

## **Bilingual Educación in the Home: Everyday Mexican Immigrant Family Educational Practices**

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### **Abstract**

As we embrace the increasing numbers of young Mexican immigrant children and their families present in our schools, it is important for educators to better understand the many family educational practices present in these households. This article examines the strategies and resources utilized by two Mexican-born and two U.S.-born Mexican immigrant families in teaching and guiding the bilingual *educación* of their children—an education that encompasses academic teaching but also provides teachings that shape children’s views toward the English and Spanish languages and their cultural identities as Latinas/os in the U.S. Drawing on sociocultural theory, three primary types of teaching practices used by these families to impart bilingual *educación* in the home are illustrated while highlighting the values and social capital they communicate: 1) school-prescribed teaching practices; 2) embodied teaching practices; and 3) culturally-prescribed teaching practices. The author concludes with implications for educators.

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### **Introduction**

Latina/o parents recognize the importance of academic schooling. In addition, they often view the lessons provided at home as an essential element of their children’s overall education. This combination of academic schooling and the teaching and learning of culturally embedded ways in which a person should live morally in the world with others is what many Latina/o families refer to as *educación* (Reese, 2013; Villenas, 2002). *Educación*, although similar to its English cognate—education, is understood to be a more comprehensive concept that encompasses academic and non-academic elements. As Espinoza-Herold (2007) explained, “*Educación* in the Latin[a/]o family includes manners, moral values, and rules of conduct, in addition to aspirations and expectations for the future” (p. 262). Latina/o parents see academic learning, behavior, and moral values as intertwined and inseparable—all important aspects of their goal of raising children who become good people with strong cultural identities that lead good lives (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1995; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995) and successfully navigate a society that often constrains them educationally and economically. Through home educational practices, Mexican immigrant families share their collective, individual, and community experiences to prepare their children for navigating their social worlds. Schools, however, have often discounted the educational contributions made by Latina/o parents toward this goal (Olivos, Jiménez-Castellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). This is problematic because it does not account for the range of teaching and learning ‘naturally’ occurring within Latina/o children’s homes that contribute to their future success (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez, & Villenas, 2006). In addition, when examining these family practices we often overlook the ideological messages that convey to children what should be valued or discounted.

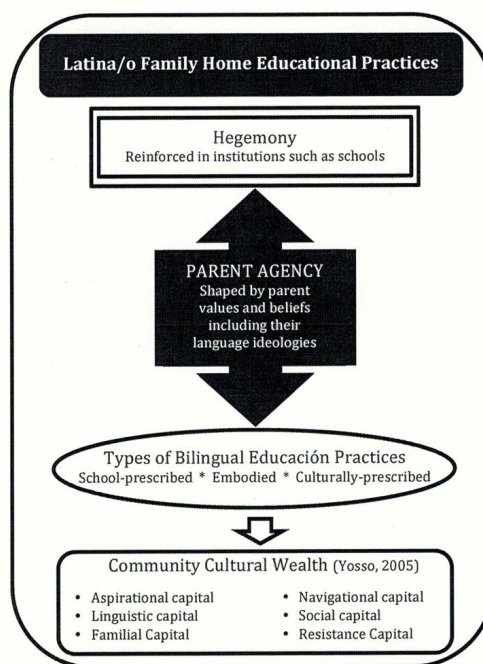
In this article, I draw on a sociocultural framework embedded within theories of cultural agency (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Wertsch, 1991) and a community cultural wealth framework (Yosso, 2005) to examine the varied family home educational practices utilized by four Mexican immigrant mothers in teaching and guiding what I term the “bilingual *educación*” of their children based on their own priorities for their children’s education—an education that provides important teachings about the role of English and Spanish in their lives and their cultural identities. Specifically, this article addresses the following research questions: What types of home educational practices do Mexican immigrant families implement and how do they implement them? What

beliefs and values about English, Spanish, and their cultural identities are communicated through these practices? In the findings, I illustrate three types of teaching practices used by these Mexican immigrant families to impart bilingual *educación* in their homes while highlighting the ideological values they communicate: school prescribed educational practices; embodied teaching (lessons communicated incidentally through parents' everyday life actions and routines); and culturally-prescribed educational practices (lessons shared intentionally through cultural tools) demonstrating how teaching and learning is done on their terms, as cultural strengths.

