent nights in addition to going on field trips and preparing food for the school's food festival. Yet in spite of her high level of engagement, Celia reported that many times she felt that the school neither respected nor truly valued her presence. When asked by other parents as to why she felt disrespected by the school, Celia talked about her problems communicating with school actors. At the time of our study, the principal and assistant principal at Daniel's school did not speak Spanish. What Celia and other parents found even more troublesome was that none of the personnel in the office were bilingual, even though 60% of the school's parents were Latino. For Celia, the lack of bilingual personnel represented a source of tension and symbolized a lack of respect for parents who had to wait until a translator was available to negotiate both trivial and crucial situations.

Porque a veces uno tiene que llamar para decir que el niño no puede venir porque está enfermo o para preguntar algo y lo dejan a uno esperando ahí hasta que encuentran a alguien que habla español, y a veces no hay nadie porque los maestros ya están en el salón. El otro día me hicieron esperar casi 20 minutos, y una no puede [esperar], yo me tengo que ir a trabajar. No puedo estar ahí esperando. Y yo he escuchado que otras personas se quejan de lo mismo. Y es que, ¿cómo es posible que no haya en la oficina alguien que nos entienda a nosotros? ¿Cómo se va a sentir uno agusto si no hay gente en la oficina que habla español? Y somos muchos los papás y mamás que no hablamos inglés. No nada más soy yo. Eso no está bien.	Because sometimes one has to call to say that one's child can't go to school because he is ill, or to ask something, and they put you on hold until they find someone who speaks Spanish, and sometimes there is no one because all the teachers are already in their classrooms. The other day they made me wait almost 20 minutes, and one can't [wait], I have to go to work. I cannot stay there waiting. And I have heard other people complain about the same thing. Because, how is it possible that there is no one in the office that can understand us? How am I supposed to feel comfortable when there is no one in the office that speaks Spanish? And there are many moms and dads that do not speak English. It's not just me. It is not right.

Celia's felt tension within the school was fueled by the power forces embedded in the school's practices. Celia was one of the few parents in our study who attended PTA meetings, the official structure through which parents can influence the culture and organization of schools. However, rather than enhancing her relationship with the school, these meetings came to represent additional experiences of disrespect. She spoke of not understanding the role of the PTA and how it benefited parents. According to her, the only role within the PTA she could make sense of was that parents were expected to pay fees. Celia also reported that she felt like a "second-class" parent at the meetings because often no one was available to translate for Spanish-speaking parents, whose presence lessened with every passing meeting. In instances in which there was a translator, only certain parts of the meeting

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were translated. The paradox of Celia's story is that the more she was involved with the PTA, the more she felt an outsider.

Celia's narratives of her experiences of feeling disrespected or devalued within the school were part of a broader conversation with the other participants, all of whom referred to similar situations. At the core of these experiences, parents talked about difficulties in communication with school personnel and how they felt a lack of respect when they attended parent-related events and no translator was available. Some of these situations were witnessed by members of our research team. For instance, we were invited by the parent liaison to observe a workshop she had organized on the topic of health and nutrition. As we arrived at the meeting, we noticed that most mothers were speaking Spanish and that the presenter was not bilingual. At that point, the parent liaison asked one of our researchers whether he could translate. Had he not been present, we wonder how the situation would have been resolved.

In our conversation with the school principal about the school's efforts to support engagement among immigrant parents, he described the school's parents' program in detail, including the presence of a full-time parent liaison (who was not bilingual) and a series of activities for parents throughout the year. We were invited to several of these events, all of which had a significant turnout of immigrant parents. Some of the events were traditional practices carried out in schools, such as "Meet the Teachers Night." Other events or activities were more out of the ordinary, such as "Muffins for Moms" and "Doughnuts for Dads," in which mothers and fathers were invited on different mornings for a light breakfast and an informal chat with the principal. The principal described proudly how, at a recent school breakfast, he had been able to carry on a basic conversation with the Spanish-speaking mothers who had attended. One of these mothers had been Celia. When discussing the lack of bilingual personnel in the front office, the principal acknowledged that the situation was unfortunate and described how difficult it was for him to find bilingual staff, although it was one of his priorities. A bilingual secretary was eventually hired.

The interview with the principal mirrored the traditional linear model under which parental engagement is typically explained: "We offer activities, and willing parents come and participate." Parents such as Celia were often described by the principal and other school actors as "exemplary" parents, and their stories were used as part of the school discourse to demonstrate that if these mothers could be actively involved in the school, then any parents could. What our research indicates, however, is that in reality Celia and other parents like her experienced their position within the school space in a more complex manner than school actors realized or talked about. Absent in the principal's and teachers' discourse was acknowledgment that highly engaged immigrant parents might be positioned as outsiders and might perceive a lack of respect by the present structures of the school, both interactional and discursive.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Authoring a Personal Space of Educational Engagement

Responding to this lack of power and the tensions present within the structures offered to parents to engage in the schooling of their children, Celia worked on constructing a close relationship with each of Daniel's teachers. It was within the context of this active parent-teacher relationship that Celia believed her actions had a real impact on Daniel's schooling and her presence within the school space was valued and respected. She spoke of how important it was for her to maintain an ongoing conversation with each of Daniel's teachers, either to seek out information or to discuss Daniel's progress in school. These conversations, conducted in Spanish, were not part of scheduled meetings but occurred during Celia's frequent visits to Daniel's classroom.

> Hasta ahorita en cuarto año que va Daniel, para mí todos sus maestros han sido excelentes maestros y me llevo muy bien con ellos y tengo comunicación. El primer día de clases, y a veces hasta antes, yo me presento, les pido su teléfono de su casa para una emergencia, o si el niño quiere mentir y yo tengo una duda, le pregunto, le digo, pero no es que lo esté molestando. Y los maestros son muy comunicativos, ellos piden que vayan los padres. Pero para mí hasta ahorita, no sé mas allá si tenga algún problema, pero ahorita no. Ellos piden que vayan los padres. Yo cuando tengo libre me estoy una hora ahí y ahí me estoy a leer en español. O si ellos tienen algo que hacer yo les ayudo, pero . . . me gusta trabajar con ellos, pero si veo que no son buenos, yo se les digo.

> Up to now, that Daniel is in fourth grade, I'll say all his teachers have been excellent teachers and I get along with them very well, I communicate. The first day of classes, and even before sometimes, I introduce myself, I ask them for their home phone number in case of an emergency, or in case the boy wants to lie and I have [to] doubt him, I ask them, I tell them, but it is not that I am bothering them. And teachers like to communicate, they ask for parents to go. For me, up to now, I don't know if I will have a problem later, but up to now not, they ask for parents to go. When I can I am there for an hour, and I am there to read in Spanish. Or if they have something to do I help them, but . . . I like to work with them, but if I see that they are not good I tell them.

