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Parental Involvement: Breaking Barriers for Immigrants in (K-12) Education

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LS 400: Senior Capstone

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Abstract

The focus issue of this Capstone Project is on parental involvement among non-English speaking parents and the roadblocks they face. This is important because teachers/schools and non-English speaking parents lack communication regarding their child's education, events, or resources that may be available. It is argued parental involvement is significant in fostering academic success for students. The primary stakeholder perspectives chosen were non-English speaking parents, teachers, and former students of immigrant parents. These stakeholder perspectives were chosen given the demographic location of the schools and population. Having a predominantly immigrant and Hispanic population paved the way for collecting data and understanding the issue at hand. Three themes emerged from an analysis of the interview data collected. Increasing resources for the indigenous community is argued to be the most effective way to help parents be aware of organizations and resources that can assist them and potentially increase parent participation in schools.

Parental Involvement: Breaking Barriers for Immigrants in (K-12) Education

As part of my elementary school education, parent participation from my parents was always something they had trouble with and difficulty being a part of. When field trips, meetings, or events would come up during school hours, it was always difficult to ask my parents to attend since, during a period of time, I only had the support of one parent, my mom. She would be working more than 8+ hours so she could financially support my siblings and I after my dad had been deported. It was hard having to explain why my mom or dad were not attending these events and having to go with someone else. During parent-teacher conferences, it was always difficult for my parents to attend meetings since they worked constantly, and it was challenging to find a time and day when they could ask for a day off and attend. On the other hand, many of my teachers only spoke English, meaning I was left translating for them. I remember it was challenging since I did not know how to translate many words from English to Spanish or vice versa. I could see the look on my parent's faces when they sometimes had some questions or concerns, but they couldn't speak up for themselves since they didn't know how to speak English. When I had a bilingual teacher, the whole situation changed. I was not in the middle of these meetings. It was a good experience for my teacher and parents to communicate and ask questions. Since my parents are unfamiliar with the U.S. school system, they always worried about my sisters and I falling behind since my two older brothers dropped out of high school. It was hard for them to keep up with their schoolwork and receive support from teachers and advisors. Not having my parents to advocate for them, they decided to take a different path.

Growing up, I would always rely on my siblings for help since both of my parents have a low level of education from Mexico, and they only speak Spanish; my father mainly speaks an indigenous Zapoteco dialect. They tried their best to help my siblings and I but there was only so

much they could do. Although my parents wanted to be involved with our education, they couldn't since they faced barriers such as trouble communicating in English, time flexibility, unwelcomed environments, limited educational background, and cultural differences. My parents' lack of parental involvement during my school years was challenging for my siblings and I. Every child should have the opportunity for their parents to feel welcomed and accommodated by schools in order for them to succeed. Non-English speaking parents should be able to receive the necessary support from translating services or necessary accommodations in order to keep track of their children's education, advocate for them and attend events without encountering any difficulties.

Literature Synthesis & Integration

The number of Latino students attending public schools in the United States is rising. According to UnidosUS, the percentage of Latino students enrolled in public schools grew from 22% to 28% between 2009 and 2020, and it is predicted to reach 30% by 2030 (UnidosUS, 2022). The importance of parent involvement in classrooms can contribute to a number of factors, including its significant effects on academic achievement, social development, or a positive school environment (Brooks, 2019). Parents involved in their child's education are giving them the encouragement they need to succeed in school. However, figuring out how to participate can be challenging, particularly for non-English minority parents who are simultaneously balancing a full-time job, face language barriers, or lack resources/funding from schools (Brooks, 2019). Due to cultural and language barriers, research has revealed that Latino parents may have significant difficulties while attempting to be involved in their children's schooling (Smith, 2006). Schools should take action to boost parental involvement and enhance

outcomes for all students by acknowledging these issues and working together to overcome them.

