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TESTIMONIOS ON THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS' HIGHER ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT: VENGO CON GANAS, SOLO ÉCHAME UNA MANO!

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TESTIMONIOS ON THE ROLE OF MENTORSHIP OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS'
HIGHER ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT: *VENGO CON GANAS, SOLO ÉCHAME*

UNA MANO!

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Jessica Grisel Mendoza Servin

June 2015

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to highlight the importance of having academic mentors of similar heritage to facilitate higher academic attainment of first generation Mexican immigrants. The researcher assures to demonstrate how constructs such as mentorship, self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, social and cultural capital, and similar heritage due to cultural values can positively influence and contribute to the success of English Language learners in academia.

Through the mentorship relationship, students, particularly minority groups, can tap into social and cultural capital that would otherwise be limited due to their immigration to a foreign country. Immigration typically limits individuals' ability to communicate in the predominant language, which in turn limits their ability to culturally relate or access social capital. Mentors, particularly those of similar heritage, through their shared stories can become role models as they exemplify self-efficacy and self-regulatory strategies.

Family, especially for Mexican-immigrants, is one of their strongest values. Students, given their cultural values, seek opportunities to create a sense of family. Having left their country, their friends and family; it is only natural for immigrants to find comfort in relationships that resemble those with *padrinos* (godparents). In this case, the relationship is not through a spiritual connection, but through a mutual understanding of hardships, background, and heritage.

For these reasons, mentors of similar heritage have the greatest positive impact when facilitate higher academic attainment of Mexican immigrants.

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My sister hermosa, Esthersita, te nos adelantaste! I love and miss you sister! Thank you for all the wonderful memories. You are an integral factor to

my academic success. La pasamos de maravilla como undergrads. Hermosas vivencias sister. You will forever be loved and missed.

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My deepest gratitude also goes to the most remarkable individuals I have had the pleasure to meet, my research participants. Thank you for allowing me to hear your amazing and empowering stories. Thank you for allowing me to tap into your history in order not only to complete my academic goals, but also to serve as role models to our immigrant community.

This educational experience has been one incomparable transformation and growth. Thank you Jesus!

DEDICATION

There is absolutely no doubt that this academic accomplishment is dedicated to three extremely important persons in my life: my husband, Rene Leon, my mother, Mari Mendoza and my father, Gerardo Mendoza.

Husband, you are the perfect complement to my life. You are the most supportive, giving and selfless individual I know. You have been there supporting, cheering, and encouraging me since my very first step in a university. You helped me move-in the dorms, you actually bought my first set of comforters for my bed there! You have been there every step of the way in my educational journey, and my entire adult life for that matter, patiently waiting the moment I finalize this dream. Wow, it has been a long wait. Thanks to you, I hold the highest degree a woman can earn, a mother degree. We have the most precious, confident, successful, active, and most importantly healthy, happy and loving children anyone can ask for. You have often, if not most of the time, taken the role of father and mother in order for me to accomplish this dream. You have done it all so graciously and selflessly that there are absolutely no words to express my gratitude to you, and God for the gift of crossing paths with you on this earth. Please know that all your efforts have paid off and have not passed unnoticed. I might have not said it enough in these past 13 years, but I appreciate everything you have done for me. From encouraging me, paying tuition, raising our children, cooking for me, to the endless demonstrations of love through actions and all peace and happiness necessary to succeed in this crazy

world of academia. You have done it all; this degree is yours, for you and because of you. Thank you my love.

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hoy por hoy admiro padre, es que a pesar de tantas vivencias y sufrimientos, su hermoso corazón sigue fuerte y lleno de amor. Usted jamás se da por vencido en su lucha constante por la felicidad, sus dichos tan bellos “tu y yo, como una y mugre,” “yo solo quiero vivir feliz con tigo,” “yo solo quiero vivir feliz.” Pareciera juego Gerochito, pero siempre he tenido en cuenta todas sus conversaciones, consejos y dichos sabios, “cuando salgas de fiesta, si dejas tu trago no lo vuelvas a tomar,” “tu debes ser licenciada en administración de tu dinero,” “amigo es un peso en la bolsa,” y tantos otros que jamás terminaría de mencionar. Gracias padre, mi Gerochito, lo amo.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Latina Immigrant of Mexican Descent

This research focuses on giving a voice to the many and growing population of immigrants in the United States. It has been this author's passion to increase understanding of the knowledge, power, and service immigrant populations could potentially offer. Unfortunately, in order for those voices to be heard, one must face a multitude of challenges; consequently, there is a limited amount of immigrants making important decisions for the Latino immigrant community.

Being a Latina immigrant of Mexican descent in the United States has been extremely challenging both personally and academically. Although, I have encountered both personal and academic challenges, my research focuses in the academic area given that academic success has given me freedom and a voice; a freedom and voice I would have never experienced without an education.

Personal Challenges

I am first-generation immigrant in the United States; my older siblings led the way to this country, not my parents. I am the youngest of nine siblings, all my siblings were born in Guanajuato, Mexico, except me; I was born in Mexicali B.C., Mexico. Out of 16 siblings, my father was the only US born. My parents got

married at the age of 13 (mother) and 16 (father), as it was accustomed in their culture, hometown and family.

In order for my father to provide for his family, he immigrated to the United States, but due to his lack of education, his only choice was to work in the fields where he was often treated inhumanely. Every two or so years my father would go back to my mother for a couple of months, until my mother got tired of it. She packed one outfit for each of her eight children and came looking for my father at the border town of Mexicali, B.C. My oldest sibling was about 14 years old, with very little education, and my youngest brother was about a year old; two years later I was born. As anyone can possibly imagine, my parents and siblings really struggled to settle with such a large family and being first generation migrants to Mexicali, B.C., Mexico.

Within a couple of years, my siblings caught up with their education and started to dream about immigrated to the United States. My older sister, then 17, filled out all the necessary documents to attain U.S. residency, but my father could only afford to pay for the oldest four children and my mother (before they became over the age of 18). As soon as they were able to cross the border, my older siblings packed some of their belongings and immigrated to Indio California, the city in which we currently reside. Five years later, my father was able to save and apply for the five remaining children's residency, the two youngest ones actually qualified as derivative of an American citizen, which

makes a huge difference, since we were given citizenship without having to test for naturalization.

Once in the United States, my life was not easy at all: it actually got a bit more complicated and challenging before it got any better. I was just about to enter my teenage years; I did not speak English; I grew up in a poor, but very close community and immigrated to another poor community, but very distant and quite solitary. I was very confused, I tried to assimilate and acculturate but it was too much to take at once. Seeing kids kissing was traumatizing enough, but to know some of my classmates were pregnant and others were gang affiliated and drug addicts was a bit much. I tried to fit in, but was constantly bullied for my inability to relate and mostly because I could not speak the language in order to defend myself or even have a reaction, I could not understand what they were saying, but most importantly, I could not understand why they were so mean to me...I was sweet then. Anyhow, my life at home was troubled too, my mother was very strict and there was very little to no communication between her and me, or anyone in my family for that matter. I remembered being in trouble all the time because my mother couldn't understand my change or the challenges I was experiencing in school. Eventually, I started fighting back and started to worry more about my goals and dreams instead of trying to make others happy. High school years were fairly simple, in the emotional area, but rather challenging physically. I worked throughout my high school years in very physically demanding jobs like corn picking and other times two jobs at once. Society,

family and friends often discouraged me; therefore, I learned to keep my dreams and hopes very quiet. I was usually exhausted, missed a lot of school, but my dreams were intact and I was committed to my success.

Academic Challenges

After graduating from high school, I went straight to the closest university, University of California, Riverside (UCR). But, just as I was getting ready to move in the UCR dorms, I found out I was pregnant. I was happy, but I knew my life had taken a very different turn. I moved in the dorms, told my parents my situation and they asked me (as expected in my culture) to marry my son's father, which I did. I continued my education but not without challenges. By this time, I had been in this country for five years, attending college with very limited English. Although I had my husband, I always felt very lonely. Being the first person in my whole family and surroundings to attend college in the United States made it extremely difficult for me. I did not have anyone to speak about my challenges in college; I did not have any friends; my parenting situation and my language limitations made me very self-conscious, timid, and introversive. Classes were too large, courses were challenging, and I didn't know how to navigate the system, I did not know how to ask for help. In my eyes, everyone seemed to know what they were doing, where they were going; and I was extremely embarrassed to ask for help given my difficulty communicating in English. I knew I had to get over my fear, but every time I tried to communicate

with people, they seemed to get frustrated, misinterpret my words or simply did not give my voice enough credit.

Once I became pregnant with my second child, during spring quarter of my sophomore year, I decided to change schools because commuting was hard, classes were hours apart, and traffic was horrible; I remember having to wait for classes in different restaurant parking lots on freezing cold days during my second trimester of gestation. Fortunately, they had just opened the California State University, San Bernardino Palm Desert campus; it ended up being the perfect solution. Although discouraged by one of the university counselors, I continued taking classes, but because my original major was not being offered, I ended up having to take many prerequisite courses at the local community college, College of the Desert. Having a family, working part time while attending college full time was a rather difficult task. Even though I had a lot of support from my family, it was extremely hard for me to relate to anyone. People my age who went to college did not have a family, and people who I could relate regarding family were much older and were not attending college.

I truly believe my struggles have a direct effect in the way I experience and see the world today; it definitely impacts my research study and possible interpretation of others' experiences. I know for a fact that racism, sexism, marginalization, oppression and discrimination were part of my daily experiences, but I can honestly assure that I never focused on it. I navigated through all the challenges without analyzing situations or second-guessing the

responses or behaviors of others; I was extremely naïve. My experiences in this program certainly changed my views and perceptions. I have learned to accept that I will continue to be a female, immigrant and English language learner from a low social economic status with limited social and cultural capital challenged by society, but empowered by those same challenges and with a purpose.

Having gone and overcome multiple personal and educational challenges in partial result of being a Latina immigrant in the United States has made me aware of the significance of having mentors and role models individuals can relate to. Throughout my different life experiences, I did not necessarily have a particular mentor I would refer to for advice, but I certainly had role models that significantly and positively impacted some of my most successful decisions. Therefore, I am extremely interested in finding out the extent to which mentors impact the academic achievement of Mexican Immigrants in the United States' educational system and how role models of similar heritage impact one's success.

Statement of the Problem

English Language Learners (ELL's) are one of the most vulnerable groups within the educational system and academia. The majority of ELL's in the United States and in California speak Spanish as their primary language, 79% and 83% respectively (Gandara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). Most of the time, ELL's live in poverty, formal education is not part of their family history, and

their English language proficiency is limited (August & Hakuta, 1997). ELL's enter schools at various ages and with little to no English language abilities; these students must learn the language at the same time as they attempt to learn subject matter content (The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009).

Statistically, California and the entire U.S. are facing a dropout crisis. Latino adolescents in the U.S. are expected to dropout significantly more than adolescents from any other ethnicity (Fry, 2003). Approximately one-fourth of all students who enroll in ninth grade do not succeed in earning a high school diploma in four years (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). High school graduation rate for White students is 75%; an estimated 53.2% of Hispanic students and 50% of Black students who enroll in the 9th grade will complete the 12th grade and graduate with a regular diploma. Foreign-born Hispanic dropouts account for 25.3% of all dropouts in the United States (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

Nearly half (45%) of all Latino children are ELL students in our nation's public schools. Latino immigrants make up 58% of the total population of immigrant children, they represent more than 75% of ELL students (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). In the year 2010-2011, the state of California reported an overall graduation rate of 85.6%, but only 82.3% of the Latino population succeeded in completing their high school diploma on time, and a significantly lower rate of English Language Learners (75.2%) acquired their high school diploma (see Table 1 below) (California Department of Education, 2010).

Table 1

California Cohort Data for the Class of 2010-2011

Subgroup	Cohort Students (N)	Cohort Graduates (N)	Cohort Graduation Rate	Cohort Dropouts (N)	Cohort Dropout Rate
Statewide	501,663	382,558	76.3	72,314	14.4
Male	256,456	185,513	72.3	43,173	16.8
Female	245,207	197,045	80.4	29,141	11.9
Hispanic/Latino	238,436	167,886	70.4	42,126	17.7
White	146,169	124,863	85.4	12,980	8.9
English Learners	100,117	60,280	60.2	24,858	24.8
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	314,369	219,856	69.9	55,483	17.6

Note. California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, 2010,
Retrieved from <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

At 1, 475, 988, ELLs are one of the largest groups in California (California Department of Education, 2010); in addition to being the most difficult group to service given the limited resources, inadequate instruction and multiple constraints in American schools as a result of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2002.

The original intention of the NCLB law was to ensure that all students,

despite any differences, have a high quality of educational instruction that will produce high academic achievement, which has not been the case. As a matter of fact, it is this researcher's belief that standardized testing has deprived teachers the opportunity to mentor. Educators refused to spend time on anything non-state-test related (Wright, 2002).

NCLB provides choices that range from harsh—whereby schools can be closed, federal funds withdrawn and staff fired—to the less aggressive approach, such as the agency may require a school or district to hire a consultant and submit a school improvement plan on the other end of the spectrum (Orfield, Losen & Wald, 2004, pg. 11).

Given the severe consequences, educators were practically forced to “Teach to the test,” therefore, it is not surprising that graduation rates among the Latino population, particularly those who are English language learners, continues to drop, just as high school dropout rates from the same group continue to rise. Additionally, NCLB legislation required schools to identify and serve both ELLs and immigrant students; schools were strictly accountable to ensure not only a rapid progress in learning English, but also parallel advances in their reading, math, and science skills (Tinajero, Munter, & Araujo, 2010). Very contradicting if you ask this researcher, given the statistics that show that ELL's tend to have the least experienced or qualified teachers. ELL's are more likely than any other student population to be taught by teachers with an emergency credential (Gandara et al., 2003).

Moreover, reports across the nation regarding schools that “push out” low achieving students have increased dramatically due to the excessive emphasis of numerous states and school districts to help raise their overall test scores in order to avoid assessment-driven accountability sanctions (Orfield et al., 2004). “Push-out” theories focus on school influences that discourage students from continuing with their education (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). Researchers on the “Push-Out” theory claim that students not only dropout of high school for personal reasons, but also because of school structure (Fine, 1991). NCLB required disaggregation of data and tracking progress for each subgroup of students, which promoted the elimination of those at the bottom of each subgroup. Consequently, students caught in this unfortunate situation could face terrible consequences such as inability to further their education including military service, dropout, or are pushed out to help their schools’ scores (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

For all these reasons, it is crucial for teachers to receive professional development that raises their consciousness about the importance of cultures and languages that ELL students can provide to the classroom setting (Cooper, 2009). And just as important, educators must acknowledge the significance of supporting ELL’s to maintain their native language (Cooper, 2009). Therefore, it is essential for this researcher to provide a platform for ELL’s who successfully navigated the educational system in a foreign country, the United States, to voice their experiences and strategies to accomplish their educational goals. It is

important for educators serving ELL's to remember that ELL's are a diverse group, with different educational experiences, primarily language skills, and levels of English proficiency (Tinajero et al., 2010), but with a vast cultural capital that can enhance the very diverse U.S. educational system.

Research Questions

This research study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, mentors of similar heritage impact higher academic attainment of first generation Mexican immigrants?
2. Do academic mentors impact self-regulatory efficacy?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to uncover the impact academic mentors have in mentee's academia, specifically Mexican immigrants whose primary language is not English. This research will study the extent, if at all, mentors of similar heritage have in higher academic attainment of first generation Mexican immigrants. This study will also focus on the central role played on mentorship in self-regulatory efficacy. It investigates the degree to which mentors may or may not affect mentees' self-regulatory efficacy.

Analyzing the multiple dimensions of students' and teachers' emotions, their sources, development, and their function has become increasingly studied in the last couple of decades, particularly the way it affects learning (Buric &

Soric, 2012). Research demonstrates that early adolescent years initiate a descending spiral for some people, which directs some adolescents to academic failure and school dropout (Eccles et al., 1993). Students' emotions are a key component of individual well-being and physiological health (Kemeny & Shestyuk, 2008). Our educational system must take importance in the psychosocial interactions of students. Adolescents spend more time in school than any other setting. It is the place where they uncover their cultural behaviors, interact with acquaintances, engage in extracurricular activities that possibly shape their individuality, and arrange their future (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

There have been numerous explanations regarding the reasons why adolescents' school-related motivational behaviors decline, specifically in junior high school. Multiple studies demonstrate the impact of classroom and school environmental characteristics on motivation. Teacher effectiveness and teacher-student rapport literatures document the importance of high teacher effectiveness and positive teacher-student rapport for positive teacher and student motivation (Fraser & Fisher, 1983). ELL students are an extremely vulnerable population in the academic system, and serving such populations require a multiple set of skills and awareness from educators who wish to serve them.

Multiple schools serving high-risk students have had outstanding success demonstrated by their graduating rates of more than 90% and similar rates of college enrollment (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Darling-Hammond, Aneess, & Ort, 2002). Unfortunately, ELL's are usually thought by the least experienced or

poorly qualified teachers. English learners are more likely than any other students to be taught by teachers with an emergency credential (Gandara et al., 2003). Effective educators must not only be highly qualified, but also receive the professional development necessary to serve particular sectors and populations. Cooper ensures that it is necessary for educators to receive professional development focused on raising students' consciousness about the importance and richness their cultures and languages add to the classroom experience. She also mentions the importance of educators supporting ELL students' use of native language (2009). Additionally, research has found that schools serving equally and traditionally low-performing students have higher levels of graduation and academic achievement when they create smaller, more personalized sectors in which students see fewer teachers over an extended period of time and teachers work together with a smaller cohort of students (Braddock II & McPartland, 1993). Schools serving special populations such as ELL's can benefit from more supportive learning strategies. Students do not benefit or learn well alone (Hurd, 1998a). According to Hurd,

The key to success must lie partly in the support systems available to students and the extent to which diverse individual learning needs are addressed, but even more importantly is the degree to which these support systems encourage language learners to develop strategies that work for them personally, and which lead to more effective learning methods and enhanced learning outcomes (2009, p.37)

This study is unique due to the lack of research regarding positive teacher-student rapport; studies that initiated with that purpose ended-up focusing on teacher strategies conducive to student learning and not rapport building, due to its difficulty to measure. However, this study focuses on providing a platform for this very particular population, first generation Mexican immigrants, who have overcome multiple challenges to accomplish their educational goals. They will provide the strategies necessary to succeed in the United States educational system, they will dictate from their own experiences and provide educators with an opportunity to learn from the source.

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to transform educational practice by focusing the attention back to the students rather than focusing on testing. It will be significant to promote the development of tools to help administrators monitor a positive teacher-student relationship. Perhaps, even the development of educational programs with an emphasis on mentorship with self-regulatory efficacy strategies that support English language learners' academic achievement. Salton-Salazar makes best statement,

Scholars have been working to elaborate new conceptual and theoretical frameworks for understanding the social networks, socialization, and educational attainment of racial minority youth, particularly Latino, African American and Asian youth from working-class or economically

disenfranchised urban communities. Such frameworks are critical precisely because careful efforts to articulate the complexities of socialization, network relations, and educational attainment among racial minority youth, including the multiple roles played by resourceful and committed socialization and institutional agents, can help us design interventions and school environments that can authentically empower both youth and agents (e.g. parents, teachers, counselors, youth program personnel) (2010, p. 5).

Statistics show that Latino adolescents in the U.S. are expected to dropout significantly more than adolescents from any other ethnicity (Fry, 2003). Foreign-born Hispanic dropouts account for 25.3% of all dropouts in the United States. Nearly half (45%) of all Latino children are ELL students in our nation's public schools. Latino immigrants make up 58% of the total population of immigrant children, they represent more than 75% of ELL students (Kohler & Lazarín, 2007). These alarming statistics have made this research even more noteworthy.

Personally, having taught for nine years in a valley predominantly Hispanic with a large concentration of first generation Mexican immigrants made me aware of the need to research best practices to aid this growing population. Throughout these nine years, I have done some very informal observational research that supports my idea regarding mentors of similar heritage. Nevertheless, I am very well aware of the fact that although mentors can open doors to better opportunities, it is not but ones' determination, resiliency, self-

regulation and self-efficacy what eventually breaks through all and any hardships that would otherwise prevent one from accomplishing their goals. I vouch to prove that having mentors of similar heritage can open doors to new realities for first-generation Mexican immigrants as they model important traits such as self-regulation and improve mentees self-efficacy.

It has been theorized that having teacher mentors who are also role models of similar heritage improve not only high school graduation rates, but also higher education enrollment and success. The Latino community, especially immigrant, needs to see that it is possible to succeed beyond one's expectations and scope of reality; they need individuals to count on as reference and inspiration when challenges arise.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The educational system has not been a positive place for many learners of non-traditional backgrounds and particularly students of color (Cropper, A. 2000). Students of color fail at a much higher rate in higher education than Caucasian students (Cropper, A. 2000). The largest minority population in the country, Latinos, is also the most underrepresented in college. The Latino population tends to have significantly lower enrollment in post secondary education and even significantly lower enrollment when it comes to Latino ELL students.

Research indicates that underrepresentation of Latinos in college is about Latinos' inability to successfully navigate the college access pathway, partly because of parents' and schools' inadequate guidance for students (Gamez-Vargas, J. & Oliva, M, 2013). Students particularly those unfamiliar with the system find the academic requirements or courses too difficult. Failing inevitably impacts individual' s self-confidence, self-esteem and identity. Students who are unfamiliar with the university system and who have family traditions unrelated to higher education commonly experience a sense of disconnection, marginalization and being different and highly impact an individual' s identity (Cropper, 1998; Dadzie 1993). We can't forget that students' educational experiences are different given their historical and structural positions they may have inside and

outside the institution, ultimately impacting their sense of self and identity (Cropper, A. 2000). Certainly, systematic, long-term discrimination stresses the potential for anxiety and isolation (National Mentoring Consortium (NMC), 1998).

In terms of higher education, students' readiness and eligibility starts as early in one's schooling. Nevertheless, due to segregation and unequal resource allocation, Latinos have distinct and inferior school experiences (Ginorio and Huston 2000, Moreno 1999, Valencia 2002). Research conducted in California reports that schools with disproportionately high Latino and African-American enrollments have a higher probability of less prepared teachers, fewer supplies and poor facilities (Oakes 2002). As a result, students have fewer opportunities to prepare for college.

For these reasons, the following review of literature will report essential constructs tied to the academic success of a minority group, first generation Mexican immigrants implying that the lack there of can contribute to academic failure.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth development goal is for youth's own internal motivator to be activated (Reed, 2006). Larsen (2000) discusses how the capacity for initiative is essential for adults in our society and argues that it is absolutely necessary in the 21st century. The capacity initiative "is the process of growth and increasing competence" (Larson, 2000). It is the adolescent's ability to

strive and devote attention and effort towards a challenging goal. Adolescents must have the opportunity to develop responsibility and ownership of their surroundings because adolescents are losing autonomy and are becoming more and more dependent on adults. According to Larson (2000), in order to build initiative capacity adolescents must experience intrinsic motivation, concentrated engagement in the environment and temporal arc. Intrinsic motivation is the ability to engage in an activity due to ones' satisfaction or feeling of investment. Concentrated engagement in the environment is the ability to direct attention and effort to a challenging goal. And, temporal arc is the ability to carry on the goal despite the obstructions or challenges that might otherwise impede the ability to reach a specific goal (Larson, 2000). Adolescents have the ability to produce their own development, but they must stay motivated. Parents, teachers, policy makers and mentors often try to mold and control adolescents, but such actions do not help promote adolescent's positive development. Humans have an inherited ability to experience enjoyment from challenges and have a motivational system that can be blocked through different life obstacles (Larson, 2006).

