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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

FROM BABYSITTING TO TEACHING—LATINA CHILDCARE
PROVIDERS ACQUIRING EFFECTIVE TEACHING
STRATEGIES: A GROUNDED THEORY OF
TRANSFORMATIVE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Deborah Becker

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
School of Teacher Education
Educational Studies

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This Dissertation by: Deborah Becker

Entitled: *From Babysitting to Teaching—Latina Childcare Providers Acquiring Effective Teaching Strategies: A Grounded Theory of Transformative Professional Development.*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in the School of Teacher Education, Program of Educational Studies.

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ABSTRACT

Becker, Deborah. *From Babysitting to Teaching—Latina Childcare Providers Acquiring Effective Teaching Strategies: A Grounded Theory of Transformative Professional Development*. Published Doctor of Education dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2021.

Using theoretical sampling, focused on those who could best inform the theory, the participants in this study, all Latina women, consisted of two program *Tías* (Aunties), currently teaching and mentoring in the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* [Grandmothers Preparing the Children for School], or APPLE program, and 14 past graduates. The only education the program graduates had before APPLE was in their home countries prior to immigrating to the United States. Beginning with a description of the type of care they provided to children before they participated in the APPLE program, the participants explained how the structure and content of the program transformed their practice from mother/babysitter to teacher, enabling their children to function successfully in the Eurocentric system of schooling while otherwise maintaining their existing culture. Key to this transformation is a professional development program that condenses significant content knowledge of child development, child guidance, pediatric health and safety, curriculum studies, and business practices; all made accessible to the participants in a manner that connects with their emotions as well as their minds while making the learning engaging and fun. Despite evidence of altering the Latinx culture, the participants consider the transformation they experienced as an acculturative positive change in themselves and

the educational care they provide for the children that in no way diminishes their culture; instead, they consider it an opportunity for them to improve society through their new knowledge.

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“I pray you, [gentle reader], receive my little book in all charity, studying my words with me, forgiving mistake and foible for sake of the faith and passion that is in me, and seeking the grain of truth hidden there” (DuBois, 2018).

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Finally, to the marginalized children and families of the United States, W. E. B. DuBois once asked, “How does it feel to be a problem?” I now realize that you were never the problem; the real problem resides in the hearts and minds of those of us wracked with guilt over trying to justify to ourselves that centuries of oppression and abuse was acceptable. Unfortunately, some of us got so good at telling that lie that you began to believe it, too. Therefore, to the intersectionally marginalized children and families I have harmed over the years, however unintentional it was at the time, I

express my heartfelt apologies and dedicate myself to standing with you: as you work to bring liberation and justice, I will also work to open the minds and hearts of others like me. Together we must seek justice before we can find peace in our world.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Considered by many as the epitome of prosperity and promise, the United States of America has cracks in her foundation that will inevitably lead to downfall unless corrected. One such fissure lies in the education of our children. In the United States (US) education system today, there exists a dichotomous relationship between the children of the dominant culture and those who are not. (Note: for a full listing of acronyms see Appendix L.) The children outside the dominant culture are most often children of color, those for whom English is not their first language, and those whose families live in or near poverty. According to the annual Kids Count report (Colorado Children's Campaign, 2020), the state in which this study occurred is home to 5.75 million people with 1.3 million of them being children under the age of eighteen. Graduation rates for this state show 90% of Asian students, 86% of White students, 74% of Black, and 74% of Hispanic or Latinx students graduating within the typical four years of high school education (Colorado Children's Campaign, 2020). It is this 12 – 16% gap in school success rates between ethnicities that garners much attention in both political and educational arenas. Until we can eliminate this dichotomy, the US cannot even begin to address the global disparity showing the US lagging behind countries boasting 95–100% graduation rates.

Ladson–Billings (2006) described an education debt comprised of historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components that have accumulated over time to

create the underlying problem exacerbating that which has been called either an education opportunity gap, the socio-economic disparity based on privilege and social capital (Bahar, et al., 2018; Crosnoe & Cooper, 2010), or an achievement gap as first described by Gwartney (1970), showing differing graduation rates according to ethnicity. In the United States (US), in which the dominant culture reflects a Eurocentric interpretation of the world, thus emphasizing White values and experiences as the norm and that which is non-white as aberrant (Souto-Manning, 2018). Thus, families outside the dominant culture are primarily non-white, often speakers of languages other than English, living in economically challenging conditions, socially considered lower-class by those of the dominant culture, and referred to as “minorities” despite the fact they represent the global majority. In this paper, I use the term “intersectionally marginalized” (Souto-Manning, 2018) to more accurately represent the hierarchies of power created and preserved by the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components to which Ladson-Billings refers and that play out in schools as systemic racism.

To counter this existing systemic racism (Escayg, 2020; Feagin & Elias, 2013; Kempf, 2020), early childhood programs in the US rely on anti-bias and multicultural curricula to inform pedagogy (Banks, 2007; Escayg, 2019, 2020; Nieto, 2010; Souto-Manning, 2013), despite critiques regarding the limitations of this practice (Escayg, 2018, 2020; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2011, 2014). However, improving the quality of early childhood education and care programs for the benefit of all children requires developing new perspectives on the precepts of quality to include the values, goals, ontologies, and epistemologies of intersectionally marginalized children and families (Crosby, 2018; Cycyk & Hammer, 2018) to address the colonialist practices endemic to

the existing Eurocentric measures of quality (Goodwin, et al., 2008; Pérez & Saavedra, 2017; Souto–Manning & Rabadi–Raol, 2018). While scholars continue to debate the issue of equity in schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2015), with a goal of transforming the culture of schooling (Souto–Manning, 2018) toward an anti–bias and anti–racist equity, little changes in the realities of children’s lives. Without disputing the need to counter systemic racism, until the results of these efforts are common in early childhood classrooms, many children will continue to fail in a system that perceives them from a deficit perspective (Dudley–Marling, 2015; Soto & Swadener, 2002).

Another way to look at this education debt lies in the disconnect between the cultures of school and home (Souto–Manning, 2018). Eisner (2002) refers to “that pervasive and ubiquitous set of expectations and rules that defines schooling as a cultural system” (p. 106) as a hidden or implicit curriculum. We might think of Eisner’s implicit curriculum as an unwritten “codebook” for succeeding in schools. Until the culture of schooling shifts to an equitable environment for all, for the sake of the children today, we can no longer wait for the necessary change that must eventually come. We must do something now to end the unjust failure of too many intersectionally marginalized children. Therefore, one solution might be to provide this “codebook” – to explicitly teach the implicit curriculum – to families outside the dominant culture so they have the tools for their children to succeed within the existing system.

