STORIES ABOUT CULTURE, EDUCATION, AND LITERACY OF IMMIGRANT

GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Hala Mirza, B.A., M.Ed.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2017

APPROVED:

Janelle Mathis, Committee Chair
Carol Wickstrom, Committee Member
Karthigeyan Subramaniam, Committee
     Member
Ricardo Gonzalez, Committee Member
James Laney, Chair of the Department of
     Teacher Education and
     Administration
Randy Bomer, Dean of the College of
     Education
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse
     Graduate School

Mirza, Hala. *Stories about Culture, Education, and Literacy of Immigrant Graduate Students and Their Families*. Doctor of Philosophy (Curriculum and Instruction), December 2017, 194 pp., 1 table, 1 figure, references, 162 titles.

Every year many immigrant families become members of United States communities. Among these are international graduate students whose lives and identities, as well as those of their families, are changed as they negotiate between cultures and experiences. In this study, three Saudi graduate students share their stories about culture, education and literacy. This research employs narrative inquiry to answer the following question: What stories do Saudi immigrant students tell regarding their educational beliefs and experiences, as well as the experiences of their children in the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia? The participants' interview texts are the main data source. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry spaces of temporality, sociality, and place help identify the funds of knowledge in place throughout these narratives. Data analysis uses funds of knowledge as a theoretical lens to make visible the critical events in each narrative. These events point to themes that support the creation of a third space in which the participants negotiate being in two cultures as well as their storying across time to understand their own experiences. Themes of facing challenges, problem solving, adaptation, and decision-making connect these stories and support the discussion of findings within the personal, practical, and social justifications for this narrative inquiry. The participants' negotiation of being in two cultures as revealed here serves as a resource for educators in understanding the instructional needs of immigrant families. The findings also have the potential to contribute to changing existing misconceptions about this minority group and other immigrant groups. In a rapidly growing global community as the United States, such narratives

provide insights that invite personal understandings and connections among diverse

people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Those who tell the stories rule society.
Plato

Statement of the Problem

Little did I know that a conversation between my friends and me would lead to finding the topic of my dissertation. It was a summer weekend night in 2014 when two of my friends and I were enjoying some tea and Arabic coffee as we talked about anything and everything. The conversation drifted, and we found ourselves talking about our children's reading habits. My friend was amazed and overjoyed with the fact that her seven-year-old daughter was already reading chapter books, and she was reading for pleasure and asking for more! As a literacy educator myself, I realize how important it is to both parents and to teachers to have engaged readers who read by choice.

However, for us, the parents who were talking to each other that summer night, seeing our children read and engage in literacy practices had a whole different meaning. We are three international doctoral students studying in various fields, yet we share the same background. We are all graduate assistants sponsored by the same university in Saudi Arabia completing our higher education degrees in the U.S. We are expected to earn our degrees and go back and teach in our tenured positions. However, for all of us, and almost anyone who studied in the same school system as we did, reading was not something we learned at school. As shocking as this information is, it is the truth. By this, I do not mean the ability to decode and comprehend because, apparently, this is not the case. We are bilinguals and are working on completing our PhD's, which reflects our high literacy skills,

1

especially given that we are doing it in a second language. However, we did not learn to read anything outside our curriculum books to find the information we needed. We read was merely to memorize the information provided in the textbooks in order to achieve high scores on tests. Reading for pleasure was something very few people did and certainly had nothing to do with schools, teachers, or education. Learning in such a system marginalized our thoughts and abilities to read beyond what was given to us. The cookie cutter system demands that every student learn the exact same thing at the exact same time, with no attention at all to personal differences or to opening spaces for any different ideas. This explains my friend's joy and happiness about her daughter's reading skills. It is merely something new for us, something we did not do during our childhood, which makes us appreciate the knowledge our children are receiving as they attend U.S. schools.

As a result of that conversation, I returned that summer night, thinking about myself, my friends, and our bilingual children who are studying in the U.S. school systems. Not only did I think about their literacy skills, but I also wondered how different their lives would be from ours. Their identities are shaped in entirely different ways than ours when we were children, and later as adults. They have to live in hybrid spaces as they negotiate being in two cultures, which is something we only experienced as adults. The two cultures are different in so many ways including habits, ways of thinking, learning, and political and religious beliefs causing a lot of tension and struggle sometimes.

They also have to learn in a different educational system than we, their parents, did, which makes a tremendous difference in our backgrounds and theirs. Knowing this led me to ask myself how we influenced our children's lives. What funds of knowledge do we offer them? In what ways are we helping them negotiate between the two cultures in which they

are living? How are their literacy skills developing, and what did we contribute to that? How did we, as graduate students, negotiate our lives in academia and the new community within which we were living? And how did that affect our children? Are we the same people we were before coming to the States or are we different?

I remembered all the stories, events, and situations I had been through during the years of my graduate work. I thought about the anecdotes I heard from my friends, and the funny, sad, and sometimes confusing situations in which we found ourselves as we were trying to negotiate living in a new culture that is so different from our own.

The more I thought about these questions, the more I realized how important it is to share these stories that we have lived and experienced. We are not only foreign students with families who happen to be studying here for a short time and then going back to our home country. No! We are part of this community in which we are living. We are leaving permanent marks on this society, on our children, and even on ourselves. Hence, I decided to write this dissertation to help myself and others understand the experiences of being an international graduate student and a parent all while navigating the educational system in the US. This will help educators and researchers on many levels—first, by exploring the funds of knowledge Saudi graduate students have and that they share with their children to promote their educational skills in general, and more specifically, to promote literacy. Second, by investigating the third spaces these parents and their families might create for themselves, I want to show how they negotiate being part of two cultures and what strategies they use to do that.

One of the benefits of highlighting the knowledge and experiences of the students and their families is to help teachers become more aware of this minority group and

understand the funds of knowledge they bring to the new content. It has potential to address gaps in both the Saudi and the American education systems, for both international graduate students and their children who are attending American public schools. Teachers in both countries can scaffold students based on the students' existing knowledge and skills instead of placing them in the mainstream educational system and hoping for them to just "get it." Another goal of this study is to better understand how these Saudi graduate parents negotiate being part of two cultures with their children, and the strategies they use in order to adapt to the changes they are going through.

Personally, the most important goal of this study is to share the personal stories of each individual. The stories themselves are of great significance for educators and researchers in the literacy field, as each scholar and educator might draw many different insights from these stories.

Purpose of the Study

The research attention toward immigrants and the literature documenting their experiences is a hot topic in education in general and in the field of literacy specifically. Immigrant research is taking many forms and various methods are used, portraying the importance of this field. For example, Cassidy and Grote-Garcia's hot topics list (2014) indicates that English learners/English as a second language should be a hot topic to discuss. However, ESL education is just one side of the immigration story, and it indicates the gap in this field of research. For that reason, researchers have been exploring this topic and shedding light on the different aspects to consider when thinking about literacy and immigrants.

When we are thinking globally, we realize that the dynamics of culture are rapidly changing. No one culture can explain it all, and there is no one theory educators can use to help students learn and achieve their potentials. The world population is changing fast as well. The statistics show that "immigrant population stood at more than 41.3 million, or 13 percent, of the total U.S." Additionally, about 25% of all children in the U.S. live with an immigrant parent (Zong & Batalova, 2015). However, very little immigrant literature addresses the topic from an insider perspective, giving voice to immigrant parents, especially those who are continuing their higher education in the U.S.

As immigrant numbers are increasing every day in the US, these individuals are becoming part of the community, contributing to its development in many different forms, regardless of where they originally come from. However, the lack of knowledge that educators have about the funds of knowledge that immigrant families provide to their children and the ways they integrate knowledge from two different cultures creating a third space for themselves (Bhabha,1994; Soja,1996) increases the immigrants' feelings of isolation and being 'other'. Educators and policymakers need to know more about different minority groups in order to address their needs and provide them with adequate support.

Immigrants have knowledge, experiences, skills, and resources that they bring with them when they migrate to a new place. Yet, there are many new skills and practices they still need to learn and acquire in the new environment. The same concept applies to their educational understanding as well; regardless of the knowledge they hold about education, they will need to learn new skills and strategies to establish solid bases in their new settings.

The Funds of knowledge is a research practice that has been used to study the different ways people use their background knowledge and resources to engage their daily life. Funds of knowledge refers to the "historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to household's functioning and well-being" (Gonzalez et al., 1995/2005, p. 91-92). It is a theoretical perspective that states that "people are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002, p. 625).

My goal is to give voice to the participants in this research, inviting them to talk about their experiences and tell stories of the ways they support themselves and their children. These stories make visible the funds of knowledge that the immigrant students use as a scaffolding tool, which will help them create social possibilities in new hybrid spaces for themselves and their children.

In this research, I work with one particular group of immigrants, Saudi women, and refer to them as Saudis and/or immigrants. It is helpful to keep in mind that the term immigrants includes all foreign-born individuals or those coming from different countries and residing in the U.S. as defined by The Migration Policy Institute (Zong & Batalova, 2015), whether they are staying in the States or are planning to go back to their home country.

This study uses narrative inquiry to tell the stories of the funds of knowledge of international graduate students who are enrolled in U.S. graduate schools. It also looks at the ways that they support their children's literacy skills using those funds while creating a third space for themselves and their children.

Research Puzzles

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative research is not concerned with a precise question that has a specific definition; instead, it is concerned with a research puzzle, which is composed around a particular phenomenon. This shift from questions to research puzzles marks narrative inquiry as a different form of methodology (Clandinin, 2013).

The research puzzles I am trying to solve in this study are:

1. What stories do Saudi immigrant students tell regarding their educational beliefs and experiences, as well as the experiences of their children, in the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia?

2. What do these stories tell about the funds of knowledge of these parents and how does this contribute to their children's literacy development?

3. What do the stories reveal about the new spaces/third spaces created that support their negotiation between their homeland culture and that of their current U.S. context?

Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the areas of strengths of immigrant families who are studying in the US. While research concerning immigrant students and immigration usually focuses on the gaps that children and families speaking English as a second language have, the assumption here, with one or both parents being a graduate student, is that children will have fewer issues succeeding in school. The issue here is not whether these children will succeed in school or not, rather, it is about the way they and their families negotiate being in two cultures and the funds of knowledge that they have.

By using the concept of third space, which is usually used to explain the tension and unproductivity that might occur when being in a different culture (Cook, 2005), I want to

7

find out what the most significant factor is for those parents and their children when it comes to literacy and education. I also want to find out what concept of third space these families connected to the most if they were actually using third space at all. According to Moje et al. (2004), third space can be used to build a bridge between marginalized and common knowledge, as a space that allows students to bring their funds of knowledge from home, and/or as a space that will produce a new form of learning. I explain these three ways of constructing third space thoroughly later in chapter two, as they add more insights to the findings and contribute to clarifying the phenomenon under investigation.

I am aiming to solve a puzzle about the types of struggles families go through when they live in two cultures, the strategies they use to overcome the obstacles of being in a new, different space, the funds of knowledge they already have, and the third space they might create. Also, their literacy beliefs and the ways they use them in their daily lives will be studied.

Using Moll, Amanti, and Gonzalez's (2005) "funds of knowledge" theory along with "third space," to tell stories using narrative inquiry method, the focus is not on what these students lack in their knowledge but on the new knowledge and the different resources and experiences they have. The uniqueness of this study lies in working with graduate students from Saudi Arabia, which adds significant depth to the study considering the various cultural, historical, identity-related differences they have from the U.S. immigration mainstream. The spreading of diverse populations all over the world is connected with this cultural difference, and it has made this topic not only nationally essential, but globally essential as well (Dantas & Manyak, 2010). Since 2005, when the King Abdullah Scholarship Program started, Saudis are studying abroad and residing in different

countries around the world in increased numbers, with a total of 174,333 current undergraduate students and 21,748 graduate (Detailed Education Statistics, 2016). The U.S. is the no.1 destination for Saudis, with 61,287 enrolled students in its universities (Institute of International Education, 2016), making Saudi Arabia the third country in the number of students it sends to the U.S. However, only a small number of studies cover this population as students and highlight the different culture they carry with them.

This study has many aspects that will potentially add to the educational field when completed. One aspect benefits the children of these international graduate students, as teachers and practitioners will have more insights about this minority group. It will help teachers accommodate the needs of the students by using the funds of knowledge the students have, to develop learning opportunities that engage them. There is a need to know what these families do, not only to know where they come from (Md-Yunus, 2015). Another aspect will concern the graduate students themselves; when they tell their stories about learning in both Saudi Arabia and the US, the higher education institutions in both countries can address the different perspectives on education and plan accordingly.

Since this is qualitative research, there will always be something worth reporting. Qualitative research is about understanding an experience and gaining insights, and with narrative inquiry as the research method, I aim to provide insights about this special group. Narrative inquiry requires three levels of justification: the personal, the practical and the social (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007), which I explain further in the following chapters.

It is critical to keep in mind that this study focuses on the broader concept of literacy, considering the social, cultural, ideological and economic factors that shape its practices. In this study I do not look at one single literacy practice at home, rather I

consider all of the above factors as told by the parents themselves. Many research studies

focus on the parental involvement, but very few use the parents' voice. By asking parents,

who are students themselves, to share their experiences, I hope they can tell stories that

explain the struggle they went through and the ways they dealt with being caught between

cultures themselves, as adults, and those of their children.

Definition of Terms

- *Field texts.* The term "field texts" refers to information collected by researchers

from different resources in narrative research.

- *Funds of knowledge.* The term "funds of knowledge" refers to what Moll and

González (1994) identified as:

> those historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge
> and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. As
> households communicate within circles of family and friendship, children are
> being "participant-observers" of the exchange of goods, services, and symbolic
> capital, which are part of each household's functioning. (p. 443)

- *Immigrants*. According to the Migration Policy Institute (2016), the term

"immigrants" (also known as the foreign-born) refers to "people residing in the United

States who were not U.S. citizens at birth. This population includes naturalized citizens,

lawful permanent residents (LPRs), certain legal nonimmigrants (e.g., persons on student

or work visas), those admitted under refugee or asylee status, and persons illegally

residing in the United States." In this paper, I refer to any person who came from another

country to live in the U.S. as an immigrant. It does not matter if they are planning to live the

rest of their lives in the U.S., or if they are planning to return to their original home country

eventually, even if they have citizenship but do not identify themselves as citizens (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

- *Third space.* The term third space refers to the place where the first space and second space come together, and function as one space called the third space. The first space usually refers to a material space whereas the second refers to a mental space (Soja, 1996). Third space not only brings first space and second space together, it also extends to creating new social possibilities. Bhabha's (1990) view of third space refers to creating newness. In that sense, third space is a space for people to function in ways that suit them, with the knowledge they already have, to understand new concepts and ideas. It works as a scaffolding tool for people dealing with new space.

Summary

Current research shows the absence of studies that cover the funds of knowledge and third space of international graduate students and their families. As mentioned previously, data shows that Saudi Arabia comes in third place in the number of students studying in the U.S. The present study documents stories of three Saudi graduate students and addresses their educational backgrounds, their children's literacy skills, and their strategies for adjusting to a new culture through narrative inquiry.

In the next chapter I discuss literature in the field that addresses funds of knowledge, third space, narrative inquiry, and family literacy. I also focus on research on what it is like to be an Arab and a Muslim in the United States.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first part of this chapter provides a review of the literature that is related to family literacy practices used in households, focusing on immigrant families. Research indicates that immigrant families' English language proficiency, their social status, and their background knowledge play major roles in developing and shaping their children's language skills and home experience (Li, 2002; Li, 2006). However, this is usually associated with students from families with low-income and low-education levels. Since there is a smaller body of research on immigrant parents who are well educated, there is a need for new research exploring this area. By asking parents to tell their stories, I want to know more about them and their children regarding their knowledge, their background, and the resources they have. There are multiple levels to this study, as I seek to learn about the strategies these parents use to shape their children's literacy practices, and the ways they help them succeed at school. Also, I want to know if being a graduate parent with a different cultural background contributes to these children's educational journey and in what ways? How would these parents describe their experience here in the US, comparing it to their past experience in Saudi Arabia? The answers to these questions will help readers understand the experiences of Saudi graduate students and their children by delving into their stories that demonstrate their ways of thinking and learning.

The second section of this chapter focuses on immigrant children and their graduate parents in the United States and the ways they negotiate being in two different cultures. This includes being an international student, being a Muslim and an Arab, negotiating third space and the funds of knowledge these families have.

The research in this area suggests that students in general, and especially marginalized minorities, create a third space for themselves and further extend it to new spaces where they detach from the first space, yet examine that space with a new perspective. The body of research about this topic is both massive and diverse. For that reason, I chose the research that goes along with my topic, which focuses on immigrant children and their families and the ways they are functioning in new societies or on research about marginalized groups or individuals. Connected to third space and germane to its ideas is the theoretical concept of funds of knowledge. I address literature in this area showing the various literacy skills that immigrant families provide for their children and their ways of connecting that knowledge to academic discourse.

Since this study focuses on international graduate students from Saudi Arabia, it is essential to include literature about being Muslim and Arab in the U.S. because religion is inseparable from Saudis' lives and guides their every action. This section will discuss Muslims' feelings toward living in the U.S. and the ways it influences their lives and identities as Muslims and Arabs. I will be discussing Muslims and Arabs in general because the literature about Saudis, in particular, is scarce and insufficient.

The following section provides literature that discusses some of the difficulties international graduate students encounter while finishing their graduate work. It also highlights some of the reasons for challenges that these students face, including the absence of policies to protect them.

In the third part of this chapter, I discuss what is known about narrative inquiry as a research methodology in literacy education, explaining reasons for choosing it as the research method for this study and the ways it fits its purpose. It was critical to present the

research body available about narrative inquiry to demonstrate the need for a research that addresses the gap in this area. Many researchers used narrative inquiry as a method in literacy research, but rarely was it used with immigrant parents who are students themselves.

Funds of Knowledge

Vélez-Ibañez and Greenberg (1992) introduced the concept of funds of knowledge to the educational field after being inspired by Eric Wolf's (1966) work. They explained the concept by relating it to Wolf's (1966) distinguished funds that households must acquire in their daily lives such as food, rent, and other social funds like friendship, which require a level of knowledge and specific skills to obtain. Vélez-Ibañez and Greenberg argued that the meaning of funds of knowledge is any selection of knowledge and skills that are of great importance to the household and family's well-being. Through studying Mexican families, they found that these families held a wide array of funds through their daily interactions with others, their work and labor practices, their daily activities, and their educational experiences (Rios-Aguilar, 2010).

In 1992, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González used the same concepts to study the at-home literacy practices of Latino students and their families. Their goals were to build positive relationships between teachers and students and to learn about the different knowledge these households shared. Moll and González (1994) identified funds of knowledge as:

> Those historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. As households interact within circles of kinship and friendship, children are

"participant-observers" of the exchange of goods, services, and symbolic capital, which are part of each household's functioning. (p. 443)

Gonzalez and her colleague argued that Vygotsy's ideas are found in funds of knowledge in three ways. Firstly, funds of knowledge is one of the household's most important cultural resources because it works as a mediator for the well-being of families through communicating activities that organize household life. Secondly, funds of knowledge is also a cultural resource for teachers when documenting their experience, as they mediate their thinking to acquire specific tools that will help conduct the research. The third and final way is using funds of knowledge as a tool for change in classrooms. In other words, funds of knowledge contributes to the social and cultural changes in classrooms, mediating teachers' thinking and families' well-being, which aligns with Vygotsky's ideas.

In Vygotsky's perspective (1978), a key aspect is how humans construct meaning socially and culturally. In this theory, culture provides tools and resources for humans to practice and use; it helps mediate their thinking. In other words, human thinking is socially constructed from the beginning by cultural practices including language and by using artifacts from the social world (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

According to Hogg (2011), funds of knowledge makes a difference in research, teacher practice, and teacher education. In her study, Hogg investigated the term funds of knowledge in the literature and recommended using it in the three previously mentioned areas. She stressed that funds of knowledge could "recognize the knowledge of marginalized students and their families as a way to redress ill-informed negative judgments perpetuated by deficit theorizing" (p.673). Furthermore, it can boost the schooling experience for such groups by informing teachers what to teach and how to teach

it. Other goals include improving schools' authenticity and supporting the community's "empowerment and transformation" (p.673).

All of these serve as goals of my current study, but the focus is particularly on portraying the funds of knowledge that the participating families have as a well-educated minority group. For that reason, funds of knowledge goes well with my research as a framework to explore the resources and knowledge that international graduate parents have accumulated thanks to their previous educational experiences, to their upbringing in a culture different from their children's, and to their current status as graduate students in the US. Moll and González believe that these practices are influenced and ever-changing according to socio-historical situations, and they focus more on practices rather than culture because of the different meanings associated with the word culture (González, 2005; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Although the term funds of knowledge was not new then, González and her colleagues' framework provided a new perspective, and many researchers adopted their definition of the concept. They used it in their studies to explore the knowledge and skills of minority students and their families to make a better connection between home and school.

Many teachers overlook the information and knowledge students bring with them from home into the classroom, creating a gap between school and life experiences, while they emphasize the disadvantaged students and the academic knowledge and language skills they lack (Gonzalez, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, And Amanti, 2005). These experiences are often viewed as a burden rather than an asset (Street, 2005). By ignoring the students' funds of knowledge, teachers deny these students their great potential to learn compared to when teachers look further into their lives and their

16

households' culture. Gonzalez (1995) explained the goal of this project by saying: "The point of this type of ethnography must be not the collection of data but the development of relationships of empowerment and access between communities and schools" (p. 6).

In developing this project, Moll and colleagues offered a new way for teachers to bridge the gap between home and school by using the funds of knowledge that Latino students brought with them from their homes and community. The perceived notion associated with these students was that they come from poor communities with a lack of academic knowledge, which led to low expectations from them in schools. Funds of knowledge worked to prove the previous assumptions wrong. It showed that there was a deficit in the previous theorizing model, and it engaged teachers in conducting research, making the theory-to-practice connection (Hogg, 2011). By focusing on the students' households' daily practices (Gonzalez, 2005), it offered a new framework for effective practices for students from different backgrounds.

The new framework offered by funds of knowledge is presented in various studies and conducted research. For example, Street (2005) explored culturally diverse students' funds of knowledge by using their writing as a tool to hear their voice. He argued, "It was my goal to find the voices of my students and see what was important to them. By allowing my students to choose their writing topics I hoped they would pursue their writing assignments with improved interest and energy" (p.23). He explained that the reason these students and their families felt like outsiders was due to their view of themselves as having nothing to contribute: they thought they did not belong to a writing community and that, academically, they were failures. With the funds of knowledge project, Street admitted he learned many new things about these students and their abilities socially and academically.

17

He was surprised with the knowledge these students shared, and most importantly, he built stronger relationships with them and their families, which is the heart of the concept of funds of knowledge. He admits that, by getting closer to the families, they no longer felt disconnected or like outsiders. Students and families began to see themselves as both teachers and learners, by adding and contributing to the curriculum with the ideas and knowledge they brought to school. Street himself learned a lot and felt he was engaged in culturally responsive teaching. He also admitted that he had many misconceptions about teaching, but he was able to reassess them and fix them after this project. He remarked that funds of knowledge had helped him a lot as both a learner and a teacher.

Another teacher described her initial experience with funds of knowledge and the home visits as getting outside of her comfort zone and having increased levels of anxiety (Tenery, 2005). She later built stronger relationships with students' families, concluding that her visits to the families left positive marks on students' learning in schools. She summarized her experience with funds of knowledge saying that many characteristics of the families she visited contradicted a great number of the stereotypes of Mexican families. The more hardships these families encountered, the more skills they developed.

Comparable research by Brenden (2005) came to similar conclusions. After recruiting many teachers to observe students and their families, the teachers expressed how much the experience helped them to understand the students and their families' perspectives in ways that they never thought possible due to school culture and to economic and social barriers. This is similar to Riojas-Cortez's (2001) research on funds of knowledge of students. After she conducted her observation on students, she extended her research to include 12 categories that she found in children's dramatic play (such as

language), values and beliefs, household care, and the value of education as resources of funds of knowledge. She encouraged teachers to dig deeper into students' funds of knowledge, to go beyond food fairs and flag displays as a representation of culture. She believes that funds of knowledge demonstrates children's capabilities and can inform curriculum and help children to develop more formal bodies of knowledge and literacy skills later on (Hedges, 2007).

While the original project included families and explored the parents' funds of knowledge along with their children's, not all of research explored the same funds of knowledge. Many studies only explored the students' funds of knowledge, not including parents in their study (J. Andrews & Yee, 2006; Johnson, Baker, & Bruer, 2007; Moje et al., 2004). Also, research using funds of knowledge studied many minority groups "including Mexican-Americans (Ayers et al., 2001), Puerto Ricans (Olmedo, 1997; Rios-Aguilar, 2010), Haitians (Conant et al., 2001), and African Americans (Foster & Peele, 2001)" (Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt & Moll, 2011, p. 166), but had never been used to study Saudis or Muslims in general.

However, as with any other theory, funds of knowledge has its own limitations, which, according to Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, and Moll (2011) are: the high emphasis the concept puts on recognizing the funds of knowledge of students, the one methodological approach it uses, and its dependency mostly on adult practices for analysis.

Third Space

Because of these limitations, I make the connection here between funds of knowledge and third space as they have a solid relation to each other. Funds of knowledge

can be one of the characteristics of third space, as people bring their own knowledge to create third space (Cook, 2005). Using third space along with funds of knowledge will help decrease the focus on funds of knowledge only, which is one of the limitations mentioned earlier and will highlight other areas of significance for immigrant students when they share and use their funds of knowledge to negotiate the new space they create. The connection between funds of knowledge and third space is evident in the seminal work of Moje et al. (2004), who viewed hybrid spaces as spaces where the different funds of knowledge and discourses develop from regular formal discourse (Barton & Tan, 2009). Their study was influenced by sociocultural theory (Moll & Whitmore, 1993; Vygotsky, 1986) and by discourse and cultural theory (Bhabha,1994; Gee, 1996; Lemke, 1990; Luke, 1995/1996; Soja, 1996).

Looking into the students' funds of knowledge and discourses that shaped their reading, writing, and talking about texts, and the ways they bring these funds and discourses to classrooms, were the two main guiding principles in the research of Moje et al. The study was embedded in two larger science/ethnography projects. There were 30 young people (20 females and 10 males) who volunteered to participate in the study. All participants lived in low-income or working-class households, and they all identified themselves as Latino/a even though they came from different countries. They were all bilingual and bi-literate in both English and Spanish. The data-collecting methods included participant observation, surveys, interviews (informal and formal, and individual and focus groups), and collecting different documents, artifacts, and photos. Researchers have categorized their findings into four categories: family funds of knowledge and discourse, community funds of knowledge and discourse, peer funds of knowledge and discourse, and

20

popular cultural funds of knowledge and discourse. They found that households' funds of knowledge have connections that are cultural, historical and scientific. These funds "had a transnational or global quality because they were based not only in two nations but also in two interdependent economic systems" (p.52), which confirmed that everyday knowledge is very diverse and has broad spectrums even when it is drawn from home experiences. The team of researchers found that all students talked about immediate or extended family and work experiences.

These findings showed the ways that students connected their funds of knowledge with school knowledge moving in a third space of knowledge and discourse. The home knowledge the students already had, like dry cleaning, farming, and landscaping were directly related to the scientific concepts in school. However, this home knowledge was rarely used in classrooms. The rest of the categories had very similar findings, indicating that the literacy practices required in science and other content area curricula could be supported, further developed, extended, and even challenged, by linking them to the students' funds of knowledge. Another significant finding was that students did not volunteer to talk about and share their knowledge in classrooms, but did so with enthusiasm when asked to talk about it in the out-of-school interview. This reflected the unconnected feelings students had in relation to what they were learning in schools. They did not use the physical spaces highlighted in the science courses they were taking. Thus, they did not offer their knowledge and experiences. Moje et al. concluded that teachers need to develop a third space where they can engage students in reading, writing, and doing other activities. They can achieve this goal by including texts and experiences of the

communities and local spaces that students examine and live in. It is important for teachers to show students that their knowledge and Discourse are welcome in classrooms.

Moje and her colleagues (2004) described the creating of the third space in learning situations as a combination between the first and second spaces. The first spaces are usually the non-academic, informal spaces in students' lives. These include home, friends, popular culture, and community. Second spaces are more formal spaces that have more power and authority over the students. Schools and academic situations are examples of these second spaces. Moje and colleagues believe a third space is created when the first and second spaces are combined. Many researchers encourage the challenge of the separation of home and school as separate spaces. Orellana (2007), for example, emphasizes the idea of transactions across and between the two spaces.

Moje's et al. (2004) work demonstrates how a third space is beneficial for examining the use of different resources—intellectual and physical—when introducing existing knowledge to the contested space. In their work, Moje and colleagues analyzed three different views of third space. The first perspective views third space as a bridge between marginalized knowledge in schools and academic knowledge. They support this view by looking at the following previous studies. According to Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, Tejeda, et al. (1999) and Guiterrez, Baquedano-Lopez, Alvarez, and Chiu (1999), the third space can be educationally and linguistically explicit. The different Discourses students can attend to, and the ones they are confronted with can be considered resources that help the students better understand the world in the classroom and in their daily lives. These different resources are hybrid in nature and thus function as a third space where students can mediate social and cognitive development. For Gutierrez and her colleagues, third

22

space is a bridge between home and community knowledge and school-based knowledge and discourse. In other words, it is more like a scaffolding tool that moves the students to their zones of proximal development from what they already know about home and community discourse to academic discourse. This view of third space is important because it allows for success in school while also giving space for marginalized groups (Moje et al., 2004).

The second view of third space is Bhabha's (1994) view, which addressed the fact that "third space is produced in and through language as people come together, and particularly as people resist cultural authority, bringing different experiences to bear on the same linguistic signs or cultural symbols to bear on the same experience" (Moje et al., 2004, p.43). Bhabha's view suggests a sense of uncertainty of signs and symbols. This means that if signs and symbols have no fixed meaning of their own, then any discipline or concept is open to any interpretations.

Coming from a postcolonial perspective, academic knowledge can be the colonizer by making only certain knowledge and Discourse valid and available to those who are privileged. This makes marginalized students struggle and resist this privileged Discourse, thus having trouble achieving self-worth and always thinking of themselves as "other." However, this can be avoided, and this struggle can open spaces to "newness" of self and identity—a productive hybrid third space according to Bhabha (1994), as long as one is not defined by the dominant Discourse. Moje and her colleagues say,

> Bhabha's view of third space suggests that academic knowledge and Discourse need not to be accorded an absolute and exclusive privilege, precisely because there is potential for the rearticulation of both academic and everyday knowledge, as well as of the Discourse constituted by the communities the produce such knowledge. (p.43)

The final view of third space is concerned with the physical space in which people interact. According to Soja (1996), people are "intrinsically spatial beings" (p.1), and the spatial dimension is of an important role in the lives of all people as they socially construct their personal space. This perspective requires looking beyond the first and second spaces of physical and social to other oppositional categories like the everyday and the academic, the in-school or out of school, or any other oppositional categories that can work together to create new knowledge and Discourse (Moje et al., 2004).

To Moje and her colleagues, third space draws on all of these previous perspectives. They see third space as a scaffold for people to learn different Discourse and knowledge, which is the Discourse of the privileged. However, they also think of third space as a way to bring everyday Discourse to the academic Discourse in ways that challenge that privileged knowledge. This view builds a bridge between what is already known to new knowledge educators and what they hope students will acquire. They also believe that third space moves beyond usual spaces to new ones that create new knowledge.