According to the EPE model, Celia's authorship of an effective practice of engagement needs to be understood within the visible and invisible constraints that affect what she is able to do and not do as well as the cultural capital she activates in response to these constraints. As an immigrant woman, Celia has worked intensely to construct an understanding of the cultural world in the United States, including Daniel's school. She has constructed this understanding through interactions with cultural forces in her host society (Delpit, 1988) that position her as a poor, immigrant, non-English-speaking mother and in the absence of a strong social network to support her engagement practices. When Celia said "I introduce myself" (to Daniel's teachers), she was drawing on her ability to reflect critically upon her son's schooling, her recognition of her rights as a human being, and her

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

determination to advance her goals regarding Daniel's education. She is activating all of this cultural capital to establish a personal space (i.e., "being present"). Just as Celia took risks to immigrate to the United States and has since worked relentlessly toward authoring a new self and claiming a personal space in the larger social context, the last 4 years have involved a series of careful steps designed to determine the risks and benefits of constructing these relationships with Daniel's teachers.

Celia's self-authored practice of engagement is not free of tensions, however. Upon analyzing Celia's data, it was clear that the interactions that took place within the personal space of the parent-teacher relationship were still overwhelmingly framed as the parent being a helper or a receiver rather than an author. In describing what she did when she was in Daniel's classroom, Celia reported that she helped put materials together, read to her son and other children, or simply observed what was happening. Celia also said that she often asked Daniel's teacher for ideas as to how she could best help him at home. When we inquired as to whether she had ever been asked by any teacher for her opinion as to how decisions should be made-regarding either her own son or the class as a whole—Celia stood silently for a few seconds and then answered, her eyes widening and her voice distinctly clear, with a resounding "no."

Celia described one instance in which she expressed concern to Daniel's teacher that the students were not receiving sufficient English instruction, knowledge she gained through entering the classroom space. Celia said she was simply told that it was how the program was designed. Celia reported that while she was still concerned about Daniel's limited exposure to English, she had not made any further comments. When she talked about this situation in more detail, Celia stated that she did not think it was right that students spoke mostly in Spanish in class but that if the school administrators said this is how it would be, maybe she had to trust their judgment. However, she added that "maybe they know something I don't know, but I don't think so."

While our conversations with Celia did not reveal the exact reasons why she did not pursue the topic with Daniel's teacher, we wondered about the complexity of this situation. It may have been that Celia realized she lacked the formal cultural capital or knowledge to defend her point. Celia was able to speak in Spanish with Daniel's teacher—narrowing the gap between the school's and Celia's cultural world—but she lacked an understanding of the school's programs and did not have the necessary command of English to talk about them. It may also have been that Celia was protecting the personal space of engagement she had established by not voicing her disagreement even though she felt that her position was valid. However, we had observed Celia disagreeing with her son's teacher and knew the situation was more complicated than that. Losing her valued place in the classroom for reasons she could not formally justify may have weighed too heavily on her. This kind of "loss of authorship" needs to be further explored.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In spite of these difficulties, Celia emphasized how maintaining an active relationship with Daniel's teachers and her frequent presence in Daniel's classroom continued to be her most satisfying school engagement experiences. While the school at large still seemed overpowering and the experiences within the prescribed spaces of participation for parents continued to feel tense and devoid of a true co-participatory role, Celia said that in her self-authored space of engagement she felt respected and valued; more important, she believed she was having a type of direct impact on her son's formal education that defied the traditional stereotypes held by others. That is, she was a poor immigrant women highly engaged in her son's schooling, continuously negotiating "off time" with her employers to visit the classroom at least once at week. She said that she did not need to be invited; Daniel's classroom was also her space.

Authoring an Immigrant Self

As suggested earlier, Celia's authorship of a personal school engagement practice was part of the larger process of authoring her immigrant self. Our data showed that Celia's descriptions of how she makes sense of the world converge in the theme of *sufrimiento* (suffering). In describing her childhood, Celia spoke not of games and friends but of waking up at 5 o'clock in the morning to haul water, grind corn for tortillas, and work 2 or 3 hours before going to school with an almost empty stomach. She also spoke of being told by her parents that she could not continue studying after she finished sixth grade because the family's precarious resources could support only her older brother's schooling. In addition, she was expected to work to contribute to the family. As a young married woman, she described being abandoned by her husband and chastised by her in-laws.

Reacting to this ongoing oppression, which occurred within the larger context of civil war in El Salvador, Celia decided to immigrate to the United States. She shared with the other parents how her journey across three countries (Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States), as a woman traveling alone with meager resources, almost cost her her life. Unfortunately, upon her arrival in the United States, her initial experiences as an immigrant woman were an extension of the exploitation and disempowerment she had experienced in her homeland: sexual harassment, denied payment after weeks of around-the-clock domestic service, social isolation, and the ever-present fear of deportation. Although admitting that life has not been kind to her, Celia reported that these experiences of *sufrimiento* have made her the courageous woman she is today.

A mí siempre me ha ido ido muy mal. Siempre me va mal. Pero yo sigo y sigo. Antes me pasaban muchas cosas y me daba miedo todo, pero ahora no. Ahora soy muy brava.	Things always go bad for me. But I insist and insist. Before a lot of things would happen to me and I was afraid of everything, but not now. Now I am very brave.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Celia's description of herself as a woman of courage who defies the oppressive forces she continues to encounter highlights how resilient she has been throughout her life. Resilience, which has become a popular concept in the academic discourse, can have different meanings for different people. In the context of Celia's life story, we use Trueba's (1999) definition of resilience as the capacity of immigrants to survive physically and psychologically in circumstances that require enormous physical strength and determination as well as the psychological flexibility necessary to adapt to a different lifestyle in the absence of their familiar environment. In our data we noticed how, throughout her life, Celia has made gradual functional adaptations in the face of oppressive forces. With each new adaptation, she has constructed new ways to understand the world and herself in the world.

As Celia entered the school space, she encountered a climate that seemed unwelcoming, even if unintentionally. In response, she chose to activate the cultural capital that, in the past, had allowed her to establish a personal participatory role that fit with her values, beliefs, and expectations for the future. Therefore, it makes sense that Celia's demand for respect was so prominent in the conversation groups. She knows clearly the types of experiences she does not want her son to have, and she has made a commitment to ensure that Daniel's schooling is marked by fairness. As do many immigrant parents, she believes that a good education is the best way to ensure that her son will not repeat the story of oppression she has lived out in both El Salvador and the United States. At the same time, she knows that the world is not a place to trust and that only by being present in Daniel's schooling can she ensure that his school is living up to her expectations.

Presence as a Strategic Helper

Because she clearly had a presence at her son's school, we labeled Celia's form of engagement in her son's schooling as "presence/strategic helper." We use the phrase *strategic helper* because we want to illustrate how Celia's presence worked within the boundaries of the school to author a voice there. What is important here is that Celia gained first-hand knowledge of how the school works by being present in the classroom and by observing the activities that took place there. On one hand, Celia's actions in her son's class supported the teacher's actions and decisions. Celia's presence was valued by the teacher because she provided services during the morning homeroom to Daniel and to other children in the class. On the other hand, her work as a helper in the classroom did not result in Celia having no power, voice, or ability to work for change. Helping was a strategic action that often provided Celia with the capital she needed to become an author in that space or other school spaces. Helping also provided her opportunities to raise questions regarding what was happening in the classroom from the standpoint of someone with knowledge.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Celia's relationship with her son's teacher was strategic for several reasons. For example, it was through this relationship that Celia authored a personal space of engagement in her son's classroom. Indeed, it was in the context of this parent-teacher relationship that her practices of engagement had the greatest effect, allowing her to seek out information and express her concern and support in relation to her son's school experiences. It was also through this relationship that Celia learned more about how to talk to school administrators and about how other school structures worked. Finally, it was in this space that Celia was able to transform her son's schooling. Instead of school being a distant place for her son, it felt comfortable and connected to the home.