Definition of Key Terms

Three key terms occur in the literature regarding the problem that is the focus of this study: *educational opportunity gap*, *achievement gap*, and *education debt*, each used to indicate the inequality in school outcomes for children who have been

intersectionally marginalized compared to those from the dominant culture. Throughout this paper, I use these three terms interchangeably, according to the term used by the speaker or author, with the understanding that although each term has unique connotations and under currents as to cause, they all indicate the effects of the inequity that exists in the education system of the United States (US). In defining this issue, rather than citing current literature that frequently uses the terms interchangeably, I searched for the origin of each term.

Achievement gap – the differential between white/nonwhite scholastic achievement that becomes evident as the general level of education increases. In the article *Changes in the Nonwhite/White Income Ratio—1939–67*, James Gwartney (1970) was the first to use this term (p. 878).

Education Debt – defined by Gloria Ladson Billings as the gap in student outcomes created as a logical result of “historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society” (Ladson–Billings, 2006, p. 5) in her Presidential Address to the American Educational Research Association comparing this disparity to the national debt of the United States.

Educational opportunity gap – the inequality of educational experiences available to children outside the dominant culture. A report for the U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, titled “Equality of Educational Opportunity,” known colloquially as “The Coleman Report,” (Coleman, 1966) was the first time this term appeared in print.

Other Relevant Terms

Confianza [Trust] – a Latinx cultural value in which trust is reserved for those within the family group and distrusting outsiders; a key factor influencing choices of childcare.

Culture Broker – a person bridging or mediating between two different cultural groups to facilitate border crossing from one culture to another. Critical to this research, this person is familiar with the cultural values and beliefs of both groups and acts to prevent misunderstanding and biased assumptions on the part of the researcher (Delgado–Gaitán, & Trueba, 1991).

Culturally Relevant Practice – the combination of Gay’s (2002) culturally responsive teaching and Ladson–Billings’ (1994, 1995a, 1995b) culturally relevant pedagogy. Both are founded on critical race theory, informed by the examination of oppressions such as racism and sexism from critical legal studies (Ladson–Billings, 2000), and linked to critical whiteness theory (Matias, et al., 2014; Tanner, 2017). The enmeshed racism within the dominant culture of the US is so deep as to be invisible, and to counteract it must first be exposed (Kempf, 2020; Ladson–Billings, 2000). Therefore, I use this term to highlight practices that support and honor the lived experience of the participants in ways that might ordinarily be inconsequential if not invisible to the dominant worldview.

Educación [moral education] – a Latinx cultural value defined as the process through which the children are socialized to become good, moral people who will remain connected to the family (Cycyk & Hammer, 2018; Johnson et al., 2015) and which prepares the child to be an obedient, responsible, well-behaved,

respectful student. This term should not be confused with the English word "education."

Familismo [*Familism*, also *Familialism*] – a Latinx cultural value defined as the responsibility of individual members of the family to the family as an entity. Lugo Steidel and Contreras (2016) described this as four interrelated components: (a) family comes before the individual, (b) adults are involved in the daily lives of the extended family through strong physical and emotional connections, (c) family members provide support for each other in times of need, and (d) individuals have a duty to protect the family name and, if necessary, actively defend the family honor.

Population of Interest

The US census data for the southwestern state in which this study took place shows, with 65.1%, a predominantly White population (U. S. Department of Commerce, 2021). The next largest ethnic group are those of Hispanic or Latinx descent at 21.9% while the balance of the population consists of those of two or more races—not Hispanic or Latinx (4.5%), Black or African American (4.1%), Asian (3.5%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.9%) (U. S. Department of Commerce, 2021). However, when it comes to the children of this state, barely more than half are White (56%) with nearly one-third (31%) Hispanic/Latinx (Colorado Children's Campaign, 2020).

The terms used to describe the population of interest in this study are problematic, regardless the one chosen. Hispanic, Latina/o, Latinx each carry significant baggage to prevent them from accurately describing this population sector of the US. To

acknowledge differences in national origin, there is no single term that will suffice because this people group comes from multiple countries and most prefer to use their country of origin to describe themselves (Taylor et al., 2020). In an effort to create a single consolidated market across the US, media figures like Telemundo and Univision used the term Hispanic as it connected those who speak Spanish (Simón, 2020); however, it also carries a negative connotation due to memories of colonization under Spain. Others preferred the term Latino, from the term *Latino Americano* or Latin American, despite its exclusion of other Spanish-speaking countries like Cuba and Puerto Rico. More recently, the term Latinx has emerged as a gender-neutral term from those who prefer to place themselves outside the gender binary (Simón, 2020) though some maintain the term has been imposed to connect to the non-gendered English language. In this study, I will henceforth use the newer term of Latinx, unless speaking solely of people identifying as female, in which case, I will use the term, Latina.

The Problem: An Analogy

Imagine for a moment that a child's education is like building a jigsaw puzzle. At birth, every child would receive a sealed box containing a jigsaw puzzle unique to that child. This puzzle box represents the child's potential. Over the course of a lifetime, the child would use the contents of this box to construct her/his own knowledge, represented by the jigsaw puzzle when completed.

If you are a teacher from the dominant culture, you would have certain expectations on the first day of kindergarten – you would expect that each child's family has already removed the wrapper from the box, opened the box, and poured out the puzzle pieces. You would expect that the children have worked with their families to turn

all the pieces face up, to have sorted all the edge pieces, and built the border of the puzzle. You would know that some children might have sorted the remaining pieces by color, though others may not, yet all would have begun connecting pieces inside the puzzle border. The families of these children are certain they have provided their children a solid foundation of all they need to succeed in school and their future life. The children are actively engaged in building their knowledge puzzle by making more and more connections. To your mind, these children are ready for school and properly prepared to learn.

There are, however, several children who look, sound, and act differently. These children also received a sealed jigsaw puzzle uniquely their own at birth. Lovingly protected and often discussed, this box sat on a shelf for the child's first five years of life, yet the wrapper still glistens like new with nary a speck of dust. Their families also prepare them for learning in school, but in ways unfamiliar to a teacher from the dominant culture. On the first day of kindergarten, these children race excitedly to school with eyes sparkling in anticipation, proudly carrying the treasured puzzle box. Each child cherishes their puzzle box, feeling the weight of its importance to the rest of her/his family. S/he can hardly wait to get to school and open the box with the teacher to finally see all the wonders inside. These families outside the dominant culture send their children to school to begin their education, able, willing, and excited to learn. They have prepared their children with a solid foundation of love and respect for the knowledge they will build in school. They know that their children are fully prepared for the teacher to begin their academic life in school.