Building on Moje et al.'s (2004) work, Benson (2010) used third space to analyze one student's vignettes. Benson argued that even though the boy, who is the focus of the study, was not being "othered" by race, gender, or socio-economic status; rather he was colonized by the schooling system, which is "highly politicized space" (p.556). The goal of her research was to describe the student's experience for further reflection on how to use literacy-learning conditions that are relevant to students' literacy skills. Through field observation, informal and formal interviews, and a student's portfolio of coursework, Benson was able to collect data to write four vignettes about Bud, who was a 16-year-old Caucasian male in an English Language Art classroom. From the data she collected, she

found that Bud was not interested in reading and writing, and he was often able to go through the day without completing his assigned work. Thus, he created a new space for himself, avoiding all spaces he was pushed to by teachers. Benson found that Bud altered assignments and requirements to demonstrate his creativity and skills. Providing time and space for Bud was not enough to engage him in literacy practices, as he was pushed to spaces he did not wish to enter. Therefore, he was using the classroom to create a new space to serve his own purpose, which created a gap between his abilities and his achievements.

Benson argued that creating a third space in classrooms, where both teachers and students work together, transfers the power from teachers to students by giving the students more voice and allowing them to use the knowledge they already possess. She believes that Bud's refusal to read and write was not due to his lack of abilities but due to lack of communication and connection between teacher and students.

In another study conducted by Elsden-Clifton (2006), the researcher explored the artwork of migrant students, who used art to create third space in transformative ways. The researcher's goal was to explore how migrant students created third space and the ways they engaged with it as a tool to find meaning for themselves, others, and the world.

On the other hand, Gutierrez (2008) viewed third space as a more in-depth space for expanding forms of learning and development of new knowledge. For her, it is more than just a celebration of literacy skills of minority groups or just knowing what these minority groups can do with it when receiving support and scaffolds. It is a collective third space "in which both individuals and the collective develop. New and shared understandings and practices evolve through coordinated activity" (Martin, Snow & Torrez, 2011, p.2).

Family Literacy

Literacy as a Social Practice

Many researchers have tried to describe literacy and come up with a specific

definition for it. Nonetheless, literacy has a lot to offer and is not limited by one definition

or one perspective. One way of looking at literacy is by viewing it as a social practice that is

shaped by many different aspects including educational, social, cultural, economic, political,

and ethical views (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000; Gee, 1999;

Perry, 2010; Street, 2001). A sociocultural view of literacy "emphasizes the role of social,

cultural, and historical factors in the human experience" (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p.122). It

stresses the role of cultural and social factors of literacy learning, focusing more on the

broader aspect of culture. Reading is a social activity by nature based on this perspective

(Tracey & Morrow, 2012). This view of literacy as a social practice is rooted in Vygotsky's

(1986) theory that states that actions and language are inseparable. In his theory, children

learn when they socially interact with others. They use signs and symbols to construct

meaning, and they do so in a social context.

From that perspective, the concept of literacy as a social practice emerged.

According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), literacy practices are those observable, repeated

behaviors people use when they interact with texts, including feelings, values and social

practices that work as the background for this interaction. The social aspect is evident as

Gee (1999) highlighted that literacy acquisition is not about learning how to read and

understand words only, but extends it to include the social aspect of the text, which means

how readers feel, value, think about, and interact with it.

One form of literacy as a social practice is family literacy. Family literacy as Pahl explained it, is an effort to link home and school through an emphasis on shared literacy activities with parents and children, most likely on school sites, but depending on home-based experience (Pahl & Kelly, 2005). The focus on family literacy started a couple of decades ago when Taylor (1983) coined the term family literacy. Heath's famous study *Ways with Words* (1983) is a seminal work in this area. Heath studied the ways parents interacted with their children at home in different societies and the effects of these interaction on the children's language acquisition. However, the focus of her study was on language mostly, with no considerable attention to other aspects of literacy. Other studies followed that examined children's text making in homes (Gregory & Williams, 2000; Kenner, 2000).

The connection between home and school is necessary because many parents draw their knowledge from what they what they are familiar with. This was evident in Pahl and Kelly's (2005) study as they found a mingling connection between home and school when conducting their study. The researchers found that both parents and children used the family literacy classrooms, where they were working with books and creating texts and other literary material as a third space where they constructed their own meaning. They were drawing on resources from both home and school and were able to share them with teachers, which helped teachers create a shared curriculum for the students.

Teachers, Home Literacy Practices, and Minority Students

It is important for teachers to understand how home and school literacy practices can vary and to work to reduce the gap in literacy programs and curriculum so they can

help families support their children (Brown, 2007). When there is communication between home and school, teachers can better understand the different needs of children. They will be aware of circumstances and things that happen at home. They will be more knowledgeable about the skills students probably have, which will result in eliminating the blame on parents for not being involved in children's education (Edwards et al., 2001). Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2005) concluded that educators should encourage parents' involvement so that they can acquire the needed skills to provide suitable social instructions for literacy activities at home for students. When teachers attempt to understand students' different cultures and their home environments by cooperating with parents, listening to their needs and valuing their abilities and skills, they will be better able to provide individualized instructions for students and help parents in supporting their children's literacy skills (Paratore, 2002; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2005). However, there is a miscommunication or lack of communication, to be precise, between home and school causing educators to believe that many parents do not support their children's literacy skills and educational development, which is in conflict with the actual level of involvement for these parents.

Research indicates that many teachers are confused when it comes to valuing the family literacy practices that students bring with them to school simply because they are different from their own. This gap increases when the students come from a different culture. Many times educators develop negative feelings toward students (and their families) from different cultures, believing they are not interested in school (Heath, 1983; Manyak and Dantas, 2010; Moll, Amanti, and Gonzalez, 2005). In a study by Manyak (1999), he found that many teachers, who did not have enough knowledge about students'

backgrounds and had minimal contact with students' families, assumed that their students had little experience outside of school. Even more, many teachers had false assumptions about family literacy and believed the students came from families that did not value succeeding in school (Auerbach, 2005). They view minority parents as less cooperative and less engaging in school than Caucasian parents (Boethel, 2003). Teachers believe parents lack the motivation to work with schools and that they are less concerned with their children's education, and have a law perception of education in general (Lopez, 2001).

In another example, after Christenson and Sheridan (2001) studied African American parents' levels of involvement, they found that their involvement was comparable to or higher than that of Caucasian parents, contrary to the educators' beliefs, who thought that they had a lower rate of involvement than that of Caucasian parents. The same findings yielded from different studies reporting minority parents to have similar attitudes toward education or even higher involvement levels than Caucasian parents (Rimm-Kaufman, La Paro, Downer, & Pianta, 2005). The focus on parental involvement is vital because students' achievement increases, and they are more motivated and develop higher levels of emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment, when their parents participate in their education and build warm, mutual and respected relationships with teachers (Pianta, 2006).

It is crucial for teachers to help minority families feel welcomed and become insiders when it comes to their children's education. While mainstream American families know and are familiar with the education system in the US, it is not the same for refugees and immigrants, who were taught in different education systems, which affects the ways they ask for help to support their children at school. Many of the first generation parents

are unaware of the cultural, social and academic practices that occur in U.S. schooling system, which make it ambiguous for some of these families (Schulz, 2010). Nevertheless, when teachers make an effort to know the students and their families and culture, these teachers can use these resources to help their students achieve more in schools. Manyak and Dantas (2010) argued "instead of focusing on the knowledge, experiences, or material sources that such families lacked in comparison to the prototypical 'mainstream' family, we began to recognize the unique resources that diverse families possessed and passed on to their children" (P.6). In her ethnographic research, Perry (2010) studied the literacy practices of Sudanese refugee families. She wanted to explore their beliefs about literacy, how they use it in their daily lives, and how do school practices support their everyday literacy practices at home. She found that these families used literacy in a variety of shapes and languages too. They spoke English, Arabic, KiSwahili, and other local Sudanese languages. Families used literacy in things that mattered to them, like learning religion. They also used literacy to be up-to-date with the political situation in Sudan. They were also very concerned with education and formal schooling. She suggested that teachers should learn more about their students to be able to use their background knowledge when building the school's curriculum. Also, they need to take the time to get to know their students and their families, even if their family does not fit the average definition of family. There is a need to have family literacy programs that recognize different types of families of refugee students based on their culture.

Parental Education Level

Parents' education level is a fundamental factor in this study as it focuses on

graduate students. Research indicates that mother's literacy level is the single most

significant indicator of children's literacy level (Educational Testing Service, 2006). The

more education a mother has, the more likely she is to read to her child. Studies revealed

that 77 percent of mothers who have a college education read to their children every day,

while only 49% of mothers who had a high school education read to their children daily

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Other research suggested that the amount

of education that parents receive affects the ways that they organize their home

environment as well as the ways they communicate with their children in encouraging

academic achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005). These parents understand the importance of

literacy and value it. Therefore, they reinforce practicing it at home (Brown, 2007).

Moreover, in 2006, Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, and Shapiro argued that parent's education

was directly related to their beliefs and values about literacy. The more educated the

parents, the more they value reading and vice versa (Lynch et al., 2006).

Being a Muslim and Arab in the United States

Arabs and Muslims differ in their feelings toward living in the States. While some

have very positive experiences, others do not. According to Qamar-ul Huda (2006),

> American Muslims do not feel marginalized, isolated, or locked out of political
> participation. Social economic mobility is far more attainable. For the most part,
> American Muslims have successfully created professional, cultural, human rights,
> civil rights, educational and political organizations as an expression of feeling
> included in the larger spectrum of American Society and liberal democracy. (p.2)

On the contrary, many researchers have differing views. Even though Islam is the

fastest growing religion in the world, making it the second-most popular religion after

Christianity, many view it negatively and associate it with the biased portrayal that is often

31

found in Western media (Leonard, 2003; Phelps, 2010). This happens partly because social media, movies, music, popular culture, government officials, textbooks, and other teaching resources misrepresent Islam. These are resources that contribute to Muslim stereotypes and to misinformation about Islam (Abu El-Haj, 2002; Douglass, 2003; Phelps, 2010; Suleiman, 2001).

For Muslims, Islam is a way of life, and it shapes the identities of its followers. However, there is a huge gap in the literature addressing religion in general, and the role it plays in shaping people's identities. Similarly, very few studies of recent immigration and ethnicity say anything about religion, which according to Warner (1997), represents a "huge scholarly blind spot" (p.218). For example, Douglass and Dunn (2003) demonstrated that when it comes to Islam, students only study it in a historical or world cultural context, and they only spend a couple of weeks out of 12 years of schooling on this topic. Schooling systems ignore the significant contributions of Islam and Muslims in science, math, geography, astronomy, medicine, and much more during the Islamic golden ages. Instead, they focus on the tragic events of 9/11 (Phelps, 2010). This comes in contrast, for example, with the teaching of Holocaust, which is taught in many schools in the US.

Many Muslim students are being "othered" by the education system and society in general. Peek (2005) reports: "Following September 11, the students were frequently questioned about their faith and religious beliefs," (p. 231) by peers who perceived them differently. This 'othering' is defined by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2013) as "the social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalizes another group," (p. 188) causing many discriminating acts in schools. Additionally, Mastrilli and Sardo-Brown (2002) conducted a survey that showed that one-third of American teachers reacted

32

negatively to hearing the word "Islam." "They responded using terms such as 'terrorists,' 'enemy,' 'trouble,' 'war,' 'Bin Laden,' and 'unfair treatment of women'" (p. 156). Furthermore, some educators view Muslim students as English language learners who are not very proficient in oral communication (Md-Yunus, 2015). It is important to note that most of their knowledge comes from the media, and few have personal connections or contacts with Muslims.

In a recent study by Md-Yunus (2015) the researcher explained the challenges students and their parents face when entering a public school. These challenges include the gap in the culture between teachers and their students, causing a conflict and a negative understanding of what it means to be a Muslim. Muslim students have to navigate a system that does not support Muslim's traditions of eating, dressing, being with the opposite gender, as well as not being able to practice prayers, fasting, or celebrating Eid due to lack of acceptance for being Muslim in schools. This makes Muslims and their families feel like they are second-class citizens, and put them at a disadvantage through discrimination against them.

The current educational framework in the U.S. focuses more on the cultural differences rather than the similarities between Islamic culture and the mainstream culture in the West (Abu El-Haj, 2006). This cultural mismatch could affect teachers' perceptions and judgments of their immigrant students, according to the Longitudinal Immigrants Families and Teachers Study [LIFTS] (Rogers-Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014). Other studies reported that "these differences may lead to the situations in which teachers misread students' aptitudes, intents, or abilities as a result of the differences in styles of language use and instructional patterns" (Delpit, 2006, p. 167). It also affected teachers' views of

their students' academic achievement (Hauser-Cram, Sirin, & Stipek, 2003), and behavioral well-being (Sirin, Ryce, & Mir 2009).

This is evident in the recent incident that took place in October 2015. Ahmed Mohammed, a 14-year-old Muslim boy, was accused of building a bomb and bringing it to a school in Texas. The talented boy had built a clock and brought it to school to show it off to his teachers, but instead of being praised for his creativity, he was arrested and sent to jail. This case represents what it means to be a brown Muslim in an anti-Muslim society that spreads Islamophobia (Leonard, 2003; Phelps, 2010; Giroux, 2015). Ahmed and his family chose to accept a scholarship from Qatar and moved there shortly after the event. This story represents how many Americans feel toward Muslims in general.

Similarly to Ahmed's story, just by wearing a headscarf and sometimes having darker skin, Muslim women are seen as incompatible with the American identity (Stadlbauer, 2012). Nadia, who has Egyptian heritage but was born and raised American, told her story of coming back to the United States after visiting her original home. She described how a middle-aged European-American woman, whom she had never met before, approached her and put her arm gently around her shoulder saying in a loving, caring voice that she could take off her scarf now because she was in a free country. Simply because she was wearing her headscarf, she was denied her identity as an American citizen in the woman's eyes. This is typical for many Western people, both around the world and in the United States. Westerners often think Muslim women are dehumanized and denied their rights, as they are slaves for Muslim men. They are viewed as powerless, without agency or the ability to have a voice (Hamid, 2006, Stadlbauer, 2012).

Nonetheless, this is not how all Muslims feel about themselves, especially women. The counter-narrative research by Scranton (2015) explored the identities of Muslim women by collecting their stories from a website dedicated to challenging the stereotypes surrounding Muslim women, these stereotypes being that they are oppressed and neglected. The website is a space for resistance, and stories were told by answering the question "What does it mean to you to be a Muslim woman today?" (p.154). Analyzing the stories these women told yielded four themes: I am multidimensional, I am strong, I change the world, and I am special. The narrators saw themselves as multidimensional, strong, active, and special women. These themes challenged the stereotypes that viewed them as weak, oppressed and that "othered" them. The Western perspective, especially in the United States, holds that these women were victimized and sexualized by their terrorist, extremist, religious, Muslim males with the media contributing widely to spreading the idea of Muslims as "others" and increasing Islamophobia (Haddad, Smith, & Moore, 2006 ; Kumar, 2015; Zine, 2002).

Being an International Graduate Student in the United States

The Open Door report for 2014-2015 indicates a 10% increase over the prior year in the number of international students in the United States, with a total of more than 974,926 students studying in colleges and universities in 2014/15. Fifty-eight percent of international students come from China, India, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, with most students studying in California, Texas, and New York. Statistics show that 4.8% of all students in higher education are international, yielding 362,228 international students in

total, with 12,584 students from Saudi Arabia, making it the fourth country in the number

of students studying in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2015).

These numbers make the United States one of the major countries around the world

that attracts international students, especially graduate students. It also signifies the

importance of this study about Saudi graduate students.

Even though these numbers indicate high rates of international students in U.S.

schools, according to Becker and Kolster (2012), there is no comprehensive national policy

in higher education in the United States that discusses the internalization of higher

education or a policy that addresses recruiting international graduate students. With this

absence of a nationwide policy that embraces international students, there is no specific

method on what or how universities should handle international students' issues in higher

education. These students often have many problems, which range from feeling lonely and

homesick to having to deal with the difficult load of graduate work, compounded by the fact

that English is not their first language.

International graduate students struggle to succeed in their academic life, often with

no help from the school. They struggle with the "double load" of academic work, as well as

making adjustments to the changes in their social and personal lives (Ren & Hogedorn,

2012), which affects their academic experiences. Duff, Rogers & Harris (2006) found that

international graduate students struggled with academic work because of their lack of

knowledge and their limited language proficiency. After giving these students the proper

training, they all succeeded in their academic work.

Many students feel there is a gap in what they learn and the requirements from

them when they go back to their homes. Trice (2005) argued that the majority of

international students are not fully satisfied with their academic experience because they felt that the curriculum does not fit their needs, especially if they will be returning home after graduation. Trice compared four academic departments in a top Midwestern research university in order to have a better understanding of how these schools, professors, and faculty respond to the growing number of international graduate students' needs. The schools had already high numbers of international students enrolled in their graduate programs.

The interviews and observations yielded interesting results: even though faculty expressed positive attitudes toward teaching international graduate students, very few made changes to their curriculum to meet the students' needs, and many expected them to have the same language proficiency as their American peers. The amount of communication between these students and their professors was poor, and it was not enough to help the students address their needs to their teachers. Trice recommended planning more activities that include international students, asking young faculty members to have more experienced mentors, because the age of the faculty played a role in their understanding of international students' needs, and to build curriculum with global objectives.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative is experience; we experience life narratively, and people recall, remember, analyze, and retell their experiences in narrative ways. Narrative inquiry is rooted in Dewey's work that viewed education as life. For him, education, life, and experience are interwoven and inseparable. Studying education is studying life and experience. Chase

(2011) summed narrative theorist definitions of narrative inquiry by saying "Narrative theorists define narratives as a distinct form of discourse: As meaning-making through the shaping or ordering of experience, a way of understanding one's own or others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time". The focus is "on the relationship between people's life stories and the quality of their life experiences" (p.421).

In narrative inquiry, the focus is on what these stories are about because it revolves around the significance of life experiences as told by those who lived them. Narrative inquiry goes beyond just telling stories. It delves deeper into realizing these stories rest upon other stories that people of which people are usually unaware, and it helps researchers and participants discover new things and reach the new information they did not know themselves (Bell, 2002).

Clandinin and Roisiek (2007) argued that narrative inquiry should begin in the daily life that people take for granted. They wish that researchers would listen more to the daily life experiences of people to find out new chances and opportunities within that experience. The goal is not to generalize, but rather to improve the quality of the experience of the participants. There is a connection between narrative life stories and the identities of the people telling them and their well-being, or in other words "how narrative makes personal growth possible" (p.422).

Human beings understand experiences based on selected elements of that experience, which is reflected in the stories they use (Bell, 2002). This meaning requires the researcher to dig deeper into the narratives to find out the assumptions behind these stories, which are associated with the sociocultural aspects that are inseparable when

thinking of narratives because narratives differ based on different cultures (Hokenson, 1995; Pavlenko, 2002; Wong, 1991). This difference is important because in the educational field, students, teachers, and stakeholders come from a variety of cultures. When a story is told in a context of one culture or language it could be misunderstood in another culture and language (Pavlenko, 2002). Yet there is a misunderstanding of this concept in classrooms, and some educational approaches are more privileged than the others, including narrative inquiry, without considerations of minority cultures (Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981; Pavlenko, 2002; Scollon & Scollon, 1981). Moreover, many social factors like gender, power relations, race, ethnicity, and class shape people's narratives. They find their ways in people's' narrative conventions and are present in their language.

The Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work is influenced by Dewey's ideas and philosophy, which perceived examining experience as the key to education. Given that, they say, "narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore, educational experiences should be studied narratively" (p.19).

Dewey's work helped Clandinin and Connelly (2000) transform their view about narrative inquiry and enabled them to create the three dimensions of narrative inquiry: temporality, place, and the personal and the social dimension. The sociality dimension calls for participants to take their personal and social settings into accounts. The feelings that participants go through and the people who surround them at the time of the event are some of the factors that shape that event or experience. Temporality refers to the time or the continuity of event. When telling a story, the inquirer should look at stories from the

past and present knowing that they will influence future actions. The place dimension or the location where stories take place also affects the narrative. Thinking about place means considering the influence of that place on the story.

Clandinin and Connelly explained these dimensions with a real-life example. They highlighted a research study that was conducted in school settings where the researcher made connections to her early educational experience as a child. She was transcribing a teacher's experience of being marginalized and remembered her own story when she was working on her research. The temporality dimension was evident when the teacher told her story. As she talked, she took the researcher and other listeners back in time to the moment when they had feelings similar to the teacher, and then the teacher sent them to the future when she questioned her marginalized position as a teacher going against standardized testing. Additionally, she described the social and personal dimension when she expressed her emotions, including the passionate feelings she had when talking with the school's principal. She argued with him regarding an assessment strategy that she felt strongly against.

The space dimension was marked as the story took place in an urban school, where the principal was trying to set the new testing policies. While the teacher told her story and moved between the three dimensions, the same happened with the research when she remembered a childhood school-related memory. The researcher's memory went back to her old classroom and then forward to her present research. This happened in the past, in the school settings, and in the present, now in the university, which reflects the temporality dimension. Her story evoked feelings of anxiety as a child taking a test, and how she remembered other classmates who failed the tests. This story portrays the three

dimensions of place (school), temporality, (going back in time by telling the story and

connecting it to the present and future), and the personal and social dimension (by

showing her feelings and inner thoughts while talking to the principal). These dimensions

are guiding principles for all narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative Inquiry as a Tool of Empowerment

The example Clandinin and Connelly (2000) provided illustrates how narrative

inquiry empowers even researchers to tell their stories. Narrative inquirers do not only

work with participants' stories, but with themselves as well and their own stories. It is

almost impossible to remain silent when working with narrative inquiry. It makes stories

and secrets go public, for both the participants and researchers. However, it is important to

not slip into stereotyping the narratives or not understanding their complexity (Craib,

2004). It is also central to realize and mediate the relationship between the researcher and

the participants (Schaafsma & Vinz, 2011), keeping in mind that meaning differs from one

community to another and that no one group owns a theory or methodology that suggests

the absolute truth (Collins, 1991; Ochberg, 2003). In the same way, narrative inquiry is a

method that shows that people's stories do matter, and it compels others to care about

people's lives and their stories as they become visible. It helps to view topics more clearly,

carefully, and completely, thus moving things into action (Schaafsma & Vinz, 2011). In

other words, it empowers all those who are included in the inquiry: the inquirer, the

participants, and the readers. "When both researchers and practitioners tell stories of the

research relationship, they have the possibility of being stories of empowerment" (Connelly

and Clandinin, 1990, p.4). In that case, both voices should be heard in narrative inquiry: the

researcher's and the participants', through a mutual relationship with shared equality and

connectedness. It is important that the researcher listens and the participants talk, but it is

also important to that the researcher is not silenced as well. Through narratives, teachers'

and learners' voices are heard along with researcher's voice, which gives insights into their

motivations, challenges, gains, identities, and learning paths. It is also an empowering

experience that enables participants to explore their identities and voices, as they are

shaped with cultural, social, and historical dimensions. The relationship between the

researcher and participants is also a key factor in shaping this narrative (Pavlenko, 2002).

Narrative Inquiry Characteristics

As mentioned earlier, narrative research helps researchers negotiate purpose,

transition, and ways to be useful. Unlike quantitative research, where researchers set a

hypothesis and then test it, narrative inquiry does not work this way. It is about

questioning and finding answers along the way. Researcher's interests can shift along the

way as she/he might find challenging questions worth answering. Similarly, after finishing

a study, researchers do not just pull themselves away. Lastly, there is a need to transition

from field to field texts, which are the data, to the research texts themselves.

One issue worth mentioning is the different modes of thinking that researchers can

take when conducting a narrative inquiry. This means that researchers' thinking can shift

from one way to another with transformation in ideas, depending on the situation and their

experience when doing the research. As researchers use narrative inquiry, there are four

ways of thinking according to Pinnegar and Daynes (2007): the change in the relationship

between the researcher and participant, the shift from using numbers to using words as

data, accepting other ways of knowing, and a change from the general to the specific—from the global to the local. They believe that when researchers use these four modes of thinking, they can better embrace the narrative research.

A feeling of belonging and being able to talk and use voice while others' voices are present is an important characteristic of narrative inquiry. Researchers need to be in the field of research long enough to become part of the place. They need to be sensitive enough to grasp the situation, with all its events and stories, which means being intimate with the place and participants. Being intimate in narrative research means that the researcher will take for granted some of the same things participants take for granted as well (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

According to Burroway (2003), one important element of narrative inquiry is the point of view. It shows how the story is present, and it shows the relationship between the researcher and the participant, which became an issue for many in narrative research. Usually the writer has the power and is assuming a position of privilege against the marginalized position of the participants. This dilemma can be avoided with some decisions the researcher can make to moderate this relationship.

Point of view in narrative inquiry includes five elements: person, omniscient, narrator reliability, narrative voice, and authorial distance. Depending on who tells the story, the person element is a way to diminish the speaking from a privileged position. The researcher can choose to tell the story in first, second, or third person and can choose whether the story is told by his/her voice, a character voice, or a narrator character. When telling the story in first person, readers feel the closeness to the story and events, and when

telling it in third person, writers can show the ideas and thoughts of the others in the story. Each approach has its pros and cons, but it is up to the researcher to decide.

Omniscience means the amount of knowledge a researcher has, and how much a researcher knows about the participants, their lives, and their stories. Omniscience works to provide description and interpretations of the story. However, this knowledge should be general because a researcher cannot describe every single detail about the characters, but chooses only major events and highlights others based on their significance to the story. This might indicate that the researcher has extensive insight about the participants, which is misleading. It is important for the researcher to acknowledge that his/her understanding is limited (Coulter & Smith, 2009).

The narrator reliability answers the question: How can a researcher tell the story through the feelings of a person who lived different experiences from his own? Narrator reliability means the level of trust reader hold for the narrator. The researcher can give the reader signs to indicate that the narrator is telling the truth and can be trusted or not, depending on the narrator's interest and intentions.

The narrative voice, another narrative element, refers to the different views each character can have when looking at one specific event. It can be a tool that researchers use to avoid being in the omniscient point of view, by telling the same story from multiple perspectives. Bakhtin (1981) called this approach heteroglossic, and there are multiple ways researchers can achieve it. One is by allowing participants to tell their point of view in various forms (for example, poems, songs, separate chapters, etc.). Another form is dialogue or through the participants' actions.

Narrative Research Elements

Both Connelly and Clandinin (2006) believe that there are eight key design elements any narrative researcher should consider when designing, conducting, and presenting a strong narrative inquiry, which are: 1. Explicit explanation of the reasons behind researching the topic including the personal, practical, and social factors to justify the research. 2. Explicit details about the phenomenon under study through a narrative lens. 3. Figuring out the exact field texts needed for researching by describing explicitly the research method used to investigate the phenomenon, while considering the three commonplace. 4. A thick description of the analysis and interoperation process used in the study. 5. Rich clarification of ways the phenomenon under investigation is situated in relation to the existing literature. 6. A thick description of the distinctive lenses used to inquire about the phenomenon and how they are used. 7. A Clear understanding that the ethical responsibilities of narrative research go far beyond the requirements of the IRB or any other review board. 8. It must all be in narrative formats: The research process, from beginning to end. (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr ,2007).

The Difference between Narrative Research and Other Forms of Research

Conventional research aims to gain knowledge and a new understanding of the world. In that sense, narrative inquiry aims to portray experiences, to make readers ask questions and look at the phenomena with a different lens, to stir actions, and to offer an interpretive space (Barone, 2001; Coulter & Smith, 2009). It causes readers to question their values and think about new beliefs of what is ideal and what is possible. It also helps

readers weave together emotions and understanding of experiences with a new

perspective.

However, the major difference is the question of truth. How do we know the

researcher's stories are true and reflect reality? According to Barone (2007), the positivist

research is dominant and aims for truths and objectivity, which is not suitable for narrative

research. Denzin (2000) agrees with this notion of truth and narratives, saying that

narratives are a reflection *on* the world not *of* the world, because they do not establish the

truth, nor reflect upon the truth of an experience. They create the event to be reflected on.

In constructivist and postmodern research the task is not to describe the world as it

is, rather the goal is to re-describe the events retrospectively, as there is a difference

between the literal truth and the story truth (Freeman, 2007; O'Brien, 1990).

Summary

In this literature review I showed the connection between third space and funds of

knowledge, discussing the advantages of combining them in research to reduce any bias

that could emerge from using funds of knowledge by itself. Also, I argued for the

significance of parental involvement in their children's literacy education, especially for

immigrant children.

I also showed the controversial views Arabs and Muslims have to deal with as they

live in the States, and I focused on Muslim women's experiences because all of my

participants are female students. Lastly, I dedicated a big part of my discussion to narrative

inquiry and how it works as theory and a methodology, as I will explain further in the next

chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

I was once attending a cross-cultural panel that discussed the educational experiences of the participants who were from different parts of the world. The participants answered questions based on their educational experiences in their home country. It was interesting to listen to, to analyze and compare their answers, but one question, in particular, caught my attention. The person leading the discussion asked all participants what was most memorable from their educational experience. While the participants were answering this question, I tried to answer it myself, and my thoughts took me elsewhere. This question specifically evoked so many feelings and memories and took me back to my school years in Saudi Arabia. It made me think about my own experience; I remembered my own educational journey and the things that made a difference to me, and I found out that relationships mattered the most to me. When I look back at my educational journey, I cannot help but remember all the friendships I made through the years. I had wonderful teachers and mentors who left positive impacts on my personality and my way of thinking. There were also the negative memories and people who were part of that journey as well.

It was not what I learned or grades that mattered to me. Neither the long hours of studying nor taking so many tests during the years made the difference. It was the relationships that I was able to build and maintain that had the most influence on me. There are so many stories I lived and shared with people who left their permanent marks on me that made me the person I am today.

Thinking about my own story, especially my literacy education and experience, I found myself going back to my family history and the effect it had on me. I wondered to what extent - my past influenced the person I am today. What stories remained with me the most? And why? How am I affecting my children stories as well? With all these questions in mind and thinking about answers, I realized how important it is for me to tell my own story as well as the stories of others. I have so much to tell, and I know how important it is to tell these stories. There are a lot of insights that can be drawn from telling such stories and analyzing them can lead to significant outcomes if the right person uses them at the right time and the right way.

I have also come to recognize the fact that relationships are all about narratives; narratives maintain them. People communicate through narratives and transfer their own perspectives, stories, identities, and culture through narratives as well. Hence, the idea of conducting a narrative inquiry was born. The more I thought about it, the more it made sense to me. After reading so much and thinking about family literacy and the experiences of many immigrant students living in the U.S., I believed that narrative inquiry was the best approach. Narrative inquiry helps in understanding an experience and organizing it in a body of knowledge instead of just remaining as a story to be told. I want to use narrative inquiry to tell the stories of a group of people who might not tell their stories otherwise, including myself. I mention all of this because it is important to justify the purpose of my research. As narrative researchers, it is crucial to answer questions about our research like "so what?" and "who cares?" because many agencies and policymakers view narrative inquiry as a simplistic process of just telling stories, which dismisses narrative inquiry as only personal and not practical research (Clandinin, 2013).

According to Clandinin (2013), there are three ways of justifying narrative inquiry. The first is personal justification, by stating why this study is important to me as a researcher. The second is practical justification, by stating how this research might make a difference to practice. The third is social or theoretical, by clarifying how this research might make a difference to socially unjust situations or add to the theoretical understanding.