Pablo Loeza: Educating by Example

Pablo Loeza was one of the four fathers who participated in our study. A Mexican man in his late 30s with a husky complexion and a thick mustache, Pablo came with his wife, Cecilia, to the third round of the conversation groups and attended all of the *talleres*/studios. As did Celia, Pablo worked long hours, often leaving home before his children awoke to drive to the various construction sites at which he was employed.

Pablo had a quiet presence in the group, that of a listener more than a talker, but one who invariably expressed his views, usually toward the end of each session. Pablo would often stay after meetings and talk informally with the only male researcher about his life and his views on parenting and education while his wife chatted with other parents. Such "man-to-man conversations," as Pablo would describe them, seemed to be similar to his experiences in talking to other men: his coworkers at the construction site, his friends from church, or his "paisanos" (acquaintances from his home country) who would visit him at his house. Pablo's experience of fatherhood also had a "man-to-man" tone. As the father of three school-aged boys, Santiago, Alvaro, and Diego, and a 1-year-old, Fernie, Pablo often talked about how to guide his sons toward becoming *hombres de bien* (good men). At the same time, he acknowledged that even when he and his wife did their best to instill in their sons the values that have guided their own lives—respect, hard work, and honesty—they, as parents, could not control their children's choices. It was around this larger goal of guiding his sons while allowing them to find their own paths in life that Pablo's experience of school engagement was constructed.

Proximity and Distance Within the School Space

Pablo described himself and his wife as a couple with a deep commitment to being engaged in the schooling experiences of their sons. In the conversation groups, he talked about the various parent-related events they attended throughout the school year. Similar to Celia, however, Pablo said

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that in spite of his high level of engagement in school-structured events designed for parents, he continued to feel like an outsider in the school space.

As is the case with many immigrant parents, Pablo reported that his limited English proficiency made it very challenging to have conversations with school actors, particularly nonbilingual teachers. He said that when he was asked a question he did not understand or when he wanted to express an opinion but was not able to verbalize it, he feared that teachers or principals might view him as incompetent. In addition to the language barrier, Pablo said that his job did not provide much flexibility to visit his sons' classes during the day, as other parents were able to do. He added that when he had made an effort to go and talk to one of his sons' teachers, he had at times been left with a feeling that his opinion was not respected.

> Y yo veía que Alvaro no avanzaba, los otros dos [hijos] tenían más trabajo y yo me fijaba que Diego que es más chico sabía más que él. Y fuí con la maestra y le pregunté qué estaba pasando. Y me dijo que Alvaro era muy buen niño y que se portaba muy bien y que no me preocupara. Pero yo sabía que algo estaba pasando porque veía que no, que no hacía gran cosa y que no sabía mucho. Y después cuando ya se acabó el año, Alvaro nos dijo que la maestra llevaba a su nieto a la escuela, porque ella ya está viejita, y lo ponía a cuidarlo. Pues por eso decía que era muy buen niño porque le ayudaba a cuidar al nieto. Y la otra maestra, la de ahora, me dio la razón, porque dijo que todos estaban muy atrasados, no nomás Alvaro, que todos no habían aprendido gran cosa el año pasado.

> And I would notice that Alvaro was not making progress, the other two [sons] had more work and I would notice that Diego, who is younger, knew more than him. And I went where the teacher was and asked her what was going on. She told me that Alvaro was a very good boy, that he behaved very well and that I should not worry. But I knew something was going on because I could see that he did not, he did not do much and that he did not know much. And later, when the school year was over, Alvaro told us that the teacher would take her grandson to school, because she is old, and she would ask Alvaro to look after the boy. That is why she said that he was a good boy because he would help her with the grandson. And the other teacher, the one from this year, proved me right when she said all students were quite behind, not only Alvaro, that all of them had not learned much last year.

Contrary to Celia's experience, Pablo's attempt to affect his son's schooling by authoring a practice of engagement within the school space was not supported in this particular instance by Alvaro's teacher. Pablo's account highlights how the cultural capital a parent brings to the school space—including, in Pablo's case, his critical view of the school world, his

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

high regard for quality in education, and his commitment to being engaged in his son' schooling experiences—can be constrained by the way she or he is positioned in terms of the beliefs and practices embedded in the cultural world of the school. We pondered how Pablo's concern would have been handled if he were fluent in English, had a professional job, and had access to an extensive social support network. We questioned to what extent the teacher's response ("he behaves very well") to Pablo's academic, not behavioral, concern was influenced by class, racial, and political lines. Such questions are important given that there are multiple examples in the parents' stories in which their authorship of engagement was threatened as a result of preconceived beliefs held by school actors regarding poor immigrant parents.

Indeed, the possible negative effects of race and class on how a group is perceived and positioned by others have been identified (Waters, 1990), and the extent to which a specific racial or class identity is salient depends on its context. In the past years, in the face of drastic social, political, and economic changes in the United States, immigrants have been increasingly blamed for negatively affecting the economy, draining the social system, and contributing to crime (Espenshade & Belanger, 1998). This social positioning of immigrants as a threat to the country's stability has found its way into legislation (e.g., California's Proposition 187 and Arizona's recently approved Proposition 200) that denies immigrants access to state-funded services.

Also, long-held beliefs across cultural worlds constrain immigrant families' experiences of schooling in the United States. For instance, immigrant students and nonimmigrant students of minority backgrounds are perceived as less capable of academic excellence and as more prone to misbehavior (Valenzuela, 1999). It is within this anti-immigrant culture that parents such as Pablo and Celia activate resources to support their children's schooling. Alongside his narrative of the tensions he felt within school structures, Pablo expressed his belief that being engaged in his sons' schooling was the greatest expression of love and the greatest proof of care he could offer them. As a result, he took clear steps to ensure that his educational engagement practices were both active and effective.

Teaching by Example

Pablo described the daily ritual in which he sat with his three sons as they did their homework, researching topics on the Internet, reading books, or solving math problems. While at times he was not able to help, particularly with his oldest son's work and with computer matters, Pablo said he believed that his "being present" was his way of learning what his children were doing, motivating them to do good work, and letting them know that school is important and he cares about their learning, a practice he calls *enseñar con el ejemplo* (teaching by example).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yo trato de hablar con ellos, para entenderles, y esa es una manera de que ellos también se sientan que son importantes para mí, porque si yo no me intereso en sus tareas, si no fuera allá (a la escuela) ellos dirían, "No pues yo no le intereso a mi papá" Después van a decir, "Mi mamá es la que iba a las juntas, la que nos ayudaba con las tareas." Y ellos también pueden agarrar otro camino de no ir a la escuela, porque dicen, "Como quiera (mis papás) no vienen a la escuela, no se dan cuenta" Y eso también me motiva a ir porque en este país hay mucho que hacer aparte de ir a la escuela, andar con otros niños que se van para otro lado. Así que pues ayudarlos, más que nada, no necesita uno ni decirles nada, simplemente que vean el ejemplo, con eso es algo que uno aprende, y un niño se fija, también ven que es un bien para ellos.	I try to talk with them, to understand them, and this is a way for them to feel that they are important to me, because if I don't show interest in their homework, go there [to the school] they would say, "Well I must not matter to my dad." Later they are going to say, "My mom is the one that went to all the meetings, the one who helped us with our homework." And they can also take a path of not going to school, because they say, "As it is, [my parents] don't come to the school, they don't know what is going on." And this also motivates me to go, because in this country, there is a lot to do besides going to school, hanging out with other kids that are going in another direction. So helping them, more than anything, you don't need to tell them anything, just that they see your example. That is what they learn, a child notices, and they see that [school] is good for them.