When these children arrive in the classroom and present their unopened puzzle box, the teacher unceremoniously rips off the plastic wrapper, barely noticing how new it still looks from the loving care the family has shown. The teacher tears the box open, allowing the puzzle pieces to tumble out, as the child stares in awe and wonder at what is inside and then in shock at the irreverence the teacher exhibits in how s/he handles the puzzle box. The teacher works with alacrity to get the child caught up to her/his peers, at a frantic pace that confuses the child. Why is the teacher in such a hurry? Unfortunately, the teacher sees a child lacking in what s/he deems a “proper foundation” for learning (according to the perspective of the dominant culture) and is attempting to remedy this lack while surreptitiously *blaming the family for an educational opportunity gap*.

As the child settles into the routine of school, there are multiple hands frantically working to help this child “catch up” to their peers. In this constant push to catch up, there is no time for the child to wonder or ponder the meaning of each piece of the puzzle. The child even finds some of the pieces of her/his puzzle expeditiously connected by others, not completely sure how or why they connected, thus *taking away power over the child’s own learning*.

With the many hands of tutors, specialists, and interventionists, “helping,” invariably some of the pieces of the puzzle fall to the floor, swept away in the night, leaving holes where the missing pieces belong. Future teachers will notice these holes, or “gaps”, in the child’s learning and assume the child is careless, or worse, incapable of learning; thus, *blaming the child for an achievement gap*.

The Interpretation of the Analogy

“[P]erhaps it is the alignment between Eurocentric ways of being and behaving and readiness that disproportionately advantages White children” (Souto–Manning, 2018, p. 457). Variations in cultural perceptions and practices result in different understandings of what it means to prepare children for the rigor of learning in school, with Eurocentric ontologies and epistemologies aligning to disproportionately benefit children from the dominant culture (Souto–Manning, 2018).

Within the dominant culture, one that values independence, competition, and achievement, children learn numbers and letters before they ever start school. Parents read books regularly and give books to children to “read,” teaching the child how to handle a book and the joy of reading. The children visit libraries, museums, and parks with their families and discuss what they see. They sort, cut, color, paint, and play with play dough. Every activity builds on the last to ensure the child will be ready to excel in school.

Other cultures, those valuing interdependence, collaboration, and community well–being, teach children the value of family, to see the hard work it takes to ensure every member is well cared–for, the joy of celebrations that bring family together, and the pleasure of listening to their stories. They teach children to show respect to elders, deference to educators as experts, and the importance of providing for the well–being of the whole family (Calzada et al., 2013). They tell the children about the promise of education for getting a good job that will support the family someday. This foundation of social and emotional skill development will ensure the child will be ready to excel in school.

Unfortunately, the current system of schooling views intersectionally marginalized children from a deficit perspective (Soto & Swadener, 2002; Souto–Manning, 2018), while overlooking their strengths (Bustamante & Hindman, 2020; Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991). Assuming that these so–called “at risk” children start school at an academic disadvantage (Bustamante & Hindman, 2020) compared to their peers of the dominant culture, the teachers expect to invest much of their time, the work of many tutors, specialists, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, and other interventionists, as well as the expenditure of valuable resources to correct the perceived harm “inflicted” on these children by the family’s culture, position in society, and imagined neglect. This is despite, as some research suggests, that these children are better prepared with strategies for learning which include higher levels of social–emotional competence and executive function than their peers (Bustamante & Hindman, 2020).

The Significance of the Analogy

The idea of school readiness, or what it takes to prepare a child to begin school, is a cultural construct, and as such, it is unreasonable to penalize children for the difference in cultural perspectives and practices. Though a few schools have initiated policies, programs, and practices to make the school “child–ready” as opposed to expecting all children to be “school–ready,” these are few and far between (Early et al., 2001). There must be a way to bridge this chasm between cultures regarding the school readiness of children.

Would explicitly teaching the rules and expectations of the US school culture, this implicit curriculum (Eisner, 2002), to family, friends, and neighbors who provide

childcare (FFN childcare providers, also FFN providers) in the Latinx community, many of whom attended school outside the US, address this education debt (Ladson–Billings, 2006)? Could this be the position taken by the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program to address the discrepancies in the readiness and achievement of Latinx children that combine to maintain an education debt? (Note: The name of the program and all participants are pseudonyms.)

Purpose of this Study

Intending to improve the quality of early childhood education for all children, the purpose of the current research is to examine a successful and culturally responsive early childhood program, (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2017) working to improve the school readiness of Latinx children. The criteria used to select the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program as the focus of this research include the following: (a) the program attempts to remain true to the familial and cultural foundations of the participants, (b) the program attempts to encourage the disruption of inequities in education, and (c) the program attempts to provide explicit instruction to FFN childcare providers for them to teach very young children the strategies that will help intersectionally marginalized children succeed in US schools.

The Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela [Grandmothers Preparing the Children for School] Program

The Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela [Grandmothers Preparing the Children for School] (APPLE) program provides knowledge and tools to FFN childcare providers, from non–dominant groups that enable intersectionally marginalized children to succeed within the existing Eurocentric structures of education

in the US without demanding assimilation into the dominant culture. Though it is now expanding to other marginalized populations, the APPLE program began as an intensive training program for Latina FFN childcare providers to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to reduce the education debt by addressing the school readiness of the children in their care. Spanish-speaking childcare workers, referred to as “*Tías*” or “Aunties” are first recruited from the community in which Latina FFN providers work, and then trained to come alongside other FFN providers as mentors and teachers. In the Latinx community, the terms *Tía* and *Tío* (aunt and uncle) refer not only to siblings of a parent, rather to other adults significant in the lives of children. Each year, the APPLE program *Tías* recruit 20–25 Latina FFN childcare providers to enroll in the program as a cohort, thus, creating several cohorts among various cities in the northern region of this southwestern state every year. The program requires regular attendance in at least 30 group professional development meetings and participation in the one-to-one mentoring part of the program, with observation and additional instruction in the individual FFN provider’s home. At the end of the program year, the FFN providers qualify to apply for the national certification as a Child Development Associate, and the program assists in the application process if the FFN provider so desires.

