HOME-BASED FAMILY LITERACY PRACTICES OF AN HISPANIC FAMILY: A CASE STUDY OF ACTIVITIES, FUNCTIONS, AND THE INTERFACE WITH SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY EXPECTATIONS

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This study examined the home-based family literacy practices of one Hispanic family, especially focusing on the parents' memories of home-based and school-based literacy activities, current home-based literacy activities and functions, and the interface of home-based family literacy practices and school-based literacy expectations. Ethnographic data offered insight into the understanding that literacy acquisition begins in the home and is dependent and reflective of literacy experiences that are sociocultural based. These home-based family literacy activities and functions are broad in scope and are valuable forms of literacy. However, these activities of marginalized families are often regarded as unimportant and/or unrelated to school-based literacy expectations, and therefore inferior. In response to this perceived mismatch between home-based family literacy activities and school-based literacy expectations, educators approached families from a deficit perspective. This deficit assumption created a sense of devalue on the part of the parents, who assisted their children by culturally and socially relevant means. To meet the school-based literacy expectations familial relationships were jeopardized as the pressure, frustration, and guilt from educators can result in emotional and physical abuse from mother to her children.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Michael Jr. got abused along with everything because I was getting it at the school and I was thinking I don’t want them thinking I’m not teaching him.

Interviewed mother

Literacy is socially and culturally based and important in the daily family life of all learners. Both home and school literacy practices influence literacy acquisition, with each context contributing to the literacy acquisition of a person in its own unique way. Yet, in the United States, the educational sphere of influence affecting literacy acquisition is predominately school-based (Compton-Lilly, 2003, 2004). This influence seldom considers families, communities, or diverse cultures as sources of positive stimuli for literacy attainment. While many educational public policies and contemporary educators refer to parents as a child’s first teacher and the home a primary source for learning, this belief is not always met with true conviction. Literacy learning within the context of family is an after thought with school-based literacy learning as primary (Auerbach, 1989).

School-based influence has permeated all facets of literacy education including the definition and concepts of family literacy. In contemporary times, the term family literacy has evolved from the original meaning in Denny Taylor’s (1981, 1983) research that focused on naturally occurring, home-based literacy practices involving the family, to a more structured, school-based, government funded intervention. These interventions reflect a philosophical stance that focuses on eradicating what are considered deficit literacy skills with the intent of improving the United States economy
and lower the number of persons on government assistance (National Center for Literacy, 2002).

More specifically, interventions have the goal of shifting existing views, practices, and skills within the scope of the family’s role as the child’s first literacy teacher, to more prescriptive, school-like interactions and activities with their children. These interventions are regularly promoted by public schools within urban settings serving diverse students and their families (Auerbach, 1989). Because these interventions reflect a deficit assumption about literacy knowledge, activities, and skills within families’ homes, they ultimately reflect a belief that families do not have the proficiency, environment, and/or the desire to assist their children with literacy acquisition.

Associated with these literacy deficit views is a deficit view of parents or primary caregivers. Frequently public schools perceive minority parents as non-supportive, uncaring, and uninvolved in their children’s success (Ortiz & Ordonez-Jasis, 2005). Many educators believe the appropriate method to correct assumed deficits are through the promotion of school-based literacy practices and activities for parents and their children which will enhance overall school success and the meeting of educational expectations. What these practices do is create a negative interface between schools and families. Schools that ignore the wealth of daily home-based literacy practices involving the family devalue the relevance of cultural and social family literacy practices of diverse learners, and thus, the learner himself. A sociocultural theory of learning such as that proposed by Vygotsky (1978) purports that all human activities and development take place within socially-mediated cultural contexts (such as home environments) and by internalizing these social interactions, the construction of knowledge occurs. A
portion of this development also depends on a learner’s interaction with expert others (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wegner, 1991). Many times this participation with a more experienced person involves a child and his/her parent or teacher. If educators have little awareness or thought as to how the sociocultural aspects occur.

The cultural and social resources, wisdom, abilities, and talents of individuals and their families are what Moll (1992) refers to as funds of knowledge. Families and households function as part of a greater society. It is through this functioning and networking with other families and institutions that families acquire the knowledge, skills, and information for daily living, thriving, and advancing (Moll et al., 1992; Valdez, 1996). Funds of knowledge evolve from and include social and cultural settings, which include places of employment and labor settings, schools, and homes.

Since the home and school are the two prevailing influences in a child’s life, family resources and skills are especially important contexts to be considered relative to the child’s education. Unfortunately, educators rarely access these funds of knowledge in the context of school-based instruction (Moll et al., 1992). Indeed research on family and school literacy connections indicate a sharp contrast between classrooms and household practices (Auerbach, 1989; Compton-Lilly 2003, 2004). Researchers indicate teacher-student relationships are limited because the teachers typically only knew the students from his/her performance in a classroom context and not from a multi-dimensional perspective as family members would. Research results also documents classrooms as seeming isolated from the students’ outside world. Teachers often did not utilize the student’s existing funds of knowledge to promote learning, but rather imposed learning on the students. This is in contrast to learning in the home where
knowledge was taught and acquired through interest and questions. The research of Moll et al. (1992) also indicates a use of reciprocal practices. These practices are based on the mutual trust experiences among people. These interactions with fellow family members, friends, and community members, including school personnel, either reinforce or negate learning among children and parents. These practices are confirmed with each personal exchange often leading to long term relationships or feelings of distrust. It is these practices that can be used by educators to promote instruction beyond the limited, traditional means of school-based instruction and learning relegated only to a school setting (Diaz, Moll & Mehan, 1986; McCaleb, 1994; Moll, 1992a; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). By drawing awareness to the cultural and intellectual resources within homes, educators will not fall victim to negative assumptions and beliefs often discussed in the mainstream, dominant society (including school communities) that often diminish home-based literacy practices and parental involvement (McCaleb, 1994; Moll, 1992a; Gonzalez et al., 2005). This understanding also has the potential to abate families’ frustration, especially for parents who are assisting their children with relevant, social and cultural methods of literacy acquisition.

As the United States continues to become more diverse (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004), especially with a growing Hispanic population, Auerbach, (1989) and Delgado-Gaitan (1990) indicate more understanding is needed from educators that diverse families do promote literacy development in the home environment. This development is often through naturally occurring, daily literacy activities. Educators should be encouraged to realize that home-based interactions suggest a promise to enhance the literacy attainment just as school-based practices do.
Educators’ knowledge of family literacy will be the foundation to elevate family strengths while creating a positive association among families, schools, and educators. Accepting and confirming the wealth of literacy practices, skills, and knowledge in home-based approaches to literacy acquisition is paramount. To propose a limited definition of literacy and thus family literacy, interfaced with negative views of families and their literacy skills is a formula for frustration.

Need for the Study

Hispanic families have an abundance of home-based family literacy practices and experiences occurring in their homes. Hispanic parents are involved and contribute greatly to the literacy acquisition of their children. The home-based family literacy practices and experiences of Hispanic families offer ample opportunities for literacy acquisition. A review of the current literature indicates that many educators do not acknowledge or capitalize on the wealth of literacy practices occurring in Hispanic homes (Auerbach, 1989; Degado-Gaitan, 1990; Moll, 1992c; Moll et al., 1992; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994; Ortiz & Ordonez-Jasis, 2005; Volk & Long, 2005). For example, Delgado-Gaitan, (1990) found that with the twenty Hispanic families she studied numerous literacy based activities occurred in these homes. Valdes (1996) also documented the multiple use of literacy within Hispanic homes. The literacy activities were often based on relevant genuine circumstances, which allowed those involved to acquire literacy understanding.

While these examples have been documented in numerous studies, many educators still consider Hispanic families from a deficit perspective (Auerbach, 1989;
Bartolome & Balderrama, 2001; Ortiz & Ordonez-Jasis, 2005; Valdes, 1996; Volk & Long, 2005). What is not always realized is many Hispanic families have and use a wealth of social and cultural methods beyond school-based approaches to acquire literacy knowledge (Moll, 1992b; Moll et al., 1992; Moll, 2004).

In the context of families and literacy education, additional understanding of the sociocultural theory of learning and funds of knowledge research is needed from a Hispanic family perspective to continue to enhance the knowledge of educators. This occurs by researchers continuing to gather confirmation that Hispanic families do offer a wealth of literacy knowledge that if used by educators can offer beneficial results for students (Auerbach, 1989; Compton-Lilly, 2003).

To accomplish this goal the present study documents past and present home-based family literacy practices thus expanding Hispanic family literacy research. Also important for the field of education, the primary need for this study is to add to the limited research on the often frustrating interface between the contemporary home-based family literacy practices of Hispanic homes and the school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators. This interface is often frustrating for Hispanic parents based on their perceptions and experiences with educators and administrators concerning the literacy attainment of their children. Research data from this study will contribute greatly to broaden the understanding of family literacy beyond a limited, school-based intervention perspective by enhancing the awareness of educators and administrators as to the wealth of home-based family literacy practices. This awareness also has the potential to improve teaching practice based on this knowledge.
Statement of Problem

Wertsch (1994) asserts that learning is a sociocultural process that is embedded in the daily contexts in which people live and include cultural, institutional, and historical settings. An example of these settings is a public school. Public schools and educators entrusted to educate children hold great power.

A major part of that education includes literacy acquisition, which begins in the home and is dependent upon and reflective of the literacy experiences provided through familial interactions (Moll, 1992a; Wertsch, 1994). These home-based literacy practices are also broad in scope and are all viable and valuable forms of literacy (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). However, what is a concern is that the home literacy practices of non-majority cultures are often marginalized and regarded as non-existent, unimportant and/or unrelated to school literacy expectations by educators and this is problematic (Paratore, 2001; Valdes, 1996). In response to this perceived mismatch, many schools, social programs, and community-based family literacy efforts approach family literacy from a deficit perspective. This perspective often approaches families with the idea to change family systems, that include literacy acquisition and activities that are equivalent to those of the mainstream (Auerbach, 1989; Compton-Lilly, 2003; Taylor, 1997a; Valdez, 1996).

Learners from non-majority cultures and their families often feel devalued because of the messages this deficit orientation to their literacy sends. That is, what they do is different from school-based literacy and therefore, inferior. Many educators regard home-based family literacy practices as non-academic or not contributing to school literacy goals which can position individuals and families as lesser or inferior
within the powerful social hierarchy of the school and community (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee, 1992.) Public school influence often supports the broader power structures of those in the mainstream dominant society, which frames marginalized families as deficit in literacy skills and knowledge, as well as, uninvolved and uncaring in assisting their children with literacy acquisition (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee, 1992). As this devaluing is predominant in non-majority cultures, the effects can resonate across generations and affect not only home-school relations, but also intra-familial relationships (such as parent-child). School-based literacy expectations interfacing with home-based literacy activities frequently create frustrations for minority parents (Valdes, 1996).

As educators denigrate home-based literacy, the opportunity to understand and capitalize on the rich and genuine funds of knowledge available from the child and family is lost (Moll et al., 1992). Funds of knowledge offer opportunities for learning outside the school-based setting. This counters the traditional mainstream belief that formal literacy education is essential for literacy acquisition. Many contemporary classrooms have ignored the holistic approach to children’s literacy learning that capitalizes on the interdependence of social and cultural processes for a more structured, single standing form of teaching literacy (Taylor, 1997). As with many educational approaches, this may be appropriate for some learners, however public schools in the United States are educating more linguistically and culturally diverse than ever before and a “one size fits all” model of learning that does not recognize the myriad of learning within the home and family is no longer appropriate (Osterling, 2001).
Research Questions

In this study I will provide insight into the past and current family literacy practices within the childhood and current homes of a set of Hispanic parents. Data will be gathered documenting the historical literacy perceptions and practices of each parent as they grew up. The naturally occurring home-based family literacy and school-based family literacy experiences will also be recorded. According to Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler (1995) and Gee (1990), many times it is the ideas and experiences of our past that influence our present and future choices and decisions. By examining the past home-based and school-based family literacy practices of this set of Hispanic parents that insight will be gained about their current home-based family literacy practices with their own children. These current practices will also be revealed. Documenting the present-day home-based family literacy practices contributes to understanding the wealth of cultural and socially-based literacy practices within the home as well as the often negative interface between the Hispanic parents and the educators and administration of their children's public schools.

Three broad research questions guided my data collection:

1. What are the past home-based and school-based family literacy practices within the homes of each of the Hispanic parents?

2. What are current home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family that support literacy acquisition?

3. How do the current home-based family literacy practices interface with school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators?

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions are used in this paper:
• Culture-The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that people use within their world.

• Discourse-An institutionalized way of thinking linked to power over marginalized persons.

• Family literacy-Functional use of literacy by families that reflect their social and cultural traditions.

• Funds of knowledge-Bodies of knowledge generated by the history and productive activities of households including the past and present experiences of family networks, language use, employment histories, and educational histories that incorporate family practices and perceptions of literacy.

• Hispanic-Category of persons whose ancestry is based from the people of Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin America. The term is also used as a broad form of classification in the U.S. census.

• Home-based family literacy-Functional literacy practices and activities occurring within the family context.

• Literacy-Application of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representing embedded in the larger sociocultural context of each person.

• School-based literacy-Literacy practices and activities initiated by public school educators that are often skills based.

• Sociocultural learning-Acquisition of knowledge for any activity, including literacy, for a person that occurs through the social and cultural interactions of a more experienced person(s) such as a teacher or parent, with a person(s) of less experience as a child or student.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to document current home-based family literacy practices within a Hispanic family and to understand how these practices interface with school-based expectations expressed by educators. Assisting with the understanding, a review of literature has been compiled. The literature review is organized in a contextual manner. Understanding the varied contexts of Hispanics, including past and current perspectives, the impact these perspectives could have on educational attainment, the sociocultural factors, as well as, the funds of knowledge within Hispanic families, and the relationship all the factors have to literacy and family literacy acquisition.

To be identified Hispanic includes an abundance of cultural and social histories and experiences. These histories are the foundation for many Hispanics in the United States. Hispanics offer a wealth of cultural and social know how, experiences, and information for the communities in which they live. Historically this Hispanic impact of experiences and knowledge has been strong in urban cites around the country. In contemporary times the shift is changing to a more widespread, Hispanic population offering their abounding abilities, wisdom, culture, and practices, as an example for all cultures.

Historical Perspectives of Hispanic Families in the United States

According to Fox (1996), 25 million people in the United States can trace their origins to somewhere in the Spanish-speaking world. Over four centuries ago Spanish colonists built the oldest city in this country (today’s St. Augustine, Florida).
Two hundred years later Spanish colonists fought in the American Revolution. As years progressed the territorial and economic expansion of Anglo-Europeans in America began to impact the Spanish colonists and define their geographic settlement patterns. Spanish settlements became dominant in the Southwest, Atlantic, and Gulf Coast regions of what is now the United States. Fox (1996) states, in 1821 when Mexico declared its independence from Spain, the nation inherited the northern provinces which include present day California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and sections of Wyoming. This territory remained under Mexico’s control until 1853 when Mexico’s far north region became the United States’ southwest.

In 1830, in the area known as Texas, settlers whose English language and ancestry was Anglo-European culture dominated the region. Mexico welcomed Anglo settlers by offering inexpensive land in exchange for the settlers learning Spanish, converting to Catholicism, and following Mexican laws. As word spread more and more settlers came to the region. The Mexican population of 4,000 became overwhelmed by the Anglo population of 25,000 (MacDonald, 2004). As the Anglo population grew, these settlers came to ignore the law, religion, and language stipulations of the Mexican government. By 1835, Spanish speaking Texans and English speaking Anglo-Europeans rebelled against the Mexican rule wanting greater autonomy and the removal of Mexico’s President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. By 1836, Texas independence was ratified by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago and English-speaking Protestants came into governance. The 4000 Mexicans ultimately became immigrants on their own land. According to MacDonald (2004), the treaty gave the Mexicans one year to choose to remain a Mexican citizen or seek a United States citizenship.
A similar uprising in 1836 occurred in the area now known as California by those referring to themselves as *californios* (Novas, 2003). This name was taken to ensure others’ understanding that they were not Mexicans. The californios drove out the Mexican rule, but in 1846 they were overtaken by Anglo settlers and the U.S. Navy officially becoming a United States territory against their will. In the same year Texas was annexed by the United States becoming the twenty-eighth state. The United States contemplated annexation of the entire country of Mexico, but instead seized almost all the northern region for a payment of fifteen million dollars and acceptance of citizenship for the Spaniards and Mexicans in the territories. It was this loss of land, according to Alonzo (1998) that contributed to the decreased status to second-class citizenship in a land they had previously dominated.

This domination by the Anglo settlers continued as time progressed. This supposed “Anglo-Saxon Protestant superiority” (MacDonald, 2004, p. 57) saw Anglos negatively stereotyping Mexicans as mongrels, greasers, immoral, and potentially subversive in the realm of politics (Gonzales, 1999; Weber, 1982). Menchaca (2001) and Carmarillo (1979), believes it is these stereotypes that contributed to the violence, racial slurs, and discrimination toward Mexicans, which ultimately contributes to the lasting social and economic weakening of former Mexican citizens.

Anglos enjoyed using the cheap labor of Mexicans to benefit the profits of their mines, factories, and fields but did not want to associate with them beyond using them to further their monetary endeavors. The Mexican Americans, over time, also became victims of extensive racism from the dominant Anglo society, being segregated in schools, barred from practicing law, and in many cases forbidden to marry outside their
race, even prohibited from military service unless they could pass for “white” (MacDonald, 2004).

One of the main reasons for the Anglo Protestant revolt against the Mexican government was the desire to obtain a formal, public education. The Anglo Protestant settlers turned their backs on the language, religion, and legal stipulations of the Mexican government, in part because the Catholic Church which oversaw the public schools with lessons taught by Catholic priests and nuns (MacDonald, 2004). By 1845 when the United States annexed Texas, Americanized public schools predominated in the region and Texas Mexicans, or Tejanos, saw their culture, traditions, and language become even more diminished. Tejanos were encouraged to assimilate into the dominant Anglo culture. Use of the Spanish language was challenged. Public schools, which the Texas legislative officially established in 1854, could not receive funding unless the English language was the principle language for instruction (MacDonald, 2004). In what MacDonald (2004, p. 60) calls, the “transitional decades of the Texas public school system” many Tejanos came to accept the English language as a means to survive. They realized the dominant society brought English with them to the territory and for Tejanos to be successful they must learn English while in the segregated schools they attended.

As the twentieth century came, segregated schools separating Mexican American children and Anglo children continued to be created based on the ideas of racism. Mexican children were believed to be of low intelligence, practice poor personal hygiene, have an inclination toward violence and crime, be innately inferior, and hold deficient English language skills (Carter, 1970; MacDonald, 2004).
Early in the 1940s, many in Texas were guilty of these discriminatory beliefs against Hispanics. The discrimination was so harsh in some areas of Texas that the Mexican government refused to contract with the United States for agricultural labor. In an effort to appease the government in 1943, the Texas Good Neighbor Commission was created. The commission encouraged the Texas education authorities to improve the education of children of Mexican descent. In general, this token effort did little to enhance the educational lives of Hispanic children (Carter, 1970; Texas State Historical Commission, 2005). It was not until 1949 that segregation of children of Mexican descent in public schools was overturned. This prompted the State of Texas to create equal facilities, educational services, and education for the children (MacDonald, 2004).

Nevertheless, segregation abolished, many Hispanic children still found themselves victims of harassment, racism, and language-related difficulties. According to Carter (1970) and Gracia & De Greiff (2000), desegregation became the vehicle used to Americanize students and families to the dominant Anglo society through enculturation and socialization. To socialize a student “…involves bringing the child into membership in society by teaching him certain behavior, expectations, roles, and personality characteristics. Carter (1970) states, that “enculturation is the corollary and interrelated activity of teaching the values, knowledge, and skills of the parent culture” (p. 14). Carter (1970) and Ogbu (1991) assert, to be academically successful during this time for the Hispanic child depended on the extent to which the children and family were oriented to the Anglo middle class school environment and larger mainstream society. Speaking English was viewed as paramount to this assimilation. Cummins (2000)
declares that many educators used harsh physical punishment or humiliation if Hispanic students were heard speaking Spanish during the school day.

Nationally segregation was enacted to yield an equal quality education for all, but as with other minority children, Hispanic children were still faced with unequal treatment. Locally, educators' long held perceptions and beliefs created the foundation for school beliefs, expectations, and treatment of Hispanic children. Schools and educators often viewed themselves as the “first chain of influence” set out to help the “deprived child…whose home background and experiential base are substantially different from those of the middle-class child” (Carter, 1970, p. 36). With these views by schools and educators Hispanic children became victims of what Carter (1970) refers to as, “sorting and sieving” (p. 14). Schools often sorted students into classes based on the occupational needs of the local community. These employment needs were often limited to agricultural and other manual labor jobs, resulting in an educationally engineered limited social status for many learners. These factors often combined to limit the graduation rates of many Hispanic children who felt limited to move beyond the basic occupations of the area because they were not encouraged by educators for greater possibilities. They felt relegated to these jobs by those in more authoritative and respected positions (Carter, 1970; MacDonald, 2004). Berzonsky (1991) and Samaan (2006) refer to this orientation by individuals as “identity foreclosure.” Each researcher stresses that a person’s identity can be constructed or reconstructed based on powerful, authoritative persons or situational circumstances. Many times a person who sees himself having less power will accept decisions of other’s with more assumed
authoritative power. The less powerful person accepts what they feel is deemed best for them by the person with more influence.

As the twentieth century moved forward, Hispanics often still found themselves the victims of racism and prejudice whether it be in education, employment, or daily life. In the 1950s, many Hispanics were accused of having Communist beliefs because they were members of labor unions who organized protests and strikes to combat poor working conditions. In the 1960s and 1970s, persons of Hispanic origin, whether it be Cuban Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, along with other national origins began to take a stronger stand against the culturally and racially motivated inequalities and actions of the dominant society in the United States. These groups created more unions, became more politically active, and actualized “identity movements,” in an effort to improve the marginalized lives of many Hispanics that included discrimination, oppression, political disenfranchisement, and denial of rights (Fox, 1996; MacDonald, 2004). It was through the protests, riots, strikes, walkouts, and boycotts, that action occurred to assist Hispanics. Educational reform became a primary issue for Hispanics who used these rallies to garner attention. According to MacDonald (2004) during this period in history:

1. Hispanics averaged three to four years less schooling than their Anglo counterparts.

2. Fifty percent of Hispanics over twenty five had not completed eighth grade.

3. Less than 6% had some college education.

4. Many times Hispanic children utilized worn textbooks and outdated educational equipment.

5. Bilingual education was limited.
6. Hispanic children were disproportionately represented in Special Education programs for the mentally handicapped.

7. Hispanic children were victims of insensitivity from Anglo teachers who did not understand or value of the Hispanic language and culture.

Many high school and college-aged Hispanic students were in the forefront for action against these injustices. Hispanic students wanted basic educational reform in the terms of smaller classes, greater representation of Hispanic-origin faculty and administration, more demanding curricula, greater parental input, and an end to the “no Spanish” speaking rules that often still existed in schools (MacDonald, 2004).