Personal Justification

> Narrative inquirers need to begin with personal justifications, that is, by justifying the inquiry in the context of their own life experiences, tensions, and personal inquiry puzzles…. readers often understand an inquiry in more depth when they are able to see the researcher's personal justification in the research text. (Clandinin, 2013, p.36)

I have always thought of myself as a good speaker and a literate person. Why should I not believe so when I have heard so many compliments on my oral reading, my vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension skills? One of my proudest moments took place when I was in 7th grade. I was taking an oral reading test, and the test committee was made up of two teachers, one of them was my Arabic language teacher, whom I admired the most. After I read the passage, she turned to the other teacher and said, "Did you notice how well she read?" It was just a short sentence, but I felt glorious, it was one of those moments when you know you did so well, and you deserve that compliment and the way my teacher said it made all the difference. I could tell that she was impressed,

Teachers and students always reached out to me to talk in the school's morning broadcast, to pass out my class notes and to explain things to other students. School was so easy to me, and I did so well. I was always representing my school in and out of school

activities and presentations. Even at the university level, I was always chosen as the team leader or the presenter. I have an outgoing personality that helped, but also I was very literate, and I knew how to do well in school.

Then I came to the States to do my masters and Ph.D., and I lost all of this. I became the student who stutters when I presented. I lost my train of thought when I talked. I did not make sense when I was explaining my ideas. I remember I had to present in a class during my second year in the Ph.D. program, and I was assigned a chapter from William Pinar's book (2006) *Understanding Curriculum*. The chapter was very difficult to understand. I could not comprehend it no matter how many times I read it. I even sought help from one of my more mature colleagues to make sure I understood the text. Yet I made a joke of myself when I presented. I did not do well at all. I was so embarrassed as I stood there not being able to talk or present the ideas in that chapter. I simply could not comprehend it. I still have a lump in my throat when I remember that situation. I went from being a person who viewed words as my forte to a student with less skills and abilities than the others due to language barriers, keeping in mind that I spoke English very well.

It was even made worst when colleagues would approach me in later presentations saying that I did better this time. While this is a compliment in and of itself and my classmates really meant well by telling me so, it also meant I did horribly in the previous one. I cannot but wonder how this would be different if I had to read and present in Arabic? Would I struggle the same way? This story and others had a great impact on the way I view myself. I no longer think that words are my strength. I still have a long way to go before I expert in English, and I am still learning every day. I always question myself before I talk as

to whatever I am making sense and wonder if this is the reason why I am "othered" at times.

I wanted to tell about the struggle I went through and the hard work I did to reach where I am now. I want educators to realize how hard immigrants work to figure things out as they settle into a new community. I want to show how our children are trying to balance between two places. I want to tell how much we care and how we provide for them so they can succeed in school and life. That's why I am telling my story. This is my personal justification.

The following section will explain the practical and theoretical and social justification.

Revisiting the Theoretical Framework and Research Puzzles

> We find that powerful theoretical concepts can function as lenses that enable us to see our everyday experiences in new ways and thus lead to very practical changes in our behavior. We define theoretical concepts as terms or phrases that concisely encapsulate the meanings of a broad set of related ideas, As our understanding of theoretical concepts becomes clearer and deeper, they become more useful to us. (Manyak and Dantas, 2010, p. 6)

I implemented an integrated theoretical framework comprised off three different perspectives: narrative inquiry method, funds of knowledge theory, and the theoretical concept of third space. They are all concerned with the lived experiences of people, and each added more depth to the analysis of data and functioned as the theoretical framework for my study. The funds of knowledge and third space both have their roots in Vygotsky's ideas as explained in chapter two. The emphasis is on the relationship between everyday practices and actions.

This theoretical framework helped in solving these research puzzles:

1. What stories do Saudi immigrant students tell regarding their educational beliefs and experiences, as well as the experiences of their children, in the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia?

2. What do these stories tell about the funds of knowledge of these parents and how does this contribute to their children's literacy development?

3. What do the stories reveal about the new spaces/third spaces created that support their negotiation between their homeland culture and that of their current U.S. context?

I used field texts and puzzles here to refer to data and research questions as

Connelly and Clandinin (2000) suggest. They use the field text term instead of data to

specify that composed texts in narrative inquiry are not objective texts; rather they are

experiential, intersubjective texts (Clandinin, 2013). Giving the data this name gives a more

humane influence to the research and breaks the coldness of research.

Narrative inquiry as a methodology is concerned with ways of knowing, and it is

both a method and the phenomenon that is being studied (Clandinin, 2013). With

narratives, inquiry researchers can see the world through other people's eyes. They use

people's lived, told, and retold stories as a theory, data, and method in a shared effort

between researcher and participants (Montero & Washington, 2011). According to

Connelly and Clandinin (2006), narrative methodology is still in its early stages in literacy

education but is rapidly growing in education and other social sciences. Nonetheless it is

suitable for scholars who define literacy in its broader way by including the social,

historical, cultural, and political aspects of literacy (Montero & Washington, 2011). For

example, it is used when defining multiliteracies studies (Cope & Kalantizes,2000), or

critical literacy (Gordon, McKibbin, Vasudevan, & Vinz, 2007), and most importantly when

trying to understand the literacy skills and development in families, culture, school, and

experiences (Lapadat, 2004), which is the focus of this study.

Three Commonplaces of Narrative Inquiry

Narratives must be put into a context that uses the three elements of narrative inquiry: temporality, place, and the social and personal dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I used the three dimensions of narrative inquiry: Temporality, sociality, and commonplace to situate myself and the readers in the context of the stories. I wanted to address temporality, place and sociality as they are all connected to funds of knowledge. It is not possible to understand the experience of the participants without understanding its settings that include the timing of the story and considering it in the past, present and future, and the location where the story took place. Also understanding the personal feelings and social interaction with other people in the story is essential to understand funds of knowledge and third space because they focus on the social experiences of people. Funds of knowledge is based on the belief that all people have funds of knowledge they gained from their life experiences and which they provide to their children through different social modes. Third space is a meeting point where one can be productive and create new connections in a third additional dimension that emerges from struggle (Soja, 2009). Connelly and Clandinin (2000) developed their three dimensions based on Dewey's work (1938, 1958). His approach suggests that we need to study people's interactions with others along with examining personal experiences if we want to understand them. Using these three commonplace: Temporality, place, and personal and social dimension is central to narrative inquiry as it will help researchers decide if some actions that took place in the past or present will take place in or impact the future. The interaction between a participant and other people is also an indicator of different points of view or purposes that

might explain some actions. The locations or landscapes can give meaning to the activities happening in that place.

To think with the three commonplaces is what distinguishes narrative inquiry from other types of qualitative research (Clandinin, 2013). For that reason this next section is important to situate the stories.

- *The place commonplace*. This dimension refers to the "the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p.480). The most important factor in this commonplace is realizing that all events happen at some place.

- *The temporality commonplace*. The temporality dimension requires looking at stories from the past, present, and the future. Clandinin (2013) argues that attending to temporality is to take care of someone's experience because it is embedded in people's living and the stories they tell.

- *The sociality commonplace.* This dimension refers to the milieu where people encounter new experiences and events and it includes their feelings, hopes and reaction (Clandinin 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). There are two aspects to consider when thinking about sociality: The inward and the outward. When we turn inward we tend to our emotions, our reactions, and our responses. When we turn outward we tend to events, experiences and interactions with others.

Thinking with the three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry helped with reaching a deeper level of understanding that enabled me later to identify the funds of knowledge resources in the stories.

Funds of Knowledge and Critical Moments

In this study I use the terms critical moments and critical events interchangeably.

Narratives requires searching for events to look for details that helps in recognizing

the phenomena under study (Webster & Mertova, 2007). They argue that:

> Specific events are key determinants in how we recall our life experiences. Our
> memories of past critical events often lead us to adapt new strategies and processes
> to apply to new situations. Because events are critical parts of people's lives, using
> them as the main focus for research provides a valuable and insightful tool for
> getting at the core of what is important in that research. An event-driven approach
> is also a mechanism for dealing with large amounts of data. (p. 71).

Critical event analysis allows researchers to identify important events in the stories

participants told and in this research it identified third spaces by using a funds of

knowledge theoretical lens. Using the commonplace of narrative inquiry, funds of

knowledge theory and resources, and third space helped in explaining why a critical event

is critical and the impact of that event on the person who experienced it.

According to (Woods, 1993), an event is critical when it has "the right mix of

ingredients at the right time and in the right context"(p.102). As I connect this to narrative

inquiry, I find a relation between critical events and the dimensional space of narrative

inquiry. A critical event happens when temporality is in relation with place and the

personal and social dimension. In other words a critical event is critical when the right

thing happen in the right place and right time. It is not enough to look at each dimension by

itself, but all three of them need to be in an active relation to become critical.

Webster and Mertova (2007) explained critical event saying that it influences the

actions of the storyteller on the personal or professional level. It could be trauma or

excessive action, or a personal consequence. It cannot be observed as it happens because it

can only be identified afterward because it changes experiences. Events become critical

because of their impact on the storyteller and her/his life. They transform people, and they are usually unplanned, uncontrolled and unexpected just like in the example I provided above about the critical event that impacted me.

Critical events analysis was first used in 1954 by John Flanagan who believed that critical incident technique is useful in answering questions and problems and developing ideas about psychology (Fountain, 1999). Critical incidents have three features according to Flanagan, which are: Description of the event, a description of the actions of the person involved, and the results of the action (Fountain, 1999). Also from its characteristics is that it is unpredictable, uncontrolled, and unplanned(Webster & Mertova, 2007).

These events were identified in this research by looking with the funds of knowledge lens that focused on the skills, abilities, traditions, and knowledge sources minority students bring to school, this study borrows the following description of funds of knowledge:

> These are the everyday practices that we attempt to theorize, practices that are at times emergent, perhaps counterintuitive, and sometimes opaque. Yet these practices do not emerge from nowhere; they are formed and transformed in sociohistorical circumstances. Practices are also constructed by and through discourses, the ways of knowing that populate our streams of talk. The lives of ordinary people, their everyday activities, and what has led them to the place they find themselves are the bases for our theorizing of practice. (p.1)

Germane to the critical moments and funds of knowledge is third space creation. The critical moments is usually a result of a challenge or a tension of some sort that needs to be resolved. This tension led participants to the creation of third spaces where they were able to manage that tension and solve their problems. All these layers of analysis helped in the development of a final story where themes emerged.

Research Design

"Narrative inquiry is a way of studying people's experiences, nothing more, nothing less" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 38). In this study, I explored the narratives of three Saudi graduate students looking for possible creation of third space of Saudi graduate students through the lens of narrative approach and funds of knowledge theory. I was the research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and the "most important tool" (Shagoury & Miller Power, 2012, p. 118).

By using conversation as the data collecting method tool I asked participants to share their stories about education, literacy, and culture and the field texts are written in narrative formats with least possible adaptation. I analyzed the narratives by developing a multi-layer analysis approach that included three-dimensional narrative inquiry spaces, funds of knowledge resources and theory, critical moments, and third space.

In this study, I highlighted the third space that the Saudi graduate students and their children created for themselves in their journey as immigrants, graduate students, and parents in the U.S. My goal was to look for the different funds of knowledge they have and share with their children to support them in their literacy skills. By telling and retelling their stories about third space and funds of knowledge I wanted to gain more insights about their educational experience, with the chance of developing a better understanding of the ways they learn. By understanding how this group merges the two cultures they live in by creating third spaces, I bring forward the ways they shape and reshape their experiences. These goals are my social and practical justifications for conducting this study.

Self-as-a-Researcher

There is a reason why I am doing this, not only that I want to be doing this, but also, I am destined to be here, a Ph.D. candidate working on this dissertation. When I think of my life and how I reached where I am now, I know for sure that I am here for a strong cause. I am privileged in so many ways that it is my responsibility to help those who are not. And by help, I mean give a voice to the stories people tell, especially the stories of people who are silenced in one way or another. They are silenced when they are treated differently in some situations, or when they are not treated differently in other situations. They are silenced when they are stereotyped and looked at as "other". There are many ways this group of people is being silenced, and I want to help them speak their stories. Not that I believe I have the power to tell their stories, rather I see myself as a tool that they can use to empower themselves. However, pursuing a Ph.D. in education has empowered me as a researcher to know who I am, what I want to do, and why I want to do this. It is an eye-opening journey that led me to question what is happening in my world, on both the personal and external level. I want to tell the world my story as well as the stories of people with whom I have a lot in common, yet we are also very different. Our educational background, our current work, the ways we support and scaffold our children at school and with their literacy skills, the third space we create (I know I am already living in one), and the diverse knowledge we have, are all some of the factors that contribute to the complexity of our stories.

I am a powerful woman. I begin with this sentence because I realize how this feature has influenced my whole life. I have leadership skills that always put me in situations where I am the only one saying what I believe in and speaking up about what I agree with,

or more often, about what I disagree with. It is often a double-edged sword. While I did get what I wanted most of the time, I was in trouble even more, especially growing up in a community that believes women come in second place and are inferior to men.

I am the first child to middle-class Saudi parents who came from different roots. My paternal great-great-grandfather came from Turkestan to Mecca probably for religious and business reasons and settled there. My grandmother was born to a father from Sind and to a Moroccan mother. My mother was born to a Syrian/Kurdi mother and a tribal father. Because of this mix of nationalities, my personal appearance allows me to fit into many cultures. I can fit in with any culture I want, and I won't look like an outsider. I say this because I realize how a person's physical appearance influences the way others view her/him, and therefore, the way they are treated. I always joke that my kids and I can pass as European, Latino, Asian, Arab, Turkish, Indian, or Russian.

I was the only female in my family until my sister was born 13 years later. I had two younger brothers, three male cousins, three uncles, and no other female relatives that lived close to me. I had many other female cousins my age, but they were half cousins and lived in a different city. Therefore, I did not have the chance to be around them when I was younger. Being the only girl gave me both power and weakness at the same time.

My father spoiled me and empowered me to do whatever I wanted to do. He would let me do what I wanted, even if my mother disagreed with it. I remember she was refusing to let me go to a newly opened arcade center in Jeddah in the 1990's because she thought it was inappropriate for little girls to go by themselves at that time and that it would lead to unwanted outcomes, but upon my insistence, he allowed me to go. When I grew older, I understood her fears and concern, but I appreciated the freedom my father gave me even

more. Growing up in Saudi Arabia as a girl is not easy. Many traditions control what people can do and say. I emphasize the word traditions because usually Saudis connect their acts and thinking to religion, which are often far away from reality, but this is an issue I explain later in the study.

My father put me in an excellent private school, giving me greater privilege over my brothers, who went to public schools. In Saudi Arabia, both public and private schools use the same exact curricula. If you walk into any school in any part of the kingdom, teachers are supposed to be teaching the same lesson, the same day, the same way. There is little room for teachers to decide what to teach. However, being in an excellent private school meant that I would be treated nicely and would have extra activities like field trips that public schools do not offer. It also meant that teachers would be more qualified than public school teachers, but this is not a generalization. One other important difference in the two kinds of schools is that students of any nationality can attend private schools, but only Saudi students are allowed to attend public schools. So I grew up with friends from many different nationalities, which added greatly affected my personality and ways of thinking.

I came from a family that valued education. My grandfather spoke five different languages, two of which he taught himself: English and French. All of his children and grandchildren have also been gifted in linguistics genetically—learning a second language was a piece of cake for all of us. We never thought of it as something extra or hard; it was a given fact that we could speak another language. It is important to note that we rarely spoke anything but Arabic in our house. It was just something we knew how to do, and we were good at it.

It is ironic that, although all of my uncles and aunts held bachelor's degrees or higher from the U.S. and the U.K., my dad was the only college dropout, while three of his brothers earned their Ph.D. My mom's family is the complete opposite. My mom and one of her sisters are the only two of seven sisters to finish their undergraduate work. However, her family lived in another city, and I was not in close contact with them very often. My mom valued education and reading while I was growing up. She had several books that I read as a teenager that influenced my personality very much. She was always worried about me because I was always in my room reading by myself. She believed I was not being involved with the family due to my constant reading habits.

I was a straight A student, not because I put extra effort into my work, but because I had the social skills that fit the schooling system. I graduated from high school with a high percentage of my accumulated grades that allowed me to choose from multiple programs. I was destined to choose early childhood studies, and after graduation, I was one of three people selected to work as a graduate assistant from 50 candidates. I say I was destined to study there because. there, I met people who changed my life afterward.

Until that point of my life, and despite the fact that I was an avid reader, I was reading for no purpose and never analyzed anything I read. Critical thinking was something I rarely used and didn't understand until I met my mentor Dr. Nojood who introduced me to many things I did not know about. She was a recent Ph.D. graduate in children's literature coming back from the US. A new world of possibilities was opened for me back then. This led me to choose to continue my work in the literacy field and to obtain a master's degree in reading education, which at the time of my study, only a handful of people held such a degree in Saudi Arabia. A requirement for being a graduate assistant is

to finish both a master's and Ph.D. as soon as possible, thus in 2010 I started my journey in Texas to work on my Master's and then in 2012, my Ph.D.

For me, learning and becoming more knowledgeable is not an option. It is a need. I was privileged in so many ways that I feel it is a sin if I do not do so. I know that I was blessed along the way with so many things that others only dream of. It is a waste to let all of my past blessings go without helping others to achieve some of what they want. Being more knowledgeable in some areas means I can help others; knowledge empowers me and makes me more able to influence others and change some of the things I long to change.

From this background and with this thinking, I chose to do this research for all of the reasons I stated earlier. I wanted to show the stories of those who have a lot to share. They have stories about their education in Saudi Arabia, their migration to the states, their feelings of belonging and otherness, the resources and funds of knowledge they have and that provide to their children, the ways they scaffold their children's literacy skills, and the ways their education in both Saudi Arabia and the US influenced their practices. I wanted to tell my own story as well; being part of this narrative inquiry as the inquirer entails me to tell my stories of struggle and contradictory feelings about my education as well as my children's. As I heard stories of other parents and learners, I thought of my own stories too and wanted to share them with the participants. When doing narrative inquiry, there is a deeper relationship between the researcher and the participants that goes beyond just asking questions and documenting stories to analyze later on. There is a mutual friendship and connection between both parties. Therefore, telling my stories and hearing theirs is essential to high-quality narrative research. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) affirm this by saying:

As narrative inquirer we work within the space not only with our participants but also with ourselves. Working in this space means that we become visible with our own lived and told stories. Sometimes, this means that our own unnamed, perhaps secret, stories come to light as much as do those of our participants. This confronting of ourselves in our narrative past makes us vulnerable as inquirers because it makes secret stories public. In narrative inquiry it is impossible (or if not impossible, then deliberately self-deceptive) as researcher to stay silent or to present a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self. (p. 61-62)

I do not claim to be a narrativist (Bell, 2002), but I do want to produce a powerful narrative inquiry that helps inform the educational field of the possibilities that parents can bring to the field—a narrative that helps others see how this group of graduate students felt and dealt with being a minority in American culture.

Participants

The participants of this study are selected through purposeful sampling. Following Morrow's (2005) argument, the sampling procedure should be purposeful by choosing participants that will provide the most informative data. I know all of the participants because we all share the same experience of being international students studying in the U.S. We are all Saudi students who are or were sponsored through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, and we live or have lived in a small town in North Texas.

Even though we all come from the same country, we come from different parts of Saudi Arabia. Because of this, we share many traditions, but at the same time, there are many differences. Saudi society is very social in nature, and being a member of a big family is essential to many people. For this reason, along with many other emotional ones, many Saudis in a minority culture form strong bonds with each other, creating a third space for themselves where they can function well in both cultures. This is exactly how I can describe my relationship with the participants. I know this group of people very well, as we shared

63

and still share our daily lives and know many details about each other that not even our own families know about us. We have witnessed and shared so many events and lived moments together that helped us form a strong bond that is similar to the ones we have with our own families.

I chose to conduct this research with them because I know they have so many stories to tell. I have been a part of and witnessed some of these stories myself, sometimes as a friend, as a sister, or as an aunt to their children. When I was still in the early phase of my study, I did not want to ask anyone specifically to participate because I did not want anyone to feel pressured to join. So I sent a general broadcast in Arabic using my smartphone through an application that we all share asking them in a shared group podcast if they would like to participate and be involved in my study (Appendix A). In the initial request, I explained the study in short simple sentences stating that its focuses would be on exploring their and their children's experiences as international students. I told them that the conversations will be in Arabic to make it easier for them to tell their stories, and that they have the options to reply to me directly in the WhatsApp group or privately. I received a response from three people saying they were interested in being part of the study and that they were willing to participate and share their experiences. Since there were three participants who volunteered, I did not try to find more people to join my study. However, one of my volunteers went back to Saudi Arabia before I started collecting data, and I had to find another participant. To save time, I went and asked a friend using the same process above if she was willing to participate and she said yes. In qualitative research in general, and in narrative inquiry in specific, the focus is not on the number of people participating in the study, nor on the number of data collected. In narrative

research, the focus is not the "product of an individual" (p.150), and narratives need to come as a part of a relationship and a culture (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, narrative inquiry is time-consuming. Researchers need to spend many hours with each participant talking and listening to their stories, and then working with the field texts that come from the conversations. Thus, by choosing only three participants I wanted to give them enough space and time to tell their stories so that I could focus more on their experiences both as international graduate students and parents.

It is the meaning participants hold regarding the phenomena under study that is the focus of this research. I told the participants that there would be more than one visit and that they would have the freedom to choose when, where, and whom they want to include in the research.

I am using pseudonyms for the participants to maintain their confidentiality. Also, all names of schools, towns, and public locations were changed.

- *Manal*: Manal is a Saudi woman in her early thirties, who came to the U.S. in 2010 to continue her education with her husband. Her husband, who has both Saudi and American citizenship, was working on his undergraduate degree while she studied in the English language institution then pursued her master's degree in a private university. At the time of this research, she has three children: two girls and a boy. Her older daughter was seven years old when she came to the US for the first time, and her son was six years old. They are now 12 and 13, and her third child is two years old.

Manal was among the first people I met when I came to the States, and we formed a quick friendship, especially since our husbands got along together as well as our children. Our children attended the same school until her daughter moved to middle school. Our

sons were in the same classroom one year at school, and they now share many activities at school.

- *Arwa*: Arwa is a Saudi woman from the Central region of Saudi, specifically from the capital, Riyadh. She came to the United States to obtain her Ph.D. in 2011. She spent over a year in California, where she had her second child, then moved to North Texas to work on her degree. I met her in a graduate class when she was in her first year of the program while I was in my second. We formed a strong bond instantly as we shared many commonalities in our thinking and interests. Even though as Saudis we do not have what is known, in American culture, as "godmothers", this is how I can describe my relationship with her youngest daughter, whom she had in her second year of the program. Her older daughter was almost four years old when she first came to the United States and is now 10 years old. Her husband wants to work on his master's degree, but he is still working on getting all requirements for the program he chose.

- *Tahani*: Tahani is a Ph.D. student who earned her master's from Michigan in 2015 before moving to North Texas. She is the mother of three children. Her husband is a stay-at-home dad. We met when she was inquiring about some classes that I previously took. Our daughters are almost the same age, and they quickly became friends. She is from the central region of Saudi Arabia, and she worked as a graduate assistant in one of the universities in the capital.

- *Hala*: Myself. My husband and I came to the U.S. in 2010 to obtain our graduate degrees. We are both from the Western region in Saudi Arabia and are in our early thirties. We have two children who are now 12 and 10, and a 16-month-old baby. My husband is in his third year of the Ph.D. program, while I am working on my dissertation.

Field Texts Collecting Method and Analysis Procedures

Because of my close relationship with the participants, it was effortless for me to visit them at their homes, talk to them, observe, and collect artifacts. I gave the participants the choice of where and when to meet.

Conversations

I had in-depth conversations with the participants rather than a formal interview. A conversation is a general term covering different activities, including written communication and letters. However, oral conversation remains the most common type of conversation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). I preferred to use conversation rather than structured interviews because I am aware of the constraints these interviews can put on the participants. I wanted to avoid bias in my research as much as possible, but I realized I might not be able to. Therefore I wanted to give more power to the participants by not interviewing them thus avoiding becoming superior to them. Additionally, because I am already close to the participants, it is more appealing to talk to them rather than interview them. Conversations involve listening, and by doing so, there is probing in conversation. The listener can investigate the experience but in a manner of mutual trust because of the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Additionally, conversations offer more flexibility of taking the research in any direction that feels right. Most of the questions will evolve from the context, and no specific questions will be set prior to the conversation itself, as the conversation must go with the flow (Patton, 2002).

I asked participants to decide the best time for them to meet and gave them the freedom to choose any place they liked for our meetings. They had the choice to include anyone in our conversations, but none of them chose that option. I asked some questions to initiate the conversation, and I prepared with more follow-up questions to keep the conversation flowing (Appendix B). I encouraged them to start telling their stories. As we were talking, I told them some of my stories as well because one of the characteristics of in-depth conversation is to have a two-way discussion. It shouldn't be one person asking questions and the other just answering. Narratives require good listening skills and asking the right questions.

I met with the participants more than once, the first time to give them the chance to tell their stories, and the follow up meeting was to add any more stories or details to whatever they said in the first meeting. There were a total of six conversations, two with each participant, and they varied in length. Some took two hours and a half, and others were only one-hour long. I wanted my participants to have the freedom to talk as much as they wanted. After the first meeting, I asked them if they felt the need to add something or say more about a point. Meeting them more than once gave them the opportunity to share further thoughts.

The conversations were audio recorded, which enabled me to transcribe the conversations more accurately afterward. The conversations were in Arabic to make sure that the participants told their stories fluently and without any possible barriers from having to talk in their second language. Thus, I translated and transcribed the conversations. I sent the transcripts in their final version and asked the participants if there was anything they would like to add or remove. This member-checking step is vital to make

sure I do not influence the study by translating only what I construct from the conversation.

Field Texts Analysis

I started my analysis as soon as the participants began to tell their stories. I was mentally aware of the possible patterns for each story. As the participants were sharing their stories and talking about their experiences I was thinking about the different lenses I could use to categorize these stories. Then I started transcribing the conversations. This process, which was the most time-consuming part of the analysis, helped me think deeply about the data I have in my hands. I listened to the recorded conversations over and over. I went back and forth as I was transcribing to make sure I wrote down every single word the participants said. This process helped me become very familiar with the data so I started highlighting the transcripts using the funds of knowledge and third space as filters or lenses for my patterns.

I used an inductive approach when analyzing the data, which allowed for discovery of different themes. After I collected the field texts, I spent long hours with the data listening to them, transcribing them, and then translating them. I became very familiar with the data and had memorized some parts of it just from reading and rereading it several times. For some parts that were rich in data, I had to re-listen to the recorded conversations couple of times before realizing the patterns they reveal.

As I translated the texts from Arabic to English, I tried hard to maintain the narrators' voice and style. If there was an ambiguous text, I tried to adapt it with minimal changes to save the authenticity of the story. If I felt it was necessary to explain something

to the reader I put my comment between brackets. The stories in the English translation represent the narrators' styles and voice. I did not fix any sentence structure issues or grammar to have a more authentic text.

This process was the most time-consuming part of my analysis, yet very essential prior to the inductive analysis. Inductive analysis fits narrative research because narrative researchers are "less likely than qualitative researchers to use discursive logic to frame their description of the social world of their participants" (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p.587). The narratives should reflect the uniqueness of each individual and thus many researchers use different analysis procedures while making sure "to let the narratives stand on their own literary merits" (p.587). This goes hand in hand with Clandinin's (2007) views of narrative analysis. Upon writing a chapter on narrative interpretations and analysis, she realized that there are numerous ways of interpreting narratives and that the best method was to let the researchers decide how to analyze the data considering their specific fields and contexts of the research.

Following these scholarly views regarding narrative inquiry I approached the analysis for this study using a process designed to employ the theoretical frames of my study. First I used the three-dimensional levels of narrative inquiry to situate where the funds of knowledge resources came from. It was important to understand the temporality, sociality, and place of the stories in order to identify the funds of knowledge as they work as resources, which is part of the funds of knowledge theoretical framework that focus on the skills, abilities, traditions, and knowledge sources minority students bring to school. The funds of knowledge theory has its roots in the social constructivism theory as mentioned earlier, which shares some theoretical concepts with Dewey's ideas that believe

learning is constructed from personal experiences. This study borrows the following

description of funds of knowledge:

> Those historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. As households communicate within circles of family and friendship, children are being "participant-observers" of the exchange of goods, services, and symbolic capital, which are part of each household's functioning. (Moll and González, 1994,p. 443)

As I looked for evidence of funds of knowledge codes I was able to narrow down my codes

to the following: Parental involvement, language and cultural practices, skills and problem

solving, and social challenges. See appendix (C) for a detailed list of codes and scripts. After

I looked into Saudi immigrant narratives and highlighted the funds of knowledge they have

that were situated in the three dimensional levels of narrative inquiry, I used the funds of

knowledge as a theoretical lens to identify the critical moments in the told stories and

made a connection to third space as suggested by Moje et al. (2004).

I looked for stories that changed the participant's life or made an impact on them or

their children as they used different resources and funds to help them pass through these

moments. I also looked at the stories where there was a tension that led participants to

create a third space for themselves to be more productive. As I read the transcripts and

reread them, I was able to locate the critical events (Webster & Mertova, 2007). A critical

event is critical because of its impact on the storyteller (Bohl, 1995). The term critical here

refers to the significance of the event not to a critical lens or stance in the analysis. These

critical events are meaningful experiences people go through that impacts their lives. By

coding the scripts I was able to locate the critical events in the stories and later used these

events to make visible the third spaces created by the participants where they were

negotiating the issues in hand. After that I used the critical events, third spaces, and funds of knowledge to identify the themes in the stories told by the three participants.

As I was looking at the data, I was searching for stories of struggle, adaptation, and recourses parents had shared with their children that are in relation with the previously mentioned lenses to answer my research puzzles.

Figure 1 explains this multi-layered analysis and the relationship between these layers.
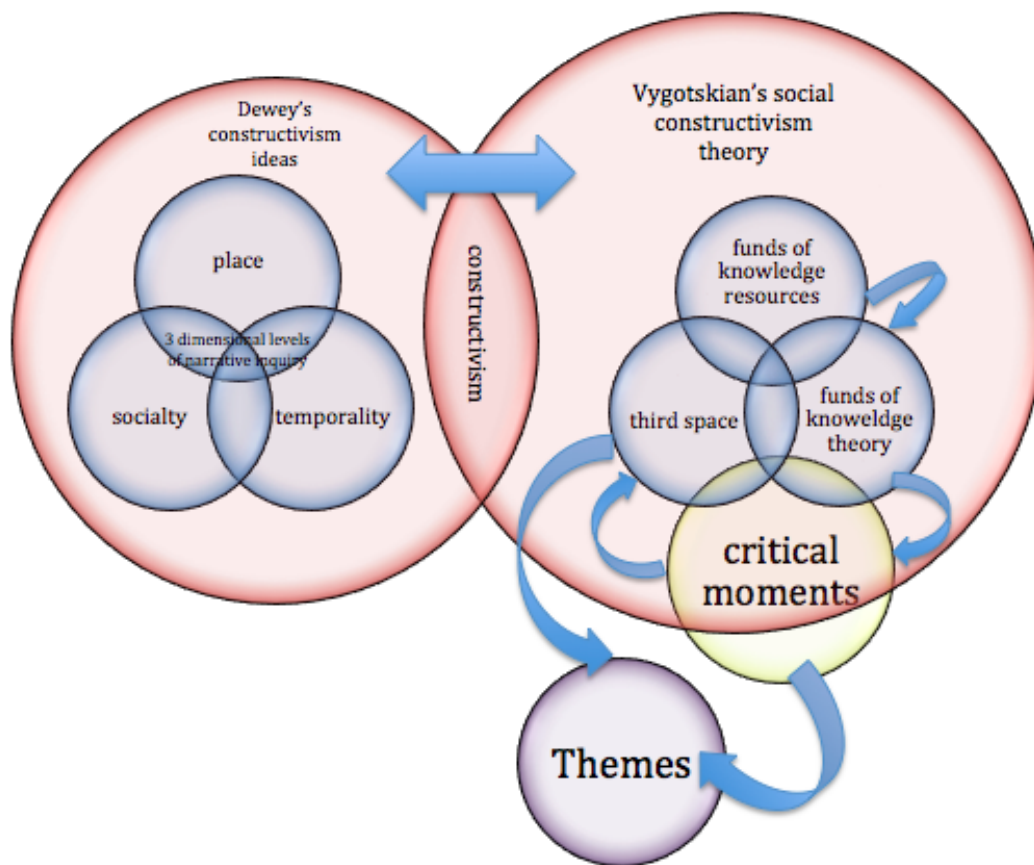

Figure 1. Multi-layer analysis and procedure.