Prior Research on the Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela [Grandmothers Preparing the Children for School] Program

A quantitative, five-year evaluation study of the program conducted by an independent evaluator, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (2017), documented the evidence of change through professional development and in-home coaching. The study documents measurable growth of the FFN providers in key areas using a

program—developed rubric, the Protocol to Evaluate Progress, Environment, and Interaction, with corresponding positive and statistically significant results in preparing children for kindergarten as measured by the Child Development Profile – 3 (DP–3). The study further documents the consistency of implementation and fidelity to the program’s change model i.e., “including ‘Tía’ coaching and instruction, the professional development/credentialing process, ECE [early childhood education] curriculum, and dosage of the program delivered to providers” (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2017, p. 5). This research provides a foundation for the proposed study in that it has documented the program as a change agent in improving the quality of care provided by Latina FFN providers.

The Research Question

For an array of reasons, including several institutional and cultural barriers (e.g., see Liang, et al., 2000; Navarro–Cruz, 2020), many Latinx families choose unregulated, license–exempt FFN childcare for their young children. Although the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) findings indicate a dramatic improvement in all competency areas by the end of their APPLE program participation, there is no discussion regarding how the changes in practice occurred for the FFN providers or any qualitative data explaining the transformation that may occur in the FFN providers’ self–perceptions and their identity as teachers. Zuniga and Howes (2009) also studied Latina family childcare providers, describing women with limited overall education, and specifically lacking formal early childhood education as demonstrating high–quality teaching practices without explaining how they learned these behaviors. The authors indicated a need for future research to understand how and when Latina FFN providers

move from “mothering” to teaching in their programs, explaining, “Within Latino families, mothers are less responsible than teachers for teaching academic school–related skills.... mothers tended to direct rather than support children’s behavior” (Zuniga & Howes, 2009, pp. 267–268). Both the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) and Zuniga and Howes (2009) studies indicate a gap in research that this study proposed to fill.

This existing research indicates a lack of knowledge in how and when Latina FFN providers transition from their role as mother/babysitter to the role of teacher, despite having minimal formal education (Zuniga & Howes, 2009). Similar to the findings of Zuniga and Howes (2009), the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) study documented dramatic improvements in provider competency with the corresponding improvement in kindergarten readiness of the children in their care, however, they did not consider the transformation that might occur in the FFN providers’ self–perceptions and their identity as teachers.

This research study returned to the same program examined in the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) study specifically to address this gap in the literature by asking the research question:

- Q1 How do license exempt Latina family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) childcare providers view their role as early childhood educators after participating in the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program?

Methodology

This was a grounded theory study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) that employed a social justice ideology (Mistry & Sood, 2015), informed by acculturation research (Berry, 2005; Ward & Kus, 2012), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002), and culturally

relevant pedagogy (Ladson–Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1995b), through a lens of care theory (Noddings, 2005, 2015) to inform the field of early childhood education in moving toward equity in our practice working with children and families of multiple backgrounds and world views (Gay, 2002; Ladson–Billings, 2000; Souto–Manning, 2013). For specifics see the methodology section.

Significance of the Study

Improving the quality of early childhood education programs for the benefit of all children requires developing new perspectives on the precepts of quality to include the values, goals, ontologies, and epistemologies of intersectionally marginalized children and families to address the colonialist practices endemic to the existing Eurocentric measures of quality (Goodwin, et al., 2008; Pérez & Saavedra, 2017; Souto–Manning & Rabadi–Raol, 2018). To counter existing systemic racism (Escayg, 2020; Feagin & Elias, 2013; Kempf, 2020), early childhood programs in the US rely on anti–bias and multicultural curricula to inform pedagogy (Escayg, 2019, 2020; Souto–Manning, 2013), despite critiques of their limitations (Escayg, 2018, 2020; Pacini–Ketchabaw et al., 2011, 2014). Scholars continue to debate this issue with little change in children’s lives. Not disputing the significance of systemic racism or the need for systemic change, until these efforts are common in early childhood classrooms many children will continue to fail in a system that perceives them from a deficit perspective (Dudley–Marling, 2015; Dudley–Marling & Paugh, 2010). This study offered a middle ground: meet the needs of the children and families in adapting to and excelling in the current system, minus the expectation of assimilation to the dominant culture, while simultaneously working to change the existing system.

Role of the Researcher

This was a qualitative study, where “*the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis*” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16, [emphasis in original]).

This is most effective because the goal of this study was to understand the process of change when experiencing the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants.

The use of grounded theory specifically dictates the researcher’s systemized handling of data, from creation and collection to analysis throughout the study. The line-by-line coding of the data recommended by Charmaz (2002) plus member-checking (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) ensured the research remained true to the perspectives of the participants, rather than inadvertently imposing biased misunderstandings of the researcher, due to “differential and unequal positions of power and privilege” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Researcher Stance

My career in early childhood education has taken me to several cities, large and small, within a state located in a southwestern part of the US. I have worked with children in every age group from six weeks through twelve years. In so doing, I have held many titles including Teacher’s Aide, Licensed Family Childcare Home Provider, Preschool Teacher, Kindergarten Teacher, Out-of-School-Time Teacher, Program Director, Center Director, Quality Improvement Coach, Tutorial Specialist, Infant/Toddler Specialist, Childcare Resource and Referral Coordinator, Professional Development Coordinator, Quality Improvement Initiatives Manager, and now Early Childhood Teacher Educator. Unfortunately, all of this practical experience, grounded in Developmentally Appropriate Practice as espoused by the National Association for the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC), fostered a gross misunderstanding of the concepts of multicultural awareness (see Background Vignettes: Scene One), culturally responsive pedagogy (Background Vignettes: Scene Two), cultural and linguistic diversity (Background Vignettes: Scene Three), and multicultural education (Background Vignettes: Scene Four) as exhibited in the following vignettes from my personal experience (in chronological order).

Background Vignettes

Many early childhood educators come from a place of well-meaning cultural blindness, even using it as an intentional – yet erroneous – strategy: “If I treat every child the same, then I cannot be racist” (personal conversation, July 15, 2020). Sometimes in denying color we shift the focus to socioeconomic status to disguise our racist views: “No, I ask all of them if someone reads to them every night. A lot of times it is the white kids from the trailer park [who are not being read to]” (personal conversation, July 15, 2020).

As Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) note, “it is imperative that the researcher engaged in a social justice-oriented grounded theory study be explicit about prior ideas, conceptions, and experiences” (p. 57). Therefore, to be fully transparent as a researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2000), this section offers a unique perspective on both the research and my personal journey to the proposed study. Following each vignette, I offer what Souto-Manning and Rabadi-Raol (2018) describe as a counter story by considering the four pillars of Winn’s (2018) transformative justice framework as described by Souto-Manning and Stillman (2020). Although the experiences described below are uniquely my own, the underlying

perspectives are common among many White early childhood educators and caregivers.