Mentorship

Recent research regarding mentoring relationships has increased tremendously. Mentoring has demonstrated to benefit individuals in all areas of life (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008). Having an experienced member,

mentor, provide career and personal support to protégés is beneficial (Kram, 1985). Protégés report positive emotional and career outcomes (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Nielson, Carlson, & Lankau, 2001; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Research on the outcomes of mentoring state that protégés in organizations and academia accelerate promotion, produce higher salaries, develop stronger professional identities, generate greater career success, and create higher levels of both personal and professional fulfillment (Busch, 1985; Kram, 1988; Robinson, 1994; Roche, 1979; Wright & Wright, 1987). Mentoring process shows that mentors usually offer two different types of support to their protégé's: instrumental and psychosocial. Instrumental support improves the career of the protégé' by offering challenging tasks and vision in addition to mentor's sponsorship and protection (Gibb & Megginson, 1993; Noe, 1988). Psychosocial support, however, involves activities in which mentors serve as role models and provide counseling, coaching, friendship, validation, and acceptance. Psychosocial functions are thought to increase protégés' sense of competence, identity, and efficacy in a role (Gibb & Megginson, 1993; Ragins & Cotton, 1991).

Mentoring is an educational strategy where experienced individuals support a less experienced individual, helping to close the gap between laboratory learning and organizational procedures, policy, and skills (Dennison, 2010). In psychology, mentoring is teaching, supervising, counseling, advising, and companionship while providing both career and psychosocial functions (Johnson, 2002). Mentoring is a 'psychosocial intervention' where the mentor

supports and guides the mentee while providing opportunities for both academic and social growth (Shin & Rew, 2010). There is not an exact definition of mentoring (Speizer, 1981). However, most definitions share the following elements: (1) mentor relationships help the protégé achieve long-term goals, (2) mentoring, for the most part, focuses on professional development and provides psychological support, (3) mentoring benefits both mentors and protégés, (4) mentor relationships are personal, (5) within the mentoring relationship, the mentor has superior professional experience, influence and achievement (Jacobi, 1991).

Mentorship in Education

In an academic context, mentorship provides protégés with three unique forms of support: psychosocial support by sharing life and personal life experiences and companionship to a more personal level; Career related skills such as writing research or teaching skills; and networking support by introducing protégés to influential others and to colleagues at other academic institutions. (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). Among high school students, mentoring has a positive association to academic success (Linnehan 2001; Rhodes, 2000; Sánchez, 2008; Wyatt, 2009) and higher education attainment (DuBois and Silverthorn, 2005). There are multiple reasons describing why mentorship has a positive impact on academic achievement. Rhodes' (2005) model of youth mentoring states that mentors can contribute to youth development in three different ways: socio-emotional development, identity, and cognitive skills.

Consequently, positive academic outcomes of mentorship include facilitating students' successful academic identity formation and value education as part of their identity (Erickson, 2009). Additionally, mentors can benefit protégés' educational outcomes by providing social capital for academic success (Chang, 2010).

For adolescents, older siblings, family members, friends, neighbors, and important adults in the community are significant in helping their overall well being and future life chances, especially adolescents from minorities and working class families (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). Just one respectable relationship with a capable adult can result in a better transition to adolescence (Masten, 2009). Researchers have concluded that in working class urban areas, there is an overwhelmingly lack of resourceful and caring adults who could serve as mentors; therefore there needs to be a change in the way we view the roles of school and of professionals whose paths cross those of youth on a regular, sometimes daily, basis (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). Some researchers suggest that, for adolescents, mentors fill a role somewhere between parent and peer (Beam, 2002). Furthermore, having a teacher-mentor is predictive of better school connection, reduced risk behavior, and higher academic achievement among adolescents (Black, 2010; Erickson, 2009; Gastic & Johnson 2009). Adolescents limited in personal and social resources appeared to benefit from having a teacher-mentor by earning a higher GPA and greater educational attainment than high-risk youth with other types of mentors (Fruht & Wray-Lake,

2012). Similarly, Dubois and Silverthorn (2005) found that students with “professional mentors,” who were primarily teachers and guidance counselors, were more likely to attend college than those with other types of mentors.

Mentorship of Minority Groups

Empirical mentoring research has mainly focused on white Caucasian protégés; consequently, there is less information about the experiences of colored protégés, along with the experiences of those individuals who mentor them. For individuals of color, particularly African, Hispanic, and Native-Americans, mentoring is critical for personal and academic development, but most of their mentoring will come from those who are different from them (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, & Williams, 1999). Diversified mentorship theory suggests that the particular composition of the relationship can influence the levels of support and satisfaction of a particular relationship (Ragins, 1997). According to this theory, a certain level of comfort and interpersonal attraction exists when individuals share similar racial/ethnic backgrounds, therefore protégés of color benefit from having a relationship with a mentor who is also of color. Likewise, similarity-attraction model (Byrne, 1971) suggests demographic similarity in race, sex, or age produces a positive feeling and a reciprocal attraction, which leads to positive interactions. Thus, demographic dissimilarity can create negative feelings and discomfort, at times resulting in the physical or psychological separation of individuals (Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999; Riordan, 2000). Taking into consideration similarity-attraction model, same-race

mentorships can be easier to develop and may provide more mentoring functions than cross-race mentorships (Cohen & Steele, 2002; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Thomas, 1993). Actually, Turban et al. (2002) found that individuals prefer to be in same-race mentorships.

Mexican Cultural Values of *Familismo* and *Compadrismo*

There are multiple and diverse explanations for the different levels of academic achievement among immigrants and non-immigrants in the United States (Valenzuela, 1999). Cultural values of newly arrived-immigrants are definitely an explanation to the different academic achievement and attainment of immigrants. In this section, I will explain two significant Mexican cultural values: familismo and compadrismo. These are constructs that play a significant role when first generation immigrants select mentors.

It has been clearly noted that newly arrived-Mexican origin families and school personnel tend to have difficult interactions and understandings about school expectations.

Much of the confusion had to do with the fact that the families were recent immigrants who lacked familiarity with schools and made incorrect assumptions about the nature of the educational system...these differences had to do with values and beliefs about the nature of life itself and what is important (Valdes, 1996, p. 169).

Cultural values have been typically related to the way different cultures perceive life and relationships (Carter, 1991; Sue & Sue, 2002). One of the strongest values for the Latino community particularly of Mexican descent is family (Familismo) in terms of “unity,” “honor” and “loyalty” (Garcia-Preto, 1996). “Early scholars defined familism as a strong identification with family characterized by loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity among family members (e.g., Triandis, Marin, Betancourt, Lisansky, & Chang, 1982)” (Campos, Rojas Perez, & Guardino, 2014, p. 2). Multiple researches on familismo have described this cultural value as beneficial and detrimental depending on the situation. For instance Pabon (1998) connected familismo with reduced risk of adolescent delinquency (Pabon, 1998). However, researchers have found emotional and psychological distress as a negative aspect of familismo (Schwartz et al., 2010) mostly due to the tension of meeting family responsibilities and/or stress due to family conflict (Fuligni et al., 2009). Likewise, Latino cultural values go beyond family, by having a strong emphasis on relationships with extended family members, friends and others not related (Ruiz, 1995). For instance, Mexican families have a high regard for *compadrazgos* (spiritual relationships), *padrinos* (godparents) are viewed as co-parents, and therefore they are *parte de la familia* (part of the family). The selection of *padrinos* (godparents) is extremely special and a great honor for those selected. Those individuals selected by either the parents or the children are believed to be *sabios* (wise), *respetables* (respectable), *responsables* (responsible), *de confianza* (trustworthy) and *gente*

decente (a good person). They are believed to help parents raise their godchildren by giving *consejos* (advise) and *guiarlos por el buen camino* (guide them through the good path).

I believe familiarismo and compadrismo play a significant role when building relationships with adults and during mentorship selection; even though, I highly support the idea that mentorship relationships should transpire genuinely. Newly arrived- Mexican origin families heavily rely on their “networks” and “unity” in order to adjust and progress in the American culture (Portes, 1998). Students, given their cultural values, seek opportunities to create a sense of *familia*. Having left their country, their *amigos* (friends) and *familia* (family), it is only natural for immigrants to find comfort in relationships that resemble those with *padrinos* (godparents). In this case, this relationship is not through a spiritual connection, but through a mutual understanding of hardships, background, heritage, and in many cases *dolor* (pain).

Role Models

Role models are a fundamental factor for positive youth development (Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue, 2008; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). Role models serve an important function in socialization by helping individuals create, experiment, and define their self-concept (Krumboltz, J.D. 1996). Individuals can develop their self-concept by carefully observing their role model’s style, traits and skills (Manz & Sims, 1981). Most of the research on role models

investigates the strategies of behavioral modeling by exploring the process and strategies of behavioral modeling (Ibarra, 1999). Researchers have assumed that role models serve positions such as teachers, mentors, and supervisors when in fact, individuals may have a range of role models outside these categories (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

Role models can assist youth overcome the risks faced by being exposed to negative non-parental adult behavior influences (Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue, 2008). Multiple studies investigate the negative effects of exposing children to negative non-parental adult behavior and the extent to which positive role models may offer to offset these risks. Having someone to admire demonstrated to be a considerable advantage for adolescents, but this benefit may not be entirely true for all adolescent outcomes (Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue, 2008).

Social Capital

According to Begum (2007), social capital theory has been traced back as early as 1916 while Dika and Singh (2002) believed it originated in 1920. In either case, social capital is defined as “a set of properties existing within especially patterned associations among people that, when activated, enable them to accomplish their goals or to empower themselves in some meaningful way” (Stanton-Salazar, 2001 p. 265). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James Coleman have been recognized as the initial developers of this theory (Portes, 2000). According to Bourdieu (1986), there are

three sources of capital; economic, cultural and social. However, Coleman (1988) researched the function of social capital in the creation of human capital.

According to Bourdieu, social capital can be broken into two different components: the social networks that permits an individual to tap in the resources possessed by their connections, and the quantity and quality of those resources (Portes, 1988). For Bourdieu (1986), the amount of social capital a person possesses varies based on the size of the network of relations one can access and on the amount of capital, whether economic, cultural, and symbolic, their networks possess.

For first generation Mexican immigrants, social capital plays a significant role in the assimilation process particularly in the academic context. Newly-arrived Mexicans for the most part, lack the social capital necessary to navigate the educational system in the United States.

Cultural Capital

Education is one of the most important factors for predicting social mobility in most developed societies (Sewell and Hauser, 1975). Countless of studies on social mobility demonstrate that academic achievement and occupational attainment are largely dependable on individual's family origin and education (Kerckhoff, 1996). The studies on social mobility have focused mainly on the roles of "socioeconomic status (SES), family structure, and family resources, including economic, cultural and social capital (Sirin, 2005)." Bourdieu (1986)

defined three types of cultural capital: Embodied cultural capital refers to styles, manners, cultural preferences, and valued types of cultural knowledge. Cultural capital is represented in artifacts and goods we generally think of as cultural, such as literature, music, dance forms, art, and things like that. Institutionalized cultural capital refers to academic qualifications— those established qualities that indicate an individual’s cultural distinction.

The research on cultural capital indicates that individuals possess different amounts of cultural capital. What this means, in the educational system, is that each individual student brings a different level of cultural capital, and it explains why some students meet school standards, are accepted at college, and achieve higher levels of education, and why other students do not (Lareau, 1989).

Bourdieu (1986) argued that the cultural experiences in an individual’s home environment is essential in developing the interactions children have with schools and directly impacts their academic achievement. These particular experiences take direct part into one’s cultural capital in the form of cultural resources for social mobility. These cultural resources are in the form of, “knowledge, practices and artifacts” that can direct to social advantages or no advantages at all, according to its value in society.

Schools promote particular ‘academic’ language, discipline structures and types of curriculum. Students from families of higher Socioeconomic Status (SES) are already familiar with these social patterns when they enter school, and therefore navigate school with more confidence and less fear. Their home

experiences support these particular students adjust to school and maintain the pursuit of academic achievement (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Stanton-Salazar work focuses on Latinos (2001; Stanton Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). He found that the students of higher SES compared to the students of lower SES (all of Mexican origin) reported higher access to school-based social capital by having weak ties in school, for example teachers, but better ties to higher status individuals and institutions outside of school. A significant number of students of lower SES and Mexican origin, who are less acculturated, are denied opportunities to access vertical ties, thereby limiting the possibility of acquiring valued institutional support through ties in the school setting.

In this section, I will support the research regarding social capital by annotating my own personal experience as Latina in the educational system. I will discuss the role of cultural capital, institutionalized cultural capital, in my own personal experience and will generalize my academic journey for the immigrant English language Latino community.

The human capital approach and the research on cultural capital share a common idea: the use of resources in order to build skills and habits in children by parents and other adults in the extended family and neighborhood (Farkas, 2003). Components of family life, especially cultural resources, are used as capital to align students' expectations with school norms and help solve problems concerning social acceptance (Lareau, 1989). The argument is that low income

parents fail to support their children in succeeding in school not because they don't see the value in education, but because they lack the skills, habits, and knowledge needed to effectively assist them (Farkas, 1996).

Particularly for me, this argument is very true. I am the youngest daughter of nine children and after my father got injured and became disabled to work, my mother had no other choice than to immigrate to the United States. This was for me the greatest opportunity of my life; I was very enthusiastic of the transition and I could not wait to go to school and succeed. However, life in a new country was not easy at all. I did not speak the language, we had economic challenges, and no one around me could help me pursue my dreams.

My family is first generation United States immigrants, which means that no one in my family, immediate or extended, spoke English at the time of immigration. My older siblings had immigrated a few years before my parents did, but none of them went to school or learned English. My educational experience in Mexico was solid, high grades and very involved, so I wanted to continue that, but I did not speak the dominant dialect. It was extremely difficult for me to communicate with peers, especially because some of them made fun of me and tried to humiliate me because I did not speak their language. I lost all confidence in my ability to relate in the school environment, I had to find ways to integrate myself to my surroundings, and for a while deviated my attention from school to survival. I tried speaking to my parents about it, but they could not understand. They supported the idea that children behave like that and I had to learn to

ignore it and move on. I tried speaking to my sibling about it, but they could not relate to it. They went directly to the workforce and did not even bother to go to school. My siblings advised me to finish middle school and try working, but my mother didn't want me to. My family believed and still believes that being exposed to the English language in school is sufficient to learn it. My parents expected my grades to be similar or higher than the ones I had in Mexico, but they disregarded the additional challenge of not speaking the dominant language. This was a very stressful transition and can definitely be categorized as the most challenging stages of my life.

Language is an important component of the cultural capital necessary to succeed in the educational system; neither my family nor myself possessed this knowledge. Additionally, my family's social capital was not sufficient enough to support my transition. They, I'm sure, were going through some intense challenges as well. I know they all wanted me to go to school, learn the language, have a happy transition and ultimately succeed, but they did not know how to help me. They did not know how to communicate it to me; in my family communication was not our forte. My father used to work all the time and although my mother was a stay home mom, she was always busy with house chores that she hardly ever spoke to us for any other reason than to discipline us. They certainly had no idea of the types of resources and support the educational system offers to those who ask. And they had no idea about the challenges of minorities in the educational system. They exposed me to what

they could and what they knew, they offered me everything they had to offer.

As I started growing older, I realized other challenges within my household. My parents were really challenged to support family economically. My father did not work and spent most of his time in Mexico, and my mom had been a stay home mother all her life, she lacked the skills to find a reasonably paying job. My mother worked in minimum wage paying jobs for as long as she could. So, as soon as I realized that, at the age of 14, I decided to work; luckily, my siblings had enough experience in the restaurant business as servers and bartenders. I had seen for many years that they made sufficient money to pay their bills, support their families and have fun; I thought that would be the perfect job for me. I asked for their help to find me a job and they did. Some of my sisters had been working at a local family restaurant for many years and were able to get me a job as a hostess. I needed to make more money than that, since I started giving my mother money every month for rent and food, therefore during the summers I would work two jobs. I grew up seeing my older siblings work multiple jobs to make their living; I figured I could do it too, and I did. I went to high school during the day, worked part time during the school year and during the summers worked two jobs. I learned to enjoy the service business, and to appreciate the value of hard work, just like my family did.

This particular episode in my life supports Lareau (1989) by portraying that components of family life are used as capital to help solve problems concerning social acceptance. It was completely acceptable within my household to work at

early stages of one's life, even if it meant leaving school completely. I did not leave school, but it was my choice. If I had decided to stop going to school, I would have done it with no implications other than continuing to work and paying my bills. My family had acquired enough social capital within the service business that it allowed me to replicate their experience and solve the problem at hand, work to help support my family household.

Working throughout high school allowed me to help support my family, buy my own used car, dress fashionably and gave me a certain level of confidence. I learned enough English to communicate, pass my classes, defend myself, and "fit in" within the norms of my environment and society. However, I dreamed of becoming a math teacher since I was in elementary. Although, I enjoyed the restaurant business, I did not want to do that the rest of my life. But there was nothing within my cultural capital that supported those ideals. No one in my family had an education, publicly admitted their aspirations for an education, and they often assured I was not going to study. Additionally, my friends in school were mostly Spanish speakers with very similar backgrounds as mine and had no aspirations in furthering their education. Everything supported the cultural capital research. Up to this point, I was about to complete high school with a decent grade point average, and although I wanted to further my education, I lacked the cultural knowledge and resources necessary to fulfill that dream.

Nonetheless, at the beginning of my senior year, there was a seminar with our counselors at our school. They talked about career, college and how to

apply. I followed through with the requirements and was granted admittance to the University of California, Riverside.

My educational journey and challenges continued throughout my undergraduate career. I got married and started a family, but that was not the issue. My now extended family, could not understand what I was doing, they still don't. They questioned my ability to raise my children properly if I was always so busy with school. They were sure my marriage was going to suffer because I was not paying enough attention to my husband and they tirelessly stated that I could make the same living without having to sacrifice myself so much. My family has a very different perspective of success; they had a certain level of cultural capital that allows them to be successful within their social context, but not enough to move from one social context to the next (supporting the social reproductive theory).

My family life was not my only challenge, so was my school life. I can honestly say that I had no idea of what I was doing; I did not know how to ask for help, I realized my English was not enough to communicate within my new educational context and I was not prepared for the challenges. I lacked confidence in my English language abilities, but thankfully math was my forte, or so I thought. I realized that English language skills were crucial for the level of mathematics I was being exposed, once again; I lost my confidence in my own abilities. I never had to repeat a class, but I was challenged in areas I had never been challenged, in addition to the challenges I had not overcome. I lacked the

ability, confidence and knowledge in addition to being on my own. At that point in my life, I was in a position where only I could understand what I going through. I was in my mind the only Latina teenage mother attending a four-year university, at least the only one I knew, there was no one I could relate to. Even a counselor at a university tried to discourage me from continuing my educational goal.

The cultural capital I was trying to acquire was clearly out of my reach. The cultural capital I had been exposed to did very little to support my goals.

Due to the fact that I have attained a certain educational level I might be perceived as an outlier to the research supporting cultural capital, and I might be to a certain extent, but I also believe that my cultural capital serves as a boundary to my capacity. I truly believe that if I had been exposed to other types of cultural capital I would have exceeded those too, and if not I would have at least not struggled as much as I did. As continue my journey, I continue to think of those Latino immigrants who have a very similar background as mine, and who overcame the challenges and limitations of the cultural capital they have been exposed. I know there are a few of us who have excellent educational outcomes despite our limitations and challenges, and I wonder what did it for us. I honestly can't put a finger to the reasons why I surpassed the statistics; perhaps I was just rebellious against them, perhaps I did not wanted to be part of them. But I can't help to feel a bit angry for those that didn't make it, for those that fell within the statistics.

Today, I feel extreme excitement for my family's future generations. I have acquired a certain level of cultural and social capital that will benefit and improve the life chances of future generations to come. At least, in the educational system, I am able to provide my children with the valued cultural capital within my social and educational context: readings, vocabulary, travel, sports, career conversation and exposure, technology, networks, expectations, support systems, research and all other cultural components valued to succeed within my scope of experience. I hope that breaking the reproduction cycle in my family will allow my descendants to have a better quality of life and perhaps move from my current socioeconomic status to the next.

I hope to use my educational experience and journey to connect and inspire individuals from challenging backgrounds, those who can't have access to the necessary cultural capital to succeed in the current educational system. I hope to empower them to excel the statistics and provide them with some exposure to what the future can bring to them, and what can potentially be their contributions to society. I know I can't change the world, but if I can only transform the world of one individual I would be satisfied.

Self-Regulatory Learning

Self-regulation from the social cognitive perspective involves three very significant processes: personal, behavioral, and environmental (Bandura, 1986). These processes impact individuals when pursuing particular goals (Bandura,

1997; Weiner, 1990). Social cognitive approach relates to students' feelings and beliefs in their efforts, competence, and goal setting. One of the most significant factors of student success is definitely motivation derived from acknowledgements, efficacy, self-image and confidence. Self-regulated learning (SRL) has been defined as an "active, constructive process whereby learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals, and the contextual features in the environment" (Pintrich, 2000).

Self-regulated learning is an important factor in student learning and academic performance in the classroom setting. Self-regulated learning has three major components: metacognitive strategies to monitor and modify their learning, management and control of their efforts, and cognitive strategies and active cognitive engagement in learning (Pintrich & Groot, 1990 & Zimmerman, 1989). Just as important as cognitive and metacognitive strategies is motivation, since effort is absolutely necessary to use those strategies to regulate their learning (Pintrich & Groot, 1990). Self-regulated learning is also defined as "the ability of learners to control the factors or conditions affecting their learning" (Dembo, Junge, & Lynch, 2006, p. 188). From a cognitive perspective, self-regulation is the use of learning strategies to understand and recall information; from the metacognitive perspective it is about planning, setting goals, monitoring, and evaluating; and motivation is about motivating oneself, assuming responsibility for one's successes and failures, and self-efficacy, which in itself

requires effort and persistence (Dembo et al., 2006). Zimmerman believed that “The key issue defining learning as self-regulated is not whether it is socially isolated, but rather whether the learner displays personal initiative, perseverance, and adaptive skill pursuing it” (Zimmerman, 2001, p. 1).

Sharp, Picklinton, and Weindling believe that SRL happens when students are given the freedom to create their own learning experience and follow their own interests (2002). Pintrich affirms that self-regulated learners demonstrate their ability to create strategies, set goals, and put meaning in their work; they monitor their performance, assess and transform their learning, and improve their academic performance by using internal and external contexts and personal traits (2002). Self-regulated learners practice forethought, performance control, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 2000). Students can be described as self-regulated if he/she demonstrated their ability to actively participate in their metacognitive, motivational and behavioral learning process. In other words, students initiate and direct their learning efforts to acquire knowledge and skills without having to depend on parents, teacher or other adults (Zimmerman, 2003). According to Zimmerman (2000), students who demonstrated an “integrated self-regulatory style” are more likely to fully assimilate since they experience more choice and control over their actions.

Self-Regulated Learning and Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is typically described as the degree to which an individual believes in his or her own capability to complete a certain task (Burke et al., 2009). Albert Bandura developed Self-efficacy theory as a result of his work on Social-Cognitive Theory. According to Albert Bandura, “The capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one’s life is the essence of humanness” (2001, p. 1). Bandura research on social cognitive theory is classified by three modes of agency: direct personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency (2001). “In social cognitive theory human behavior is extensively motivated and regulated by the ongoing exercise of self-influence” (Bandura, 1991, p. 248). Bandura (2006) additionally states that within the framework of social cognitive theory, one’s ability to regulate one’s thoughts, motivation, affect, and action through self-reactive influence creates one of the primary properties of human agency. From social cognitive perspective (Bandura, 1986; 1989b; 1991), learners who self-regulate direct their learning processes and attainments by setting challenging goals for themselves (Bandura, 1989c; Schunk, 1990). Thus, Self-regulated learners demonstrate high self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1989, 1990b). The hypothesis behind self-efficacy directly and indirectly influencing performance accomplishments through its influences on self-set goals has been tested and validated (Bandura & Wood, 1989). As a matter of fact, Zimmerman and Martiez-Pons (1992) corroborated through their research that there is a tight connection between students’ use of self-regulated strategies and their

perceptions of academic efficacy. Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992) even hypothesize that students' perceive efficacy to use self-regulated strategies improve their perceived efficacy to succeed in their academic courses. Furthermore, "In comparison to people with low levels of self-efficacy, people with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to persevere in the face of difficulties, more likely to feel disappointed in the face of failure" (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010, p. 285).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Qualitative research is best suited for this particular research. It is necessary to give voice and attention to the stories of those who have overcome significant barriers and challenges. It is important to emphasize the positive aspects of the immigrant population, and the best way to make those stories available is by conducting an ethnographic qualitative in the form of testimonios.