Pablo's educational engagement in teaching by example expanded beyond formal school matters to daily life situations. As is the case with many immigrant parents, Pablo's diverse and often challenging life experiences have allowed him to build a rich body of cultural knowledge that informs his interactions with his sons (Lopez, 2001; Reese, 2001). For instance, he has taught his son Alvaro the basics of mechanics. Pablo described to the group how, as a means of saving money, he has learned to do most of the repairs on their vehicles. During a visit to Pablo's house by one of our researchers for a follow-up conversation, we observed how Pablo walked his son Alvaro through inspecting the different fluid levels in their truck with great detail and using humorous language. Also, drawing from his experience growing up in a farming community in Mexico, Pablo has taught his sons to grow vegetables in the back yard. Furthermore, Pablo told the group he plays soccer regularly with his children and teaches them techniques he learned when playing in community leagues in Mexico and in his first years in the United States.

Together, Pablo's descriptions illustrate how his educational engagement and presence within the home space are centered in an experientially based knowledge that his sons can immediately apply in their lives. In a linear model of parental involvement, these practices would not be recognized or incorporated into students' formal schooling. Yet, they constitute rich cultural practices through which Pablo has been able to construct a self-identity as a father who supports his children's schooling.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In our data analysis, we noticed how Pablo described such experiential "teaching by example" with his sons in more detail and at more length than homework episodes. It may be that Pablo feels more at ease talking about nontraditional learning activities, while textbook knowledge has become more difficult to discuss as his children advance in their schooling (Tapia, 2000).

On the surface, such a distinction could be dismissed as minor, but it signals an ongoing struggle that many immigrant parents face: loss of authority over recognized forms of knowledge in the host society and increasing marginalization of their cultural knowledge, in turn resulting in an even greater distance between the school and home. We recognize that children's formal education levels can surpass those of their parents whether parents are immigrants or nonimmigrants; in the case of poor immigrant parents, however, this experience takes on extended meaning. From the onset, many immigrant parents such as Pablo lack a number of the forms of formal capital that are useful in negotiating their children's schooling, and their cultural knowledge is not part of the world of the host society. Thus, their loss of voice or of authorship can be compounded.

Pablo's school engagement was not limited, however, to "being present" during homework time and transmitting experiential knowledge to his sons. We learned that his vision of education as a pathway to better life opportunities sustained his motivation to challenge existing barriers to his children's educational experiences. Pablo explained to other parents how he and his wife had managed to send his oldest son, Santiago, to an out-of-zone middle school and how they planned to do the same with their other boys. Responding to other parents' questions as to why they decided against Krause (a pseudonym), the neighborhood's middle school, Pablo explained that there were many behavior problems among the students in that school. Pablo said that, in fact, it had been Santiago's teacher who told them not to send Santiago to Krause, because he was a very smart student who deserved a better education. He had also talked to his neighbor, who was not an immigrant; a year earlier, the neighbor had decided against Krause for his child because of the school's behavior problems. At the time of our study, Santiago was attending a school about 10 miles away from Pablo's home that had been recommended by Santiago's teacher. On the suggestion of one of Santiago's new teachers, Pablo and his wife were thinking of applying for the city's magnet school, known for a more developed science and math curriculum that they were told would be even better for Santiago.

As with Celia's authorship of a school space, Pablo and his wife's decision to send Santiago to a better school needs to be understood within their story of immigration. Pablo reported that although initially he was quite satisfied with the neighborhood's schools, as the years passed he and his wife learned that schools indeed were different and that there were things they could do to ensure that their children attended the best schools possible. In Pablo's case, a central part of this learning process was having a reliable parent-teacher relationship in which Santiago's teacher felt comfortable sharing her views and in which Pablo and his wife trusted her judgment. While

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this story has larger implications regarding the social inequality of the school system, we focused on how Pablo's commitment to being present and his critical orientation to the world allowed him to create a better school experience for Santiago. As Pablo described, these actions required much work and learning and were supported by teacher-parent relationships, social networking, and foremost his cultural knowledge—seeing the world as a place of possibility—and high regard for quality education.

We identified three reactions among the study parents in their comments on Pablo's decision. Some parents supported his actions, other parents said the school did not matter as much as their level of engagement with their children, and still other parents said they had never thought about changing schools but were now curious as to whether real advantages existed. These different reactions seemed related to each parent's stage of immigration at the time the conversation took place. Significantly, important differences were in evidence even among our apparently homogeneous group of immigrant parents, including the number of years they had lived in the United States, the age of their children, and the resources they could summon to orchestrate, as in the case of Pablo, a change of schools. We wondered how Pablo's process of engagement would have transpired had he been a recent immigrant with much less of an understanding of the country's school system.

In analyzing Pablo's practices of engagement, particularly seeking a new school for Santiago, we could see that he was drawing on his years of experience as an immigrant man, his existing social network, his critical view of the world, and his material capital to support his actions. Pablo's and his wife's decision about Santiago's school seems to have been made possible as a result of their vast 14-year experience as immigrants confronting, understanding, criticizing, and adjusting to life in the United States. As is the case with any immigrant parents, ignoring Pablo's history would be a disservice in regard to understanding his school engagement practices.

Knowing the World and Fearing the World

As did Celia, Pablo described his experience as an immigrant as one of a continuous struggle, a story of *mucho sufrimiento* (a lot of suffering). As he talked about his time as an undocumented immigrant in the United States, Pablo described initial and recurrent experiences of discrimination at his different jobs in the construction industry. In particular, he talked about being one of the few men at his present company who could operate certain types of equipment and how, because he possessed this skill, he was regarded as one of the most valuable workers. Yet, in spite of his high level of specialization, which he acquired through practicing how to operate the machinery after hours, Pablo said he was not paid nearly as well as his coworkers who held work permits.

Furthermore, being an undocumented immigrant not only limited his job opportunities and what those opportunities could mean for his family; it also limited his cultural experiences in the United States given that, to avoid deportation, he had to maintain a low profile.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yo no tengo papeles, no tengo nada, cuando andan redadas de emigración por ahí, pues yo voy, trabajo y ando nomás "Dios mío ayúdame, cuídame" y es todo. Y ahí ando. Y me han echado dos veces pa(ra) afuera, dos veces me han aventado. Pero yo del río me regreso. Veo el río y vámonos para atrás. Si me paran, pues tengo licencia, aseguranza, pero uno como está . . . como te digo, no andas bien, no tienes papeles. Y luego vives bien, pero que te quede dinero no mucho, hasta un golpe que de uno o le den, le piensa. Y en mi casa pues estoy bien. Al trabajo pues tengo que ir, pero ese es uno de los problemas que pasa. Luego le pienso porque tengo a mis hijos. Yo solo que me avienten. Esas dos veces que me hecharon, si yo no hubiera tenido mi familia aquí, yo me voy para el rancho.	I don't have papers, I don't have anything, when the immigration rings are going around there, well I go, I work and I go around just saying, "My God help me, take care of me," and that is it. They have kicked me out two times, two times they have thrown me out. But I come back from the river. I see the river and [I said] "let's go back." If they stop me, I have a driver's license, insurance, but one is not . . . as I tell you, one is not all right, one does not have papers. You can live well, but it is not like a lot of money is left out, they may hit the truck, I think about it. And in my house I am fine. I have to go to work, but that is one of the problems out there. I think about it because of my children. By myself they can send me back. The two times they throw me out, if it was not because of my family I would have gone to my hometown.