My position as a participant observer influenced the filters I chose to analyze my data as mentioned by Saldana (2016). The lenses I used to analyze my data were not only guided by my research question, but they were also influenced by my methodology and

research approach. The narrative inquiry is fluid in its nature with a lot of freedom for interpretation, as is the analysis.

Bernard (2011) asserts that analysis is the "the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place" (p.338). However, it is important to keep in mind that patterns are not standard measures or fixed units; they can be changed because they are flexible. By looking at the critical moments and the funds of knowledge resources I was able to make visible the third spaces these participants used to cope with change. Working with all these layers of analysis allowed me to understand the stories better and helped me create a story of my own. I saw these three female students face challenges and develop their personalities over the stories they told, which helped me interweave their stories together to make one story that portrays the themes I found.

Limitations

Like any other method of research, narrative inquiry has its limitations. One of the most important limitations is the researcher's bias. When researchers take stories of people and weave these stories together, they are imposing their own understanding and their interpretation of meaning of the stories. There is no escape from this dilemma in narrative inquiry. Even when sharing the narrative construction, the participants are never free from the researcher's analysis of their stories (Bell, 2002).

Another limitation of narrative inquiry is the absence of specific criteria for assessing narrative inquiry. It is the researcher's responsibility to set the requirements of assessment by choosing the elements of narrative inquiry that she/he is working on from

early stages, whether it is temporality, authenticity, causality, or difference between experiences, etc. (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999). It also depends on the reader's cultural understanding of what makes a story. There are some elements in each story that researchers can choose from according to the purpose of the writing and its crafting.

Another limitation of this study is the close relationship that is well established between the researcher and the participants. This close relationship might influence the study in several ways. The participant might not express their real opinion or feelings because they do not want to share certain experiences with their friend. On the other hand, having a close relationship with the participants can also be a positive factor, as they might feel the freedom to disclose more.

Lastly, the one source of data collection, which is conversation, is a limitation of this study. Because of the nature of this study, the other initially proposed data collection methods- observation and artifact collections- were not of significance to the findings and were discarded. I was not able to meet at the house of two of my participants, and I could not collect data about any literacy resources that might have been available at their homes. I initially intended to observe their homes and document any literacy resources or funds of knowledge I noticed during my visits. However, since they chose to meet at a public place I had to comply with their needs.

I did ask the participants to send me artifacts from their homes that related to literacy. The artifacts I received were pictures of children's books and papers of schoolwork that did not add any significance to the research. For these reasons I did not use these two data collection methods.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness does not only matter and show at the end of the study, it must be there from the beginning of the study because it is part of my own trustworthiness as a researcher. For this study, I seek trustworthiness through three methods: triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Trustworthiness is also gained by collecting multiple field texts and displaying them. By providing a thick description of the collected field texts, I give my readers the chance to be a part of the study and become more involved in it. Also by explaining myself as a researcher, I added to the trustworthiness of this research because I explained why this research is important to me and why I want to do it.

- *Member checking.* I used member checking (Brenner, 2006) at the end of my data collection with all participants. I sent them their stories and the transcripts of the conversations we had in English and as they will appear in the research document and I asked for their feedback. By doing so I aimed to decrease the bias of the research findings and critical moments I developed (Denzin, 1970).

- *Theoretical triangulation.* The logic of triangulation is grounded on the idea that no single method is ever sufficient enough to solve the problem of challenging explanation because each method reveals different aspects of the study (Patton, 2002). Denzin (1989) encouraged triangulation saying, " By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources, (researchers) can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-method, single-observer, and single-theory studies" (p. 307). For that reason, I used theoretical triangulation, which refers to data collecting methods and research design (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1984; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Thurmond, 2001). In my theoretical framework I used funds of knowledge, third space and narrative inquiry to look at my data

in order to provide a deeper analysis of findings and to help compare the different views

that participants have and their perspectives with the aim of understanding why and when

these differences emerge (Banik, 1993; Patton, 2002).

- *Peer debriefing.* According to Creswell and Miller (2000) peer debriefing is the

process of having someone who is familiar with the research being carried out review the

data and provide feedback to the researcher. To enhance the validity of my research I used

the peer debriefing strategy when I presented my research in the Ethnography and

Qualitative Research Conference (EQRC) in 2017. I received feedback from fellow

researchers and took notes about future research suggestions.

Summary

I justified my research in this chapter by discussing my personal, practical and

social/ theoretical justification as suggested by Clandinin (2013). My personal justification

was to tell my own story and explaining my need to do this research. I explained the

practical justification and how this research would make a difference in practice by trying

to understand more deeply the experiences of international graduate students and their

families. By making the lives of my participants clear while they negotiate being in two

cultures, I examined the possibility of changing their practices.

I discussed my theoretical justification by using three different theoretical models-

Narrative inquiry, funds of knowledge and third space- as guiding perspectives for this

study. I developed multi-layered analysis to reach deeper understanding of the field texts

instead of using one analytical approach. Chapter four will begin with a restatement of the

analysis. The field texts are then presented in storying formats followed by a final story that portrays the themes in the scripts.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the stories as told by the participants. It is important to read the stories before I move to the analysis. Rosenblatt's reader response theory (1978) argued that each reading experience is unique to each individual based on his or her background experiences. In this research I want readers to understand the stories without influencing their thinking with my analysis. I come with my own agenda and my personal ideas, and I have the privilege of being an insider of the same minority group I am researching. The goal from using narrative inquiry is not to generalize and find one "truth" but to influence lives and "sign up many truths" (Byrne-Armstrong ,2001, p.112). I leave the readers here so each can construct their own truths. However, after the stories I provide a thick-description of my analysis process.

The Stories

Arwa's Stories

I am not the issue. The issue was when I decided to come to the states. I prepared Mashael from there from Saudi. I put her in an international school so she would be ready and learn skills and language first thing before we come to America.

She was young when we arrived. Maybe three years and a half, but she was excellent in English and French too, not only English. So she blended in and she blended in strongly. I mean I didn't feel she was (silence)! One thing I did for Mashael and it is maybe funny. You see how she draws now. She's fascinating her teachers with this now, which is giving her more glow in school. Until first grade she was drawing badly, because here in America

when they see any two lines they go crazy about it! and she shows me and wants me to hang her stupid silly paintings she drew. Because this is a focus point for me, this is my field, I know she can does better than this, but because she was getting all the compliments on nothing, she does her work very fast and in low quality and sees it perfect. One time she came and she had a painting and asked me to hang it. I told her no I will not hang it! it stinks and you can do better than this. I criticized her. It was not very educational way to be honest but it was like… I know you are better than this, what the heck are you doing? From that time her drawings changed, she took it seriously and not just for fun.

When I first came to the states her teacher was Asian, but she was living in the states, when she knew we were Arab she said that Mashael's English language is very good. She said she knew we were still studying language, me and Bandar were still studying English, but don't speak English at home at all! Never ever! Of course we were in a stage where we were like no, we were supposed to talk English 24 hours until we master English. Language is practice. So we wanted to practice it, especially that I didn't speak not one English word. I was afraid of making mistakes. I didn't have the courage to speak publicly, so at home it was just between us until I break that briar and feel more but we sacrificed this home practice and that's it. From the minute her teacher told us only to speak Arabic we only spoke Arabic. So her Arabic language is very good because we don't speak English with her at all. Not even one word. Even if it was big and difficult Arabic words we say it and she should understand it. If she didn't she should look around to do so.

So this is the beginning of her education. That's how she became bilingual. A lot of kids you see they only speak English and that's it. I don't know I feel when the child has two languages his sensibility and realization becomes better and is more able to succeed in

school. He learns more, and has more abilities, because they learn it at a young age. If they learn it at a bigger age I feel it is not the same success as when they are younger. They might slow down but they move along later on.

When Mashael was young I was not the only one focusing on her. When we were at Saudi my whole family Sara, Sadeem, Munirah and my mom and dad, six or seven people read for her. So she opens books I don't know if she was reading or if she memorized the words. And sometimes she read some words.

She read in Arabic and English, even at her school before we came, she wrote her name in Arabic when she was only three. Can you imagine? I mean she was younger than Hussam now, I don't understand how she was writing. She wrote her name and she started reading in preschool, even before school. I am trying to remember because when we were in California she was not in school yet, when we came to Texas she went to school and she was reading in California. She was in first grade when we moved here because she studies kindergarten there. And they were easy going there and they put her in kindergarten even though she is very young. She should be in third grade now not forth. She's the youngest in her class and they always make fun of her. She is younger and she is very petite in her size as well, so they make fun of her and of her size that she's a baby! You know them, so this is an issue for us now! Every day or two days we have to say and repeat and keep telling her that this means you are better, it means you are smarter!

But to be honest when she said she was going to take the EXPO test I was afraid for her! Because EXPO is already higher than the average level and she is already one year higher than her level, so I said she surely will fail it. So I told her, I saw the test parts and I told her you are not going to have any problems in math probably, but in reading the words

will definitely be hard, so she asked me how to prepare and I told her to read, so she went and got a Harry Potter book.

She was in third grade and her reading teacher told her that no she will not let her read it. She thought it was higher than her level and told her she will not understand the vocabulary in it. It was so weird, but I was busy and I didn't communicate with the teacher. But I told her to read it and not to listen to the teacher and ignore what she said. So she read it and her teacher would come and say why are you reading this? Take another book, because she wanted to guarantee that she read it.

Maybe Mashael exaggerates. The reason I don't really care about what she says about teachers is that she exaggerates. She is very sensitive! If they told her anything, we know not to listen to everything she says.

She had a teacher in first grade that didn't want any child to talk, she drove all of us crazy. Bandar was at the school all the time to talk to her. The next year she moved to another wonderful teacher, and her dad told the teacher that she is talkative and the teacher was like all children talk! That previous teacher was mean. Mashael almost hated school because of her. She always had her on parent contact because she was talking! Well, this is not a serious behavior issue! She was an old teacher.

So when she read *Harry Potter* and she passed the EXPO test she was very happy she passed it, because she proved to herself and those who made fun of her that she was in EXPO and they were not, and to not underestimate her abilities. She doesn't say her real age anymore. She says I am almost ten, and she's only nine years old and couple of months. But I don't tell her anything about it, I let her say what she wants.

Anything she shows interest at we let her do it. Now that she is drawing I took her and I bought her a professional painting kit. She was happy that it wasn't a kiddy kit. She's very into it. She has a problem in focusing, so I got her these mandala coloring books, I got her plenty because it is one of things that helps with focusing issues. Her problem is not about focusing, she can focus, but she thinks about many things at the same time. She's not board but her brain in elsewhere. She thinks about the ipod and Ipad and these things. She prefers them over anything else, and when we take them away from her she works on something else. Like rainbow loom. Did you ever see her rainbow looms? She makes three-dimensional designs with it. She made a lot, not only one or two. I mean if she was bored she would only make one or two, but she made a lot and her friends at school bought from her. I didn't know they were buying from her. I saw her wallet full with money so I asked her where did she get that money from and she said that her friends told her they would give her a dollar for each loom, because they liked it so much. She wasn't selling it, she just wanted to show them what she made, it was the day when they do a show and tell about something they like or if they had a talent, so she took the looms and they went crazy about it. I told her it is ok you can sell it. So I sat down with her and looked at Amazon and we ordered a lot of rainbow looms, of course it was all over her bedroom, but she was happy. Her thing is that she's just like my sister Sadeem, when she likes something she really focuses on it and reaches high levels of it, then she leaves it and moves on to something else and a high level in it. So I see Sadeem as a multi-talented person. I feel Mashael is like her. She loves her anyway and sees her as her role model, and calls her her best friend. She's her best friend, her role model and everything, everything.

When it comes to her studying her dad helps her a lot with math and I help with reading. He always brings her stuff to model addition and subtraction for her, he acts for her so she can understand. He brings two apples and an orange and say we took one apple what's left? And things like that away from the school's atmosphere. He does that for homework and for non-homework. He puts a lot of effort with her because he sees the problems she comes with from school more than I do. She comes from school complaining that this person said this and this person said that, this person hurt me and that person did that to me. Can you imagine that she put no on the paper that asks if she's returning next year to school?! She doesn't want the whole school because of them. So he always tries to explain to her that this is their way and their character. She feels she is bullied, but I feel that she exaggerate. She just feels it. She says he pushed me and I fell, he did I don't know what and beat me, but she never said that anybody hit her directly.

She has a classmate who's called Kelly. She always complains from her. All year long! At the end of the year her dad went to school with her and talked to the teacher. They sat with her and talked to her. She told the teacher that this girl is bullying her and so. The teacher told her dad that the girl is kind of annoying but that she never saw a direct harm or anything. Maybe just by words. So she sat down with Mashael and talked with her, and Mashael came back from school very happy! We always talk to her but she wasn't convinced as much as she was when the teacher talked with her. Her reaction with her teacher was different. She came back very happy even though it was almost the end of the year and she might not see the girl again. The teacher was very cooperative from this side. I even told Bandar I wish we talked to her earlier. So this school year that annoying girl is not with her and she's very happy. She didn't complain at all except that they tell her she's

tiny and so on. So I asked her did any teacher ever tell you that you were small or tiny? She said no they tell me I am very cute. So I told her ok then! No one says cute for someone who's tall!!

As for me, I am going to tell you! I had a big issue regarding my study. I used to go to school with my mother. I was an audit at first grade. My story started when I was four years and a half. The day I put my foot in school I was four year and a half. So I used to set with first graders, the school didn't have a daycare or pre-k or anything. My mother taught fourth or fifth grade. I used to go one day and skip ten days. One day or two. If I woke up early with her I went to school, if not I stayed home. Anyway the first grade teacher noticed that I do understand at the same level the first graders did. There was no difference. At the end of the year she decided to test, we had oral tests then, she was testing the students and I was memorizing what they are saying. I didn't study or anything. Anyway she tested me and then went to the school principal and told her that Arwa should go to second grade next year. The principal said how come? She isn't even enrolled. The teacher said it is unfair if she repeated first grade when she had mastery of everything needed for first grade. The principal refused of course to do so and she said this is a big responsibility and this girl doesn't even have a file or a certificate and is not even enrolled. How do we enroll her?

My mom was not taking any side and said I don't know! Let her teacher decide she knows better; she wasn't excited about it. But the teacher gave the principal a hard time about it to the extent that she cried because she said it was unfair that the other students would go to second grade and I don't. At that time my uncle had connections with the education minister and I don't know what. So my mom told him the story and said they want me to go to second grade and he said yeah she should, he thinks it is something to be

84

proud of, and he went and had a paper from the minster that I can enroll in second grade. Now my folder doesn't have a first grade certificate or report card, no pre-k, nor kindergarten, no first grade, no nothing! Just second grade and above.

When I was in second grade I had a problem. We moved to a new house, and my mom wasn't with me at the same school, I don't know why! Oh yeah she just had my sister Munirah, there's a five years and a half gap between me and my sister. So I remember myself in the classroom. I was terrified I was alone in school and my mom is not with me, she was on maternity leave, and I don't understand anything! you know the paragraphs we should read and I barely read words, I don't know how did that crazy teacher transfer me to second grade and I don't know how to read.

I remember the frightening feeling. I saw the paragraphs. I saw them, and I know how to read them. I remember clearly that I saw and was able to read, but I was afraid. I was afraid! You know I was afraid! Then I would stand up and I look at the girls, and I was very tiny when I was young, my sister wore my sixth grade uniform when she was in first grade and it was so tight on her, can you imagine? I just had a growth spurt when I was in middle school out of the sudden and I became taller. So I used to look at the girls and school like that! (in reference they were much bigger and taller than her). When I was with my mother I used to hang out at the teacher's room when it was recess. I never hang out with the girls. And now I have to stay at the yard with the girls and look at them!!

I mean I was five year and a half and at that time there were many people who delayed their kids, they would start school when they are eight years old . you know? It was not a strict system, so there was that terrifying feeling. So I was very scared from this. I was very scared and I put double the effort to read. I don't know how second grade passed by, I

was very young so I don't recall it exactly, but I remember the feeling of fear. I don't remember exactly.

In third grade my mom was back at school, and we moved to a new school, and I was comfortable because my mom was with me. I didn't have any problems. I passed the reading problems. Nobody bothered me. I was the teacher's daughter so that gave me a privilege. Many teachers treated me nicely because I was their friend's daughter, so I was relieved. But I still have this feeling until today that I can't . Maybe because I started with the feeling that I can't, and I don't know. so until today, even when I passed my qualifying exam, my husband tells me see? I told you so, and I tell him no I didn't do well! And he says how you didn't do well when all your doctors wrote positive comments? One said I am very satisfied and the other one said this is exemplary work! So there's a trust issue. I feel I will never pass unless I do double the work and put double the efforts. I feel I have to work hard. When I was preparing to the qualifying exam for three months, I quit our group of friends because I feel I am in so dispersion if I saw anything, you know? I want just to focus even though sometimes I am at the university looking blah at the screen and listening to a song, I could spend the whole day just to read one article. Not that I was working the whole time, but I felt guilty if I stayed home. I feel that if I failed it would be because of that moment I stayed at home.

Our only entertainment at home was reading. Even when we had the satellite we weren't watching TV 24 hours. It was only one TV and by 8:00 o'clock we had to be at our rooms. So there's nothing after 8 except for books. I loved Mickey, so I had these volumes, and whenever I finished one I had the other, even if we traveled I would take them with me. I had prescription with Majed's magazine, and I read newspapers. I loved newspapers. We

had a subscription and all newspapers were delivered to us. We had books for children, I read them when I was in elementary and middle school, when I was in high school, they were about genes, but they were in caricature drawings and very detailed information. They were amazing. So when we studies genes and genetics, it was a piece of cake for me. I had a background and it was the correct background, not stories, no correct background. The teacher always told me, when I first participated with her, so she asked if I studied the lesson before she gave it to us. I told her no, but I read a book, and I told her about the book, it was an amazing book.

I was dull; I mean I loved watching documentaries, not as much as I listened to songs, but I enjoyed watching documentaries. My siblings would look at me and leave me. I didn't like movies from that time. My sister Sarroo is even better than me in reading. She used to take scary books from the library and read them. She was in third or fourth grade maybe. If I want to think about abilities, I think Sarroo, Sadeem, and Nawaf are way smarter than me and Munirah. They have sharp intelligence.

When I finished high school I faced another dilemma. I used to study at a public school all my life, my dad worked at the education ministry and was refusing the idea of private schools, he thought they were all bad (this is the father's personal view, not necessarily true). When he had Nawaf he put him in a private school because it was very well known in the whole gulf area. He started at a public school, but I think my father was afraid for him from the community. It was a different community.

Anyway I was studying at an exemplary public school. It was the best one in Riyadh. Because it was exemplary the other schools would come and visit to observe. The building was amazing. You would never think it was a public building. It was like a fairytale. When I

went to that school, I fell in love with it. Not only the school, even the teachers were great. They were elite, you know? Can you imagine? It was a wonderful school. It wasn't in our neighborhood, but we didn't have a school in our neighborhood so they accepted us there.

When I was in my second high school year we moved to a new school. I went crazy I didn't want to move. I loved that school. I told my dad he could've let me stay but it is not like him to request for me to stay at the old school. He doesn't do that. He said I would put you in a private school if you want but I wouldn't break the rules. I didn't want to go to a private school, I wanted to stay at my school with my friends. The walls closed on me all night long; I was so upset for two days I didn't talk to anyone and didn't see anyone. I was mad at my mom and dad. Then one night I was up and it was so weird. It was the night and I was thinking and thinking. I don't know how I was thinking. I was in my bed, I remember the lights in my room and the direction of my bed, and I was thinking deeply, I don't know what I was thinking about, but finally decided I would go to the new school. I just decided to go, and I went and I was happy. Do you know that weird feeling as if somebody came and told me I should go to the new school and that it was a good one? Nobody came to me and helped me, not my dad nor my mom came and told me no. They let me be upset and I will compulsory go to the new school. You know? I thought about the two schools, and I didn't even see the new school, they told me I would transfer on the weekend, and all that weekend I was upset and I stayed in my room and no one cared. I was thinking and thinking, and then I swear it was out of the sudden that I wanted to go. I was relieved and I went downstairs happy in the morning. My mother looked at me in disbelief; yesterday I was very upset and mad! I went and I didn't like it. It was a rented building and I don't know what. The students came from two schools, one was our group who moved from that

building, and they were from a fancy neighborhood, and the other group were from a low class neighborhood, the people from the two groups were different, so we couldn't blend in together. There were no agreement points. But then suddenly we got along together I don't know how!

There was this math teacher, may she rest in peace, it was in senior year, she treated me special in math. She put formulas and before she explained them to us I would solve them, she went crazy! I would understand when she explains things from the first time, but she repeated for others, so I would put pens in the person' in front of me hair, or go underneath my desk. I get bored! I didn't want to hear the same thing again. I swear the god I didn't want to hear the same thing again. Even now, if you want me to see a movie that I've already seen? No way! It is impossible!

I don't like to see the same thing twice or hear the same thing twice. I might repeat for others, but I don't like it when others repeat things for me. So what would she do, she prepared papers for me, with formulas and equations to solve, as soon as she entered the door she gave them to me. She wanted to keep me busy with them.

I still have my math notebook until now, every time I gave it to her or when I solved a problem, she was amazed with my work and would write me a paragraph (as a compliment). I heard that she died, may she rest in peace, she was amazing! But I really enjoyed that school. I really liked it and fell in love with it! I loved all the teachers. The biology teacher, when we had all these cells class. So she would come at each class and asks us about the previous lesson, so once she asked me, and I told her everything about that cell and more, I kept giving her details, and talking about so many information and she was looking at me like this!! And kept saying: Wow! Very good, very good! And I kept on talking

that it is the example of this and that and under pressure it becomes I don't know what and so on! And she kept saying very good very good!

One time in the biology exam, with the same teacher, I adored her, she made a cooking book after she retired and it became a very famous book.

She was very pretty but anyway, she put a question in the exam, and I didn't like the question, so I put the wrong answer. So I missed some points on it, and it was the first time I miss few points, so I went to her office, she tried to convince me but I wasn't convinced and I left her office, and she didn't change my score of course. When it was the final test, she put the same question again. She was taking rounds on all the students to check on us. When I saw the question I put my same answer, just like I wanted it to be. She came and looked at my paper and saw my answer, as if I am saying I wasn't convinced after all your explanations. And I got the full mark in that test! Can you imagine? She even gave me the full mark on the previous test! Maybe she felt she didn't explain it well for me, or that I was correct in my answer, I don't remember, but my way of answering the question was very weird.

In physics we had to prove the equations I think, and there was a question with A,B,C, and D to choose. The difference between A and B was the sign, so I flipped the page and wrote a whole page to prove that low to make sure from the sign! So I don't lose a quarter point!

This was the influence of my mother, when I was in elementary school I answered a test once and I didn't revise my answers, and I missed few points. My mom scolded me and said why were you in a rush? Why didn't you reread the questions and answers again? This talk

90

affected me. She said: Don't read your answers, you should answer again as you are solving it for the first time, then compare the two answers.

Then I entered college. The deal was like this. We didn't have a driver at that time, he was on vacation, and when the results were out my mom went and got my certificate. I was asleep. My dad had a trip in the afternoon, and my mom came and said congratulations! Hurry up and go register at the university! Your dad has a trip in the afternoon. Go to the university and register? Register for what? I didn't have any interest in anything! I went to the university, I wanted something that had to do with engineering, something that makes me think, not just work and memorization. But there was nothing.

When my dad came he asked me what did you want? What did you not want? Your grades are good. And I was like ok ok. I don't know. I went to the university and when I entered I had the same fear I had when I was in second grade. The gate was so big. It was huge. Another world! Streets and buildings, and I went from a building to another and I looked at the forms! Oh my god!! What should I write? They said your male guardian has to give consent, and I told them I don't have it. They said if he's with you let him sign it. So I took the form and went outside, the views had changed. Where is that small building I came through? I walked the whole way down the university and up again. It was hot and sunny; it was summer you know! And finally I found that small room, I went outside and gave my dad the paper to sign it and he asked me why didn't you put any wishes for what to study? I told him I didn't have interest in anything! So he said give me the paper I will write it for you, so he put my first wish: Medicine, the second wish: Dentistry, the third wish: Pharmacy, the fourth wish: Medical technologies. I went inside and I gave them my papers, including my original transcript and the copies. I didn't know what was going on. Of course

medicine had an entry exam. When I had to go again for the exam I said I will not go by myself. My mom said why? what's wrong? I said I will not go by myself. So she said fine I will come with you, and we went to the administration office and asked for my original certificate I left. They were laughing who would give their original certificate? I was like you should be happy I even came! When she saw my file and my GPA her tone changed and said someone like you should not make this mistake.

And I went and took the medicine test. When they interviewed me they asked me why do you want to study medicine? I said to oppose the stupid community who does not want female Saudi doctors, just like my uncle.

I was accepted. There were about 400 applicant and they accepted about 50 based on our test results and interviews. And I entered this stinky medicine field. I didn't even desired to study it or anything. The first semester was fine because we didn't have autopsies or anything. The second semester was a disaster, we were doing autopsies, but it was on animals so it was fine. The second year I couldn't. I tried but I couldn't. So I asked for a transfer to dentistry. I put my papers and left, and then I got a call from the secretary. He said the dean wants to talk to you. I asked why? and he said: You don't know why? Everyone is dying to be accepted to medicine and you want to leave it? I said I didn't want medicine. I just don't want it. I want dentistry. They said fine. I thought we will do less autopsies in dentistry.

And I took all the tests, I knew their tests were different, they required skills, and I had these skills. Most of it were hands-on tests, sculpturing, we sculptured wax, chalks and we did it in specific measurements, they were not easy tests, they were six hours long. Then there were the paper test and the interview. Four doctors interviewed me and asked me

why did I want to transfer from medicine? I said if you are not accepting me I will quit college. They said no why would you quit? Anyway they gave me permission and I was accepted to the program and I started dentistry. My first subject was head and neck autopsy! I said this is about teeth what is this, and they said no the dentist is not only concerned with the teeth and jaw. If someone had an accident and broke his/her jaw, you can repair the whole face including the neck. This is your responsibility. The second class he started showing us moth diseases, I don't know if it was on purpose or not. Maybe they wanted to make sure if we wanted to continue. Diseases like hair in the tongue, or something green on it. Ewwww! I closed my eyes I couldn't see. I couldn't no matter how much I tried. I can't handle a small cut! After that I did not go to college. And I started having stomach issues and my mom took me to the hospital. My stomach couldn't handle it, too much stress. What should I do ? where am I supposed to go?

I didn't know I knew how to draw. I didn't know I had that skill. Can you imagine? If I told you this you might think I am stupid or uneducated, but I was sleeping and I swear the god!!

Three important things happened in my life, the first one was when I accepted going to that school, the second one was this: I was asleep and I woke up feeling I wanted to draw. I never drew before. Even when we took art classes in school it was nothing special. I remember waking up and holding a picture of a contemporary Saudi poet and Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, and started drawing him at 3 am in the morning. I was done at the morning and Muneerah entered the room and asked me where did I get that painting from? She couldn't imagine I drew it. I told her I drew it and she said I was lying! I told her I am telling you I drew it. I mean is it believable I had something I didn't knew about or enjoyed

before? Even when I was young my mom helped me with my art projects and did it for me! I swear I never held a scissor and cut anything or colored. That's why I try to support Mashael now. What is the story? I found I liked drawing!

Me entering the arts field was a turning point in my life and my education. I decided to study art. I love mathematics, I worship it, but I don't want to study it. I didn't even want computer science because it was being taught in an old fashion. I don't want to complicate my life. I went to the dentistry department to find them holding my papers. It was the last day for transfers. If I didn't transfer that day I will stay at home for a year. Also the secretary called me. The dean and the chair wants to talk to you. I went there to the men's college, and I got lost and the driver I didn't know where he was. It was so big and huge. When I got in there the chair asked me why do you want to transfer? And you want to go to the art education too? he said the applicant to dentistry were 600 and they only accepted 28 student, not even 30! He said you are the best of the best, why are you leaving? I said I didn't want the whole medical field. He said you gave medicine a chance, give us a chance too! I said no I don't want to! He said then change the art college! I told him I loved art! He was silent for a little bit and asked me if there is anyway he could convince me to stay? I swear he asked me what bothered me and he would fix it for me!

I swear I will never forget his words. I told him I didn't like everything, and if he didn't sign my papers that day it means I will stay at home. You either sign or I would stay at home. So he told the secretary to take a copy from all my files and signed the paper for me and said: If you go and you don't like it come back to me and I would accept you again! He was so sure I would come back.

I couldn't believe he signed the paper. I flew to the art college, with a copy from the dentistry schedule. It was one of the transfer requirements to present my previous schedule.

So I met the art education dean, and she was checking my schedule, what is this? General autopsy! Head and neck autopsy? What are you transferring from medicine? Why did you transfer? You have a high GPA! And the whole interview became about medicine.

She told everybody later on that we have a new student transferring from medicine with a high GPA. Most transfers had low GPA's, so every teacher came to class would ask: Who's Arwa? Where is she? That was such an attention that served me later on! It distinguished me in college. And I enjoyed education. The first year I was sick from all the education subjects, I don't understand what they are talking about. I was used to math, equations, and problems and this is different, theories and philosophy and I don't know what. When I wanted to transfer they were always out of the forms. 3 times I went and they didn't have the forms. My friends told me that this is a sign to stay in medicine! But I was so sure! I will transfer.

People drove my mother crazy when I transferred to the art education. They called her and asked her why did I waste my future? They were saying I will waste my future. My mom didn't mind me transferring from medicine, to the contrary she was happy about it, but my dad was upset. He didn't like the education field.

Later I was the first one in my family to earn a master's degree, and the first Ph.D. holder when I am done in shaa Allah (God's welling).