As some legislative, judicial, and institutional advances were made, some Hispanics still faced negative perceptions and false assumptions from those in the dominant society. In 1994, California voters approved the “Save Our State” (S.O.S.). According to Fox (1996) and MacDonald (2004) Proposition 187 denied undocumented immigrants from receiving any form of public welfare, including non-emergency medical care, public schooling, and pre-natal care. If passed, the intent of this proposition was to reduce the number of people who could emigrate, then the state could redirect money to other services. Arguments against this proposition cited evidence that immigrants created more wealth through tax revenues than they used from the state (Fox, 1996; MacDonald, 2004).

According to Fox (1996) the implicit belief held by many California citizens stemming from Proposition 187, was that the state was becoming overpopulated with Hispanics due to the increased immigration. Three additional issues closely associated with immigration was the belief that Hispanics had higher birth rates than most other cultural groups, they did not have a desire to assimilate to the mainstream, and they took money and services from true California citizens.
Sadly, these reactions to immigrants and refugees were dominant for the time. Fox (1996) documents results of a national poll taken in 1990 indicating Americans perceived persons of Hispanic origin to be second only to Blacks in terms of being lazy and taking advantage of the welfare system. Results from this poll also indicated many Americans perceived Hispanics as less patriotic, ignorant, prone to be involved with violence, drugs, and/or poverty stricken. Ultimately, Hispanics were thought to be endangering California and the United States to the point of destruction. This paranoia reflected a growing trend concerning Hispanics in the United States. Fox (1996) believes this paranoia, in part, stemmed from United States census figures. He states the 1980 census the bureau introduced the identifier *Spanish-Hispanic Origin* on the documentation form. This action was created to document specific national origins. The census asked, “Is this person of Spanish-Hispanic origin or descent?” This question included a broader group of answers than during previous censuses. The answers for this question included origins as Spanish-Hispanic, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish-Hispanic. By broadening the identifiers to include the national or ethnic origin more persons were documented indicating an increased population.

The census classified 14.6 million Hispanic people in 1980. This question was again asked in 1990 with a total of over 22 million Hispanic persons identified. This indicated a 53% increase of the Hispanic origin population over a ten year period. These numbers were often used to bolster the belief of some United States citizens that Hispanics were invading this country (Fox, 1996).
Contemporary Perspectives on Hispanics in the United States, 2000-2005

Population

According to Census 2000 (United States Department of Commerce, 2004) 281.4 million residents were counted in the United States. Of that number 35.3 million (12.5%) classified themselves as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. Persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin include Mexican, Puerto Rico, Cubans, Salvadoran, Dominican or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino persons (United States Department of Commerce, 2004). As of the year 2000, the United States Census Bureau added the identifier Latino and began to refer holistically and interchangeably to the terms Spanish/Hispanic/Latino (United States Department of Commerce, 2004). This evolving census identification began in 1930 when for the first time the term Mexican was included as a category in a race question. The 1940 census asked for persons to identify themselves if they reported Spanish as their “mother tongue.” In the 1950 and 1960 Census' the identifier Hispanic was only indirectly used to document persons with a Spanish surname within five southwestern states, including Texas. In 1970 the census included a separate question focusing specifically on Hispanic origin, but the question was only asked of five percent of the sample households. It was also during the 1970 census that persons where asked to choose if their origin or decent was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish.

In 1980 and 1990, the census asked persons to record if they were Spanish/Hispanic origin or decent and to specifically mark if they were Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic (United States Department of Commerce, 2004). Thus, the Census identification of persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin or
decent has evolved over the years to become more culturally responsive to gather accurate data. Kloosterman (2003) warns as the Census Bureau and some researchers have begun to cluster the origins of these people into one large ethnic denomination and use these identifiers interchangeably, there must also be realization that there are unique differences in the cultures and linguistic backgrounds of each of these Hispanic/Latino subgroups. Each subgroup comes from countries with diverse origins, traditions, immigration circumstances, socio-economic and educational levels, and degrees of language proficiency.

According to the Census 2000 data (United States Department of Commerce, 2004) the Hispanic population in the United States in 1990 was 22.4 million people compared to 35.3 million in 2000. This 57.9% increase was compared to the 13.2 increase for the total population. Of these 35.3 million Hispanic people, 76% of America’s Hispanics lived in the South or West regions of the United States. These regions are concentrated in the states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, and New Jersey. The largest concentration of the Hispanic population came from California (11.0 million) and Texas (6.7 million). This means 50 percent of the Hispanic population is dominated in these two states. Census 2000 data (United States Department of Commerce, 2004) reports the Spanish/Hispanic/Latino population in the State of Texas is 6,669,666 persons or 32% of the total population.

Ramos (2004) reports, that by 2030 Hispanics will constitute 18% of the total United States population. By 2050, this percentage will rise to 22%, in 2075 29%, 33% in 2100, and in the year 2125 Hispanics will comprise 36% of the population.
Ramos (2004) refers to this growth as a demographic and cultural revolution which will change the day to day lives of United States citizens and more significantly will alter the power structure of this country. He states nothing will remain untouched by this transformation in the Hispanic population.

Households and Labor

Over 81% of Hispanics live in what the United States Census bureau refers to as family households. Family households consist of a household with one or more people living together who are related by birth, marriage or adoption (United States Department of Commerce, 2004). Fifty-five percent of these households are married couple families. Of the total population, nearly 71% of all men participated in the American labor force, and 70% of Hispanic men participated. Nearly 58% of all women of the total population participated in the labor force, with 53% of Hispanic women participating (United States Department of Commerce, 2004). It is also noted that Hispanics are much less represented in the white collar segment of the workforce.

Hispanic men held 26.1% of all production, transportation, and materials moving jobs in the United States in 2000 (United States Department of Commerce, 2004). Hispanic men also held 22% of construction, extraction, and maintenance positions, and 19% of service occupations. The largest disparity in occupations occurs in the management and professional fields. Hispanics men hold 14.6% of these management and professional positions. Hispanic women hold 34.8 percent of sales and office occupations, 25.6% of service jobs, and 22.9% of management and professional employment.
Native Born and Language Speaking


Documented by the 2000 Census Bureau, 18% of the United States total population spoke a language other than English at home. Over 75% of Hispanics speak a language other than English at home, with 99% speaking Spanish at home. Over 21% of the Hispanic population speaks only English, 40% speak non-English and English very well at home, and over 41% speak non-English and English less than very well at home. In Texas 27% of the total population speaks Spanish and 12.3% speak English less than very well (United States Department of Commerce, 2004).

Income and Poverty

Average family incomes for Hispanic families in 2000 (United States Department of Commerce, 2004) was $34,397 versus the total population average family income of $50,046. Median income of full-time, year-around working Hispanic males was $25,400 compared to $37,100 for all male workers in the population. Median income for full-time,
year-round working, Hispanic females was $21,600 in comparison to $27,200 for all women.

Among the Hispanic population in the United States (United States Department of Commerce, 2004) 22.6% were considered to be living in poverty compared to 12.4% for the total United States population. These lower figures contribute to the economic circumstances of Hispanic families, circumstances that also have the potential to impact their involvement in school-centered activities. Parents, in an effort to provide more for their families, could be working more and participating less.

### Graduation Rates

Scriber (1999) reported that Hispanic children are more likely to drop out of high school than children from any other ethnic group. Based on the observations and perceptions from her research, she declares Hispanic children at an early age disengage, or begin to view school as irrelevant, uninteresting, and not meeting their needs. Of the 80% graduation rate for the overall population, Hispanics have a 52% high school graduation rate. Only 10% of the Hispanic population holds a bachelor’s degree or more in comparison to 24% of the total population. These discrepancies often are attributed to minority children, their families, homes, and their cultures (Bartolome & Balderrrama, 2001; Carter, 1970; Krashen, 2006).

### Hispanic Families and Educational Practices

Since the loosening of immigration laws in 1965, Hispanics have now become the largest minority group in the United States (MacDonald, 2004; Ortiz, 1995). With this
population growth public school educators have had to adjust their thinking and actions to accommodate Hispanic students, sometimes becoming overwhelmed and vexed in the process. Moll (1999) states, based on the demographic reality of urban cities and public schools in the United States, minority children and their families are now the majority. Moll (1999) refers to this phenomenon as a minority-majority. This term is relevant for researchers and educators interested in Latino demographic trends that indicate Latino student enrollment will continue to increase (Casas, Ryan, & Kelly-Vance, 2006).

Garcia (2001) feels that this population boom reveals that instead of educators recognizing the cultural background and experiences of Hispanic children and their families they have come in the crossfire academically, politically, economically, and socially. Laws such as the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 were created and funded to ensure there were proper bilingual educational programs in public schools to enhance the academic progress of minority students (Krashen, 2006). According to Krashen (2006) the positive results seen from these laws began to fade when the Baker de Kanter Report was published in 1981 and garnered attention. The Baker de Kanter research conclusions did not find results that would warrant bilingual education for students in California. Those opposed to public funding aimed at assisting minority students in bilingual programs used this report to defend their argument. Opposition to bilingual programs persisted with some states creating ballot measures for citizens to vote advocating “English only” programs in schools. In 1997, California was one such state. Backed by anti-bilingual activist Ron Unz, a Republican candidate for governor and multimillionaire software developer, Unz used much of his own money to advance
his beliefs. His campaign targeted Hispanics and capitalized on citizens’ discontent with public schools. Much of his rhetoric employed stereotypical views of Hispanics as lazy, unemployed, and perennial abusers of social programs. Explicitly targeting bilingual education as the underlying cause for these social issues, Unz felt these literacy programs discouraged assimilation into the dominant culture (Crawford, 1998).

Unz’s movement became California Proposition 227 which would effectively make illegal public school instruction in any language other than English (MacDonald, 2004). The passage of this bill by voters was viewed by many educational stakeholders as limiting Hispanics’ quest for a stronger literacy education (Crawford, 1998; MacDonald, 2004; Ward, 2006). MacDonald (2004) insists those who promote an English-only agenda believe, “one of the main purposes of public schools in the United States has been to Americanize the diverse immigrant peoples” (p.1).

Unfortunately, this ideology only perpetuates deficit assumptions or beliefs about diverse populations. Barton (1997), Carney & Ruge (1997), England (2004), Purcell-Gates, (1995), Taylor & Whittaker (2003) and Villenas (2002) characterize deficit perspectives as those that focus on persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and what these persons or their environment supposedly lack relative to the dominant society. Such perceived deficits could include low intelligence, poor parenting skills, lack of concern for school achievement of their children, lack of involvement in children’s education, and limited literacy skills and practices, especially in the home. Often teachers, principals, and public schools as a whole can fall victim to these deficit beliefs about Hispanic families (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Valdes, 1996). These deficit perspectives may result in the devaluing of children, their families, and the
literacy activities in their home because they reflect on a limited or non-existent understanding of diverse families and a narrow vision of their home-based literacy practices (Barton, 1997; Compton-Lilly, 2004). To make assumptions based on lack of knowledge of a marginalized group, as Hispanic families, “…generates pedagogical decisions and moves that are uninformed, inappropriate, and hence ineffective…” (Purcell-Gates, 1995, p. 188).

Many educators believe literacy learning only occurs or is learned in a school-based setting (Barton, 1997; McCaleb, 1994; Volk & Long, 2005). In a recent study Volk & Long (2005) documented statements from various educators about diverse learners which indicated that deficit beliefs and assumptions are not as rare as one would like to think. Their research documented public school educators’ deficit belief system about Hispanics that bears only slight similarity to reality for Hispanic families and households.

Myth 1: Hispanic families do not value education.
Truth: All Hispanic participants in the study valued education and saw education as important to life and work.

Myth 2: If Hispanic parents cared for their children, they would read to them and teach them the way it is done in school.
Truth: Hispanic parents supported their children’s learning in multiple, effective ways. Some were school-like, for example helping with homework and reading to their children and others were more home-based. Examples of home-based activities include storytelling, using family recipes, reading from the Bible.

Myth 3: Children and families in Hispanic homes participate in limited literacy practices and activities.
Truth: Hispanic families participated in many literacy activities in their home.

Myth 4: Children and families in Hispanic homes have few literacy resources.
Truth: Hispanic families have abundant literacy resources. Literacy learning is many times socioculturally based and supported by a network of people, varying in age and ability. Often a more experienced literacy
learner will assist or “scaffold” literacy practices or experiences to a less experienced learner (p. 14-16).

It is many of these same myths that many assume contribute to low education gains and the considerable trailing of Hispanics compared to their peers (Cairney & Ruge, 1997; Carter, 1970; Purcell-Gates, 1995). Linked to these myths are the perceptions of literacy learning, school, and education and the importance of these perceptions. As Carter (1970) discusses, each are different and diverse learners that may have positive attitudes toward education while viewing the school, educators, and learning requirements negatively. Hispanics view school as an “institutional arm of the dominant American society” accepting it as necessary to be successful, but, the practices and expectations of the school and educators are often not fully understood (p. 135). Carter (1970), Valdes (1996), and Villenas, (2002) found there is a strong disconnect between the relevant world of Hispanics and the schools they attend. This disconnect often creates conflict between Hispanic parents, educators, and the school. This disconnect may also lead educators to assume minority parents do not participate in school activities and therefore do not care for their children’s schooling. Paratore (2001) and Paredes-Scribner (1999) counter this view with a generalization that many Hispanics do not know how to participate or do not perceive the need because the school is the authority for education. Lack of trust and acceptance of the schools are at the core of the perceived lack of inaction of Hispanic families.

Vygotsky and the Sociocultural Approach to Literacy Practices

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) believed all human activities and development evolve in cultural and linguistic contexts and that knowledge is constructed
by internalizing social interactions around and about language and life activities. This reciprocity of social and individual processes is the foundation for learning and development and can only be fully understood when considered from a historical perspective (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2004). Vygotsky’s work was in stark contrast to researchers of the day who believed in the subjective (internal) approach and those who concentrated on the behaviorist (external) approach to learning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2004).

Sociocultural theory embraces the social and individual learning and development of individuals, all centered within a cultural context (Gadsden, 1992, 1995b). A portion of this development depends on a learner’s interaction and activities with others who have more experience with the activity (Lave & Wegner, 1991) and is referred to as the zone of proximal development. Many times this participation with a more experienced person involves the child, and an older sibling, parent, caregiver, or teacher, and is referred to as the zone of proximal development. Morrow (1993) states interactions between children and their parents or caregivers offer many social opportunities to observe and participate in activities of their culture. It is through these opportunities that children begin to individually process and become better skilled at acquiring knowledge. This synthesizing of information is what Vygotsky referred to in his theory as individual development. Contemporary researchers support the sociocultural approach in the acquisition of language, and thus literacy, as the basis for literacy learning (Benjamin & Lord, 1996; Purcell-Gates, 1995). Gibbons (2002) and John-Steiner & Mahn (2001) stress learning is scaffolded knowledge that stems from what Vygotsky refers to as semiotic mediation. Semiotic mediation includes psychological
tools that are used by the more experienced individual. These psychological tools are not invented by the experienced individual, but include practices and beliefs of the greater communities of the individuals such as language, writing, art, diagrams, and counting (Vygotsky, 1981). Contemporary researchers have added to this list calendars, paint brushes, computers, and symbol systems (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2001). John-Steiner & Mahn (2001) and Wertsch (1991) believe knowledge is not internalized immediately and directly, but rather through the application of these psychological tools as vehicles and mediators of that learning. These tools are critical in supporting and transforming mental functioning in persons. These mental functions (including literacy acquisition) can include how a person perceives himself and the world around him, his knowledge and his understanding. Wertsch (1994) believes semiotic mediation and thus psychological tools of the community, are the key to “understanding how human mental functioning is tied to cultural, institutional, and historical settings” (p.204) that shape other individuals in their acquisition of patterns and knowledge. Leinhardt (1996) affirms semiotic mediation as the larger culturally shared system of societies, such as language and activities used in acquiring knowledge. Many times these cultural, institutional, and historical settings include parents, educators, schools, immediate communities, and larger communities. It is within these contexts that individuals learn from a more experienced individual and then process the information individually.

Family history, family organization, and culture contribute to the patterns and experiences in the origins of knowledge acquisition. Children’s thoughts and learning are shaped by families, teachers, schools, and community in all matters, including physical, economic, and language (John-Steiner, 1985). Vygotsky believed these
historical foundations form the base of any study (Vygotsky, 1978). Within these historical settings are formal and informal learning settings involving people, children, and adults, with varying degrees of knowledge and expertise. Those persons assisting others with less experience and knowledge are working within what Vygotsky (1978) refers to as the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky defines this zone of proximal development “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86). Brown (1992) and Brown, Ash, Rutherford, Nakagawa, Gordon, & Campione (1993) suggest the zone of proximal development can include adults and children with varying degrees of expertise, but can also include artifacts, such as books, videos, wall displays, scientific equipment, and a computer environment intended to support learning. By expanding the zone of proximal development to include other aspects that can be referred to as funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), Brown (1992) expands research to include multiple forms of literacy that might be based in the social and cultural backgrounds of marginalized families. Studying marginalized children and families within the sociocultural framework researchers gain insight into from the following:

…human beings dynamically, with their social circumstances, in their full complexity …[with] a more complete and…a much more valid understanding of them. We also gain, particularly in the case of minority children, a more positive view of their capabilities and how our pedagogy often constrains, and just as often distorts, what they do and what they are capable of doing…(Moll, 1992a, p.239)

The effort to analyze how children and families learn while acknowledging
their culture, benefits educators (Valdes, 1996). By examining minority families from a
sociocultural perspective in the context of literacy learning and the demands placed on
them from educational institutions, researchers are coming to understand the impact
these factors have on children’s development and educational experiences (Chisери-
Strater, 1994; Gadsden, 1992; Gibbons, 2002; Gonzalez, 2001; Osterling, 2001;
Purcell-Gates, 1995). From the beginning of his research, Vygotsky understood literacy
acquisition to be the cornerstone of the sociocultural theory. It was his and other
psychologists’ social task to educate a non-literate population in the Soviet Union after
recommended that teaching should be organized in a method that reading and writing
are seen as a necessity for something, meaningful, occur naturally, and should reflect
the learner’s environment. Auerbach (1989), Paratore (2001), Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines
(1988), and Valdez (1996) structuring their literacy research on the Vygotsky
sociocultural approach found literacy is acquired in multiple settings, including family
and home environments. Examples of this acquisition include the use of magazines,
books, and the Bible in homes, counting and using money, reading bank transactions,
and discussing cultural artifacts.

Gaining knowledge outside the school-based setting counters the traditional
mainstream belief that formal literacy education is essential for literacy acquisition.
Traditional methods of literacy instruction often counter Vygotsky’s counsel to teach
literacy as a natural process (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2004). Many contemporary
classrooms have ignored the holistic approach to children’ literacy learning that
capitalizes on the interdependence of social and individual processes for a more
structured, single form of teaching literacy (Zebroski, 1994). As with many educational approaches, this may be appropriate for some learners, however public schools in the United States are educating more linguistically and culturally diverse learners than in the past. A “one-size-fits-all” model of learning is no longer appropriate (Osterling, 2001). This school-based approach includes skills based learning initiated by teachers or curriculums that lack the relevant social and cultural backgrounds and experiences student bring with them to school.

Traditional school-based approaches to literacy acquisition are often in conflict with home-based literacy practices. Educators must look beyond school-based learning and embrace families with differing sociocultural experiences and learning. What is not always accurate is the enormous amount of resources and assets families offer for advancing education (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Purcell-Gates, 1995). A method to accomplish this goal is to recognize the sociocultural aspects of a person’s life to enhance success, education, and beyond (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Huerta-Macias, 1998). Recognizing the knowledge, experiences, and culture in the homes as a foundation for literacy have the potential to contribute to successful educational practices (Gadsden, 1992; Maeroff, 1998; Moll, 1992c; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Moll et, al., 1992; Osterling, 2001).

Understanding Funds of Knowledge and Family Literacy Practices

An extension of the Vygoskian sociocultural theory is a second element of the theoretical framework guiding this research. This extension is based on understanding what researchers (Huerta-Marcias, 1998; Kloosterman, 1999; Moll 1992a, 1992b, 2000;
Moll et al., 1992; Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001; Gonzales et al., 2005;) refer to as funds of knowledge. Moll (1992a) states the research for funds of knowledge evolved from a collaborative study between education and anthropology. The primary purpose of the study was to develop innovations in teaching based upon the wealth of knowledge and skills found in local homes of Mexican families. The collaborators studied the abundance of household and classroom practices within working-class, Mexican-American communities in Tucson, Arizona. These practices, referred to as funds of knowledge, are the bodies of knowledge generated by the history and productive activities of households (Moll, 1992a; Moll et al., 1992; Moll & Gonzalez, 1997; Paredes-Scribner, 1999). Family histories, the past and present experiences of family networks, language use, employment histories, and educational histories, including the family’s practices, uses, and perceptions of literacy are just a few examples of the funds of knowledge within families and their homes (Moll et al., 1992). These “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills” are embedded in the daily lives of each of us (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). Many researchers refer to these historical, social, and cultural experiences, knowledge, and skills as a person’s sociocultural perspective (Huerta-Marcias, 1998; Kloosterman 1999; Moll, 1992b; Moll et al., 2005; Osterling, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Perez et al., 1998).

Within this sociocultural perspective are all the learning experiences embedded in one’s historical, social, and cultural background, meaning that in any learning interaction, the sociocultural perspective is at play. The teacher or parent, as the more experienced person assisting in the understanding of concepts, with the less experienced child, “scaffolds” the novice’s learning (Gee, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; Purcell-
Gates, 1995; Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000). Many times these scaffolding practices are connected to a powerful set of norms, values, and beliefs about language, literacy, and how people identify themselves (Gee, 1990; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Street, 1984, 1995). The act of scaffolding creates the possibility of incorporating certain ideologies, based on society and school mainstream discourses, within the learning. This incorporation has the potential to influence persons and how they view themselves, their learning, and their ability to assist their families with literacy thus, depending on the respective sociocultural perspectives of the novice and expert, both positive and negative learning experiences are possible.

Social and Political Factors

Often times, public schools and educators are immersed in the social and political aspects of education (Lamphere, 1992). These aspects may be rooted in meeting national and state standards and attaining success on state mandated assessments to continue receiving federal funding. Pressure is created from the top tier educational stakeholders (federal, state, and district personnel) to the lower levels (campus administrators and teachers) to achieve academic success. Gonzalez et al., (2005) refers to these as “institutional constraints” (p. 2), which often limit social research agendas that encourage and allow teachers and administrators, the power to change situations within their schools based on their “self-reflection and a deeper understanding” (p. 2). These conditions often detach educators from their student’s needs and stress the “standardization and homogenization” of their students (p. 2). Educators often feel disempowered and begin to blame parents and students, creating
a pressure to meet literacy standards devised by those lacking a true connection to all involved in education (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Smith, 2003). As this pressure filters down, many school-based educators in turn also pressure parents to assume responsibility in the quest to meet these enormous standards. The implication for parents whose children are not meeting standards are at fault due to substandard literacy in the home and/or family. Thus, school-based/valued literacy practices are stressed as intervention tools.

As Fraatz (1987) states, educators spur parents “to consent to the ways schools define educational interactions” (p. 126). This pressure often times creates an environment of hostility by educators because they openly or subtly devalue parents for their perceived deficit or lack of involvement, interest, skill, and caring (Dudley-Marling, 2000). This denigrating view by educators can create a sense of frustration and guilt for parents because they are both unsure of the school-based literacy expectations or the definition of literacy by educators is so narrow that only school-based literacy activities are valued.