Researcher's Positionality

Having gone and overcome multiple personal and educational challenges, partially due to being a Latina immigrant in the United States, has made me aware of the significance of having mentors and role models. Throughout my different life experiences, I did not necessarily have a particular mentor I would refer to for advice, but I certainly had role models that significantly and positively impacted some of my most successful decisions. However, I have always wondered how my life could have been if I had a mentor, someone I could refer to for advice. I have always wondered if having a mentor would have made my educational and professional life a lot easier. I have read and known stories of people who have successfully navigated the educational system and attributed their success to their one or many mentors, which led me to wonder the extent to

which mentors impact the academic achievement of first generation Mexican immigrants like myself. Today, I have the fortune to serve as a mentor to many of my high school students many of who are currently pursuing their educational dream. We communicate, they share their struggles and we discuss ideas to make things better. I often share my own struggles and how things worked out for me. For these reasons, I am interested in finding out if a mentor of similar heritage or background has any significance in higher education attainment and success.

As I have grown older, and successfully navigated the United States' educational system, I've realized that my educational challenges were not the teachers', or my limitations' fault, but of the educational system that had failed to acknowledge, embrace and, center the life of all students (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez, & Villenas; 2006; Elenes 1997; Freire, 1998). I always felt the need to change and meet the requirements or expectation of the systems within society, I could not help but to feel like an outsider. I have to confess I have always felt intimidated, I doubted and continue to doubt myself. I always felt as if my voice was never heard, therefore I began to keep my thoughts and opinions to myself. My views and my experiences were very different, controversial at times, which I am sure kept me away from potential opportunities. Consequently, I learned to navigate the system alone empowered by idea to help, change or prevent individuals like myself to experience some of the challenges I overcame. Those who I dreamt to be like, not always of similar heritage, but their character

and the way they conducted themselves inspired me. Therefore, I kept pushing through the system knowing that I would struggle, but hoping to one day serve as an inspiration and maybe a mentor to someone like me.

Today, my goal is to hear the success stories of Mexican immigrants whose mentors inspired them to enroll and/or graduate college, and the impact mentors have had over their success; also, through their shared stories, become role models for the Mexican immigrant community, particularly our youth. Additionally, as a high school teacher, it is my intention to learn from their experiences in order to better serve the many English language learners in the community I serve. I believe that asking immigrants to remember their stories, narratives and histories opens possibilities for pedagogy (Saavedra, 2011). Listening to their stories will provide us with the tools necessary to adequately support them. For these reasons, I truly believe qualitative research, heavily relying on *Testimonios*, will be the best method to accomplish my research goals. “In using the concept of *testimonios*, we relinquish our authority as transmitters of knowledge and allow our students’ stories to teach us in their own terms, in their own language” (Saavedra, 2011 p. 268).

Rationale for Qualitative Research

After taking quantitative and qualitative research courses in this doctoral program, my initial preference for conducting this study was to use a mixed methods approach. I thought both qualitative and quantitative approaches were not only feasible and supportive of each other, but that it would provide the best

data. Nevertheless, after much deliberation, countless hours of research and deep soul-searching I now know that qualitative research alone will be the best approach for my dissertation study.

I used a phenomenological approach in the qualitative design given that the purpose of the phenomenological approach is to highlight the specifics in order to identify phenomena through the perceptions and experiences of the participants in a situation (Lester, 1999). In my case, I will be highlighting the aspects of mentees' experiences in the United States' educational system.

In the human sphere this normally translates into gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s). Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Lester, 1999).

My goal is to test the *extension of theory into new contexts*. Teacher mentorship is an extremely popular and well-researched theory in the

educational world, therefore I plan to add new context in terms of teacher mentorship effectiveness within the Mexican Immigrant community and my theory of significant positive impact of mentors who serve as role models by sharing their heritage.

In qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is quite different from quantitative studies. The research is considered an “instrument” of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In other words, data is analyzed through this “human instrument” instead of machines. However, a qualitative researcher must describe applicable characteristics of self, including biases, assumptions, expectations, and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank, 2003).

One of the first things that definitely pushed me to consider qualitative research alone, opposed to mixed methods, is the root of the word qualitative, which is quality. “The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). My Positionality as a Mexican immigrant has made me realize the importance of having our voices being heard. I know we have vast amounts of knowledge to provide the American educational system, but it is extremely difficult due to our language limitations and mostly due to our self-consciousness about it. For these reasons, qualitative inquiry demonstrates to be the best strategy to truly hear those voices that are typically

silenced. As Patton mentioned, one of the greatest strengths of qualitative inquiry is the researcher's opportunities to be present and close to the subjects and their circumstances, either by physical proximity and participation or in the social sense of shared experience, empathy and confidentiality (2002). I find it necessary to give voice and attention to the stories of those who have overcome significant barriers and challenges, however sharing those histories is not always easy. According to Susan E. Chase, "life story is the more specific term that researchers use to describe an extensive autobiographical narrative, in either oral or written form, that covers all or most of a life" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 652). A vital factor of a qualitative research is sharing one's life story in order to give a voice to society's underclass, such as minority groups like Mexican immigrants. Most importantly sharing one's stories provides certain richness in substance as a result of professional and personal anecdotes. It is the basic understanding that those who have lived their experiences know more about it than others (Noblitt, Flores, & Murillo, 2004). This approach will give these English Language learners a voice where they were previously silenced (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Therefore, I find it crucial to rely on *Testimonios* for this particular qualitative research.

Testimonios

Testimonios is a powerful way for Latinos and Latinas to share their stories and find solidarity with others who share similar challenges (Castillo,

1994; Elenes, 2000; Flores & Garcia, 2009; Saldivar-Hull, 2000). As Flores and Garcia stated (2009), "Through our *testimonios* we continue to experience how memory, speaking, and writing are linked to identify trans (formations), empowerment, and social change" (p. 156). It is necessary to give voice and attention to the stories of those who have overcome significant barriers and challenges. Given that "these embodied narratives explain the world through the vantage point of the oppressed and thus are the product of situated knowledge..." (Elenes, 2000, p.115). Beverley notes that a *testimonio* is "a novel or novella length narrative, produced in the form of a printed text, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist of the events she or he recounts" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.547). He additionally states that, "its unit of narration is usually a 'life' or a significant life experience" (p. 547). However, "the speaker does not speak for or represent a community but rather performs an act of identity-formation which is simultaneously personal and collective" (Yudice, 1991, p. 15). Thus, emphasizing the positive aspects of our immigrant population is imperative, and the best way to make those stories available is by conducting a qualitative research relying heavily on *testimonios*. Allowing students, now graduates, to voice their stories will provide them with the opportunity to become speaking subjects (Saavedra, 2011). It will allow them to feel the power they have over their personal experiences, and find solidarity with colleagues (Saavedra, 2011).

The beauty of *Testimonios* is that they are very much *Oral histories*, and

Oral *histories* provide an opportunity to learn the thoughts and views of people, especially groups whose history has been typically ignored or changed (Bernal, 1998). When these voices move from the sidelines to center stage, it provides a different understanding of truth, learning styles, speaking modalities, depictions of history and *cosmovision* (Brabeck, 2003). *Testimonios* propose a new possibility for the marginalized voice to speak on its own behalf and for the dominant group to understand that voice given its uniqueness (Brabeck, 2003). It promotes the expression of personal experience as a collective struggle against oppression from hegemony or oligarchy (Yudice, 1991).

For all these reasons and in an effort to provide a voice to the many and growing population of immigrants in the United States, my primary method to collect and listen to their stories and histories is *testimonios*. I interviewed twelve Mexican immigrants who have earned a BA or higher, and who also had a mentor. It is my intention to hear the success stories of Mexican immigrants whose mentors inspired them to enroll and graduate college, the impact mentors have had over their success, and at the same time through their shared stories, become role models for the Mexican immigrant community, particularly our youth.

Participants

Participants were recruited from an area with high concentration of Mexican first generation immigrants who have successfully attained higher

education and have returned to serve their community. Twelve first generation Mexican immigrants serving their community within the educational system were selected after responding to a massive district e-mail inviting immigrants from the area to participate. Selection criteria included being a first generation immigrant, Mexican born, completed a bachelor degree or higher, and who have or had a mentor of similar heritage. Given that sensitive information from their personal lives were shared, participants were interviewed in their natural setting by accommodating interview locations based on their preferences and comfort. An interview protocol was followed through a series of open-ended questions in order to obtain multiple levels of data.

Data Collection

Data was collected from two sources, primary and secondary. The primary data sources for this study included the participants' responses to mentoring open-ended questions posed in one-on-one semi-structured individual interviews. Interviews were recorded then transcribed for data analysis and accuracy purposes. The secondary source was collected from a demographic survey completed by the participants. Additionally, I will maintain a log of daily activities to reference activities, my thoughts and reactions.

The interview protocol consisted in meeting the participant at the location of their choice. The research questions to this study were designed to explore the meaning of the experience from the participants' perspectives by using open-

ended questions in semi-structured individual interviews. The interview began with introductions in order to develop a personal relationship with participants, followed by sharing stories regarding heritage and research interest. The interview formally began with participant's clarification questions regarding the interview questions. The Interview questions were developed from literature about mentoring. The interview consisted of twelve open-ended questions exploring the nurturing nature of the mentoring relationship, the impact of the mentoring relationship in the mentee's life and academic achievement. In addition to the impact, if at all, the mentorship relationship had in their self-esteem, self-regulatory learning and self-efficacy.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *TESTIMONIOS*

Introduction to the First Generation Mexican Immigrants

One of the most powerful forms of communication is storytelling. Storytelling captures the essence of individual's lived experiences, particularly if narrated by the protagonist. *Testimonios* do exactly that, as stated before, *Testimonios* is a powerful way for Latinos and Latinas to share their stories and find solidarity with others who share similar challenges (Castillo, 1994; Elenes, 2000; Flores & Garcia, 2009; Saldivar-Hull, 2000). The goal of this research is to capture the essence of the first generation Mexican immigrant's lived experiences and history. The purpose of sharing their stories is to allow the reader to understand the importance of creating effective educational environments for first generation immigrants.

Immigration transition can be one of the most remarkable, but daunting experiences of a human being, especially if the foreign country's official language and culture differs dramatically from the one of the immigrants. It is crucial to listen to the oral history of Mexican immigrants as they transition to a foreign country and succeed in the American educational system. Interesting enough, as I began to meet with research participants, I could not help to notice the high resemblance between all of their stories, and also my own. Despite the extensive review of literature, I always questioned if my experiences as first generation

Mexican immigrant were particular to me, but I soon realized that similar experiences, feelings and thoughts were shared amongst all participants and myself.

In this chapter, I describe the findings as shared experiences by the participants through direct contact from interviews, transcriptions, and my notes. 12 interviews were conducted with first generation Mexican immigrants who succeeded in completing higher education with degrees ranging from Bachelors of Arts and Science to Master of Arts Degree. The analysis of the data brought to light the qualities, themes, meanings, and essences that embodied the first generation Mexican immigrant experiences in the American public school system. The concepts and themes that emerged in this study were consistent with research concerning the consistent gap between Latino students in secondary and postsecondary education.

During the interview, the participants discussed issues that impacted their lives during pre and post secondary education. The presentation of the findings is discussed in three steps. First, each participant's story/background is presented. Second, the themes identified by the researcher as they emerged from the data collected are presented. Third, the themes revealed through coded quotes from the transcriptions are used as narrative to expose and document through thematic manifestations.

My Positionality as a researcher played a big role in the data analysis. The examination process began with a deep self-reflection and reexamination of my

experiences as a first generation immigrant. Throughout the interviews, I could not help to compare the experiences of the participants and mine. As a researcher, this process made me significantly more aware about the importance of further investigating the experiences of first generation Mexican immigrants and how mentors play a significant role in changing future generation outcomes.

Participants' Testimonios are shared anonymously in order to protect their identity and confidentiality. The content of each experience shared through their *testimonios* represent their lived experiences. The data was reviewed during the transcription process, revisiting the transcriptions and recordings, and reviewing my notes. I began the analysis process by immersing myself in the data. I reached into my own experiences, as well as the experiences of my participants, to identify experiential thematic representations of the first generation Mexican immigrants' lived experiences in the American public educational system.

One of the very first themes that emerged throughout the interviews, due to the impact it demonstrated to have on each of the participants and myself, was everyone's empowerment to succeed academically due to their resilient nature. Each participant spoke about their efforts to demonstrate their cognitive and academic abilities. They each talked about perceiving a certain amount of judgment or rejection from society due to their inability to communicate fluently. It was interesting to learn that regardless of the age of immigration, ranging from 1 year of age to 17 years old, each participant felt similar rejections in their transitions. Amongst a few other important factors was everyone's positive

relationship with their mentors, regardless of their heritage. Participants with mentors of different heritage conversed about learning cultural traits foreign to them, whereas participants with mentors of similar heritage spoke about the empowerment and motivation to move forward in pursuing their academic goals. In addition, those who had mentors of similar heritage mentioned that sharing similar culture and language benefited their relationship due to a natural connection. They each spoke about their immediate connection due to their ability to communicate and relate; speaking the same language being the strongest factor. An opportunity brought up by their mentors was definitely a consistent theme amongst all participants. They each spoke about opportunities that ranged from motivation to job offerings. All of these contexts spoke to the constructs of social and cultural capital. Self-efficacy and self-esteem were also reoccurring themes. They each spoke about reaffirming conversations with their mentors, in addition to the motivation received by their compliments and words of encouragement. Self-efficacy arose from mentors' words of encouragement, as well as their relationship, and the mentors' position as role models. Finally, participants spoke about the role of their family members as their primary source of inspiration. They spoke about family values that were instilled in them such as caring, trust, respect, and hard work.

Results and Findings

Reminiscent feelings of my educational experiences as an immigrant of

Mexican descent were evoked as I listened to each and every one of the participants' stories. It was with great amazement that I listened to the stories as I uncovered how each participant shared multiple commonalities with my own educational experiences in the American educational system. Most importantly, every experience shared by the participants confirmed the importance and main objective of the study, which is to uncover the extent to which academic mentors influence mentee's academia, specifically Mexican immigrants whose primary language is not English. Throughout this study, six overarching themes emerged: Self-regulatory learning emerged to improve language and academics as a result of adversities, mentorship association due to similar heritage increased social and cultural capital, similar heritage between mentor and mentee enhanced their relationship, mentorship relationship enhanced feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem, mentors served as role models and inspiration, and mentorship relationship enriched academic opportunities.

Descriptions of the participants' Background and Experiences

This section begins with descriptions of the participants' background and experiences. The participants and the researcher reflected on educational experiences from a Mexican immigrant student perspective by reminiscing on the significant events that shaped not only personality and character, but also their educational journey in the United States educational system. Twelve participants between the ages of 22 and 55 years of age were interviewed. At the time of the interview, all participants worked at an educational institution: two substitute

teachers, eight teachers, one coordinator and one principal. The twelve participants content of interest and expertise included 3 in mathematics, 2 in English Language, one Laboratory science, two in psychology, one health education, one in careers and technical school, one in education administration, and one in especial education. All which makes the study even more interesting given the fact that each participant's experience was unique, yet the participants shared many basic similarities.

The Testimonios

Testimonio of Participant 1.

Participant one is a 32-year-old English language arts teacher. She was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at the age of five where she immediately started bilingual classes. She was also a teen mother; she had her first son at age 15, her sophomore year in high school. Her first role model was her mother; she instilled reading habits that would help her not only in reading fluency, but also in learning the new language. Her mother would often take her to the library when she was trying to learn English. Participant one learned early on that, she really disliked being wrong and not knowing the language, therefore she worked really hard to learn English. She felt that the struggles shaped her personality.

...When I was very young my, mom would often take me to the library because she wanted to learn English. So, I had to read comic books and

other things of that nature and kind of self taught to learn English and read English and to understand English. And what helped shape my personality was just the struggle when you were in school, and I didn't know the difference between words like plates and bowls, and other different cognates that have many different words in English that in Spanish its just one word. So, that helped shaped my personality and character because I didn't like to be wrong. I wanted to know the right word (personal communication, March 2015).

She considers herself a fast learner who would learn at the same pace as everyone else, if not faster. Eventually, she transitioned out of bilingual courses to English only courses. That transition was not necessarily an educational struggle, it was more personal. She had to make new friends who did not necessarily speak her native language, Spanish.

In the early years, I was in the Spanish, well bilingual classes back in that day. So, I was learning along, at the same pace as everyone in my class. I actually, I think I learned a little bit faster...then eventually when I got older that we transitioned out of the bilingual classes. It was just a little bit different um, in the sense that I had to make a set of whole new friends, so it wasn't really ever educational it was more personal like you said with it building my character. I had to learn how to get along with different people that didn't necessarily speak Spanish (personal communication, March 2015).

In her later years, she recalls having certain disadvantages that were not necessarily recognized by her at that time. She attended a district with a high population of English language learners; she did not think much of it. However, she remembers taking state exams in fourth/fifth grade and not knowing many words she believes she had not been exposed to. She feels she was not exposed to many books and literature perceived out of they reach.

Ugh, in the later years I had to ugh (long pause); So, most of the schools that I went to were actually geared towards English language learners, so when I was, while I was in that system I never felt I was at a disadvantage because most of us were at the same level, right, we were all EL's, English language learners. And so it wasn't really until later when we were maybe like in fourth/fifth grade were you saw, uh, they gave us like the California state exams and there was a lot of words that we hadn't been exposed to. And, it wasn't necessary that I think I wouldn't have understood it, It's just that everyone else, or we were perceived to be a lower level. So, we weren't exposed to that type of, you know, literature or those types of books. Uhm, and then there were other, I remember this big thing where all the other schools were going to, like Sacramento, because we were learning about the Gold Rush, but then they said our district couldn't go because we were poor and we didn't have the money. So, we weren't able to experience that (personal communication, March 2015). She met her mentor in eight grade, he was her teacher and ASB advisor.

She felt a connection with him due to his personality. He was honest and nurturing, he did not “baby” any of his students.

Okay, so I think the first person that I really, really felt was my mentor was Mr. D. He was my eighth grade teacher and he was also my ASB advisor at the time. And I really liked him because he was different in the sense that he didn't baby anybody...so he was not overbearing but he was nurturing in his own way (personal communication, March 2015).

She also respected his teaching style, especially how he individualized his instruction to accommodate all level learners. She particularly appreciated the fact that he exposed her to higher-level readings, something she had never been exposed to.

...He would give those of us who are at a higher level...different novels which were at a higher level than the kids who were lower-level. He exposed me to a lot of the Dr. Jekyll and Hyde and the Labyrinth and a lot of mythology and things that other teachers kind of didn't do. So, he contributed in that he expose me to a lot of things that I hadn't been exposed to in the past and he let me know that you know people weren't going to baby your whole life (personal communication, March 2015).

In addition, her mentor provided instrumental support to be a better student and exposed her to tasks relevant to her career goals. While in high school, he facilitated opportunities for her to job shadow and learn new things. He also wrote letters of recommendation to apply to different Universities, and eventually

helped her attain a teaching position. While working in the same middle school, he continued to provide instrumental support for her career growth.

...when I was high school I decided that I was going to go to college for that and he was very helpful in the sense that when we were freshmen we had to take a career prep course and you had to write to these people who were your mentors and he would allow us to go to (middle school name) and allow us to do job shadowing. He'd always taught me things that they didn't teach us in high school, like how do read files and how to go through the different things like clerical work... He was always helpful with everything else and everything that I needed...so, whenever I had a challenge, I would go back to him...He did write me a letter of recommendation when I was applying to the universities... I believe he helped, Mrs. Palacios, my first boss, give me the job there. And then he would sent me to the different trainings and opportunities that we had there at the middle school (personal communication, March 2015).

Amongst other things, she valued her mentor's work ethic and his straightforward personality; such traits are now replicated in her current position.

I value that he had a really strong worth ethic, he would always you know, be there. I admired his way of being straightforward and telling you what you needed to hear, not what you wanted to hear, but he was still caring...I feel like, I do that with my students and I feel that's what they need to learn... (personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentor was not of her same background or heritage, which was beneficial for her because she learned many things about his culture and the English language.

...He was an Anglo man, I think it just influenced me in the way that...there were things that he didn't know (about her heritage) and there were things in his heritage and his culture that I didn't know... I learned a lot about his culture and he just exposed me to new things... So, he explained a lot of things from his heritage and his words and cognates to me that I don't think otherwise I know... (personal communication, March 2015).

Her main source of motivation was her family. She remembers her parent's struggles therefore she wanted to build a better future for herself.

...My motivation was like for example my parents came here they had to give up what they had in Mexicali over there my dad was high was attending a university any had to stop because he had my sister and myself so he stopped going to University to come and take care of us and kind of give us a better life and bring this over to the United States. So, I figured, you know, every generation has to strive to be a little bit better than the one before (personal communication, March 2015).

However, her mentor inspired her career choice. She originally started as an elementary school teacher, but she soon realized that, that was not her passion. She wanted to be more like her mentor, he inspired her to be a middle school

teacher instead.

...I wanted to be an elementary school teacher, so I majored in liberal studies and then when I was you know in the midst of all ... I decided you know what...it wasn't where my passion. I really enjoyed what he was doing and what he taught me so it inspired me to go into middle school instead (personal communication, March 2015).

In addition, her mentor gave her confidence. She was never doubtful of her abilities because she felt well supported and she knew she always had a place to go.

... I had a good support system I knew that I could go back and ask them questions. So, I was really confident when I graduated that I'd be able to find a job there at that middle school...I don't think I've ever not been confident I always well, like I had somewhere to go (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 2.

Participant 2 is a 34-year-old female English teacher. She immigrated to the United States from Mexico at the age of 4. She first started school as a kindergartener in bilingual classes. Being in bilingual courses made her first school experiences "comfortable." She stated, "I felt comfortable because everybody spoke the same language and it was okay" (personal communication, March 2015).

Participant 2 had her first positive academic influence in second grade,

her second grade teacher, Mrs. Gonzalez. Mrs. Gonzalez recognized her ability to learn and in the middle of second grade transferred her to full immersion classes. According to the participant, this very same positive experience was also one of the most “scary” experiences she had as an immigrant and non-English speaker.

So, they sent me to full immersion in the middle of second grade, and I remember that was really scary. Like, just being thrown into class with all the students that spoke English. I could barely understand the lesson the teacher was giving up in the front, but I would always have to worry about the little conversations that they had with each other (personal communication, March 2015).

She recalls experiences in which students made fun of her due to her inability to understand the language and that made her insecure. She found comfort in reading and learning given that socialization was difficult.

...I didn't want to be like made fun of so I think that that probably drove me a little bit to try to just be, I think I was a little bit insecure because I wasn't sure of everything they were saying to me and that drove me more inward towards just focusing on what I could understand which was the lesson, reading, that aspect of it, the social interactions are a little bit more difficult (personal communication, March 2015).

Nevertheless, she believes that her teacher Mrs. Gonzalez and her decision to transfer her to an English only class made a positive impact in her self-esteem.

So that always uhm, pops out and I remember that the lady who transferred me to that class was Miss Gonzalez ... So, I think just the fact that they believed that I could function kind of made me feel a little bit more comfortable...So, I thought, oh I can do it (personal communication, March 2015).

She does not describe her relationships as one of a mentor, but instead she describes them as significant academic “influences.” Her first influence was Mrs. Gonzalez, a young Mexican teacher who believed in her and transferred her to an English only class. Then she met Mrs. Rodear in ninth grade. Mrs. Rodear also believed in her, despite the participant’s lack of academic focus. By this time, the participant was able to fluently communicate in English, which made it easier for them two to connect given that Mrs. Rodear is Caucasian and does not speak Spanish. Nevertheless, that same difference in culture and experience called the participant’s interests.