The third thing that changed my life was coming to the states. I wanted to go to the U.K. to study. I didn't want to go to the states and I never thought about it. I was even very upset from our university because they didn't want to send us to the U.K. I was trying to find an acceptance in one of the very strong and high rated universities in U.K. so they can't say no or anything to me. Subhan Allah (Glory to the god, we say it when something unplanned happens) at that time period I was doing the trial registration for all students and I was working on it day and night. I don't like to do things and leave them halfway. I want them to be perfect. So all 5600 students were registered and had section that fit them, it was epic! I studied all cases even the possible dropouts and then opened sections for everyone. So I was very busy to find an acceptance or to apply for universities. And out of the sudden and without any clues I decided I wanted to go the states. That's it. I will not even search for a university. I asked if I needed to find a language institution at the same university I will study at? And they said no, I could go to any language institution. The most important thing was that I leave! I will search for an acceptance when I'm in the states. It was difficult when I was in Saudi. I had work and social duties pressure from my mom, may Allah guide her, but she insisted on visiting people and go to big gatherings and so on, even if I didn't want to. Now my sisters don't listen to her! May Allah guide them. She pressured us, especially me, but she can't with them.

When I first came to California, it was language and things like that, I wasn't . I mean I was worried about the GRE more than it. I wanted to be better at the language, go up couple of levels, so I can focus on the GRE. I mean I was not worried about the language at all. I stayed six or seven months and then I took the IELTS test and had 6.5 and then closed

96

the language topic, then I started working on my GRE. During that time I had Husam and he had problems, and then I lost maybe about a year. The last trimester was very bad when I was pregnant with him. And then when he arrived and I was very tensed I didn't take any test or anything, until he had his heart surgery and then we went to Saudi for the summer. I mean I didn't feel it was a studying experience as much as a transitional time period. Then I started the Ph.D. and I felt I didn't practice English for a long time. There were no international students with me, they were all Americans, and when they talked I didn't know what they are talking about! I understood when the doctors talked very easily I had no problem. I was very scared because I didn't understand them. I felt I needed to understand everything. Then I went to Dr.Dean after I turned in the first paper, even Eric said that Dr. Dean says Arwa is a good writer, if you have a future project do it with Arwa. I asked him did she seriously say that? anyway I wanted to ask her about an upcoming project so I went to her office to ask her about it. After I was done I told her that that I always get nervous because I don't know what they talk about. She asked me do you understand me? I said yes I do, she said that's the important thing. She said they always talk about unimportant stuff, and sometimes it's unrelated so that's why you don't understand. She said they talk in a very slang language that's why you don't understand. She said she didn't like all what they talked about, but she cannot ask them to stop. She said it like that: It is not important. Not important at all, if you had something to say, say it! otherwise it doesn't matter. I was nervous back then, I wanted to understand everything, and I had to read everything. I was like that. Maybe that's why I was nervous back then. I even told Haneen when she first started the program to focus only on the important things,

and if you didn't understand that's fine. Anyway the time will not be enough to read everything.

But at the beginning I was scared. I felt I have to put more effort. When I made friendships with them that feeling was over, but at the beginning I felt I was othered! they made me feel that way because they didn't talk to me. My voice is low and when I speak they don't hear me. Then Eric came and told me he will teach me how to speak louder. He said that my English was very good, but that I needed to speak louder. I told him I didn't feel that I spoke softly but he assured me I did. Maybe I felt if I spoke louder I will make mistakes and they will notice I'm different? The next semester I had a class full with international students. I might have not felt the same way I did if I started with a class like that! And the professor was much nicer. It gave me a relief. It was a better semester.

Then there was Mary. She influenced everything to me. She affected my adaptation in the American society, in the department and college. Even the small class community. She made me feel I'm not out. That semester I met two people, one was going to be the reason I withdrawal from the program and the other one made me stay. Mary made me stay. The other person was a Saudi student. She even taught me before and I call her teacher. She is the kind of person who has a severe obsession. It was like a disease. She was very afraid because there were two Saudi students before her who were kicked out. She had an idea that the university is really bad and that our performance is very weak. How does she know my performance? She was a very excellent student back home but she doubted her language. She studies English for three years and she was finally accepted because she had composition courses, so she doubted her language skills. I used to get

nervous and would go to Bandar and he would say you have nothing to do with her. You scored high in IELTS in only six months. She needs to be nervous you don't.

I was in a hotel still and she would scare me, and on top of that I go and there were no international students but me. I was very very nervous and I was about to withdrawal, she did withdrawal and went back home by the way! She didn't get the GRE. Now they don't accept any student from King Saud University in the Art Education department here. I recall how they established that program. They didn't have a good program and it was a weak department. Anyway I didn't know anyone back then except for her, and I remember once she called me while I was reading an article. I swear I couldn't finish that article after her call. She was tensed and she made me tensed with her. So she implemented the fear in me. Bandar told me you should be busy with your work and don't listen to her, and then there were no international students. I didn't talk to anybody and nobody talked to me.

Then Mary came, and she asked about me if I wasn't there, and would sit next to me and talked to me. She wasn't treating me special, she was like that! She was nice with everyone. I started to feel that I existed. I was invisible to the rest. Eric was different because he lived abroad and he knows how it feels, but I mean Mary even invited me to her Thanksgiving dinner. As if she's saying come with us you are not an outsider. She welcomed us in her house with her husband, you know American are simple, and we were very comfortable and stayed for a long time with them. I was worried first at Mashael because she was understanding more and I didn't know if it will affect her or not (referring to Thanksgiving being a holiday for American that we don't celebrate). Mary treated me very special after that visit. Then this amazing professor invited us to her home. She was amazing. We were living in a hotel and she invited me and my family to live with her and

her husband! She was from the people who made me feel comfortable. I told her I wanted to take one course only and she asked me why? I told her because of my language, and she told me your language is perfect. I told her it is not perfect and she said it was.

When Mary started treating me special the others noticed me. From that point on, all my tension disappeared. As soon as she included me at the beginning I felt like. You cannot imagine. It was like I wasn't even walking on the ground.

When I got my grades I was more confident. Mary helped ease my tension, but I still have self-trust issues. Until now I feel that they compare me to others!

And then there were classes with talkative students. I felt I couldn't talk because others would always talk. Some professors would tell some students to not talk so others can participate, but other professors didn't. I couldn't talk if the class was big. One professor once told me I have to talk otherwise no one will notice you anymore. That was her word.

One time we were in groups and John always talked when we had to present our discussion. So the second time we picked a difficult theory to work on and then the professor said John don't present. Arwa it is your turn to talk. It was a very bad experience. I didn't prepare to talk and didn't have points to talk about. I looked at him to take points. It was very bad!

I feel that Mashael is an extremist in everything. She is extremist when she's upset or mad, extremist in her talent, everything is extreme to her, so she consider herself as an American. She thinks less of Arabic. When I tell her something in Arabic, she says what is that! Say it in English! But no she will have to understand it in Arabic. She thinks less of it, and she's refusing to learn it as well. She learned all the letters without me teaching her.

But if I motivated her with a big prize she will learn it. I was planning for that but my siblings ruined it for me. I told her I will get you the Xbox if you learned Arabic, without you paying for it! but then my siblings got it for her as a gift and ruined it for me! They got her a phone, and the problem is my brother Nawaf is going through some emotional issues, and he came and asked me in front of her if he could give it to her. He shouldn't ask me in front of her. We should've agreed before and then you can give it to her. So he gave it to her, but because he's emotionally unwell, and that's another problem, Mashael is so attached to him and Sadeem, because they act like Americans too and all their friends, and their accent too, even though they are in Saudi and had never left it. So she's very connected to them, yet they are emotionally unstable. So I don't know what to do. Even when I go to Saudi I don't know what to do! I don't know how would they react and what are their actions like. Even my mom is very connected to them. If they are upset she gets upset. Muneerah always says I don't want to do anything that upsets her and I become the culprit. I am afraid of saying no and then he relapses. He enjoys her so much. So when I go to Saudi I don't enjoy my stay. And if I only stayed for two or three weeks my mom would be upset. I can't take an apartment and stay by myself because Bandar stays with his family, and my mom would kill herself if we stayed by ourselves there. It is a struggle. Bandar always tells me to be patient. He says it's only days that we spend there and then we will come back here again so I have to let go.

And if she's visiting her father's family I have to prepare her. I start talking to her before we even go to Saudi. I never do when we are going to my family. She doesn't feel any difference; but I support her when she goes to her father's family. I give you an example: Ever since we came America she became black. The other day she was showing me a class

picture and she was saying mom! mom! look at me, and I didn't see her it was a small picture and she said here I am the black one. She was very light skinned when she was younger, but she got burnt with the sun. Maybe her skin will lighten up when she reaches puberty and maybe not. And her father's family always talks about her hair and her skin color. They make comments. I don't want them to say anything to her. So I always tell her you are so beautiful, I see you the pretties, you know? I compliment her so she goes there with full confidence, and they never affected her thanks Allah.

The other time, she had a headband over her curly hair, and I don't like to comb her curly hair because it will ruffle. And her hair is dry because she doesn't eat at all. She has eating problems. She doesn't eat fat at all, she eats carbs and dry things. Anything that has fat she doesn't want it, so I tell her your hair is dry because you have no fat in your body! Where is it going to get the fat from? You are skin over bones with no fat. So anyway. She came crying that day to me. She said her grandma combed her hair and asked her why didn't she blow dry it? They dislike the curly hair. Her daughters have very thick hair, and they always blow dry it. I told her I liked her hair and the way she had it, but then my mother in law asked me why didn't we blow dry her hair? She said she feels she cannot breath every time she sees Mashael's hair. So now I take her to the salon to do her hair every time we go visit them so they don't talk. It doesn't matter with me, but I don't want them to talk about her. And I tell her they are different than us, and she says yes they are different, they don't know!

She lives freely here and when we visit my family, but when she visits them she doesn't feel that freedom. We have to think about everything. She dresses here with

anything it doesn't matter, but there she has to care what she's going to care and always be dressed up day, noon, and night!

They are from a rural area you know and this is all they care about. They have limited thinking. People visit them day and night. One time I was wearing an expensive dress, I wore it twice there, and his mom was very upset, she told my brother's in law wife that I embarrassed her! She said it doesn't seem like I am an employee and I have money! Just because I wore the same dress twice in front the same people. After that my brother's in law wife and myself decided we shouldn't listen to anything she says and that we would dress the way we like it. It's up to her to like it or not. I don't care, but it really bothers me because Mashael is growing up and she understands. I don't want her to hate them; they are her family after all.

When we were young my dad would always say that Arwa takes her sweet time to understand a movie, but if she understood it!! but it wasn't like that, I am opposed to his words until today! I had the reading issue when I was in second grade. I only spent few days at first grade. And I didn't master reading yet. I used to memorize if I didn't understand. So that's why my dad said that. It is maybe the reason I have a self-trust issue no matter what I did. Bandar goes crazy from that! Even if I pass a test, I think that the test was easy! Not that I did well! Because my dad said comments. I am sure he didn't mean harm with them, but they were discouraging. And my mom was the same thing. You know? The age difference between me and Muneerah is just like Mashael and Husam. And then my mom had Saroo, also just like Husam and Danah, and got busy with these two and I was ignored. So that's why I try not to ignore Mashael and I try to focus on her. Even though my

personality was better than Mashael. I mean I was like a little lamb. I didn't do anything. Mashael would be very loud if there is something she didn't like. She's so American.

I was quiet. I used to show my dad my certificates and my excellence recognitions, not the typical ones, but things that were written especially for me, he would make jokes and comments. He would say things like yeah because I am your dad!

I remember when I brought my master's recommendation letters, if you saw what the doctors had written for me!! it was very personal. I was so proud and I was waiting for him, and when he saw them he said yeah fine, because I am your dad. There's no support from him. I heard him once telling my mom, when he thought I wasn't listening, I don't want to compliment her so she doesn't become an arrogant. But it was not about arrogance at all as much as he broke down my self-worthy!

Now I try to avoid doing this with Mashael. Even if I made a mistake with her I try to fix it. I mean a lot of things happened from my parents and were wrong. I try to avoid these mistakes. Even though I compare my reactions and Mashael's and I think that she deserves to be punished. I mean I was so quiet and didn't have any reactions. She argues back and is never silent! She makes us worthless!

So I used to memorize and it was one of my strengths. One time I studied for a test and it was the wrong subject! It was an oral test. So I saw a student pulling a question that I knew the answer for. So when she put it back, I kept following that paper, and when it was my turn I drew it! it might have been cheating, but it wasn't my fault. It was my mom's. I told her the test was not about that subject but she insisted. So I drew the paper that fit me. I got the full mark on that test. I was so scared when I did it, but I felt like a genius afterward!

I think Mashael will be very different than me. She has high self-confidence and she thinks. I didn't have the choice and I didn't have anyone around me to guide me, and even that my parents are educated, I am the first to go to college, and my dad is like if you are so good you go to medicine, and my mom didn't care what I studies. When I decided to leave medicine and go to art my father met my decision with sarcasm, which hurts until today.

I had a cousin who had issues mentally (she is using it a metaphor referring that she did not like the way she thinks), and I was the only one who hated her, when we were young I used to beat her because she was so stupid. She was one year younger than me and she went to the art college too. When she did my dad came and said now you are both even! I never forget his word! To that extent? Me and her are the same?

Even today after I had masters and working on my Ph.D. I don't feel that he is convinced. He thinks that people with great minds earn their degrees from the states, he thinks it an accomplishment, but not when I do it. Muneerah tells me he's happy and he talks about me in a good way. Even Bandar says that his eyes light up when he talks about me that is different than when he talks about my half-sister. She is older and she has issues. She was young when they separated and we don't have a connection with her. I sometimes forget she exists. We are from two different worlds. I will give you an example: We might have the same money in our accounts, but she will look like a princess and I will look like a maid. They live for luxury. They are very different.

I never read anything in English, except for what we had in school. Later on when I was working in the university, they gave us a workshop to prepare us for traveling. It was wasted money, but they gave us a book series to read. It was leveled and if you knew the words at the back cover, then it was level to read. If you didn't know five words or more,

then it's not your level. It came with audio as well. So I used to listen and read. That helped my language a little. It made me understand better when I hear. When I didn't understand my classmates and their slang, I only learned the formal language. This was one of the difficulties I had. When I read a joke or something I don't get it right away! I need time to understand it. I don't have the background for it but if you bring me something related to art education!! English became an academic language to me.

Even when I was in medicine school, we studied everything in English. There was only one course in Arabic. The girls had these small books about actors and I don't know what. I did like them and bought some, but I didn't like them and never read more than two pages. I read chemistry and physics instead.

Mashael loved reading since she was little. When she wanted to join expo and felt she needed to strengthen her vocabulary, she started reading new books. She didn't even care about the teacher telling her she couldn't read them. She thanked me for advising her to read. She said there are many words she didn't understand, but she got them as she read. Even in the test, she figured out what they meant from the context. She said she learned that technique. She has Arabic and English books in our house but she's ignoring the Arabic ones, she took them and put them in her brother's closets. She even likes to write. When she was six and Husam was six months old and had the operation, she wrote him a poem. It was funny! You grew up and you have. It was like someone who's is 15 wrote it for someone who's 9!

Of course because I'm busy I am not as involved as I wish to be with her education, but because she's very successful, and I feel that she's excellent, I feel discouraged thinking that she doesn't need me! but if there's anything that is hard for her she would come to me.

My time is very limited. My education limited my time with my children and my interaction with them, and their education and everything. It made a huge difference when I stayed with them the past few weeks, they started napping again poor kiddos. But I think my education will help them, I am different and I treat them differently. I am more patient. Especially with Mashael, I feel like I can help her if I want to.

Tahani's Stories

Tahani is a Ph.D. student in her mid-thirties at the time of the study. She is the mother of three children, two girls and a boy. She came to the United States in 2012 and earned her masters in 2015. She returned to Saudi for a year where she worked as a lecturer then returned back to the U.S. in 2016 to work on her Ph.D.

She began telling her story by recalling her earlier educational journey. She said: I recall memories since I was in kindergarten. I remember my kindergarten teacher: Her full name, the way she looked, she was influential indeed. Also some of the activities and parties. Those I remember and some of the friends as well. But I only recall so little about it very little! I only remember the teachers of the earlier grades. But in general my performance in elementary school was not excellent. My performance was in the middle, very good. I didn't discover myself yet nor the way I study.

Now I can control the way I think, to me I can give you the information the way I understood it. I reform them as I understand. This doesn't work at our schools. We follow a memorizing-lead system. I was the only one between my sisters with a B level. After finishing the early grades, which were A's of course, I entered the middle school where my

level dropped in a horrifying way. I mean I was shocked I got a poor grade I barely passed the subject, which was Grammar.

First I didn't take it seriously, the second thing it was a hard subject, a really hard one. You can't pass it without studying. I can't give opinions from my own head. It doesn't work this way. This grade I got, this shock I received was a turning point to me.

Of course my parents were very upset why did I reach this point. I became different than my sisters, who had very high academic levels, so I gave them the shock! This point made me take their disappointment very seriously. I decided to discover myself, and Alhamdulellah !!

The next semester, the 2nd semester of the year, the very next one in the 2nd year in middle school, everyone noticed the difference in school. All my grades were up! I found out my way of studying and how to deliver the information. I didn't rely on memorizing and remembering.

Because I didn't memorize and learn by heart, but in some subject I did. But it was a struggle for me to study. But in the other subjects I discovered myself and that I can create the way I deliver information. I tell stories and I give examples that are related to the topic. I continued to get excellent grades until I reached the senior year in high school so I had to be incredible, because university comes after. My father didn't expect that I will excel that much, he didn't imagine I would until I got him %99 ! It was a shock to me and the people around me. At the same time I saw it! how do I say this? I mean from the beginning when I was in elementary school I didn't know myself or the way I think and learn, but when I did, I completely changed.

I had fewer choices when entering the university because I chose the literature path in high school (in high school in Saudi students have to choose between the literature path where they study language, literature, social study, or they can choose the scientific path where they study physics, math, biology, and chemistry). I believe I would've excel in the scientific path if I studied it, even more than I did in the literature path because I liked math, physics, and chemistry. I was very good at them. But I had fear! Fear of not getting high grades thus not entering the university. I couldn't take that risk. It was either medical school or teacher's college so I couldn't risk it especially I didn't like medicine that much.

I didn't know what I wanted to study at the university level. That was the second shock to me. I only had education as a choice for major, but what should I choose? I didn't want to study English, and I had some skills like painting and doing crafts, but I didn't want to study it as my major as well. I don't like to study my hobbies, that's not my future. It will not serve me in the future.

So I headed to the university at the day that was designated for my percentage (Students with higher percentage in high school can apply first and have more choices), the following days were for lower percentages, so I had to put my choices and I didn't know. I was going to put English as my first choice but they told me that history was going to be my second option. I said I am going to put English as my first choice and Early Childhood as my second and they said no! history is your second option. Why? I don't know why! So I decided I will not enroll for anything. I didn't want history. I can't risk it.

So I went to the teacher's prep college and enrolled in the early childhood department. I felt it attracted me, I felt it was different. But was it my choice? No! Did I like it? I didn't at the beginning. But I changed my mind the first semester.

The teachers and professors played a major role in that. Also I wasn't planning on being an A student. Okay I'm already good and diligent but that's it.

And the gossips I heard, which everyone talked about, was that professors are not fair when giving grades. You pass or fail depending on their mood. To be honest I believed it back then. It was unbelievable and all, and it gave me fear, but I took it as a given thing. So honestly I started calculating my grades and counting the questions I missed and when I got my grades they were exactly like I counted. I realized it then right away that all that talk was rubbish. It might had been a way to cover for those failing or something. And to my big surprise I became on top of my class. So I had a goal to keep this level up. But it was a very difficult emotional effort. I was so tired more than you can imagine to keep up my high level and to compete with the 2nd and 3rd place students. It was a tough competition, they are my classmates and I love them, but we competed. So for four years in a row I was the first student in my class.

I applied to the job there because the department asked me to do so, they said for four years you were the top of your class student. It was a very big class. There were over 600 students. I felt it was a great accomplishment, so great. The professors supported me and kept encouraging me emotionally saying finish high and you will be with us and so on, which gave me a shock when I graduated and came with my papers to apply that they said the system had changed. They said we cannot hire you now nor nominate you. How come? What about the students before me who got first place as well and were hired? I'm confused!

They said jobs had to be available from the government now first. I told myself I will not give up but I was really disappointed. I kept on following up though on the dates jobs

will be offered, and I applied and I entered the competition. And alhamdulellah me and 3 of my classmates got the jobs out of 200 candidates. I felt it was something so beautiful and the effort I put all these past years paid off.

I never thought about studying abroad or about the scholarship, not even one percent I wanted to travel. It was a coincidence. I knew the department (where she was hired as a graduate assistant) wanted us to travel, but it never occurred to me that I would until I asked my husband one night. I asked him what do you think about applying to graduate school? We weren't serious. He said: Try! and if you got accepted we will think about it. If you didn't get it then it's over.

But when I started applying to different language institutions and doing paperwork I felt that I put a big effort. It wasn't something easy, and during that time I felt that I have a goal. It wasn't just an attempt anymore! And seriously I couldn't remove the idea from my head. I have to travel to study, and Alhamdullelah it worked out well and we came for my masters.

The first day I arrived in Washington D.C., I opened my eyes and it felt like a dream. It was the first time I fly to the states and all this distance to study. What's happening? Are we really here? What is this step that I took? But this never gave me a push back or made me depressed. It didn't affect me. I took this new weight over my shoulder as a motivation. I have to prove myself. I will never let go!

The most difficult thing for me back then was the English language. It was the hardest thing I did in my entire life. Because I'm studying in a language that is different than mine, so I put effort. The assignment that should take an hour took me 4 hours to finish. The final exam that takes 4 hours to finish used to take me the whole day.

I started from zero; my language wasn't good, so it took me a year and two months to finish, and then I was accepted to a master's program. I was very scared from the school's level. I didn't have enough confidence that I can prove myself in another language. It was a new world to me. I am used to my university, my language. This is another university, another language.

I even tried to work as a volunteer to learn from the community, so I worked in the early childhood field. It wasn't a real job because there was no contract between me and them or anything, so I used to go to the same classroom my daughter was in and I helped as a teacher assistant. It was just a personal goal to learn the language especially early childhood vocabulary. I wanted to see the children's levels and the ways they were taught.

But I was also under the stress of losing my scholarship if I didn't get an acceptance for the master. It didn't matter if I learned English or not as much as it was important to get the required TOEFL or IELTS. I was under the stress that I have to get the grade. I need to get an acceptance so I can continue. If I didn't get them I will have to go back. If I went back that means I didn't reach the goal I put for myself. This was tiring, but as soon as I started the masters this distress went away. I enjoyed my masters. I enjoyed everything. It was the first time I enjoyed learning something. Maybe because I was under the stress of grades and not knowing if I will continue or not, but when I started all of these faded away from my head. The first semester was the hardest to me. It wasn't really hard but I didn't know the way they teach.

After the first semester I felt that the plan was going willingly. The simple assignments at the beginning we had to write an essay and write our reflections based on our culture, it is not culture, and you put a reflection from an idea you have, from your

specialty and then you apply it to the topic of the course. I only had my Saudi background; I

don't have any educational experiences in the U.S. My whole childhood was in Saudi. So I

wrote those reflections and all the assignments from my experience and education in

Saudi: About training days and teaching children if I wanted to discuss something about

early childhood, or about my experience with my daughter and her education. I wrote

about these in my homework but I weaved them with the theories as a confirmation. And

alhamdulellah one of the professors commented on the assignments saying that what he

liked best in class and thought was most interesting was reading international students'

work. He said I am learning about different cultures, things that are new to me, and I don't

know about them. He told us that we were providing him with ideas and thoughts and

encouraged us to continue. I liked that. I liked that he was accepting our ideas and it

reassured me to continue because I was in fear that he wanted me to talk about education

in America only when I didn't have this experience. That what scared me! But as long as he

is accepting me telling him about my culture and education! Sometimes when I think

something is very simple and not interesting, it turns the most that interests him and he

would ask about it a lot of questions. This is considered positive in the field or about the

writing itself. So things went well in the masters. Even my graduation project was between

Saudi and the U.S. because I had background from there but I am studying here so I wanted

to take from the two sides and compare.

When I was doing my assignments in the masters, I had the fear that they will not

understand my writing because it will never be at their level of writing nor the same way

they write. It's impossible. So I used to review with my friend. A very close American friend,

we are still very close and she wants to come visit me now because I had a baby. So she

used to review my work. It was business. I gave her $10 an hour and she would check my grammar and everything. Even the small assignments she would review for me. I had this obsession! Now here when I first came in the summer I reviewed but I felt that the assignment were a lot more. Not like the masters where we had only a couple. So it was a lot for me to pay financially. I told myself that I would try and see what happens. If I received feedback or I would go to the writing center. I used to ask my friend to review for me because the writing center I had then was not good. Now I felt they didn't have any comments and everything was ok. They understood the idea, and I take care that there are no grammar mistakes. I was only afraid that my ideas were not clear. But it never became an issue now. I have the confidence now to turn in my assignment without rereading it. The only paper I try to review is the final assignment and I have no problem paying whatever it takes it for it to be good.

When I think now about my doctoral dissertation I don't want to do a research that is time-consuming. My goal for the research might be different than my advisor. I respect her opinion but I'm more concerned with finishing my degree and going back. I will do research when I go back but I will not complicate things for me now by doing a research that might not finish. It is a problem when you have an advisor that really cares about the details. She's very smart and hardworking but I don't want to sacrifice my doctorate, especially that my sponsors are very strict and they've just sent me an email last week saying that you have to finish in three years. I have 60 hours plus research; this is not doable even if I took summer courses! But I will ask for an extension when I finish my courses.

Garcia is very excellent academically, and I understood her way of teaching so she is giving me good grades now. She wants special and unique ideas and this makes me very tired. I have to dig in deep to find something she would like in terms of research ideas. Last time I did a research on Indians and their status in Saudi Arabia who have low income. I translated documents and statistics to show the findings and that India has the highest rate of wire transfers from Saudi. She liked it very much and commented that this is the kind of research I hope you do to benefit your country. But this was only a two-page paper and I was worn out.

But I prefer Dr.Fernandez because he would sit down with me and tell why this is right and this is wrong. He told me to revise my paper before submitting so it doesn't have any academic mistakes. I like a person who gives feedback, not someone who is just quiet until the end!

In my masters I had an advisor once whom I didn't feel comfortable talking with since the first day we've met, but I wasn't sure. And one day a professor I was taking a class with asked me to come under her advising. She said she would talk to him. I noticed the difference in treatment right away. Later I found out that he was mean to all girls who wear headscarves. My friends and I noticed that.

When my professor gave me a gift after I gave birth and asked to see my baby, I took a really good impression. It was humane, not everything should be about studying and working. I was fond of her for that.

I tend to get comfortable when I have friends in the class with me though. If I don't know anyone in the class and they are all American I focus better. If my friend is with me I will ask her about things and I might lose track!

When I came here my daughter Ola was almost four years old. She turned four here. She learned the language in 3 months. She was learning it gradually but she didn't talk in front of me. I was surprised when her teacher told me that she talks with them. I asked her how? She never talks English at home. I try to ask her but nothing! But then I found out that she might have learned it but she was shy to use it home. She might felt that it's not her language. I don't know! Or that she might draw attention to her if she did. But the most positive thing is that she read fluently at the age of 5 before going to first grade.

She loves to read; she stays for hours reading now. If I want to ground her now I would take away her books. School taught her how to read well. I didn't do anything to help her. I was busy learning English myself. I was struggling to learn but she was ahead of me. When I saw how much she loves reading I started buying her books or borrow them. The first thing I did when we came back here in the summer was to register at the Public library. There's no school or anything to entertain her so I took her and her brother to the public library. She read books and her brother played and met other kids because I wanted him to learn the language slowly. He's not enrolled in school yet so gradually! Now I'm trying to put him in a reading mode. I learned that from the American society. I know the idea originally but seeing it in real life and practicing it got my attention. They read to their children before bedtime, or with the family. So I began to care. I bring Tariq books and he might tear them or throw them away, but he started to have more interest. He brings the story and says the same words I repeated for him. It is one story I give him and I repeat it over and over. My goal for him is to know some vocabulary and the language itself.

This is for Tariq, but to Ola it's a different story! I am more concerned about our language, the Arabic language, I don't want her to forget it. She learned English very well and now we struggle with teaching her Arabic.

When we went back to Saudi she had to learn Arabic. There was no other option. She would come back from school, take a one-hour break then we would work until 10 or 11 at night! Very long time for a whole year, it was no less than six hours of work at home daily, but in four months she was able to read and write in Arabic. As of spelling and reaching mastery it took her a year. And now we are back here again! She's very independent here and doesn't need my help and I have no concerns regarding her performance in school. I can encourage her, or check on her, but I don't teach her from A-Z.

But every now and then I go back to Arabic. I bring her papers and pens and ask her to write me a story from her imagination. I tell her since you love reading and you read in English, I want you to write me this story in Arabic as you understood it, even if it wasn't in the standard Arabic. So she's maintaining her language this way! She doesn't like it and doesn't feel comfortable doing it, but she tries very hard. But I am also trying to use critical thinking with her. This is not the way she thinks, and I thought she would pick it up from schools here, but she didn't. She's really good with reading skills, but not with critical thinking. But after I learned the term and understood it I am trying to implant it but I couldn't.

She was in Montessori school in pre-k before we came to the states. It was very important to me to learn more about her skills because I can tell that she's smart. I had the feeling. Even though they say that Montessori lowers children's abilities or the ability to concentrate, to be precise, I didn't struggle with that. Ola could talk and I saw positive

117

outcomes in her skills and knowledge and the way she acted socially with people around her. But when I came here she became unsocial and started dropping down. Maybe now she's doing ok and she's socially okay but she's not a critical thinker. She follows a path and that's it.

The other struggle with her is that she doesn't follow my directions. She's not being stubborn, but I don't know the reason. She listens and listens but there's no concentration. Even her dad noticed this, and when her report card came the teacher had the same note. She commented on this skill specifically. So I said to myself no, there must have been something. I have to keep a close eye on this issue to figure it out. This never happened before. The first thing I did was limiting her Ipad time. She's only allowed to use it an hour a day and on the weekends, and I thought this will solve the problem, but it is still persistent. It's almost a year now and the problem is still existing. We think it could be the books. Her dad even asked what is she reading exactly and started reading her books to check their content. We thought she might have gotten influenced by one of the characters or something. We read them and there was nothing. They were very good. But what is the reason?

When we went back to Saudi for a year she was negatively impacted. When we first came to the states she was good; our early childhood education in Saudi is exemplary. But I didn't like her school here in the US neither she did. So she stayed there for 3 or 4 months only, then we changed schools. Even though the first one was very close to us; just across the street from us, and it was priced reasonably but I didn't care. I will put her in a far away school as long as I don't see my daughter fall behind. She was becoming more unsocial. They had no goals there, they were loose, no firmed education or anything. She became

stubborn and answered back. When we go out she doesn't want to talk to anyone in a weird way, and this is not how she usually reacts. So I thought this must be coming from school. Later I put her in the school belonging to the university. We were on the waiting list and waited a couple of months before they called us and said they have availability. It was a very good school. It was the same school I volunteered at, and Ola became much better with them.