Defining Literacy as a Cultural and Social Practice

Literacy defies a simple definition (Taylor, 1983; Wasik, 2004). Embracing a broader definition of literacy, which includes home and school practices, is a starting point for building positive relationships between home and school and including families as valued partners in their children’s literacy development.

As Wasik (2004) asserts, while our society places great emphasis on literacy acquisition we have not reached a readily agreed upon definition. Typically with all
learning each person employs six applications of literacy. These applications include expressive literacy (writing, speaking, visual representing) and receptive literacy (reading, listening, viewing) (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2005). They are included in our daily lives in an abundance of ways. They are an integral part of our cultural and thus social activities. McCarty (2005) refers to these applications as being the foundation of our world.

Lytle (1990), Heath (1983), Ryan, Geissler, & Knell (1994), Street (1983), Taylor (1997b), Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines (1988) also advocate for a broader conception of literacy by stressing the idea of multiple literacies. Lytle (1990) states the idea of multiple literacies stem from literacy practices that “differ from group to group within a society as well as from society to society” (p.8). Goodman (1997) stresses there are many types of literacies and many methods to enhance literacy development. Specifically referring to reading and writing, Au (1993) stresses the importance of the social context of families homes and communities to defining literacy. Au states literacy is “the ability and the willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning form printed text, in ways which meet the requirements of a particular social context” (p. 20). Valdes (1996) believes literacy should be understood to involve social practices that occur according to the everyday needs, values, and beliefs of the persons.

Conversely, literacy has also been considered as only a set of school-based reading and writing skills (Wasik, 2004). This narrow belief, according to Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988), reduces literacy to a set of limited, skill-based activities.

Gee (1992, 1996) and Purcell-Gates (1995) believe literacy is also part of a larger “Discourse” (identified with a capital D) which is embedded in the broader,
powerful, sociocultural context of each person. This Discourse, or way of being and viewing one’s world, is often not overtly taught but becomes implicit through scaffolding a person’s social, everyday practices with institutional political and ideological power (including those germane to literacy attainment) to the point that these discourses become so natural they are not questioned by those with less power and accepted as true (Fairclough, 1989, 1993).

Wasik (2004) states literacy is “conceptualized as a set of complex, multi-dimensional skills that begin at birth and develop over a person’s life from childhood to adulthood” (p.3). Purcell-Gates (1995), Gonzalez et al. (2005) and Giroux (1992) believe to understand literacy one must also view it as a cultural practice. When viewed in this way there is no room for a deficit perspective. A cultural perspective focuses on differences instead of deficit in terms of literacy attainment.

As literacy is used in culturally relevant social activities such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and visually representing, persons begin to understand the relevance and power in the attainment. Valdes (1996) describes literacy as a set of social and cultural practices woven into each person’s life. It is these practices that assist in literacy acquisition. Heath (1983) describes being literate as the ability to exhibit literate behaviors through the spoken and written interaction as a means to communicate and reflect with others. Taylor (1997) eloquently portrays literacy in a global sense by saying “literacy is a universal human right. It is not a commodity to be bought or sold, researched for profit, prescribed medicinally, or doled out for punishment” (p. 69).
Family Literacy as a Cultural and Social Practice

Just as the term literacy has multiple meanings, so does the term family literacy. A single definition is not possible because family literacy draws from several disciplines and was created without an explicit theoretical base (Handel, 1999). Morrow, Tracey, & Maxwell (1995) conclude that a definition of family literacy is a “debatable construct” (p. 2). Taylor (1997) indicates that “no single, narrow definition of family literacy can do justice to the richness and complexity of families and literacy” (p. 99). Barton (1997) states, that there is a difficulty in defining family literacy because it means different things to different people. He affirms in today’s society the concept of family and the households they inhabit are far reaching. Families include several people or a few people, related and unrelated, with children or without, single-parent or multi-generational. The notion of literacy is also multi-faceted including many diversified approaches and beliefs. Many times definitions overlap because beliefs, concepts, elements, relationships, and practices differ based on the people involved and differing circumstances (De Bruin-Parecki, Paris, & Siedenburg, 1997; Handel, 1999; Morrow, Paratore, Gaber, Harrison, & Tracey, 1993; Morrow et al., 1995). With the many broad meanings, definitions, and approaches Morrow et al. (1995) states,

family literacy is composed of both mainstream and non-mainstream families, that literacy extends beyond 'school-based' activities into the daily, functional use of literacy by families, that family literacy activities reflect the ethnic, racial, and cultural heritages of families, and that family literacy efforts can be initiated by organizations outside of the families. (p. 2)

The authors continue by stating “family literacy refers to a complex concept associated with many different beliefs about the relationships between families and the development of literacy (p.2). This broader perspective of family literacy is believed
much greater and more appropriate method for viewing family literacy (Auerbach, 1989; Morrow et al., 1995; Taylor, 1997). A narrow, school-based definition that stresses only reading and writing skills is believed to limit the relationships, development, and practices between literacy and families (Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Huerta-Macias, 2002; Gee, 2000; Morrow et al., 1995; Morrow & Paratore, 1993; Paratore, 2001; Taylor, 1983, 1997). Family literacy should involve parents, children, and extended family members and reflect literacy acquisition in functional and natural situations utilizing the customs, beliefs, values, and thus the total way of life of families (Delgado-Gaitain & Trueba, 1991; Huerta-Macias, 2002; Paratore, 2001; Taylor, 1997).

Instead of addressing family literacy with a specific definition some researchers, organizations, and legislators promote approaches to family literacy to assist in literacy acquisition. In 1995, the United States Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement proposed researchers and practitioners of family literacy gather information on family literacy. In an effort to better understand the concept of family literacy this panel wrote their view of family literacy. They felt family literacy could be thought of in two ways, a more school-based, skills approach or a more natural, holistic literacy approach used in the context of a person’s daily life (Benjamin & Lord, 1996). Handel (1999) included three meanings, or approaches in her book *Building Family Literacy in an Urban Community* she found most dominant.

The first meaning includes an adult engaging in literacy activities with a child. These activities and practices are not part of a program or intervention. These activities occur naturally within the home and family setting, and an adult is typically assisting in
the literacy development of the child. These practices are based on social and cultural activities and practices.

The second includes school-based interventions in which adult caretakers of children are shown methods to help their children with reading and writing. The foundation for these practices is built on the idea that the caregiver is the child’s first teacher and the intervention program will “encourage or educate family members in ways which to promote the child’s academic success” (p. 6). These practices focus on the idea that parents exert a great deal of influence on children’s literacy development.

The third, prevalent family literacy practice is also an intervention program. These programs are specifically designed to promote inter-generational literacy acquisition. An example involves adults looking at children’s books, making predications, relating the story to their prior experiences, and practicing reading the story. The adults apply these reading strategies to adult materials, then implement the reading strategies with their children. These practices foster literacy development for children and their caretakers (Snow & Tabors, 1996). These programs are centered in the belief that literacy failures continue across generations.

As evident the second and third types of programs promote planned and systematic school like activities to achieve a desired literacy knowledge outcome (Gadsden, 1994; Handel, 1999). Examples of these types of programs are the nationwide, federally funded include Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative, The Head Start Act, The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and The Reading Excellence Act of 1998 (Amstutz, 2000; National Center for Family Literacy, 2002).

Each of these laws or initiatives emphasize effort to create new strategies
to improve and expand family literacy services to economically and educationally disadvantaged families with young children through inter-generational, intervention programs. The most recent policy, The William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program states (family literacy is designed as an) “education program for the Nation’s low-income families designed to improve the academic achievement of parents and their children, especially in the area of reading” (Guidance for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Programs, 2003, p. 1). Within these Even Start Family Literacy programs, children and parents learn side by side. Children also develop the language and literacy skills they need with the support of their parents, who also have the opportunity to improve their own skills. This not only improves their educational and economical situation but also ultimately contributes to breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty and low literacy (Guidance for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Programs, 2003). The National Center for Family Literacy (2002) aligns with governmental funded programs and stresses creating family literacy programs based on four, school-like components. These family literacy programs are viewed as part of a broader effort designed to attack problems such as homelessness, welfare dependency, and joblessness (Hendrix, 1999; The National Center for Family Literacy, 2002).

These components bring parents and children into the learning environment together, are inter-generational, and intervention based. The four components include:

1. Parent Time-provides parents with information about the literacy development of their children and an opportunity to discuss their children's development.

2. Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time-includes interactive parent-child literacy activities that strengthen the learning relationship between parent
and child and help parents become more empowered in their roles as their children's primary teacher.

3. Adult Education—a family literacy component that comprises basic education, life skills, workplace skills, and ESL instruction

4. Children's Education—a family literacy component that may include instruction for preschool-aged children, elementary-aged children, and/or infants and toddlers (Amstutz, 2000; Benjamin & Lord, 1996; Gadsden, 1994; Morrow, 1995; Morrow et al., 1995; Shanahan, Mulhern, & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995).

According to Handel (1999) the first type of family literacy centers on the abundance of naturally occurring literacy activities between family members in a social and cultural context. This approach to family literacy is not based on a limited intervention approach but on a broader approach to literacy acquisition involving families, homes and culture. Handel (1999) and Gadsden (1994) state it is from these family literacy situations that educators can and should gain an understanding and appreciation of the family’s role as a source in promoting literacy acquisition. Gadsden (1994), Nistler & Maiers (1999) and Taylor (1997) report this type of family literacy also honors the diversity of literacy practices of differing cultural and social families. Both researchers believe it is this understanding that should be the foundation for all instruction. To view families and their literacy practices and methods of attainment from a limited, intervention perspective as most educational public policies do disregards those it is meant to assist the most. Denny Taylor (1981) who first coined the phrase family literacy in her dissertation research of reading and writing skills and activities in home settings offers a definition or approach to family literacy. This approach stresses the recognition of culture, community, language, and experiences families utilize everyday as a means to further empower families through literacy events. Taylor (1997a) continues by stating “the process of defining family literacy cannot be left in the
hands of those outside the families and communities that are affected by the decision-making process" (p.4). Barton (1997) sustains this belief by emphasizing family based sharing of literacy experiences supports and expands the range of literacy activities in the home and encourages parents to incorporate those activities within their own social and cultural context. It is this view of family literacy that can better serve families by creating a definition based on the wealth of naturally occurring family literacy practices within the home and not through a school-like family literacy program created to address the societal issues of homelessness, unemployment, and welfare.

Evolving Perspectives on Family Literacy: Programs versus Practices

Morrow et al. (1995) reports the relationship between families and education has their earliest roots in the research of anthropology and sociology. And with these studies, anthropological and sociological researchers gain a greater understanding of these relationships. Leichter (1974) indicates this is in contrast to a more narrow understanding of the family-education dynamics of educators that stress a deficit view of marginalized families and their education. The genesis of the term and concepts surrounding family literacy stems from a three-year study by researcher Denny Taylor in 1981 upon the completion of her dissertation and subsequent 1983 publication of her book *Family Literacy: Young Children Learning to Read and Write*. Taylor documented the daily family literacy practices and activities of six middle class Anglo families. By studying literacy within the social context of families, Taylor (1981, 1983) recorded the various ways these families acquire and use literacy, ultimately creating a framework to view literacy from multiple perspectives, including the home environment. The research
by Taylor is important in the field of literacy because she created an added dimension that focused on the importance of families, homes, social and cultural aspects, experiences and practices, and existing literacies all in the context of literacy attainment.

In a more recent study of family literacy within urban families, Compton-Lilly (2003) documents the diverse home-based and school-based literacy practices of 10 marginalized families living in urban communities. Compton-Lilly also records how these practices are situated within mainstream discourses of the dominant society. These dominant discourses are often based on negative assumptions about marginalized families, their literacy practices, and parental involvement in the education of their children.

As the concepts of family literacy evolved and garnered more attention, differing practices and views appeared in research as well as United States governmental legislation. Researchers documented many family literacy practices within various social and cultural homes, groups, and communities (Delgado-Gaitan 1987, 1990; Goldenberg, Reese & Gallimore, 1992; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Weinstein-Shr, 1993). Researchers gathered a multitude of data about the concepts of literacy including reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representation as a means to guide programs and practice. Also during this time the United States government began funding family literacy programs framed as a means of intervention to eradicate illiteracy within marginalized families while boosting the economic well being of the individuals. In addition, these federally funded family literacy programs were viewed as a method to increase parental involvement with children through
school-based literacy practices. This involvement was viewed as a means to greater academic success for the children. United States legislation first addressed family literacy in 1994 in the Improving America’s Schools Act (1994). State education agencies interested in receiving a portion of the funding began to promote the creation of family literacy programs centered on school-based family literacy activities as a means to combat unemployment and welfare dependency (Auerbach, 1997).

Some researchers (Auerbach, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Taylor, 1993) state this deficit approach to family literacy promotes assumptions that are not valid. The idea that family literacy practices should be created and promoted on the foundation that marginalized families are illiterate, economically disadvantaged, do not care about education, and have no involvement in their children’s education is false (Auerbach, 1989; Carter, 1970; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Paratore, Melzi, Krol-Sinclair, 1999; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Taylor, 1993, 1994). While these assumptions are false, Auerbach (1989) feels many family literacy practices still continue to transmit traditional school-based activities to minority families and homes, based on these negative beliefs. These deficit assumptions include:

1. Minority children come from literacy impoverished homes where education is not honored or championed.

2. Family literacy involves a one-way transfer of skills from parents to children.

3. Success is determined by parents’ ability to support and extend school-based activities and practices in the home.

4. School practices are adequate and home circumstances will dictate who succeeds.

5. Parents’ own problems hinder positive family literacy contexts.
It has been documented in research that minority parents value, support, and encourage their children’s literacy development like mainstream parents (Baron, 1997; Volk & Long, 2005). Researchers also have reported the wealth of literacy knowledge, experiences, skills, and resources within families and homes (Auerbach, 1989; Morrow, 1993; Purcell-Gates, 1995), and Volk & Long (2005). It is also documented that these resources are often untapped by educators (Heath, 1983; Moll, 1988, 1992b; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Volk & Long, 2005). These researchers advocate if educators are interested in assisting minority families with literacy acquisition they should truly listen and respond to the needs of families. Cairney & Ruge (1997) believe that without knowing and hearing the viewpoints of minority families, educators make negative assumptions or preconceived notions about minority families that can limit educational success.

Educators’ focus should not be on a deficit perspective or advocating traditional, school-based family literacy practices. The attention should be on recognizing the wealth of literacy knowledge and skills in the home. August & Hakuta (1998), Cummins (2000), Freeman & Freeman, (1994), Griego-Jones & Fuller (2003), Romo & Falbo, (1996) affirm this belief. These researchers believe to gain complete educational success for Hispanic students that educators must begin to alter the traditional views, relationships, and interactions among parents, and students, between schools and their communities. Connected to these views, Osterling (2001) believes educators, either consciously or unconsciously, “apply outdated theoretical models and paradigms with devastating effects on important segments of our student population” (p. 64). These models are often based on traditional, mainstream, middle class views and methods of
dealing with minority students and parents (Landes, 1965; Osterling, 2001). Osterling (2001) refers to this as “tightening the screw” on families to ensure they meet the dominant mainstream society standard of literacy education instead of honoring what they are doing in the home to promote literacy (p. 64). Over thirty years ago, Carter (1970) advocated the same idea for educators and schools. He stressed schools often made their primary role with minority students to reeducate and convince the students to accept the dominant, middle-class culture. He states schools thought this was their function in society. This was done to make the disadvantaged children “like other ‘successful’ (that is, middle class) children” (Carter, 1970, p. 37). In contrast Osterling (2001) and Cairney & Ruge (1997) believe schools should become learning communities for all parents, students, and educators, understanding and promoting differing, creative learning styles, cultural perspectives, and world views.

The purpose of this study is to document current home-based family literacy practices within a Hispanic family and to understand how these practices interface with school-based expectations expressed by educators. Contextual information concerning Hispanics in the United States including past and current perspectives, the impact these perspectives could have on educational attainment, the sociocultural factors and learning style as well as the funds of knowledge within Hispanic families, and the relationship all the factors have to literacy and family literacy acquisition. This information is the foundation to the three research questions guiding this study. These questions include:

1. What are the past home-based and school-based family literacy practices within the homes of each of the Hispanic parents?

2. What are current home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family that support literacy acquisition?
3. How do the current home-based family literacy practices interface with school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators?
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the sociocultural perspectives of a Hispanic husband and wife in terms of their own school and home-based family literacy practices and experiences and also to document how these experiences interface with school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators using an ethnographic case study approach.

Within the context of these experiences the study documents certain implicit and explicit messages received from teachers and schools by these individuals during their time as students and now as parents. This study will detail these messages and their effects and also substantiate the literacy practices occurring in the home. To accomplish this goal, a qualitative approach using interviews, observations, and field notes was used. As data was gathered, the researcher developed a grounded theory based on the constant comparison method of data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1998).

Three broad research questions guided my data collection and analysis:

1. What are the past, home-based family and school-based literacy practices within the homes of each of the Hispanic parents?
2. What are current, home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family that support literacy acquisition?
3. How do the current, home-based family literacy practices interface with school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators?

Research Design

This study uses an ethnographic case study approach to gather data based
on the guiding questions and providing an open framework for examination and thick
description of the culture in the family setting of the two case studies. The choice of
qualitative research for this study is modeled after Taylor’s (1981) in that my purpose is
similar to hers, to study family literacy. Taylor wanted to develop “a new understanding
of the local and distinctive meanings and uses of literacy in the lives of people” (p. 89).

Ethnography Rationale

According to Glesne (1999), “Ethnography comes from the anthropological
tradition of illuminating patterns of culture through long-term immersion in the field,
collecting data primarily by participant-observation and interviewing. The analysis of
data focuses on description and interpretation of what people say and do” (p. 9).
Ethnography allows the researcher to represent the shared beliefs, practices, and
behaviors of the culture to be studied. Spindler & Spindler (1987) validate the use of
ethnography as a research discipline by stressing that the goal is to discover the cultural
knowledge persons have and how it is used in social situations. They also stress the
social and cultural dynamics involved in context of literacy and propose ethnography as
a means to document these dynamics. Using ethnography in the context of literacy
studies, McCarty (2005) states:

Capturing the complexity of literacies and persons within ever-changing social
and institutional contexts requires a methodology capable of attending to the fine-
grain details of everyday discursive practices and the organization with the larger
cultural and historical frames. (p. xxii)

In agreement with McCarty, Szwed (2001) stresses ethnography as “the only means for
finding out what literacy really is” (p. 427).

The characteristics of ethnographic research customarily cited in
research literature include:

1. Theory is grounded in the data the researcher has collected through time spent with subjects and emerges from that data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Sherman & Webb, 1988).

2. Events are studied as they evolve in ‘natural settings’ or ‘contexts in process’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Gall et al., 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sherman & Webb, 1988).

3. The aim of the research is to understand experiences as closely as possible as participants feel it or live it, revealing what is thought, defined as reality, and culturally meant in the experiences. This aim is referred to as the emic perspective (Bogdan & Bilken, 1982; Erlandson et al., 1993; Gall et al., 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sherman & Webb, 1988; Spradley, 1980).

4. Human behavior is shaped in context and events cannot be understood completely if isolated from the context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Erlandson et al., 1993; Sherman & Webb, 1988).

5. Ethnographic researchers want the subjects they learn from to speak, see, think and act for themselves. These actions can reveal different meaning systems that assist in understanding cultural differences (Gall et al., 2003; Spradley, 1979).

6. The end product of the research is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Carspecken, 1996; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Gall et al., 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sherman & Webb, 1988).

The actual design of ethnographic research is considered emergent based on the understanding that information from persons interviewed, observations accomplished, and field notes documented are always flowing from previous data collected. The data are analyzed as it is collected and new directions and ideas emerge leading the researcher to new levels of understanding about the phenomenon (Gall et al., 2003; Meloy, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Taylor, 1983). By collecting the units of data, comparing and contrasting, sorting and organizing into categories, and analyzing this data, important aspects grounded in the data emerge. With these
methods, Taylor (1983) states ethnography has become a strong foundation for literacy education study as researchers “search for structures of signification in the behavior of others” (p. 101). Gonzalez et al. (2005) advocates the critical need for ethnography as the method for educational researchers in order to truly come to understand the knowledge minority cultures have without yielding to deficit stereotypes about these cultures.

Educators can move away from negative assumptions about what goes on in the households of minority families and build confident relationships with families if and only when there is real knowledge of and from families themselves. These issues are addressed through ethnographic research methods, which allow real understanding of how persons make sense of their lives. Gonzalez et al. (2005) calls this a sense-making process, which is what ethnography and the researchers purport.

In summary, the goal of ethnographic research is to provide a thick description of a culture and understand another way of life, viewpoints, and patterns of others who live by differing meaning systems beyond the researchers' own cultural background (Gall et al., 2003; Geertz, 1973; Spradley, 1980). This type of research allows the researcher, thorough analyses and reflections, to theorize practices in an effort to enhance educational practices. For all the mentioned reasons, an ethnographic stance is most appropriate for this study because my purpose is to describe the complex contexts, perceptions, and experiences of these Hispanic parents.

*Case Study Rationale*

Not only is an ethnographic stance appropriate for this study, but also the
research questions call for a case study approach. According to Gall et al. (2003), the case study approach stresses the "in-depth study of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (p. 436). Case study research also offers several advantages for researchers. These advantages include a thick description to assist readers in comparing and contrasting the case studies and offering researchers the ability to investigate unusual phenomena, ultimately gaining greater understanding. Case studies have the potential to develop grounded theories based on collected data for a certain phenomena and allow the researcher more emergent process than experimental designs offer to change focus, adopt new data-collection methods and frame new research questions.

The researcher's primary objective for this study was to closely observe the participants in natural settings that included family literacy practices and discovering cultural patterns in that behavior. This design objective allowed the researcher to study each participant and the occurring phenomenon holistically and insightfully. The design also allowed for a comprehensive description of the subjects, their memories of experiences with literacy at home, and the current perceptions and experiences with literacy at home and at public school. A systematic and thorough approach to acquiring and handling research data was developed to aid and strengthen the research design and thus the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

Setting and Participants

The setting of the study was conducted in the home of the Hispanic husband and wife who were participants for this study. This home was located in a large city in Texas
(United States). Veronica and Michael Ramirez (pseudonyms) have been married for nine years and have three children Anthony (age 15), Michael Jr. (age 10) and Anita (age 8). Michael is 40 and Veronica is 35. Each participant has a full time job and considers their family middle class. Each grew up in a lower class home, learned English as a second language, spoke mostly Spanish and limited English in the home and spoke English in school, had parents with limited formal education and attended public schools in Texas.

Gaining Entry

Entry was gained through obtaining informed consent for interviews, observations, and taking of field notes. Veronica was initially approached to discuss her potential interest in allowing me, as the researcher, to come into her family’s home for research purposes. Veronica knew me from parent-teacher interactions, as I am the reading and dyslexia teacher of the family’s two youngest children. I explained that pseudonyms would always be used in the manuscript and the family’s confidentiality always guarded. Veronica indicated she felt comfortable with this arrangement. Permission was also sought to come into the participants’ home during various times to observe, audio tape interviews, and take field notes. Michael and Veronica signed consent forms and each of the three children signed assent forms.