### A Framework for Understanding Latina/o Family Home Educational Practices

Sociocultural theory has taught us that events in the home context are situated within relationships that socialize us to the implicit roles and definitions of what it means to be a member of these contexts. This includes the particular core beliefs and attitudes of Latina/o families about how society works, what its practices are, and the power negotiations among and between groups that occur in the context of broad social, cultural, and historic trends (Wertsch, 1991). Embedded within Latina/o families' practices are particular language ideologies (Woolard, Schieffelin, & Kroskrity, 1998)—ideas, attitudes, and beliefs about the role of Spanish and English in their children's lives—that may stand in support of or in opposition to dominant hegemonic forces such as English-only language ideologies and anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. Parental language ideologies in particular have been found to shape a parent's practices and expectations regarding their children's linguistic, cultural, and social behaviors and development (López, 2010; Parada, 2013). Figure 1 offers an overview of how I conceptualize family home educational practices as centered in acts of parental agency (Holland et al., 1998).

Figure 1. Framework for Understanding Latina/o Family Home Educational Practices.



Parental agency, as described by Holland et al. (1998), is seen 1) when parents intentionally direct their actions within day-to-day interactions and routines toward advancing their own educational outcomes and priorities for their children, and 2) when they draw together the capital they have available in any given moment to adapt their actions to further their family's and children's immediate needs and interests when faced with inequitable or uncertain circumstances. Through these acts of agency, Latina/o parents negotiate between the hegemonic messages conveyed in U.S. society and their own personal beliefs and values about what it means to be *un Latina/o bien educado/a* or a well-educated Latina/o. Hegemony represents the common sense social values and expectations inherited from the past and uncritically accepted as the way the world works; such a structure serves to maintain unequal power relations that create a subaltern status for those that oppose these common

sense notions (Gramsci, 1971). In the U.S., some hegemonic values and expectations embedded within our social structures include white racial privilege, as well as the privileging of wealth, citizenship, patriarchy, and the English language. However, hegemony is not only domination through passive consent or acceptance but also an ongoing contestation through everyday interactions where individual agency exerts itself in response. In the case of Latina/o families, they make choices and exert parental agency to maintain important embodied and culturally-prescribed educational practices that serve their interests while simultaneously responding to the privileged white, middle class school-prescribed forms of education for the home required of them. Negotiations of these hegemonic forces guide Latina/o families' enactment of bilingual educación practices as part of routine family and community social interactions that support their children acquiring essential forms of capital—community cultural wealth—necessary to be *bien educado*.

### Community Cultural Wealth

Latina/o immigrant families are empowered with a deep reservoir of resources and capital—what Yosso (2005) has termed *community cultural wealth*. Bilingual educación includes an ideological orientation held by many Latina/o immigrant families that recognizes that in light of institutional and societal constraints, the procurement of community cultural wealth is an indispensable foundation for any other teaching and learning to occur. Thus, the bilingual educación provided by Latina/o immigrant families to their children supports formal education while simultaneously prioritizing the acquisition of community cultural wealth. This wealth represents the “array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression” (Yosso, 2005, p. 9). Included among this array of community wealth are aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant forms of capital. These different forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static; rather, they dynamically build upon one another. Aspirational capital is being able to maintain hope for the future despite barriers. Researchers have found that despite lower educational outcomes, Latina/o families maintain high hopes for their children's future (Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014). The research literature has also documented the linguistic capital gained by children in many Latina/o immigrant families through their exposure to two languages such as bilingual children functioning as language brokers (Dorner, Orellana, & Li-Grining, 2007; Orellana, 2009). Many times Latina/o immigrant families are able to overcome obstacles in their daily lives through supportive people and community resources (Luna & Martínez, 2013)—their social capital. When confronted with oppressive structures, many Latinas/os call on their resistant capital—strategies they have learned to challenge the inequalities they face (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) and navigational capital—strategies they have learned to maneuver through social institutions such as schools (Yosso, 2005). Latina/o immigrant familial capital has been detailed in the funds of knowledge literature that has documented the historically accumulated bodies of knowledge that Latina/o families have gained (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) and in research on Latina/o teaching and learning outside of school (López, 2001). Each of these forms of community cultural wealth is expressed in various ways through Latina/o family home educational practices. For this article, I focus on illustrating the educational practices that Mexican immigrant families in my study used in pursuit of their children's bilingual educación.