The following terms are being utilized throughout the research to identify and examine topics that others may not be familiar with:

- **Parent involvement:** Parents or guardians who are actively involved in the education and development of their children. Examples include volunteering at the school, attending parent-teacher conferences, helping their child with homework, or attending school board meetings, among other activities.
- **English Language Learners (ELL):** Students who are developing English as a second language

When it comes to parental involvement among non-English speaking parents, there are many factors that we have to consider. Latino parents tend to have more obstacles when it comes to being involved in their children's education, such as language barriers, lack of flexibility, or lack of resources, among other factors (Smith, 2006). Language barriers are a common problem for Latinos since many teachers need to speak Spanish or other indigenous languages. When they rely on translation services from other staff members or their child to speak on their behalf, this frequently makes it difficult for parents and teachers to interact. With limited levels of communication, parents cannot receive information regarding their child's educational process, express concerns or ask questions. Parents also encounter difficulties at home with their children; it might be difficult to assist with homework when they only have limited education and do not speak English. As the child progresses through school, it gets more complicated to understand

the content and support their child with schoolwork (Zarate, 2007). Latino parents often struggle to find time to be involved or participate in their children's education due to their work. Many parents work in agriculture and commute to different cities, which increases their working hours. Many meetings or events are often set to school hours, making attending difficult.

For many Latinos, the lack of involvement in their children's education is often seen as a lack of interest, but on the contrary Latino parents place greater value on education (Tinkler, 2002). Many Latino and other immigrants come to the United States to give their children a better life and education than they obtained while seeking the American Dream. Although they want to be involved in their children's education and have higher academic expectations for them, Latino families often feel excluded from the school community despite their desire to do so (Quiocho & Daoud, 2005). According to research, 97 percent of low-income parents who responded to a study about their thoughts toward their role in their children's education agreed with statements like, "I want to spend time helping my children get the best education" (Lonneman, 2021). Parents may frequently feel helpless due to a lack of bilingual support when addressing issues or speaking up for their children. It is challenging to navigate the American educational system since many parents need to become more familiar with school policies, or it may frequently remind them of their own educational experiences where they were not encouraged and discriminated against for speaking Spanish (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995).

Research has demonstrated the connection between parental involvement and successful outcomes. Some of the effects lead to better conduct, higher motivation, pleasant attitudes, and overall academic performance. From constant involvement, children feel supported and valued, creating significant well-being. Several initiatives have been made through the years to increase parental involvement in education, such as using technology, parent-teacher association, or

parent education programs. As well as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) this law provided parents with new rights and duties to ensure that every school implements these laws correctly. Parental engagement is addressed in several areas of NCLB, such as parental notification and choice, parental engagement strategies, and accountability. Additionally, parents of English language learners have a number of rights and responsibilities (NCLR, 2007). Generally, initiatives to increase parental involvement in education have been continuous through the years, but there are still a lot of resources and improvements to be made. Educators can take various actions to improve parental involvement among non-English speaking parents, such as offering bilingual interpretation either verbally or in writing in Spanish or an indigenous language, hiring more bilingual teachers, providing more parent workshops where parents can learn to navigate their child's school system or homework assistance, having events where parents can participate at a more convenient time, and, most importantly, creating welcoming environments where parents feel supported and informed of all essential resources and information for their children's education (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995).

Overall, student success is greatly influenced by parental involvement. Studies have consistently demonstrated that when parents are interested in their child's education, their child is more likely to perform well in school. Even though we explored multiple obstacles that non-English parents and schools must overcome, such as language barriers, lack of flexibility, or resources. Many factors contribute to helping Latino parents be more involved and work with their teachers to promote a better education environment for their children. By doing so, we are contributing to supporting Latino families to achieve a higher education despite the challenges they have to overcome.

Method

Non-English-speaking parents have a difficult time being involved in their children's education, whether it is attending school events, resource fairs, training, or helping with homework. This may occur for different reasons; maybe the parents work long hours and cannot find time for weekday meetings, or certain training/events may not have the correct language accommodations for them to feel comfortable attending. For this Capstone project, my group and I investigated how teachers and parents can address parent involvement for English language learners and find solutions to improve it. The main issues we focused on were the language barrier, lack of flexibility, and funding. The language barrier is one major factor that may arise during parent-teacher meetings or school-related training. Also, the lack of flexibility for when parent meetings are held can make it difficult for parents who work long hours. By bringing these issues to light, we hope to increase engagement among parents.