The researcher explained what would occur during each of these situations. It was also stressed that the information gathered would enhance the understanding of educators about the literacy experiences of Hispanic families, hopefully enhancing the educational experiences of students and their parents. The researcher also explained
that the potential participants were under no obligation to participate and could withdraw from the study at any time.

After consideration, Michael and Veronica agreed to participate in the study. The three children also agreed. Each signed the assent forms for observation and field note purposes. Once all consent forms were obtained the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Texas gave approval to proceed (Appendix A and B are examples of these forms).

Data Sources

Using multiple methods to collect data about a case study phenomenon enhances the interpretative validity of the findings through a process called triangulation (Gall et al., 2003). For this case study the use of interviews, observations, and field notes contributed to the triangulation process. After two visits I became a “part of the family” as the mother claimed and a feeling of ease with my presence became apparent. This assisted in my role as a participant-observer. I took this role with great enthusiasm. I also reassured each family member that all information given to me was relevant, would not be judged by me, and their names would be changed for the study and the city in which they lived would not be indicated. I encouraged them to not filter information, practices, and experiences, as it would alter the true dynamics of my data collection.

Interviews

The case study participants’ interviews were used to supplement data collected during observations and field notes. The parents are considered participant construct
interviewees and the interviews were used to learn how the informants structure their physical, social, and cultural world (Gall et al., 2003).

*Interview Format*

I used three basic approaches to collecting data through open-ended interviews. Each approach offered data that was relevant to creating a holistic understanding of the perspectives of each interview participant. In an effort to enhance the comfort level of the participants the researcher began data collection by encouraging each participant to discuss their personal literacy histories. These non-threatening, informal discussions were a means to discover each participant’s perceptions, understandings, and past and present experiences with literacy. No pre-determined wording of questions was used for the personal literacy histories portion of the data collection. Based on information received from the personal literacy histories, the general interview guide approach was used for subsequent interviews. During the interview process, I maintained an effort to follow interview technique protocol ensuring objective, non-confrontational and unbiased interviews (Gall et al., 2003). These protocol techniques included:

1. The use of leading questions was avoided.
2. A conscientious effort was made by the researcher to talk less than the informant.
3. A conversational mode of dialogue was used.
4. Questions were phrased in clear relevant language.

For subsequent participant interviews, I used standardized open-ended questions. Also used in interviewing was the informal conversational interview. This approach allowed me to spontaneously ask questions of the parents as I needed to
garner more in-depth data collection. Questions were respectful and asked with the objective to discover more about the multitude of lived experiences of persons in a non-evaluative style. Many times these conversational questions focused on the past and present experiences and perceptions of family literacy within their homes. It seemed that the parents realized I had an authentic and sincere concern for them in their daily literacy lives, about what they actually do and how they think about what they do. As a result a meaningful sharing relationship evolved. Often during interviews Veronica and Michael would ask me of my experiences growing up. My willingness to reveal personal information and experiences created a comfort level and allowed greater depth of responses from the research participants. This level was especially important to reach as questions were asked concerning their past home and school literacy experiences, their present experiences with literacy practices, and their interfacing with school personnel concerning the literacy acquisition of their children. Questions involving the use of the Spanish and English languages and their families were also discussed.

**Recording the Interview**

Handwritten notes, as well as audio-recording the interviews were used to record interview data. I specifically chose to accomplish both tasks to ensure I did not miss valuable data. After each interview was conducted, I went home and immediately transcribed the taped interviews while they were fresh in my mind. After each two or three interviews, depending on circumstances that were conducive for Veronica, the transcriptions were given to her for editing and verification to ensure accuracy. Veronica found no changes that were needed to the transcripts. Michael also reviewed the
transcripts for verification. After the second review it was evident that Michael was uninterested in reviewing further transcripts. Michael stated, “I trust you Mr. Page. I know you are not going to write anything we did not say.” Appendix C offers examples of the recorded interviews.

**Observations**

The observation of family literacy practices focused on the behavior of each parent in the natural home setting. Observations were also made of the three children within the home. A detailed description of the observations of the family literacy practices of the family was also produced based on the daily household literacy practices and activities. These observations helped created a thick description of the cultural phenomenon being studied.

**Recording the Observations**

Handwritten observational field notes were taken during and immediately after each observation with case study participants. For example, I made notes of the family’s interactions with each other as well as other family members and friends. I noted traditional and non-traditional literacy activities and who was involved, items used in situations requiring literacy, artifacts in the Ramirez home that would help me to better understand their lives, and how the family uses literacy in cultural and social events such as a christening and quinceneara. I wrote down anything that I felt might offer insight into the family and their multiple literacies. I found that I had to write extremely quickly. To look at the notes I imagine that only I could understand them. To
ensure I remembered everything from my notes I would go home at once and make additional notes to secure my understanding when I referred back to them during the data analysis process. Appendix D documents a sample of my notes made of observations.

**Expanded Field Notes**

Gall et al. (2003) suggests certain elements be addressed within a researcher’s field notes. These elements should be detailed and concrete, avoiding vague and over generalized interpretations. These suggested elements could include:

1. Participants’ attitudes and perceptions
2. Interactions (between participants and their children)
3. Routines (of the participants)
4. Rituals (of the participants)
5. Temporal elements
6. Interpretations
7. Social organizations (of the participants)
8. Setting
9. Subtle factors

By including these elements, my expanded field notes consist of two types. Descriptive notes are portraits of the research participants, reconstruction of dialogue, description of physical setting, accounts of particular events, and descriptions of the observant behavior. Reflective notes are my personal notes based on reflections on the methods of data collection and analysis, reflections on ethical dilemmas and conflict,
reflections on my frame of mind, and reflections of emerging interpretations (Gall et al., 2003). Each type of field notes help to further process of the interview or observation experience and is reflective in nature. It is through these field notes that connections and theories began to emerge. Specifically for this study my field notes contain explicit references to specific elements in the observations of the two case study participants interacting with their children engaging in family literacy practices, descriptions of physical settings, accounts of social and cultural events, the emerging interpretations, reflections on my thoughts, and methodology used.

Recording Expanded Field Notes

Expanded field notes were written in my personal journal and/or dictated into an audio recorder immediately after each interview and observation. This enabled me to consider biases, feelings, personal reactions, as well as provide an opportunity to reflect. Many questions for Veronica and Michael used in subsequent interview and observations evolved from these field notes. I would also use the notes when I would revisit the literature that focused on all the components of my research interest, including Hispanic families, sociocultural learning, family literacy, the idea of power within schools, and parental challenges to meet school expectations. Appendix E offers an example of my expanded field notes with reflections. An extension of the expanded field notes was the use of research memos. These memos allowed me to synthesize a wealth of data in a manageable format thus contributing to the organizing of data categories. This organization also allowed me to see relationships and to begin to develop theories. Appendix F documents an example of a research memo.
Fourteen interviews were conducted from the research participants over a six month period. The interview structure was modeled after the descriptive question-observation (Spradley, 1979, 1980). This approach highlights “grand tour” and “mini tour” questions (Spradley, 1980, p. 81). The grand tour questions are broad questions based on research questions or assumptions while mini tour questions are considered clarifying follow up questions often emerging spontaneously from the conversation. The initial interview process began with a personal literacy history from the participants. Subsequent interviews were structured based on information from previous interviews and observations.

Also for the study I assumed the role of participant observer. In this role I observed the activities, participants, and aspects of each situation. I also interacted with the study participants closely enough to establish a meaningful identity within the group (Gall et al., 2003; Spradley, 1980). This approach enabled me to get as close as possible to data in its original structure and context. The observations occurred within the home setting over the same six month period, with the last two observations taking place at a baptism and a quinceanera/family celebration. A total of sixteen observations occurred and included the male and/or female study participant interacting with the children in family literacy as well as social and cultural situations. Fourteen of the observations coincided with interviews with the research participants.

Spradley (1980) suggests that participant observers put all of their senses to work during data collection. To assist in this effort field notes based on the researchers observations, biases, feelings, personal reactions, and reflections were written in the
researcher’s personal journal and/or dictated into an audio recorder immediately after each interview and observation.

The six month timeline in chart form (Table 3.1) offers information concerning the Personal Literacy History, interview dates, and observation dates.

Table 3.1

*Data Collection Timeline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Personal Literacy History</th>
<th>Interview dates</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/21/05</td>
<td>2/7/05, 2/14/05, 2/21/05</td>
<td>Personal Literacy History and Interview/Observation/Field Note data analysis ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/2/05, 3/7/05, 3/30/05, 3/31/05</td>
<td>3/2/05, 3/7/05, 3/30/05, 3/31/05</td>
<td>Interview/Observation/Field Note data analysis ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td>4/5/05, 4/6/05, 4/26/05, 4/28/05</td>
<td>4/5/05, 4/6/05, 4/26/05, 4/28/05</td>
<td>Interview/Observation/Field Note data analysis ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/23/05</td>
<td>5/23/05</td>
<td>Interview/Observation/Field Note data analysis ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td>6/13/05, 6/14/05</td>
<td>6/13/05, 6/14/05</td>
<td>Interview/Observation/Field Note data analysis ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td></td>
<td>8/13/05, 8/27/05</td>
<td></td>
<td>Observation/Field Note data analysis ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Interpretive Validity Issues

An important aspect of the data collection procedure is to be extremely conscientious of researcher bias. Fetterman (1989) distinguishes bias in ethnographic study as potentially positive (placing participants in a more positive light) or negative (placing participants in a negative light) depending on the researcher. If bias is uncontrolled it can undermine the quality of the research. If biases are made public and tracked by the researcher they can serve to focus the research in a constructive way. The researcher must document and track these biases throughout the study as a means of increasing the reader’s confidence in the findings, as well, as enhancing the interpretation of the results. To ensure trustworthy and reliable results the researcher established procedures for strengthening the credibility of the study results and reducing any distortions made through biases. The procedures for this study included:

1. Researcher positioning—researcher interpretations are more credible and useful if the researcher uses a self-reflective process. With this process the researcher is sensitive to the role that he serves in the setting. I acknowledged my role on various levels to increase the credibility of the study. I am a member of middle-class in the United States, a researcher, a teacher of two of the children of the study participants, and a participant-observer in the study (Gall et al., 2003).

2. Colleague review—In an effort to minimize the influence of my own beliefs, assumptions, and values that may have penetrated my study without my recognition I asked each of my dissertation committee members to review all aspects of my findings (Gall et al., 2003).

3. Triangulation—By using multiple data collection methods (interviews, observations, and field notes) the credibility of the study is enhanced by removing biases that might result from relying on data and findings not corroborated by multiple sources (Gall et al., 2003).

4. Member checking—In an effort to ensure the reality as constructed by the study participants (emic perspective), I had the study participants review statements made in the report for accuracy and completeness (Gall et al., 2003). Several excerpts were selected by the researcher for study
participants to read to ensure proper documentation of comments and viewpoints.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

While the goal of the ethnographer is to understand the phenomena under investigation no matter what the time frame, a study must have a completion. With that in mind I interviewed and observed the Ramirez family over a six month period. The participants were informed prior to the interviews that the sessions would be on an individual and group basis with me. Participants were also told the interviews would be audio taped and notes taken to ensure completeness and accuracy. Interviews and observations were scheduled via telephone calls and electronic mail. Visits were made on different days and at different times to ensure a complete view of the family and their practices. These visits were sometimes planned a few days in advance, sometimes planned the day of, and sometimes were spur of the moment. Visits during the typical weekday working hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. did not occur as each parent worked. The family was agreeable to this approach to my visits. Visits were made on weekday evenings and nights as well as weekends. I also attended a quinceanera of a Hispanic female youth that is a family friend, a Baptism and family celebration of the God-child of Michael and Veronica, and a party at the Ramirez home with their family and friends.

I followed the data collection procedures described by Spradley (1989) which indicates qualitative research studies typically progress through three stages. The three stages included a descriptive stage in which observations and interviews tended to be general in scope; a focused stage when the characteristics of the phenomenon under
study that are most engrossing were distinguished and the researcher collects deeper erudition about this narrower range of features; and a selected stage when the focal point shifts to cultivating and deepening the understanding of those elements that have emerged as most essential.

After the initial introduction and explanation of the anticipated process of data collection, the study participants discussed their personal literacy histories with me. On these two occasions the Ramirez family offered insight into their views and uses of, as well as their experiences with literacy. I took notes during these informal interviews. I chose not to audio tape the two personal history interviews with Michael and Veronica. I wanted to make them feel as comfortable as possible while building a sense of rapport and confianza. Confianza is the Spanish word for trust. This trust, according to Gonzalez et al. (2005), is culturally very important to for Hispanics especially in circumstances such as research and data collection. Michael and Veronica discussed their family experiences while growing up, their literacy practices and activities in their childhood home environments, as well as their experiences while attending public school. I found I had to take notes quickly as I knew I had to get the information written on paper as it was being said because I could not refer back to an audio recorder for verification. Once each interview was over I immediately (in my car and at home) expanded the “short hand” version of my notes to ensure I remembered important points. I refer to this expanded version as my research memos. Notes made on these research memos include areas of concern, biases, strengths, limitations, categories, and themes.
After the second informal interview, I began data interpretation via a coding system to assist the interpretation process. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) state “coding qualitative data enables the researcher to recognize and recontextualize data, allowing a fresh view of what is there” (p. 45). According to Miles & Huberman (1994), this coding and categorizing system allows the researcher to assign units of meaning to the information compiled. The information is compiled in “chunks” of words, phrases, sentences, segments, or meanings significant to the study. Codes and categories are developed to retrieve and organize these “chunks” thereby drawing conclusions from the data. Coding also involves constant reading and reviewing the collected data to ensure well-founded interpretation.

These interpretations occur from the use of the grounded theory approach called constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach is a continual process of comparing and revising the significant meanings and segments in and across these categories. This constant comparison approach assists the researcher in determining a set of well-defined categories with clear coding instructions (Gall et al., 2003). After the second interview I began to make selections from the data of codes and themes that were evident. The movement from coding to interpretation is central to the data analysis process. I realized as it was early in the data collection process a limited number of codes and themes would be apparent, yet would begin to offer me an understanding of relationships among and within the data.

Explaining the coding process is imperative to the data analysis of this study. As the researcher I did not use a computerized software program for coding. I felt that I could code the interviews and observations. This was done purposefully as I wanted to
work through the coding process manually to fully learn all I could. As stated after the second personal literacy history interview I began coding data. For interviews that were not audio taped (interview 1, 2, and 3) I returned home and typed my notes from the hand written version. This allowed me to reexamine what was said while typing as well as afterward while reviewing. With the two typewritten notes in hand I read the data line by line. I manually documented to the side of each line (or set of sentences) a code. As I completed the coding I began a tally sheet to document how many times each code was found in my notes. I then placed each code as a heading on an index card. Under each heading I noted the interview date this code was found and how many times it was found to assist with the organization of information as well as conceptualizing the data. For these interviews the codes that were documented varied. For example, categories such as racism, ethnic labels, bilingual speaking, Spanish speaking at home, family relations, self esteem, family literacy practices in the home, negative teacher comments, teacher encouragement, segregation within school, and public school experiences occurred (An example of the tally sheet coding system is documented in Appendix G). These codes were used as a guide to form new questions for future interviews. I tried to always form what I refer to as “skeleton questions” for the next interview, meaning that the codes would form a starting point for a question. Sometimes these questions got to be asked during the next interview, sometimes they did not. If a subsequent interview offered differing information I would not stop the flow of conversation to inject these questions. I would find a more opportune time later in the interview process.

It should be noted that after each interview and observation I continued the routine that I established. I traveled to my home (about five minutes away), transcribed
the interview (via a speech recognition software system), created my research memos from field notes, and coded. The process of coding continued after each interview based on the transcriptions and research memos. Throughout the interviews many narratives from Veronica and Michael about their experiences and knowledge transpired. Coding these narratives within the interviews offered insight into the social and cultural interactions of the study participants. The narratives also assisted in my thinking about the data in multiple contexts.

A constantly evolving list of codes emerged after each subsequent interview and observation. I also found codes became less broad and more defined and specific the more I worked through the coding process, often creating sub-codes. These sub-codes also frequently intersected and overlapped. I then created additional index cards to assist with the organization of information. I then returned to the initial two personal literacy history interviews to determine if I had overlooked certain codes. I found numerous new codes and sub-codes. I then re-tallied to give a clearer understanding and created new index cards.

I found myself revisiting all transcriptions and tally sheets over and over throughout the data collection process. As I did this, data and codes became denser and I became more aware of the contexts in which issues where being discussed in interviews and observed. The denser the codes the more information I had. After each coding session I also began forming interpretations and conclusions. This movement also helped me realize that some data would not be used in the study for it was not coded enough to be linked for interpretation. An example included the code "ethnic
labels.” This was a very interesting topic focusing on what Veronica considered herself, as a Mexican-American, Hispanic, or Latino(a) but it did not contribute fully to the study.

From this coding came connections and interpretations that created themes that became the foundations for theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I asked myself questions about the data, codes, and relationships discovered. I realized the data had moved beyond the initial four questions. This realization came after about six interviews and observations. The issues originally addressed in the four questions were similar but soon it was evident that three research questions needed to be created that were more aligned with the themes emerging in the study. I constantly monitored themes and connections with subsequent coded transcripts to ensure I did not overlook additional information. This interpretation cycle continued throughout the data collection/coding process until a complete picture of data was accomplished.

Throughout this process I also persistently immersed myself in the reading of relevant family literacy literature to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the fundamentals of the topics within my study. I found this to be extremely beneficial for me as I was constantly finding new research sources enhancing my understanding. I also found this continued reading assisting me in being aware of new codes in the data. I utilized the University of North Texas Library extensively often purchasing books that I found would contribute to a more complete comprehension.

I feel it is also important to note that as I visited the Ramirez home more and more the initial, more formal interview and observation feeling of the sessions lessened and soon evolved into conversations and exchanging of beliefs, views, and experiences about many issues including those involving literacy. These conversations became
more informal offering a trust and comfort level for Michael and Veronica to share information about their families, educational histories, their hopes and goals for their children, as well as their feeling of frustration and guilt with their children’s teachers, principal, and school as a whole. The feeling of confianza toward me became evident.

Background and Experiences

I feel it is important at this point to document my background, philosophy, and feelings as a research and teacher who attempts everyday to assist Hispanic families and their children feel successful. This personal examination of information provides a context for certain perceptions and biases I may have concerning issues within this dissertation.

During my life I have been involved in events that have contributed to my philosophy of literacy attainment, including home-based and school-based education practices. I grew up and lived the majority of my life in a small Southeast Texas town of 110 people. I went by bus to the next largest town of 1500 people to attend school. We lived in a mobile home on the outskirts of the small town. I am the oldest of three boys and my parents were married for thirty-five years until their recent divorce. My father quit high school, entered the military and obtained his General Education Degree (GED). After having various jobs, he completed several courses at a local junior college becoming a Master Electrician. After several years in this position, my father suffered a major back injury, basically leaving him unable to work.

My mother dropped out of high school due to her pregnancy with me and later completed her GED before also taking several classes at the local junior college. For
the majority of my school life she was a stay-at-home mother. We were considered poor but I excelled in school. I always viewed my education as a method to move to a life that included more money and material substance. My parents were not overly involved in my education. There was an unspoken view in our home that the school “knew best” and was not challenged or questioned. My father always stressed that I should get A’s. My elementary grades reflected A’s, B’s, and an occasional C. My true realization that my grades were a means to “get a better life” began in junior high school. It was at this point A’s were viewed as a necessity by me.

Our family participated in many home-based literacy activities, but similar to the Hispanic family I researched, my family did not understand the difference between home-based and school-based literacy. I often felt guilty because our home was not more like the school in terms of stressing reading. I graduated third out of my class of 42 students. For years I have not considered myself a “reader” for I only understood “reading” in terms of school-based reading and literacy. Not until I began my Master of Education in Reading degree at age 30 did I understand reading through basic, everyday activities was literacy and should be valued as much as school-based literacy.

I became an educator in 1995 through the Alternative Certification training program offered by the urban school district in which I teach. I sold pharmaceuticals for nearly four years prior to becoming a teacher. I began my educational career by teaching kindergarten for four years in the southern section of the city. This school had a 100% African-American student population. Though some days were challenging I truly loved the experience. I left my kindergarten position with much hesitation to work full time toward finishing my Master of Education degree at a mid-
sized university in West Texas. During this time I also served as a permanent substitute teacher in a local public elementary school for five months.

With the encouragement of a mentor in this university I pursued admittance to a reading education doctoral program. I was accepted into a program and after graduation moved back to the large city in which I taught kindergarten. I became a Curriculum Writer/Reading Specialist for a company that produced reading curriculums. I worked in this position for 11 months and then became a Master Reading Teacher at Skinner Elementary School (pseudonym) with the public school district that I worked for previously. The student population of Skinner Elementary is 94% Hispanic, 2% African American, and 4% Anglo.

It was through this teaching position early in 2001 that I first became acquainted with Veronica Ramirez. My position as the Master Reading Teacher involved working with students struggling with reading as well as dyslexia. Michael Ramirez Jr. was in one of my dyslexia classes. Anita, Michael Jr.’s sister, was identified as dyslexic in late 2004. She began coming to dyslexia classes immediately after her identification.

I served as Master Reading Teacher for Skinner Elementary for four years. In May of 2005 I was told funding for this position was not reauthorized for the 2005-2006 school year. I now serve half time as the Talented and Gifted teacher for the same elementary school as well as half time Talented and Gifted Teacher for another elementary school.

I have taught in public schools on the elementary level for nine years. I truly enjoy teaching and can remember from age eight wanting to be a teacher.
From the beginning of my teaching career, I realized the connection I had with my students and many of their parents, even though I am of a different race. I am Anglo-American and my ancestral history includes German, Indian, and Scottish.

The parents of my students confide in me as a teacher and utilize me as a source of information, guidance, and advice concerning issues related to the success of their children. I converse with parents who are frustrated because they are diligently trying to contribute to the school success of their children but feel they receive no school recognition about the positive literacy practices occurring in the home. Parents speak to me of their guilt that they are doing all they can, yet it is not enough to meet the standards of school personnel. By connecting with my students and their families, I understand with greater depth my role as a teacher and the often damaging impact school personnel have on families. This understanding inspired me to examine my own family experiences while growing up involving school-based and home-based literacy practices. I think of the disconnect and the guilt I felt because I believed the literacy practices within my home were not adequate or correct. Through this insight I began to inquire about this topic as a researcher. The driving force behind this study is my desire to assist families to feel and to be successful while also contributing to and expanding Hispanic family literacy research.

With these experiences I have learned a great deal about how families who are marginalized in terms of their positioning within the larger community think, act, and believe about their literacy practices and experiences with public education. No matter what school I teach, many families have realized my concern for their children and confide in me as an educator. I witness parent’s concern for their children
in relation to what is happening and what their children are experiencing at school. These relationships, partnered with the concerns of the families, guide my research interest. These interests include:

1. The recognition of the abundance of funds of knowledge within the home, specifically home-based family literacy practices.
2. The experiences, roles, behaviors, and beliefs of parents and how these influence literacy practices in the home.
3. How school-based social and political issues that are often influenced by mainstream society sometimes impact these practices.