### Methodology

Utilizing a qualitative naturalistic inquiry approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with ethnographic fieldwork strategies of home observation, in-depth interviews, and document review, I examined the practices and perspectives of Sra. Esther Gomez, Sra. Laura Luna, Ms. Anna Salas, and Ms. Betty Mendoza, four Mexican immigrant mothers and their families. Situated in a small city in south central Texas that I call Sonoma, I semi-immersed myself in the lives of these four families. To ensure confidentiality, I utilized pseudonyms for all proper names. This community of 44,596 residents had a population that was 96% native U.S.-born, 35% Latina/o, and 19% Spanish-speaking. This article examines a subset of data built around each of the four families with a focus on the mothers as primary caregivers. They ranged in age from 32-43 years and had a young child enrolled in kindergarten. All four mothers described themselves as having medium to high parent involvement in their children's schools, a long-term marriage, primary caregiver responsibilities, and between two to four

children. Two of the mothers (Sra. Luna and Sra. Gomez) were undocumented Mexican immigrants born in Mexico who had lived in Sonoma for ten to sixteen years. The other two (Ms. Salas and Ms. Mendoza) were second-generation, U.S.-born Mexican immigrants born and raised in Sonoma. Both Sra. Luna and Sra. Gomez were Spanish dominant, with Sra. Gomez having conversational English skills and Sra. Luna just starting to learn English. Ms. Salas and Ms. Mendoza were both English dominant with Ms. Salas able to speak and understand Spanish and Ms. Mendoza able to understand Spanish but not speak it. These mothers are representative of the Mexican immigrant families found in our country's public schools, with diverse immigrant status and English/Spanish language abilities.

Data was gathered through a series of one-hour, in-depth interviews ranging from between two to six interviews per mother regarding family history, education, and parent involvement and through informal home observations. Observations focused on the ideas and emotions expressed by the mothers that related to education, language, and parent involvement. These observations, conducted during home interviews, also captured telephone and/or face-to-face exchanges that occurred between the mothers, other family members and/or school personnel. A thematic analysis strategy using both theory-driven and inductive codes (Boyatzis, 1998) was implemented. Among the themes that emerged around the overarching concept of Latina/o family home educational practices were: 1) school-prescribed teaching in the home; 2) mother's embodied teaching (incidental lessons through everyday actions and routines); and 3) culturally-prescribed teaching. I then collected all interview transcripts and observational field notes across all four participants related to each of these three themes. The findings were synthesized to develop an understanding of Latina/o family home educational practices as bilingual *educación*.

### **Providing Bilingual Educación**

“Bilingual *educación*” is the explicit teaching and learning that occurs within Latina/o homes and communities that communicate particular value orientations toward education and language. Thus, Latina/o parents, whether they intend to or not, constantly communicate both the role and degree of value that Spanish has for their family as well as what it means to be Latina/o. These messages varied among the Mexican immigrant mothers in this study in large part because of their differing social histories and experiences. Through selected excerpts and the described lived experiences of these four families, I illustrate the three broad types of teaching and learning that take place in Latina/o households: school-prescribed teaching, embodied teaching, and culturally-prescribed teaching.

### **School-Prescribed Teaching in the Home**

Parent involvement is framed around specific responsibilities that parents have to their children as described by Epstein's (1995) typology of parent involvement. These include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Sonoma was no different. There were the parent-teacher conferences, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, the volunteering, the homework, and the general expectation that parents' efforts be focused on consciously creating learning experiences for their children that reinforced what was taught at school. As documented in other studies of Latina/o parents (Durand, 2010; Poza et al., 2014), Sra. Gomez, Sra. Luna, Ms. Salas, and Ms. Mendoza all participated in these school-prescribed activities. In addition, they also took seriously the academic teaching the school expected them to reinforce in the home and incorporated these into their daily family routines. Family late afternoons and evenings were dedicated times in all four households where mothers made arrangements to provide assistance and review school-assigned homework with each of their children. For example, Ms. Mendoza and her husband exerted their parental agency by arranging their work schedules to allow one of them to be home after school and ensure their children completed all school assignments. She describes the instructions she provided her husband to coordinate the family after school routine:

I told my husband, “As soon as they get home, if they have anything they need to do, do it and then when I get home you know we can go over what they did and then I'll put my input ...or

if there's a project that's a family thing then we do it when I get home. ...buy me one of those big old cork boards." I put it [the cork board] in the room and I taped their [my children's] schedules. So here at home with my husband I tell him, I said "whatever needs to be done it's on the cork board."