Context

The Salad Bowl is home to a great number of immigrant agricultural workers. For the majority of them who have children in schools, they do not speak English and sometimes even have a language other than Spanish. Our interviewees will be from our hometowns which are low-income communities. In one city, an elementary school has 79% of students who are English learners compared to an elementary school in another city which only has 58% of students who are English learners. Both cities are home to a vast majority of Hispanic Immigrants, in particular from a state in Mexico named Oaxaca. These communities do not speak English and sometimes know very little Spanish because they speak a dialect. We will also be interviewing former K-12 students from our communities whose parents do not speak English and sometimes

know little to no Spanish. It is important to note that the long hours being worked by agricultural families make it difficult for students to receive the parental involvement they may need or want.

Participants and Participant Selection

Researchers

Noe: I grew up as an English learner and also had parents who worked long hours and only spoke Spanish. The communication between teachers and parents has always stood out to me because of this reason. Having parents feel welcomed and wanted is only beneficial to the children's success. I can identify with the participants in the way that I am an English learner and have worked in agriculture, so I know what it feels like to work those long hours as many parents of schools in Greenfield and Salinas do. Something I must be mindful of is that times have changed, and now there are a lot more resources for parents out there, but the idea is to find a way for the parents to have access and knowledge of these resources.

Ronaldo: Reflecting back on my education, I know that if I would have had my mother be involved in my education, I would have been more inclined to perform better academically. Unfortunately, due to my mother having to play both parent roles, coming home late from work tired and with no method of transportation made it difficult for her. With this in mind, there are several factors we will be looking into when looking at the challenges of parent involvement. Something that I need to be mindful of is my bias because it will only lead me to obtain inaccurate information. For example, I need to be mindful of how I phrase my questions because that will determine the kind of information I receive.

Maribel: I would watch both my parents wake up really early in the morning to go to

work for long hours in the fields. They would come back home really tired and prepared to do it all over again the next day. Although they wanted to be more involved with my school education, they couldn't due to language barriers and working hours. This is an important topic for many migrant students because they should feel included and welcomed in their school setting where their parents can participate and become more involved. However, I must keep in mind that many schools have already included many resources for parents, but I want to ensure that they are aware of these resources and raise awareness about this topic.

Participants

We will interview teachers and parents from two different schools in Hometown 1 and Hometown 2 (School 1 and School 2). The idea is for the parents who are Non-English speakers to explain the issues or roadblocks they may face when it comes to attending school-related events as well as teachers' expectations. Also, multiple former K-12 students were interviewed about their parents' involvement. We want to know how their parents' involvement may have influenced their academic achievement, if any.

Teacher. A Hispanic female teaching first grade. She is bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish.

Parent 1. A Hispanic male, parent of four children. He is from Oaxaca, Mexico, specifically from la region Mixteca. His primary language is Mixteco but speaks Spanish as well.

Parent 2. A Hispanic female, parent of two children. She is from Oaxaca, Mexico. She speaks Zapoteco, an indigenous dialect, and Spanish.

Parent 3. A Hispanic male, parent of an only child. He is from Oaxaca, Mexico. He speaks an indigenous dialect of Zapoteco and Spanish.

Parent 4. A Hispanic female, parent of four children. She is from Oaxaca, Mexico. She primarily speaks Zapoteco, an indigenous language, and Spanish.

Parent 5. A Hispanic female parent of three children ages two, seven, and 15 who works in agriculture and is from Oaxaca, Mexico. She does not speak English, and her first language/dialect is Triqui.

Parent 6. A Hispanic male parent of two children ages three and eight, born in Oaxaca, Mexico. His first language/dialect is Triqui, and does not speak English.

Former Student 1. A Mexican-American female. Parents had a low educational attainment. She is 1 semester away from obtaining her Bachelor's degree.

Former Student 2. A Mexican-American male. Parents had a low educational attainment. He graduated from college and is looking to transfer to a local university.

Former Student 3. A Mexican-American male. Parents had a low educational attainment. He is a 2nd-year student at a local university.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

Questions for non-English speaking parents:

1. Para usted qué significa la participación de padres en las escuelas?
2. Cuáles han sido sus experiencias sobre la participación de padres en la escuela de sus hijos,
3. como asistir a reuniones, actividades, etc.?
4. ¿Cuáles creen que son los desafíos de los padres que no hablan inglés y su participación en las escuelas?
5. ¿Usted sabe si están haciendo algo actualmente para mejorar la participación de los padres por parte de las escuelas, maestros o miembros de la junta escolar?
6. Sabe como obtener recursos/ayuda por parte de la escuela? Está informado de los eventos o juntas que se llevan a cabo?
7. Ya que usted habla dialecto hay algunos recursos que lo/la ayuden a recibir más información/recursos de la escuela?
8. ¿Qué ayuda le gustaría recibir para que las escuelas les brinden la ayuda necesaria para que pueda involucrarse más en la escuela de sus hijos?
9. ¿Qué tan involucrado está en la escuela de su hijos(s) ¿Le gustaría involucrarse más? Si es así, ¿cuáles son las dificultades que no le permiten involucrarse en la escuela de sus hijos?

10. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría decir sobre las escuelas?

Former student interviewees

1. From what you can remember, what would you say was your parent's level of involvement in your schooling?
2. (if applicable) Can you give me examples of ways your parents were involved in your education?
3. How would you describe the demographics of schools you attended?
4. What are some of the reasons that led to that level of involvement?
5. Do you think your parent's involvement in your education influenced your academic achievement?
6. If your parent's involvement was at a different level from what it was, do you think your academic achievement would be the same or different?
7. How do you think your parent's involvement stacks up against other Latino parents?
8. Do you think your parent's involvement in your education may influence your parental involvement?
9. Is there anything you can think of that can help improve parental involvement amongst Latino parents?

Procedure

Participants were interviewed individually. When it became an obstacle to interview participants in person, we invited them to complete a phone interview with the same questions. Face-to-Face interviews took less than one hour, they were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and took place in our hometown schools and or the city public library. A semi-structured interview format was used for face-to-face interviews, allowing for follow-up

questions to unclear, interesting, or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, one teacher, five parents, and 3 former students whose parents are non-English speakers were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve parental involvement for non-English speaking parents and the roadblocks they may face. This is important because parental involvement is crucial in fostering academic success for students. [explain why your focus issue is authentic, meaningful, and/or urgent]. Three themes emerged Based on data analysis and the relevant research literature (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision-making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: accessibility, funding, and sustainability. Accessibility is an essential factor to consider because of how certain resources are made available to parents. Considering the work parents in the community do is important in making resources accessible to parents. The long hour's Hispanic parents in this community work do not allow them to take full advantage of the resources being made available by the school. Also, an essential factor to consider while making resources available to parents is the language barrier. A lot of parents do not speak English and have little Spanish or none at all. The amount of money needed for parents to have access and schools to be flexible is essential because of the school district budget and how each household income is not always the same. Oftentimes school districts will give priority to other projects rather than focusing on helping teachers build relationships with parents through resources, events, and

training. Finally, sustainability can offer an idea of how successful the action option might be. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option, an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	Accessibility	Funding	Sustainability
Cultural Linguistic Services	Low	Medium	High
Teachers Becoming Digital Citizens	High	Low	Medium
Increasing Spanish Speaking Resources	Low	Low	Medium

Cultural Linguistic Services

Considering the Hispanic community in school number one, there is an increased demand for services that will benefit teachers, parents, and especially students. As the teacher interviewed stated, “The school should already know the increased need for Triqui translators” (Teacher 1, personal communication, April 19, 2023), which would make it beneficial to have Triqui translators. The benefit of having Triqui and Mixteco translators for school-related events such as parent-teacher conferences or even a monthly school assembly in either of the two

schools might mean an increase in parent attendance at these meetings and events. By aiming to increase the parent attendance to said meetings it would mean communication and relationships would begin to be built. For the most part, parents tend to come to school with a negative mentality toward teachers, stated teacher 1, making it difficult to communicate and strengthen the relationship. An increase in parent-teacher relationships is also important because it helps to consolidate a foundation for an inviting and warm school environment (DeGaetano, 2007).

This theme showed up with both parents and teachers being interviewed. The literature addresses this issue when it comes to parents showing respect to the teachers. An example of this would be how Hispanic parents commonly believe that contacting a teacher is disrespectful because it challenges the teacher's authority and would be counterproductive to the educational experience (LeFevre and Shaw, 2012, p.709). Adding the language barrier these parents have would only increase their unwillingness to approach a teacher.