Summary

Chapter 3 documents the research methodology used in this research study. A qualitative research design incorporating an ethnographic, case study rationale was used. A discussion of the setting, participants, and the method of gaining entry is also established. The data collection procedures included interviews, observations, and the use of field notes. Specific procedures, the data collection time line, and credibility issues were also discussed.

The data analysis process included the creation of a coding system to assign units of meaning to the information compiled. As each interview, observation, and field note documentation occurred new information was coded. The multi-dimensional literacy experiences, skills, and knowledge of this family are evident. From the coded information theories were created to enhance teacher understanding of the daily, naturally occurring, home-based literacy experiences and practices of Hispanic families. Teachers also realize the home environments of Hispanic families are conducive to literacy learning, children receive assistance from their parents with literacy acquisition,
and parents do care about the literacy success of their children even when the interface
between the home-based and the school-based literacy learning creates frustration and
guilt. The underlying assumption is that this information will assist teachers and
administrators negate negative assumptions about Hispanic families and their homes in
a literacy context, understand the literacy dynamics taking place within these homes,
and use these dynamics to enhance the literacy education process of Hispanic
students.
CHAPTER 4
The Family and the Findings

The Ramirez Family

In Chapter 4, I describe the Hispanic family under study and present the information from interviews, observations, and field notes employed in this analysis. The Hispanic family lives in a large city in Texas. According to the most recent U.S. Bureau of the Census, the population of this city is 1,188,580 with 35.6% claiming to be people of Hispanic or Latino origin. The median household income for all families in the city is $37,628. Homes where languages other than English are spoken reflect 37% of the population. Persons graduating high school average 70.4% of the total population with a 49.3% graduation rate for Hispanics (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000). In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Texas’ population officially became a majority-minority state, meaning minorities within the state became the majority of the population. Much of this growth for minorities stemmed from the growing Hispanic population.

The family consists of a male and a female parent with three children. The family lives near the downtown section of the city and in the home in which the mother grew up. The neighborhood is a diverse mix of cultures and ethnicities with multiple restaurants, upscale nightclubs, commercial strip centers housing retail stores and grocery stores nearby. The three children in the family attend the city’s public school system. Enrollment for the city’s public school (pre-kindergarten-grade 12) is 161,000. Almost 70 different languages are spoken in the homes of students in the district. Hispanic students comprise 63% of this enrollment.
The parents, Veronica and Michael Ramirez, have been married for nine years. The Ramirez parents have three children, Anthony, Michael Jr., and Anita. Michael is the adoptive father of Anthony and the biological father of Michael Jr. and Anita. Veronica and Michael met when Michael was twenty-five and Veronica was twenty-one but did not marry until several years later. Michael is an inside sales representative for an equipment company and presently Veronica is a receptionist at a building materials company. Veronica has alternated between staying at home as a full-time mother to working various jobs. Michael is 40 years old and Veronica is 35. Each parent is Hispanic and descendant from people in Mexico. Veronica and Michael are both third generation citizens of the United States.

During the personal history interviews I explained I would be revealing background information in my study about them including their ethnicity. I asked each parent what ethnicity they wanted me to use to describe them as I have noticed in my literature review a variety of identifiers as Latino, Hispanic, Mexican-American. Immediately, Veronica said “American.” I agreed with that statement but challenged her to consider her ethnicity. She told me she would have to think about it. When I returned for the second personal history interview one week later, Veronica stated she and Michael discussed it and felt Mexican-American was too derogatory and preferred the identifier Hispanic.

Veronica has a broad smile and contagious laugh. She clearly loves her children and is extremely protective of them. She grew up in the city in which her own family now resides except for a period of one year at age six when her family moved to a much smaller town in central Texas. Veronica’s family moved to the smaller town for her
father’s construction job. Veronica attended 1st grade in the public school district of this town. She did not pass this grade. Veronica’s father had a heart attack and survived during this time and the family returned to the urban city after one year. Veronica entered 1st grade again in the present city’s public school district. She attended elementary, junior high and high school until tenth grade when she dropped out. Veronica became pregnant at age nineteen. She gave birth to Anthony at age twenty. Anthony’s biological father is no longer involved with Anthony or Veronica. She worked various minimum wage jobs, dated, and married Michael in 1996, two years after Michael Jr. was born. Veronica explained to me that she and Michael waited to marry because her father died, and she wanted to wait until after she had Michael Jr. Veronica is bilingual but considers English her primary language, although she grew up speaking Spanish with her family.

Veronica’s father, with whom she was very close, continued to work in construction until a stroke caused his retirement in 1976. Veronica’s mother worked various jobs including a janitor for a local school district until her retirement. Veronica’s parent’s first language was Spanish. Each also spoke some English. Both were 2nd generation born in the United States. Her father is now deceased and her mother still lives in the urban city in a nearby neighborhood. Veronica has four siblings. Her younger brother graduated from a local private university and now works for the university. He lives in the same city as the Ramirez family. He is Veronica’s only sibling to graduate with a university degree. Her sister lives in a northern section of the city, is married and has five children with another soon to be born. Veronica has a half brother and a half sister. They both live in San Antonio, Texas. Veronica is the youngest and is
not in close contact with her siblings or her mother even though her mother lives
nearby.

During the first two visits to the Ramirez home I realized that Michael was shy. While Michael was present during the interviews he did not contribute much to the
conversation. Upon follow-up visits he did warm up to my presence, offering very
thought-provoking insights on various issues. Michael cares deeply about the success
of his children. The majority of his life he grew up in the urban city where his family now
resides. According to Michael, until age six he lived with his mother in San Antonio,
Texas until she “dropped him off” in Hondo, Texas to live with his aunt and
grandmother. At age seven his father came for him and Michael came to live with his
dad and stepmother in the large, urban city he now resides. Michael has three siblings:
a half sister, a half brother who he referred to as handicapped, and a sister. He is the
youngest of these siblings. Michael’s father was a steel company supervisor and his
stepmother worked making contact lenses. Michael’s father and stepmother always
stressed success for Michael. This success included attending school for an education.
Michael graduated from a local high school at age eighteen at the urging of his
stepmother. He had decided to drop out, but with the encouragement of his stepmother
stayed in school until graduation. By this time in Michael’s life his father and stepmother
had divorced and he chose to stay and live with his stepmother instead of joining his
father and new stepmother and her five children. Michael had various jobs until he
became employed in his present position. Michael has been with the same company for
twenty-two years. Michael is bilingual but considers English his first language.
Veronica and Michael are extremely focused on the happiness of their children, taking them on various vacations as well as ensuring their daily lives are filled with play and learning. The three children in the family are Anthony (age 15), Michael Jr. (age 10), and Anita (age 8). Anthony attends the local public high school and is in 10th grade, Michael Jr. is in 5th grade, and Anita in 3rd grade. Michael Jr. and Anita attend the same elementary school. Anthony is very well spoken and intelligent, with a flair for making people laugh. He is an excellent artist. He acknowledges he really does not care for school and is not motivated to succeed academically. Near the end of the data collection process Anthony expressed his deep unhappiness with his life. He confided to his mom he was depressed and that he tried to commit suicide. Veronica immediately sought help for him. He was diagnosed as depressed by a physician. He is seeing a counselor once a week for his depression. Also during this time Anthony began to sneak out of the Ramirez home at night and take the family car. Veronica and Michael found out about these incidents and grounded Anthony. Anthony eventually ran away from home. He returned and it was decided he would live with Veronica's mother and begin attending another local high school.

Michael Jr. is a very gentle boy with a radiant smile. He grew several inches during the time I collected data. He is now a young man. Michael Jr. has a slight speech impediment. He has been in Special Education classes for reading and math since 1st grade, attends dyslexia class, and works with a speech therapist at the elementary school. Michael Jr. loves Pokeman, Digimon, and Yu-Gi-Oh cards and draws them on a large scale in a spiral notebook. Michael Jr. is very quiet until he feels comfortable with a person, then he will talk and interact more with those around him.
Anita has a beaming smile, is initially very shy and recently qualified for Special Education services in reading and math. She also attends a dyslexia class at the elementary school. She likes to read and often has a female friend over to play. Anita grew several inches during the time I spent with the family. As I spent time with the family I began to notice physical growth and maturity changes in all the children.

Anthony can speak very little Spanish, but will try to communicate with his mother at times in this language. He is in a Spanish class this school year. All three children speak English and consider English their first language.

The Ramirez home is a white wooden, tidy three bedroom home with a large tree in the small front yard. The house sits on a relatively busy corner with a concrete driveway from the street angling to the backyard. The design of the home includes three bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen with a washer and dryer, and one bathroom. All the walls are white with taupe wall to wall carpet in the rooms except the kitchen. There is a master bedroom for Michael and Veronica; Michael Jr. and Anita share a bedroom, and Anthony occupied a built-on bedroom at the back of the home prior to moving in with his grandmother.

Upon entering the home there is four step-porch which leads into the living room. Standing in the living room, to the left is the doorway to the master bedroom, immediately in front is the doorway to Michael Jr. and Anita’s bedroom, to the right is the open area of the dining room which leads to the kitchen in the back of the home. The back door of the home also leads to the built-on bedroom Anthony inhabited. In the living room there is a large screen television, a large couch, treadmill, and a cabinet with a glass door holding movies purchased through retail establishments. Family pictures
are on the walls. The dining room has a long rectangular table with seating for six. One cabinet and an up right piano sit in this room. The furniture is adorned with trophies and ribbons won by the children in school, cards, mail, bottles of wine, school work completed by Michael Jr. and Anita, and the house telephone.

The walls of the dining room display a clock, pictures of the children, and an inspirational plaque. A window air conditioner is mounted sits in the dining room window as one of the methods to cool the home during the spring and summer. Prominently hung on the opposite wall is a single 8-inch by 10-inch picture of Veronica’s father. The kitchen has a gas-burning stove, a refrigerator with a calendar and the children’s school and artwork adhered to it. There is also a calendar on the wall by the doorway that leads to the dining room. The washer and dryer are also located in the kitchen. Several wall-mounted cabinets, as well as, one free-standing cabinet occupy the kitchen.

Michael Jr. and Anita’s bedroom has two single beds. The beds sit opposite each other flush against their respective walls. Their bedroom has a television with a cabinet holding video games and a video game machine hooked up to it, books on shelves, cabinets holding toys, and a rug partially covering the hardwood floor.

The home environment is always active with friends and family members visiting. The smaller children can often be seen playing outside and Anthony is often playing video games with Michael Jr. in his bedroom. The large screen television in the living room is used as an information source as well as entertainment. The television was on during each visit I made, no matter what time of the day or evening I arrived. I noted no magazines or newspapers at the home. When asked, Veronica stated she reads them sometimes at work but the family does not have these in their home.
Memories While Growing Up

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1978) and Bartoli (1995) describe in each of their research studies the value in analyzing the histories, actions, and beliefs of parents in the framework of education. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1978) believes this is important for educators to understand because these parents not only bring their children to school but also their prior memories and experiences of their own schooling including interactions with parents and teachers. According to Bartoli (1995), Lawrence-Lightfoot (1978), and Moll (2001) it is these educational histories of parents that can contribute in understanding families, their motives, and actions with schools and teachers in present day. This belief is the foundation of this section of the present study.

Relevant in the present study of family literacy funds of knowledge, data were collected based on the memories of Veronica and Michael Ramirez while growing up. This information will assist in answering my first research question within this study (What are the past, home-based family and school-based literacy practices within the homes of each of the Hispanic parents?). These memories offer valuable insight into the early lives of two Hispanic children and (1) their home-based family literacy practices, (2) the actions and beliefs of each of their parents, (3) the school-based activities and practices each where involved with, and (4) their experiences attending public school. The four aspects of memories of this question came to be as I realized each currently influence Veronica and Michael.
Memories of Home-Based Family Literacy Practices While Growing Up

My interest in the memories of Veronica and Michael about their home-based family literacy practices while growing up unfolded during the data collection process of this study. I wondered what (1) home-based family literacy practices occurred, (2) how frequently these practices occurred, and (3) who was involved. These memories of occurrences and practices many times evolved from the familial funds of knowledge in each parents’ household.

Contrary to what she initially indicated, Veronica participated in many home-based literacy practices occurring within her family home while growing up. Veronica was convinced she and her family did not create an environment for literacy acquisition. Veronica argues her family did “nothing” involving literacy activities in her home while growing up (04/26/05 interview). As interviews proceeded and we discussed various components of literacy Veronica began viewing literacy through a broader lens, beyond only school-based activities. She began to understand that literacy was not just reading a book, doing homework, or going to the library. At this revelation Veronica’s view of literacy in her childhood home changed. As our time together progressed I noted a change in her perspective on her home-based literacy practices and experiences. Veronica then began to discuss the many literacy activities.

Through interviews with Veronica it is evident all six facets of literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representation) were used in her home growing up. In our second interview Veronica stated her parents could not read or write. Veronica reveals she read all the family bills and wrote out all checks each month. Her parents would sign their name to the checks but she would complete the rest. Veronica
also indicated she counted out money and ran errands for her father. Veronica was adamant her parents could not read or write in Spanish or English. As the interviews progressed I revisited this topic of discussion. Through our interviews, Veronica began to recall instances of reading and writing with her parents within their home. She remembers her father reading “little Mexican books” and had stacks of them all around the house (interview 04/26/05). Veronica’s mother wrote and spoke Spanish prayers. Veronica verifies both her parents spoke Spanish as their native language. Both also spoke English, though not very well. Veronica remembers her father telling her stories of her family history and his life. She also remembers singing, drawing pictures and hanging them up in their home. Veronica’s parents occasionally used their children as translators. These interactions included daily activities such as ordering fast food, reading household bills, and translating school information. While Veronica previously viewed literacy in school-based terms it became evident with the data collected that literacy was used as a functional component in the lives of her family.

Michael grew up with parents, especially his father, who encouraged assimilation into the dominant, mainstream society in the United States to become, “as successful as possible” (field notes 01/24/05). Banks (1999), Gollnick & Chinn (1998) and Gordon (1964) state assimilation is the manner in which a minority person or group gradually adopts the mores and posture of the dominant culture. The foundation behind this adoption is power of the dominant society. In most societies it is expected that the less dominant group will accept the language, principles, and culture of the dominate group (Banks, 1999). According to Michael, his father felt to be more successful in the society in which they lived, the English language must be learned. Michael’s father spoke
Spanish and English. With a directive from his father, Michael spoke primarily English growing up. As Michael learned to read and speak fluently in English in school made Michael’s father happy. Michael and Veronica reflect how they both came from households that primarily spoke Spanish but learned to speak English as their primary language. Michael’s father appreciated and encouraged speaking in English. Michael acknowledges he was often harassed by his father’s work friends who spoke Spanish. This harassment occurred because he did not speak Spanish as fluently as they deemed necessary. Veronica affirms that she also received teasing from family members because she was not fluent in the Spanish language. Veronica and Michael seemed to be caught in conflicting situations and receiving conflicting messages. They both had parents who felt learning the English language would increase their success, yet Veronica and Michael were teased by family and friends because they did not always speak Spanish accurately. Veronica and Michael admit they still are very self-conscious when speaking Spanish to others, fearing they are not speaking fluently.

Veronica and Michael both recall watching a great deal of television growing up. Michael indicates his family watched English language television shows but viewed Spanish language movies. Michael reveals his father encouraged English language television to accelerate English language learning. Each family also had a set of encyclopedias. Michael’s parents purchased their set at the State Fair of Texas and Veronica’s mother got their set at her work after it had been thrown in the trash when she was a janitor with another school district in the area. Michael admits never using their set and Veronica indicates she used their set only once. Michael states his reading interests were elsewhere. He loved to read comic books as a child and young adult. He
indicates he collected many of them through the years and only in the past few years got rid of them.

Findings about the Parents’ Memories of their Home-Based Family Literacy Practices While Growing Up

The evidence based premise grounded in the data concerning the home-based family literacy practices of Michael and Veronica Ramirez while growing up indicate that literacy acquisition within each household was embedded in the daily, sociocultural functions of their lives. A summary of points to validate this premise follows:

1. Veronica only viewed literacy within a school-based context. She did not realize the abundance of home-based literacy practices that occurred in her home while growing up until later in the data collection period after discussions.

2. Veronica and her family used the six aspects of literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representation) within their home. Many times the use of the literacy elements were reflective of familial interactions and used cultural contexts while embedded in the daily functions in which Veronica’s family lived.

3. Michael’s father insisted that he, in effect, abandon his Spanish language skills and learn to speak English. This assimilation to the dominant language of the broader society, his father believed, would make Michael more successful in life. Yet, Michael was teased by family and friends because his Spanish speaking skills were not strong.

4. In keeping with their own social and cultural identities, Michael and Veronica’s parents did encourage literacy practices and acquisition in their homes. This sociocultural process of learning embraced relevant contexts of the family and their lived experiences.

5. Michael and Veronica used an abundance of socially and culturally based activities to assist with literacy acquisition. This included watching and listening to the television, reading comic books, and interaction with parents to pay bills and run errands.
Memories of Parents in the Context of School

Moll (2001) states another example of funds of knowledge includes parenting and childbearing beliefs, motivations, and actions. Many times these tenets differ for many cultures from the mainstream. Valdes (1996) confers that Mexican families often have differing parenting styles than that of a more traditional American family “model” characteristic of Anglo European families. Educators sometimes negatively misconstrue these differing styles and actions of parenting. Teachers and principals sometimes view parents as not taking the “right approach” toward school-based education and therefore not adequately involved in their children’s education. For example, many times Hispanic parents, based on their cultural respect for teachers, will not question the educator. Some teachers view this as uncaring. Within this same concept many Hispanics feel education is the job of the teacher. Parents feel their involvement in this process is another sign of disrespect to teachers. Yet, many teachers regard this action as unconcerned.

Delgado-Gaitan (1998) reinforces the same idea by indicating that she found in her research that Mexican-American parents instinctively want a better life for their children, but, often support their children in ways that do not match the mainstream culture in the United States. These viewpoints were reinforced in this study by comments from Veronica and Michael about their parents.

Michael and Veronica verify both sets of their parents adopted the parenting style perspective that “If you don’t hear anything from the school, everything must be fine. They trusted the school and our teachers” (field notes 01/24/05).
Both indicate their parents never asked to see report cards, see or assist with homework, or inquired about school. When asked why they thought their parents were not more involved, Veronica believes Hispanics are a passive culture and this passivity is often based in trust and non-questioning attitudes toward others, especially those in respected positions of power such as educators.

Veronica believes Hispanics trust the school and teachers to do what they are supposed to do to educate their children. During several interviews Veronica and Michael stress the sentiment of trust by their Hispanic parents; the sentiment that teachers and schools know what’s best for children and should not be questioned. This cycle continues today as Veronica indicates she will not challenge a teacher because she believes the teacher knows best and she trusts them. The Ramirez parents’ parenting style perspective is grounded in trust and belief that educators understand the dynamics of teaching much more than parents and to interfere or question would be disrespectful to educators. Ultimately, Veronica’s perception is that teachers are smarter than she. This cyclical action seems to affirm the declaration by Delgado-Gaitan (1998).

Without true cause many times educators dismiss these parents as uncaring and uninvolved. Many times what may be viewed by the educator as uninterested parents could be a matter of uncontrollable circumstances leading to the inability to be involved, such as job restraints. Bourdieu (1977) suggests the method in which schools are structured may often negatively influence marginalized persons with children in public school. This structure can keep persons from participating in the various activities of the school community. Parents with limited English language speaking skills, who do not work traditional schedules, who are economically challenged, and/or uncomfortable in
the school setting are viewed as uninterested, when in fact they are interested, but unable to participate.

Based on the perceptions of Veronica and Michael, the structure of the schools they attended could have kept their parents at a distance, limiting their comfort level in the school environment. Veronica believes her parent’s limited English speaking skills coupled with not knowing what to ask the teachers about their children’s learning could have contributed to their seeming lack of involvement.

Veronica remembers that no one in the school office spoke Spanish and her parents worked during the day. Veronica feels “they were too old, too tired, and didn’t have much schooling of their own” (interview 04/06/05). These aspects could have influenced her parent’s lack of involvement. Veronica also states she did not like her parents involved in her schooling. She stated “I didn’t tell my parents anything about school. It’s the way we were raised. You don’t talk about anything. You don’t say anything” (interview 04/06/05). Veronica did acknowledge her mother would leave her job as a nurses’ assistant and come up to the school everyday during Veronica’s 1st and 2nd grade year and bring her chicken for lunch. “During lunch she would bring me chicken to school and she brought me chicken everyday. That’s the only time in 1st and 2nd grade that they (school and teachers) knew who my mom was or…she never went to parent conferences. She never went to anything. She would just drop it off…go look for me in the cafeteria, drop it off and leave. She didn’t talk to nobody, no grownups, nothing. She would leave. She would give me my stuff and go. She would never stop by the office, classroom, or anything” (interview 04/06/05).
When asked by me if he felt outside influences limited his parents’ involvement with him in school, Michael indicates his father and stepmother both worked jobs and that may have limited their involvement in his education. Michael also verifies the only time his parents would go to the school was when he was in trouble in high school or was included in school programs. Michael states his father viewed all learning in school as important, especially learning to speak the English language. Michael’s father equated learning and speaking English with success in the larger society in which they lived. In interviews Michael highlights his parents trusted school personnel to help him succeed. He also believes, as does Veronica, that Hispanics trust that schools will do what is appropriate for their children’s education and thus success. Michael’s stepmother, whom he came to respect and value as his actual mother, also displayed her belief in the importance of an education. Michael’s father and stepmother divorced when Michael was in high school and instead of leaving with his father Michael choose to stay and live with his stepmother. Through her constant educational encouragement, especially when Michael wanted to quit high school in 1985, he succeeded in graduating high school. He states, “She told me not to quit, that I would regret it” (interview 06/14/05). A look in Michael’s eye and the smile on his face at the conclusion of this conversation with me validated his belief in this statement and his contentment that he did graduate.

Findings about the Parents’ Memories of Their Parents in the Context of School

The evidence based premise grounded in the data concerning the memories of Michael and Veronica Ramirez’s about their parents in the context of school indicate
that cultural, social, and economic factors influenced their level of involvement in their children’s education. A summation of points to validate this premise follows:

1. Veronica and Michael feel their parents had trust that centered the school and educators as the educational authority for their children. Veronica feels this trust was culturally based and to question a teacher was a sign of disrespect. This same view is held by Veronica today.

2. Veronica and Michael feel the structure (traditional school hours, limited comfort levels, limited English speaking skills) of the schools may have limited their parents’ involvement in their schooling. It is evident that Veronica’s mother nurtured her by bringing her lunch each day to school in a manner that was culturally based.

Memories of School-Based Literacy Practices

During interviews with Michael and Veronica the topic of school-based literacy was discussed many times. Included were topics each parent perceived as school-based literacy, including going to the library, doing homework, learning to read, and reading books. Each area includes information valuable in understanding Michael and Veronica’s perceptions and beliefs of what constitutes literacy attainment and how their school experiences influences their contemporary beliefs and perceptions.

Veronica’s memories of school-based experiences, including literacy experiences, were often negative. These negative experiences began in her 1st grade year in public school in central Texas. Speaking in a resentful tone during an interview Veronica states, “That school did not teach me how to read.” During that school year Veronica reached a point of being so scared and intimidated each day at school that she began to urinate uncontrollably on herself in her bed and at school, have bad dreams and play sick, begging her mother to let her stay home.