Scene One

The early childhood care and education center in which I worked for several years was part of a national chain serving primarily middle to upper class families, with a small percentage of families receiving public assistance to attend. This center was in an affluent neighborhood, in a medium-sized city. This city is home to both the county seat and a public university.

Early in my career, our early learning center went through the process of becoming accredited by NAEYC; a designation which we proudly maintained throughout my tenure with this company. Part of that accreditation process was to incorporate multicultural materials into the classrooms. The center director purchased multicultural dolls and play foods for the dramatic play area and I added empty food boxes from Old El Paso taco shells, La Choy Chinese noodles, and Lean Cuisine stir-fry frozen dinners. The art centers all boasted varying shades of “skin color” construction paper, paints, markers, and crayons. There were “multicultural” musical instruments and recordings of children singing in different languages in the music center. We posted National Geographic-style pictures of families from around the world on the walls and labeled various objects in the classroom with English words and one other language of the classroom teacher’s choosing. My co-teacher and I selected Spanish for our classroom as did several others, though one classroom teacher chose French and another preferred German, all despite English being the only language ever spoken in any classroom. On the day of the accreditation observation visit I brought in my Japanese

dolls, a souvenir from my visit to Okinawa as a young girl (*Look but don't touch!*) and told the children about the Girl's Day celebration in Japan, followed by a tea party.

I thought that I was exemplifying multicultural awareness in my classroom. Little did I understand that my perspective was a combination of appropriation and misinformation focused on "otherness" and lacked any relevance to the children, none of whom were of Japanese descent. According to the third of four stances of transformative justice posited by Souto–Manning and Stillman (2020), "Justice matters."

Scene Two

A year or so later I was the lead teacher in another classroom when a parent approached me with her concern because my assistant had helped the children make "Indian headbands" with taped–on feathers the previous afternoon. I immediately became defensive. First, because I was unaware and unwilling to accept blame for an unplanned activity that I could see was offensive to this family. Truthfully, however, I did not understand why the project was inappropriate. The parent explained that she would be happy to do a presentation for the children and teachers about her Native culture; she often did such presentations to share knowledge of her culture with others. I said that would be nice, but of course, I never invited her to do so. I was not ready to consider common practices that maintained inequitable power dynamics rooted in history. This situation is indicative of the first of the four stances of transformative justice posited by Souto–Manning and Stillman (2020), "History matters."

Scene Three

Another incident occurred soon after the director had enrolled a child in my classroom who spoke no English; her family spoke what I referred to as Chinese,

though I am not certain which language or dialect they spoke. Our class had decided to eat lunch picnic-style outside that day. Ever since the attacks on the World Trade Center our center kept the doors locked for safety; when children needed something inside, they had to ask a teacher to unlock the door. As we were eating lunch, this new little girl walked up and stood looking at me. “What do you need?” I asked. She stood there, silently looking up at me. I told her that she needed to go sit down and eat her lunch. Suddenly I noticed the distress in her eyes as she began to urinate. Quickly, I grabbed her arm and rushed her inside to the bathroom, all the while scolding her, “No! No, Susan! (All names are pseudonyms.) When you need to go potty, you must tell me!”

Unfortunately, it never occurred to me to give her any tools with which she could communicate with me, nor had I learned any words in her language to communicate with her. I did not realize that by not providing a method of communication, I was dehumanizing her. The fourth stance of transformative justice posited by Souto-Manning and Stillman (2020) says, “Language matters.”

Scene Four

After leaving the classroom I began focusing on the early childhood quality improvement efforts taking place around the state. I was then writing and managing grants and providing coaching to assist other early childhood programs in their efforts to become accredited. Now I was the one recommending the “multicultural materials” each program needed and purchasing these with grant funds. I attended “multicultural awareness” professional development trainings which truthfully did nothing more than to further marginalize people who looked different from me and further distance me from the real issue of my own racism. Further professional development would ensure that I

knew what materials the raters would look for in the accreditation observation visit. I learned to count books that supposedly reflected difference: a character wearing glasses here, a woman wearing a hardhat there, or children with brown faces, even if the facial structures were the same as the white children. These were all acceptable, but I must advise the removal of books that depicted violence, never realizing that the real violence remained in the inaccurate depictions of people of different ethnicities such as those showing children with White features tinted brown and brown characters in subservient roles. “Critically analyzing the role of racist lenses and ideas” (Souto–Manning & Stillman, 2020, p. 2) is the second of the four stances of transformative justice posited by Souto–Manning and Stillman (2020), “Race Matters.”

Connection to the Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela [Grandmothers Preparing the Children for School] Program

I first learned of the Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela [Grandmothers Preparing Children for School] (APPLE) program in 2008, when I was invited to write a grant to replicate the program in our county. This would be the first extension of the program into other communities and would require hiring and training local Tías. Upon learning of the opportunity, I felt it could be a great advantage to our community. The grant proposal was successful, and I facilitated the hiring of the new staff and recruiting the initial cohort. I could not work directly with the program because I am a privileged, White, monolingual English speaker, living in a different town, and therefore, my participation with the program ended soon after hiring the new program staff. Beyond that, I only heard the anecdotal reports the APPLE program staff published to the rest of the agency. However, in an early meeting to recruit potential

participants, I became rather emotional explaining (through an interpreter) the reason I wrote the grant to bring APPLE to our county was that I felt it unjust for children to fail in school because of the color of their skin. One of the women later responded, “I never knew that a White woman could care as much about my babies as you do” (personal communication, 2009).

Return to Higher Education

I went back to school to obtain additional credibility to address the quality of early childhood education programs on a systemic level. I believed that my background in both developmentally appropriate practice in the direct education and care of very young children in a high-quality, NAEYC–accredited program combined with experience working toward improving the quality of other early childhood programs gave me a knowledge of all that a high-quality early childhood education and care program should exemplify.