And then later on, in ninth grade, I had Mrs. Rodear. She was Caucasian, and her life I thought, was very inspirational. She had a daughter on her own that was not her, her blood, which to me was weird because in Mexican families we don't see like a lot of adoption like that; your kids are yours, like *del papa y de la mama*, or whatever. But she had that, and she was always talking about the agony of defeat and saying how much potential I had because by this time, I was like not really focused on my academics and she tried to always be there for me ninth-grade and 10th

grade and did the best she could (personal communication, March 2015).

But, the one person she does refer as mentor is Mr. H. This one individual not only believed in her, but he went above and beyond to make sure she reached her academic potential. He provided her with instrumental support to continue higher education; he served as a role model and provided the psychosocial support necessary for her self-efficacy and self-esteem.

And by the time I got to eleventh grade, I met Mr. H which I think would be more like a mentor type. He was always trying to teach me about why it was important to succeed and get a higher education. He would talk about the struggle Mexicans that we have as Mexicans, something that I was never interested in...(personal communication, March 2015).

One example of instrumental support was when she struggled with mathematics. Mr. H introduced her to one of his colleagues in the math department and arranged for her to meet with him for tutoring.

Okay uhm, I did really poorly in math always and Mr. H was really good friend with with Mr... Mr. RH. He was really good friends with Mr. RH, so he would tell me to go get tutoring with Mr. RH, I would, he was really nice (personal communication, March 2015).

After graduating from high school, she was determined to continue with technical school, however Mr. H went looking for her and convinced her to enroll in a community college. This experience in particular changed her educational path completely. This was his greatest contribution as a mentor.

By the end of senior year, I ended up getting pregnant, and most of the other people around, you know they don't really care, they fall out of your life, but he heard that I was in ROP the following year and he heard that I had a child and that I was in ROP and that I wasn't in college. He got so upset, that he went to go find me there. I saw him, I was like sitting in class writing medical terminology or whatever we were doing and I could see him like looking around and I was like, oh hey look, there is Mr. H! And I kept paying attention and when there was a break, I went out there and he was still looking around and he's like oh (name of the participant)! I hear you, I was looking for you, how are you? And he was like, really upset that I ended up at ROP and that really impacted me. I was like, oh my gosh this person really does care!...he came and he told me you can do better than this, so I went back and talk to my dad and he said okay go ahead to college for the nursing program then I did that...But the role of my mentor was significant because when he found me, I was already an statistic. Single mom, I did graduate from high school, but I wasn't seeking higher education and he came in and talked to me and told me I could do better than that, told me I could go to community college get that done, and that's how it happened... he planted the seed, like he made me think, somebody outside of my family thinks I can do well. Somebody else believes in me...just the idea that someone cared that much, somebody I hadn't seen in a year cared that much and they went to go get me and to

talk to me to make sure I was okay, that had a profound, I think impact on my self-esteem and my psyche (personal communication, March 2015).

When asked about the qualities of her mentor, participant one stated that she really valued his honesty and openness.

My mentor was always honest...he wasn't afraid to show us his good side, and his bad side because... I don't like hypocrites, and he was never hypocritical, he would tell us even...that he had struggles with his wife communicating and there was violence. So at that point I was like, hmmm why is he telling us this? But, I think he would do it as a way to teach us that everybody has struggles. Like, even if we see him and he's a teacher and in a leadership role that we all have struggles that we always have to work our way through it and I like that, he was just very genuine...(personal communication, March 2015).

Furthermore, she also valued the similarities between them. He was role model, a mentor and an inspiration.

... I felt, well he's a lot like me and he went to college. So, I'll just maybe, I could go to college too just like you did you know his life hasn't been perfect...(personal communication, March 2015).

Her parents and other family members were also a source of inspiration.

For higher education, I think that the route started with my parents because when they lived in Mexicali, before they had to emigrate us here to Coachella umm..dad was gonna be an engineer and he was like taking

night classes and then a lot of my mom's brothers and sisters are teachers and there's a lawyer in the family so that was kinda there (personal communication, March 2015).

She also appreciated the conversations with her mentor about the Latino community. She believed those conversations made her proud to be Mexican and that improved her self-confidence and self-esteem.

... He was the first one that talk to us about the different dynamics within the Latino community ... I decided I just want to be one of those Mexicans, you know, I wanted to be more like my mom's family that they help each other out in *lo poquito que tienen*, with the little things that they have...he exposed me to a lot of Chicana literature and he taught us a little bit of the history of Mexico and so I thought, you know we don't always have to be a concord nation that's in our past and want to be part of, I want to be a proud Mexican now. I'm proud of my culture make my people proud. I speak Spanish correctly and I speak English correctly and I think he help me take pride in both of those sides (personal communication, March 2015).

Nevertheless, all these experiences as an immigrant have demonstrated to have a life long lasting effect. Even until this day, communicating at a social level is a lot more difficult than academically. She wonders if people question her ability to teach English language arts and she is very self-conscious about her grammar when communicating in social media.

Now, I noticed that even when I text, type or I'm on social media, I always try to use the most correct grammar because it's what, I guess, it was my security blanket. I couldn't communicate with the students on the social level but I could be their academic equal and that was my goal, like I'm not dumb. I can do this, just because I think in Spanish before I do it, you know it takes me a little bit longer to put my thoughts together doesn't mean that I can't write a better essay than you...being an ELL, I think it does sometimes impact me a little bit because I wonder if I have a chip on my shoulder. You know, do they perceive me as a less proficient English teacher it's because I'm Mexican, can they hear my accent and I try really hard to make sure that my grammar is okay whenever I send work emails but that's more my self-esteem issues than anything else (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 3.

Participant 3 is a 24-year-old female psychologist who was born in the United States, but was raised in Mexico until the age of 14. She emigrated from a border town in Mexico, Mexicali, to a border town in the United States, Calexico. Her main purpose for immigration was attaining higher education in the United States given that she has multiple family members with American degrees.

She started school in the United States as a sophomore in high school, which was "scary." Although, she was determined to go to college, she felt pressured and was worried she was not going to pass the high school exit exam,

CAHSEE. She was denied access to a four-year university when her high school did not allow her to make up her freshman English language arts class during the summer or during regular school time given that she started school her sophomore year. The school only offer summer school for remediation purposes, not advancement.

I was very scared because it was a new culture, it was a new language and more than anything since I got here they told me about this test that I have to pass in order to graduate high school, the CAHSE exam. And, I was a little worried because I didn't have a lot of contact with the grammar portion and the English... I was very frustrated for this reason because I didn't feel confident in my language and more than anything it was more that I felt very scared to not graduate because my goal was to go to university. I asked what would I need in order to go to a university just transfer not going to college, and they told me that I need four years of like regular English, starting from ninth grade to 12th grade. And since it was my first year in the United States, I was in tenth grade I know that I was missing already two years. So, I went to summer school for 10th grade English, I tried to take for the other summer class the ninth grade that I was missing, but I couldn't because I didn't repeat the class or anything. So, I didn't have the opportunity to have my ninth grade of English (personal communication, March 2015).

Participant 3 was determined to graduate high school and go to a four-year

university; therefore, she transferred out of English Language Development (ELD) classes, to regular college preparatory language arts classes.

Obviously, because I was determined to go to the university, I transferred myself from ELD to regular English. That was a very difficult for me, but I was determined to do it. I took 11th grade regular English and 12th grade regular English. My 11th year was a little bit harder especially because it was my second year in the United States and the professor, she was very umm...very special. She like, she didn't help me a lot and she didn't understand that I was a new student here in this country, she was not in touch with my background. So my grades weren't that good, but in my 12th grade, my professor helped me a lot and I just had straight A's and I feel more confident, not really that much, but a bit more confident (personal communication, March 2015).

She believes that her language barriers and challenges helped shape her current personality. She became a self-regulated learner after she realized that her teachers were not helping her. She had to figure out ways to overcome her challenges and limitations.

I know my limitations, I saw professors, they don't realize our background and they they're not very good at feeling how we're feeling and helping us to do better and the areas that we need to work more. I was determined just to do more effort on myself and look for ways. For example, I went to tutoring classes after school and I just, I knew that I have to work harder

on my grammar and if I want to be in English regular classes for the rest of my life I have to just look for the way to have my, you know, my essays or anything. I needed tutoring classes in order to do it, and I that's how I finished my bachelors actually (personal communication, March 2015).

Luckily, participant 3 had a very strong support system in her family. Her academic mentors are within her family. Her parents are professionals in Mexico, her father a math teacher and her mother a psychologist. She also has two aunts with a master degree and one working on her doctorate degree.

Yeah, I feel very close to them [parents] and with my aunts here in the United States too. They have masters and I have another one working on her doctorate degree (personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentors provided psychosocial support.

So, I feel very close to them and that makes me feel that if they can do it, I can do it too. That's why I' am working on it so I can get my masters and in the future have my doctorate degree in psychology...My aunts here in the United States support me a lot. They help me with all the paperwork that I have to do in order for to get my Masters. So, I really feel the support and even though they know that I don't have a really good grammar and probably I don't feel very comfortable with my English, they also supported the idea and they don't think it's crazy that I can finish my masters or my doctorate degree here... I didn't feel ashamed to go with them... every time I feel insecure or I have any questions, I feel very confident that I can

go with them and they can help me and guide me in order to feel confident and achieve my goals (personal communication, March 2015).

As well as instrumental support,

My really, really challenge was in the grammar area, probably not very good at English because I hear how they talk and I try to imitate... every time that I have a question in grammar, I send my essays to my aunt and she helps me a lot and teaches me how to write correctly and I feel very supported because they were helping me...I have the opportunity to go with them anytime I have a question and every time I don't know how to write an essay (personal communication, March 2015).

And, they served as role models.

For me, they are like my role models. For example, I know in order for them to have a bachelors or masters and a future doctorate degree they also had some limitations. I took their experience and everything they went through in order so I can learn...I learned from their stories and experiences and they give me kind of a way to direct my education, so they really help me a lot... I really want to do the same and looking just to help everybody around because of the same positive reaction I have from them (personal communication, March 2015).

Participant 3 really appreciates and respects her mentors' hard work, willingness to help others and being good people.

If they have a goal, they just don't sit down, they work for it, they work

harder and they achieve their goals no matter what. Besides, they are very good persons... they work for their goals and they also help everybody else around and they try [for] them to achieve their goals...For me, I see them like team work for everybody's helping each other in order to achieve their goals (personal communication, March 2015).

Being part of the same family definitely helped their mentor-mentee relationship, but the fact that there were commonalities in their backgrounds and experiences as first generation immigrants made their connection even stronger.

They are similar, they also immigrated here so I know they had difficulties with bullying and stuff...I know they had challenges and they didn't matter they went to school. They did it, so for me, I feel in the same background from them and I understand that no matter what happened if we have someone that support you and if you are determined to do something you're going to do it. But it's easier if you have a mentor so you can know and have an idea how to get to your goal (personal communication, March 2015).

She also feels that her mentors are her inspiration for higher education. She grew up seeing them working hard to accomplish their goals, she feels that is the right thing to do.

My inspiration are my mentors, basically because I think it's easier when you have mentors that have an education and you grow up seeing those people getting better and getting better education you feel like I can do it

too (personal communication, March 2015).

Her last comment offered a powerful message to teachers and everyone in the educational system.

I immigrated to Calexico, a town very close to Mexico. I learned that, sometimes the professors have very low expectations for us. So, they don't try to push us to improve our grammar classes or English classes or even practice English...I had to move because sadly, you can see, those low expectations didn't help you a lot in order to have a higher education. It will be very nice if we teach or let our professors know especially the ones close to Mexico in other areas that they have to pay attention and do not have to low expectations. That just because you're very close to Mexico all they need to know [is] just the basics of English. They're going to do something else in their life. I think if we teach our kids since preschool or anything that education is very important for ourselves and if you wanted to something we have to pay attention to this language and be bilingual... especially right now that they can do whatever they want, but not giving the measures that you have low expectations for your students and they just can work at a store or any restaurant. I think if we take our kids in school and especially high school and let them know that they can go to any University they want, just you have to work for it and you can do it... so we have to let the professors know that they have a very good tool and responsibility in their hands. In order to make a better person and

students and push themselves [we need to] teach them, talk to them and express [their] experience in order for them to feel like going to school and be better and if you go to school you can be better. Definitely an educated society is a stronger society (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 4

Participant 4 is a 24-year-old substitute teacher who majored in Psychology. He was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at the age of 11. He emigrated from a boarder town in Mexico, Mexicali, to a U.S. boarder town, Calexico. He described his immigration experience as easy, compared to students who attend predominantly English speaking schools, given that most of the students had similar experiences and spoke the same language.

Well, I immigrated to the United States when I was 11 years old. Uh, It was a hard experience at the beginning because when I moved here, I have only ELD classes. So, pretty much the teachers and the students were pretty much like me. They speak Spanish, most of them, about actually about 85% of the student population came from Mexico and some of them crossed the border every day. And so that make my initiation process in the United States as a student more easy (personal communication, March 2015).

However, attending college was not as easy. He recognizes that not having practiced his English language was a disadvantage.

Uh, on the other hand when I went to college, it was difficult for me

because I didn't get to practice English as much as I needed. So, even if my work was in English, I got that support from my professors, like to talk to them in Spanish and they were like they were okay with that. But, when I went to college and then University, I find it, uh, not as helpful because I needed to talk to my professors in English. I need to talk to my classmates in English, so communication and my writing skills weren't as proficient as I wish (personal communication, March 2015).

Nevertheless, having gone to a predominately Spanish-speaking school and town was helpful psychosocially. He did not experience bullying or any traumas for his language barriers or for being different. He believes being in a country that “is not yours” pushed him to try harder to succeed and gave him strength and confidence in his ability to accomplish his goals.

At the beginning I think that it help me because I wasn't bullied and I wasn't traumatized...so, my experience, my personality was shaped in a way that I need to succeed and that I need to always look for the best in me because being a Mexican in a country that is not yours, uh, puts a little bit more of weight in succeeding. So, it shaped me in a way that I think I'm stronger and I more confident about what I can accomplish (personal communication, March 2015).

He also mentioned that initially, attending school in a foreign country was hard, but his last year was particularly harder because he commuted daily from Mexico to the United States.

It was pretty hard to, you know, the first, I guess 5-6 years that I came was pretty hard because you don't know anybody and (ugh) you don't really know how the system works. And, in the last year, I don't know if I told you but I crossed the border every day the last year. I struggled because you need to wake up earlier than most students sometimes you don't even get to have breakfast you know that makes learning a little bit tougher because you cannot concentrate as well as others and you need to put more effort (personal communication, March 2015).

Participant 4 did not have a mentor, other than his mother, for his k-12 career.

Per se, an academic mentor, I didn't have any until I got out of high school. Okay, so, for my elementary school to my senior year pretty much my mentor was my mom. She always encouraged me to do my best (personal communication, March 2015).

He met his mentor through his girlfriend at that time, his now wife. His mentor is a teacher who provided instrumental support for his current job.

...right after high school, I met my now wife. She has an aunt who teaches for the (a school district's name) district and she encouraged me to pursue an further my education at the University...She pretty much guided me through the process, you know, you need to take so many units. We actually went over my classes and discussed how many units and we did some math about it. I finished my bachelor's degree in less than 4 years, to be exact three years and a half. I finished my bachelor's degree and

that was thanks to her because we went over my units, the classes that I needed and it was like a combination of her advice and also my counselor...I got a bachelors degree in psychology so my mentor told me what can I do with that degree in the future. If I wanted to go into teaching I can do that as well, just get my license [teaching credential]...Currently, I'm a substitute teacher thanks to her advice and I'm pretty thankful for her...you know, you don't know what's next after you're done with high school. So, since she's a teacher she told me, you know you can get your bachelors degree and get exposed to the educational field? And then, if you like it, you can even become a teacher if you want, but first you need to become a substitute teacher so you can sense what it is (personal communication, March 2015).

For participant 4, having the same background as his mentor was an important factor that helps their connection.

Well, we both come from Mexico but also from the same city; we both came from Mexicali which is not too far away from here. We both assimilated into the same culture and having this culture and background in common makes me have a stronger connection with her (personal communication, March 2015).

Additionally, he feels a great deal of respect and admiration for her.

She's always [been] a hard-working person. Since I met her, I noticed that she had been through a lot, and like, she is a full-time mom, she's a full-

time student, and a full-time teacher. So, that really impressed me about her (personal communication, March 2015).

However, he believes his motivation mostly comes from within, but he recognized that his mentor has been a motivation and an inspiration to attain higher education despite cultural challenges.

I think that this motivation comes within me, because I grew up always pursuing to be the best in everything. [Also], because been exposed to this culture like requires from you more effort. So, that motivation comes from within me, and also I see my wife's aunt accomplishments and make me believe that higher education is possible no matter, no matter what cultural background you came from... my mentor, ugh her accomplishments and her support made me believe that everything is possible (personal communication, March 2015).

Nevertheless, his mother plays a substantial role in his academic success. His roots and his mother's advice always remained with him.

...When I just came to high school, my mother was my primarily mentor, her pride in me, her comments, patience, encouragement. I've always strived for the best, to be the best and make a positive change to society (personal communication, March 2015).

He believes that his greatest benefit from having a mentor in the academic sector has been mostly instrumental. He mentions that his pursue for higher education and his ability to complete his goals in a timely manner is attributed to

his mentor.

The first thing that I can think of [regarding mentorship opportunities] is pursuing a higher education, as well as finishing my bachelors degree in less than four years. And, after I finished it, I wanted to follow her footsteps into education, that's why I became a substitute teacher. I am currently seeking a teaching credential program (personal communication, March 2015).

Also, through the conversations with his mentor and her support, he believes to have learned how to self-regulate.

Well having such a close relationship with my mentor made me believe that everything is possible. With hard work and just giving your best in every situation... most of the conversations that I have with my mentor gave me structure and set the path for my educational goals. Actually, those conversations put me where I am, in this moment (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 5.

Participant 5 is a 40-year-old male high school mathematics teacher. He double majored in Liberal Studies and Cross Cultural Studies. He immigrated to the United States at the age of 12. He met his mentor in high school. His mentor is also a first generation immigrant like him, which allowed them to instantly connect.

One of his most daunting events in his life was definitely immigrating to

the United States at the age of twelve; things such as educational environment and systems, building's structure, and people in general were different compared to what he was used to.

So, 12 years old claustrophobic in the classroom because you're coming from small classrooms with big windows because there's no air conditioning, and all of a sudden you're coming to those enclosed classrooms with the little windows... I didn't feel the freedom I think that it had to do with the fact that wasn't recognizing anything in school; very different kids, different noise and everything was like a shock first day of school. I didn't go to class; I didn't know what to do. I sat there, outside in the play area, my brother and I sat there the whole day. Nobody told us where to go and we just up for lunch. We did whatever we saw people would do (personal communication, March 2015).

He described how he sat on a playground bench for the entire day his first day in American school. He sat there planning with his younger brother what they would do if someone would come to them, especially because no one would speak Spanish. He talked about the behaviors of people in 1986, he described how other students did not accept Spanish as their social language.

...They told us the room number and the teacher...they told us to go eat and they were supposed to pick us up to take us to the classroom but nobody did...we had no idea what to do, so we sat a bench, with my brother... I have no clue what to do, he's a year younger than me so he

always depended on what I decided to do, out of the sudden, you know, we're just gonna sit here, and have no clue. We were there, we were talking, "if this happens you gonna do this, if somebody comes and ask you something pay attention to how he sounds maybe we can understand it by the way the sounds." We were trying to figure out what's going to happen. This was 86, a lot of people did know Spanish and the students wouldn't say the new Spanish...in the valley it was a big deal if you knew Spanish, that was not a good thing so you were secluded and kind of away, by the peers, the students (personal communication, March 2015).

Of course, getting home was also challenging. They were frightened and did not know how to ask for help; fortunately his keen observation skills helped them overcome that challenge. "There was this kid that I think got the bus at the same place we did and that's how I knew which bus to take...I told my brother, "we're going to follow him wherever he goes"" (personal communication, March 2015). Those experiences demonstrated to be a turning point for this participant. Not knowing what to do, how to communicate or even ask for help was life changing. The next day, he decided to take control, go to the office and ask for help. Once taken to his classroom he realized that there were other people like him, with similar life experiences, and more than anything they spoke the same language.

Next day comes in, and I'm asking, "where my supposed to go?" "Well, right now go play" Hay *vamos otra ves* (there we go again). That was a turning point for me, that's when I said, you know, "What I'm gonna go

ask?' I was 12, you don't know how to ask for help when you are 12... that's when I met other people that were like me, that's when I heard Spanish for the first time and understood. That gave me comfort that was my turning point. So that was how I grew...if I had to say an experience that shaped me, that was it (personal communication, March 2015).

Another challenge he had to face was poverty. He had to work after school and during the weekends to help his parents. He lived in a small trailer about three miles away from a bus stop. The trailer was small, had no restroom and no T.V. It was a place to sleep at night in the middle of grape fields.

And then the idea of, your off from school and your parents take you to work with them a little bit after school and during the weekends you go into work. You get up at four in the morning because they have to get up to cook their lunch and you get up too. And they drop you off at the corner where the bus is going to pick you up or you walk, we used to walk like 3 miles to get to the bus stop...I felt comfortable where we lived because it was just a small trailer... I mean small trailer, my truck is bigger than the trailer we lived in...we used to live in grapefruit vine yards...we had no TV, no video games, no restrooms, nothing just a lot of space, but I felt comfortable because I had nothing over there (in Mexico)...I was comfortable at home, but not at school... (personal communication, March 2015).

Eventually, he became part of a mentorship program, the Migrant

Program. This program opened opportunities for him. Through the program's fieldtrips he was able to visit different Universities, including the one he ended up attending. This program gave him a different perspective; education was not an option, it was more like the next step, the natural thing to do. He affirms that the majority of people who were part of this program attained higher education.

I did have an academic mentor being a migrant student; I was part of the Migrant program... My first experience with migrant program and with a mentor was actually a summer in Cal State San Bernardino, we spent two weeks... I can say that a good 90% of those four of us went in the special he continued to go into higher education. So that was my first experience, and we did that freshman, sophomore [and] junior year. So that being my first experience, it was the idea of that's where our next step is college because I got to see the University our second year we are actually not only went to spend the two weeks at San Bernardino but we also had a week where we went to four different universities... (personal communication, March 2015).

In addition to the Migrant program, he had another mentor in the academic setting, his math teacher. He believes his connection and relationship with this mentor initiated due to the fact that they had many things in common such as heritage and background.

...My math teacher turned out to be my mentor in a way, not officially. One of those people that you talk to and then you connect; same

background, even where we come from, very similar north part of Mexico. And just sharing ideas of how he was when he was young and how I was, how he felt when he first came over and how all that change happened to him in his life and how it happened to me. And I think I saw it as, ok if I'm going through this right now, and he is there, I think I can be there too. The fact that I wanted to be a teacher that was, even if I didn't think about, it I think I always knew I was going to be a teacher. In a way and I had somebody who was a teacher, the only person that I know that had the same background as I did... I knew he was super bright guy super smart he showed me his degree and not a lot of people can have this degrees like that and I connected with that idea oh I have the same issue with the speaking and pronouncing as he does so I don't want to worry about that (personal communication, March 2015).

Both mentorship experiences provided instrumental and psychosocial support. His teacher mentor for example, he would tutor him and other students with similar background on Saturdays. He would constantly reinforce their mathematical abilities. He would talk to them about different career choices involving mathematics.

...With other students that he worked with, that had similar background as I did, he would spend Saturdays and we would go review math, he was a math teacher, and we would go over math. There was a test they used to do, it was a national test, I don't know, they would rank students and he

always kept on saying, “You guys are good students, you understand math different and you can be good and you can score better so we’re going to get you ready for that...” Which I used to do when I was in Mexico with my teacher, they have academic Olympias...my brother, who was younger than me, he got to do that...I think that was my first indirect mentor, was my brother, I always wanted to be what he was...So, when he said we should study Saturdays, I felt like, oh that’s what I’m used to...and then when we took that test, we got the results and I remember scoring in the top 3% and it was excited... that’s when he kept saying, you know, you’re good in math so maybe you should think about being a teacher...it just need to be the next step (personal communication, March 2015).