While Veronica will not divulge extensive information about her school-based literacy learning in the public school, it is apparent from comments and body language
during our interviews she continues to have negative recollections about her school learning and experiences. At the conclusion of the school year Veronica’s report card indicated she failed 1st grade. She states “I did not learn to read so I failed” (field notes 01/24/05). Veronica acknowledges she was very happy when her family moved back to the city, where she and her family currently live. In September of 1976 Veronica entered the local public elementary school and began 1st grade again. The new school year in a different city and with a different teacher offered Veronica positive encounters with school-based literacy. Veronica vividly remembers her 1st grade literacy experiences in the city school. Veronica fondly recalls learning to read high frequency words with flash cards in a round robin style with Mrs. West, her 1st grade teacher. Veronica also remembers studying spelling words each week. This was a positive memory of her school-based literacy practices. Veronica states she felt safe in this classroom as the teacher took time to help her learn (field notes 01/24/05).

The experiences seemed to create positive, school-based literacy learning for Veronica. During several interviews Veronica talks about Mrs. West being a “little white lady” from whom she learned to read. Veronica remembers the first word she learned, nine. The school-based literacy experiences with Mrs. West were in sharp contrast to the previous year of education. Veronica indicates she was supported and understood by Mrs. West in her struggles to read.

Similar to Veronica’s experiences Michael failed 2nd grade. Veronica first tells me of Michael’s failing. As I broach this subject with Michael a in later interview he acknowledges his failure of the grade but does not feel comfortable discussing the issue in depth. He did offer when asked why he failed, “I don’t know really. I know I had
trouble with reading.” In an effort to ease the uncomfortable situation in the interview I switched to a different subject with Michael.

Michael and Veronica indicate their school-based literacy practices were not of great importance to them while growing up. Included in these practices was homework. They both stress they felt a lack of relevancy in what homework activities they were asked to complete by various teachers. They both also acknowledge they did very little of this homework. Veronica admits when she did do the homework assignments she “copied off someone the day it was due.” Michael does not remember having homework until high school. Associated with the feeling of non-relevant homework, Michael’s perception of school as a whole was the same. He states the school did not teach information and promote experiences relevant to his life. He states, “I didn’t see them teaching me anything I needed to know. School wasn’t real life” (interview 05/14/05). He asserts school was not important to him. Veronica acknowledges the same feelings of non-relevancy of homework she received and school as a whole. She admits this non-relevancy contributed to her quitting school in 10th grade.

As stated Veronica and Michael both view literacy as “reading a book.” Associating reading a book with library use, Veronica offers insight into her viewpoint of literacy attainment. During a joint interview with both parents Veronica comments about her library use while attending school. She declares she minimally used the libraries of each school she attended to check out books to read. Veronica remembers only one time utilizing the school library and this was only because the librarian gave her a book and said “Read it.” She acknowledges reading the book and liking it but did not get
another. Michael said, while in elementary school, he “was made to check out books,” but he never really liked any of them except the Cat in the Hat books.

Findings about the Parents’ Memories of School-based Literacy Practices

The evidence based premise grounded in the data concerning the memories of Michael and Veronica Ramirez about their school-based literacy practices signify that many times these practices were extremely negative, not relevant, and continue to be influential in the interactions of Michael and Veronica with their children’s teachers and the school system as a whole. A summation of points to validate this premise follows:

1. Veronica’s school-based literacy experiences were often negative, especially when she attended 1st grade as a central Texas public school.

2. Veronica repeated 1st grade. She attributes this failure to her limited school-based reading skills and her humiliating interactions with teachers and the school environment.

3. Veronica does remember learning to read with Mrs. West in 1st grade. According to Veronica her experiences were in stark contrast to the year before because Mrs. West understood her struggles in learning to read.

4. Veronica’s memories of her prior school experiences according to her do influence how she views and reacts to the school and educational personnel today.

5. Michael states his 2nd grade failure could be attributed to his school-based reading difficulties.

6. Veronica and Michael feel their school-based literacy activities were not important. They saw no relevancy with their lives to these practices.

7. Veronica and Michael only view literacy in terms of school-based reading activities. The functional aspects of literacy in their lives growing up were not recognized.
Memories of the Parents’ Public School Experiences

Revealing to this study are the perceptions of Veronica and Michael about their public school experiences. Beginning with elementary school Veronica remembers some explicit negative school experiences.

In 1st grade Veronica moved with her family to a town in central Texas and attended public school. She was one of only a very few Hispanic children in a school dominated in population by Anglo children and no Hispanic teachers. According to Veronica she was in a 1st grade classroom with a teacher who was “mean” (field notes 01/24/05). Veronica perceived herself as unwelcome by the attitudes and verbal comments she received from teachers. According to Veronica, she grew so uncomfortable that she would uncontrollably urinate on herself at school. Veronica reflects on these experiences and feels they were based on racism because she was in a school with predominately Anglo student and teacher population (field notes 01/24/05).

Veronica also relates her experiences attending another elementary school in the late 1970s within the same urban school district she now lives. Veronica was bused to the nearby elementary school from her home. She recalls how students were mandated by personnel to enter the school each morning; entrance was based on skin color, “Whites entered first, Hispanics second, and blacks third.” She stated students were also many times separated within the school-based on race. Some classes and recess, according to Veronica, were segregated. Veronica states, “…I remember when we were in class I saw the white people playing outside but I never thought anything twice about it. The blacks and Mexicans went out and played later” (interview 04/6/05).
Reflecting on her junior high education experiences, Veronica specifically discussed her perception of an older Anglo teacher as racist. Veronica states the female teacher “didn’t like Mexicans and everyone (in the school) was Mexican” (field notes 01/24/05). Based on Veronica’s experiences she began to feel that the school and teachers “did not care” about her and that school “wasn’t real life” (field notes 02/7/05; interview 04/06/05). Veronica states she received no other educational encouragement about school from other teachers beyond third grade, “No other teacher beyond Mrs. Black in 3rd grade encouraged me” (field notes 02/7/05). Veronica admits this perception continued through her educational experiences until she quit high school. Veronica also admits this feeling influences her today with the school and her own children. During one interview Veronica offers this view, “What do you really use that you learned in high school? Computers do it for you now” (interview 04/06/05). Yet in the same conversation Veronica acknowledges the beginning years of school are important. She feels these years lay the foundation in reading but as you get older and progress through school and other subjects she questions the relevancy of what is taught, especially in high school. According to Veronica her father constantly urged her to graduate high school. When asked why she felt he wanted her to graduate Veronica reflects, “The only thing my dad said…Go to school and graduate, go to school and graduate, go to school and graduate. He never said anything else but to graduate. That’s all he wanted” (interview 04/06/05). Veronica did not graduate high school, dropping out in 10th grade.

Michael’s perception of school was not different than Veronica’s. Michael states he also wanted to quit high school but with the constant encouragement of his
stepmother he graduated with a high school diploma. Both admit the lure of money from full-time employment and the perception that the homework and class activities in high school as irrelevant contributed to the desire to abandon school.

Findings about the Parents' Memories of Public School

The evidence based premise grounded in the data collected concerning the memories of Michael and Veronica Ramirez about their public school experiences signify that while each was encouraged to graduate high school by their parents, the overriding sense of the non-relevancy of school and uncaring, racists teachers.

A summation of points to validate this premise follows:

1. Veronica feels many of her negative memories of experiences with public schools and public school educators evolved from racism against her Hispanic heritage.

2. Veronica’s school-based experiences were so traumatic in 1st grade she would uncontrollably urinate on herself at school.

3. Veronica feels except for a teacher in 1st grade and a teacher in 3rd grade she was not cared for or encouraged as a student.

4. Veronica and Michael feel the relevancy of the activities promoted at their public school was limited in their lives while growing up.

5. Veronica received constant encouragement from her father to graduate high school. He valued and respected education. This encouragement did not outweigh the sense of uncaring teachers and the irrelevance of school work to her life to sustain her graduation. Veronica quit high school in 10th grade.

6. Michael also felt the school offered no relevant aspects to his life. Yet Michael’s stepmother was eager for Michael to graduate high school. Through her persistence Michael did complete high school and obtain his diploma.
Current Home-Based Family Literacy Practices

I offer findings of current home-based family literacy practices from interviews, observations, and field notes utilized in this study. Over the six months I spent with the Ramirez family I observed the use of many funds of knowledge contributing to the advancement of literacy acquisition. Many times this knowledge was attained through home-based literacy practices. These observations highlight the Ramirez family’s literacy practices, resources, and values. These findings answer the second question of this research (What are current, home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family that support literacy acquisition?).

The Ramirez family household is filled with an abundance of literacy activities reflecting their funds of knowledge. The parents are strong literacy users and literacy role models for their children although this literacy use is recognized rarely by the parents. The Ramirez parents view literacy as only school-based reading activities, yet broader literacy practices and resources, including writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representing are being utilized. Many times these practices are not seen as beneficial because the practices are not considered contributions to the advancement of school-based literacy either by the Ramirez family or by the educators associated with the family.

According to Moll (2001) this attitude of irrelevance is not uncommon. Members of households interact with and use literacy in terms of relevancy in their lives. The daily usage is important but not always acknowledged. This is evident in the data gathered from Veronica and Michael, because literacy use is not always performed in school-based literacy context. The disconnect creates frustration and guilt on behalf of the
parents. Schools also often do not recognize home-based literacy practices as beneficial. This contributes to negative assumptions, beliefs, and actions about marginalized families. Understanding the wealth of literacy practices within the home can strengthen school-based learning and vice versa, and has been advocated by researchers (Heath, 1983; Auerbach, 1989; Valdes, 1996).

Tables 4.1-4.6 display various examples of types and uses of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representing within the home. Imbedded in the six elements of literacy is the use of diverse technology (computer, telephone, television, video games) by the family members. Using literacy in this manner has, in recent years, created a dimension for advancing literacy acquisition. This is evident with the Ramirez family.
Table 4.1

*Home-Based Reading Activities and Functions of the Ramirez Family*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>To gain information</th>
<th>To share information</th>
<th>To enhance personal relationships</th>
<th>For entertainment</th>
<th>For school-based activities</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>To gain information</th>
<th>To share information</th>
<th>To enhance personal relationships</th>
<th>For entertainment</th>
<th>For school-based activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Games</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faxes</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax refund</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2

Home-Based Writing Activities and Functions of the Ramirez Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>For social and cultural rituals</th>
<th>To share information</th>
<th>To enhance personal relationships</th>
<th>To complete needed information for others</th>
<th>For school-based activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork from bank, hospital, school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checks</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address book</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent forms</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursive writing practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery lists</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptismal forms</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3

*Home-Based Listening Activities and Functions of the Ramirez Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>For social and cultural aspects</th>
<th>To share information</th>
<th>To enhance personal relationships</th>
<th>To gain information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television programs</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio programs</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone conversations</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact discs</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations with family/friends</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video games</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinceanera message from preacher</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptismal message from priest</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4

*Home-Based Speaking Activities and Functions of the Ramirez Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>For social and cultural aspects</th>
<th>To share Information</th>
<th>To enhance personal relationships</th>
<th>To gain information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Spanish, English, Spanglish</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In person conversations with family and friends</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone conversations</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5

*Home-based Viewing Activities and Functions of the Ramirez Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewing Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>To gain information</th>
<th>To share information</th>
<th>For entertainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHS/DVD videos</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6

*Home-based Visual Representing Activities and Functions of the Ramirez Family*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Representing Activities of the Ramirez Family</th>
<th>To organize information</th>
<th>To share information</th>
<th>To document information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s art work</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binder for organizing Pokemon cards</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs of family</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters in the children’s rooms</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures of video games</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following section, I discuss more deeply the home-based literacy findings in the Ramirez home as indicated in Tables 4.1-4.6.

Veronica, the Hispanic dual language speaking and writing (Spanish and English) mother in this study, uses literacy activities and functions in her daily life with
great enthusiasm, although this usage is not always recognized and valued by her. She places high significance on a more school-based literacy approach and negates herself and experiences because she is not more proficient in school-based literacy. This study demonstrates Veronica uses the six components of literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, visual representing) in her daily life with high frequency. The successful use of literacy evolves from her daily funds of knowledge with her children, husband, work, and general life activities.

Veronica employs reading in all aspects of her daily life. Family related tasks such as reading the directions of a box of cake mix, family recipe cards, household mail, house payment information, monthly bills, bank statements, information concerning family vacations, notes from the schools the children attend, and dyslexia testing results for Anita from a local hospital are various examples of home-based reading that specifically impacts Veronica and her family. Veronica also reads to benefit others beyond her household. During the time of observations for this study, Veronica served as Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) President of the elementary school Michael Jr. and Anita attend. Veronica was dutiful in her position, acknowledging she extensively read the PTA paperwork and information to share with other parents and school personnel that are members of the organization. Many times Veronica read the children’s homework whether it be in worksheet form or in textbooks. She also read the children stories for homework or for pleasure several times at the request of Anita.

Veronica applies writing in all facets of her life. She filled out government lunch forms for the children, special education paperwork for Michael Jr. and Anita, writing
checks for the household bills, completed forms concerning loans and mortgages, and used her writing skills to support her children’s understanding of their homework. Veronica would also assist Anita and Michael Jr. with correct writing techniques to enhance their penmanship.

Veronica has a specific manner of speaking and within this manner she voices her thoughts and opinions. Veronica is very vocal, and physically and emotionally demonstrative in her expression. She has a boisterous voice, using it to stress certain points important to her and her family. She also uses her voice to emphasize emotional issues relevant to her family, friends, and household.

Many times throughout my observations I noted Veronica uses a short hand version of vernacular her family and friends understand. This vernacular is often a combination of Spanish and English speaking and occurs when a person code switches or code mixes words or creates new words. A common name for this verbiage is Spanglish (Wikipedia, 2006). Veronica would be speaking English and interject Spanish words into the sentence. This would also happen sometimes if she was speaking Spanish with her family or friends. She would interject English words into a Spanish spoken sentence.

Many times in conversations with bilingual family and friends she will speak Spanish and English words in the same sentence. Within these sentences I would also witness Veronica speaking in an informal, slang manner. This slang was a specific manner of speaking all persons around her understood. As I would listen, sometimes Veronica would notice the confused look on my face and immediately translate or explain to me what she was saying or asking. I never saw an instance where family and
friends did not recognize this type of vernacular and not answer Veronica. Veronica communicated with me and her family and friends, through conversations in person, emails, and the telephone. She verbally taught me how to make refried beans, explained the cultural features and background of a quinceanera, the dynamics of the quinceanera celebration, the fundamentals of a Catholic christening, the specifics of her God-child’s christening we attended. She told me the characteristics of the Hispanic culture and her Hispanic family, and told me various stories about her family, many involving her father.

In conjunction with the aforementioned concepts of literacy, Veronica’s listening was evident in all facets of her daily life. Whether it was listening to Michael, her children, family, and friends, she paid attention to the point being made then voice a concern, idea, opinion, answer, or suggestion based on the situation.

The viewing component of literacy in Veronica’s daily living was obvious. In her home she watches television and movies on her VHS and DVD player. Veronica employs the television for example, to learn more about the death of the Pope, possible new Popes, and the selection process of the Catholic Church for choosing a new Pope. Many times in our conversations Veronica referenced news reports. Such reports included the Michael Jackson trial, another high profile trial in the city in which they live, a parent-teacher fight in a local elementary school which resulted in a hurt teacher, and the image of Jesus on a windowpane in Arizona.

At work, Veronica makes use of her computer to communicate with her co-workers, friends, employer, and me. She also views websites to gather information on her computer. Television functions also as a source to learn how to deal with family
issues impacting her family. Veronica referenced the Oprah Winfrey Show in one instance; she stated she learned a lesson about how to say “no” to family members that are “takers.” She noted this show helped her realize how her brother uses her mother for money and material objects. The Ramirez family does not have a computer in their home, but Veronica uses her work computer to access the Internet to collect information for a school-based project about travel around the world for Anthony, as well as assist in her daily work routines. An important note for this study was how Veronica incorporates concepts of literacy to assist each of her children with their homework from school. This assistance is often developed using a creative, relevant literacy approach to help her children and herself understand the concepts in the homework lessons. She emphasizes this is how she often helps her children. One example of her resourcefulness includes her and Michael Jr. using her funds of knowledge when Michael Jr. was in 1st grade.

Veronica: Okay, Your name is like Monday. Remember your last name up here (Veronica points to the top of an invisible piece of paper) D-A-Y. You just remember, Monday. And we would even do it with sign language.

Larkin: Oh that’s great.

Veronica: With different things like that, I taught him a whole bunch of different ways. So he would remember M-O-N and just look and put D-A-Y from his last name...Yeah. OR, O-R the word that he was learning in 1st grade. The word “or” is in your name.

Larkin: Very creative.

Veronica: What else? How else? Keep in mind, Michael Jr. did not learn his colors until 1st grade. For some reason Michael Jr. could not remember what red, pink, orange, and purple were at all. It took him a long time. So, when he would do something I would try to get him to remember the O or...he couldn’t remember what the letters looked like. What an O was, what a T was. I don’t know why. He just couldn’t remember none of that. So I had to teach him different
ways of learning and stuff. He learned them a different way
(03/31/05 interview).

Like Veronica, Michael uses literacy in a wide variety of activities and functions in
the home. Also like Veronica, Michael is a dual language speaker and writer. He does
state he is not a strong Spanish speaker or writer but can do both when necessary. He
considers English his first language. I often notice him reading the mail and documents
dealing with the household bills as well as determining if he received the appropriate
amount on his employment check. I also witness Michael writing checks.

Although I did not observe Michael using reading and writing as much as Veronica,
indications of home-based literacy use to support everyday living and survival was
evident. From initial interviews and observations to the point when Michael truly felt
comfortable with the data gathering process his personality never changed. Michael is a
person who listens intently and speaks with much forethought. This was evident in
situations involving his children, friends, family, and school personnel. Michael
converses with me about his family, friends, and often, about school personnel,
including his children’s principal and teachers. Michael often uses the telephone to
communicate with others and me who frequently phoned their home. He also indicates
he uses email communications at work. Michael would offer clarifying information for me
during our interviews concerning the Hispanic culture, the Catholic religion, the family’s
church, quinceanera celebrations, and Catholic christenings.

Michael also states his frustrations with Anita’s and Michael Jr.’s present
elementary school principal. He stresses how the principal speaks to him, what she
says to him, and his responses during the Admission, Review, Dismiss (ARD) meetings
and hardship transfer meetings concerning Michael Jr. and Anita. I also observed
Michael using relevant life examples in an effort to assist Anthony in understanding his homework and witness Michael encouraging Veronica not to talk negatively about people, which often prompted a funny, verbal response from Veronica. Michael’s daily literacy use incorporated technology in numerous ways, including assisting his children with inventive literacy techniques to assist in their literacy acquisition. Michael uses his speaking and storytelling skills to relate stories of his family (present and past) and his childhood. Michael discusses how he has Anita and Michael Jr. read the headlines that “run” at the bottom of the television screen. He explains this helps them with their reading skills and encourages them to find out what is going on in the world. He also watches cartoons with the children and talks with them about the cartoons, such as characters and events in the cartoon. Michael utilizes the television to learn more about issues relevant to his life as the death of the Pope, the process of choosing a new Pope and more “pop culture” issues such as the Michael Jackson trial.

For this study the Ramirez children were not interviewed, as the primary focus was the Ramirez parents but the children were observed through my visits to their home and certain literacy activities were noted. Each child uses the six aspects of literacy a great deal. Incorporating technology with these components also was evident. Michael Jr. loves to draw and color especially Pokemon characters which he labels and then clarifies the characteristics of each to me. Michael Jr. explained and demonstrated to me his video games and plays these games with Anthony. Michael Jr. will watch television for various reasons but will often be in his room reading, drawing, or playing the video games. He is also constantly talking to his mother, father, and Anita.
Anita is timid and shy around me when I am in her home. She will play video games but not as often as Anthony and Michael Jr. She loves to write in cursive and is proud of her writing skills. She also reads, writes, speaks about, and listens to instructions from her mother about her homework. Anita enjoys informing me about a chapter book she is reading at home. She obtained this book at a Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) book fair at her elementary school. The book was one of many she displayed in her bedroom. The books were given to her by a variety of people, including her parents.

Anthony's home-based literacy is often used in the context of technology. He loves to read Game Pro Magazine, focusing on the “Fun Factor” and “New Game Reviews” sections of the magazine. He also loves the pictures of the video games in the magazine. He enjoys playing video games, watching television, and listening to music, including the musical group linkin park. He and I had an informal conversation about the musical group, as I had heard of them but knew nothing of the group. Anthony also discusses the fact the musical group has several Hispanic members. Anthony enjoys creating various forms of artwork, sharing with me the particulars of several pieces of work.

Findings about Current Home-Based Family Literacy Practices

The evidence based premise grounded in the data collected concerning the current home-based family literacy practices of the Ramirez family indicate that literacy acquisition is evident in the home. This acquisition is also dependent upon and reflective of funds of knowledge based literacy activities provided through familial
interactions. Data is also grounded in the fact that literacy serves many functions in the Ramirez family. These functions include gaining information, to share information, to enhance interpersonal relationships, to complete needed information for others, for entertainment, for school-based activities, and for social and cultural rituals. A summation of points to validate these premises follows:

1. Literacy uses evolve from sociocultural experiences and funds of knowledge in the lives and home of the Ramirez family. These activities are centered around the home and family.

2. The Ramirez family use literacy in multiple, functional ways. These activities are broad in scope and while are not school related, they are viable and valuable forms of literacy. Examples of literacy functions include gaining information, sharing information, entertaining, enhancing interpersonal relationships.

3. The Ramirez family uses all six components of receptive and expressive literacy (reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visual representation) to accomplish daily objectives pertaining to their lives.

4. The Ramirez parents use literacy in their home and serve as literacy role models for their children.

5. Literacy use is not always realized or valued by the Ramirez parents because it is not used within a school-based context.

6. The Ramirez family uses various forms of literacy that incorporates technology to assist their every day lives.

7. Both sets of parents of Veronica and Michael used their own funds of knowledge to enhance the learning of their children. These significant resources were often culturally and socially based mediating literacy attainment.

8. Each Ramirez child uses relevant, home-based literacy practices in context to understand and complete literacy activities, including school-based activities such as homework and special school projects.

Interface of Home-Based Family Literacy Practices and School-Based Literacy Expectations

The following section combines data to answer the third question under
investigation within this study (How do current, home-based family literacy practices interface with school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators?).