Pablo's description of his experiences helped us to understand how immigration (in the case of an undocumented person) is not a one-time occurrence but a prolonged state of uncertainty that infiltrates every aspect of life—including, in Pablo's case, his practice of school engagement. In that sense, Pablo's tensions in regard to being present in the school space were a manifestation of his lack of legally recognized status in his host culture. A paradox of being the undocumented father of four U.S.-born sons is that the involvement the school and society at large expect from Pablo is constrained by the negation of his presence by that same society.

Navigating the different spaces in which his engagement practices occur (i.e., his home, his children's school, his neighborhood) and recognizing the factors that influence these practices (e.g., lost opportunities resulting from his being an undocumented immigrant), Pablo continues to redefine his construction of the different cultural worlds in which he resides, as well as his construction of himself within these worlds. This continuous process takes place in the context of unfolding questions regarding his children's progress in school, his developed understanding of the school world, and changes in education and immigration polices in the United States. As a result, his engagement practices are in constant tension and transformation but are supported by his strong beliefs regarding how he constructs fatherhood. He summed up his feelings as follows: "That is why I suffer, but I don't even feel the suffering because it is for my children."

Presence as a Questioner

Although Pablo's engagement took place primarily in out-of-school settings, it would be a mistake to infer that his presence at the school did not have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

powerful consequences. We labeled Pablo's engagement as "presence/questioner" because undergirding Pablo's out-of-school engagement practices in his children's schooling was a desire on his part to question what was happening in school and use those questions to pave a new educational path for his children. Just as Celia helped out in the classroom to learn more about how schools operate, Pablo questioned the seemingly intractable process of schooling to establish a school space for himself and his children. As the story about Santiago and Krause Middle School indicates, Pablo drew upon the relationship he had with his neighbors and his son's teacher to learn about the various middle schools in the city and how parents can achieve the power to switch their children's school.

One could argue that Pablo and Celia were similar in terms of their engagement in their children's schooling, and we would agree. However, we believe that a significant difference—engagement from inside the classroom (Celia) versus outside the classroom (Pablo)-framed other aspects of how the involvement process unfolded for each of them. We speculate that, in the case of Celia, it might often have been better to "go along" with certain school decisions even if she did not agree, given that expressing her disagreement openly may have threatened her place in the classroom. This does not mean that she was not also a questioner; rather, she *strategically* used her place in the classroom to question at the times and opportunities she believed were most likely to lead to a productive resolution. Her presence in the classroom as a helper provided her with unique insights into the workings of the classroom as well as the capital to engage in strategic activity.

What makes Pablo's authoring space different from Celia's is that while Celia was a questioner, she was also an active insider within the school who used her position as a helper to gain additional capital she could activate toward her child's educational future. She collaborated closely with the teacher and in support of the teacher. Pablo did not have such a place in the classroom. He relied on his network of social peers and on his relationships with a teacher and his children to gain new knowledge about how schools work and act on his children's behalf. Indeed, during the conversation groups, Pablo listened intently to what parents such as Celia had to say about schools, and he often used that information to raise questions about his own children's experiences.

Isabel Andrade: "What Can a Parent Do?"

Isabel was invited to participate in the second round of conversation groups by one of her neighbors at the mobile home complex to which she had recently moved. She was the most recent immigrant of the study parents, and she had the most formal education. Her husband had done seasonal work in New Mexico since their marriage approximately 12 years before the study. As economic conditions in Mexico worsened and their second child started school, Isabel and her husband decided to immigrate to the United States. After a year in New Mexico, they moved to Texas, motivated by a larger number of available jobs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Isabel participated in five conversation groups and six *talleres*/studios. Isabel's anxiety regarding meeting people for the first time dissipated rapidly as she found a space with parents who had similar stories and with whom she could communicate in Spanish. She was usually among the first parents to talk, and at times she held back tears when relating to the group her struggles in adapting to life in the United States. Isabel's husband would at times accompany her to the meetings, but he stayed outside playing with their children, Tania and Raquel, who were in fourth and first grade, respectively, and 3-year-old Tony.

Uncertainty in the School Space

Isabel's narrative about her parental engagement experiences was characterized by questions regarding the best way to address the dilemmas she faced as a recent immigrant constructing understandings of the cultural worlds in which her family now lived. As discussed earlier, immigrant parents' initial experiences of adaptation can be difficult and complex given the many unknowns they face in orchestrating actions aligned with the reasons they immigrated (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997). Isabel shared how her desire to provide better educational experiences for her children was constrained by her lack of knowledge regarding the best way to achieve this goal.

Tania se sentía muy mal con la maestra porque dice que la regañaba mucho y me decía que ya no quería ir a la escuela. Entonces fuí a hablar con el director y me dijo que la maestra iba estar nomás unos días, que no era maestra, que nomás iba a estar con el grupo hasta que llegara la otra maestra, una que si tuviera su título. Pero los días pasaban y pasaban y esta maestra seguía ahí y Tania cada vez peor y fui y hablé otra vez con el director y me dijo que la maestra ya habia sacado su título y que se iba a quedar con el grupo. Entonces le pedí que me la cambiara, que la niña no estaba agusto, pero me digo que no se podía porque los otros grupos ya tenían muchos alumnos. Y Tania ya no quiere venir, antes le gustaba mucho ir a la escuela y ahora llora en las mañanas porque dice que la maestra le habla muy feo y no quiere, no quiere estar con ella, y no sé que hacer.

Tania did not feel good with her teacher because she said she was on her case a lot and she would tell me she did not want to go to school anymore. So I went to talk to the principal and he told me her teacher was going to be there for only a few days, that she was not a teacher, that she was going to be with the group until the teacher arrived, one that was certified. But days went on and on and that teacher was still there and Tania doing worse and I went and talked with the principal again and he told me that the teacher had gotten her certification and that she was going to stay with the group. So I asked him to change her to another group, because the girl was not doing well, but he told me it was not possible because the other groups had a lot of students. And Tania does not want to come, she used to like to go to school a lot, and now cries in the mornings because she said the teacher talks to her harshly, and she does not want to be in her class, and I don't know what to do.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

According to Isabel, the principal did not ask her for specifics about the problem or offer to meet with Tania's teacher to discuss the situation, leading Isabel to conclude that school actors were not really interested in helping but were concerned only with what the school needed. Some of the parents in the group suggested that Tania's difficulties might be related to the fact that she was in a new school where she did not have friends, and perhaps a counselor could help Tania and her teacher work better together. Other parents suggested speaking to Tania's teacher directly. Isabel said she had thought about speaking to the teacher, but she was afraid that the teacher might be upset with Tania for complaining about her and that she could make the situation even more difficult. At the end of the conversation groups, Isabel continued to feel tension regarding how to orient her practices of engagement within the school, and she indicated she was not even sure what options she had.