Then again, when we went back to Saudi for a year the regression happened. She was in elementary school and the two systems differ here and there. Here they teach with games and great efforts. When I enter Ola's classroom I don't feel like I'm inside a classroom. The way chairs are arranged is different. The way things are put. I feel it is fun to the extent I wish if I can teach here. I feel there's some magic in the way they teach the students. One time Ola came back home and said I wish if school was longer and she used to come back at 4:00 p.m.! But when we went back home I didn't put her in public school because I didn't want to shock her so I put her in an international school. But sadly it was the same! The same result, the same way the classes are arranged, the same tables, everything. They were not creative; they didn't bring learning tools or anything. So it wasn't nice. She had good grades. I had the feeling there was no problem with grades as long as she was in a private school. But she hated school so much she went into a horrible condition. Every night her dad and me struggled with her. It began one month after school started; that's why we say school is the reason, especially that it was over when we came back here. She did not sleep! Until midnight and she won't sleep. Every day she cries. Not any regular cry. Cry with stubbornness that she didn't want to sleep and she kicks. I swear it was not my daughter. I used to call my mom and I would cry saying this is not my

daughter. This is not Ola. I swear someone switched my daughter (Metaphor). She would cry every day and make a fuss. And when I am strict she doesn't even back down. She would throw a fit and break things. Then we came here, it was summer time so things were ok. She still didn't want to go to bed and didn't want us to tell her to go to bed, but when school started she was back to herself. She was the daughter I know! So I knew that school was the reason for all of that! She was under a huge pressure back there. She couldn't even carry her backpack. Her dad will carry it for her because it was so heavy. And as soon as she came she had homework. I swear they are more than my assignments at the university level. She would study for six hours daily at home. It was a struggle, a real struggle, but now she's happy. She doesn't even want us to change our house so she doesn't have to change her school. She's only nine years old but she had to change eight different schools.

Our teaching methods in our schools in Saudi need development. We need more fun and entertainment when teaching our students, that's why I plan to focus on this when working on my dissertation. I want to know how do they make learning enjoyable in the states? Students will learn the information eventually; it is how to deliver it with more fun and entertainment that I want to focus on. I am so against teaching just by using chairs, tables, blackboard and signs. I don't feel this would work at all. It might deliver the information easier but it is very boring to the child. Children need movements, sound effects, and stimulants. We don't have this in our schools; we only have individual efforts. My aunt is a teacher. She is trying to change things but she is doing it solo. She uses a rewarding system. She puts different baskets with different prizes for different levels. Children get a prize depending on their level. So these are all catalyst for the children. Even for the students with lower achievement she hopes that the baskets will be a motivation for

them to do better. But not all teachers do this; the system does not support you. I used to be active when I taught students in the university. I took them to field trips that spark discussions about children and education, especially for freshman and sophomore students who did not get to do observation and practicum yet. So I took permissions to take the students to visit different facilities, some are for special needs children and some for regular early childhood classes, and it was so nice. But then after all of the colleges were merged and we became a university, many rules have changed and I lost my rights to go visit these places. Even the way the grading rubric is set became inflexible. I used to put points for classroom activities and stuff like that. Now I can't. I lost all my power in doing so. I can't even choose the books that should be taught with the course I am teaching. I used to choose from three to four books at once. Now I am forced to use one book and it was a bad one. I used to be bored when I was reading it to prepare for class, so I can't blame the students if there were bored while studying it.

Also attending is compulsory and students could not miss any class unless they provided a doctor's note, yet there were no points for attending. How do I require them to attend then I don't' give them any credit for that?

Even if I had over-achiever and creative students, I couldn't reward them. I want to, but I can't. I am controlled by the system. I had to lecture the students, to stand up and just pour it al. blah blah blah.I still did activities with the students but just to break the routine. Let's do this and let's do that and every time something different, yet it was still boring.

The problem we're facing now is that we have a system we cannot break or change. My point of view is different than the others. I want to change, I want to create, and I want and want! But if one student complained it could all fall against me. If one student was

disadvantaged by my changes and complained, I become against the law and then I deserve the penalty. For that reason I say that our education is not bad, but our teaching methods are. They don't give space for creativity or freedom.

I am socially stronger now. I am a mother and I had two of my kids here in the states. I shouldn't let go of my dreams after all of this hassle and tiredness. I shouldn't lose and I must go back with the same point I went after.

I have changed; I am not like I used to be in Saudi. I see my older sister who has a job, but she waits for her husband or anyone like my brothers to help her, even if she needed just a thought (the sister will not even think for herself). On the other hand I can take care of myself and manage the situation if I had something urgent to do unlike her. My father noticed the change in my personality and was surprised with that, but my husband doesn't because he's staying with me and notices the change as it happens slowly.

Even my kids are different. I see Ola different than other Saudi kids her age. She is smart. She helps me and gives me ideas for things. For example: She told me they had the book fair and this stuff and she wanted to buy a book so I told her that I was busy and you have many books, leave it until later. I meant we're busy with moving out and my assignments and arrangements and other things; after we are settled down we will see. And you have many books if you want more we can go borrow some and come back. She said: How about I buy it with my own money? I asked her: What do you mean buy? From where do you have the money? She said: I can make lemonade then I can sell it and have money. The only problem I don't have cups. I told her that she didn't need to do that. The point was for her to wait a little bit, not to go and sell so she can buy a book.

She liked the idea because we did it with my family. We were renting a cabin and each child would bring something to sell and they would get the benefit. She did an ice cream corner and sold it. So she was happy with the idea but said that ice cream melts so let's sell lemonade. What an idea! But if I compare her with my nephew who is her age or the one who's older than her, I don't think they would think the same way she does. She always likes to do beneficial things for entertainment, and she thinks that other kids, who are her age, act and think silly.

I feel there are positive things from living here for my kids, but I always feel guilty toward my kids. I feel they are less than the other kids in terms of joy. That's why I always feel guilty. The kids in the United States are living their own life. This is their life and this is their social standard. The kids in Saudi are living as well. Our social life is more coherent. I mean every week there is a family gathering and there is the grandparents' house and I don't know what, besides all the other outings. I mean you are totally dedicated to your house and family, but here no. So most likely here if they want to go out, even if it's just to the movies, I can't. I have to study; you all go with your daddy. I feel guilty about this, but I can't. I am hoping it's temporary. I even feel that Tariq rejects me sometimes. I come to help him do something and he refuses and goes to his dad. He became very attached to his dad because he spends more time with him. He was able to give me the feeling that he doesn't want me. But in the winter break I spent more time with him and things got better. Now he spends more time with me. He knows I am not going anywhere.

I have two totally different kids in their language acquisition and reading development and this is one of the reasons of my interest in early language and language development. Because I knew I would come to study here I prepared Ola for English. I was

worried that she would stay in a class that speaks a total different language so I prepared her from early. I put her in a Montessori school since she was 2 years and eight months old. They were good. They covered social skills, math, and science. They had many activities including language. They cared about songs and vocabularies, I mean basic things. It was not just A,B,C's and that's it like other schools. So I was ok with that. I also had a live-in maid that spoke English. My main goal was to learn English from her, both my daughter and I. I even have videos of Ola when she was young and trying to talk and name many things. Some videos were lost but I have a couple where she tries to name pictures, books, animals, and letters in English as a new Language. So when we came to the states I felt she was happy she knows a couple of songs she can sing in the daycare but I felt she was surprised there was a second language.

Tariq was on the contrary. Tariq had confusion. Because when he was seven months old I put him in a daycare (in the States) so he dealt with people using English as his first language. He wasn't even speaking yet, but he would listen and store. When he was 18 months old we went back to Saudi. He wasn't talking yet but he understood when I talked to him. When we play songs for him he imitated the signs in the songs, which means he understood what they were saying but his language was still…

Anyway Arabic became the foreign language for him. So he started listening but took longer to talk. He talked when we came back again to America. He said only three or four words and only I would understand what he said. Now I put him in daycare and he speaks Arabic but what I understand might be different from what you understand, but I think he is ok. He listens and understands and talks, even if not very clearly. Now he started using English with the daycare.

The difference between him and Ola is that she learned the language in three or four months and she was very fluent like Americans and still is, but she differentiated between Arabic and English and that we used Arabic at home and English outside. Even her Arabic pronunciation was not affected. It's not the same for Tariq. No! You feel that he is dispersed between here and there and the two environments. Especially that he has to learn and I try with him here at home, I bring him stories and read to him, and I try to talk to him in both English and Arabic, but I feel now when he talks some sentences in English he uses Arabic with it as if it is one language. For example he wanted his sister's book so he said: I want my Kessah (which means story in Arabic). I told him no, it is Kessaty (which means my story in Arabic) but he kept saying "my kessah". He uses it as one language not two, like what is that? He thinks it's one language and talks with his teacher the same way. She says he gives her two or three words in English and one word in Arabic. As of you understand or you don't understand him it is your responsibility! He doesn't care.

Ola is comfortable with English but she talks in Arabic at home. She reads and writes in Arabic due to our one year back home but I feel that she forgot it this year. I printed couple of research in Arabic and English. She had sentences and letters with translation to use it in the daily activities, but to be honest I don't use it daily. When I am free I give it to her or when she's with her dad I give it to her. But with Tariq it's different, he's more tiring because he is in the middle of the environment and I don't know which one to focus on, this or this? Not like Ola who established Arabic then English afterward.

Ola, maybe because she was my first child, and because I had more free time, even that I was employed but I had a maid, which really makes a difference, so I had more time. I brought her stories from Jarir (a famous bookstore in Saudi like Barnes & Noble) and we

125

read letters and words. But she only read in Arabic last year, but here started reading and writing before she starts school at the age of five.

But Tariq is on the contrary. I was very busy when he was born. I couldn't dedicate myself to him. I read him a book once a month or every two months without any exaggerations. I am delinquent in this area with him and I feel he's lost.

But I also have some notes regarding his school. It's unbelievable that he doesn't know a color or a letter or a number or anything! I will talk to them but I will give them more time first. It's unbelievable that he didn't acquire anything! I asked about his teacher and I found out that she wasn't an early childhood specialist. She's a special education, so I thought that might be a reason. But she should give a group attention and individual attention for each child. I went to his school and was surprised that when I asked him to give me a block, they have the blocks with numbers as they count with them, that he didn't know. I repeated it for him maybe only three times and I was speaking in English, because we were in school, and he knew it. So he does understand. It also caught my attention that three other kids came and one started helping too, so is it the teacher maybe? I don't know!!

Ola is not only interested with reading but also with art. I am an artist and I draw. I see that she took that interest from me. She sees me buy colors, and coloring sets. I see that she's practicing it in her drawings, very beautifully. I bought her the very detailed coloring books (Mandala). I feel her focus on these things really helps her. So she's spending her time on useful things. I am not a perfect person or ideal to look these things up for her. She is the one who asks for these things.

I want to enroll her in gymnastics. I don't want all her time to be spent on academics. I am annoyed from the long time she spends reading. I mean cut off this time and do something else. I will enroll her in the summer when I have more free time hopefully.

I don't help her with homework, she doesn't need me and I am not free. I just check on her when she finishes. But the STAAR test for example I help her with step by step. She's good in reading but she needs help with math so I set with her and I tell her to focus, you need this and this. It's different than Saudi. I don't know why but our school days are more exhausting(in Saudi), maybe from the sun and the long rides and crowded streets.

She would nap when she came back from school (in Saudi) and then we would study until 11:00 p.m. going over all subjects. The schoolwork there is different in nature.

Now when I teach Tariq I teach him principles. I feel that Ola already had these principles from the beginning so we worked on reading since she's months old. But with Tariq I feel it's more difficult because I don't have the time, so I'm just focusing on the principles with him now like to be fair with his sisters. If he wanted to take his baby sister's book he has to give her one of his stuff. I want him to learn that because I feel Ola already knows it. Maybe because he is a boy they are so different? Or a middle child?

I've never felt I was different than people here, but when I was in Ohio and Michigan people made me feel like I am one of them everywhere. There is no racism here. No! but it is a weird feeling. For example in class I don't feel like I am one of them. They don't give me the feeling that they know me since a long time. And one point I always thought about, even though I was good with non-Saudi people back home, I was not bad at all, but it was different. My maid for example, she was from Kenya, I treated her formally as business and

that's it. I wasn't bad but this is how I viewed things. Now I am different, I think that she came from a different culture and I have to respect her. So many things I started thinking about. For example I used to keep the cell phone with me. She can have it whenever she wanted to talk to her family but then return it to me and I didn't allow so many things (this used to be the standard rule in all Saudi houses). Now I think differently. I cannot rule her; I have no right. She's a completely different person than me. We don't share the same culture, religion or anything. It's a contract between us, but am I going to find a maid who values this and respect it?

In the complex I live in there's this lady with her dog. She's racist, or beyond racist. She made us feel this thing. She used to talk to Ali all the time, and she would smile at the kids and greet them. After she saw me wearing my scarf she knew what we are. I smiled at her and she didn't even smile back at me and pulled her dog harshly inside her house and locked her door. After that time she continued the same way. Ali once greeted her and said good morning and she never answered him back. And her dog freaked Ola out and she didn't do anything about it. She doesn't see us and thinks we are nothing!

The only place that made me feel like I was in Michigan and Ohio was the hospital where I gave birth. They were okay. I really felt comfortable. Even my doctor and the kids' doctor were very nice. They are always smiling, laughing and talking with us. I feel happy when I talk to them.

In the university I felt some professors were surprised when they saw me. Like who is this person? This teacher if I talked she would stare at me. I thought maybe this is the first time she had an international student! She seemed very surprised.

Manal's Stories

I started my school in Al-Dhahran. I lived there during elementary, middle and high school. Actually pre-k and part of the elementary I was in Khubar. We lived there for four years and then we moved. I remember myself very good because my mom worked at the hospital so I always dreamt that I will be a doctor. I wanted to go into the medicine field.

So when I always went there and saw the doctors, even my mom wearing the white coat, she wasn't a doctor, but the same atmosphere! I always said when I grow up I want to be a doctor. Of course when I saw my grades in middle school I knew that I will not become a doctor.

I got married when I was a junior in high school and moved to Riyadh. It was from the hardest periods of my life because I didn't know people there, no one. I went to a school that is different than my environment, and I saw people with a different lifestyle and a different level than mine. It was a new life and a marriage and things like that so I couldn't do well in school. My average in senior year was very low, to the extent that it was very difficult for me to get an acceptance in the university. So the first two years I stayed at home. I got pregnant and had Malak. Then when I was planning to go to the university and while I was preparing my documents I found out I was pregnant with Abdulaziz! So I stayed home until I had him. When I was pregnant with him in the last trimester I applied to university. Of course I entered the university. I was planning to study early childhood because I had children and I wanted to learn more about them and how to deal with them. I mean I thought that I will benefit from it and I can add to it too. But it didn't work out. It wasn't Allah's well even though the personal interview was very very successful, but you know because of my grades it didn't happen. They told me I could choose between studying

129

business management, social studies, psychology, financing or economy! I didn't know what to choose between finance and business management. But I don't know how, subhan Allah, I told her business management and then I left.

Seriously my grades in the university, because I stayed for two years at home and all that time I was upset I wanted to go to the university, I wanted to study, I wanted to continue, so I started with a high motivation, and my grades were all A's and B's in the first couple of semester. It was never less than this. They were even A's and A+. I finished university in four years then I worked for a year then before even finishing one year as an employee I came to the States in 2010.

We came to the states because Ahmed wanted to finish school. Life was hard there without a degree. He didn't want to go to the Saudi university. He wanted to continue. He had come previously to the states and stayed for two years and a half and then for family reasons he had to go back to Saudi and didn't continue his education. He tried and entered the management community college and took courses there and took a training, but still it is not like what he wanted. He wanted to continue in a university in the states, so he talked to his dad and told him he wanted to study there and be self-sponsored. His dad agreed and let him go and within three months he joined the scholarship program. Those days scholarships were available Alhamdulleallah and he was able to continue his education.

Because we were planning for this from the beginning we wanted to put our kids in international schools, so they don't struggle when we come here with the language. At the beginning it was just an idea but we didn't really work on it. They went to public schools. Abdulaziz was in daycare anyway and Malak was in first grade in public school. She was there for only one semester and then I moved her. I didn't like the school to be honest and I

put her in an international school right away. And her brother joined her next year until she finished second grade.

When she started third grade Ahmed was already in America and I didn't have enough money to put them in the international school, so I put her back in public school but this time Malak went to the National Guards' school with my mother-in-law so she could come and go with her.

I put Abdulaziz in a cheap private school but it was not international. They both stayed there only for three weeks. It wasn't much. They stayed for three weeks exactly then we came to the states. But we tried to help them learn English a little bit. My goal was for them not to struggle. They will face a new language different than theirs and I was afraid they will not do well in school, or that it will delay them!

It helped them a little bit. They knew the letters and they understood things, they didn't talk but they understood. Malak was seven years old then and Abdulaziz was six. No! less than six, he was five years old and something. I remember well because when we first came we wanted to put him in first grade and Malak in third, they put him for a week then they found out that he was younger, he was born in November so he had a couple of months left to be six. And they said no, he is young and they put him in kindergarten. Even Malak was supposed to be in third grade but because her language was not very strong they put her in second grade.

The beginning was a little bit exhausting. Abdulaziz was probably easier because he was young in kindergarten and was still learning. So it's ok. But we worried about Malak, but we feel that she's smart and can manage things. She was independent from a very

young age, she always tried to study by herself and she wouldn't ask for our help unless she had something hard and needed help with, but she always managed to help herself.

She had a problem since she was in Saudi, she always said I don't have friends. Her self-confidence was a little bit low. not self- confidence! She was actually shy. Very shy. She doesn't ask for what she wants, she would stay quiet. I went and talked to her teacher. I told her Malak is this and that. I told her about my daughter so she's aware that Malak always complains she doesn't have friends. The reason is that she doesn't have the courage to go and talk to a girl and tell her let's be friends or let's hang out together. She was very shy, so I asked her teacher to help her with this., and she played a big role in that and I started to see my daughter mingling with others.

I tried to teach her what to do. I showed her. I used to tell her to start a conversation. See what you like in a girl and tell her, make a comment. For example if you were coloring or something and you saw her coloring something do something similar and start a conversation. How do you do that? How do you fix this? Tell her I don't know how to do this, teach me. So you can get closer. I don't know if she did any of this, but I felt there was a big difference after I talked to the teacher.

Also Malak's self-confidence improved when she joined choir. This changed my daughter so much. Her self-confidence was higher, she had more courage, my daughter changed since she joined choir. I go to all of her activities and I tell her I am so proud of you and so happy and I always show her that. Not only me, even Ahmed the past time period he was always with us when he had free time.

We were always there, especially the days of North Elementary. North Elementary's choir is very well known, it is much better than South Elementary's choir. So the activities

they did were very strong. She loved it more. They did acting scenes, songs, plays and many other nice things, which is much nicer than South Elementary. In South Elementary they only stand up and sing, the other ones had more creativity. Slowly Malak gained more confidence and said she wanted to do band and she did in middle school.

We didn't struggle with Abdulaziz when it came to friendships. He's talkative and is able to socialize with people, but we struggle with studying with him. To make him sit down and force him to set and study used to take a huge effort from me. I had to go back to his teacher for help. I was very tired with him and I asked his teacher what to do. She gave me some tips like websites he can go online and use for practice. She gave us some practice papers and told me I can print more online. So we started doing that. Ahmed would set down with him and study more than I did. I didn't have enough patience to work with him, and Abdulaziz would listen to his dad more than he did with me. So Ahmed always took care of teaching him, but I was the one who went to school and asked teachers, and I gave Ahmed the ideas. Ahmed had the idea of STAAR test, so he would go online and print older tests and gives it to the kids to work on. They spend the whole week answering the tests. Some other times I would ask his sister to help him. Malak would help him study; he also listened to her. I also made him read. I would put a timer for him to sit and read. I forbade T.V. and any other activity until he finished his work, then he can go and play outside or do anything. If he asked for something I tell him he can't get it until you finish your homework or your studying.

I feel that coming here made it easier for me to teach them in English. My language was weak when I first came here. I studied at an English institution and Ahmed took care of them. When Malak brought me her science book and I would open it... ok I do understand

but I cannot deliver the information. At the same time I don't know if what I know is right or wrong. Maybe I understood it wrong. So Ahmed took care of their learning. Now when my daughter brings me something to read, or something to research together, I can do it faster. Faster than four or five years ago I mean. When she brings a project to work on, I know how to help her now better than before.

I am very proud I earned my masters. It was one of the best things I did in my life. It was a positive experience. I remember myself from the beginning, since I was a sophomore in the university. I would tell my teachers that I want to study masters. I put it in my mind that I want to earn masters. It was difficult and I went through a lot of difficulties because I am a mother and I had a lot of responsibilities, appointments, other commitments, and school! And me and my husband were students. So this was hard. We faced so many barriers: Health issues, financial issues, even issues with the kids commitments, social commitments, but luckily I was able to get over them all. I mean I started in the institution and finished with masters, which was fun and very entertaining. The doctors were awesome. I don't recall anyone that I hated. There were some core courses that I felt they were unnecessary. I was forced to take them, but they were not important. They were stupid, but it was ok and things worked out. Most doctors were friendly. They treated us more like friends than as students. This was very beautiful; it was different than when in Saudi totally. In Saudi it is different, I mean the doctor have a respect that is beyond measures. We get scared of them and no one argues with them or say they were wrong about anything. I have noticed here students speak up if a doctor said something wrong or partially wrong. They raise their hands and share from their own experiences. Each talked about their experience, even if it was different than the doctor's opinion. And doctors didn't

get mad or think that you are diminishing them or doing something wrong. To the contrary they might be convinced if the student was able to prove it with an article or anything. The doctor respected that and fixed his mistake. He would say ok I made a mistake. Someone got us this information and fixed it for us. In many times they would ask the students and say some of you might be a specialist in this field, and you have more experience in this area than I do.

This is something I didn't get used to, and we cannot do. I remember when Ahmed was in the management college in Saudi, in one of the programming courses, and the teacher did something wrong. He said a wrong code. Ahmed raised his hand and said that the code was wrong. The teacher was so mad and asked Ahmed to leave the class. He was the teacher and Ahmed was the student, how dare he say he did something wrong? Ahmed looked at him thinking to himself: But you said something wrong! The code you put is wrong! So there's no way to talk. The majority of doctors think of it as disrespect.

Doctors here were very collaborative. I remember one time I broke my big toe. I had a major paper for submission, and the professor was a difficult person. I was worried how would I submit at 12 o'clock when I was in the hospital still. When I contacted him I was so happy with his reaction to be honest. He said it was ok and that I can take all the time I need to submit. He said: Take your time, heal, and then come back and turn it in anytime you want! I mean I expected him to give me a new deadline, but he didn't. So he gave me a chance to finish it and then send it to him. I felt that I really liked him even though I disliked him at the beginning because he gave us a lot of hard work to do. He never let us rest. But at the same time when I saw that he was very understanding I felt he was great.

There was another doctor that I really loved. She was amazing. Her lectures were really nice and she loved to listen from everyone. If I had something that I didn't do well at or I was late she wouldn't take away from my grades. She would open the blackboard again for me to allow me to resend it. I loved this about her. She respected that I am a mother and a wife, and I have kids and I couldn't finish the homework on time. I am speaking another language; a homework that needs five lines only or one paragraph takes me an hour and a half to write or even two to finish those five lines.

Learning the Arabic language is a struggle for the kids. At the beginning I tried to teach them Arabic, but honestly I couldn't. Time wasn't helping because I was busy myself. I found someone to teach them and I paid her. But to be honest the spending was a lot for us, even if it was a little amount. It was still a lot for us. We will need the $50 or $100 by the end of the month.

So for a while she taught them the letters then she taught them how to read, then I had to stop. Later I looked for someone else to teach them and so on. So during the seven years we lived here three teachers taught them, and I also took them to the Masjid (mosque), but I didn't like it, I felt it was a time waste that's it. Now I am going to start all over again and a Moroccan lady will come and teach them. Now I care more about teaching them religion than teaching them Arabic.

School taught them how to read, more than me honestly. School helped them read and write. Of course it was a condition that they read for 20 minutes a day, which helped. I used to go and ask teachers for activities to do with them at home. One told me to ask them to write two lines about something they did or something that happened during the day, to check on spelling and grammar. We worked on spelling too. We had spelling sheets from

school so we would work on these too. I made them memorize it, and they read 20 minutes a day. Malak likes to read actual books but Abdulaziz likes audiobooks more. He is able to finish a book in two days with audio books. North school would only give it to him for a couple of weeks, but South school lets him keep it the whole semester, so he is finishing books now! In the past Abdulaziz would never finish any book and gave me and his teacher hard time!

They both joined science projects; of course we helped them with these. Me and Ahmed helped and they presented the projects, they didn't win but the goal was the experiment itself, and going through the experience and how to look up for something and research it, and the process itself. If any of our kids showed interest in any topic we try to support her/him and provide anything they might need.

I used to think that my kids are different, but I but now I discovered that they are like everyone else, and maybe better than other kids too. Even Abdulaziz, both are passing it Alhamdulelah. Some American kids are not passing it. These kids might not have the parental guidance to help them study. Maybe they are not following up with them from the beginning. This is the biggest factor for children to pass or not.

However I have to tell you I've been through difficult times with Abdulaziz. They came to me more than once telling me Abdulaziz didn't! They put him a year down. They retained him in second grade. He wasn't doing well. He was in North school and had finished second grade and was supposed to go to third grade, and when summer came. That year his teacher was always complaining; she always complained that he was not good. I really blame her. She said my son had ADHD. I told her I do get tired with him, but when you set with him (She is saying that he understood on one on one and did not have

ADHD). The teacher didn't want to work with him most likely. She didn't want to focus on him. When he went to South school and they worked with him, he was much different. It was a huge difference. When I moved him, and it was the best thing I did that I moved him from North school, even though both schools has a rating of nine, and Malak's experience there was amazing, and she had a great teacher, but to Abdulaziz's luck his teacher was really bad. I was shocked when they tested him early in third grade to check on his level. They gave him the second-grade test, they had a meeting with me and told me that your son doesn't know anything from second grade, as if he didn't study second grade. It was a big shock to me. They even told me that they can keep him in third grade and don't retain him, but we're telling you that he will not be able to pass it. First thing he will suffer and then he will retain third grade, because he will be taking the STAAR test then. I was afraid, me and Ahmed started thinking what should we do? There is no other option but to have him repeat second grade, and we did. We never regretted that decision.

He was emotionally affected by this and was very upset about it. until now he's upset and says that he would've been in sixth grade but I'm in fifth. For a long time when someone asks him what grade are you in he would answer I am in 4th grade but I should've been in fifth.

When we moved him and wanted to retain him the year he was very resentful. He cried and crushed down saying he didn't want to fail and didn't want to repeat second year. We told him it is not a failure but that you didn't get hold of second grade. You seriously don't know. They gave you the test and you didn't pass it. They can let you be in third grade but you will struggle. We explained to him how would he struggle and how difficult it's going to be and so on until he was convinced and agreed to retain second grade and then

we went to school and told them ok. We never forced him, and if he insisted on staying in third grade we would have let him, but he would have struggled. We talked to him and explained to him and told him the positive and negative sides of it, so he thought about it and said ok there is no problem and I will repeat second grade.

It was good that he just moved to the new school. We heard the same thing not only from South School. He did go to a third school the West school for two weeks because the house we were about to take was in that school area. They called me and told me the same thing as North school. Then we finally got an apartment in the South school area so we went there. I remained quiet hoping they won't notice and let him in third grade, but within a week they called me and told me your son! When I heard it from them and from the others as well I knew that my son had a problem in second grade and that it is not just them resenting him. At that point I was convinced he must repeat second grade.

He was good in math and science but had many difficulties in reading and writing. He didn't have ADHD. I took him and tested him and brought them a proof that he didn't have ADHD. When I went to his teacher in North school she would say he's fine, he's fine. She never sent anything to work with him and when I went by myself she didn't give me anything. She kept saying he's fine even though his report card said otherwise. His grades were not good. He had ones and twos. Not so good. I went back to her and told her that his grades are not good and she says: No, he's going to be fine. Until it was the end of the year and they had a meeting and told me your son has problems and he will not be able to continue.

I was so furious then and I fought with them. I told her where have you been?? I am coming to you from the beginning of the year and asked you what should we do? I told you

I was available. I was busy, and I was under pressure, I was studying at the institution back then, and I was busy in general, but I used to go and ask her and tell her that I am ready to help. If you had any methods for teaching, or if you had practice pages give me and with your help and my help he would do better, but she kept saying he's fine. It was the end of the year when I was shocked that he wasn't fine, and I was shocked even more when the West school and South school both told me that my son didn't know anything in second grade! As if he didn't go to second grade!

Since he was doing good in math and science I told them let him continue in third grade and we would help him with reading and writing, but they told me that math and science both depends on reading in third grade. So if he couldn't read how would he perform in these? This was %100 logical. Now he's in fifth grade and he is not doing so well, but we shout at him and work with him but he needs extra work, but when he was in fourth grade he did so well. All his grades were threes. Such an accomplishment! This is one of the best things at South school, they care about their students, and they don't leave them to struggle, no! If you want to help your son come and we will show you how to help him.

I do feel othered sometimes. When I try to connect with the mothers of my kids' friends. For example Malak invited them awhile ago, also she invited them to a party once. Mmm I don't know! They seem friendly with us, but I feel there is a barrier. Because I am from an environment and they are from a different environment. Even I don't feel like I can be involved with them. They don't think like us. For example when my daughter comes and tells me there is a party at someone's house and I want to go. My daughter has grown up now, and I fear for her. So sometimes I think about it and I say I don't want her to get

involved. I say I don't want you to go. It is hard to let you get so close with them because I don't want you to be like them. Their religion and traditions are different than us.

I was able to adapt to living here by being with people like me. I looked for a community like mine, and I let my children get together with my friends' kids as well, so we all share the same ideas, the same religion, the same. So we can help each other as well. For example if my friend saw my son doing something wrong she can tell him come here this is wrong. You are supposed to do this and this. If she heard him say nonsense or she felt that he's thinking in a wrong way she could come and tell me or she could talk to him. All these things help in upbringing the children. This really helped us manage the feelings of being distance from home.

It is unbelievable anyway to separate my kids from being around people. Like Americans and not having a company from people like us too! They will get very lonely. But I am outgoing in the American life as well. Abdulaziz joined running club and yearbook club. Malak do choir and band. They both go to karate classes. I give them anything they can do, but I am always with them and I know what they are doing. At the same time I don't let them get so involved in the American lifestyle. As I told you the when there is an event with Americans my kids don't go because they are big now!

A while ago Malak was invited to a friend's party. I was thinking about it but wasn't sure from my decision. The day of the party passed and we forgot. She forgot and I forgot. But seriously I don't want her to be involved. If she wants to invite them over my house I don't mind, or if she wants to meet them outside, but it is hard to go to their houses because she doesn't want me to go with her.

More than once she wanted to go to the movies or something like that. I tell her it is ok but I will be joining you. So she refuses and decides not to go. It is up to her, but I can't let her lose. I told her I will not talk to you or anything. I will just set far away but I just want to see you, but she said no and didn't go.

The days are going fast, my life is passing by, not the way I want it, but it is just moving on. Everything goes by fast; from the minute I wake up until I go to bed I have appointments and things to do. Ahmed doesn't want to go back home, but I really do. I want to feel I settled down. I want to go back to my friends, and Malak goes back to her friends. She is at an age where she needs friends her age. She can party with them and have fun. Our parties are at home and I feel safer because of that. She can dress up and have fun within our traditions. I don't guarantee that parties here don't involve boys. Even though she told me that the last party she was invited to was only girls' party, and I was going to take her but I forgot. She forgot as well and didn't bring it up again. But I try to make it up for her. For example she wants to go to the trampoline place every Friday. She's meeting all her friends there. So I feel it's fair enough. Also with my friends' daughters like Maria and Lama, because they are all at the same age, so when we went to Safa's house on Thanksgiving they got together and sang and danced and had a good time. Also when we go to Six Flags. If she wants to go to any mall I take her. On black Friday I really didn't want to go, but she really wanted to go and Maria was going. She could have gone with Maria but she wanted me to come so I can buy her stuff if she wanted anything. So I pushed myself and went with her. I am trying everything I can. But I just can't let her go with strangers I don't know.