The validation and comfort he received from both mentorship experiences are clear. He found confidence and self-efficacy through his mentor; knowing that his mentor had a strong accent, yet he was really smart gave him the confidence to believe in his intellectual abilities, even if others teased him about his accent.

I think it was for a time catching up to me, the idea that I wouldn’t feel comfortable speaking in front of everybody because I would not sound right...They did mock me because I didn’t sound right and one of the teachers just said, “if you are that better than him then how come he’s getting better grades” [students responded], “He cheated, you cheated! That was the answer and then I had already seen Mr. J go through

that...So, I when they started saying that to me it didn't even bother me. By that time, it was already in my head that doesn't matter however I sound, doesn't matter, give me a pencil and I'll prove it to you (personal communication, March 2015).

Family was a significant factor in his academic attainment. He was the oldest child in his family; therefore he had to set the example as it is accustomed in Mexican culture. He always perceived college as the natural next step, not as an option and for that, he was considered the wisest one of the family.

I never thought I was going to be the first want to go to college it was a big reveal that was for me for me, it was like what's next...So, I think at that point I was the wisest one of the family because I was going to college...(personal communication, March 2015).

The quality that he most admired about his mentor was his intelligence and also his similar background, especially because it was easy for them to relate and communicate fluently in Spanish. Additionally, having the same background facilitated their relationship by being able to understand one another not just because of Spanish, but also the speaking modalities of their hometown.

I could see how smart he is and I think that was a quality that I always admired...I like being around people that are smart and how easy it was for us to automatically go back to her first language and just how fluid and what we thought came out... even our voice our tone of voice this is very from the north very strong voice, very high and that kind of brought me

back to myself... a lot of people had a hard time hearing me in English and in Spanish after a while because I just got used to that tone of voice and when I talk to him to our high notes... And he's a very calm person but when he was around his family he goes back to being in the Hermosillo... and I think that something that I liked, that I thought we had in common big families because that was good (personal communication, March 2015).

His source of inspiration was definitely his family; he has multiple family members who were educators in Mexico. He relates how they inspired him to

My six grade teacher it was my uncle and he started teaching when he was 17...my grandma was a teacher, not that she had a degree but... they were the only ones educated... my great grandma decided to teach people, so it was then my grandma... for my uncle, it was, oh I'm the next one to do it...he became so good that people requested him at the beginning of the year or there would be a big line of people that wanted to have their kid in his class, and that was a big deal for me... that's one of the things that I first noticed, that's when I wanted to be a teacher...I have cousins that are already doctors and lawyers in Mexico, so school was already embedded in me, but I didn't know how far... for me it was the next obvious thing to do (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 6.

Participant 6 is a 32-year-old female high school mathematics teacher. She holds a Bachelors of Science in mathematics and a Master degree in

education. She was born in Los Angeles California but was immediately taken to Mexico where she resided until the age of 15. She immigrated to the United States at the age of 15 where she enrolled in high school as a freshman. She believes that immigrating as a teenager gave her a different perspective; she was grateful of the opportunity to have a better life in the United States.

I came to the U.S. when I was 15. So, obviously I came with a different perspective...when I came to the US, you know, I was thankful for everything because we missed so much. I didn't have many things in Mexico that when I came here my perspective was totally different... I couldn't believe that people would give you like food and things like that (personal communication, March 2015).

However, she soon realized that there was a negative aspect to her transition. She talks about constantly having to defend herself because of cultural differences. She feels that these differences and constant struggle made her stronger and pushed her to be resilient and succeed in order to prove she was intelligent.

So, I became like thankful, very thankful, but on the other side as well, I think I became, umm stronger? And also, at times you know, because I had to constantly defend myself, and just be proud of who I was because of the language obviously. People would make fun of me because I couldn't say the right words, [mostly] the students. And it was kind of hard, like, I always found myself trying to, to prove that I was smart, trying to

show that I was worth it. You know, that I just didn't know the language, but I was smart. So that, you know shaped my character, and I became just like stronger. When people would make mean comments, I would just be like "Okay?" You know, and I kind of just got used to that and I would just block them and move on because I knew I was worth it... (personal communication, March 2015).

Fortunately, she had multiple mentors throughout her educational and personal journey as an immigrant. Most of those mentors were women who shared multiple similarities such as language, schooling and understanding of her culture. She felt that those commonalities enhanced their mentee/mentor relationship by providing the necessary trust in order to make a connection.

I was very fortunate to have people in my life who guided me, and mentored me. Umm, and for some reason a lot of them are women, some males, but I think in general you know women. Um and so, I feel close to them, all of them I would say in general. Umm, but I think they were like in different parts of my life so far. So, when I came to the U.S., you know teachers were my mentors, and two of them were my same race and one of them wasn't. But, I think the hook into, like trusting that mentor, was the fact that this person had lived in Mexico and knew Spanish even though you know she was American. Um so, that right there just built the trust, like right away. Just knowing that that person knew my culture, knew Spanish, understood and lived and went through like school in Mexico, so

that really like just made a connection (personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentors provided great contributions to her life. First of all, she spoke about self-efficacy by believing in her intellectual capabilities.

They [her mentors] would tell me that I was very smart, that I was very strong and you know that I was focused, that I knew where I wanted to go and I just didn't look back. You know, I want to have a career, and I'm going for that...(personal communication, March 2015).

She also mentions instrumental and psychosocial support, especially during her earlier years of immigration. Instrumental support by guiding and advising her on regards to classes she needed to take to meet her educational goals, and psychosocial support by listening and encouraging her during troubled times.

I mean she's my guide towards, like, what classes to take here at [high school name]. And what she did after, the whole time, it was just you know guiding me through (umm) the hoops. You know, when she would be the person that would give me the courage and I would go crying after English class and say "Ms. the students you know, they're making fun of me" and she would be there to say "You're fine, you're doing okay". Um, and she would go fight for my classes, you know, with the counselors because she knew that I was smart and that I could do it and sometimes I wasn't getting the right classes. And she would go and say, "she can handle it, you are going to give it to her." So it was that, and I felt I knew I had somebody to

go to. And any question I had about anything about college...I mean she opened those doors for me, and she was there. I mean scholarships, applying for all of that. Umm you know, she was there making sure I understood the process of applying for financial aid, all of that, but also I think she became not only like an educational mentor but more of a personal as well... She knew that I was here with just my aunt, that I was by myself, and she just became that, you know, that person that was there on different levels. You know personal and educational, and in general... I remember that history and you know one of the science classes ...Chemistry!..She would encourage me to like take history, so that I would understand the history behind this...She would tell me, even if it's not required, take it, because it will help you become a better educator, you know you're going to understand the people from this country, and in the science... the chemistry class, I would come back, I mean even if I had already graduated from high school. She continued to be my mentor in my future years in college, and I would talk to her, and she would give me advice, "Go to tutoring. Go!" You know she would continue to do that (personal communication, March 2015).

She met the rest of her mentors after she graduated college. They also offered psychosocial, but mostly instrumental support.

The other ones well, I found them after I was done with my career, you know, when I was working. So, those are people that I, I still look up to...I

did ASES, I did CARE, and I was gonna go into the admin as well. So it was because of that, it was because I was given that opportunity by my mentors you know, because they're pushing me to do this, "You can do this, you can do that" and little by little giving me the opportunity to just try different things (personal communication, March 2015).

She believes that shared similarities such as culture, language and gender made facilitated their connection. But mainly, she appreciated the fact that they demonstrated to care for her, and they able to see her potential despite her limitation. Later, she realized that there was a powerful personal experience shared amongst her and all her mentors which was not having a father.

...The fact that they recognized something in you, and that they recognize something in me. They knew that I was worth it and the fact that they knew that I was at a disadvantage because of language. But the fact that they recognized that this person can, she's smart, she can do it, and that just pushed me to do it. [They] make sure that I didn't fall; you know in the middle with everybody else and just get disappointed. Umm, that was very valuable, I think that was, you know, what I would say has the most value. Umm all of them were people that I looked up to, and somehow, you know, talking to them was very interesting... I had to relate to them because of something that we had in common...they all have umm; they don't have their dad. It's funny how later on, we kind of talked about it, and we were like, it's kind of weird you know, that we shared that in common,

or we have life experiences that were like very similar even though were like different ages (personal communication, March 2015).

For her, being honest, trustworthy and from similar heritage was a significant factor when connecting and selecting her mentors.

Umm, so that um you know just they're very honest and trustworthy people...like I mentioned before umm one of them wasn't [from similar heritage], but I mean, she knew Mexico...She even said it, I mean, that her second country was Mexico, just because she loved so much, like the students, and the culture, and all of that. And the ones that were Mexican like me, you just look up to them and you know it's possible. Just because you know they look the same, skin color, or just the fact they know Spanish, you know has been an emphasis and all knowing that its okay, you know you could do it. You know, we're the same or simply just like being able to say something like little words, word sometimes in Spanish that will lead you to understand and you know the meaning of that so I think that played a bit. It's tremendous how knowing you were the same, background... help me (personal communication, March 2015).

Additionally, she attributes her motivation to learn, be helpful and better herself to her mentors. Although, most of her motivation comes from within, she believes that her mentors inspired her to be a better person and to help others.

...I mean I have it in me, like, I want to become better and learn more to help others because I think what I got from my mentors was that. The

same way they helped me, and I feel that I can help someone, that I can be a mentor [to] someone else, and I can help them with whatever they're going through. Umm, I also find motivation in every day [life], the job that I do, you know, I want to be a better me. Umm and then you never stop learning, because I remember my mentors I mean, they never stopped reading, they never stopped being just like a conscious person of the world...I remember, they all were very conscious of what was happening outside the world, what was happening like our world in general...they were always reading, they were always like very active...I still think about them, and I'm like "yeah! I got to be that" I got to make sure that I'm conscious, and I'm just active, right? In this life, and obviously because within me, I want to continue to learn and be just a better me (personal communication, March 2015).

Higher education however, was definitely due to her mentors. They were her mentors and role models.

... It [higher education] definitely has to do with my mentors, because they all have a master's degree and I have one. And I think that's one of the reasons why I got one, because I knew they had one and they talked to me about it and how, you know, it helps you. Umm, so that has inspired me to continue with my higher education... they were very, very crucial in like, what programs you know, I wanted to go into because I would ask them, "What about this, with this, this university?.. They showed me that it

wasn't through a lesson or through talking, it was through actions more than anything. Seeing them involved in life, seeing them active you know and different things it was more of that, because I still have contact with them so I still have that relationship with them even today! (personal communication, March 2015).

In addition, her self-confidence and self-esteem benefited from these mentorship relationships. She tends to be self-critical; therefore having someone who validates and reminds her that she is indeed doing well was extremely significant and helpful.

I think by nature I'm just a person that is really hard on myself...sometimes like they made me look back and said, "You're fine, it's fine, you're doing a good job." It's just it's not that I had a low self-esteem or anything, it's just that I've always been really hard on myself and trying to do better every single time...The validation of saying, "You're fine, it's okay, you don't have to try that hard. It's its, its fine. You're doing a great job" and just by saying that I think they, they always reminded me of how lucky my students were having me as a teacher. You know, validating you know what I was doing looking at all the hard work that I was putting into my career, or you know anything like that or any assignment that I was given. But I think it was validation more than anything (personal communication, March 2015).

Finally, she reflected on the importance of having a mentor, particularly one that

has a similar background or that truly appreciates and values one's culture. She stated that although self-regulation is extremely important, having someone to remind you and guide you makes the goal more attainable.

I do feel that it would've been really hard if I didn't have a mentor who would guide me through different things. Especially coming from, you know a different country. I know that part of it is you, having the willingness to try, and making sure that, I was focused, I wanted to know, I wanted to go to school, I knew it was gonna go to school, I just didn't know how, I didn't know the path. I think it's crucial...So, I think it is very important, I really do believe that mentors and especially your own background, I think it becomes more powerful, or at least somebody that has like this other person I had, she wasn't Mexican but I mean her heart was Mexican and it was just, I knew right away that I could trust this person! (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 7.

Participant 7 is a 54-year-old female first grade teacher. She holds a Bachelors degree in Liberal studies and a Master degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in reading. She was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at the age of 12. She describes her immigration to the United States as the most significant event of her life. Although she faced many challenges, immigrating to the United States positively impacted her life and she was thankful for the opportunity, especially to be able to have an education. She

said her parents immigrated to the United States seeking a better future for her and her siblings.

Well the main significant event was moving from Mexico to the United States that impacted my life greatly and shaped my life completely. The reason why was because if I wouldn't be here my education would have stopped and I wouldn't be able to continue going to school at all so when my parents decided to bring me and my brothers and sister to the United States it was because they were thinking that we would have a better life here in the United States and it did they were right about that (personal communication, March 2015).

She started school in the United States in seventh grade, not speaking any English; culture, weather, poverty and uncertainty shook her world. She moved to the desert during an extremely hot summer, to a house in a ranch that lacked basic services and with no air-conditioning. She cried everyday.

I entered school here in middle school, seventh-grade, not knowing English of course, not knowing the culture and it was quite a shock. The first days were like hell! I remember that I was crying almost every day, even though Mexico was not as good as being here in the United States, I still wanted to go back because of the hardships that I was going through here. Not knowing the language and not knowing what direction to go to, and even the weather was awful, that was another thing. Compared to Mexico, where used to live, the weather was nice most of the year, not hot

not cold, it was moderate. But, here in the valley, it was hell because I came during the summer time and there was no air-conditioning at the house, it was just a cooler, water cooler. And also the house where we were living was a house without all the services, furniture and things that you really need. And, it was on the ranch here in (named the city), very lonely. I didn't even know that there was a city around us for the first couple of months, until I started school because we came in July... (personal communication, March 2015).

Then, when she started school, she lacked the social and cultural capital to navigate her daily existence in the school setting. She would often go days without eating because she did not know lunch was free for her and she was embarrassed to eat her home made lunch. She did not know how to find the restroom, where to go and when. She tried asking, but people did not understand what she was saying.

Then when I started school I didn't even know that lunch was free, so my mom used to make us a sandwich to take to school for lunch. I was very embarrassed to take it out because I saw that the other kids were having their lunches and they looked different than us so I felt really bad about taking out my sandwich. Some times I didn't even eat, not knowing that we qualify for free lunch until I found out through one of the aids in school. She told me in Spanish that if I wasn't going to eat and why and then she told me, "Do you know that you can get a free lunch if you want you can

go get in line and get one?' And so, that made good different impact in my life too is it all nice so I can get to eat lunch just like the other kids. And then the other thing it was that I wasn't able to move around, not knowing where to go at first, not knowing where the restrooms were, and I remember trying to ask people and they couldn't tell me because they didn't understand what I was asking for (personal communication, March 2015).

At that point given her frustration, she had to figure out mechanism to survive; She began to ask for help, raise her hand and observe others. However, she was not the only person frustrated with her inability to communicate, her teacher was too. Unfortunately, her teacher was not equipped to teach first generation immigrants, so she ignored her and others like her by sitting them in the back and basically ignoring them.

So, I was frustrated in thinking, what am I gonna do? No one understands me and I need to go. And so, what I did I was just observing and trying to figure out what people were doing to be able to survive. And so, then I started raising my hand to ask permission to go out. Then the teachers didn't speak Spanish at all, so I could tell that they were frustrated too because they couldn't communicate with me. The first year was very difficult as it was, but also the teachers instead of dealing with me in with other immigrant students there were a couple of them in my classroom and they put us in the back of the class thinking that maybe just by

listening we were going to grasp something but always it was play we were playing in the back. It was all year that we were just playing, very quietly though, in the back (personal communication, March 2015).

Eight-grade was a little bit different. There were was an attempt by the school to help new comers, however by then, she was already acquainted with some peers and was not very focused in her learning. She explained that the reason she was misbehaving was because she could not understand anything they were saying, and they sounded funny.

The second year I remember that they gave us a tutor and they started pulling us aside in a small group. By then, we started being playful and just because by then I made friends and we started misbehaving. In other words, misbehaving because I wasn't understanding what they were saying and everything sounded funny and I was just having fun! (laughs) (personal communication, March 2015).

It wasn't really until high school that she started to learn English and some content. However, she struggled due to language; some classes had Spanish support, but others did not.

Then, I started going to high school and started having bilingual classes. That's when I started really getting to learn something. They had the ESL classes too back then, and they had Spanish classes. But, they didn't have the pre-college requirements like science. I remember they had pre-algebra, Spanish and history in Spanish, but science or chemistry; it was

English only and I was struggling there (personal communication, March 2015).

Eventually, she graduated high school and enrolled in the local community college. College was also challenging due to language. She did not know how to speak or write English proficiently; therefore she had to start with numerous remedial courses. Life circumstances also challenged her higher education attainment; she got married right after high school, had a child, worked in the fields and went to college at night. It took her 15 years to finish her Associates of Arts degree.

When I graduated from high school and went to college I felt totally lost because I didn't speak English. I couldn't write well, I didn't take all my prerequisites to be in college, so I had to start taking remedial classes; reading, writing, even math and it took me a long time to graduate from college, took me about 15 years to get my AA degree. Also, the other thing is that I was working and studying. I was working in the fields, I got married right after high school and had my first child (personal communication, March 2015).

Fortunately, in the midst of all that, during one of her psychology classes, a group of recruiters spoke to her class about becoming a counselor for criminal minors. She was no interested in that field, but was eager to find a better job and she got it. That opportunity prompted her to practice speaking English and eventually get a job with the Migrant program. Working with the Migrant program as a migrant

community aid inspired her to continue higher education.

I thought it was better [for me] to start seeking for a better job instead of the fields. The opportunity came out when I was in a psychology class in College. A group of people came over to class and ask if anyone was interested in being a counselor for criminal minors. Even though, I wasn't thinking about becoming, being you know, my major was not criminal justice but I still thought that was a good opportunity that it was good after working the fields... I didn't think I was going to be hired but I did and that's when I started working with them. That's when I started speaking more English because I needed it and I felt more empowered then and also then after that because I have a one year experience working with a group of students I was able to be hired by the migrant program, as a migrants community aid. In been in that position made me thought about becoming a teacher. I said, "I'm not going to stay all my life being a teacher's aide, I can move on," and so I did, but I was going very slow (personal communication, March 2015).

Her family also played a significant role in her academic success, particularly her husband; the fact that he was there since the very beginning of her higher educational journey, supporting and facilitating her progress made the difference in her success.

He (her husband) has always been supportive with me since I started going to college. He stayed home, basically he was the mom and dad at

the same time, and he was my right hand since then. And, he knows that he's part of my success, and he's very proud what I did. He still, to know, he helps me with anything, my job, anything, he's there for me (personal communication, March 2015).

Additionally, she attributes her success to many mentors throughout her educational journey. Her first mentor was her brother. He opened college for her by going to college himself and encouraging her to attend. He made sure she attended and made sure she didn't quit, even after she got married.

I had many mentors throughout my academic education. The first one was one of my brothers; he is older than me by two years. He started going to college and he liked it. He told me, he always told me, you have to go to college, and you're not going to stop after school. I don't know how you're going to do it, but you have to and I always listen to him, but I never said yes or no. So, when I graduated from high school he said, "Okay you have to go to college, I'll give you my car. Here's my car and you pay your expenses, your gasoline, your insurance and everything else but now you have a car and go!" And I said, "really? I was in planning." "No, I told you, you have to go, you're going to have to go. I want you to go and try it first before you say no." is it okay silent and he was just always there supporting me making sure that I didn't quit because he knew I didn't want to go (personal communication, March 2015).

The Migrant program was instrumental for her academic success. While in high

school, they provided instrumental support such as tutoring for her academic advancement; they gave her work experience after school and helped her find scholarships and financial support. Eventually, as mentioned earlier, they gave her a job as a community aid while in college.

One of the programs that really help me a lot too was the Migrant program. Since I was in high school, they gave me the opportunity to work for them after school as work experience. They also help me find scholarships for me and find ways to support my education academically. And after when I was going to college they were also helping me with giving me a job when I needed it (personal communication, March 2015).

Later on, while attaining her master's degree, she met an academic counselor who became her mentor. This mentor also provided her with instrumental and psychosocial support. He was there to guide her through the process of applying for financial aid, as well as calling her to see how she was doing and listening to her when she needed to release her frustrations.

I had counselors, academic counselors. Actually the one that I had for my master's degree at Grand Canyon University; And it was very amazing that this person kept me on track all the time, calling me, if I needed anything or when there was a problem or I was struggling or wanted to vent out on something, I was called him. And, he was there to listen to me and give me guidance and tell me what else I can do. Also financially, he was the one that help me get a teach grant and applying for the loans to

get my Masters degree (personal communication, March 2015).

She is very thankful and truly values her mentors, especially because they believed in her. She also valued their struggles to succeed. For instance, having a similar background as one of her mentors served as inspiration, he was her role model. Sharing similarities or appreciation for her culture and background played a significant role in her mentorship relationships.

...they didn't give up on me, they believed in me, they had faith in me, and they were there for me, mainly... My brother, he immigrated like me, the same year, at the same time. He struggled at school as well with the language, he was able to go to a very prestigious university, graduate and he's a very successful businessman. So, I look up to him as a model and in the migrant program too...they help people that work in the fields, I was one of them...gave me a job to be able to get out of the fields and become educated. So, and then, my university mentor even though he is not a Latino mentor, he feels for us. He knows our culture and he appreciates it. And, I think that's very important because they are able to people like him are able to really feel for you and help you (personal communication, March 2015).

She adds that relating to mentors culturally, especially linguistically helps.

When your mentor relates to you culturally, and in that includes language, it improves the relationship a lot because you can communicate better and have confidence that your mentor feels for you...even if I make mistakes

when I speak, I don't feel threatened that that person is going to diminish me... I feel really good when I'm around people that are Latino like me because we do understand each other and when we say a joke, or something that we understand, we laugh together (personal communication, March 2015).

Her motivation however, came from the students she serves, she sees herself in them. But also, the different negative experiences of discrimination or humiliation she experienced throughout her life. It was the idea of proving individuals that she could do it.

I find it (motivation) in my students too. Sometimes, I see myself as them when I was little and when I was struggling. Sometimes you would not think that the student would make it all the way to college but you never know for example if I would go back my first grade teacher that I am a teacher in the United States in that I can speak English that I am successful professional, she would faint, she wouldn't believe in me because when I finished first grade, I couldn't read...she thought that I would never good to be successful in school...When I started working as a teachers aid...there was this teacher that talked about that when I was in his classroom as his aid, he used to say why do you confirm yourselves with being just someone that is enough money for what you're doing or becoming educated. He used to put us down a lot, even me. He just to tell his students look at (participant's name), she's only an aid. I don't think

she's going to do anything else in her life, and look at you, your parents work in the fields. Do you think you're going to be a college student one day, no I don't think. You're going to do the same thing as your parents, go back to the fields and work your whatever out to make a little money for what you do...Then I thought, oh my God, this man! That was the first time that I started thinking about going (back) to college...I thought, I'm not going to let him be right, I'm going to prove to him that I can do it too and that his students can do it...maybe he's negativity helped out in someone to trigger something in our minds... I had the pleasure to go back to him and I told him, "look, I am a teacher now, I'm successful." and he was very proud of me of course (laughs) (personal communication, March 2015).

Also, the different opportunities brought up by her mentors helped her reach her academic goals, and without forgetting the one opportunity that changed her life, immigrating to the United States.

A lot of opportunities, especially being able to get scholarships and work to pay for my college, my books and materials to go there... work-study through high school and then college...my brother too, the car that he provided... The fact that I moved here to the United States...I honestly, I do I think that this country open many doors that I wouldn't be able to go through in my country (personal communication, March 2015).

Another benefit from her mentorship relationships was improving her self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem.

I think that it's hard because when you grow up in an environment that is not very positive then most of the times you see and feel scared about many things happening around you. You don't see the future as being bright. And so, sometimes your self-confidence goes down a lot, but when people start telling you yes, you can do it... Gloria you have potential, you can learn English, don't worry, you will learn one day, just practice it...people believing in you and tell you good things about yourself that helps you a lot, like really, I can do it? Okay, I'm going to give it a try...(personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentors also improved her self-regulatory learning, but they were more of a resource; actually, having struggled so much academically forced her to find ways to succeed in accomplishing her goals. Being self-conscious about the language and what others might think, forced her to rely on sources such technology to figure things out on her own, in addition to asking her mentors.