By establishing the cork board with the children's schedule of school assignments, Mr. and Ms. Mendoza incorporated school-prescribed teaching into the home in ways that empowered them by helping them feel they were doing everything possible to ensure their children's academic success. It was in this area where the mothers' language proficiency in English and Spanish influenced their ability to assist their children and offered important signals about the value of each language. For Ms. Mendoza and Ms. Salas who spoke English, this was a routine that was familiar based on their own English schooling experiences in the U.S. Ms. Mendoza, for example, shared both her own experiences with linguistic discrimination in school and her mother's experiences with racial and linguistic discrimination stating:

I graduated in '84. Of course one of the things was you couldn't talk Spanish. ...when she [my mother] was growing up...she was here too you know...you couldn't speak Spanish. She remembers going to the old...theater and the Hispanics had to sit up in the upper level and all the whites had the good seats in the bottom.

Armed with the memories of discrimination faced historically by Spanish-speakers in Sonoma as well as during her schooling experiences, Ms. Mendoza chose to balance the provision of linguistic capital with school navigational capital gained as a graduate of the Sonoma school district. Thus, Ms. Mendoza enrolled her children in a monolingual English classroom and homework time in Ms. Mendoza's home was always in English with Spanish reserved exclusively for family gatherings with extended family. For Ms. Salas, imparting linguistic capital meant enrolling her son in a Spanish/English dual immersion program and learning to support Spanish homework. For Sra. Luna and Sra. Gomez, their children's enrollment in a Spanish/English bilingual program meant that in the early grades most of the homework was in Spanish. However, as their children grew older and moved into English classrooms, their ability to assist and review their homework was strained. As Sra. Gomez detailed in an interview:

*... algunas veces si trae trabajo que es en inglés y... si necesitas ayuda por decir [mi hija] a veces me pregunta que quiere decir esa palabra. Le digo, 'Pues, no sé. ... búscala en un diccionario porque no sé.'*

...sometimes if she brings homework that is in English and...she [my daughter] needs help, let's say she asks me what does that word mean. I tell her, 'Well, I don't know....look for it in the dictionary because I don't know.'

It was in these situations where they improvised ways to be involved in their children's homework by directing them to dictionaries, older siblings or neighbors, or looking over homework as if they could read it, as Sra. Luna often did, just to keep their children guessing as to how much English they actually understood. The overall message each of these mothers conveyed through these practices was that schoolwork was important and should be completed no matter what language it was in. Since much of their children's homework and conversations shifted to English as they grew older, unintentionally English became more prominent in the home over time.

Another aspect of school-prescribed home practices was parents' communication with schools. Through these practices, Mexican immigrant mothers most showcased resistant capital. For example, following an incident where her son Mando, a kindergartener, was pushed by a third grader on the bus, Ms. Salas exerted her parental agency by contacting the school principal directly during one of our interviews stating, "Look, this little boy [third grader] needs help...I don't care if his father is a detective! I don't care if his mother is Barbara Bush! I don't care! You are going to find a solution for this!" Evident in her statement is her awareness of how the misbehaviors of students from privileged parents, such as those of a detective or ex-first lady, are often

overlooked. By raising this perception of inequity directly with the person in a position of authority at the school, Ms. Salas exerted her agency by drawing on her resistant capital to challenge the school to resolve the issue facing her son and not ignore it. These kinds of efforts to confront the inequities their children faced at school were a central part of the bilingual *educación* provided by these mothers.