The other day she wanted to go the library because she was meeting someone there. So I took her and I was so nervous because I wasn't able to talk to her because she doesn't

have a phone. She told me that her friend would go back with her to our house so they can work together. I knew the girl came when I saw Malak's Instagram account. She left it open in my phone and the girl sent a message and I saw it. I told Malak to let me know when they go back home, and I asked Ahmed to let me know when they arrive because I had to go run some errands. I told her twice to let me know when she arrives home yet she didn't. When it was five o'clock I knew that the library was closed by that time so I called Ahmed at 5:10 and asked him and he said yes. Malak and her friend are at the house and we finished the project together. Ok why no one called me? I was worried! When I got back home I asked Malak about the girls' parents and she said they don't care.

She knows that I really worry. Both of them know and say I worry much more than needed. I tell them it is not much more than needed. You are my kids and I fear for you. I think about other things you don't think about. You are only thinking about having fun.

One of the difficulties I am facing now with Malak is that she was supposed to wear hijab (cover her hair) last year. But she was in the middle of the year in 8th grade. It was going to be difficult for her to wear the hijab in the middle of the year with the homework and everything. I felt it was going to be harder for her to start at that time so I told her no problem continue this year like this, and next year when you start a new year in a new school and you are going to start high school you are going to start it with hijab. It is going to be easier this way. She said ok. And now of course she started wearing the hijab. Not many reactions happened because it is summer time, but one of the reactions she got was that she started noticing that many people are looking at her when we go to the supermarket or any other place. She is more aware of people looking now. No one is talking or saying anything bad but people are looking.

One of the other reactions she got was with her group of friends on Instagram; they always text each other and chat. She said she was surprised that when she started the marching band camp and showed up with her hijab none of them said hi or anything even though they were just texting each other yesterday, except for her close friends of course. She didn't go say hi as well. She said that she suspects it is the hijab that changed them.

She also had many questions on why are you wearing the hijab and she replays with I have to. I don't think she explained to them why she is wearing it. She doesn't like to talk about it. She understands that she has to wear it to put boundaries between her and boys. Many boys are asking her to be their girlfriend now; even when we were traveling they sent her messages on Instagram because they were not able to call her. They tell her they want to get to know her and want her to be their girlfriend. She doesn't know how to deal with them. She ignores some because she says she doesn't even know them. They are with her at school but she doesn't know them closely. The funny thing is one boy always teased her at school and was always bothering her. not only bothering her but he was very rude. He told her more than once you are terrorist and things like that. At the school's end of the year dance he came and asked her to be his partner. She looked at him and said get lost! Her Band teacher was there and came and told her listen I think he is trying to prank you, do not accept his offer! He was afraid for her. She told him anyway I wasn't going to. She still remembers this story and talks about it. She says I can't understand this. I am so confused; this boy hated me and bothered me why did he ask me to the dance?

Another boy saw her at this sports place she used to go to with Maria. He asked her for her phone number and she didn't give it to him. Now he saw her at the marching band. He is one year older than her. He told her I asked you for your phone number and you

didn't give it to me. She told him I don't give my phone number to anyone and I don't do phone calls. If you want you can text me on Instagram. He's very silly! The conversation was so funny when she told me how it went. He said hi and she said hi. He said how are you and she said fine, then he said ok. And all his replays afterward were ok, ok, ok! He's silly. The next day he asked her why you didn't continue the conversation and she said what do you want me to say and your last word was ok? I laughed so hard on both of them!

But I don't know! She doesn't like the hijab so far. I hope she likes it. I really do and I hope she gets used to it. I wish if she goes to an Islamic school it will be easier for her, but it's expensive and we cannot afford it.

My Analysis Process

The following is an in-depth description of my field texts analysis procedure. I conducted the field texts analysis using multiple layers that focused on using narratives as a voice for the narrators and choice and actions they choose to do. It also focused on using narratives as an instrument to show the uniqueness of human actions (Chase, 2005). The layers of analysis uses the three dimensional-levels of narrative inquiry spaces, funds of knowledge resources, funds of knowledge theory, critical moments analysis, and third space to help with finding shared themes among the participants.

But before I move to a think description of the ways I analyzed my field texts, I want to share one of my critical moments and invite my readers to think with the story not about it (Clandinin, 2013). I do so because sharing the researcher's story is one of the characteristics of narrative inquiry that I am emphasizing in my study.

As a mother working in the educational field with a specific focus on early childhood education, I always had a fear of not doing enough for my children. I always felt guilty for not providing my children with more tools, resources, experiences and whatever that would make them successful. I tried hard to teach my son how to read from an early age. However, he only read when he was ready when he was almost six years old. Moving my children to another country and taking them away from their culture, family, friends, and everything they knew was a big weight I was holding the whole time. Did I make the right decision for my family? Am I being just with them when I decide to study? Are they going to suffer from being bilinguals? Are they going to be marginalized by the new community? Are they going to be successful? These are some of the worries I thought about on daily basis, which is a never-ending act that all mothers share.

I remember I was in a class once in my early Ph.D. courses, and we were discussing achievement of minority students, assessments, and other literacy-related topics. I declared my fear for my children not having the enough background knowledge to succeed in school. Because they are coming from a different culture, they might not know everything the teacher is talking about. I was talking about my son, who was back then eight years old and I was describing possible barriers he might face. Then one of my classmates, whom I was always intimidated from because she was on top of everything and the professors were very fond of her, commented. She said: But he has you! This came as a shock to me! I never thought of being enough for my child to be successful. I never really thought about that. Her words made me think about many things and changed a lot for me. I realized how others think of me, despite if I agree with their views or not, and I understood that indeed my children had me as a tool and resource that will help them through school. I started putting

the dots together. My son was on the 98th percentile nationwide with his reading skills. He loved school and never had an issue with any task or any homework, and his teachers loved him. Why was I worried then? I took a deep breath after that comment, and relaxed. It made it easier for me to focus more on my work in the doctoral program. I was torn before reaching that decision between taking care of my young kids and doing academia. I always felt that I didn't do well in both! I doubted myself on daily bases.

I used to run between soccer practices, gymnastics classes, lacrosse games and girls scout event, while trying to read, write, research, turn in assignments, and sound scholarly enough to talk in class, not to mention the house chores of cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and dishes. It was a tough journey! However, that comment made me believe in myself, and gave me a much-needed push to continue what I was doing knowing that there's something right going there since this classmate viewed me this way! I realize now how the funds of knowledge my husband and I provide to our children is essential to their success. The long hours I spent with my children reading to them, playing games, and doing crafts were funds I was giving to them. I was good at school, and I knew the drill of doing it, and I made that clear to them too. I gave them what they needed for that. My husband as well always talk with them and show them new things happening in the world. He is giving them time, which I think is the most valuable fund a parent could give to his/her children or as my classmate said it: But he has you! That comment was a critical moment in my journey, and I am thankful for it.

My Analysis

I used the multi-layer analysis I described earlier in chapter three. For each participant I looked at her story first and situated it in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry spaces. Then I used deductive funds of knowledge codes that looked at: parental involvement, language and cultural practices, skills and problem solving, and social challenges. As I highlighted each script with these codes, I started to think about them in light of the funds of knowledge theory. Here is an example of the codes and the scripts. Appendix (C) provides more examples of the coding process.

Table 1

Example of the Scripts and the Code Associated with Funds of Knowledge

Script	Code
Manal: However I have to tell you I've been through difficult times with Abdulaziz. They came to me more than once telling me Abdulaziz didn't! They put him a year down. They retained him in second grade. He wasn't doing well.	Parental involvement
Tahani: She learned English very well and now we struggle with teaching her Arabic. When we went back to Saudi she had to learn Arabic. There was no other option. She would come back from school, take one-hour break then we would work until 10 or 11 at night!	Language and cultural practices
Arwa: When Mary started treating me special the others noticed me. From that point on, all my tension disappeared. As soon as she included me at the beginning I felt like. You cannot imagine. It was like I wasn't even walking on the ground.	Social challenge
Tahani: This grade I got, this shock I received was a turning point to me.	Skills and problem solving

Funds of knowledge theory assisted in identifying the accumulated knowledge the participants used in their daily activities and the critical moments when their funds of knowledge was most evident. they experienced. By identifying the critical moments, I was able to identify the tension in the stories, and then identify the third spaces they might have created. From these third spaces and the activities therein, I could then identify common themes that were present in these spaces. The following are examples of each participants' analysis.

Analysis of Arwa's Stories

Arwa talked repeatedly about the way she felt and still feel about school. She has carried fear in her heart since she was in second grade, feeling small, alone, and not able to read. She had the same feeling when she finished high school and was going to university, and again when she started her Ph.D. journey not knowing anyone in the program. The three-dimensions are overlapping in this story. These feeling continued with her and will probably continue to influence her actions in every difficult situation related to school. She says "But I still have this feeling until today that I can't. Maybe because I started with the feeling that I can't, and I don't know so until today, even when I passed my qualifying exam, my husband tells me, "See? I told you so, and I tell him no I didn't do well!" The story is told in the past, present and will influence future actions. This feeling started when she was only five and a half years old, and she felt it as a graduate student again. Whenever the situation is new to her and feels uncomfortable, she feels that she cannot do it and the fear of failing is there.

She was living in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia when she was in second grade and when she entered college, but she is living in the United States as a graduate student. Despite the different location, the feelings didn't change. It was the places that represented educational institutions that caused her fear (school, university at home, Ph.D. classroom). As I thought about her three dimensions I related those feelings of fear and loneliness with social challenges. It was the association of the absence of her mom's presence at school when she was very young with an academic setting that impacted her for the rest of her life.

She later talked about three events that changed her life. She said: "Three important things happened in my life: the first one was when I accepted going to that school, the second one was this-- I was asleep, and I woke up feeling I wanted to draw. The third thing that changed my life was coming to the States." Those situations represent social challenges as well as skills and problem solving. It was her busy social life that she wanted to escape that encouraged her decision to move to the states. She was feeling lonely, unheard, and very upset because she was forced to go to a new school, yet she faced that problem with a positive attitude.

Upon analyzing these three event in Arwa's life, it is evident that they are very critical moments in her life and that she used them to create her third space. She was agitated for having to leave her high school, to be forced to study something she did not want to study, and she was under work and social pressure as she mentioned in her stories.

In each situation, she created a third space for herself where she was happier with the decisions she made. She never thought she would love that school, but in the new space she created, she woke up happy and willingly went to school. She also found a new place for herself where she could practice something new, and she loved that new activity. She

realized that being under pressure from work and family would be a barrier in her journey,

so she brought her funds of knowledge knowing that it was going to be easier to travel to

the States and get approved for that than going to the UK. Her understanding of the process

of getting a scholarship from the university she worked at, plus her experience there made

her realize that it is going to be faster and easier to travel to the U.S.

Her job as a graduate assistant and a lecturer, and being aware of the social

demands of the community she was living in, demonstrates her accumulated social

knowledge that helped her decide to study abroad in the U.S. She knew that if she stayed

there, she would not be going anywhere. She found a third space for herself where she

could be productive and feel more comfortable by going to the States. This does not mean

that she was unproductive in her other spaces because she was. She was very active to the

extent that she was overwhelmed and decided to find another more comfortable space for

her family and herself. Bhabha (1994) argued that "third space is produced in and through

language as people come together, and particularly as people resist cultural authority,

bringing different experiences to bear on the same linguistic signs or cultural symbols to

bear on the same experience" (Moje et al., 2004, p.43). Arwa was resistant to the situations

she experienced; she was against the cultural authority she lived within at that time where

she had to spend long hours preparing for people's visits and gatherings, while at the same

time when she was under a lot of pressure from the loads of work she had to do in her job.

She was trying to bring in a new experience by choosing to go somewhere unfamiliar. She

used language and actions to create her third space. It is clear that the accumulations of her

funds had led her to the creation of third space knowing that she will keep drowning in the

social customs and workload if she did not take any action to resist it. Therefore, she decided to create a new experience for herself and family.

Another critical moment for Arwa was her friendship with Mary. Arwa was feeling lonely, and feared failing upon hearing rumors, and was discouraged about not understanding what her classmates said, representing another social challenge for her. She was struggling to fit in but always felt that she was marginalized and did not belong until Mary befriended her. She was suddenly "seen" by her classmates, and they started acknowledging her. Arwa says: "When Mary started treating me special the others noticed me. From that point on, all my tension disappeared. As soon as she included me at the beginning I felt like. You cannot imagine. It was like I wasn't even walking on the ground." As Arwa began to engage with her classmates her confidence levels raised, especially when she started receiving good grades. Her professors were supportive as well. One of them told her to speak during class otherwise she would go unnoticed, and the other one told her that she was doing well in class and that she did not need to understand everything her classmates said. All of these social factors influenced Arwa's life and changed it. Mary's existence helped Arwa create her third space in school where she gained more confidence and no longer felt like marginalized. She was able to continue in her Ph.D. program and to excel at it.

Analysis of Tahani's Stories

The three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry in Tahani's stories explains to us some of the social challenges she went through with her family, and they reflect her parental involvement funds. For example, she talked about her daughter's tantrums,

152

refusing to sleep upon their return home. Ola's tantrums took place in Saudi Arabia, and it was a reflection of her objection to the pressure she was going through. Knowing the place of that event is important because it helped us understand that the change in place was a huge reason for Ola's tantrums. The new place affected her inner social dimension. She was feeling furious and could not cope with the pressure she was dealing with. She was interacting with her parents in a different manner than her usual self as an indicator of the struggle she went through. The problem was nott resolved until they moved back to the States and she no longer had the same educational pressure. The change of the place helped her overcome her problem. The personal and social interactions were described as Tahani said, "I used to call my mom and I would cry, saying this is not my daughter. This is not Ola. I swear someone switched my daughter". She was expressing her deep concerns and feeling of frustration to her mother, and she was trying to find a reason why her daughter had these tantrums. As this story was told in the past, it also continued until they moved back to the States.

According to Moje et al. (2004), third space can be used to build a bridge between marginalized and usual knowledge, as a space that allows students to bring their funds of knowledge from home or as a space that will produce new form of learning. Moje et al. (2004) state that, for them, "the first and second spaces constructed in opposition to one another might be the everyday and the academic, primary, and secondary Discourses (Gee, 1996), spontaneous and scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1986), or out of and inside school (Moje, 2000)" (p.42). This features that Tahani went through when she told the story of her transformation from average student to outstanding student. She does not give details

about how exactly she did that, but she says she had to think about herself and know what worked for her.

I categorized this story and coded it under skills and problem solving because they are very apparent in the field texts. Tahani brought her funds of knowledge with her to scaffold her learning. She used what she knew from her past experiences as a school student to help deal with the tension she experienced from receiving the low grade. She said her family was confused and shocked. She was in distress from the grade she received. She said: "This grade I got, this shock I received was a turning point for me. Of course my parents were very upset. Why did I reach this point? I became different than my sisters, who had very high academic levels, so I gave them the shock! This point made me take their disappointment very seriously. I decided to discover myself, and Alhamdu lellah !!".

Because we do not know much about her school, or home, it is hard to tell how she reached this new place of being successful. However, the assumption here is that she used her everyday knowledge from home and her academic knowledge from school to create a place of success for herself where she was comfortable and able to develop new forms of knowledge and literacy for herself. In a sense, this event changed Tahani's life and made her an outstanding student deserving to be a graduate assistant later at the university level. This change resembles third space as a navigational space and a way for succeeding in different discourse (Lee, 1993; Moje et al., 2004; & New London Group,1996).

As she told her story, she said, "I have changed; I am not like I used to be in Saudi. I see my older sister who has a job, but she waits for her husband or anyone like my brothers to help her, even if she needed just a thought (the sister will not even think for herself). On the other hand, I can take care of myself and manage the situation if I had something urgent

to do unlike her. My father noticed the change in my personality and was surprised with that, but my husband doesn't because he's staying with me and doesn't notice the change as it happens slowly". Moje et al. (2004) mentioned that "third space can be viewed as a space of cultural, social, and epistemological change in which the competing knowledges and Discourses of different spaces are brought into "conversation" to challenge and reshape both academic content literacy practices and the knowledges and Discourses of youths' everyday lives" (p. 44). Tahani changed upon her travel to the States. She can see the difference in her personality as she compares it to her sister's. That change is visible even to those who are as close to her as her father. She believes that she is a better person since she came. She is more active and productive than when she was in Saudi Arabia, and she takes care of things for herself, versus waiting for someone to help her get things done. This change is the result of being in a new environment and a new culture that is different than her own. Her realization of the difference made her change and become a better person. It challenged and reshaped her knowledge about many things in life.

Analysis of Manal's Stories

The social commonplace in Manal's story reveals her inward thinking. She expressed her feelings of joy and being proud of herself for earning her master's degree. She said: "I am very proud I earned my masters'. It was one of the best things I did in my life. It was a positive experience. I remember myself from the beginning since I was a sophomore in the university, I would tell my teachers that I want to study masters. I put it in my mind that I want to earn a masters. It was difficult and I went through a lot of

difficulties because I am a mother and I had a lot of responsibilities, appointments, other commitments, and school! And my husband and I were students. So this was hard."

Her earlier past desire to continue her higher education did pay off as she earned her degree. She did not know back then that she would earn it from the States, which was a different place, but that made her even more proud because it was harder, yet she accomplished it. She described her feelings about it, saying it was one of the best things in her life!

The dimensional space in Manal's story makes us think of the effort she put in to reach her dream, regardless of the obstacles she encountered. The new goal she achieved required huge efforts to be successful, but she was able to extend that effort and achieve her goals. The temporality in her story reflects the past when she talked about her higher education being a dream and her continuous work to accomplish that dream. This influences her present as she uses the knowledge from that experience to help her children. In the future, she can use her degree and her accumulated knowledge as resources for success.

Manal told the story of her son's reading dilemma and spoke about the ways they help their children at home, reflecting on her parental involvement in her children's education. As she told her story, many aspects of funds of knowledge were present. She said, "I used to go and ask her (the teacher) and tell her that I am ready to help. If you had any methods for teaching, or if you had practice pages give me and with your help and my help he would do better, but she kept saying he's fine. It was the end of the year when I was shocked that he wasn't fine, and I was shocked even more when the West school and South

school both told me that my son didn't know anything in second grade! As if he didn't go to second grade!"

This story is a critical event for Manal because it changed her son's future. She was not expecting the need to hold back her son at all. She was concerned from the beginning and was willing to work and help him, but she never thought that he would be held back a year. She worked hard to help him and met with several specialists, reaching out to an ADHD consultant and a team of his teachers at school. She took action and proved that her son did not have ADHD. However, she had to work with him at home too. She was bringing all her funds of knowledge and the resources she had to help him overcome his problem. Manal believed that teachers were responsible for her child's success or failure in school. She talked about the strategies she knew to help her son that she expected the teacher would also suggest. She talked about different strategies they use at home with their children. Ahmed would print older test versions for his kids to practice on, which was a strategy that was widely used in Saudi Arabia in the 90s. Manal would bring practice sheets and find online resources to help engage her kids in the learning process. She helped them with spelling practice and asked them to read on a daily basis. She was aware of the possible struggle they might face when coming to the States and prepared them by enrolling them in international schools when they were still in Saudi Arabia.

From her story, I found Manal to show great passion for learning and education. She faced so many obstacles in her way, from marrying and moving to a new place, multiple pregnancies, motherhood, and speaking in another language, yet she was persistent about her goals, and she reached them. This is the funds of knowledge that she is passing on to

her children. Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) believe that students have rich knowledge from their home, family, and community that they can use in academic settings.

Malak and Abdulaziz learned at home that education and school is a priority and that it is the way for success, which became a cultural practice for them. The father's desire to continue his undergraduate studies and Manal's journey to learn the English language first and then earn her master's portrayed for their children the significance of knowledge and learning. Over their fireplace mantle, Manal's certificate is placed in a wooden frame, representing the importance of this degree to the whole family. Their home provides them with the tools to succeed in school. Manal said, "If any of our kids showed interest in any topic we try to support her/him and provide anything they might need", thus their efforts are a scaffolding tool between the new knowledge that the children are receiving at school and the everyday knowledge they have already, and it connects their knowledge from one kind to other kinds (Moje et al., 2004).

Another critical event in Manal's story is her daughter's hijab, which is linked to cultural practices as well. This had changed the way people looked at Malak and the way some of her friends treated her. She said, "She also had many questions on why are you wearing the hijab and she replies with I have to. I don't think she explained to them why she is wearing it. She doesn't like to talk about it. She understands that she has to wear it to put boundaries between her and boys. Many boys are asking her to be their girlfriend now; even when we were traveling, they send her messages on Instagram because they were not able to call her. Another boy saw her at this sports place she used to go to with Maria. He asked her for her phone number, and she didn't give it to him. Then he saw her at the marching band. He is one year older than her. He told her I asked you for your phone

number and you didn't give it to me. She told him I don't give my phone number to anyone and I don't do phone calls. If you want you can text me on Instagram."

Malak is using her funds of knowledge to balance this new situation she is facing. In her home culture, she is not supposed to talk to boys. Mixed gender relationships are limited and should be very formal. She is expected to use her phone only with her girlfriends. However, at school and within the American community in general, this is something very normal and widely expected. Malak was able to tolerate the difference in these two cultures by saying that she cannot talk by phone but that she could use the Instagram application. Instagram had become her third space where she could communicate with her friends and chat with them, without breaking the cultural boundaries of her home.

Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

As I read and reread the stories I became very close to my participants. I started finding new things that I did not know about them. When I investigated their stories using the multi-layer analysis I created, I was able to put the pieces together. I came to a new understanding of their experiences and their thinking. I saw major themes that crossed their stories and presented them in new ways. Themes of strength, problem solving, decision-making, facing challenges, and adaptation emerged from their field texts.

I saw three women, who have so much in common, yet are very different. I saw three female, graduate students working really hard to earn a higher degree. They strive to succeed, and they put a huge effort in to reach their goals. They share the same country of origin, and they are graduate students in the U.S., while trying their best to be good parents

to their children. However, each is a unique example of ambition and persistence. They shared similar stories of being lost when it came to choosing a major for their undergraduate studies. Their parental concerns and worries were similar in its nature but different in reasons. Some of their concerns were related to language, and their desire for their children to learn Arabic and not to lose part of their identity, which is connected with language. Other concerns regarding their children were individual ones that varied from being disconnected from the real world due to reading, to exaggerated in feelings, and to having to wear a hijab.

Funds of Knowledge

Stories about parenthood revealed the funds of knowledge these moms used to help support their children. They used technology and media, they consulted other adults about what to do, they provided their children with tools and equipment's to use at home, they talked and listened to their children, they took an active part being involved with their children, and they helped them with the decision making process. They were modeling cultural practices to their children to keep them connected to their home culture. Arwa accepted gifts for her daughter when she was against it so she did not hurt her family member's feelings. She also talked to her daughter about the meaning of beauty and how to act with family members who would say things she did not like.

Adaptation

These women used their skills and knowledge to adapt to changes they faced as they moved from one culture to another, while they witnessed the effect of that change on their

children. They had to teach themselves and their children how to cope with that change, and how to build appositive place where they can practice being themselves. The third spaces they created were a result of tension or a critical event in their lives. The critical events were important because they changed their lives forever. If Arwa had not decided to choose Art as her major and continued in medicine school, she would have been a different person. The same goes for Tahani, who decided that getting a low grade was evidence of her lack of studying skills and worked on learning how to study and she became a top student afterward. Manal chose to surround herself with people from her own culture and together they created a third space where they were able to practice their common beliefs and traditions where they were not afraid of being rejected or judged.

I saw common themes of strength, problem solving, decision-making, facing challenges, and adaptation.

Strength

Their strength came from within as they were learning how to overcome barriers. I saw strength when Manal broke her toe, yet she finished her assignment and sent it to her professor. I saw strength in Tahani when she studied hard to stay on top of her class, and when she volunteered in a daycare in order to learn English. I saw strength in Arwa when she continued going to classes even when she felt she was marginalized and as an outsider. She did not allow her feelings of marginalization takeover her desire to study. Tahani showed her strength as she was aware that she was different than other women in her society including her sister. She said that even her dad noticed the strength in her. She linked this change to her abilities of taking actions when needed. Manal also showed

strength when she talked about felt proud of herself for finishing school despite all the

difficulties she encountered. She was strong enough to go through them all and succeed at

school at the same time. Their strength varied in source, but always helped them achieve

the potential goals they put for themselves.

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Skills

Their decision-making and problem-solving skills helped them negotiate being in a

new culture and create third spaces. Their background knowledge influenced their

decisions. Tahani moved her daughter from one daycare to another because she felt it was

the reason for her daughter's setback. Because she worked in the early childhood field, she

was able to decide that this school was not the best fit for her daughter. Arwa's knowledge

about the process of receiving a scholarship made her decide to come to the U.S. instead of

the U.K. Tahani's decision making differed from Arwa's when she was planning to come to

the U.S. as well. It started as an idea for Tahani but with constant trials it became a goal and

she took the decision to travel to study.

Manal's decision making was evident when her son had to retain second grade. She

was resistant to the idea at first, but after hearing more than one opinion she was

convinced with it. However, she never forced her son on her decision. She talked to him and

explained to him reasons for the retention. Her idea of decision making did not include

forcing her children on wheat she thinks is right. It had to be their decisions too!

Facing Challenges

The three graduate students faced various challenges. Those challenges were wide ranging in reason. Some were mental challenges, some were physical, some were social and some were emotional challenges. Tahani faced racist attitudes from a professor at the university and from her neighbor, but she did not let that change her perception of the culture. Manal had to balance between her responsibilities at home as a mother and wife and being a graduate student. She broke her toe and went to hospital, but she could not forget her assignment and did her best to take care of it. Arwa had to work with her emotions and feelings that had roots to her childhood, and she overcame the negative feelings she felt as she was marginalized by her classmates. Tahani also went through a challenging situation when her daughter had tantrums and she sought help by talking to her mom and by working on finding the reason behind that change of her daughter's behavior.

Third Space

These women created new possibilities for themselves by building new spaces for themselves and their families. The spaces they created were different from each other and were the result of different tensions. Tahani's spaces were always encouraging her to perform on a higher level and pushed her to success. Arwa's third spaces were a tool that helped ease her worries and calmed her down. Manal's third spaces were a way to balance what she was familiar with and changes in culture that she encountered. Their third spaces were varied in reasons and in the ways in which it supported them, however they all

needed them to resolve the struggles they were going through. Their third spaces helped them create new possibilities for themselves.

I saw three women who could reach their goals with their passion toward learning and their ambition. I saw women who shared personal stories to help others understand how it feels like to be an immigrant, a graduate student, a wife, and a mother in a new culture. They changed their lives by taking action toward their goals, and their stories hold the potential of changing others as well.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion of Findings and Educational Implication

It is hard for narrative researchers to move from field texts to research texts.

Narratives deal with mass data, which requires returning to them again and again and

researching them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is difficult in narrative inquiry to go step-

by-step on the process of analysis and interpretation. It is just "not how narrative inquiries

are lived out." (p.132). However, I provided an example of my analysis process in the

previous chapter that guided me when I was thinking about my findings. Moreover,

qualitative researchers always need to justify their research by explaining their purpose,

and the findings they hope to uncover and understand (Clandinin, 2013). Previously in

chapter three I explained the personal, practical and social justification of my research

thoroughly. As I discuss my findings in this chapter, I will revisit these justifications and

connect them to the findings.

Personal Justification

This research is important to me because it tells the stories of people from my

community. It tells stories of the struggle, the hard work and the different strategies people

like myself used to adapt to the new changes in their lives and the new culture in which

they are living. I was able to listen to their stories of funds of knowledge, which views

culture as the practices of the lived life inside households and the actions of members of

these households. This view states that knowledge is always being constructed and needs

to be discovered (Gonzalez et al. 2005) and I wanted to discover this new knowledge.

Looking at international graduate students' constructed knowledge through the stories they told about education, culture, and literacy practices impacted me as an individual and as a researcher. I was able to know different sides of my friends' personalities that I would not have normally know. On a personal level I learned to never assume anything about people, even the ones close to you. I thought I knew the participants very well because they are my close friends, but I was surprised at what was revealed from their stories that I did not know about them. As a researcher, I learned that the research field is fluid and I have to learn how to use my data to have a credible study. I planned on using three data collection methods and ended with one, but by providing a thick description of my data collecting method and by providing a transparent analysis I tried to avoid the bias of using one single data source .

My personal reflection on creation of third space added to my understanding of the concept. I see third space as a place for balance. It is where I bring my Saudi culture and the American culture together. In this space, I can choose the best of both cultures and create new understanding of my own. I think of it as a space where I do not feel the tension I have in both spaces. It is a space where I can be myself and where I help my children and family balance the negotiation of the two cultures we live in.

However, my most significant personal finding was realizing that we are all very different, yet we share many similarities, or as Carl R. Rogers (1961) said, "What is most personal is most universal" (p. 26). The participants of this study come from different parts of Saudi Arabia, two from the capital Riyadh and one from AL-Dhahran. However, their stories shared many similarities. This is important because we need this feeling of connection to people from cultures that are different than ours. When people make these

personal connections, they will have more compassion and empathy towards different communities and groups.

Practical Justification

The goal of this research is not to generalize, but this study can serve as a mean to study other immigrant groups. The U.S. has the largest number of immigrants in the world with about 25% of all children in the U.S. living with an immigrant parent (Zong & Batalova, 2015). This huge number needs more attention, and this research contributes to the field. It is important to keep in mind that the immigrant definition is not only related to poorly educated and unskilled workers. While they still represent a part of the population, this group also include immigrants who are among the most educated and highly skilled people in the U.S. (Suarez-Orozco,2001). Immigrant children are the fastest growing sector in the U.S. Thus, we must address their needs. While some pass school easily, some of immigrant children struggle. Suarez-Orozco discusses reasons for their success in adapting to the new culture by saying that it may relate to cultural and social patterns and the single values they have, or by developing cultural strategies that teach their children how to defend negative attitudes (De Vos,1992;Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Sue & Okazaki, 1990). He concludes that families that can maintain their cultural values and resist cultural beliefs of the new space have children who are more successful at school. That being said, the parents in this study deployed these strategies with their children and helped them become more successful at school by providing them with their funds of knowledge.

This research will make a difference to practice by making visible the funds of knowledge and third space of these families and the ways they negotiated being in two

cultures. An example of this negotiation is their constant efforts to save their children's

Arabic language. Arwa, Tahani, and Manal were all trying to teach their children Arabic and

were worried they might lose it. Because language and actions are inseparable

(Vygotsky,1986) it is important to maintain the children's Arabic language and their

fluency in speaking, reading, and writing. The parents in this study are aware of the

relation between culture and language, thus they are using their funds at home by not

speaking English at home, giving their children tasks, using prizes for reinforcement, and

sometimes tutoring them. Their funds of knowledge as being graduate students-with some

of them majoring in education-reflected on their awareness of the relation between

language and identity. They are trying to create a third space for their language skills. As

Bhabha (1994) suggested "third space is produced in and through language as people come

together, and particularly as people resist cultural authority, bringing different experiences

to bear on the same linguistic signs or cultural symbols to bear on the same experience"

(Moje et al., 2004, p.43).

     These parents were supporting their children's literacy skills in many ways.