Being able to find ways to resolve problems or to accomplish a goal or to find out or learned new things. For example, when I get stuck with a word or with the whole line...or by listening to other people talking and sometimes not understanding everything they are saying... I have to admit that I'm still afraid to ask most of the time I turn around and go and find out the answer by myself somehow, Google it some time, or ask people that I really trust, like a mentor...that helps you, helps a lot and that's what I do now...mentors are very important, and most of the time those of the

mentors that that tell you right, exactly how it is, and what it is. And how to go about things... so, your mentor and all the resources around you especially technology nowadays...so, when of the things that I would say about my mentorship relationship and how it has impacted me is that, I trust them and the amounts of trust between you and your mentor is very important (personal communication, March 2015).

Finally, she offers a powerful message for all individuals struggling in education. No matter what happens, do not give up.

I want to add that it's not easy and that you have to be willing to make sacrifices and just don't give up, just whatever happens, don't give up. That's my case, that's what I think, that's what I did...for example, there was one time that I was taking a writing class... a professor not only got frustrated with me because of the typewriter, but because of my grammar errors. She even told me, "Really, I don't know how you made it to college..." I just got up from my seat and went to the bathroom and cried. I think she noticed it and she apologized... I felt bad, so even with those things, whatever happens to you, just don't give up. Just think about who you are, think that it's not easy, but you can do it, you can still do it (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 8.

Participant 8 is a 32-year-old special education male teacher at the high school level. He earned a double major in Spanish and Special Education. He

was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at the age of six.

I got to this country... around 1988-89, I was in second grade... all throughout my second grade and part of my third-grade year, I kind of hated education in the United States because I didn't understand the language right...also I heard kids talking in a bunch of gibberish and they would point at me and laughed at me. So, my first reaction, to be really honest with you, was just punching them and being aggressive about it. And I mean, as a result of that, I spent a lot of time, you know, with administration and with the principal...So, I just hated school to be honest with you...(personal communication, March 2015).

For him, feeling a connection to his culture at school was necessary. Feeling a connection with his culture at school helped him to accept the educational environment. As a teacher, he shares the importance of variety of cultures and making a bond with students.

...First thing that... made me feel like home at school was the fact that somebody...played for her Las Mañanitas with and accordion and a guitar. Obviously, a Grupo Norteño. To me that was... a connection between my home life and my academic life... like there is some similarity, obviously back at home we heard Norteños and Corridos... so from there on, I kind of felt accepted into the educational environment, but prior to that, I didn't really feel that they wanted me there... you know, that's why I now being a teacher I take the extra step and I talk to kids about their homeland and I

talked about different things that might be in the cultural aspect...(personal communication, March 2015).

Also, not having a bilingual teacher made him feel rejected his first and a half in American schools. Later on, he connects his negative perceptions of school with his teacher's inability to make him feel interested in school which made him resist and rebel against the school system. After that, he mentions that the reason he become a teacher is to give another perspective of education; making connections to the student's culture and taking an extra step to help students find interest in their education.

I didn't really feel that they wanted me there because back in those days wasn't such a thing as a bilingual education. So, they threw me in a class with a lady... she wasn't a bilingual, she was trying to teach me English but... she get all upset when I couldn't pronounce a word in English... I felt very rejected my very first year and a half here in the United States... I don't think the teachers took the extra step to make me feel welcomed in the school setting...It just made me very resilient, I almost want to say that it made me kind of kind of a rebel against a system... I eventually got to a point where instead of getting upset at teachers and putting me down, I just kind of not tell them anything, in deep inside in my mind I would say, "you know what I'm going to show you, I'm going to prove you wrong I'm going to show you I'm good... unfortunately it kind of taught me the system was going to always suppressed me no matter what, no matter

how much I tried to fight. So, I try to find a smarter way to fight them back...getting education was my way of fighting back... the only way for me to change the system was actually getting involved in it...(personal communication, March 2015).

For participant 8, family played a significant impact in his child and academic development. Coming from a dysfunctional family, and working in the fields hindered his academic progress. Since he was five years old, he remembers looking for ways to financially contribute to his home, therefore not caring about school. Another significant event that negatively impacted his life was when he was in six grader his house burned down. In seventh-grade he met his mentor.

...Obviously, I kind of came from an dysfunctional family. So, growing up was rough, you know, we used to migrate to Delano to go pick grapes up there... Half of the time, when I got back down from Delano; it was early November... I was already behind academically so, it was kind of a rocky period in my life and academically in a way...Back when I was about five years old, my dad used to be a grape picker in Delano. And I would buy sodas for him to sell during his break. So, I've always been trying to find a little way to make money... I used to sell Mexican candy... I bought candy from Mexico and putted in backpack and sold it at John Kelly, to my classmates... I'll be honest, I didn't even care about school, I just went to school to make money...In six grade my house burned down so we lost all our belongings and basically we had to start back from square one. When

I entered seventh-grade, I met a man who I considered my mentor... I don't even know if he knows it or not...I just recently emailed him and I told him, "thank you for being my mentor, you kind of change my perspective on a bunch of stuff... Now, I was at first-generation student in my family...(personal communication, March 2015).

He enjoyed writing about his childhood experiences as an immigrant even though being different made his life difficult academically and socially.

... It was very hard growing up because not only did I have the language barrier and I had the stigma of the way look, the way I dressed, the type of music that I listen to, but academically, Math was definitely not one of my fortes, even right now... I guess one of my forte was the arts like writing essays or writing stories I always like to write my stories about migrating into central California and picking grapes here and all that...(personal communication, March 2015).

For participant 8, his mentor serve as a role model for his career, now as a teacher, he resembles some characteristics learned from his mentor. His mentor gave him confidence in his education and career.

You know, my mentor... he just looked at things in a whole different perspective... all of the little things that he did when he was my teacher, now as a teacher I appreciated it. He for example, instead of being upset about me wanting to listen to corrido's and things like that, he would actually try to incorporate some of the stuff that we liked into his own

curriculum... he would actually use things that were familiar to us, to help our learning... learning by association and it's funny because I still do it, now days I do the same with my students...I guess my mentor helped me use my bilingualism as tool or asset in my education rather than making me feel that the majority of the people before him did... and rather than making looking it down on me, for not having a strong English skills as all the other kids, he kind of taught me to capitalize on, that basically capitalize on that in any kind of excepted or embrace the whole culture aspect of me whereas before I feel that people were trying very hard to suppress it you know, I had kids in my class from that like your Spanish music and I also have the other kids that like the rap and all that kind of a weird strange way he could've allowed us each listen to our own genre of music and do whatever he wanted to do but still be able to bring it all together as one common community in the classroom you know (personal communication, March 2015).

Participant 8 valued his mentor's honesty and willingness to support his students in their academic goals. Also, he appreciates his mentor's use of his bilingual skills in class in order help all Latino's students feel comfortable.

Well the fact that he was a very honest man... he is a cool guy cause he still alive, but some of the things he did I still remember I thank him so... always thought outside the box to be able to get kids to achieve the academics... that he was a word man... I really valued his honesty unto

today... I still know that Mr. R said something he's going to follow through and he's going to do it... Also the fact that from time to time, and even when there is an English lesson he would often time to time throw in a couple Spanish words like "Gracias" , "abre la puerta porfavor" and obviously a lot of the times he would translate, because I don't even know if he's fully bilingual meaning knowing fully Spanish but he would throw some of those words in there and I do that a lot in my classroom too... because I want to make sure the kids that come in, that are first-generation immigrants, feel kind of identified with the classroom... I don't want them to feel alienated... make them feel welcoming...(personal communication, March 2015).

His mentorship relationship improved his self-efficacy and self-esteem.

In regards to my seventh grade teacher Mr. R, I think Mr. R made me realize that I had the potential to do things academically whereas before it was kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Majority of people just kick me out of their classrooms and expected me to be a mess up... but they just kind of expected me to you know be a dropout ... that definitely boosted my self-esteem you know in my academic environment in a weight prior to me meeting him... my mentors made me realize that there was more out there for me, than what people expected of me...(personal communication, March 2015).

Also, there was a significant connection with his mentor due to similar heritage

and background. Additionally, he mentions that sharing his experiences with his students made him stand out from other teachers who don't.

... He talked about when his parents or his grandparents got to this country ... because I think he's like third-generation Mexican already... so he actually spoke about that, he would say, "when my people came here from Mexico, they would pick grapes, they would pick lemons and such and such... and to me that was a big deal, I do that too as a teacher... to me, if you care enough about your students, to put yourself out there, share little bit of your personal information that's a big deal, because you're just being honest, you being real about things, and he wasn't embarrassed...What I came from, people that came were immigrants too, not that Long ago my people were in the same situation... and he would talk about those different things... students that did ended up in jail, or they did this and did... whereas the majority of the teachers are trying to act like they have a perfect life... my mentor uses his experiences as a tool to get us to relate to him... he wasn't embarrassed to think outside the box ... he been honest...maybe the fact that he was Mexican just like I am also facilitated the process of me being able to assimilate with him (personal communication, March 2015).

However, his main motivation to continue furthering his education is his family. Also, become a better teacher for his students; he wants to help students from dysfunctional families earn an education.

... My biggest motivation is basically my parents, where I come from, the way I grew up... a lot of my family members were not a good example... I'm glad that because my education I'm able to help our kids are in the same position I was, in and the way I see it, it's also our responsibility... My responsibility for youth is to help them somehow to achieve their academic goals... we may grow up in families that may not give us the best examples or might be dysfunctional but it's about what you want to do... also, my motivation are my students ... try to motivate me to become a better teacher academically and class management wise (personal communication, March 2015).

He was also inspired by a fellow student at Cal State San Bernardino to become a positive influence for their school and community.

When I was a freshman in Cal State San Bernardino... a guy that was part of the fraternity... His name was Ezequiel Bonillas... he was very involved in his community... I want to surround myself with people that him... because I eventually want to become somebody that can influence other people. Somebody that can be influenced to younger people... they can look up to and been a positive influence... So, I took the opportunity, I joined this fraternity... it taught me a lot of discipline and it was definitely a networking tool, and I firmly believe that if I had not become part of the fraternity, I wouldn't become a teacher... I was vice president of the University for two years... thanks to the fraternity (personal

communication, March 2015).

Once he was focused on his education, he relied on his self-regulatory learning skills to succeed in college.

... So I always sat in front of the class, I always took notes whether I needed to or not. Even if it was something I was going to remember, I always made a habit of taking notes just for the sake of self-monitoring... making sure that my ADHD wouldn't get me messing around... I self-regulating myself because I always understood in the back of my mind that in order for me to get to the university... it was very important for me to regulate the behaviors that negatively affected my academics...I missed the majority of parties... I was very good at self-regulating and basically you know putting my academics before my social decision in the whole social aspect of the University... Being able to self-monitor has definitely been important and one of the things that I also do know as a grown man...I kind of think it's a great self-monitoring tool (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 9.

Participant 9 is a 39-year-old male principal at the high school level. He was born in the United States but was raised in Mexico until the age of 15 when he immigrated to the United States. Even though, he attended a predominantly Anglo high school, being U.S. born gave him a certain level of confidence and comfort.

I emigrated from Mexico at age 15. I went to a mainly Anglo high school at that point, and, one, one of the things that influenced me and that kind of makes me different as far as immigrant experience is that I was actually born in the US. And so, when I came in I never had to worry about, oh am I going to be able to move on to higher education? So, so kind of knowing that gave me a different perspective knowing, yes I'm gonna be able to do it because I am, am an American citizen. So, that, that was significant in the way I approached everything, where I didn't have to wonder whether I qualified for things, I just knew that I had an opportunity (personal communication, March 2015).

He knew he was going to attend college. As a matter of fact, his parents immigrated to the United States in order for him to attend college. He had two sisters who attended college in Mexico; therefore the expectation was there. Furthermore, he stated that attending a predominantly Anglo high school was an advantage for him, since he had no other choice but to learn English in order to communicate at all levels, educationally and socially.

Umm and umm, you know we migrated here, my parents migrated here, exclusively for me to go to...ugh, to complete high school and then go to college; there was never any other expectation and so for me that, knowing what my goal was going to be really, really gave me an outlook for what I needed to do as far as learning English and, and getting into college. [long pause] Being in a, in a mainly Anglo high school, I think that

also shaped my, my character and my, my drive to learn English, meaning I had no other choice, I, I, you know in the current community where I work Spanish is essentially the language that you can learn and you survive, but realizing that English was going to be my only, not just academically but really social way of getting, getting along with people... ugh, it drove me to learn it a little quicker, in that (personal communication, March 2015).

Another important advantage was definitely finding a mentor. He met his mentor his junior year in high school; she was his Spanish teacher. She cared for him; she took the time to learn about his goals and to help him reach those goals. She was instrumental in his reaching his academic goal.

I did have an academic mentor in high school, one of my teachers my AP Spanish teacher, Mrs. B. Umm, she, she just took the time to talk to me and to see if I needed anything as far as accomplishing my goals and she ended up becoming my guidance counselor...I do remember Mrs. B taking the time and saying, "do you realize of the college of application process is?" And, turns out I didn't, turns out that I still had the mentality of, of the Mexican college application process which is, they come look for you, you don't, you just have to perform in high school and they'll come and look for you and you get essentially recruited and taking care of. Where as here... a whole bunch of things that has to come out of the student side as opposed to the university side. Uh and so, she got me through that and I

don't think that I would've applied or even known the process to apply for college had not been for her (personal communication, March 2015).

Additionally and although he was self motivated, his mentor provided him with other types of instrumental support, such as networking opportunities and other resources necessary for his academic success.

English was the most challenging area for me, writing and speaking mostly. Um, I can't say that my mentor was essentially pushing me at anything, I was pretty self motivated, but she did, she did [help me], just knowing that she was there if I ever found a stumbling block, umm that I could go to her for maybe a question that I had on any of my subjects. Uh, and she would know who to guide me to, you know, if I had a question in English she knew somebody who would help me and revise an essay. She never actually did it herself, which is kind of surprising, but she always found the resources for me...(personal communication, March 2015).

His mentor was definitely instrumental in his higher education attainment. She connected him to a recruiter from the university he attended. He definitely met the requirements, but she facilitated the process. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and a master's degree in Educational Administration.

She opened up college for me, I mean that's a huge opportunity...there were a couple of colleges that I was applying to, and she said that I would fit at Notre Dam; She told me, "I'm going to introduce you to this

former student of Notre dame who's the president of the orange county club of Notre Dame,” and I said fine. So, she introduced me to this guy C, um and this guy C is essentially took it from there as far as ugh recruiting me you we want you in there he actually provided me with an all-expenses-paid trip before I had to make my decision about accepting the offer from Notre Dame. And that made the difference for me, umm and just from that moment, all kinds of opportunities were open to me. I was very grateful and lucky and I, you know, the opportunities where there and I took advantage of them because she put in front me (personal communication, March 2015).

One of significant trait this participant valued from her mentor was how caring she was. He does not quite understand why she found interest in him, but just the fact that she did was extremely valued by him.

Just caring you know giving a hoot about somebody. Essentially I don't know what she saw in me, I don't know why she bothered to ugh get to know me or to approach me but she did and she took an interest in me and just the fact that she took time for you know as I like to say for a little mocosso like me... so, just that that caring quality that she had (personal communication, March 2015).

Additionally, the heritage of his mentor had a positive impact in their relationship. She resembled many traits valued and instilled in his family. She was a strong Hispanic woman, just like the women in his family, they had similar skin color,

accent and even other speaking modalities helped him identify with her and feel comfortable.

She is Hispanic, very strong Hispanic woman and so to me that was important because I saw a lot of the females in my life you know...so I identify with her from the color of the skin, to the accent to the, to just the nickname she gave me you know, I wasn't Richard I was Ricardinskiy...I immediately felt the sense of familiarity with her , so it was certainly important to identify with her and to feel the comfort level that quick (personal communication, March 2015).

His mentor eventually became a role model. She model what graduating from the United States looked like. She made it real and possible.

...The mentorship relationships made it seem real in the US. In other words, all my sisters were educated in Mexico and they graduated from Mexico universities and so I didn't know what it look like in the US to graduate from college ugh and so that was a my connection between strong female characters in my life and in an American role model and Mrs. B that kind of brought her Home saying this is how you achieve what has been done by your sisters here in the US (personal communication, March 2015).

His motivation and inspiration for attaining higher education comes essentially from extrinsic and intrinsic sources. Extrinsic source include economic benefits to provide for his family and intrinsic source is his eagerness to learn and better

himself.

There are really two sources of it one is definitely economic you know I want to provide for my family. I equate higher education with a essentially more money, more income, but at the same time I do love learning I love the process of finding out more of self reflection and growing and being a lifelong learner (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 10.

Participant 10 is a 33 female mathematics teacher at the high school level. She has a Bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in education. She immigrated to the United States at the age of 17, from Guadalajara, Mexico. Immigrating to the United States demonstrated to be emotionally difficult for her due to multiple reasons, language being the greatest challenge.

I came to the United States to (City of residence) when I was 17 years old, I came from Guadalajara Mexico. When I came here, I went to depression because the change affected me. The fact that I was in a city, I already have friends, and here I have to start all over again. So, I would consider myself a good student, but here I would face other challenges, like learning the language, getting to know other people and getting used to the system. So, I it was a hard time (personal communication, March 2015).

When she started high school, she was told that in order for her to graduate she

had to attend adult school, and she was not happy about that. Nevertheless, her high school accepted her as a sophomore, even if she graduated at age 19. Not knowing the language was the greatest obstacle she faced in high school, but she was determined to learn English. She was determined to go to college and build a better future for herself; she did not want to work in the fields or selling ice cream like some of her family members. With the help of one of her teachers, who she refers to as her mentor, she was able to graduate high school with honors.

After a week I was here, my parents signed me up in high school. People would tell me, "You're going to go to adult school." So, I really didn't want that for me, I wanted to go straight to high school. But yeah, they accepted me, even though I graduated at 19 but I was able to go to high school and not to adult school and I started a sophomore. When I went into my classes, I thought I was going to be really hard because most of the teachers for all the subjects they would speak English. There were some bilingual classes, there were like two bilingual classes and those are easy because everything was in Spanish, but my goal was to learn the language because I wanted to have a better future. I wanted to have a career, I didn't know what I wanted, but I know I will I wanted a better future. I needed a better future because my parents and my older siblings used to work in the fields and some of them would sell ice cream so I wanted something different for me. In my high school years, the challenge

that I had was to learn the language. So, I had a hard time, but I was really committed to that goal. And, with the help of my teachers, and especially one of my mentors, one of the teachers that I consider my mentor I was able to succeed and I graduate with honors (personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentor, the Spanish teacher, was instrumental in her academic success and her higher education attainment. While in high school, he would spend a lot of time talking to the students about college and the benefits of having a college career. Also, he would help her academically, especially correcting her English essays. Additionally, through his leadership in the Migrant program, he would provide instrumental support by being the go to person when it came to college application and process. He was always available to help.

I had a mentor who I considered an academic one, even though he was not formally an academic mentor. He was a teacher from high school, he was a male Spanish teacher and met him when I came here as a sophomore to (name of high school). I was taking Spanish four and he was a teacher for that class. He was my mentor, I consider him my mentor because when he was in the classroom he would devote a lot of his time to tell us that education was important if we wanted to have a great future or a different future than our parents had, needed a college education. And he also would spend a lot of time telling us the difference between the different incomes. So, if you only have a high school career, this is how

much you can make compared to a bachelors degree or a masters degree then you are gonna make more. He also was available when I needed help with academics, especially with the English classes and he would help me check my essays...once he became the Coordinator for the migrant program, he was he was now a resource if I would need any help like on the applications or college process I would go to him and ask for help (personal communication, March 2015).

After high school, she attended a community college. She was not sure of what she really wanted to do in terms of her career, but after meeting a math teacher there, she was inspired to become a math teacher. While in college, she worked as a tutor for Advancement Via Individual Determination program (AVID), math and science at the high school she graduated from. She completed her Associates of Arts degree within three years, and transferred to University of California, Riverside (UCR) where she earned a Bachelor's of Science in math and a Master's of Arts in Education that included a teaching credential. Once, she cleared her credential, she returned to her community and got a math teaching position in the same high school she graduated from.

After high school I went to college community college, my goal there was to decide what I wanted to do with my careers, what I would like to do to study. And, I met there a great math teacher, and this time he was a white American teacher.... a girl, and she motivated me to be a math teacher. So, I kind of had a mentor also there, but this time it was a female math

teacher. After that, I stayed there for three years, taking all those classes and then working also as a tutor in high school. I also worked as a tutor and I was working for the avid program at the time but I used to tutor in math and science, I wouldn't do English (laughs) only math and science. After that, after COD I transferred to UCR where I did my bachelors in math and I did my masters in education. I did student teaching in Fontana for a year, and then once I was fully credentialed, I came here to the valley to come to teach math and I'm here since. I have 7 years teaching here (personal communication, March 2015).

She describes her immigration experience as a significant event that changed her perspective of life and her abilities. She feels stronger and more capable as a result of overcoming her challenges. She also feels empowered to motivate her students by sharing her success story with them.

The significant event was the change of coming here to this country and learning a new language. I think, that made me realize that it was possible for me to do anything that I set my mind on. So, what I learned also from my teacher was that "what doesn't break you makes you stronger. " So, all those challenges that I had made me the person that I am right now. I was able to face some challenges and now, when I have some students that also come from Mexico and they don't speak the language, I can tell them my story so that they feel that it is possible...coming to a different country, and losing all my friends over there, and not seeing my other

family made me the person that I am now. I think it shaped my personality and it helped build my character (personal communication, March 2015).

In addition to her character, having gone through those struggles, particularly language helped her become a self-regulated learner. But, she does recognize that having a mentor for support through those struggles was beneficial. For instance, she would practice English instead of watching television by reading books that her mentor would lend her.

I think I already had it (self-regulation), the fact that when I came here would learn 20 words a day and then after that I knew, I mean, I knew what to study. He (her mentor) just helped me realize that it was possible for me as a migrant student to have an education...The subject that I always did well in school was math... he would tell me, "good job!" He would always make positive comments on that. And, the class that I struggled the most was English...he was available for that subject, for English, he would correct my essays, not just my spelling but also the meaning of my reading, and he was always available for any question that you have in the class. He would provide me also with a list of books to read because I like to read on my spare time instead of watching TV I would be reading or learning words for translating the words...my mentor was always there for me even though, I mean, he was teaching Spanish, he would offer tutoring and that's where I would ask for help (personal communication, March 2015).

When asked about the characteristics that she valued from her mentor, she mentioned that he was a great teacher, not only the way he taught, but how much he cared. She also mentioned the connection she found with him due to similarities in heritage and background. He became her role model once she found out he was also an immigrant from Mexico, who came in high school and had to learn the language to be successful.

...He was a great teacher and he was an awesome teacher... but besides being a great teacher, he was a caring person. So, he would care for all of us, especially if you knew we were migrant students like he was...He was also from Mexico and he came from Mexico, I don't know what year, but he came in high school. So, once he said that, I can relate to him because I knew a real person that had the same situation as me because home I was the only one, the only one going to school. So, he was the closest person that I would see as a model, oh he was able to be successful, to have an education, to get a career, even though he didn't know the language before, he was able to catch up and be successful in life (personal communication, March 2015).

She believes that similarities in heritage helped their relationship particularly because he was a Spanish teacher. He would have lessons about her culture, and sharing the same heritage helped build trust in their relationship. Having the same heritage made him her role mode.

Heritage helped a lot because he was a Mexican as I am and we could

relate in a lot of things, especially in the classroom since he was teaching Spanish class. He would have a cool lessons related to our culture. So, I think that helped a lot because we shared the same heritage. That made me trust him more because I cannot see trust in another person plus he was the only one available...I don't know if the other teachers were, I never asked, but you can feel who you can trust. I think the heritage helped a lot because he was kind of a role model for me...he spoke the same language, so I was able to relate to him in so many ways and he also was able to relate with us and he shared his experiences... I think I trust him more because of that... (personal communication, March 2015).