### Embodied Teaching within Mothers' Everyday Actions and Routines

Bilingual *educación* does not consist solely of the activities and interactions supporting children's schoolwork or countering bullying on a school bus. It also entails the day-to-day teaching that is imparted incidentally by mothers in the course of their everyday lives through the various roles they enact (i.e., mother, wife, worker, Latina). These Mexican immigrant mothers often had to navigate social contexts in which they were marginalized or discounted daily. This often required them to continuously adapt and exert agency in order to further their immediate interests. They did this by drawing together the knowledge, resources, and relationships available to them in any given moment to respond to their present circumstances. As these mothers worked toward supporting and guiding the overall development of their children into persons that were *bien educados* (well educated), they were improvising choices and decisions that aligned with that goal. These mothers' everyday actions and routines are what I term *embodied teaching*. I draw on Villenas' (2006) notion of *teaching by doing* to describe the teaching and learning of life lessons occurring through the performative narratives of mothers' daily actions and rituals. The daily routines of the four Latina mothers generally followed the same schedule. In addition, all four mothers consistently demonstrated their value and support of the learning and use of English through their actions. The main differences between the mothers were in their embodied teachings about the role of Spanish. They all talked about valuing Spanish proficiency, but its presence and practice in their daily lives varied.

I offer a narrative snapshot of Sra. Gomez's typical daily routines as she described them in an interview as a way to contextualize the essence of the teaching and learning happening in these homes through embodied teaching.

*En la mañana me levanto temprano ...llevo [a Carmen] a las 7:20 a la escuela y ya después... llevo a Esperanza y ya me voy yo también. Tengo que estar trabajando todo el día...¿pues limpio ...salgo cansada. Llegas del trabajo y a ver qué haces de comer, a lavar, o a recoger. Algunas veces no tengo tiempo ni siquiera de sentarme. ...Yo trato...de ayudarlo [a mi esposo] también. Siempre le ayudo [a Esperanza] con su tarea, ... hago lo que yo puedo aquí en la casa.*

In the morning, I get up early...I take [Carmen] to school at 7:20 and then later...I take Esperanza and I go ahead and leave too. I have to work all day...I clean...I leave tired. You return from work and have to see what to cook, to wash, or to clean. Sometimes I don't even have time to sit down. I try...to help him [my husband] too. I always help her [Esperanza] with her homework...I do what I can here at home.

Showcased in this typical day are Sra. Gomez's overlapping roles and responsibilities to her children, job, husband, and home. In addition to the activities she was involved in all day everyday, Sra. Gomez came home to fulfill the school prescribed parent involvement activities for the home. Therefore, at the end of the day, Sra. Gomez arrived home to prepare meals, attend to her husband, and prepare her daughters for school the next day. This entailed reviewing school folders for notes, behavior scores, and homework. Sra. Gomez, although Spanish dominant, had good conversational English skills that she developed through her work cleaning houses. Thus, although she tried to use Spanish exclusively in the home and watched Spanish language television, she took work calls in English, conversed with her oldest daughter in English, and watched her daughter do schoolwork in English. In these ways, English was slowly gaining more prominence in the home while Spanish, although still present, was losing ground in its use in the home. To counter this trend, Sra. Gomez would invite her husband's parents from Mexico to stay several months, instantly converting their home into a Spanish immersion experience and forcing her daughters to use their Spanish. As Sra. Gomez explained, "Cuando vienen los abuelos de [mi hija] Esperanza, ellos no hablan inglés. Ellos no entienden inglés. [Mi hija] tiene que hablarles en español. /

When [my daughter] Esperanza's grandparents come, they don't speak English. They don't understand English. She [my daughter] has to talk to them in Spanish."

Evident across every aspect of Sra. Gomez's everyday routines were a dynamic conflict between fulfilling the role of a traditional Mexican wife and mother by being home and attending to her family—balanced against the role of a working wife and good mother imposed on her through the necessity of work and the requirements of school. Sra. Gomez's efforts to make a life in the U.S., buy a home, learn English, and be involved in her daughter's school sent important messages to her daughters about the value of hard work, the importance of school, her unconditional support, and the oftentimes contradictory lessons of maintaining the traditions of family life as a Spanish-speaking Latina woman while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of attaining independence as a woman through education, speaking English, and resisting marriage until later in life. Sra. Gomez's efforts were symbolic of the future she was building for her daughters, providing a sense of stability to counter the family's undocumented status.