Isabel's predicament highlights an ongoing struggle that other parents in the group, with a longer history of immigration, said they also faced as new immigrants: how to have a positive influence on their children's school experiences when traditional practices (e.g., talking to the principal) were not effective. Unlike Celia, Isabel was unsure of the possible outcomes of visiting and talking with Tania's teacher, and, unlike Pablo, she did not have the cultural and material capital to move Tania to another school. However, just as was the case with Celia and Pablo, Isabel was committed to being present in her child's schooling experience.

Isabel's described tensions need to be understood within the political structures sustaining those tensions. Practices within schools are not neutral. A classic neutral view of parents' actions would draw on a positivist tradition in education that considers practices of schooling in technical terms (e.g., this is what good teaching looks like) and takes the position that, when tensions arise, changes are required in families rather than schools and school actors (Fine, 1993). The story of Isabel, and other parents in similar situations, makes it clear how her engagement practices were strongly limited by the structures of power she faced within the school space and how her actions were positioned according to the discursive and interactional practices of school actors. As in Pablo's case, we wonder how Isabel's request would have been received by the principal had she been an English-speaking, U.S.-born parent with knowledge of and access to the structures embedded in the cultural world of schools instead of a poor, recent Latina immigrant. The paradox in Isabel's account is that her attempts to collaborate with school actors resulted in increased tension and distance between Isabel's world and the school's cultural world.

Standing on Unfamiliar Ground

Isabel's concerns about her daughter's experiences in school and her uncertainty regarding how to best support her were expressions of a larger struggle to adapt to her new life in Texas and to protect her children from the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dangers she perceived in this new culture. During the conversation groups, Isabel would often veer from our research questions to ask other parents about several "how-tos": how to respond to unfair landlord practices, how to find out about low-cost medical care, how to negotiate an emergency loan. While the researchers encouraged parents to talk about their school engagement experiences, Isabel would insist on more pressing matters-doctors, the rent, her children's clothes. She attempted to structure the best possible experiences of schooling in the midst of also learning how to provide for all of her children's needs.

Along with the daily tensions involved in raising her children, Isabel described the impact that moving to Texas was having on her psychologically. In analyzing our data, we identified several examples of the difficulties that the experience of immigration had imposed on her understanding of the world and her construction of herself in the world. In Mexico Isabel had had a stable and supportive social network, while in Texas she felt utterly isolated. She had felt satisfied with her job in Mexico as an accounting assistant, but she realized that her opportunities for a similar job in the United States were limited because she did not have a work permit, did not speak English, and had to stay home with her children. Before she had felt highly competent in all of the daily activities in which parents typically engage when raising children; now she often felt insecure even when performing simple tasks such as going to the supermarket. Unlike most of the study parents-including Celia and Pablo, who described themselves as hopeful and resilient-Isabel said that she felt trapped, sad, and at times desperate.

Vienen a mi mente recuerdos de mi infancia, de mi niñez en que fui muy feliz, antes todo era muy bonito, la escuela, la familia, las amigas. Yo crecí y fui feliz. Me paseé hasta decir "no más," conocí lugares, fui de vacaciones a muchas partes.

En México es mucho muy diferente porque allá no hay tanto problema como aquí. Será porque aquí hay mucha libertad, sinceramente no sé. En México tienes libertad, nosotras íbamos a donde queríamos, tomábamos el autobus y nos íbamos solas hasta San Juan, nos gustaba ir a los velorios, sólo para tener una excusa y salirnos de la escuela, o nos íbamos a la plaza, mis amigas, todas, comíamos nieve, y a veces los maestros le decían a nuestros papás. Muchas veces me castigaban pero fui muy feliz.

Memories come to my mind from a childhood in which I was very happy. Before everything was very nice, school, family, friends. I grew up happily. I traveled until I said "no more," I saw places, I took vacations with my family to many destinations.

Mexico is a lot different because in Mexico there are not so many problems like here. Maybe it is because here there is too much freedom. I am not sure. In Mexico you have freedom, my friends and I would go wherever we wanted, we would take the bus and would go by ourselves all the way to San Juan. We would go to wakes, just to have an excuse to take off from school, or would go downtown. We all ate ice cream and sometimes the teacher would tell our parents. Many times they would get on my case, but I was happy.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mis niñas ya van creciendo, y las han molestado mucho, que porque como se visten o como hablan. Y yo sé que están batallando. Como que se están traumando, se van haciendo rebeldes, hasta groseras conmigo. Me siento impotente, ¿Qué hago? Sinceramente no sé. Al menos con la grande estoy batallando.

Cuando tengo un problema le hablo a mi madre o a mis hermanas, ellas son profesionistas y tienen hijos más grandes que los míos. Ya pasaron por lo que pasé yo. Pero aquí no conozco a nadie. Uno no puede confiar en la gente tan fácil. Hay mucha discriminación. Si no hablas inglés te tratan mal. Mi esposo se va a trabajar todo el día y regresa hasta la noche así que yo soy la que está con mi familia, con mi bebe, mis hijas, apoyándolas, animándolas.

My daughters are growing up and they have been teased a lot, because of the way they look, the way they dress, the way they speak. I know they are struggling. Like they are getting frustrated, like they are getting rebellious with me. I feel helpless. What should I do? Honestly I don't know. At least with the oldest one I am struggling.

When I have a problem I call my mother or my sisters in Mexico. They are professionals and they have children older than mine. They already lived what I am living now. Here, I do not know anyone. One can't trust people so easily. There is a lot of discrimination. If you don't speak English, they treat you badly. My husband is working all day and returns when it is late. I am the one who is with the family, with my baby, with my young daughters, supporting them, encouraging them.

The preceding excerpt, taken from a written narrative Isabel shared with the other parents in the final studio, reflects her struggle to adapt to life in Texas. Because her narrative was shared on our last day with the parents, we were not able to learn whether or not she was successful in adapting. Some new immigrants achieve upward mobility, while many others, especially immigrants of color, find themselves isolated in low-paying service jobs; still others disappear in mainstream middle-class institutions (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). The more effectively immigrant families adapt to life in their new country, the more positive their children's experiences in school (Trueba, 1998). Isabel and her family will most likely move through different phases, each affected by the beliefs and practices of the cultural worlds they encounter. At the time of our study, Isabel was experiencing the tension of wanting to do more but not knowing how. If reform efforts begin to recognize the profound ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic differences among immigrants, parents such as Isabel will be in a better position to relieve this tension in a way that is empowering to them and beneficial to their children (Auerbach, 2002).

Presence as a Listener

Isabel's engagement in her daughter's schooling was markedly different from that of Celia or Pablo. She did not participate frequently in formal parent venues, nor did she form a personal relationship with her daughter's teacher. The few times she chose to engage with officials at her daughter's school

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(e.g., talking to the principal), she was positioned as without power and with little hope of effecting change. Even at those times she most desired to challenge the teacher or an administrator in regard to something that was happening at school, she often resisted initiating the challenge because she did not want to disrupt her daughter's seemingly tenuous position. It was in this sense that we labeled Isabel "a listener."