However, the Doctor of Education (EdD) program I selected would not allow a master’s degree in process, so I first had to obtain a separate master’s before starting the EdD program. Fortunately, (though at the time I did not agree) this university did not offer advanced degrees in early childhood education, so I opted to work toward that which I considered a natural extension in an ever-increasingly multi-cultural society: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education with an emphasis in early childhood education. That decision initiated an avalanche of changes in my thinking leading to the difficult and painful work of dismantling and unlearning everything that I thought I knew about myself, the field of early childhood education, and the world around me, for, as Ladson–Billings (2000) so aptly explains:

The process of developing a worldview that differs from the dominant worldview requires active intellectual work on the part of the knower because schools, society, and the structure and the production of knowledge are designed to create individuals who internalize the dominant worldview and knowledge production and acquisition processes. (Ladson–Billings, 2000, p. 258)

I see now that my plan to improve the quality of early childhood education can be nothing like I once imagined. We cannot allow the existing constructs of Developmentally Appropriate Practice and multicultural awareness to stand (Goodwin, et al., 2008; Pérez & Saavedra, 2017; Souto–Manning & Rabadi–Raol, 2018). As a field, we must move beyond awareness, or touting tolerance, and delve deeper into the difficult work (Ladson–Billings, 2000) of deconstructing “quality” (Souto–Manning & Rabadi–Raol, 2018) to embrace the vision of equity in early childhood education for all children and families. Until then we must, at the very least, abolish the deficit perspective and provide all families the tools they need to succeed in the existing system even while working to change it.

Discovering A New Perspective

In the spring of 2019, I was invited to be a guest instructor at a teaching university in China. This opportunity allowed me to experience the perspective of being the “other” when all I have known is white privilege in my own country. Even when I lived on a Japanese island as a young teen, I still operated from a position of privilege as the daughter of a member of a military occupation force.

Though there were four other teachers from the US also teaching at the university in China, I most often had to rely on the kindness and hospitality of the

Chinese people to survive. Fortunately for me, the people I met were extremely gracious hosts, often going far out of their way to ensure that my visit to their country was pleasurable. By comparison, I realized just how far I, as a native citizen of the US, fall short in my accommodation for people visiting this country.

From the very first day in China, I was amazed by this hospitality. Annie, the teacher with whom I was traveling, and I wanted to see some of the sights in Beijing before our scheduled arrival at the university city. We planned to make travel arrangements to see the Great Wall the following day. As we were walking toward one of the sights, a young woman approached us and struck up a conversation in English. She instantly became an impromptu tour guide and translator, first taking us to a travel agency she had used the day before to arrange our trip to the Great Wall because, as she said, it is much too expensive to arrange the excursion through the hotel. She then proceeded to take us to see several sights in the city, including taking us to experience a 15-minute massage and later to a restaurant for lunch. She spent several hours showing us around, answering our questions, and helping us to enjoy our time there. Before helping us get a taxi back to the hotel, she gave us her contact information in case we needed anything. She even seemed a bit disappointed when we wanted to get back to the hotel to rest as there were still more places and events she wanted to share with us.

When we arrived at the city where the university is located, a teacher from the university met us and took us to the dorm where we would be staying. She told us to call her by her English name, Jane. She would be our primary contact during our stay. Jane proceeded to take us to Walmart to get what we would need to set up

housekeeping. Unfortunately, I had not planned well and was low on currency. I thought to purchase only the barest essentials that evening, planning to return later to get all that I would need. Jane insisted that I get what I needed right away, saying that I could pay her back when I got my stipend from the university. Arriving back at our dorm, she called over a few young men walking by to help carry our purchases up to the room in a single trip.

The next morning, Jane sent two students to show me around the university and help me find my classrooms. Noticing how I struggled to climb so many stairs, the students contacted Jane and asked her to find another classroom where I would not have so many stairs to climb. Jane then worked to find a room in a building with an elevator for most of my classes. Returning to the dorm, I asked about laundry facilities. The students located the laundry in my dorm and asked the dorm manager to show me how to operate the machines as they had to get to class.

Part of the way through my stay, I became very ill. One of the students arranged for a taxi to pick me up at the dorm and take me to the health clinic on another part of the campus. She proceeded to fill out the required forms for me, acting as a translator between the doctor and me, getting the prescriptions filled, and ensuring that I understood how to take them before taking me back to the dorm.

When I purchased items from the shops near my dorm, I just had to trust that I received the correct change, because I did not know the currency and could not tell the value of one coin from another. I purchased a small bag of Cheetos, recognizing the packaging, only to find that they were flavored, not with cheese as I expected, but with chicken. When I purchased food in the cafeteria, I never really knew what I was eating

until I tasted it. Eventually, I could recognize my favorites, but it took a good deal of trial and error.

When one of the shop keepers ran into me while walking on the street, her face brightened, and she was talking to me rapidly though I had no idea what she was trying to tell me. Later, I learned that she was acknowledging that she recognized me from shopping in her store. When I ordered dumplings, I did not understand the hand signs for numbers when asked how many I wanted. When I opened my hand to indicate five, she indicated that they came in servings of three or six, though it took me a few exchanges to learn that an extended pinky and thumb with the other fingers folded down meant six.

Through everything, the one thing that I had going for me was a willingness to ask for help when I needed it and fortunately, the people I met graciously helped me. No one chastised me or belittled me for not knowing the language. Very few people lost patience with me. Even in my inability to understand the simple act of counting, which I know seemed so obvious to them, I was never made to feel less than. It is from these experiences; these simple, everyday transactions that I have had a brief glimpse into the world of living outside the dominant culture. I never realized how very helpless I could be, nor the struggles and courage it takes for so many people in my home country merely to survive.

Therefore, I approached this research study, not from a position of privilege or a desire to “fix” a problem. Instead, I came from a place of respect and wonder for how these women are addressing the problem for themselves, their children, and their community.

Organization of the Dissertation

This first chapter has provided an overview of the research, including an explanation of key terms impacting the study, a statement of the problem presented as an analogy, the purpose and significance of the study, the research question, an overview of the methodology, and the role and stance of the researcher. Subsequent chapters include a review of applicable literature in Chapter Two and a comprehensive explanation of the methodology selected for this study in Chapter Three. This methodology section includes the rationale for a grounded theory study, the research setting, and participants, as well as the sources, collection, and analysis of the data. Chapter Three also addresses the trustworthiness and limitations of the study. Chapter Four provides the details of the findings of the research followed by a discussion of the findings considering past research and limitations of the study. Chapter Five presents my conclusions and recommendations based on the findings as well as implications for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Considering the potential impact of early childhood education quality, this study focused solely on early childhood providers by exploring one program designed to increase the school readiness of children who would be intersectionally marginalized in US schools by improving the quality of early childhood educational care they receive.