According to Brown (2007), parents with higher education value literacy practices and

understand its significance for their children; therefore they reinforce it at home. Both

Tahani and Arwa said that they would bring anything related to literacy that their children

showed interested in. They also said that their daughters are good readers and that they do

not need constant support from them to read. In other words, these parents valued

learning, education, and literacy. They are supporting their children in different ways from

taking them to public libraries, going to school and talking with teachers to discussing any

issues, and buying them books and other literacy tools.

Another example is the stories the participants told about their previous educational background indicating the importance of these experiences to them. As they told their stories of critical events that changed their lives, the creation of third space was evident. They were living in two different communities and were trying to draw on their funds of knowledge as a tool to ease their transition between the two cultures. Arwa talked about her fear and feelings of loneliness when she first started her Ph.D. program. She was struggling to find who she was in this new place. She felt her classmates marginalized her because nobody talked to her and because she was the only international student at that time in her classes. To add to that, she heard discouraging stories of other Saudi students who failed. It wasn't until she had an American classmate and more friendly professors that she no longer felt marginalized. However, during the rough times, she used her resources and went to talk to her professor discussing her fears. She also spoke to her classmate about her presenting skills. She expressed her thoughts to her husband, and he was supportive of her. He assured her that she was not going to fail. She created a support system for herself by talking to all these people around her to help her continue the program and to ease her fears.

Teachers and educational leaders can benefit from these stories by realizing the funds of knowledge resources the graduate parents have. Children of highly educated parents understand school and how to be successful, and teachers can use the knowledge these students bring with them from home, especially when they are from a different culture, to build a better curriculum and instructions. Also, they can use the parent's willingness to help and support their children and ask them to be part of the schooling system and involve them more in students' activities. Knowing their abilities and the funds

169

of knowledge they have will advance them and promote their literacy skills (Edwards et al., 2001; Paratore, 2002; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2005). This can also create a bridge between home and school as students negotiate these two social cultures. This study contributes to changing the stereotyping of children of minority groups and teachers' assumptions that they did not value succeeding in school (Auerbach, 2005).

As for university faculty, this study contributes to the research field by confirming the many negative feelings and the load international graduate students bear. The participants expressed feeling lonely in the classroom or feeling discrimination from a faculty member because of wearing the hijab and thinking that professors were strict and hard to deal with. Their stories reveal the "double load" of academic life as discussed by (Ren & Hogedorn, 2012). Faculty members can use the stories in this research to address the needs of international graduate students and accommodate their needs. They are no less than any other student by any means, but compassion is needed.

Social/Theoretical Justification

This research contributes to theory understanding as it reveals insights to the funds of knowledge theory and third space extending their use to more than what is found in the research literature. I used them as theories for my research as well as lenses that helped me write my findings. The goal from funds of knowledge and third space is not just informing or just telling the stories of the participants, it highlights the fact that these families were merging the two cultures, without erasing one or the other. It does not replace the old culture with a new one and it does not change a value system over the

other, which goes hand in hand with the third space notion as bridge between marginalized knowledge and academic knowledge (Guiterrez et al., 1999).

This research extends the potential of funds of knowledge by giving the parents a voice talk about their own funds of knowledge rather than the traditional way of observing subjects and reporting the findings. It also contributes to the research field by using the three-dimensional narrative spaces as a tool to situate funds of knowledge and third space.

Additionally, other researchers in the narrative inquiry field can use the analysis process I designed to analyze the field texts. This multi-layered approach is an addition to the research field because using the funds of knowledge and third space as lenses to a unique approach that provides researchers with a way to provide a more transparent analysis for this particular methodology.

This research contributes to the social justification by bringing to the forefront personal feelings of being marginalized by society . Literature suggests contradicting views regarding Arabs and Muslims feelings of being welcomed and not marginalized (Qamar-ul Huda, 2006) and of being marginalized as second-class citizens (Md-Yunus, 2015).

The participants did feel marginalized at some points in their stories. Arwa felt it when no one in class talked to her or noticed her. Tahani was in more than one situation where a faculty member and a neighbor showed racist behavior. Manal also went through the feelings of not belonging when she tried to mingle with the parents of her daughter's friends. All three of them felt they were excluded from the community, and it caused tension for them. However, it was temporary as they were able to overcome these feelings and created third spaces where there was no such tension. Arwa found a new friend whom she was able to trust, Manal created a new community for herself and her daughter to

bridge the gap between friendship and keeping traditions. Tahani found another faculty member to be her advisor. These findings support both views of the literature addressed previously, making it possible for immigrants to switch in between these feelings.

This research also contributes to making a difference to socially unjust situations by highlighting the needs of this group of individuals. This study has the potential to change the mainstream opinions and stereotypes about this group of women. According to previous research, women who wear headscarves (hijab) are viewed as "other" and associated with oppression and a lack of freedom (Hamid, 2006, Stadlbauer, 2012). By giving voice to these three Saudi women, I wanted to show their strength and the ways they shaped their personalities away from oppression or lack of freedom. They were making decisions regarding their future and taking action toward those decisions. Both Tahani and Arwa talked about their decision to study abroad, which is a decision that will affect the whole family, yet they themselves were making that choice. This goes hand in hand with Scranton's (2015) study that showed that Muslim women believe they are multidimensional, strong, active and unique women and it challenged the stereotypes that viewed them as weak, oppressed and marginalized them. The stories in this study confirm the results of Scranton's (2015) study by highlighting these women's critical events and their abilities to function in new spaces despite the struggle they went through. They used the struggle to change and be more productive people. Tahani transformed from being an at-risk student to a straight A's student. Arwa excelled at a school she thought she hated and her life path totally changed upon her joining the art college. Manal earned her masters despite many obstacles she encountered including language barriers and the responsibilities of motherhood.

Future Research

The findings of this study and the stories the participants told yielded many topics to think about and consider when teaching both the graduate students themselves and their children. It can be of great benefit for multiple sectors: the public mainstream, the educational personnel and university faculties and staff.

Future research is recommended using different methods of analysis. The stories these participants told yielded various interesting events like the struggle to find a college path, which was a consistent issue with the three participants. The Saudi educational ministry should focus more on explaining college options to students. Even though these participants graduated from high school more than 17 years ago, not much has changed regarding this issue.

Also, further research is needed to navigate the third space of these families upon their return to Saudi Arabia, if they decide to go back. How would their children cope with the change in culture? How would their identities be shaped then? How would the parents help their children navigate the change in communities in their new homes? Educators in Saudi Arabia and researchers can use the findings from such research in helping the students adjust better to their new environment and ease the moving process for them.

Conclusion

As a researcher in the field, along with my experience as an international graduate student in the U.S. while being a mother at the same time, I was knowledgeable about the depth and richness of this experience. Knowing the struggle that we go through as students while trying to provide the best opportunities for our children, guided me to explore and

highlight the experience of this group. By understanding the struggle and hardship this group of students go through, and by examining the funds of knowledge they have and provide to their children, I hope that multiple educational sites benefit from these experiences. Teachers in school can use these funds to help promote their students' literacy skills. Professors and teaching faculty at the higher education level can also support and scaffold their international graduate students emotionally and through their graduate work. However, the most important outcome of this study is giving the students the voice to tell their stories and to share what they had to tell.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF THE MESSAGE I SENT TO MY FRIENDS ASKING THEM FOR AN INITIAL

PARTICIPATION

Dear friends, I would like to ask you if you are interested to be part of my narrative inquiry study. It is going to explores what you already know about education and the special resources and experiences you have and the strategies you use to help support your children's literacy skills. It is stories about your experiences, your knowledge, your ideas, and yourself.

It is going to be individual meetings, with your choice of where and when to meet. I will meet with you and anyone from your family you wish to include in our conversations. Also the conversations will be in Arabic, and I will send you everything I write once I am done from writing the stories. There will be also a follow up meeting to give you the chance to share more insights, add, or delete to the first conversation.

If you find this study to be of your interest and would like to participate, please let me know. You can respond to me directly in this thread or privately if you wish.

I look forward listening to and sharing your stories.

APPENDIX B

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO KEEP CONVERSATION ACTIVE AND FLUENT

- What do you recall from your educational experience?

- How was your home environment supporting your literacy acquisition?

- What were your strengths/weaknesses in learning in your native language?

- Tell me about your experience with literacy in your first language.

- Tell me about your experiences with literacy in your second language.

- Tell me about your children's literacy experience.

- How did they learn to read and write?

- Tell me about the kinds of experiences that your child has with literacy at home.

- Do you help your child with reading and writing at home? Why and how?

- What do you do at home to help your child with school work.

- What materials and resources do you use with your child when reading and writing?

- How much involved are you in your child's educational system? Why?

- How does living in a different country than yours affect your education? And your children's?

- What is most significant about your educational experience in the U.S.?

- How does your higher education influence your support for your children?

- What is most memorable from your graduate work experience?

- Tell me about being an international graduate student in the U.S.

- How did you cope with difficulties, if you had any, adjusting to the new community?

- Did you ever feel you were "othered" by members of the American society or the university you studied at?

- How do your children do at school?

- Do they feel "othered" as well? Why and how?

- How do they cope with changes in culture?

- What do you do to help them with the changes they see?

APPENDIX C

MORE EXAMPLES OF THE CODES THAT HELPED IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL MOMENTS

Script	Patterns
Arwa: That previous teacher was mean. Mashael almost hated school because of her. She always had her on parent contact because she was talking! Well, this is not a serious behavior issue! She was an old teacher	Being in trouble
Arwa: I was terrified I was alone in school and my mom is not with me, she was on maternity leave, and I don't understand anything.	anxiety
Arwa: So there was that terrifying feeling. So I was very scared from this. I was very scared and I put double the effort to read. I don't know how second grade passed by, I was very young so I don't recall it exactly, but I remember the feeling of fear.	struggle
Arwa: The second semester was a disaster, we were doing autopsies, but it was on animals so it was fine. The second year I couldn't. I tried but I couldn't. So I asked for a transfer to dentistry.	Struggle with school
Arwa: Three important things happened in my life, the first one was when I accepted going to that school, the second one was this: I was asleep and I woke up feeling I wanted to draw. I never drew before.	change
Manal: However I have to tell you I've been through difficult times with Abdulaziz. They came to me more than once telling me Abdulaziz didn't! They put him a year down. They retained him in second grade. He wasn't doing well.	hardship
Manal :I used to go and ask her (the teacher) and tell her that I am ready to help. If you had any methods for teaching, or if you had practice pages give me and with your help and my help he would do better, but she kept saying he's fine.	Need for help

Script	Patterns
Manal: Many boys are asking her to be their girlfriend now; even when we were traveling, they send her messages on Instagram because they were not able to call her. They tell her they want to get to know her and want her to be their girlfriend. She doesn't know how to deal with them.	confusion
Tahani: This grade I got, this shock I received was a turning point to me.	shock/ turning point
Tahani:I have changed; I am not like I used to be in Saudi.	change
Tahani: But I was also under the stress of losing my scholarship if I didn't get an acceptance for the master. It didn't matter if I learned English or not as much as it was important to get the required TOEFL or IELTS. I was under the stress that I have to get the grade.	stress
Tahani: But she hated school so much she went into a horrible condition. Every night her dad and me struggled with her. It began one month after school started; that's why we say school is the reason, especially that it was over when we came back here. She did not sleep! Until midnight and she won't sleep. Every day she cries. Not any regular cry. Cry with stubbornness that she didn't want to sleep and she kicks	struggle
Tahani: I even tried to work as a volunteer to learn from the community, so I worked in the early childhood field. It wasn't a real job because there was no contract between me and them or anything, so I used to go to the same classroom my daughter was in and I helped as a teacher assistant.	Taking action
Tahani: She learned English very well and now we struggle with teaching her Arabic. When we went back to Saudi she had to	Struggle and hardship

Script	Patterns
learn Arabic. There was no other option. She would come back from school, take one-hour break then we would work until 10 or 11 at night!	
Tahani: Now I am going to start all over again and a Moroccan lady will come and teach them. Now I care more about teaching them religion than teaching them Arabic.	Change of plans

REFERENCES

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2002). Contesting the politics of culture, rewriting the boundaries inclusion: Working for social justice with Muslim and Arab communities. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *33*(3), 308–316.

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2006). Race, politics, and Arab American youth: Shifting frameworks for conceptualizing educational equity. *Educational Policy*, *20(13*), 13-34.

Andrews, J., & Yee, W. C. (2006). Children's 'funds of knowledge' and their real life activities: Two minority ethnic children learning in out-of-school contexts in the UK. *Educational Review, 58*(4), 435-449.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2013). *Postcolonial Studies: The key concepts* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Auerbach, E. R. (1995). Which way for family literacy: Intervention or empowerment? In L. M. Morrow (Ed.), *Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities* (pp. 11-27). International Reading Association.

Ayers, M., Fonseca, J., Andrade, R., & Civil, M. (2001). Creating learning communities: The 'build your dream house' unit. In: E. McIntyre, A. Rosebery, & N. Gonzalez (Eds) *Classroom diversity: Connecting curriculum to students' lives* (pp. 92–99). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist Ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Banik, B. J. (1993). Applying triangulation in nursing research. *Applied Nursing Research*, 6(1), 47-52.

Barone, T. (2001). Science, art, and the predispositions of educational researchers. *Educational Researcher, 30*(7), 24-28.

Barone, T. (2007). A return to the gold standard? Questioning the future of narrative construction as educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*(4), 454-470.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). Understanding literacy as a social practice. In D. Barton & M. Hamilton (Eds.), *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community.* (pp. 3-22*).* New York: Routledge.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated Literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 7-15). New York: Routledge.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M. & Ivanic, R.(Eds.) (2000) *Situated literacies: reading and writing in context.* Routledge: London.

Barton, A. C., & Tan, E. (2009). Funds of knowledge and discourses and hybrid space. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *46*(1), 50e73.

Becker, H. S. (1970). Problems of inference and proof in participant observation. In H. S. Becker (Ed.), *Sociological work: Method and substance* (pp. 25-38). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Becker, R. & Kolster, R. (2012). *International student recruitment: Policies and developments in selected countries.* Netherlands: NUFFIC.

Bell, S. J. (2002) Narrative inquiry: more than just telling stories, *TESOL Quarterly*, *36*(2), 207–213.

Benson, S. (2010). "I don't know if that'd be English or not": Third space theory and literacy instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *53*(7), 555-563.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture.* New York: Routledge

Boethel, M. (2003). *Diversity: School, family, & community connections*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Brenner, M. E. (2006). Interviewing in educational research. In L. Judith, Green, C. Gregory & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp.357-370). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum for AERA.

Brown, K. (2007). Strengthening the home-school literacy connection. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 20*(1), 95-152.

Byrne-Armstrong H. (2001). 'Whose show is it? The contradictions of collaboration. In H. Byrne-Armstrong, J. Higgs & D. Horsfall (Eds.), *Critical moments in qualitative research* (pp. 106-115). Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Cassidy, J., & Grote-Garcia, S. (2014). What's hot what's not survey. *Reading Today, 32*(1), 8-12.

Chase, S. (2011). Narrative inquiry: Still a field in the making. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 421-434). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001). *Schools and families: Creating essential Connections for learning*. New York: Guilford Press.

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Clandinin, D. (2013) *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press Inc.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1998). Stories to live by: Narrative understandings of school reform. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *28*(2), 149-164.

Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (2000), *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. J., Pushor, D., & Orr, A. M. (2007). Navigating sites for narrative inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *58*(1), 21-35.

Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2006). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35-75). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought*. New York: Routledge.

Conant, F., Rosebery, A., Warren, B. & Hudicourt-Barnes, J. (2001) The sound of drums. In E. McIntyre, A. Rosebery & N. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Classroom diversity: Connecting curriculum to students' lives* (pp. 51–60). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(5), 2-14.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006) Narrative inquiry. In J. Green, G. Camilli & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (3rd ed., pp. 477.487). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cook, M. (2005). 'A place of their own': Creating a classroom 'third space' to support a continuum of text construction between home and school. *Literacy*, *39*(2), 85-90.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.

Coulter, C. A., & Smith, M. L. (2009). The construction zone literary elements in narrative research. *Educational Researcher*, *38*(8), 577-590.

Craib, I. (2004) Narratives as bad faith. In M. Andrews, S. D. Sclater, C. Squire & A. Treacher (Eds), *Uses of narrative*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wiley.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, *39*(3), 124-130.

Dantas, M. L., & Manyak, P. C. (2010) *Home-school connections in a multicultural society: Learning from and with culturally and linguistically diverse families*. New York: Routledge.

Davis-Kean, P. E. (2005). The influence of parent education and family income on child achievement: The indirect role of parental expectations and the home environment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *19*(2), 294.

Delpit, L. D. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom.* New York: The New Press.

Denzin, N.K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* Chicago: Aldine.

Denzin, N. (1989). *Interpretive biography.* New York: Sage Publication.

Detailed statistics of education: Students studying abroad based on education level. (2016). Ministry of Education. Retrieved from: https://departments.moe.gov.sa/PlanningInformation/RelatedDepartments/Educationstatisticscenter/EducationDetailedReports/Pages/default.aspx

De Vos, G. A. (1992). *Social cohesion and alienation: Minorities in the United States and Japan.* Westview Press

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* New York: Macmillan

Dewey, J. (1958). *Experience and nature.* New York: Dover

Douglass, S. (2003). *Response to the American Textbook Council report,"Islam and the textbooks."* Fountain Valley, CA: Council on Islamic Education.

Douglass, S. L., & Dunn, R. E. (2003). Interpreting Islam in American schools. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *588*(1), 52-72.

Duff, A. H., Rogers, D. P., & Harris, M. B. (2006). International engineering students avoiding plagiarism through understanding the Western academic context of scholarship. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, *31*(6), 673-681.

Edwards, P. A., McMillon, G. T., Turner, J. D., & Laier, B. (2001). Who are you teaching? Coordinating instructional networks around the students and parents you serve. *The Reading Teacher*, *55*(2), 146-150.

Elsden-Clifton, J. (2006). Constructing 'thirds paces': Migrant students and the visual arts. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development*, *3*(1), 1-11.

Fountain, J. E. (1999). *A note on the critical incident technique and its utility as a tool of public management research.* Annual meeting of the Association of Public Policy and Management, Washington, DC, 4-6 November 1999.

Foster, M. & Peele, T. (2001) Ring my bell: Contextualizing home and school in an African American community. In: E. McIntyre, A. Rosebery & N. Gonzalez (Eds), *Classroom*

diversity: Connecting curriculum to students' lives (pp. 27–36). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Freeman, M. (2007). Autobiographical understanding and narrative inquiry. In J. D. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 120-145). London: SAGE Publications.

Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses.* London: Falmer Press.

Gee, J., (1999). Reading and the new literacies studies: Reframing the National Academy of Sciences report on reading. *Journal of Literacy Research, 31*, 355-374.

Giroux, H. (2015). Schools as fear mongering factories: The case of Ahmed Mohamed. *Revista Hipotese*, *1*(4).

Goodwin, L.D., & Goodwin, W.L. (1984). Qualitative vs. quantitative research or qualitative and quantitative research? *Nursing Research, 33*(6), 378-380.

González, N. (1995). The funds of knowledge for teaching project. *Practicing Anthropology*, *17*(3), 3-6.

Gonzalez, N. (2005). The hybridity of funds of knowledge. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 29-46). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

González, N., Moll, L., Tenery, M. F., Rivera, A., Rendón, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (2005). Funds of knowledge for teaching in Latino households. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 89-111). New Jersey:Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gordon, E., McKibbin, K., Vasudevan, L., & Vinz, R. (2007). Writing out of the unexpected: Narrative inquiry and the weight of small moments. *English Education*, *39*(4), 326-351.

Gregory, E. & Williams, A. (2000) 'Work or play? Unofficial literacies in the lives of two East London communities. In M. Martin-Jones & K. Jones (Eds.), *Multilingual literacies: Reading and writing different worlds* (pp. 37–54). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Ltd.

Gutiérrez, K. D. (2008). Developing a sociocritical literacy in the third space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *43*(2), 148-164.

Gutiérrez, K. D., Baquedano-López, P., Alvarez, H. H., & Chiu, M. M. (1999). Building a culture of collaboration through hybrid language practices. *Theory Into Practice*, *38*(2), 87-93.

Gutiérrez, K., Baquedano-López, P., Tejeda, C., & Rivera, A. (1999, April). *Hybridity as a tool for understanding literacy learning: Building on a syncretic approach*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.

Gutiérrez, K.D., Rymes, B., & Larson, J. (1995). Script, counterscript, and underlife in the classroom: James Brown versus Brown v. Board of Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, *65,* 445-471.

Haddad, Y. Y., Smith, J. I., & Moore, K. M. (2006). *Muslim women in America: The challenge of Islamic identity today*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hamid, S. (2006). Between orientalism and postmodernism: The changing nature of western feminist thought towards the Middle East. *Hawwa*, *4*(1), 76-92.

Hauser-Cram, P., Sirin, S. R., & Stipek, D. (2003). When teachers' and parents' values differ: Teachers' ratings of academic competence in children from low-income families. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *95*(4), 813.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hedges, H. (2007). *Funds of knowledge in early childhood communities of inquiry*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Hogg, L. (2011). Funds of knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(3), 666-677.

Hokenson, J. W. (1995). Intercultural autobiography. *Auto/Biography Studies*, 10(1), 92-113.

Institute of International Education (2015). Top 25 places of origin of international students, 2013/14-2014/15. *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from http://www.iie.org/opendoors.

Institute of International Education (2016). Fast facts: International students in the U.S. *Open Doors Report*. Retrieved from https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Fact-Sheets-and-Infographics/Fast-Facts

Johnson, A. S., Baker, A., & Bruer, L. (2007). Interdependence, garbage dumping, and feral dogs: Exploring three life world resources of young children in a rural school. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *34*(6), 371-377.

Jovés, P., Siqués, C., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2015). The incorporation of funds of knowledge and funds of identity of students and their families into educational practice. A case study from Catalonia, Spain. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *49*, 68-77.

Kenner, C. (2000) *Home Pages: Literacy links for bilingual children*. London: Trentham Books Limited.

Kumar, D. (2015). *Gender, sexuality, and empire: The evolution of "imperialist feminism" from the 19th century to the War on Terror*. Personal collection of D.Kumar. Newark, NJ: Rutgers University.

Lapadat, J. C. (2004). Autobiographical memories of early language and literacy development. *Narrative Inquiry*, *14*(1), 113-140.

Lee, C.D. (1993). *Signifying as a scaffold for literary interpretation: The pedagogical implications of an African American discourse genre (NCTE Research Report 0085-3739, no. 2*6). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Lemke, J.L. (1990). *Talking science: Language, learning, and values*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Leonard, K. I. 2003. *Muslims in the United States: The state of research*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Li, G. (2002). *East is east, west is west?: Home literacy, culture, and schooling*. New York: Peter Lang.

Li, G. (2006). Biliteracy and trilingual practices in the home context: Case studies of Chinese-Canadian children. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *6*(3), 355-381.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lopez, G. (2001). The value of hard work: Lessons on parent involvement from an (im)migrant household. *Harvard Educational Review*, *71*(3), 416-438.

Luke, A. (1995/1996). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. In M.W. Apple (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (Vol.21, pp. 3-48). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Lynch, J., Anderson, J., Anderson, A., & Shapiro, J. (2006). Parents' beliefs about young children's literacy development and parents' literacy behaviors. *Reading Psychology*, *27*(1), 1-20.

Manyak, P. (1999). *Integration time: Contrasting perspectives on and practices with primary grade Latina/o children.* Unpublished manuscript.

Mastrilli, T., & Sardo-Brown, D. (2002). Pre-service teachers' knowledge about Islam: A snapshot post September 11, 2001. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, *29*(3), 156.

Martin, S. D., Snow, J. L., & Torrez, C. A. F. (2011). Navigating the terrain of third space: Tensions with/in relationships in school-university partnerships. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *62*(3), 299-311.

Mays, N., & Pope, C. (2000). Assessing quality in qualitative research. *British Medical Journal*, *320*(7226), 50-52.

Md-Yunus, S. (2015). *Muslim immigrant children in the United States: Practical suggestions for teachers.* Faculty Research and Creative Activity. Paper 40.

Michaels, S. (1981). "Sharing time": Children's narrative styles and differential access to literacy. *Language in Society, 10*, 423-442.

Moje, E.B. (2000). To be part of the story: The literacy practices of gangsta adolescents. *Teachers College Record*, *102*, 652–690.

Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004). Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *39*(1), 38-70.

Moll, L., Amanti, C., & Gonzalez, N. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA Publishing.

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, *31*(2), 132-141.

Moll, L. C., & Gonzalez, N. (1994). Lessons from research with language-minority children. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 26*(4), 439-456.

Moll, L.C., & Whitemore, K.F. (1993). Vygotsky in classroom practice: Moving from individual transmission to social transaction. In E.A. Forman, N. Minick, & C.A. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 19-42). New York: Oxford University Press.

Montero, M. K., & Washington, R. D. (2011). Narrative approaches: Exploring the phenomenon and/or method. *Literacy Research Methodologies*, 331-352.

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 250.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Condition of Education: Reading Performance* (Indicator 23-2012). Retrieved August 30, 2012, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_rd2.asp.

New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, *66,* 60-92.

O'Brien, T. (1990). *The things they carried*. New York: Broadway Books.

Ochberg, R. (2003). Teaching interpretation. In R. Josselson, A. Lieblich, & D. McAdams (Eds.), *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research* (pp. 113–133). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Olmedo, I. M. (1997). Voices of our past: Using oral history to explore funds of knowledge within a Puerto Rican family. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *28*(4), 550-573.

Orellana, M. F. (2007). Moving words and worlds: Reflections from "the middle." In C. Lewis, P. Enciso, & E. B. Moje (Eds.), *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power* (pp. 123-136). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Pahl, K., & Kelly, S. (2005). Family literacy as a third space between home and school: Some case studies of practice. *Literacy*, *39*(2), 91-96.

Parent involvement. (2006). Educational Testing Service. Retrieved March 7, 2013 from http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.22f30af61d34e9c39a77b13bc3921 509/? vgnextoid=2369253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pianta, R.C. (2006) Teacher–child relationships and early literacy. In: Dickinson D, Neuman S, (Eds) *Handbook of early literacy research,* Vol. 2, (pp. 149–162). New York: Guilford Press.

Paratore, J. R. (2002). Home and school together: Helping beginning readers succeed. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*, *3*, 48-68.

Pavlenko, A. (2002). Narrative study: Whose story is it, anyway? *TESOL Quarterly, 36*(2), 213-218.

Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry* (pp. 3–34). London: Sage Publication.

Peek, L. (2005). Becoming Muslim: The development of a religious identity. *Sociology of Religion*, *66*(3), 215-242.

Perry, K. H., (2010). "Lost boys," Cousins and aunties: Using Sudanese refugee relationships to complicate definitions of family. In M.L. Dantas & P.C. Manyak (Eds.), *Home-school connections in a multicultural society: Learning from and with culturally and linguistically diverse families* (pp.-19-40*)*. New York: Routledge.

Phelps, S. (2010). Critical literacy: Using nonfiction to learn about Islam. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *54*(3), 190-198.

Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The story of the immigrant second generation.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Qamar-ul Huda. (2006). *The diversity of Muslims in the United States: Views as Americans* (Special Report No. 159). Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Ren, J., & Hagedorn, L. S. (2012). International graduate students' academic performance: What are the influencing factors? *Journal of International Student, 2*(2), 135-143.

Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., La Paro, K. M., Downer, J. T., & Pianta, R. C. (2005). The contribution of classroom setting and quality of instruction to children's behavior in kindergarten classrooms. *The Elementary School Journal*, *105*(4), 377-394.

Riojas-Cortez, M. (2001). Preschoolers' funds of knowledge displayed through sociodramatic play episodes in a bilingual classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *29*(1), 35-40.

Rios-Aguilar, C. (2010). Measuring funds of knowledge: Contributions to Latina/o students' academic and non-academic outcomes. *Teachers College Record*, *112*(8), 2209-2257.

Rios-Aguilar, C., Kiyama, J. M., Gravitt, M., & Moll, L. C. (2011). Funds of knowledge for the poor and forms of capital for the rich? A capital approach to examining funds of knowledge. *Theory and Research in Education*, *9*(2), 163-184.

Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers-Sirin, L., Ryce, P., & Sirin, S. R. (2014). Acculturation, acculturative stress, and cultural mismatch and their influences on immigrant children and adolescents' well-being. In R. Dimitrova, M. Bender, F. de Vijver (Eds.), *Global perspectives on well-being in immigrant families* (pp.11-30). New York: Springer.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Schaafsma, D., & Vinz, R. (2011). *On narrative inquiry: Approaches to language and literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Schulz, M. M. (2010). Building connection between home and school. In M.L. Dantas & P.C. Manyak (Eds.), *Home-school connections in a multicultural society: Learning from and with culturally and linguistically diverse families* (pp.94-111*)*. New York: Routledge.

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. (1981). *Narrative, literacy, and face in interethnic communication*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Scranton, A. (2015). I won't change who I am for anyone. *Narrative Inquiry*, *25*(1), 148-165.

Sirin, S. R., Ryce, P., & Mir, M. (2009). How teachers' values affect their evaluation of children of immigrants: Findings from Islamic and public school. *Early Childhood Quarterly, 24*(4), 463-473.

Shagoury, R., & Power, B.M. (2012). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher researchers* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME:Stenhouse.

Soja, E. (1996). *The third space: journeys to LA and other real-and-imagined places.* Malden, MA:Blackwell.

Stadlbauer, S. (2012). A journey to a "pure Islam." *Narrative Inquiry*, *22*(2), 348-365.

Street, B. (2001). The new literacies studies. In E. Cushman, G.R. Kintgen, B.M. Kroll, & M. Rose (Eds.), *Literacy: A critical sourcebook* (pp.430-442). Boston: St. Martin's Press.

Street, C. (2005). Funds of knowledge at work in the writing classroom. *Multicultural Education*, *13*(2), 22-25.

Suleiman, M.F. (2001). *Image making of Arab Americans: Implications for teachers in diverse settings*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the California Association for Bilingual Education, Los Angeles.

Suárez-Orozco, M. (2001). Globalization, immigration, and education: The research agenda. *Harvard Educational Review*, *71*(3), 345-366.

Sue, S., & Okazaki, S. (1990). Asian-American educational achievements: A phenomenon in search of an explanation. *American Psychologist*, *45*(8), 913.

Taylor, D. (1983). *Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.

Tenery, M. F. (2005). La visita. Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll, & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 119-130). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Thurmond, V. A. (2001). The point of triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, *33*(3), 253-258.

Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L. M. (2012). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York: Guilford Press.

Trice, A. G. (2005). Navigating in a multinational learning community: Academic departments' responses to graduate international students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *9*(1), 62-89.

Velez-Ibanez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly,* *23*(4), 313-335.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (original work published 1962).

Warner, R. S. (1997). Religion, boundaries, and bridges. *Sociology of Religion*, *58*(3), 217-238.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. New York: Routledge.

Wolf, E. (1966). *Peasants*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Wong, C. S. L.(1991). Immigrant autobiography: Some questions of definition and approach. In J. P. Eakin (Ed.), *American autobiography: Retrospect and prospect* (pp. 142-170). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Woods, P. (1993). *Critical events in teaching & learning*. Basingstoke, UK: Falmer Press.

Zine, J. (2002). Muslim women and the politics of representation. *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, *19*(4), 1-22.

Zong, J., & Batalova, J. (2017, March 8). *Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States*. Retrieved October 14, 2017, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states