She also attributes her motivation to continue higher education to her mentor.

She remembers the conversations about income based on education levels,

I think I find my motivation from this mentor that I talked about. He would spend time telling me the importance of getting an education, if you want to have a car, if you want to have a better house; you need to go to college. I also found my motivation and enthusiasm because my friends, who were his students, they also had the goals of going to college. At the beginning I wasn't sure because my siblings did not go to college, but they would always tell me, "Go to college, we're going to buy you a computer, but whenever you need..." Thank God I was able to get financial aid, so I didn't have to ask them for a penny but at least I knew they were there to support me. So, that my family telling me that it's important to go to

college, plus the teacher telling me the mentor telling me it's important to go to college, and also the friends that I had also influenced me because all of them were wanted to go to college (personal communication, March 2015).

In her case, she had a strong psychosocial support system through her friends and family, but her mentor provided that, in addition to the instrumental support necessary for her to navigate and succeed the educational system.

Since I have the support of my mentor, I was able to do better in the class I was struggling... So, I think that helped me a lot in class, and also, that teacher, the mentor the always be there for me. When he was a teacher he gave me the applications to take AP literature as a senior... which helped me a lot in college because I also didn't have to take any foreign language...then also, when he became the migrant Coordinator, he was able to help me more with the applications for college...and also for FASFA. And, he was a well-rounded person, all of the students loved him so much because he was caring and he was a good person (personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentor helped improve her self-esteem and confidence, particularly when it came to her communication skills and accent. He would encourage her to speak publicly and he would make her feel comfortable. Her different educational accomplishments and his mentorship made her realize that everything is possible.

That mentorship relationship helped shape my self confidence and my self-esteem because when I came here I would feel like, “oh, since I don’t know the language, I’m not going to participate or I cannot do this because I do not know the language.” But then he said, “You know what, it doesn't matter you have to participate in class. It doesn't matter that you have an accent; you just have to keep trying.” So, he would help me in that sense, even though I was really shy, so I tried not to speak out because of my accent, he made me feel more comfortable with myself esteem and confidence. Also, because after all accomplishments thanks to his support; I came to realize that if I want if you wanted to go to college it was going to be possible if I had the same skills, which are commitment, confidence and also be proactive about my education (personal communication, March 2015).

However, her inspiration to attain higher education came from her family. She had very humble beginnings; therefore she wanted to create a better life economically. She aspired to be the changing factor in her family; she wanted to break the cycle, especially because she had younger siblings. And she did, all her younger siblings attain higher education, but one.

What inspired me is the need for having something better because I have a 9 siblings. So, it was really hard, we didn't even go to anywhere, we just went to the grocery store and that was it... it was hard, and I didn't want that to continue. So, I wanted to break that cycle. So, I decided to go to

college because my dad would always say that the only options I had without an education would be working in the fields or joining the family business, he used to sell ice cream...So, all of those factors, I wanted to show my family that it was possible because I had little siblings...all of my younger siblings went to college except on sister but the other ones were able to, now they have a career (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 11.

Participant 11 is a female health and careers teacher at the high school level. She immigrated to the United States at the age of 13. She was held back one year for not knowing English. Nevertheless, by the time she promoted middle school, she was able to exit the English as a Second Language program (ESL), which allowed her to graduate high school and go straight to a four-year-university where she graduated with a bachelors of science.

I came to the United States when I was 13 years old. I'm the oldest of six siblings, and when I came I was supposed to go into the eighth grade because I didn't know English, they put me in seventh grade so by the time I graduated in the eighth grade, they tested me again and for high school I didn't have to take any more ESL classes. And from there on, I graduated from high school, (name of the high school), and went off to College and I graduated from there with my bachelors of science (personal communication, March 2015).

The event that she believes shaped her personality and character was working

on the grape fields from 13 to 15 years of age. She did not like working in the fields, therefore she realized that she must go to college in search for a better future. Although, this was a challenging event in her life, she is grateful for having gone through it. She believes she is a better and stronger person for it, and that event was catalyst to her life and the life of her siblings. She wanted a better life for herself, and she wanted to be role model for her younger siblings.

The events shaped my personality and character were my parents taking me to the fields and working the grapes because it left me a big, uhhh, how what I say it, not a trauma, but I didn't like that. I was the oldest and they took three of us, me and the next two down. And then, we had to work, just like them. And I thank them for that because that's what made me realize that's the events that made me change my life, my character and think, I'm only 13, 14, 15 and I need to realize that, I don't want this for me. I know that there's better and I'm gonna to go get it. And that's the even that shaped me, like made me change my character and become stronger. I'm the oldest and I said I'm gonna show my brothers and sisters that being in the United States they can make it I will be a role model for them and I tried (personal communication, March 2015).

She relates how immigrating to the United States had some sort of impact in her academic achievement, especially in mathematics. She shared that Science was her academic forte, but not math, even though she was good at math in Mexico. Having to struggle thought her how to self-regulate. She know

math was challenging, therefore she always looked for resources such as study groups and extra classes to help her succeed.

The best area or subject that I always excelled was science, the ones that I always had trouble with is math, except in Mexico. It's interesting that I was doing well. When I came to the United States I was doing well, I was like wow ahead of my class, but then some kind of acculturation took place where I don't do very well Math anymore and so it's always been my challenge Math...I never really overcame those (challenges), I had to pass my college statistics class for my bachelors and so I took Study groups and I went that route...I succeeded with study groups in math because that's been my weakest subject. For my teaching credential, I had to pass math part of the CBEST... I didn't pass the math, so I had to go to Cal state San Bernardino even though I had already graduated, just to take a workshop that made me pass my CBEST. So, it's always been challenging; so, I always looked for resources (personal communication, March 2015).

Participant 11 never had an academic mentor, but she spoke very highly of a colleague whom she sees as her "colleague mentor." The university originally assigned him to her as part of her credentialing program, but he became her friend and the person to go to when she had any challenges at work. She valued the fact that he listened to her, he was wise and he encourage her to not give up.

I don't have an academic mentor, but I have a colleague mentor that the college assigned to me for a year. It was only for a year, but he helped me a lot in regards to a new job and in regards to the bigger picture of camaraderie and rivalry, it's sad to say, within the job. So, the qualities I recognize, that I admire from that person is he was wise enough to see my point of view and to guide me in regards to not leaving, not giving up and giving myself a chance. Now that I got the job, this position that I wanted and in how to retain it, he was wise (personal communication, March 2015).

Although the heritage of her mentor was different from hers, she feels that he sees his students and people from other races as equal. According to her, he makes no distinctions or separation. He treats everyone the same, he has never treated her differently.

He is not from my same heritage, he is from the United States...he sees his students and he sees people from other races just like nothing, he just goes on and make some friends and trusts everybody and never separates Latinos or Caucasians, and you never hear him say that. He treats everyone the same, and with me, it's like, you don't see a difference. That is something that I admire and recognize from him, is that he's never able to make that, like give me a little hint that I'm different (personal communication, March 2015).

When asked about her motivation to pursue higher education, she

immediately spoke about her family. Today, her children are her main source of motivation, but back in college, her parents and siblings motivated her to succeed academically, especially when her sisters became teenage mothers, and her parents questioned their parenting.

I think my children do because I want to show them that education could be obtained with support. I have the support of my husband and the support of my peers and so I want to show them that it can be done so my internal motivation my family not so much my parents and my siblings now it's shifted to my children...It used to be my parents is to my siblings to set an example, to prove to my parents because there were six of us, four girls and two boys, and we all agreed to help our parents. We were going to do this, but when my sisters started getting pregnant, two of them in high school, I thought that's it. Nothings gonna, you know, go well. So what I did was, my parents will like, "what are we doing wrong Mija, what are we doing wrong." I'm going to show you that you're not doing anything wrong it's up to us and so before it was them and to show them to guide to guide my siblings but now it's about me and my husband and my stability economically my children to him so they can see that it could be obtained...(personal communication, March 2015).

During her undergraduate years, her family was also her inspiration, particularly setting an example to her siblings by becoming their role model. Now days, while pursuing her master's degree, her main source inspiration is also her family, but

mostly her immediate family. She wants to provide financial stability for them.

For my BA is was definitely setting an example by being a Role model for my siblings, but now that I am working on my masters is stability economically for my family and my mentor has always been there... I see more stability in my job more secure financially my family (personal communication, March 2015).

Her mentor enhanced her self-confidence in her career by providing psychosocial support. He was there to listen, encourage and empower her when she had difficulties with another colleague. She was ready to give up her position due to those differences, but the psychosocial support of her mentor made her realize that It was best for her to stay and learn from the experience. He helped her grow professionally.

When I first came into the partnership Academy there were difficulties with a person...he gave me the motivation in the self-confidence...he gave me like the courage to just stay. Otherwise, I would've given up... he made me realize, with his patience and just by listening to whatever I had to say...He made me a little wiser to say, no I think it's best if I stay, put up with it, and work around it. So, he made me grow professionally (personal communication, March 2015).

Testimonio of Participant 12.

Participant 12 is a 25-year-old female Health Corps Coordinator. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Nutritional Sciences. She was born in Mexico and

immigrated to the United States at the age of 10. She is the only child from a divorced family. Her mother had a big impact in the way she sees education given that she raised her alone.

So, I am a first-generation college graduate. I'm the only child from my parents and my parents are divorced... When I was four-year-old... and I never had a relationship with my dad and I definitely had an effect with how I approach things... My mom basically raised me by herself. So, definitely had an impact on how I viewed education. So she always emphasize, you know, getting good grades, being the best student in all those things. I always did the hard-working thing that needed to get done in order to get the grades. My motivation was always, if I get the grades, then I'll be able to go to college. Also, since I was the only child there was this high expectation of you are like my only one, so you kind to be perfect. Because not that my mom ever said I'm going to show you off, but that's the way it kind of came off. And so, I was like, okay, that means that I'll have to work through any hardships that I have and get my grades and be involved in extracurricular activities, and that way I'll be able to. So, when I was in high school that's why I was focused on and in that way I'll be able to go to college and do whatever I was going to do after that.

She describes her immigration to the United States as a difficult event in her life. She experienced bullying due to her English language limitations and also because she was an illegal alien. She started school in the United States in

fifth grade, not speaking or understanding any English. She was determined to learn the language and be one of best students in her class. Her inspiration to pursue higher education mainly came from her mother and her teacher Mejorano; they helped her achieve her academic goals. Her mother was very supportive in her education and in fifth grade, Mr. M helped her during a before school tutoring program for English language learners

Very difficult, I came to the United States when I was 10 years old and I came undocumented... that didn't pose hurdles right away but I didn't know word of English... the students were really cruel. I was a newcomer and I didn't know a word of English, so I could tell that they would like to talk to behind my back they can like made fun of me of my accent... I was the more academic focused student... there was this girl that was kind a like the top students... it was like a competition between the student and me... she would make comments... you're an immigrant like, why would you give me war? Why would you be able to be as smart as me, or even more than I am? And so that sometimes kind of difficult but at the end of the day my drive was always my mom to kind of keep studying. She's always very supportive... The teacher at the time I had Mr. M, he was always my inspiration, he came up with like a class before school... for English learners... a math component and in English component... I never had issues with math except for like word problems because I didn't know the vocabulary but then in the English part I really struggled, because I didn't

know the language... these classes was extra support... I just remember my mom would get early with me to take me to the school...I don't remember how early... sometimes the sun wasn't out yet... things like that really encourage me to keep achieving more... when we got promoted in fifth grade obviously I was not in the grade level yet, I had to make some improvement... my mom was supporting supportive and my teacher ... definitely helps me... he told my mom don't let her get caught up on the really basic classes where she'll loose the ability to excel... and so six grade I think I still had transition and I believe like seventh grade and on... I always have regular classes... my mom said... I have to learn the language, learn the skills in order for you to succeed and so that definitely push me to do those regular English classes... then in high school ... I took AP classes... and it was difficult... it just means I have to spend a little bit more time... sometimes I get caught up with my accent... they make comments like, your accent is funny... even as an adult... I end up like not really caring about it ... it doesn't mean that you're not going to be able to succeed and be more educated...(personal communication, March 2015).

During her sophomore year in High School, she got involved in a nonprofit organization called Summer Search. This nonprofit organization provided a mentor that helped her develop as a student leader and encouraged her to go to college. Additionally, the organization assisted the students with their

applications for college and financial aid. Additionally, the organization helped participant 12, and other students to learn how to manage their stress and anger levels. She connected more with one of her mentors because they shared similar backgrounds as Latinas.

...when I was in high school... as a sophomore I started being part of this nonprofit organization called summer search... a mentor... to become leaders... they look for resilient students not necessarily straight A students, but those students that are really working hard and maybe come from backgrounds that don't really helped their situation to succeed...they really are there to kind of close the gap and encourage more student to go to college and graduate from college... they all have the same kind of training they all kind of still supplied the same tools and knowledge... There was a mentor that I had, she was from Nicaraguas, So I can relate more to her because she was Latina as opposed to the one that there was another one that I had he was Caucasian so sometimes the guy wouldn't necessarily relate cultural things... nevertheless getting that support from them really encouraged me to... get good grades, to be able to go to college... having this perfect balance of... running and volunteer service in this club... Another thing was learning how to like coping mechanisms with anger or stress... this nonprofit sort of provided me... additional support to apply to college ... with financial aid... because my mom was clueless in those regards... all the supplemental things that my mom was necessarily

not able to do (personal communication, March 2015).

In College, she had a few mentors that guide her into her Major of Nutritional Sciences. Her immediate major advisor provided her with instrumental support by making sure she registered to the correct classes, provide career related opportunities to reach her academic goals, and shared her knowledge and experience in the field of Nutritional Sciences. Additionally, her mentor provided networking opportunities by introducing her to an advisor in order to further her education. In addition to psychosocial support and networking opportunities, her mentor provided psychosocial support by encouraging her to continue her education despite her illegal status. Furthermore, participant 12 describes that her mentor continuous to be an important person in her career; she helped her with her resume, job applications, letters of recommendation, and her application to graduate School.

When I was in college I had a few academic mentors. One of them was my immediate Major Adviser. She worked in the department of nutrition and communion nutrition... when I started school that was my main interest, working in community nutrition... she would always kind of advise me... what kind of classes to look... what kind of experiences to look for... internships, volunteering, things like that... then when I was a junior in college, I decided that I wanted to become as a nutrition... I talk to the dietetics advisor... she would guide me, not also advise me with just the course load, but also like academically... how well I needed to perform in

the next few years... I was still undocumented... figuring out how can I still do it ... advising me even what can you do in the meantime until I would be able to get a Social Security number... she offered that advised and still does now... even though post graduating college...looking for jobs, needing letters of recommendation... guidance of what kinds of things to look for, and still be able to come up with my resume to be able to be in the nutrition field... and now that I got into graduate school... provide guidance on what kinds of things to look for ... she was like one of those that was always pushing me... to have more options... to be able to sort of bring it to my portfolio for future experiences (personal communication, March 2015).

During her Bachelor's Degree, she struggled in the areas of science and English; nevertheless, she describes been successful in math. During her academic struggles, her mentor was there for encouragements as well as providing strategies to succeed. She advised her to sign up for tutoring, find peers to help her understand the material and even connected her with an upperclassman who had taken those classes.

I definitely excelled in math, I just really like numbers. I struggled in English and science. My science background was not really there through high school... when I went to college, I struggled a lot...taking college level science classes, which is basically what you need to do for nutrition, was difficult... encouraging me to go to tutor hours, go to the professor

and ask for help... talk to peers that understand the material... connected me to upper-level upperclassman that had already taken the classes... provide me with mentorship and guidance and how they could succeed in class...When I was struggling in my biochemistry classes... my mentors told me, "okay so, you know this is a challenge, so what are you going to do to pass the class? ... You need to pass the class to be able to graduate"... I just think what I can spend more time studying ... ask someone to study together... listen to the lectures more ... having that relationship with ... my academic advisor nutrition ... she go through a lot of those challenges... she kind of knew what to do if you're struggling... there are ways you can work around... might not be getting A plus or an A in the class but that doesn't mean you're not learning... just encouraging me to think outside the box...(personal communication, March 2015).

Some of the characteristics learned through her mentorship relationships was being open-minded and not give up, even when she was discouraged due to her academic challenges and her immigration status. Her mentor would always tell her, "Education is very important and nobody can take it away from you."

I definitely say being open-minded, when I went to college... I was the only latina ... when you go into an institution that's predominantly Caucasian... you see other perspectives and sometimes disadvantages, or strength... I really admire that regardless of been undocumented... regardless of the status of like my academic challenges and sometimes is

personal challenges... they still be pushing me to keep working for what I wanted... supported and never really let me give up, because sometimes there are times where I thought, well what is the point, I'm not be able to get a job after I'm done. I don't get it... they remind me... you're not here to get a job, you're here to get educated and you know the education cannot be taken away from you... Remaining me the value of education, being able to move forward (personal communication, March 2015).

The heritage of her mentors expanded her cultural awareness. It made her “try things out of her comfort zone.” She believes that having the same heritage does not necessarily determine how successful your relationship will be, but rather one’s willingness to contribute to the relationship.

Definitely expanded my whole cultural awareness and being willing to try things outside of my comfort zone. For example, when I went to do a nutrition internship out in the bay area, my supervisor had a similar background to my academic advisor from the nutrition department. Being exposed to my advisor, make it easier to be able to related to my internship supervisor. Not being afraid or feel intimidated that because we weren't from the same background... that we weren't going to be able to work together... gaining that sense of your heritage doesn't determine how successful your relationship may be, but more... what you're willing to contribute...(personal communication, March 2015).

Having a better job the main motivation to continue higher education, she

wants to expand her knowledge and her career choices.

It's a number of things, definitive being able to get a better job... when I was done with my bachelors degree, I realize that I cannot do half the things that I wanted to do because my education level is limited. I have definitely made me realize that I have to continue gaining that academic exposure. Also, I really enjoy nutrition...being able to have access to other points in the profession... Not necessarily just being stuck in the community nutrition world, but maybe being able to access research or clinical nutrition... food service... having the opportunity to gain more academic knowledge to serve in different areas and no just in one (personal communication, March 2015).

Having a mentor very close inspires her to continue her higher education. She is pursuing her master's degree and a dietitian internship just like her mentor. She believes her mentor is her professional role model.

...being able to move professionally and then having more options to pursue... both my mentors especially, my academic advisor from my four years of college... she did a combination of masters and a dietitian internship, which is what I'm going to do... she talk to me about how she really enjoyed it... I look for her because sometimes I think well there's no reason for me to not pursue a PhD... she just inspired me... even though the field is "white woman dominated"... it just sometimes feel like I have a little bit more of an advantage because I bring a culture understanding that

they don't have an interests... she was definitely a professional role model for me (personal communication, March 2015).

Having a close interaction with her mentor helped her have different opportunities such as a paid research position as an undergrad.

Many different things for starters being able to take advantage of a research position... college research position at the college in summer after my junior year... project related to small eating changes and physical eating changes in African-American, Latino, low-income families or adults... I was able to experience research, I had a first hand basis... she was very familiar with the process... they where able to pay me... mentorship relationship connected me to ... scholarships or like different programs to support me going through college...(personal communication, March 2015).

The mentorship relationship impacted her self-confidence and self-esteem. When feeling discouraged, her mentor encouraged her to “keep fighting” and reminded her of her accomplishments.

Definitely improved it because sometimes it's so easy to sort of being discouraged... when you keep fighting really hard and working really hard and you realize you're not going anywhere... when you have mentors telling you... “Have you noticed that you have accomplished A, B and C”... sometimes it's so easy to forget ... bring you back, “ just because you might not be at point Z, doesn't mean that A, B, and C don't count... that

really helped my self-esteem (personal communication, March 2015). Having a mentor of similar heritage had a positive impact in her higher academic attainment. Her high school mentor was instrumental in her college application process. Her college mentor reminded her that her Latino community is looking up to her and that pressure motivated her.

... One of my mentors from high school, she was Latina... she was, I believe the first generation of her family to go to college and become educated... when I was ready to do that... she was instrumental in, helping me feel that I could accomplish this, I could survive... all the challenges that I'm going to have to face... she definitely encourage me to do that... the other adviser I had in college, was Mexican. She was working at Cornell University. Even though she was really hard on me, she really encouraged me to as Latina ... you're trying to break down barriers... you're not just doing it for yourself, you're doing it for others after you... she definitely emphasize that... she had broken down some barriers for people like myself, to be able to continue studying in college... she definitely made a point to remind me, that just because I have this luxury of going... at a university, I can't just wasted because other people after me should have the ability to do the same... whatever I do could have an impact on those follow me... that was definitely a pressure but at the same time a motivation, that you're not just doing this for yourself that you're doing it for others (personal communication, March 2015).

In her final statement, participant 12 uses a powerful statement, a mentor has to be someone you feel connected and comfortable with in order to make an academic bond. Instrumental support is essential, but psychosocial support is crucial, especially because first generation college graduates can't get that at home.

Well the role of mentors can be such a grey area...I want to have a mentorship relationship that is going to help me think pursue my professional goals... balancing my professional life and personal life... I don't have that with my family... I can't just go ask my mom... what do you think my next move should be... she is clueless, but if I have someone that I feel comfortable with sharing some of my background and my interest... I would like to find someone to be able to help me and get a better understanding... how do you define your goals? How you get there? How do you balance all those things? ... Definitive having a mentor is very important, at least for me... helps me think out loud of my next move... that person that helps me... strengths and weaknesses me, hopefully they point out... you need to wait for this forward... even if you fall on your face and your fail all the times it doesn't mean you're not going to succeed... definitive they are very important (personal communication, March 2015).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Introduction

This study documented the experiences of selected first generation Mexican immigrants who successfully completed a bachelor's degree or higher. There is a multitude of researchers examining the reasons why Chicanos or Latinos do not succeed in attaining higher education; however my research emphasis and interest is to add to the research, but from a deficient point of view instead, I would like to highlight the success of those who overcame the multiple challenges of immigration. In this study, I examined the educational experiences in the American school system throughout their k-20 educational journey. A research probe, "Tell me about yourself, and your educational experiences from a Mexican immigrant student perspective," was explored and answered. The interview involved in-depth heuristic inquiry that resulted in-depth interviews lasting 20-60 minutes. The sincere cooperation of the participants to share their lives was powerful and appreciated. It allowed me to write openly and honestly about my own experiences as a Mexican immigrant in the American educational system.

In this chapter, I discuss the themes presented in chapter 4 along with their implications, powerful quotes from the participants, and relevant scholarly works.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the data brought to light the qualities, themes, meanings, and essences that embodied the first generation Mexican immigrant experiences in the American public school system. Six very significant themes emerged; these themes provided important implications and applications for educational practitioners and researchers interested in increasing Latinos postsecondary education success. The themes were revealed through the heuristic inquiry process: Self-regulatory learning emerged to improve language and academics as a result of adversities, mentorship association due to similar heritage enhanced mentee/mentor relationship, mentorship relationship enhanced feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem, mentorship relationship enriched academic opportunities, mentors served as role models and motivation, and family was their main source of inspiration to attain higher education.

Themes

Theme 1-Self-regulatory Learning: Self-regulatory learning emerged to improve language and academics as a result of adversities

One of the very first themes brought to light during the interviews was everyone's empowerment to succeed academically due to a challenging event in their life. All of the participants spoke about a significant life event that shaped their personality and character. Interesting enough, each participant appreciated that challenging experience in their life because it gave them the strength and empowerment to overcome those challenges, set goals and succeed in attaining

them.