Spreading Awareness

Aware that times have changed and that there are a lot more resources available to immigrant parents, a question that arises is, "How can parents possibly know that these services are available to them?" This question led to our second action plan, which advises school administrators to push teachers to become digital advocates for immigrant parents. Through social media, teachers can become aware of and help other teachers do the same about the resources available. Platforms, such as Twitter, can be a great tool for teachers to get started and build a community that advocates for immigrant families. One of the former students who we interviewed stated, "There may be resources out there... there are programs now like ELAC that encourage parents to attend" (M. James, personal communication, February 27, 2023). ELAC is a program that consists of parents, teachers, staff, and community members who advise school

officials on English learner programs and services. This program will help immigrant parents feel more comfortable participating because they know their voices will be heard. Since the research that Kim(2009) gathered, the interviewed parents shared that when they participated in parent meetings, their opinions were disregarded because of their ethnicity.

Ultimately, with all the information that a teacher learns from social media, we would want them to share it with the parents. Therefore, we would want teachers to inform the parents about the resources available to them through the Remind app. This app allows teachers to write a message that will be received by all parents instantly. The great thing about this app is that the message can also be translated into the preferred language of the parents. Moving on, the accessibility of this action plan is high because anybody who is on social media, which almost everyone is, has access to these apps. The funding for this action is low because there is no purchase necessary. Lastly, the sustainability of this is intermediate since the determining factor is the teacher's willingness to want to help immigrant families.

Increasing Resources for the Indigenous Community

Providing parental support and resources for all cultures and languages is essential to promoting academic achievement for students in a school environment (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). Non-English-speaking parents already have difficulty being involved in their children's education. Latino parents tend to have more barriers, such as language barriers, lack of flexibility, or lack of resources, among other factors (UniUS, 2022). Of the four Indigenous parents we interviewed, all stated how their children's schools do not provide, or they were unaware of resources offered in Zapoteco or Mixteco, the language they speak. A parent from an interview stated, "I believe that the school districts lag behind in acknowledging the indigenous communities because we are always generalized with the Latino community, and although we do

belong geographically, it's an issue that they do not meet our needs." (Parent 1, personal communication, March 27, 2023). Schools need to acknowledge indigenous parents, primarily from Oaxaca, where these communities are being left on their own to navigate the school system and have limited support from their teachers or schools.

Increasing resources for the Indigenous community would allow parents to feel welcomed in their children's schools since they would be acknowledging their culture and languages, potentially increasing their participation in schools. Providing resources such as organizations that offer translating/interpreting services, help filling out paperwork, counseling services, or workshops would be very beneficial for parents since they would be provided with a list of resources instantly. Although this emerging theme greatly supports indigenous parents, the low access to funding and accessibility makes it difficult to provide these services to parents. In the community we investigated, there are limited resources and interpreters available. It would be hard to find qualified interpreters that know how to speak the language and are able to be consistent with the information being delivered. These resources would give parents a better understanding of the educational system and guarantee they get the guidance and opportunities they deserve.

Recommendation

Given the three action options, it is recommended that schools increase resources for the indigenous community. From the literature review and interview data, there seems to be an increased need for resources that will foster and build parent-teacher relationships in the given community. Understanding the need for more Triqui translators or simply information getting to immigrant parents who speak an indigenous language should be prioritized for a better

understanding of why these parents' involvement in their child's education is vital to promoting academic success.

Concessions

Although increasing resources for the indigenous community is essential moving forward, our other two emerging themes, which include cultural linguistic services and spreading awareness, are still as important. Cultural linguistic services would be beneficial since it benefits parents, teachers, and schools. It would provide translators and interpreting services in Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Triqui, among other languages. Having translators available would allow teachers to communicate with parents instead of having their children speak for them. Often parents are left with questions and concerns, unable to communicate with their children's teachers or administrators, and essentially left with concerns. This is an action option that guarantees schools have better communication with parents from indigenous communities and offer a welcoming environment. As for spreading awareness, teachers can become digital advocates by using social media such as Twitter and Remind, along with other apps, to communicate with parents and offer them essential information. This is extremely beneficial since parents can receive information from meetings or workshops they could not attend due to their long working hours. Overall both of these themes would allow parents and teachers to have better communication and be provided with the necessary information/resources to be more involved in their children's education and succeed academically.

Limitations

While all action options may have a limitation, cultural-linguistic services with regard to providing more translators seem to have several. While translators can help eliminate the

language barrier when teachers communicate with parents, it won't allow them to build a connection. Another limitation of this action option is the low accessibility since there may not be a lot of translators who speak a dialect. As a result of this, we face yet another limitation which is funding. Because there is a small percentage of translators, the demand is high, and therefore the service cost can become expensive. In essence, translators are not the solution to the language barrier issue but rather a temporary solution.