Sra. Luna and her husband similarly created an environment at home that communicated to their children the value of English and Spanish. First, they purchased, used, and prominently displayed in their living room the popular audio English language learning program, "*Inglés sin Barreras/English Without Barriers*," to demonstrate to their children the importance of learning English and their own commitment to learning the language. However, their ongoing emphasis was on maintaining Spanish. To do this, they used Spanish exclusively with their children inside and outside the home and selected to attend Spanish community events. In addition, television and music engaged in at home was only in Spanish and their children were sent annually to visit family in Mexico as a Spanish immersion experience despite the risks upon re-entry due to their undocumented status. Sra. Luna's daily actions taught her daughters the value of being bilingual, while also teaching them how to overcome obstacles, and the importance of persistence and family cohesion to move forward in life.

When this study began, English was the dominant language in the homes of Ms. Salas and Ms. Mendoza with all of their children speaking predominantly English. While Ms. Mendoza continued to focus on English with limited social opportunities for her children to hear Spanish, Ms. Salas suddenly became aware that her children were not learning Spanish. Since Ms. Salas valued bilingualism, making statements like "[My goal is that] you can actually say they [my children] are bilingual," and "It's our language! I have to make sure it doesn't fade out," she sought to counter the situation by enrolling her youngest son into a Spanish/English dual language program. This action changed the home environment from one that was mostly in English to one in which Spanish became more prominent across all home routines, including television, homework, and family mealtimes. Each mother conveyed messages to their children through the everyday actions, routines, and choices they made (embodied teachings), illustrating an important way that Latina/o families provide bilingual *educación*.

### Culturally-Prescribed Teaching

There is a growing body of research that has documented Latina/o families' pedagogical use of an array of cultural practices to advance their own educational outcomes and priorities for their children in what are generally referred to as pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006; González et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). These culturally-prescribed teaching practices are part of Latina/o families' collective historically accumulated resources through which cultural meaning and a sense of self as a Latina/o is conveyed to children (Delgado Bernal, 2001). Among the culturally-prescribed teaching practices used in this study by Sra. Luna, Sra. Gomez, Ms. Salas, Ms. Mendoza—which are also documented within other Latina/o families—I include *consejos* [advice] (Delgado Gaitan, 1994; Villenas & Moreno, 2001), *experiencias de la vida* or *testimonios* [life lessons through oral narratives] (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004; López, 2001), and *el buen ejemplo* [modeling expected behavior] (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). These sets of practices are encompassed in what I refer to as bilingual *educación*. Sra. Luna describes in an interview the importance of *el buen ejemplo*.

*Me la he pasado diciéndole a [mi esposo], tu responsabilidad es sacarlas [hijas] adelante y enseñarles... Que el hecho de que eres papá y eres él que las manda a ellas, no te da derecho a faltarles el respeto... si quieres que te respeten, respeta. Y yo no necesito decirles, respeten a él, tú mismo les vas a enseñar a respetar. El respeto se aprende y se gana ....respetando.*

I am always telling [my husband], your responsibility is to get them [your daughters] ahead and teach them... The fact that you are the father and that you are the one that tells them what to do, does not give you the right to disrespect them... if you want them to respect you, respect them. And I won't need to tell them, respect him, you, yourself will teach them to have respect. Respect is learned and is earned... by respecting.

Sra. Luna communicated an important lesson about mutual respect, building *confianza* (trust) among family members (adult to child, child to adult, child to child), and the obligation each family member has to maintain good behavior for the benefit of the entire family. *El buen ejemplo* was showcased within everyday events in the home. In the following example, the value of the home environment that Sra. Luna had established became evident when a spontaneous opportunity for the father to contribute to his daughters' education emerged and was welcomed. Sra. Luna's husband, Sr. Luna, created a teachable moment from a flying wasp, demonstrating the importance of careful observation and the ongoing nature of learning while sharing familial capital gained during his childhood. According to the field note:

Today all four girls are home. ... Suddenly, a wasp flew into the room. All the girls began squealing... In the blink of an eye, Sr. Luna caught the wasp and held it between two fingers... his daughters gathered around him and he began identifying the parts of the wasp to them in Spanish. He also cautioned them on the stinger and provided suggestions to avoid the full effect of the sting. ... He [Mr. Luna] said he had gained his knowledge from his experiences on the ranch in Mexico.