Method of the Review

The methods used in this review of the literature began with the terms: Latina family childcare, culturally mitigated professional development, intersectionally marginalized, childcare quality, and school readiness. These results led to a citation chase, in which I used the title of relevant articles as the search term to find further related writings. As I began to develop a list, I then identified specific authors writing in this area and searched by author name for other writings I may have missed. Next, I searched recent journals published by associations to which I belong: the American Educational Research Association, American Association for Teaching and Curriculum, NAEYC, and Society for Research in Child Development for more articles that might be related to my topic. This last search led to the most recent studies connected to my topic. As I put together the outline of the literature review, I searched for specific articles to support information I intuitively knew from prior study and personal experience in the field of early childhood education that might not be known to others unrelated to this field. Finally, I identified one publication that seemed to predominate in much of the

research that I was finding: The Early Childhood Research Quarterly. In one last search to identify the most current literature on this topic, I reviewed this journal for all articles printed between 2015 and 2020, also conducting a citation chase based on these articles.

Organization of the Review

To illuminate the complexity of the issue behind this study, I first organize this review of pertinent literature as a funnel of information (see top of Figure 1) from the broadest perspective of the problem, that is, the readiness of children for the rigor of schooling in the United States, to a relatively small gap in the literature indicating the need for the proposed study. Then I situate the study as a single drop into the body of research (see bottom of Figure 1) which includes the ripples of concentric circles showing the conceptual and theoretical frameworks culminating in the selection of the methodology for this study.

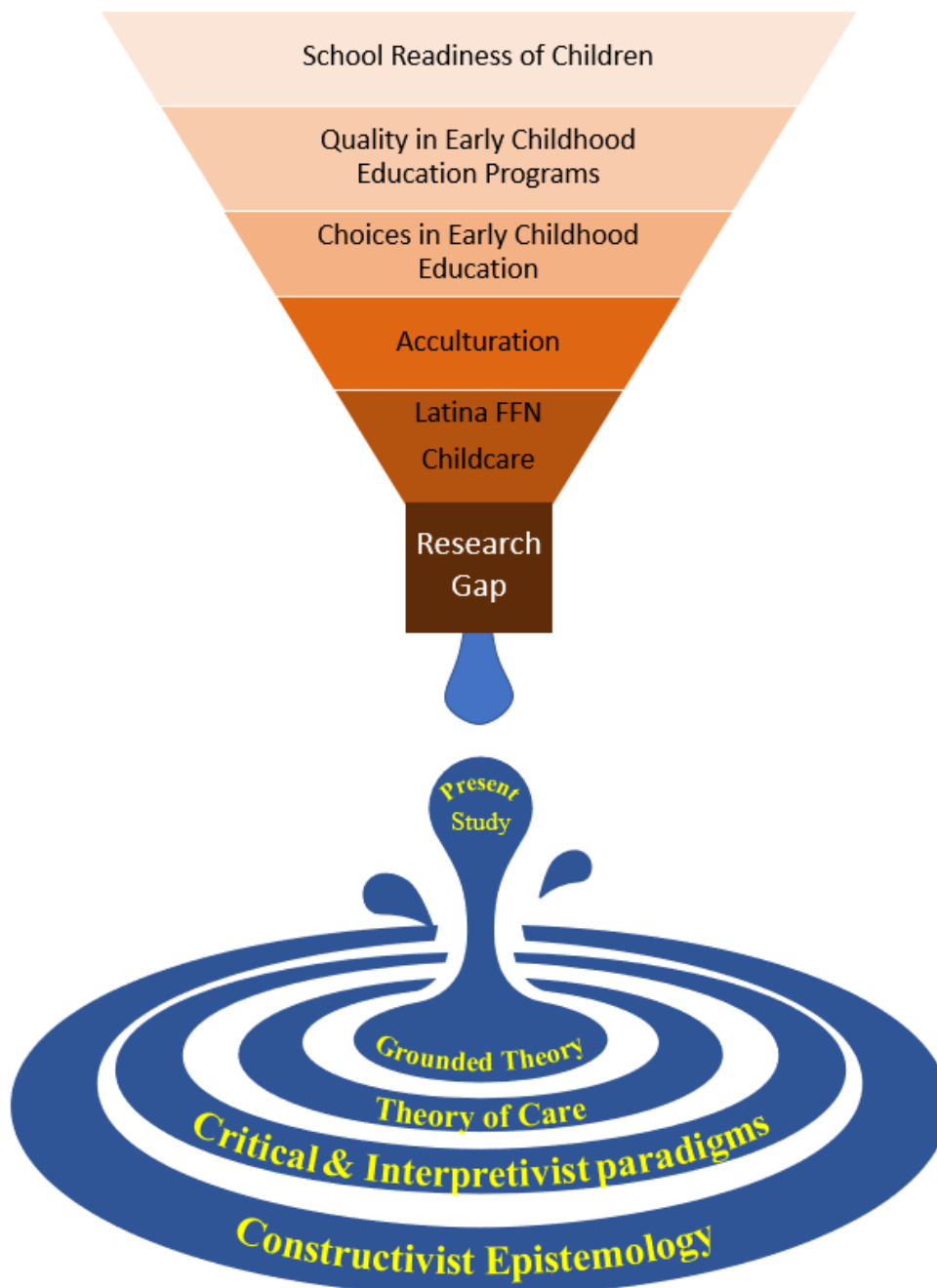
Why School Readiness?

Beginning in the mid eighteenth–century industrial revolution through today, business models have shaped American schools, or education factories (Spring, 2014). In economics, the input–output model originated in 1941 with Wassily Leontief’s demonstration of the interdependence of supply and demand such as “to estimate the economy–wide effect that an initial change in final demand has on an economy” (Bess & Ambargis, 2011). In computer science and mathematics, the term GIGO, meaning garbage in garbage out, indicates the concept that the quality of the output, or result, is governed by the quality of the data originally entered, or input (Rouse, 2008). Therefore, it is no surprise that the concept of input–output influences the perception of results

from the US education system, referenced in the literature as an educational opportunity gap (Coleman, 1966), achievement gap (Gwartney, 1970), or education debt (Ladson–Billings, 2006).

Figure 1

Structural Model of the Literature Review



This debt, or gap, is also reflected in the “school-to-prison pipeline” affecting many students of color, especially African American and Latino males (Alexander, 2020). This plays out through apparently benign and unconnected school policies and teaching strategies that focus on skills low on Bloom’s taxonomy, thus preventing culturally and linguistically diverse students from developing higher order thinking skills (Hammond, 2015).

Padilla et al., (1991) note that the largest gap in student achievement, according to a National Assessment of Educational Progress report, is recorded in reading scores and the highest drop-out rates are found in schools with large concentrations of students whose first language is Spanish (46%) or those of Southeast Asian descent (48%). “Although a number of risk factors contribute to school drop out for ethnic- and language-minority students, one of these risk factors is limited English proficiency at school entry” (Padilla et al., 1991, p. 124). While a lack of English language proficiency may account for some initial disparity, as found by Hindman and Wasik (2015) in which Latinx children in Head Start averaged two full standard deviations below standardized norms on English measures, it does not fully explain it. The children studied by Hindman and Wasik (2015) also averaged one full standard deviation below test norms in Spanish vocabulary, indicating their English language proficiency alone does not fully account for the gap in achievement.