Potential negative outcomes

Potential negative outcomes to consider may come from school administrators and teachers. For school administrators, not seeing quick enough results of higher levels of parental involvement when providing resources to immigrant parents can be a potentially negative outcome. For example, a school provides a translator at a parent meeting, but only one or two parents that speak a dialect may not be seen as a good investment by the school. This can lead schools to cut the funding for them and allocate it towards other things. As for teachers, not seeing changes in the levels of parental involvement when they become digital advocates can lead them to feel discouraged and see their efforts as a waste of time.

Conclusion

The greatest way for Latino parents to break down barriers in their children's education and to get more involved in their schools, regardless of difficulties that may result from unfavorable outcomes, is to increase resources for the Indigenous community. This action has a medium level of sustainability but low levels of accessibility and funding. The interview data and literature review established how this action could be implemented and sustained with efforts from schools and teachers collaborating. Increasing resources for Indigenous parents promotes a high level of academic achievement since it is proven that when a parent is involved more in

their child's education, they tend to perform better. This emerging theme provides parents with organizations from which they can seek information and be provided with the necessary resources for their children. Although teachers and school administrators may be left with limited linguistic services and a lack of becoming digital citizens, with the increased resources for indigenous parents, they can have equitable access and a potential increase in parent participation.

Action Documentation and Critical Reflection

The focus issue we looked at is how Hispanic parents struggle with being involved in their children's education due to the different barriers they may face. We formally interviewed teachers, non-English speaking parents, and former students of Hispanic parents. From the interviews, three action options emerged: Cultural Linguistic Services, Teachers Becoming Digital Citizens, and Increasing Spanish/Indigenous Resources. From these three action options, we decided to implement Increasing Spanish/Indigenous Resources for the reason that in the community where we did our interviews, the indigenous community is very large.

There were a great number of responses from our interviews that wanted to see change when it came to resources for the indigenous community, more specifically, translators for different languages/dialects. We decided to email the principals of the schools where we conducted our formal interviews, asking what they are doing at the school to help parents who speak a dialect and have a hard time communicating with teachers. Also, a pamphlet was created with the intention of reaching out to parents to help provide resources for the indigenous community. The email addresses for the principals were attained on the school website. The decision to email the principals was taken because of the power the principal holds in a school setting. As for the pamphlet, there were multiple organizations that we found while searching the

web. Being able to provide phone numbers and addresses for parents to reach out to is what we feel will help in spreading awareness for some of the indigenous resources that are available in their community. Based on our results, we found that both communities have indigenous parents who speak a dialect such as Triqui, Zapoteco, or Mixteco. These parents are often categorized and included with Latinos since Oaxaca is in the region of Mexico. It is surprising that these parents' needs are not being met. Many resources, workshops, and meetings are primarily offered in Spanish, and not many translators or organizations around these communities can help these indigenous parents. This causes parents not to be a part of their child's education due to the language barrier. Many parents speak very limited Spanish and are not able to speak up for their children or build relationships with their teachers or school administrators.

Resources for Indigenous community 🖨️ 📧

 **Noe Tinajero Pacheco** <notinajero@csumb.edu> Mon, May 22, 8:21PM (2 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to: [REDACTED]

Hello Principa [REDACTED]

My name is Noe Tinajero, I am a student at California State University Monterey Bay. The reason for this email is to ask about what resources are available for parents who speak no English and sometimes little to no Spanish. The immigrant community is large in the school district and along with two of my peers we conducted interviews with parents, teachers and former students of immigrant parents for a semester-long capstone project. From the interviews we found that there is an increased need for cultural linguistic services. Our research has shown that parental involvement has an increased academic success for students. This means that a lot of parents, teachers and especially students would benefit from having translators at parent teacher conferences or other school related events. A lot of parents here at [REDACTED] speak little Spanish and sometimes cannot fully understand it. Maybe if the parents knew a translator was being provided they might be more inclined to attend certain events which many automatically rule out simply because they do not understand what is the focus of these events.