Another cultural tool utilized in various forms by the mothers in this study were *consejos*. It was through *consejos* that mothers taught lessons of morality and cultural values. Sra. Gomez, for example, agreed with the school's message that education and a career were important. However, Sra. Gomez did not agree with the school that valued certain careers over others simply because they were higher paid, and shared the following *consejo* with her oldest daughter:

*”¿Quieres ser pediatra porque se gana buen dinero o porque tú quieres hacerlo?” Dice [mi hija]: “Porque quiero hacerlo.” Le digo: “Si vas a agarrar algo es porque a ti te va a gustar y porque lo vas a hacer de corazón. No nomás porque aquí [en los Estados Unidos]... se gana dinero y ya.”*

”You want to be a pediatrician because they make good money or because you want to do it?” She [my daughter] says, “Because I want to do it.” I tell her, “If you are going to do something it's because you are going to like it and because you are going to do it from your heart. Not just because here [in the United States]... you can make money and that's it.”

Within this *consejo*, Sra. Gomez teaches her daughter about the value of knowing and following what gives you joy and not only the allure of material things, like money. It is the life lesson that also communicates aspirational capital showcasing that all possibilities are open to her as a woman in the U.S. but that she must make choices based on what it is she really cares about. The *consejos* that Ms. Salas and Ms. Mendoza, U.S.-born mothers, provided were not meant to redirect or realign any of the school prescribed educational demands or messages. This was in contrast to those from Sra. Gomez and Sra. Luna, who are both immigrant mothers. Instead, Ms. Salas and Ms. Mendoza saw their *consejos* complementing what the school provided to their children. For example, in the following *consejo* shared during an interview, Ms. Salas communicates lessons about tolerance and empathy towards others:

I don't shield them. I don't want to keep them in a little plastic bubble either. They're going to see



what happens...we have discussions. For instance, my daughter—there is a little Anglo girl that... lives in a real nice home...but she wears her school clothes three and four days a week, the same clothes. And she asked me, “Why?” and I said, “You know *mija*, it could be that her mom hasn’t washed, or it could be that that’s all she has.”

Ms. Salas goes on to state that in sharing these explanations with her daughter, she also encouraged her daughter to extend her friendship to this little girl and not judge her solely by her appearance. Thus, this was a lesson about the existence of hardships in life but also builds social capital by showing how to build supportive links to other people no matter what their perceived circumstances. It reflected Ms. Salas’ commitment to allowing her children to be prepared for the uncertainties present in every area of life, including school, so that they may survive them and be willing to help others survive them as well. At their essence, the *consejos* these mothers share remain lessons that prepare their children to be world citizens (Sánchez, 2007) and survivors (Machado-Casas, 2012), leading moral lives in a not so perfect world.

Finally, mothers’ own lived experiences were used to motivate their children to learn from their mistakes. For example, Sra. Gomez had married early in life and constantly struggled with her marriage even after seventeen years. As she described it, “Siempre, siempre hemos tenido problemas...y como quiera nos casamos y como quiera los problemas siguen./Always, always, we’ve had problems. ...and we got married anyway and the problems continue anyway.” She pinpoints her current problems with her husband as centering around childrearing, stating, “*Ahorita, el problema que yo tengo con él es que dice que [mis hijas] son mi responsabilidad./* Right now, the problem I have with him is that he says they [my daughters] are my responsibility.” In hopes that her daughter will resist the traditional patriarchal norms and take a different path than she did, Sra. Gomez describes in an interview the *consejos* she shared with her oldest daughter, Carmen, about the drawbacks of getting married and having a husband as well as the importance of taking the time to carefully choose whom to marry.

*Le digo yo a Carmen, “Ojala y tú sí te esperes mucho tiempo.”...que no le vaya [a] pasar lo mismo que a mí a los dieciséis años...casada y no tenía hijos, pero, de todos modos...ya no puede [uno] salir, ya no puede ir libremente pa’[sic] ninguna parte sin que le digan, ”¿A dónde fuiste?”...o que le den una regañada o... Ojala y...ellas se esperen mucho tiempo. Que la piensen muy bien...con quién se...van a casar.*

I tell Carmen, “Hopefully you will wait a long time.”... that the same thing doesn’t happen to her that happened to me at sixteen...married and I didn’t have children, but, in any event...[one] cannot go out, you can no longer come and go freely anywhere without them telling you, “Where did you go?”...or that they scold you....I hope that...they wait a long time. That they think about it well....with whom... they are going to marry.