They each talked about perceiving a certain amount of judgment or rejection from society due to their inability to communicate fluently; however, that same rejection is what pushed them to find ways to overcome those obstacles, and so they began to self-regulate their learning. Self-regulated learning (SRL) has been defined as an “active, constructive process whereby learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals, and the contextual features in the environment” (Pintrich, 2000). Self-regulated learning is also defined as “the ability of learners to control the factors or conditions affecting their learning” (Dembo, Junge, & Lynch, 2006, p. 188). In the case of the participants, learning English was the main factor jeopardizing their academic success, therefore it was necessary for them to learn how to monitor, regulate and control their understanding of the language. Each of the participants spoke about the strategies they learned in order to survive in the world of academia. For instance, participant 10 shared something very effective she used to do to learn English, “...When I came here I would learn 20 words a day and then after that I knew, I mean, I knew what to study.” Another example of self-regulation was provided by participant 11, she stated, “I don't do very well in Math...I had to pass my college statistics class for my bachelors and so I took Study groups and I went that route...” (personal communication, March 2015).

Zimmerman believed that “the key issue defining learning as self-

regulated is not whether it is socially isolated, but rather whether the learner displays personal initiative, perseverance, and adaptive skill pursuing it” (Zimmerman, 2001, p. 1). In the case of most participants, their mentors were their main resource, but the fact that they recognized they needed help and they persevered in succeeding demonstrated their possession of self-regulatory skills. In other words, students initiate and direct their learning efforts to acquire knowledge and skills without having to depend on parents, teacher or other adults (Zimmerman, 2003). For instance, participant 7 uses her self-regulatory skills up to this date in order to understand written text and conversations.

When I get stuck with a word or with the whole line...or by listening to other people talking and sometimes not understanding everything they are saying... I have to admit that I'm still afraid to ask most of the time, I turn around and go and find out the answer by myself somehow, Google it some time, or ask people that I really trust, like a mentor...(personal communication, March 2015).

According to Zimmerman (2000), students who demonstrated an “integrated self-regulatory style” are more likely to fully assimilate since they experience more choice and control over their actions. Indeed, all the participants in this study demonstrated a high level of regulatory learning skill. They were goal oriented, motivated and persevered to attain their goal. They were resourceful, adaptive to their environment and controlled the factors or conditions affecting their learning.

Theme 2-Mentors of Similar Heritage: mentorship association due to similar heritage enhanced mentee/mentor relationship

Another reoccurring theme was definitely everyone's positive relationship with their mentors, regardless of their heritage. Having an experienced member, mentor, provide career and personal support to protégés is beneficial (Kram, 1985). Protégés report positive emotional and career outcomes (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Nielson, Carlson, & Lankau, 2001; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

Participants with mentors from a different heritage conversed about learning cultural traits foreign to them, for instance, participant one shared, " ... I learned a lot about his culture and he just exposed me to new things..."(March 2015) whereas participants with mentors of similar heritage spoke about the empowerment and motivation to move forward in pursuing their academic goals. For them, having someone similar to them succeed academically gave them the empowerment necessary to pursue their higher education, which was the case of participant two when she made the following statement, "... I felt, well he's a lot like me and he went to college. So, I'll just maybe, I could go to college too just like you did you know his life hasn't been perfect..." (personal communication, March 2015). Most of the participants spoke about their mentors serving as their inspiration and role models. Particularly because they identify with them, in other words, being an immigrant can be discouraging at times. It is hard to stay motivated, there are so many challenges along the way that one can sometimes doubt and question one's ability to succeed; therefore seeing someone with similar challenges succeed is inspirational and empowering. Additionally,

individuals can develop their self-concept by carefully observing their role model's style, traits and skills (Manz & Sims, 1981). Which was the case of participant 9,

...The mentorship relationships made it seem real in the US. In other words, all my sisters were educated in Mexico and they graduated from Mexico universities and so I didn't know what it look like in the US to graduate from college and so that was a my connection between strong female characters in my life and in an American role model and Mrs. B that kind of brought it home saying, "this is how you achieve what has been done by your sisters here in the US" (personal communication, March 2015).

In addition, those who had mentors of similar heritage mentioned that sharing similar culture and language benefited their relationship due to a natural connection. They each spoke about their immediate connection due to their ability to communicate and relate, speaking the same language being the strongest factor. Diversified mentorship theory suggests that the particular composition of the relationship can influence the levels of support and satisfaction of a particular relationship (Ragins, 1997). According to this theory, a certain level of comfort and interpersonal attraction exists when individuals share similar racial/ethnic backgrounds, therefore protégés of color benefit from having a relationship with a mentor who is also of color. Likewise, similarity-attraction model (Byrne, 1971) suggests demographic similarity in race, sex, or age

produces a positive feeling and a reciprocal attraction, which leads to positive interactions. Such theories were definitely proved by many of the participants, the following statement was one of the most powerful.

...My math teacher turned out to be my mentor...One of those people that you talk to and then you connect; same background, even where we come from, very similar north part of Mexico. And just sharing ideas of how he was when he was young and how I was, how he felt when he first came over and how all that change happened to him in his life and how it happened to me...The fact that I wanted to be a teacher...I had somebody who was a teacher, the only person that I know that had the same background as I did... I knew he was super bright guy, super smart, he showed me his degree and not a lot of people can have this degrees. Like that, and I connected with that idea oh I have the same issue with the speaking and pronouncing as he does, so I don't want to worry about that (participant 9, personal communication, March 2015).

Theme 3-Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem: mentorship relationship enhanced feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem

Self-efficacy and self-esteem were also reoccurring themes. Each of the participants spoke about reaffirming conversations with their mentors, in addition to the motivation received by their compliments and words of encouragement.

Participant 12 talked about this in her interview,

Definitely improved it because sometimes it's so easy to sort of being discouraged... when you keep fighting really hard and working really hard

and you realize you're not going anywhere... when you have mentors telling you... "Have you noticed that you have accomplished A, B and C"... sometimes it's so easy to forget ... bring you back, " just because you might not be at point Z, doesn't mean that A, B, and C don't count... that really helped my self-esteem (personal communication, March 2015).

Furthermore, having the support of their mentor allowed them to succeed at various levels in academia and that feeling of success improved their self-efficacy and confidence in their academic abilities as it was the case of participant 10.

That mentorship relationship helped shape myself confidence and my self-esteem because when I came here I would feel like, "oh, since I don't know the language, I'm not going to participate or I cannot do this because I do not know the language." But then he said, "You know what, it doesn't matter you have to participate in class. It doesn't matter that you have an accent; you just have to keep trying." So, he would help me in that sense, even though I was really shy, so I tried not to speak out because of my accent, he made me feel more comfortable with myself esteem and confidence. Also, because after all accomplishments thanks to his support; I came to realize that if I want if you wanted to go to college it was going to be possible if I had the same skills, which are commitment, confidence and also be proactive about my education (personal communication, March 2015).

And, just knowing that there was someone they could rely on was significant to their overall confidence.

... I had a good support system I knew that I could go back and ask them questions. So, I was really confident when I graduated that I'd be able to find a job there at that middle school...I don't think I've ever not been confident I always well, like I had somewhere to go (personal communication, March 2015).

Theme 4-Instrumental Support: mentorship relationship enriched academic opportunities

An opportunity brought up by their mentors was definitely a consistent theme amongst all participants. They each spoke about opportunities such as motivation to pursue higher education, tutoring support in all content areas, networking opportunities, job shadowing, college application support, letters of recommendation, career selection and career/employment opportunities. Here is what participant 4 said about that,

...she encouraged me to pursue and further my education at the University...I finished my bachelor's degree in less than 4 years, to be exact three years and a half. I finished my bachelor's degree and that was thanks to her because we went over my units, the classes that I needed and it was like a combination of her advice and also my counselor...I got a bachelors degree in psychology so my mentor told me what can I do with that degree in the future. If I wanted to go into teaching I can do that as well, just get my license [teaching credential]...Currently, I'm a substitute

teacher thanks to her advice and I'm pretty thankful for her...(personal communication, March 2015).

Such opportunities provided by their mentor speak to the constructs of social and cultural capital. Newly-arrived Mexicans for the most part, lack the social capital necessary to navigate the educational system in the United States, therefore the support of a mentor in the academic context is absolutely crucial for higher education advancement. Participant 12 also spoke to the many opportunities her mentor provided,

Many different things, for starters being able to take advantage of a research position... college research position at the college in summer after my junior year... they where able to pay me... mentorship relationship connected me to ... scholarships or like different programs to support me going through college...(personal communication, March 2015).

The research on cultural capital indicates that individuals possess different amounts of cultural capital. What this means, in the educational system, is that each individual student brings a different level of cultural capital, and it explains why some students meet school standards, are accepted at college, and achieve higher levels of education, and why other students do not (Lareau, 1989).

Bourdieu (1986) argued that the cultural experiences in an individual's home environment is essential in developing the interactions children have with schools and directly impacts their academic achievement; argument proven by

many of the participants, particularly participant 3.

Yeah, I feel very close to them [parents] and with my aunts here in the United States too. They have masters and I have another one working on her doctorate degree...So, I feel very close to them and that makes me feel that if they can do it, I can do it too. That's why I' am working on it so I can get my masters and in the future have my doctorate degree in psychology...My aunts here in the United States support me a lot (personal communication, March 2015).

Finally, it has been found that components of family life, especially cultural resources, are used as capital to align students' expectations with school norms and help solve problems concerning social acceptance (Lareau,1989).

I know in order for them to have a bachelors or masters and a future doctorate degree, they also had some limitations. I took their experience and everything they went through in order so I can learn ...Every time I feel insecure or I have any questions, I feel very confident that I can go with them and they can help me and guide me in order to feel confident and achieve my goals (personal communication, March 2015).

Theme 5-Psychosocial Support: mentors served as role models and motivation to pursue higher education

Psychosocial support was probably one of the most highlighted constructs. For most, recognizing their intellectual abilities was the initial psychosocial support needed to pursue higher education. In addition, constant positive reinforcement, validation, motivation and role modeling opened the doors

to new possibilities. Research shows that individuals can develop their self-concept by carefully observing their role model's style, traits and skills (Manz & Sims, 1981). Which was the case of participant 3 when she spoke about learning from her mentors' experiences,

For me, they are like my role models. For example, I know in order for them to have a bachelor's or masters and a future doctorate degree they also had some limitations. I took their experience and everything they went through in order so I can learn...I learned from their stories and experiences and they give me kind of a way to direct my education, so they really help me a lot... I really want to do the same and looking just to help everybody around because of the same positive reaction I have from them (personal communication, March 2015).

Psychosocial support, however, involves activities in which mentors serve as role models and provide counseling, coaching, friendship, validation, and acceptance. Psychosocial functions are thought to increase protégés' sense of competence, identity, and efficacy in a role (Gibb & Megginson, 1993; Ragins & Cotton, 1991 as cited by Ensher & Murphy, 1997). All which was supported by participant's 6 statement,

I mean she's my guide towards, like, what classes to take here at [high school name]. And what she did after, the whole time, it was just you know guiding me through (umm) the hoops. You know, when she would be the person that would give me the courage and I would go crying after English

class ... she would go fight for my classes, you know, with the counselors because she knew that I was smart and that I could do it and sometimes I wasn't getting the right classes...And any question I had about anything about college...I mean she opened those doors for me, and she was there. I mean scholarships, applying for all of that. Umm you know, she was there making sure I understood the process of applying for financial aid, all of that, but also I think she became not only like an educational mentor but more of a personal as well... She knew that I was here with just my aunt, that I was by myself, and she just became that, you know, that person that was there on different levels. You know personal and educational, and in general...(personal communication, March 2015).

Furthermore, mentoring is a 'psychosocial intervention' where the mentor supports and guides the mentee while providing opportunities for both academic and social growth (Shin & Rew, 2010). In this research, all of the participants spoke about the opportunities for academic and social growth as demonstrated by participant 12 in the following statement about her mentor, "Definitely expanded my whole cultural awareness and being willing to try things outside of my comfort zone (March 2015)..." Participant 2 also stated, "He was always trying to teach me about why it was important to succeed and get a higher education. He would talk about the struggle Mexicans that we have as Mexicans, something that I was never interested in (personal communication, March 2015). For some participants, those conversations outside of the academic content

opened opportunities and interests that they would not have had otherwise.

Theme 6-Familismo: Family was the main source of inspiration to attain higher education

One of the strongest values for the Latino community particularly of Mexican descent is family (Familismo) in terms of “unity,” “honor” and “loyalty” (Garcia-Preto, 1996). Participants spoke about the role of their family members as their primary source of inspiration. They spoke about family values that were instilled in them such as trust, respect, and hard work. Those same cultural values were significant factors when selecting their mentors.

For instance, participant 10 had very humble beginnings; therefore she wanted to create a better life economically. She aspired to be the changing factor in her family; she wanted to break the cycle, especially because she had younger siblings.

What inspired me is the need for having something better because I have a 9 siblings. So, it was really hard, we didn't even go to anywhere, we just went to the grocery store and that was it... it was hard, and I didn't want that to continue. So, I wanted to break that cycle. So, I decided to go to college because my dad would always say that the only options I had without an education would be working in the fields or joining the family business, he used to sell ice cream...So, all of those factors, I wanted to show my family that it was possible because I had little siblings...(personal communication, March 2015).

Likewise, Latino cultural values go beyond family, by having a strong

emphasis on relationships with extended family members, friends and others not related (Ruiz, 1995). Newly arrived- Mexican origin families heavily rely on their “networks” and “unity” in order to adjust and progress in the American culture (Portes, 1998). For many, sharing the same culture provided them with a sense of *confianza* (trust) that they could not share with anyone else.

So, I think that helped a lot because we shared the same heritage. That made me trust him more because I cannot see trust in another person plus he was the only one available...I don't know if the other teachers were, I never asked, but you can feel who you can trust (personal communication, March 2015).

Students, given their cultural values, seek opportunities to create a sense of *familia*. Having left their country, their *amigos* (friends) and *familia* (family), it is only natural for immigrants to find comfort in relationships that resemble those with *padrinos* (godparents). In this case, this relationship is not through a spiritual connection, but through a mutual understanding of hardships, background, heritage, and in many cases *dolor* (pain). Participant 10 speaks about that sense of connection that comes from having a similar background and seeing someone similar to her background succeed.

...He was a great teacher and he was an awesome teacher... but besides being a great teacher, he was a caring person. So, he would care for all of us, especially if you knew we were migrant students like he was... I can relate to him because I knew a real person that had the same situation as

me because home I was the only one, the only one going to school. So, he was the closest person that I would see as a model, oh he was able to be successful, to have an education, to get a career, even though he didn't know the language before, he was able to catch up and be successful in life (personal communication, March 2015).

Concluding Thoughts

Research shows that disadvantaged youth have limited opportunities given their every day experiences in school, streets and home; therefore their educational aspirations tend to be lower (Mac-Leod, 1987). Nevertheless, educators can create those opportunities for disadvantaged population. I have learned through this research that having a similar background provides a different lens in assisting disadvantaged communities. There is a level of sympathy and a certain amount of obligation to serve, assist and become a change agent for students who they identify with. All of the participants had that need to give back to the community, they want to provide and open doors for disadvantaged individuals like them. Unfortunately, the educational system has not been a positive place for many learners of non-traditional backgrounds and particularly students of color (Cropper, A. 2000) mainly because we are yet to acknowledge and respect the cultural values of minority populations. For instance, the importance of family has been noted as a core Latino cultural value (Felix-Mata, 2009) yet, we fail to embrace and include those same values in our

educational system. From this research and personal experience, I gathered that Mexican immigrants *venimos con ganas de superarnos* (strong willingness to succeed), but we lack the social capital necessary to reach our goals. We need the support of individuals *que con carino nos dan la mano para salir adelante* (who can tenderly extend their hand for support).

It has been extremely gratifying to listen to the stories of such remarkable and inspiring individuals. My passion to increase understanding of the knowledge, power, and service immigrant population has to offer has driven me to conduct this study. It is with great honor and pride that I present the successful stories of our immigrant population; it is time for successful stories to take center stage. Let us emphasize and highlight the positive realities in order to encourage others to strive to be the best they can be.

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER OF APPROVAL



Academic Affairs
Office of Academic Research • Institutional Review Board

November 24, 2014

Ms. Jessica Grisel Mendoza Servin and Prof. Enrique Murillo
Department of Teacher Education and Foundations
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

**CSUSB
INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD**
Expedited Review
IRB# 14023
Status
APPROVED

Dear Ms. Servin and Prof. Enrique Murillo:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Is there a correlation between mentorship of similar heritage and higher education attainment for Mexican immigrants" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The attached informed consent document has been stamped and signed by the IRB chairperson. All subsequent copies used must be this officially approved version. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended. Your application is approved for one year from November 24, 2014 through November 23, 2015. One month prior to the approval end date you need to file for a renewal if you have not completed your research. See additional requirements (Items 1 – 4) of your approval below.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following 4 requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years. Please notify the IRB Research Compliance Officer for any of the following:

- 1) Submit a protocol change form if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your research protocol for review and approval of the IRB before implemented in your research,
- 2) If any unanticipated/adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research,
- 3) To apply for renewal and continuing review of your protocol one month prior to the protocols end date,
- 4) When your project has ended by emailing the IRB Research Compliance Officer.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillespi@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Judy Sylva

Judy Sylva, Ph.D., Chair
Institutional Review Board

JS/mg

cc:

909.537.7588 • fax: 909.537.7028 • <http://irb.csusb.edu/>
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE LETTER OF CONSENT



College of Education

Teacher Education and Foundations

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANT MENTORSHIP - QUESTIONNAIRE

Principal Investigator: Jessica Mendoza, Department of Education, California State University, San Bernardino
Jessica Mendoza is conducting this study under the guidance of Dr. Enrique Murillo, California State University, San Bernardino Department of Education Professor. The Institutional Review Board at California State University of San Bernardino has approved this study.

You are invited to be part of a research study that focuses on the impact mentors of similar heritage have on first generation Mexican immigrants enrolling and succeeding in higher education. As part of the selection process, you will be asked to fill out an electronic questionnaire to collect descriptive data, in other words, information to describe you, the participant. Based on this information, you will be contacted by the researcher to accept the invitation to participate in this study. Selection process will be based on your mentorship relationship with a mentor of similar heritage/ background. Once selected, you will be part of one individual face-to-face interview at the location of your choice. The interview should take about one hour. I will audiotape the interview to make sure our conversation is documented accurately. The discussion topics include personal experiences regarding mentorship and your educational career in the United States' educational system.

While you may not receive a direct benefit from participating in this research, some people find sharing their stories to be a valuable experience. We hope that this study will contribute to the importance of having mentors of similar background as a resource and as part of academic programs.

Answering questions or talking with others about your struggles can be difficult. You may choose not to answer any interview question(s) and you can stop your participation in the research at any time. The interviewer will have a list of support agency referrals, if you are interested in more information about community resources.

I will publish the results of this study, but I will not include any information that would identify you. To keep your information safe, your interview recording will be saved directly in a password protected computer file created solely for this research, I will be the only person who will have access to the recording until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the recordings will be deleted. I will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected and uses special coding of the data to protect the information. To protect confidentiality, your real name and your family member's name will not be used in the written copy of the discussion.

There may be reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is conducted safely and properly to protect your rights as a research participant, such as the Institutional Review Board. For example, the CSUSB IRB may review the signed informed consent form to ensure your signature was obtained and consent documented.

If you have questions about this research, including questions about the scheduling of your interview, you can contact Dr. Enrique Murillo at (909) 535-0113, emurillo@csusb.edu or Jessica Mendoza at (760) 578-6786, mendoc31@coyoze.csusb.edu

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

You may receive the results of this study upon completion on June 30, 2015 by contacting the researcher. After the study has been completed (including the completion of the written dissertation) all questionnaire forms will be shredded and the voice recordings will be deleted.

By signing below, I acknowledge I have been informed, and that I understand the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age at the time of this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Today's Date: _____

Contact Email: _____

909.537.7405 • fax: 909.537.5992

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California State University, San Bernardino
Institutional Review Board Committee
APPROVED 11/23/14 VOID AFTER 11/23/15
IRB# 14023 CHAIR Study Site by [Signature]

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire:

Name: _____

Please answer the following questions.

1. Sex _____
2. Age _____
3. Highest academic level/degree _____
4. Academic major: _____
5. Country of origin: _____
6. Are you first generation immigrant in other words born outside of the United States?

7. How old were you when you first immigrated to the United States?

8. Did you have or currently have an academic mentor? _____

9. How do you best identify with your mentor?

10. What is your mentors' country of origin? _____

11. Is your mentor an immigrant or foreign born? _____

12. Is your mentor a first generation immigrant? _____

13. How did you meet your mentor?

14. What is your mentor's higher academic level/degree?

Developed by Jessica Grisel Mendoza Servin

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW LETTER OF CONSENT



College of Education
Teacher Education and Foundations

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANT MENTORSHIP - INTERVIEW

Principal Investigator: Jessica Mendoza, Department of Education, California State University, San Bernardino
Jessica Mendoza is conducting this study under the guidance of Dr. Enrique Murillo, California State University, San Bernardino Department of Education Professor. The Institutional Review Board at California State University of San Bernardino has approved this study.

You are invited to be part of a research study that focuses on the impact mentors of similar heritage have on first generation Mexican immigrants enrolling and succeeding in higher education. If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in one individual face-to-face interview at the location of your choice. The interview should take about one hour. I will audiotape the interview to make sure our conversation is documented accurately. The discussion topics include personal experiences regarding mentorship and your educational career in the United States' educational system.

While you may not receive a direct benefit from participating in this research, some people find sharing their stories to be a valuable experience. We hope that this study will contribute to the importance of having mentors of similar background as a resource and as part of academic programs.

Answering questions or talking with others about your struggles can be difficult. You may choose not to answer any interview question(s) and you can stop your participation in the research at any time. The interviewer will have a list of support agency referrals, if you are interested in more information about community resources.

I will publish the results of this study, but I will not include any information that would identify you. To keep your information safe, your interview recording will be saved directly in a password protected computer file created solely for this research. I will be the only person who will have access to the recording until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the recordings will be deleted. I will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected and uses special coding of the data to protect the information. To protect confidentiality, your real name and your family member's name will not be used in the written copy of the discussion.

There may be reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is conducted safely and properly to protect your rights as a research participant, such as the Institutional Review Board. For example, the CSUSB IRB may review the signed informed consent form to ensure your signature was obtained and consent documented.

If you have questions about this research, including questions about the scheduling of your interview, you can contact Dr. Enrique Murillo at (909) 936-0113, emurillo@csusb.edu or Jessica Mendoza at (760) 578-6786, jmendoza31@coyote.csusb.edu.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

You may receive the results of this study upon completion on June 30, 2015 by contacting the researcher. After the study has been completed (including the completion of the written dissertation) all questionnaire forms will be shredded and the voice recordings will be deleted.

By signing below, I acknowledge I have been informed, and that I understand the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age at the time of this study.

I understand this research study will be audio taped, _____ initials.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Today's Date: _____

Contact Email: _____

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California State University, San Bernardino
Institutional Review Board Committee
APPROVED 11/28/14 VOID AFTER 11/23/15
IRB# 14023 CHAIR Judy Sylva

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Individual Mentee Interview Questions

Participant Code: _____ Date of interview _____

1. Tell me about yourself and your educational experiences from a Mexican immigrant student perspective. What significant events do you believe shaped your personality and character?
2. What person do you feel closest to right now? How would that person describe you?
3. Did you ever have an academic mentor? Or do you have one now? If yes, what did he/she/they contribute to your life?
4. In what area or subject did you do well in school? What area or subject was most challenging? Tell me the role of your mentor in each situation.
5. What qualities do you recognize or value from your mentor?
6. How has the heritage of your mentor influenced your mentee/mentor relationship?
7. Where do you find your motivation or enthusiasm to continue pursuing or attaining higher education?
8. What has inspired you to consider higher education? What was the role of your mentor?
9. Tell me about the different opportunities you have taken as a result of your mentorship relationship.
10. How did or has your mentorship relationship impacted your self-confidence or self-esteem?

11. Self-regulatory learning refers to learning that results from students' self-generated thoughts and behaviors that are oriented toward the attainment of their goals (Zimmerman, 2001). How did or has your mentorship relationship impacted your self-regulatory learning?
12. What impact, if at all, do you think your similar background has in your mentorship relationship?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Developed by Jessica Grisel Mendoza Servin

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