Best Regards,
Noe Tinajero

↶ Reply ↷ Forward

The email was sent to the principal of one school where the indigenous community is large. The need for Triqui translators was brought to the attention of the principal due to our interviewees stating it would be nice to have such services.

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RECURSOS PARA PADRES INDÍGENAS

CONDADO DE
MONTEREY

We decided to create a pamphlet that would be available for the indigenous community. This pamphlet would include organizations that are available in the two communities we focused on. These organizations offer assistance in translating/interpreting services in different indigenous languages, paperwork assistance, nutritional classes, and workshops, among others.

Moving on, our initial plan for collecting data was for each one of the members of the group to get in contact with a teacher and parents in our communities to work with. As we moved on with our project, we felt the need to implement the perspective of former students. We felt like their experience could enrich our project because it asked them to reflect on their education and, based on that, what impact it would have on them if they were to be parents. Additionally, the interviews shed some light on how parents' early involvement in education was a strong indicator of involvement in the later stages of their schooling. Another modification we

made was the way we collected data. At first, we planned on doing in-person interviews, but recording consent and scheduling conflicts prevented us from doing so with some interviewees. This led us to collect data in the following methods: voice notes, zoom, and phone calls.

From these interviews, we found that parent involvement does have an impact on student success, which is what we initially predicted. Both the pamphlet and email have not been out in the public long enough to receive a high or desired response. Moreover, something we wish we would have known at the beginning of this research project is that translators contribute to breaking the language barrier but are not the solution to our problem. While it would allow teachers and parents to communicate with one another, it does not help foster a true connection between them. After discussing with my group, we think the important next steps are for teachers to show parents that they genuinely care about them and are making an effort by trying to learn to speak Spanish and/or become culturally aware. Furthermore, the process it takes to start an action option takes into account a large number of ideas.

Lastly, keeping in mind that there will be opposing viewpoints, a lesson that was gained from working toward change is that there is always room for improvement. If an issue is there, it only takes a few to notice and begin moving towards a solution. Change will not happen overnight, and what one can do is be consistent with the idea to move forward and eventually reach the end goal. For this project, the goal is to promote and improve academic success for ALL students through the participation of parents in their education, regardless of the barriers they may face.

Critical Reflection

After conducting research throughout my capstone project, I have learned a lot of new information and methods I can use as a future educator. From the start, I was really engaged with

the topic and acknowledged how significant parental involvement is throughout a child's education. Since my family was able to relate to the same barriers many families still face to this day, I pushed myself to try and find solutions and resources to help Latino families. I have learned that although Latino families may receive resources in Spanish, we need to bring awareness to the indigenous community, which is not well-supported and lacks resources. Through the process of reaching out to parents in the community, it was challenging to have them accept an interview since many were hesitant and were not comfortable with having their voices recorded. Once I was able to gain their trust, I learned a lot from them, such as the barriers they face, their experiences with navigating their children's school, and what changes they wish would occur. As a future educator, I am able to understand the struggles many families face, along with a better understanding of the barriers they face. I can use this information to help non-English speaking parents find the resources they need and help them understand the importance of parental involvement.

Synthesis and Integration

The Liberal Studies MLOs, required coursework, and this Action Research Project have helped me develop as a future educator. Through the years, I was able to gain knowledge, new perspectives and obtain classroom experience from the different coursework. From MLO 1: Developing Educator, I was able to develop my skills, such as developing my writing, speaking, and communication skills. Being able to work in schools through our service learning classes allowed me to learn different methods, teaching strategies/styles, how to meet the needs of students, and overall how to develop different practices. As for MLO 3: Innovative Technology Practitioner, I was able to meet this outcome through coursework, LS 350. From this class, I learned how to use technology as an educational tool. We gained skills from creating our own

teacher website, where we are able to collaborate with other teachers and learn from each other and their teaching methods. Created social media apps such as Instagram and Twitter and used them to spread awareness towards certain educational topics and ways to help students. This is an effective objective since technology is evolving in classrooms, and it is important to find ways to use technology effectively. The next steps that I will need to take in order to become the professional that I envision myself would be to further my education. I plan to start my teaching credential this Fall of 2023, I am ready to start the school year with my co-teacher and be able to learn throughout the year. After obtaining my teaching credential, I plan to use the skills, knowledge, and advice I obtained through my Liberal Studies degree and credential program to use them to teach my own classroom.

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