By sharing her life experiences negotiating the demands of the traditional Mexican patriarchal roles she was raised with, Sra. Gomez formed the basis for the *consejo* she provided to her oldest daughter in the presence of her youngest. She offered a life lesson about the need to resist gendered notions of what it means to be a Latina woman while navigating the institution of marriage, thus showcasing navigational and resistant capital. The cultural tools of *el buen ejemplo*, *consejos*, and *experiencias de la vida* provide examples of some of the powerful culturally-prescribed family educational practices present in the homes and lives of Mexican immigrant families.

### Concluding Discussion

Latina/o parents draw on many resources, histories, and experiences to inform how they provide bilingual *educación*. This research illustrated not just the school prescribed, embodied, and culturally-prescribed types of teaching practices embedded in households and communities but also the ideological positions that parents negotiated and used to communicate, covering such topics as language, education, and what it means to be Latina/o. In addition, the findings showcased many examples of parental agency, the ways in which these teaching practices were used to advance parents’ educational goals for their children. For example, the strong reinforcement of English and school-prescribed forms of parent involvement in Ms. Mendoza’s home were

her form of agency: she sought to ensure her children's educational success through the filter of her own experiences in school where Spanish and its speakers were subordinated and left to fail academically. She made the choices that she felt best advanced the goal of her children obtaining success.

As in González's (2001) research, the present study illustrates how these four Latina mothers are active agents forging new cultural forms and practices within their families and homes that are linked to the mission of supporting their children's education and shaping the lessons they impart to their children about navigating through gendered, linguistic, racialized, economic and other institutionalized hegemonic forces. In the case of Sra. Gomez, direct *consejos* to her oldest daughter about making choices as a Latina woman to marry later and choosing a career because it is something she loves to do rather than because she will earn more money, illustrated her parental agency and the influence of her gendered, raced, and classed position in its enactment. New cultural forms are created by Latina/o families in any given moment as they draw on specific Latina/o cultural values and practices while navigating and accommodating the relationships and experiences they forge in the U.S. context. For Sra. Gomez, the cultural value she held for traditional marriage and the role of women was put in dialogue with her own experiences as a woman, a Latina, and a wife in the U.S. and Mexico to shape the *consejo* she imparted to her daughter. Overall, it was clear that the aspirational, social, resistant, linguistic, navigational, and familial capital that comprises the community cultural wealth of these Mexican immigrant families was accessed and shared with their children everyday as they passed on their cultural treasures to the next generation.

The findings from this study offer us some cautions as well. As standardization becomes more prominent in public education, we should remind ourselves of the lack of standardization present in the diversity of human experience. It is important that we recognize the significant role parents play in their children's education in ways not captured by traditional forms of parent involvement. Family life is valuable separate and apart from school. We should allow parents to contribute their unique "funds of knowledge" (González et al., 2005) on their own terms, not as dictated by school prescribed avenues. By relying only on the school forms of parent involvement currently available and ignoring their unique forms of capital, Latina/o parents are left experiencing social (de)capitalization (Valenzuela, 1999), much like their children who attend these schools. This extends our notions of just how far the subtractive schooling experience reaches into the lives of Latina/o families.

The present research, combined with the work of other researchers studying Latina/o students' educational experiences (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003), suggests that Latina/o families' provision of bilingual *educación* is not only imparting lessons about life but also increasing Latina/o children's academic resiliency and adaptive resources to navigate the many challenges they face across the array of sociocultural worlds they inhabit throughout their lifetimes (Machado-Casas, 2012; Sánchez, 2007). This study helps expand educators' understandings of what education and particularly bilingual *educación* represents to Latina/o parents and the embedded nature of language ideologies toward English and Spanish, which are ever present in the family educational practices of Latinas/os. Teachers can play a significant role in promoting positive engagement that values the contributions that Latina/o families are already making and can continue to make for their children's educational success (Ramírez & González, 2012).

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