Contemporary public schools are faced each day with meeting state and national standards and mandates to continue receiving federal funding. With this task, schools have become more domineering in wielding their power through messages of discontent concerning marginalized families and learning. Within the educational community there is a dominant, mainstream belief that many marginalized persons, including some Hispanic families, lack literacy skills and activities in the home, thus hindering the progress of school-based literacy attainment (McCaleb, 1994). As a result, educational stakeholders including policymakers, administrators, and teachers make certain assumptions about family literacy practices in Hispanic homes that may be unfounded and potentially damaging to families and the children they are educating. By consistently documenting the funds of knowledge and the literacy events they inspire within family households, Moll (2001) feels the negative views of marginalized families can be minimized. Funds of knowledge documentation promotes the understanding that positive family literacy practices are occurring in Hispanic homes, can contribute to school-based literacy practices for success, and can be used to redefine the approach a school community takes in their contact with marginalized families. This knowledge then can diminish the deficit views by schools and the larger mainstream society about Hispanic home-based family practices, their intellect, and their resources to succeed in life.
Respect, Power, and Frustrations

Many times negative views by educators are steeped in social and political views of the larger, dominant society (including schools) and are used as “pedagogy of control” for marginalized families (Moll, 2001, p. 13). Schools hold great influence with marginalized families with school aged children, as many families believe education to be their avenue to monetary and societal success. Hispanic cultures generally respect the institution of school as well as teachers or maestros(as). Many times respect is associated with power. This power may be used positively or negatively by those with it, including school communities, teachers, and principals to further the ideologies of the greater, dominant society (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Gee, 1996; Moll, 2001).

Respect of education and teachers is evident in the Ramirez home. Veronica states she will not question the teaching techniques or curriculum of any teacher. She is afraid she will infringe on the teacher’s knowledge and skills. “I won’t go ask them (if I have questions) because I don’t want them to think I’m stepping on their toes because they are the teacher. I’m not. You know what I’m saying” (interview 03/31/05)?

Veronica continues by stating,

…a lot of Mexican people won’t go ask the teacher because they are not the teacher. The teacher is the teacher and they know what they are doing. Do you know what I’m saying? That comes from our culture…I won’t go and ask. I’ll just go and ask after I hear that you’ve treated my kids wrong. But when it comes to class work, I’m noting going to question the teacher unless I really know it’s something really…they are the ones teaching you know? (interview 03/31/05)

Veronica implies this “wrong” is a physical or emotional misdeed. She feels unless you hear something from the teacher, everything is OK. Michael states this same approach was used by his parents. Veronica’s comments are steeped in the cultural respect she holds for education and educators.
Veronica and Michael want their children to succeed. A means to that success is school. Deeply rooted in school is literacy learning. Educators have the responsibility to ensure students reach their literacy learning potential. Many times with this responsibility comes power over students and parents. Many parents, including Hispanic parents, acknowledge this power as they view educators with respect and as people who will help their child succeed. The educators who collaborate with parents to ensure student success do not use power as a means to dominate students, parents, or situations. While this is true for many educators some do negatively use their influence or power with families.

Efforts to meet the literacy demands of the teachers, the principal, and school as a whole are visible in the Ramirez home environment. Michael and Veronica each apply their own funds of knowledge to assist their children accomplish this goal. At times the Ramirez parents do not feel their own knowledge and skills are enough. School pressures to meet educational mandates filter from the school to parents to children often creating frustration and guilt because the school does not recognize and embrace the positive learning accomplishments, including literacy attainment in the home.

During many interviews with Veronica she verbally stresses her frustration with school personnel concerning her children. Veronica says she receives explicit and implicit messages through the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of Michael Jr. and Anita’s teachers and principal concerning the academic education of her children. Often these comments and activities reference her children not meeting the educational standards imposed by the school, the Texas Education Agency and the most recent federal
education law referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Students must meet certain standards for schools and school districts to continue receiving funding from the Texas Education Agency which ultimately receives funding from the United States government. A major educational issue in Texas is that each child must read on level to pass from the third grade to fourth. A state mandated reading test, referred to as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), is the gauge determining that success. If a student does not pass this test it reflects negatively on the school and the school district. The greater the number of students not passing, the more funding is in jeopardy. With this requirement more schools are stressing the attainment of reading skills. This attainment is viewed as the foundation for success; success for students, educators, the school, school district, and state education agency.

Schools and educators use their power to involve parents in this literacy acquisition process. Sometimes this influence is positive, but many times it is negative.

According to Veronica the comments and actions from school personnel imply she and Michael are not doing enough at home to assist there children advance in reading. The Ramirez parents also perceive based on comments they receive, that they do not have the correct attitude toward the education of their children. Several negative remarks originate from the school principal about Michael Jr. and Anita. Veronica indicates the principal stated in an Admission, Review, Dismiss (ARD) meeting for Special Education “Michael Jr. makes the school look bad” (interview 04/05/05). Veronica states this comment from the principal was in reference to Michael Jr. not doing well on the state mandated TAKS test. Veronica asks me during an interview,
“Why would she (the principal) say this when she knows Michael Jr. has (Special Education) issues?” (interview 04/05/05).

In reference to Michael Jr. and Anita’s reading skills, the principal stated to Veronica, “They need to get more help at home” (interview 04/05/05). Veronica reiterates to me throughout many interviews, she does assist the children with their homework, including their reading. Veronica also declares she and another parent had a recent conversation. The other parent confided in Veronica the principal told her that her son also “did not make the school shine because he struggles in reading” (interview 04/05/05).

Veronica’s frustration is evident in her comments, “Their kind (Special Education students) aren’t wanted anywhere in the school and that’s wrong. They are treated like they are not wanted unless you do good in school. The schools don’t care anymore. They just care what Bush signed. The school dogs us about our kids” (interview 04/05/05). In a subsequent interview, Veronica states the principal referred to her children and the state mandated assessment test in a conversation. According to Veronica the context of the conversation in an ARD meeting was that Michael Jr. had to improve his own reading scores on this test in an effort to contribute to the school receiving a higher overall score. Veronica affirms the principal told her, “The school HAS to have certain scores” (03/31/05 interview). To Veronica, the impression the principal given was that more literacy practice has to be accomplished in their home for Michael Jr. to be successful and not let the school down.

Veronica indicates the Ramirez children are identified as “hardship transfers”
by the principal. This is a school district term used for students who live outside the street and neighborhood boundaries the school serves. The Ramirez home is just a few blocks outside the boundary for the particular elementary school Michael Jr. and Anita attend. The elementary school the children are supposed to attend is closer but not by much distance. When asked why Michael Jr. and Anita do not attend this school, Veronica explains with a two-fold answer. The closer school is only a Pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade school and she wants to keep Michael Jr. and Anita in the same school to limit their school insecurities and the convenience for Michael and her as they drop off and pick up the children each day.

As Michael Jr. and Anita are identified as hardship transfer students, at the end of each school year the Ramirez parents have to reapply with the elementary school, and the principal must sign the paperwork. This process occurred during the time I collected data for this study. During an interview with both parents Veronica states, “Michael won’t tell me everything specifically, what she (the principal) said to him when he went up to the school to get the signature because he knows it will make me feel bad” (interview 04/05/05). As I attempt to gather more information from Michael about the meeting with the principal he became quiet and would not offer any additional information about the meeting. He indicates to me later when Veronica was out of the room the principal took a negative, intimidating approach to signing the paperwork. According to Michael the principal also stated the Ramirez parents would have to work harder with the children and be involved more with them more next year if she was to sign the paperwork. At the completion of this conversation Veronica declares, “She (the principal) basically does not want us even though she signed the hardship transfer”
(interview 04/05/05). Asking a poignant question reflective of Veronica’s frustration, she queries me, “How can she (the principal) make people feel this little?” (interview 04/05/05). In a later interview Veronica makes a profound statement, “The whole purpose of them (the children) going to school, I hear it all the time (from educators), is ‘We are here for the students.’ But it doesn’t seem they (educators and principal) are here for the students” (interview 06/14/05).

These comments by Veronica and Michael seem to be compounded by the fact Veronica serves in the volunteer role of Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) President for Michael Jr. and Anita’s elementary school, the same school this Hispanic principal oversees. This is Veronica second time to serve in this position. She also served as PTA president of this elementary school when Michael Jr. was in 1st grade. Veronica also confides she donated a hundred dollars to the school via the principal to do with as she pleases. Veronica states she and the principal discuss this money will be used for an end of the year celebration for teachers and staff. Veronica tells me she gave the money to the principal as a way to say thank you for signing the hardship transfer.

As stated from interviews and observations for this study it is evident Veronica and Michael value and respect the idea of education and the teachers assisting in this formal education. Yet this reverence is also the basis of an internal conflict within Veronica. Veronica understands the importance of a formal education but she often feels frustrated and guilty. Veronica states when Michael Jr. was younger before his Special Education and dyslexia diagnosis’, she would feel enormous pressure and distress from the comments and actions of his various teachers. These comments were in reference to Michael Jr. becoming a better reader and getting help at home to
accomplish this goal. A comment from an early interview indicates Veronica’s frustration with the explicit and implicit pressures placed on her as a parent. “Oh, and let me tell you, Mr. Page, about all of the hell I gave Michael Jr. [when] he at first made F’s on the tests. I pressured him so hard…” (interview 03/31/05).

In a following interview Veronica offers additional insight concerning the educational pressures she felt from teachers to advance her children’s reading skills.

Veronica: ...they're always on me like, Mrs. Ramirez, you need to read with your kids more, you need to do this more.' You know it is like read, read, read, and you know what I'm thinking 'If you want to read with them, you read it with them.' [It] gets old with me. I get frustrated, because I just sit here with him an hour just to finish a paragraph. It's not going to happen. I get tired. And then Anita too you know? It's like...let me tell you about Michael Jr. 's 1st grade. We sat here for two hours each night. And of course I wasn't working, so I was able to sit here for two hours, yelling at him, making him do his work. I would tell him to have a break, get a drink, wipe your tears, get back at it. Ask him...(referring to me to ask Michael Jr.). Tell how we used to yell at you and do homework.”

Michael Jr.: Back before we knew I had dyslexia, she thought I wasn't trying...so she would whip me. And she would send me to my room. We would do it again and again.

Veronica: It was frustrating. He would go to his room, he would come back, he would go take a break, we would go back at it. You know what… that one year...that's the reason why I don't push Anita. That one year, I can't give back to him. I abused that boy. I really did. And I said I wouldn't do that to them no more.

Larkin: Was this based on what the school was telling you and what they wanted?

Veronica: Yes. They sure was always like ‘he's not working, he's not doing this, he's not doing that. He's not reading. He's not trying.’ And that's when I didn't know he had a problem. It wasn't recognized yet. We didn't know. So I was being mean to him. I was like, “What's wrong with you? I just gave you that word, B-I-K-E! How come you don't remember? And he could not tell me why he could not remember so I just told him how to spell it. Yeah, I tried real hard that one year and I said I would never do that again. Never. Ever...because I can't take that back, what I did to Michael Jr. I
hate myself, the way I treated him. You know? (interview 03/31/05).

In the same interview Veronica gave more examples of her mistreatment of Michael Jr. based on his slower rate of literacy learning required by the teacher. In an effort to assist Michael Jr. learn, Veronica used various funds of knowledge to cement his understanding.

Veronica: Keep in mind, Michael Jr. did not learn his colors until 1st grade. For some reason Michael Jr. could not remember what red, pink, orange, and purple were at all. It took him a long time. So, when he would do something I would try to get him to remember the O or...he couldn't remember what letters looked like. What an O was, what a T was. I don't know why. He just couldn't remember none of that. So I had to teach him different ways of learning and stuff. He learned a different way but did real good with the abuse I was giving him.

Larkin: Yeah.

Veronica: You know. And so that's why, after they told me everything he had at Scottish Rite (clinic where Michael Jr. was diagnosed with dyslexia) I just said I can't believe I was beating this kid...not beating him...beating him like 'What's wrong with you?! What's wrong with you?!' I was so frustrated with the teachers at school pushing on me, I was pushing him. I said I would not do that no more. I haven't...I stopped messing with him. If he can do it, if he can't...oh well...the hell with it. Anita too now...I'll never do that to them again. So that's why I don't do that no more...With Michael Jr., Michael Jr. got abused along with everything because I was getting it at the school and I was thinking 'I don't want them thinking I'm not teaching him.' Now I don't care what they think.

Larkin: Right.

Veronica: I don't care what they think if I'm not sitting down with Anita reading a book. I don't care anymore because...

Larkin: Because of the experience?

Veronica: I'm not saying I don't want them to read or anything but I get frustrated you know. It's like...I don't know...I rather get a tutor, like I did last year with Mrs. Kim. I plan to do it again this year, which I
need to call her to tutor Anita because I won’t do it no more. I won’t sit with them anymore.

Larkin: Because it’s just too…yeah.

Veronica: Yeah, you know?

Larkin: Frustrating?

Veronica: I feel so bad what I did to Michael Jr. I was bad to Michael Jr. and I apologized. Even right when I called him, right now and brought it up…I've told him before I would never do that to him again, you know? And uh, it was a bad, bad, bad year. Bad. And then Ms. Wells (his 1st grade teacher) was treating him bad in class (about his slower rate of literacy learning)…you know, so…and I'm treating him bad at home. Can you imagine how he felt? You know? And that still didn’t break his spirit. He still tries to learn (interview 03/31/05).

In a follow up interview Veronica gave another example of succumbing to the pressure from teachers about Michael Jr.’s 1st grade reading skills.

Veronica: I was just so mean to him. I would just be yellin’, shaking the whole house but I don’t want to be like that anymore. He is capable of reading a lot, a lot more, but I’m just not going to do it, you know?

Larkin: Were you reacting based on what the school and teachers were stressing to you?

Veronica: In 1st grade I did more on what they (teachers) were telling me. I don’t do it no more. I’m like “whatever.” I don’t care. They are pushing me more away from helping. I just don’t want to yell at him no more. I will still help him but I just don’t want to act the way I acted anymore (interview 04/05/05).

This interview is evidence Veronica has a great amount of frustration and major guilt about eventually succumbing to the tremendous pressures the school teachers and the principal placed on her concerning the reading success of her children. Veronica states these pressures contributed to physical and emotional harm she placed on her children. Enormous guilt and shame are evident in Veronica’s conversations with me
about the harm she placed on her children in an effort to please the teachers to advance Michael Jr.’s and Anita’s reading skills.

Veronica says while she had intentions to never act this way again she began to feel the same prior pressures from teachers and the principal to improve Anita’s reading skills during her 1st and 2nd grade years at Skinner Elementary. Stressing her frustration, Veronica again says she began hearing negative, accusatory comments about Anita’s reading skills “over and over” interview (04/05/05). She again found herself reverting to raising her voice during homework sessions. It was not until Anita was identified as dyslexic and as a Special Education student in the latter part of her 2nd grade year that she stopped. Veronica comments,

    So after I found out what was wrong with Anita, I stopped. I said I was not to act like that anymore. I said, either they (Michael Jr. and Anita) will eventually get it or I'll help them like I do with their homework, but I won't do what I did (physically and emotionally harming them).

In an effort to gain a depth of understanding from Veronica’s point of view, I ask Veronica more questions in a follow up interview. Her answers, based on her experiences with Michael Jr. in 1st grade, continue to reveal her guilt and frustration with the pressures on her to ensure her children’s success according to the standards dictated by the school and teachers.

    Larkin: Was there pressure on you from the school?

    Veronica: Yeah. Yeah. It wasn't only her (the principal). It was her, it was the Special Ed teacher, it was the speech teacher. It was everybody at the school, stopping and telling me, that I need to read with Michael Jr. more. It was the counselor, asking, 'How come this, how come that? You are not reading to him.' I remember one time, everyone had been on my ass about it already at the school. I was in that little room doing some flyers (for the PTA) that I was going to mail out for the school and the new speech teacher said, 'Oh, you are Michael Jr.'s mom, well, do you know that Michael Jr. can't read?' I wanted to just break down and cry right there. I wanted to tell her,
'Do you know how many fuckin' times people have fuckin’ told me that? I don’t need you tell me.’ I was just mad. I felt like just walking out.

Larkin: You had just heard it a hundred times before?

Veronica: Yeah. I didn’t need to hear it again. They did not know how I was treating Michael Jr. at home, trying to make him learn. (interview 03/31/05)

In a revealing comment from Veronica she asserts “home is one way and school is another” (03/31/05). This comment is reflective of Veronica’s realization and understanding of the vast demands placed on her and her family in relation to literacy acquisition. Veronica’s respect for education while meeting the demands of the teachers and principal often conflict. Based on the actions and messages Veronica receives, school-based literacy practices are the means to success for her children. This conflict is increased by the use of home-based family literacy practices steeped in the funds of knowledge within the home. With no acknowledgement from educators or the principal of the positive work being accomplished at home, frustration and guilt overwhelms Veronica. She finds herself lashing out at her children from the pressure placed on her to assist her children with literacy attainment demanded to meet the educational requirements that are often politically based.

Findings about the Interface of Home-Based Family Literacy and School-Based Literacy Expectations

The evidence based premise grounded in the data collected concerning the interface of home-based family literacy and school-based literacy expectations include the home based family literacy practices of the Ramirez family are often marginalized and regarded as non-existent, unimportant and/or unrelated to school literacy.
expectations. In response to this mismatch, educators approach the Ramirez parents from a deficit perspective. This creates a feeling of devalue, frustration, and guilt on behalf of the parents and negatively impacts the intra-familial relationship between Veronica and Michael Jr. and Anita to the point of physical and emotional abuse. A summation of points to validate this premise follows:

1. Culturally based respect for educators keeps Veronica from asking more questions of her children’s teachers. She does not want to be viewed as disrespectful of teachers and their knowledge and skills.

2. Veronica feels enormous frustration with the literacy demands placed on her and her children from educators to meet literacy goals.

3. The Ramirez parents state they receive comments from school personnel that they are not doing enough at home to assist their children with literacy development. Michael and Veronica also indicate they have received remarks from educators that they as parents do not have the appropriate attitude toward education.

4. Veronica admits her guilt and frustration in meeting the demands of educators with school-based literacy activities. This guilt has caused her to emotionally and physically abuse her children.

5. Veronica indicates she does not want to use literacy learning as a means to hurt her children. With her guilt reaching imposing proportions Veronica indicates her interpersonal relationships with her children are more valued than school performance.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FUTURE STUDY

The four preceding chapters present the purpose for this study and the statement of the problem, the review of literature related to the relevant subjects, documentation of the methodology used, and a report of the findings. Chapter 5 contains the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future study.

I review the conclusions of this study which address three broad research questions:

1. What are the past home-based and school-based family literacy practices within the homes of each of Hispanic parents?
2. What are current home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family that support literacy acquisition?
3. How do current home-based family literacy practices interface with school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators?

Conclusions

Conclusions for this study are based on interviews, observations, and field notes taken with the Ramirez family, a Hispanic family consisting of Michael (father), Veronica (mother), Anthony (son, age 15), Michael Jr. (son, age 10), and Anita (daughter, age 8). They live in a large city in Texas and the children attend public school. From the findings, premises were recorded and conclusions drawn. I feel very confident in these findings as I gained the trust and confidence of the Ramirez family to share their story. Each family member shared intimate aspects of their past and present lives which enhances the description and interpretation of the findings. I am overwhelmed when I
think about the experiences and feelings disclosed. Veronica indicated she has never before revealed many of the negative aspects of her public school and home experiences. This openness contributes to understanding the foundation of this study which includes home-based family literacy practices and the often negative intersecting of these with school-based literacy expectations of educators.

Data from the first research question indicate based on Michael and Veronica’s memories, that each grew up in homes that included home-based family literacy activities and functions. It is the social and cultural systems of each family that offered opportunities for literacy acquisition, although these opportunities were not always realized by Veronica or Michael because they were not school-based. While growing up Veronica viewed literacy practices and experiences as valuable only as they related to school-based literacy activities. Veronica and Michael’s memories of their parents in the context of school also indicate that each set of parents trusted teachers and the school. This trust was culturally-based and to question educators was a sign of respect. Veronica and Michael’s memories of their school-based literacy practices reveal each struggled with theses practices and often saw no connection with them to their lives. The findings from Veronica’s memories signify many of her public school experiences were negative because they evolved from racism, non-supportive teachers, and a sense of irrelevance.

Patterns in the data related to the second research question that focus on present home-based family literacy practices indicate literacy uses are natural aspects of the Ramirez family. Literacy is a major foundation of their lives and allows the family to contribute fully in the community in which they work and live. I documented a
multitude of functional family literacy activities as I visited, interviewed, and observed the family in their home as well as social and cultural settings. This study authenticates that the literate experiences of the Ramirez family are based in the context of past and present sociocultural experiences. It is the social and cultural experiences of the family that offer a wealth of opportunities for literacy acquisition. An extension of the sociocultural dynamic is referred to as funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992a). These funds of knowledge are the shared and enriching resources, experiences, wisdoms, abilities, and talents generated by the Ramirez family. Funds of knowledge are important to the family for they enhance and further the acquisition of literacy in a manner that is functional, valuable, naturally occurring, and broad in scope.

Premises surrounding research question three indicate that while the Ramirez family have many home-based literacy practices in their lives these activities have been marginalized and regarded as unimportant and unrelated to school literacy expectations based on the perceptions and comments received by Veronica and Michael during interactions with their children’s elementary school teachers and principal. In the context of this perceived mismatch, teachers and the principal at the elementary school Michael Jr. and Anita attend have created a literacy deficit perspective about the Ramirez family. This deficit perception devalues toward the Ramirez family because their home-based literacy practices are different from the school-based literacy and, are therefore, inferior. Based on the responses from Veronica and Michael, each indicates this perceived deficit perception also occurred during their own formal education experiences as students. The effects of this deficit perception resonate across generations and affects not only home-school relations, but also interfamilial relationships. This perception is
apparent in the negative school-based literacy interactions that occur in the Ramirez home.

The complexity of the interface between the perceived school-based literacy expectations and demands of school educators and administrator, and the literacy activities occurring within the home have created a sense of conflict within the Ramirez home. The clear differences between home and school generate feelings of frustration, doubt, and guilt especially for Veronica, who assists her two younger children daily with their school-based literacy activities. These feelings are manifested through damaging and abusive emotional and physical interactions between Veronica and her two youngest children.

Based on the comments and actions of the elementary school teachers and principal reported to me by the Ramirez parents, Veronica feels her children do not meet the school-based literacy expectations, which to her ultimately means failure for her children. In an effort to meet the school requirements, Veronica and Michael feel they must embrace within their home the literacy beliefs and practices demanded by teachers and the administrator from their children’s elementary school. These actions are done in an effort to, what they believe will, ensure their children’s success. Data also indicates that the Ramirez parents assist their children with literacy acquisition using relevant social and cultural activities. Yet these family literacy practices are regarded by educators as non-academic or not contributing to school-based literacy goals. This positions the family and their literacy practices and experiences as inferior within the powerful social hierarchy of the school and larger, mainstream community.
Comments from educators and the principal are often power-based and contribute to the relationship between these educators and Michael and/or Veronica. There is not a “symmetrical relationship” (Moll et al., 1992) between teacher and/or administrator and the Ramirez parents. Teachers and the principal often use their power in negative and intimidating ways, stressing to the Ramirez parents to engage their children in school like literacy activities in the home to meet school-based practices.

In summary, based on the memories of Veronica and Michael Ramirez, they grew up in homes with varied literacy activities. These activities were functional in nature and were integral to each household. Literacy in this context is continues in the Ramirez home. In the present day, the Ramirez family participates in viable social and cultural based literacy activities. These functional literacy activities are integral to this family and used for many different purposes. Yet these practices are not recognized and often negated by teachers or the principal serving the Ramirez children. By demeaning the home-based literacy practices of the Ramirez family educators lose the prospect to value and capitalize on the abundance of relevant literacy practices that are central to the lives of the family. This debasing also impacts the relationships between the parents, educators, and principal. The Ramirez parents feel extremely frustrated and discouraged with school-based literacy expectations promoted by the teachers and principal. This frustration, many times, manifests itself between Veronica, Michael Jr. and Anita into physical and emotional abuse. It is disheartening that the pressure from teachers and administrators is so strong toward Veronica that her children acquire school-based literacy that certain experiences result in mistreatment from the person that loves them the most.
Implications

The present study offers implications for teacher-researchers by expanding prior ethnographic family literacy research while providing knowledge and understanding to educators interested in home-based family literacy activities and functions and the interface between these activities and functions and school-based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators. Data gathered focusing on these issues was in the context of one Hispanic family in an urban setting with children attending public school.