Part of Isabel's challenge was that she lacked the diverse repertoire of nontraditional resources that Celia, Pablo, and other parents draw upon to gain access to and establish a voice in schools. As a recent immigrant, she had virtually no knowledge of how schools worked in the United States. She was not conversant in English, and she had almost no social support network within her community. In contrast, Celia and Pablo had gained significant knowledge of how schools worked, and they had stronger social networks that supported them in engaging in different parent-school practices.

Yet, despite these barriers to educational engagement and the fear Isabel felt in regard to potentially disrupting her daughter's chances to succeed in school, Isabel's actions were rooted in a desire for her daughter to have a valuable schooling experience. She maintained a presence in her daughter's schooling by talking with her every day about what was going on in school and closely scrutinized information sent home. Indeed, Isabel took part in our research project as much for the opportunity to learn more about how schools work as for the opportunity to tell others about her own experiences. Isabel was able to establish a greater presence in her daughter's schooling by drawing upon her participation in our research to gain "how-to" knowledge and build a social support network. Although typically not present in traditional, formal ways, Isabel was clearly present in her daughter's schooling experience.

Discussion

The stories of Celia, Pablo and Isabel demonstrate three of the different ways in which immigrant parents engage in their children's education as well as the different resources they draw upon and the challenges they face in doing so. We selected these stories because they reflect a continuum of the types of engagement we observed among the immigrant parents who took part in our study—engagement bounded by both the space in which it takes place and the capital each parent calls upon to become and remain involved.

There are strong parallels across the three stories. Indeed, we view each parent as an individual who has drawn upon his or her resources (both traditional and nontraditional) to actively create practices of engagement to support his or her children's education. These practices converged in the parents' desires "to be present" in the ways that best fit with their values and expectations regarding education. At the same time, their "presence" was positioned differently via the political forces that constrained and at times supported it. In labeling these different types of presence, we identified Celia as a strategic helper, Pablo as a questioner, and Isabel as a listener (see Table 1 for a summary of each engagement orientation).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table 1

Summary of Engagement Orientations

Parent	Type of presence	Spaces of involvement	Activation of resources	Challenges	Overall experience
Celia	Strategic helper: being in the classroom	"A voice in the classroom" Formal spaces: participation in parent-related school events Informal spaces: daily work with her son in his homeroom	Anchors her school engagement on her: Hopes and expectations for school experiences Ability to critique reality, plan a better life, and execute plans despite family/social pressure Critical awareness of her position in school and society Resilience Emotional and educational support from her community Reliance on a close, trusting relationship with individual teachers	Language barrier Invisible codes of power regarding how schools operate Disrespect in official school spaces	School is distant, classroom is close Does not feel that school, as an institution, values her presence Connects to school on a personal level Brings about change at classroom level
Pablo	Questioner: changing the schooling experience for his son from the outside	"Bridging home and school" Formal spaces: participation in parent-related school events Informal spaces: daily assistance with his children's homework; teaching by example; presence during home-based school activities Other spaces: use of community knowledge and teacher relationships to learn codes of power in regard to switching schools	Anchors his school-related engagement on his: Critique of his own experiences of discrimination (as an immigrant) Valuing of cultural knowledge Resilience Emotional and educational support from his community Close, trusting relationships with some teachers (though distant ones with others)	Language barrier Invisible codes of power regarding how schools operate Disrespect in official school spaces	Does not feel that school, as an institution, values his presence Connects to school at a personal level Brings about change outside of the "walls of the school"
Isabel	Listener: using nontraditional formal spaces to learn how to engage with schools differently	Formal spaces: participation in a limited number of parent-related school evens; participation in present research project Informal spaces: daily conversations with her daughter about school; homework; teacher-student relationships; power and ways of being	Drew upon the present project to gain "how-to" knowledge and build a social support network Anchors her school-related engagement on her desire to help her daughter succeed Is afraid to call those in power on any injustices for fear it will cause more harm than good	Lack of personal relationships with her children's teachers and school administrators Lack of English proficiency Lack of strong social support network	Feels no power at the school Desires to learn how schools work and to establish a support network so as to gain a voice in her daughter's education

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Celia's practice of engagement, because it was situated within the classroom space, most closely resembled what is typically referred to as parental involvement; however, like Pablo and Isabel, she authored her engagement practices with intentions and with hopes for a future that moved distinctly beyond traditional frameworks for parental involvement. All three parents authored identities as learners and advocates. In this sense, parental engagement, as practiced by these parents, represents a *process* for both the parent and the child, one of gaining crucial access to and understanding of the host culture. It is also a *product*, leading to new status within the school community, greater opportunities for their children in the school system, and, optimally, improved success at school.

What draws these stories together is an even more intimate connection around what fundamentally constitutes forms of parental engagement that are both productive and transformative (for the parent as well as the child). Indeed, all three parents viewed their *presence* in school-based activities and conversations (which may not always take place in the formal space of the school building) as the fundamental component of their engagement. However, because of the differences in their initial repertoire of resources, both traditional and nontraditional, the forms of their engagement in their child's education differed.

In all three cases, the parents sought to establish their presence through constructing relationships with school actors, thus increasing their knowledge of the school cultural world and their ability to have a significant influence on it. In Celia's case, her experience of establishing trusting relationships with teachers supported her sense of authorship. For Isabel, it was the lack of a trusting relationship with her daughter's teacher that increased her uncertainty as to what could be done. Pablo's experience moved in both directions. He took serious steps to support his oldest son's education, including switching schools, after feeling uncertain of what to do when his concerns were dismissed by his son's teacher as unnecessary worries. Together, these parents' stories suggest that a reliable and trusting relationship with at least one school actor provides the scaffolding for a more fulfilling school engagement experience. Additional study is needed on the potential of such relationships to improve the educational outcomes of immigrant students as well as why they are so crucial for parents.

As suggested in our data, one way to move the parent-school dialogue forward in a meaningful manner for all involved is to allow parents' life experiences and cultural capital to inform schools' cultural worlds. As immigrant parents gradually adapt their identities and practices to life in the United States, they also influence life in this country, including the cultural worlds of schools. If schools continue, even with the best intentions, to implement parental participation programs without listening to parents voice their particular needs and hopes, these programs will remain stagnant and do little to reduce the marked distance between home and school.

One of the most difficult aspects of facilitating our conversation groups was listening to Celia, Pablo, Isabel, and the other parents relate their vast

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

experiences regarding their vision of education and know that schools were missing the opportunity to learn from such insights. These parents' life stories have been uniquely challenging on many fronts (displacement, discrimination, poverty, uncertainty), and they continuously draw from the cultural capital they have developed through the hardships of immigration to support the schooling of their children. They have constructed a view of their new world as a place of both opportunity and oppression, they have developed critical ways to interpret the structures in this new society, and they continue to author new identities in their efforts to support their children's education. The richness of their experiences should not be ignored.

Parents' authorship of school engagement practices occurs in the presence of multiple challenges compounded by their experiences of immigration, including limited resources (both material and human) that can truly guide and support their efforts. The great paradox in our study is that the parents with high levels of engagement in the school's formal structures intended to foster parental involvement also felt disrespected (Celia), distant (Pablo), and confused (Isabel) in relation to the school's cultural world. At the same time, from our conversations with principals and teachers, we learned there is not an awareness as to how these parents, thought to be very satisfied with their role in the school, feel about their experiences of engagement. Nor is there acknowledgment of parents' practices in the home and other cultural spaces or the strengths their experiences as immigrants bring to their children's lives.