While generalizations cannot be made to all Hispanic families based on the data from the Ramirez family, a theoretical construct can be built based on the credibility and trustworthiness of the data gathered. This can serve as an example for teacher-researchers interested in the context of Hispanic families, literacy attainment, and public education.

According to historical and contemporary numbers, the Hispanic population in the United States is consistently growing, becoming what is referred to as a minority-majority. This growth also extends to Hispanic children attending public school. While some view this cultural expansion within schools as positive many times Hispanic children and families are caught in an academic and sociocultural crossfire; a crossfire that stems from issues negative assumptions by educators as indicated in the literature review of this study and evidence from data gathered over a six month period. I found the Ramirez family to be caught in this crossfire.

Based on their memories, Veronica and Michael Ramirez grew up in homes with parents that offered home-based family literacy activities. These activities stemmed
from sociocultural experiences and funds of knowledge significant to the family. Yet according to Michael and Veronica educators did not recognize or incorporate these multiple forms of literacy into the classroom, leaving them feeling uninterested and questioning the relevancy of school and their education. They felt no connection between what was occurring in their homes (including literacy activities) and what was being taught in school (including literacy expectations).

This lack of recognition also extended to Michael and Veronica’s parents. Based on memories, Michael and Veronica state that each of their parents lacked a traditional sense of involvement in their education. Veronica believes this lack of involvement was culturally centered, as she believes Hispanics trust educators to do what is best for their children and to interfere is disrespectful. Based on evidence from Michael and Veronica, each set of parents could have also felt alienated because school environments were not comfortable or inviting as teachers and administrators did not speak Spanish, they did not make parental contact, and did not offer non-traditional times to make school visits as each of Michael and Veronica’s parents worked traditional work day hours from 8am to 5pm.

Veronica and Michael have negative memories of school-based literacy experiences and public school as a whole. Veronica and Michael rarely felt encouraged by educators. In Veronica’s case, these memories stem from incidents of racism from teachers and negative school actions, including perceived comments and actions based on the fact she is Mexican-American and a second language learner, and segregating students based on skin color. Both parents also indicate that school had very little relevancy to their lives. School-based literacy lacked relatable concepts they found
interesting. Veronica’s memories of 1st grade, in which she urinated on herself and begged her mother not to make her go to school because she felt so uncomfortable with her racist teacher, are extremely powerful. This harmed her self esteem and presently contributes to her sense of feeling powerless. She admits these memories also influence her protective nature presently when dealing with her children’s teachers and principal, ensuring nothing like this will happen to them.

Evidence indicates that the past memories of their experiences influence Veronica and Michael in their present interactions with their children and educators even more than they realize. As parents Veronica and Michael have exchanges with educators, but now it centers on their children. Many of these exchanges with educators are deficit-centered based on the educator’s conjectures about Michael and Veronica’s assumed lack of interest and involvement with their children’s literacy development, blaming the parents for their children not accomplishing more school-based literacy success, and their home-based family literacy practices that are viewed as not contributing to school-based literacy expectations. This information contributes to the idea that educators have enormous power over those they serve. And in the case of the Ramirez family this power is used negatively through intimidation to garner desired school-based literacy expectations and results. This power is not questioned because of culturally-based respect for educators. As Veronica indicates, Hispanics trust that educators will do what is best for their children and educators should not be questioned. Yet in the case of Veronica and Michael they feel powerless because they are desperately trying to help their children to meet the school-based literacy demands with
no recognition from educators, only comments that reflect deficit assumptions and blame.

Based on evidence, Veronica and Michael are very interested and involved in the education of their children especially in their literacy development. Michael and Veronica many times promote literacy acquisition from a functional, social and cultural perspective. This family uses all six aspects of literacy in relevant activities and functions within their home to gain literacy knowledge. As noted in my conclusions they have an abundance of home-based family literacy activities that are relevant to the lives of the family but are not recognized by educators. Comments received by Veronica and Michael from teachers and an administrator of Skinner Elementary signify that educators are placing much blame on Veronica and Michael for not assisting their children more with school-based literacy activities. This blame is based on the educator’s negative assumptions about the Ramirez family and their literacy practices. If educators spent more time truly understanding the literacy dynamics of the Ramirez family a connection between the home, family, and school could be made and the concept of blame negated. Educators can not use assumptions and blame as an excuse to not seek full understanding of the children and families they assist each day. I offer that all educators must begin to view literacy acquisition and home-based family literacy activities as social and cultural practices. To assist with this, educators must self-reflect and understand that using relevant social and cultural literacy aspects of a child’s life can only enhance their literacy acquisition. And to blame parents for not assisting in the literacy success of their children is misguided.
Viewing school-based literacy expectations as the means for her children’s success, Veronica attempts to assist her children meet these expectations. Yet this mismatch between active home-based literacy activities and school-based literacy expectations from teachers and an administrator is damaging the interpersonal interactions within the Ramirez home and contributes to the physical and emotional abuse of Michael Jr. and Anita by Veronica. During interviews it is evident that Veronica does not want to physically hit or yell at her children but her frustration to meet the demands of educators is overwhelming. The negative and demeaning comments she and Michael receive from teachers and the administrator implies they are not helping meet the literacy education of their children. Veronica wants her children to be successful and to her this success is centered only in school-based activities. To meet these demands she helps her children with literacy acquisition the best way she knows how, often relying on socially and culturally based examples to ensure her children’s understanding nevertheless this is not enough for teachers and the administrator. Frustration develops in Veronica and is manifested in the abuse toward Michael Jr. and Anita.

This physical and emotional abuse will diminish in a two-fold manner by increasing the responsibility of action from educators and parents. First, it will subside as educators understand the wealth of social and cultural home-based literacy activities in the Ramirez family. Educators must be open to incorporating these activities in the classroom, thus diminishing the idea of home-based literacy versus school-based literacy. This also will impact the interpersonal interactions between parent and child because educators will utilize families and their literacy experiences and knowledge as
partners in literacy acquisition for their children ensuring a sense a power and involvement in the process. The actions can furthermore create a sense of relevancy for students by embracing the funds of knowledge of marginalized families. Secondly, Veronica and Michael must begin to understand that literacy acquisition occurs through many different forms including the home and not only a school-based setting. This will relieve some of the pressure Veronica feels to assist her children be academically successful for she will understand they are acquiring literacy skills that will help them succeed in life, even if acquisition is in the non-traditional school-based sense. Veronica and Michael must also understand their home environment offers a wealth of socially and culturally based literacy activities. Michael and Veronica will feel more powerful as they communicate this information with educators. It is a win-win situation as this should not be viewed as disrespectful but as sharing information with educators.

The goal and implications of this study is to not generate explicit instructional recommendations for educators. The goal is to describe home-based family literacy activities and functions within one Hispanic family so that educators can recognize the complexity of past and present home-based family literacy practices and the inevitable influence on parents’ interactions with children and with school personnel about school-based literacy practices. Additionally educators must understand their power for negative influences with the intersection of school-based literacy expectations and home-based family literacy activities and functions.

I feel I have reached this goal and I offer my experiences as a teacher-researcher with one Hispanic family as evidence. In the six months I spent with the Ramirez family I built a relationship that taught me a great deal as an urban public
school teacher and a researcher. Sharing this insight can hopefully encourage other teacher-researchers, ultimately assisting the families educators are meant to serve.

First and foremost I encourage educators to view literacy (including family literacy) beyond a limited traditional school-based approach to literacy acquisition. I began my research experience understanding this but not to the extent at the conclusion of the study. Understanding that children acquire literacy from multiple sources including the home is imperative. These activities and functions of literacy are referred to as home-based family literacy practices. To acquire this knowledge I suggest that educators seek information about the families and their home-based family literacy activities and functions. All families offer a wealth of home-based family literacy practices. I stress this point because each family, no matter their background or circumstance, has relevant, social and cultural experiences that contribute to literacy attainment.

Educators must also realize each parent they are in contact with has an educational history. As in the case of Veronica and Michael I realized their educational experiences as children were often negative. They were faced with racism, uncaring teachers, educational situations so uncomfortable and demeaning that Veronica would urinate on herself negatively impacting her self esteem, and irrelevant school-based activities that prompted them to question why exactly they were in school. These memories also negatively influence current interactions with their children’s educators. I suggest educators (including administrators) discuss in a non-intrusive manner the experiences parents had while in school. This information will allow for broader understanding of why parents do what they do or react the way they react to situations.
This information can also curb negative assumptions about parents from teachers and administrators.

By talking to parents educators also can realize that parents do care and are involved in the education of their children. Once again educator's conjectures can often be damaging by blaming parents for a perceived lack of interest, when ultimately the educator is uninformed of what is occurring within the home and lives of parents and students. For educators to blame parents is an unfortunate way to deflect responsibility for educating diverse learners, including Hispanic children.

I also challenge educators to realize the immense power they have with the families and children they teach. It is evident in my interactions with Hispanic families that I as a teacher am greatly respected within Skinner Elementary. How educators use this respect is paramount. It is concerning if teachers and administrators, as in the Ramirez case, use their influence (stemming from parental respect) to negate home-based family literacy activities, question parental involvement and interest, and apply so much pressure to parents to meet school-based literacy expectations that parents emotionally and physically abuse their children. I also would question any teacher who states that they did not make Veronica abuse her children. To fully comprehend the power and influence educators place on families to meet school-based literacy expectations, combined with the fact that marginalized families like the Ramirez family want their children to succeed in the dominant society, portends a negative interface between the two dynamics.

As an urban public school teacher interacting with Hispanics families on a daily basis I offer educators interested in professional growth and relationship building with
those they serve to begin by truly getting to know at least one family per school year by immersing yourself in their lives. Learn about the parent’s past and present sociocultural experiences (a major contributor to learning), ask about the family’s funds of knowledge which can ultimately be incorporated into your classroom to enhance relevancy, discuss prior school-based experiences of the parents that could influence parental involvement, and be willing to place all deficit assumptions and blame aside concerning marginalized families. Become a partner with parents in the education of their children, while using your influence and power in a positive manner rather than subjecting students to school-based demands which could result in negative intra-familial interactions as with the Ramirez family.

As I return to the classroom I will share with and encourage my peers to consider my evidence based findings. In this manner I can hopefully impact more than just one educator (myself) and more than one family (the Ramirez’). This is what I believe to be the foundation of educational research, to assist the uninformed to discover what is occurring in an effort to enhance learning for all involved.

While other researchers noted in my literature review offer evidence to the sociocultural (Huerta-Marcias, 1998; Kloosterman, 1999) and funds of knowledge aspects (Moll, 1992a; Gonzales et al., 2005) that contribute to literacy acquisition of Hispanic families, this study broadens the understanding of literacy and the family by focusing on the concept of home-based family literacy. With this focus I document the influential past literacy practices of two Hispanic children who are now parents, the abundance of present home-based family literacy activities and functions within the home of these parents, and the interface between these home-based family literacy
activities and functions and the school based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators.

Recommendations for Future Study

As a teacher-researcher I learned a great deal from the present study. I suggest that other teacher-researchers expand on this study to continue to the understanding of literacy in the context of a Hispanic family by also focusing on the influential past literacy practices of two Hispanic children who are now parents, the abundance of present home-based family literacy activities and functions within the home of these parents, and the interface between these home-based family literacy activities and functions and the school based literacy expectations from public school educators and administrators.

Each of these issues can be researched further through a case study approach to garner additional data. For example significant research can be gathered concerning the home-based family literacy practices of individuals while growing up, their experiences with school-based literacy, as well as their overall public school encounters. It is these memories can that offer insight into current actions and reactions of those children who are now parents.

The data gathered for this study provided evidence that the Ramirez family use the six components of literacy that are shaped by the relevant sociocultural and funds of knowledge aspects of the family’s life. This broadened my understanding of home-based family literacy, because I realized all literacy practices, while not school-based, are viable and valuable to the acquisition of literacy. I learned that in the case of the Ramirez family that educators marginalize these home-based family literacy activities.
and functions and regard them as unimportant or unrelated to school-based literacy expectations. Approaching home-based family literacy from a deficit perspective devalues family efforts to assist their children and sends a message that family literacy is different than school-based literacy and therefore inferior. In the case of the Ramirez family, this devaluing is predominant and affects the home-school relations as well as the intra-familial relationships. This is evident in the emotional and physical abuse by Veronica toward Michael Jr. and Anita. I propose that teacher-researchers must continue to document the use of literacy within a sociocultural and funds of knowledge frame. This will expand the insight of important literacy practices that can be incorporated into the classroom environment while diminishing the deficit perspective of families.

I encourage teacher-researchers to expand the evidence of this study by documenting the difference between home-based family literacy and school-based literacy, for they are two different concepts. Realizing this difference is important but even more important is for teacher-researchers to understand that the concepts can work in tandem to fully enrich literacy acquisition.

Within the same context, further study is recommended to the often negative intersecting of home-based family literacy practices and school-based literacy expectations from educators. The power-based pressures this intersection can place on parents who feel they are doing all they can to encourage literacy acquisition within their homes can create negative intra-familial interactions. It would be interesting for other teacher-researchers to document this interface to determine if the emotional and physical abuse occurs in other Hispanic families.
I found the ethnographic methodology used within this study allowed me to understand the beliefs, practices, and behaviors (Glesne, 1999) of the Ramirez family. This methodology encouraged me to discover the cultural knowledge and social interactions of persons. This sharing stemmed from a six month collection of interviews, observations, and field notes in a home-based setting. I recommend other teacher-researchers use this methodology to understand human behavior in the context of literacy acquisition thus creating a thick, rich description of the phenomenon (Gall et al, 2003).

Continued research with Hispanics families is paramount. With the growing population of Hispanics in the United States educators are walking into classrooms with diverse populations with differing social and cultural experiences. To understand, from research, that these experiences can offer a wealth of opportunities to contribute to school-based literacy practices is imperative for educators.
APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS OF PARENTS
Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose and benefits of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family: A case study of activities, functions, and the interface with school-based literacy expectations.

Principal Investigator: Jim Larkin Page, a graduate student in the University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Education.

Purpose of the Study:
You are being asked to participate in a research study which has the potential to assist parents and educators in understanding home-based family literacy activities and how these activities impact literacy acquisition.

Study Procedures:
1. The researcher will interview you 14 times over a six-month period. All interviews will be audio-taped to ensure data accuracy. Audio-taped cassettes used in interviews will be heard only by the researcher. Audio-taped cassettes will be destroyed by researcher at the completion of the study.
2. The researcher will observe you with your children interacting in your home.
3. The researcher will also take notes during the interview and observations.

Foreseeable Risks:
There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others:
This study will help:
1. Others understand Hispanic parents’ experiences with home-based family literacy practices while growing up
2. Others understand the current experiences and functions of a Hispanic family in the context of home-based family literacy

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records:
The actual names of participants will not be identified in the analysis or written report for this study.
Questions about the Study

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Jim Larkin Page at telephone number___________ or Dr. Alexandra Leavell, UNT Department of Education, at telephone number__________________.

Review for the Protection of Participants:

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at_______________ with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants’ Rights:

Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Jim Larkin Page has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.

- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.

- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.

- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

________________________________
Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant___________________________________

Date___________________________________________
APPENDIX B

CHILDREN’S ASSENT FORM
Before agreeing to your child's participation in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose and benefits of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Home-based family literacy practices of a Hispanic family: A case study of activities, functions, and the interface with school-based literacy expectations.

Principal Investigator: Jim Larkin Page, a graduate student in the University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Education.

Purpose of the Study:
You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study which has the potential to assist parents and educators in understanding home-based family literacy activities and how these activities impact literacy acquisition.

Study Procedures:
Your child will be observed with the family in the home environment.

Foreseeable Risks:
There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others:
This study will help:
1. Others understand Hispanic parents’ experiences with home-based family literacy practices while growing up
2. Others understand the current experiences and functions of a Hispanic family in the context of home-based family literacy

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records:
The actual names of participants will not be identified in the analysis or written report for this study.

Questions about the Study:
If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Jim Larkin Page at telephone number _____________ or Dr. Alexandra Leavell, UNT Department of Education, at telephone number ________________.
Review for the Protection of Participants:

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at _______________ or sboums@unt.edu any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants’ Rights:

Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Jim Larkin Page has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.

- You understand that you do not have to allow your child to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your child to participate or your decision to withdraw him/her from the study will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your child’s participation at any time.

- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.

- You understand your rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant and you voluntarily consent to your child’s participation in this study.

- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

__________________________________________
Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

__________________________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian

__________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF RECORDED INTERVIEW
Veronica: ...they’re always on me like, Mrs. Ramirez, you need to read with your kids more, you need to do this more. You know it is like read, read, read, and you know what I’m thinking ‘If you want to read with them, you read it with them.’ [It] gets old with me. I get frustrated, because I just sit here with him an hour just to finish a paragraph. It's not going to happen. I get tired. And then Anita too you know? It's like...let me tell you about Michael Jr.'s 1st grade. We sat here for two hours each night. And of course I wasn't working, so I was able to sit here for two hours, yelling at him, making him do his work. I would tell him to have a break, get a drink, wipe your tears, get back at it. Ask him...(referring to me to ask Michael Jr.). Tell how we used to yell at you and do homework.

Michael Jr.: Back before we knew I had dyslexia, she thought I wasn't trying... so she would whip me. And she would send me to my room. We would do it again and again.

Veronica: It was frustrating. He would go to his room, he would come back, he would go take a break, we would go back at it. You know what... that one year...that's the reason why I don't push Anita. That one year, I can't give back to him. I abused that boy. I really did. And I said I wouldn't do that to them no more.

Larkin: Was this based on what the school was telling you and what they wanted?

Veronica: Yes. They sure was always like ‘he's not working, he's not doing this, he's not doing that. He's not reading. He's not trying.
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF OBSERVATIONAL NOTES
Observational Notes from Visit #2--

As I came into the home Michael Jr. desperately wanted to show me his Pokemon artwork he drew in a spiral. He owns many Pokemon cards and uses the cards as a guide to draw the pictures. He enlarges the pictures to an 8.5" X 11" sheet of spiral paper. He and Anita soon began playing video games in the room they share and wanted me to guess how to play. They indicated they were playing “dragon” and “ball z gt” (pronounced ball-Z-got). While I listened to the children Veronica was in the kitchen and talked through the walls that the children should get to work on their homework. As I am still in the bedroom of the child Esther also stated she was upset that the children aren’t reading more. About this time she gets a phone call and I noticed she was talking in interchanging Spanish and English in her conversation. Some words in the sentences she spoke were in English and then the next word would be in Spanish. (I have noticed students and teachers at the school were I teach doing the same thing).

As part of this visit is to observe, I noticed the family has videos and DVD’s around the TV, no computer in the rooms I’ve been in thus far, pictures on the walls, mail on the counter, and trophies and ribbons won by the children displayed in the dining room.

As we went into the living room I noticed the TV was on although no one was really watching it. This prompted my memory as it was like that last time.
APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF FIELD NOTES
Visit #1

On my first visit to their home all five members of the family were in attendance. I arrived at 4:45 and left around 6:30. I came in visited with Michael Jr. and Anita and then sat with Veronica on the couch. Esther was VERY concerned about what I thought of them and their home. I realized by her verbal questions and non-verbal actions, she was nervous about my reactions and thoughts of their home. I stated that I was not going to judge her or her home, and family. I stated that my judgment was not part of the research process.

Veronica and Michael speak English and Spanish (they both admit they feel English is their first language). All the children speak English with not Spanish speaking skills.

Michael came home from work about 5:20 by this time Veronica and I had moved from sitting on the couch to the dining room table where Michael Jr. and Anita were doing homework. Michael sat at the table with us. Michael decided to gill hamburgers on the grill and asked if I would stay for dinner. I did not want to impose but after encouragement several times from Veronica and Michael I said yes.

I discovered all family member were born in the Texas and have almost exclusively lived in the Dallas area all of their lives. Veronica lived in Belton during her first grade year. Her family moved to that area because her father had a job in that area. Esther did state the school she attended was predominately white and she was the only Mexican-American child in the class.
APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH MEMO
11 Research Memo
June 13, 2005

When I arrived Veronica is reading her mail. We make our introductions. We begin a discussion about the kids, summer, and summer school. The TV is on. Anita is going to a physical activities summer school program at Skinner Elem. and tells me about it.

We discuss—
- Summer school
- My trip to NYC
- My car wreck
- Michael Jackson trial results
- Virgin Mary image on window
- Veronica’s care wreck experiences and dealing with the insurance company when she was 19. She used her reading skills to determine the correct paperwork and reimbursement.
- Understanding insurance issues of liability, collision
- The kids going to the YMCA pool
- She is off probation now with her new job and now has insurance for the kids and 401K benefits
- David failed Art and Spanish class this past semester. He is taking Speech this summer in summer school
- Upcoming Quinceneria that Anita will be apart of in August. She has been practicing 2 times a week on the Cumbia’s dance. She will be doma (elegant lady)
- Catholic baptism (their religion) vs. Baptist baptism (my religion growing up) and the role of God parents (if parents die, Easter presents, gifts, money, the kid becomes “one of ours.” Esther is very focused on being a good God parent and all that it involves based on the guidelines based on her religion.
- Veronica and her mom are not talking now. Brother turned her against Esther and her sister) and how she learned a lesson on Oprah about learning to say “no” to family members that are “takers”

Home based literacy practices of Veronica—
- Watches the news on TV and realizes she knows a postal worker who had been serving as a juror and was being interviewed. She discusses that she wondered where he has been because the mail at her office has not been delivered right.
- Watches TV about the Michael Jackson trial results, his Anglo children, the people outside the courtroom (Jerry, Esther, Larkin)
- Watches TV news story about the image of Jesus on window pane at church in Houston
- Reads another Quinceneria invitation that the family received in the mail about Michael’s cousin in Bandera, TX. Michael, Veronica, and Larkin read it together.
APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF CODING
Tally Sheet for coding for personal history interviews (2/7/05 & 2/14/05):

Ethnic labels-3
Racism-5
Bilingual speaking-1
Spanish speaking at home- 2
Family relations-7
Family health issues-1
Self esteem issues-2
Family literacy practices in the home-
School-based literacy-1
Public school experiences-7
Flunked school-1
Family involvement in homework-2
Cultural issues-2
Parents views of school-2
Veronica’s history-1
Veronica’ education history-2
Parental education history-3
Negative teacher comments-2
Teacher encouragement-1
Segregation within school-3
REFERENCE LIST


Bartolome, L. I. & Balderrama, M. V. (2001). The need for educators with political and ideological clarity: Providing our children with “the best.” In M. Reyes & J. J. Halcon (Eds.), The best for our children: Critical perspectives on literacy for Latino students (pp. 48-64). New York: Teachers College Press.


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