These results help to illustrate the urgency of creating practices and structures that promote dialogue among immigrant parents themselves and among immigrant parents and school actors. The parents in our study were constructing their practices of engagement as their children moved along from one academic year to the next with little knowledge as to what the next step might require (e.g., moving from elementary to middle school, relocating from one city to another). We wonder what types of structures or forces can be put in motion to bring immigrant parents' practices of engagement out of the chasms often created when their unique voices disappear into the preestablished structure of power in which schools set standards for action and parents follow them.

The challenge presented by Celia's, Pablo's, and Isabel's stories is that of working to transform traditional views regarding the positioning of immigrant parents so that the richness of their experiences can have a greater impact on the schooling of their children and on the school cultural world as a whole. We found that by creating a space for dialogue among these parents that respected their cultural-immigrant stories, they felt supported and encouraged in expressing their critical views of the world and attempting to strengthen their parent community.

Notes

Support for this research was provided by the National Science Foundation (Grant REC 9980592) and is acknowledged with gratitude. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect those of the National Science Foundation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[1]We translated the word *taller* as "studio" instead of the more commonly used "workshop" to illustrate that the goal of the *taller*/studio was for parents to craft a story (similar to a painter or a sculptor working on a piece of art) rather than learning how to do something new or improving a skill.

References

Auerbach S. (2002). "Why do they give the good classes to some and not to others?" Latino parent narratives of struggle in a college access program. *Teachers College Record, 104,* 1369–1392.

Berger, E. H. (1995). *Parents as partners in education: Families and schools working together.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in education, culture and society.* London: Sage.

Calabrese Barton, A., Drake, C., Perez, J. G., St. Louis, K., & George, M. (2004). Ecologies of parental engagement in urban elementary schools. *Educational Researcher, 33*(4), 3–12.

Christenson, S. L., & Hurley, C. M. (1997). Parents' and school psychologists' perspectives on parent involvement activities. *School Psychology Review, 26,* 111–120.

Civil, M., Andrade, R., & Anhalt, C. (2000). Parents as learners of mathematics: A different look at parental involvement. In M. L. Fernández (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Twenty Second Annual Meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education* (Vol. 2, pp. 421–426). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse.

Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94,* 95–120.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1990). *Literacy for empowerment: The role of parents in children's education.* New York: Falmer Press.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education, 100,* 20–46.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1992). School matters in the Mexican-American home: Socializing children to education. *American Educational Research Journal, 29,* 495–513.

Delpit, L. D. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review, 58,* 280–298.

Espenshade, T., & Belanger, M. (1998). Immigration and public opinion. In M. M. Suárez-Orozco (Ed.), *Crossings: Mexican immigration in interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 362–412). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fine, M. (1993). [Ap]parent involvement: Reflections on parents, power, and urban public schools. *Teachers College Record, 94,* 683–710.

Fuligni, A. (2001). A comparative longitudinal approach to acculturation among children from immigrant families. *Harvard Educational Review, 71,* 566–576.

Garcia-Coll, C., & Magnuson, K. (1997). The psychological experience of immigration: A developmental perspective. In A. Booth, A. Crouter, & N. Landale (Eds.), *Immigration and the family: Research and policy on U.S. immigrants.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Gutman, L. M., & McLoyd, V. C. (2000). Parents' management of their children's education within the home, at school, and in the community: An examination of African-American families living in poverty. *Urban Review, 32,* 1–24.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W. J., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hoover-Dempsey, K., & Sandler, H. (1995). Parental involvement in children's education: Why does it make a difference? *Teachers College Record, 97,* 310–332.

Landale, M., & Oropesa, R. (1995). *Immigrant children and the children of immigrants: Inter and intra ethnic group differences in the U.S.* East Lansing, MI: Institute for Policy and Social Research.

Lareau, A., & Horvat, E. M. (1999). Moments of social inclusion and exclusion: Race, class, and cultural capital in family-school relationships. *Sociology of Education, 72,* 37–53.

Lopez, R. G. (2001). The value of hard work: Lessons on parental involvement from an (im)migrant household. *Harvard Educational Review, 71,* 416–437.

McCarthey, S. J. (2000). Home-school connections: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Research, 93,* 145–154.

Meyers, H., Dowdy, J., & Paterson, P. (2000). Finding the missing voices: Perspectives of the least visible families and their willingness and capacity for school involvement. *Current Issues in Middle Level Education, 7,* 59–79.

National Education Goals Panel. (1999). *National education goals report: Building a nation of learners.* Washington, DC: Author.

National Research Council. (1996). *National science education standards.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Olmedo, I. (2003). Accommodation and resistance: Latinas' struggle for their children's education. *Anthropology of Education Quarterly, 34,* 373–375.

Peña, D. C. (2000). Parent involvement: Influencing factors and implications. *Journal of Educational Research, 94,* 42–54.

Ramirez, A. Y. (2003). Dismay and disappointment: Parental involvement of Latino immigrant parents. *Urban Review, 35,* 93–110.

Reese, L (2001). Morality and identity in Mexican immigrant parents' visions of the future. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 27,* 455–472.

Reese, L (2002). Parental strategies in contrasting cultural settings: Families in Mexico and "El Norte." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 33,* 30–59.

Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., Fix, M., & Chu Clewell, B. (2000). *Overlooked and underserved: Immigrant students in U.S. secondary schools.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

Suárez-Orozco, M., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2000). Some conceptual considerations in the interdisciplinary study of immigrant children. In E. Trueba & L. Bartolome (Eds.), *Immigrant voices: In search of educational equity.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. (2001). *Children of immigration.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tapia, J. (2000). Schooling and learning in U.S.-Mexican families: A case study of households. *Urban Review, 32,* 25–44.

Trueba, E. (1998). The education of Mexican immigrant children. In M. Suárez-Orozco (Ed.), *Crossings: Mexican immigration in interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 253–275). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Trueba, E. (1999). *Latinos unidos: From cultural diversity to the politics of solidarity.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Trueba, E. (2004). *The new Americans: Immigrants and transnationals at work.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Valdez, G. (1996). *Con respeto: Bridging the distances between culturally diverse families and schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Villanueva, I., & Hubbard, L. (1994, April). *Toward redefining parent involvement: Making parents' invisible strategies and cultural practices visible.* Paper

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Villenas, S., & Deyhle, D. (1999). Critical race theory and ethnographies challenging the stereotypes: Latino families, schooling, resilience and resistance. *Curriculum Inquiry, 29*, 413–445.

Waters, M. (1990). *Ethnic options: Choosing identities in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weiss, H. M. & Edwards, M. E. (1992). The Family-School Collaboration Project: Systemic intervention for school improvement. In S. L. Christenson & J. L. Connolly (Eds.), *Home-school collaboration: Enhancing children's academic and social competence*. Silver Spring, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Williams, D. L., & Stallworth, J. T. (1984). *Parent involvement in education: What a survey reveals*. Austin, TX: Parent Involvement in Education Project, Southwest Regional Educational Development Laboratory.

Manuscript received November 3, 2004
Accepted with revisions January 27, 2005

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.