Whether judged a shift in the demands of a globalized marketplace to dictate need for systemic change to develop human capital (Lake & Chan, 2015), as in the economics concept, or a perception of inferior quality in the outcomes of certain populations using mathematical and computer science terms (Spring, 2014), the focus

of attention is shifting to the input side of the configuration, or early childhood, as a potential solution (Burger, 2013; Crosnoe & Cooper, 2010; Peisner–Feinberg & Schaaf, 2009; Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000). As stated by Crosnoe and Cooper (2010) “the transition into school ... [has] a pronounced impact on learning in ways that forecast long–term disparities” (p. 260).

Multiple fields of study are coming together to improve early childhood by connecting scientific evidence to practice (Lake & Chan, 2015). Citing the classic book, *Neurons to Neighborhoods*, by Phillips and Shonkoff (2000), Burger (2013) notes, “Empirical findings from neurobiology, developmental psychology, and educational sciences highlight that early childhood care and education can be crucial for skill formation, including school readiness skills and later school outcomes” (p. 15). Anderson et al., (2015) agree, “The importance of the early childhood years for school readiness is gaining increasing traction with economists, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and physicians” (p. 406). Others (e.g. see Burger, 2013; Crosnoe & Cooper, 2010; Duncan et al., 2007; Magnuson, et al., 2004) add international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF), as well as politicians, policy–makers, and researchers influencing policy decisions to the list of those looking to early childhood education to improve school outcomes.

What is School Readiness?

The notion of school readiness includes encouraging the child’s developmental skills in four domains: social and emotional, physical and motor, intellectual and

cognitive, and speech and language. The social and emotional developmental domain includes the child's ability to express needs and feelings as well as approaches to learning such as attention, motivation, and persistence. The cognitive domain includes critical thinking as well as literacy and numeracy. The physical domain includes both gross and fine motor development, balance, and eye–hand coordination. The speech and language domain includes the child's vocabulary and effective communication skills. Early childhood learning experiences foster these skills because they are associated with later school success (Limlingan et al., 2020).

Skills developed in early childhood can significantly impact a child's future (Lake & Chan, 2015; Landry et al., 2014; Welsh et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Welsh et al., (2020), the effects of an intervention focused on social–emotional learning that supports academic learning for low–income children in preschool had sustained benefit throughout elementary school. Moffitt et al., (2011) found that self–control skills learned in preschool can predict adult health, decreased criminal activity, and financial well–being, stating that early childhood intervention appears more successful than interventions in adolescence. Building on this, Jones et al., (2015) found that kindergarten measures of pro–social behavior can predict later educational attainment and employment.

Whether a result of skill level (Duncan et al., 2007; Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000) or opportunity as Crosnoe and Cooper (2010) maintain: “small group differences tend to widen as initial advantages select children into better opportunities to learn over time” (p. 260). Unfortunately, these “group differences” are often a result of the quality of early childhood educational experiences (Burchinal et al., 2010; Peisner–Feinberg et al.,

2001; Peisner–Feinberg & Schaaf, 2009; Zellman et al., 2008) and tend to fall along lines of ethnicity (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005; U. S. Department of Education, 2015) and socioeconomic status (Crosnoe & Cooper, 2010; Duncan et al., 1994; Johnson et al., 2003; Phillips et al., 1994; U. S. Department of Education, 2015). Hammond (2015) notes,

Research findings [point] to the domino effect resulting from the lack of federally funded quality childcare and preschool for children of color, 0–5 years old living in urban and rural communities. We know quality [childcare] and preschool experiences contribute to optimum brain growth and rich vocabulary development. Access to quality [childcare], child and maternal health services, and jobs that paid a living wage all contribute to children starting school academically and socially ready. (p. 30)

Quality in Early Childhood Programs

The quality of the early learning experience for children is not determined by the location, whether center–based or home–based. Rather, there are specific elements that combine to create safe, predictable, interesting, and challenging learning experiences for young children. The general elements of high–quality early childhood education programs include high–quality teacher–child interactions, comfortable and challenging environments, research–based curriculum, professional development, etc., which combine to provide a foundation for young children’s learning (Limlingan et al., 2020).

When looking to early childhood programs as a panacea to cure the achievement gap (U. S. Department of Education, 2015), it is important to note that the quality of the

program impacts the child's brain development and learning (Landry et al., 2014), with teacher interactions, environment, parent involvement, curricula, and a host of other components playing a significant role (Magnuson et al., 2004; Peisner–Feinberg & Schaaf, 2009; Zellman et al., 2008). There are several systems and measures currently in use to assess the quality of early childhood programs for both center– or home–based environments (e.g. NAEYC, and National Association of Family Child Care accreditation, and the various Environment Rating Scales from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina). Each state creates its own version of a quality rating and improvement system (e.g. Colorado Shines, Delaware Stars for Early Success, and Texas Rising Star) for measuring, recognizing, and rewarding the quality of programs, whether center– or home–based, within its borders. The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance provides a list of nine topic areas regarding national early childhood program standards to assist states in aligning program standards for their individual quality rating and improvement systems (National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, n. d.). These topic areas can be consolidated into five pillars of quality improvement in early childhood education: (1) workforce qualifications, recruitment, and professional development; (2) family and community partnerships; (3) management, administration, and transportation; (4) learning environment, teaching practices, and curriculum (including school readiness, teacher–child relationships, and special needs); and (5) health, safety, and nutrition. This research study focused primarily on the first and fourth pillars.

High quality early childhood education programs have shown improvement in the school readiness of children (e.g. see Magnuson et al., 2004; Peisner–Feinberg &

Schaaf, 2009; Ryan, 2006; Temple & Reynolds, 2007; Wortman, 1995), particularly for those children coming from minoritized communities (e.g. see Campbell et al., 2012; Duncan et al., 1994; NICHD, 2000; OCC, n.d.; Peisner–Feinberg, et al., 2001; Ryan, 2006), with the two well-known longitudinal studies, the High Scope Perry Preschool Project (Parks, 2000; Wortman, 1995) and the Carolina Abecedarian Project (Campbell et al., 2012), indicating these effects last well into adulthood (Campbell et al., 2012; Parks, 2000; Schweinhart et al., 2005). However, these studies focus on center-based programs using intensive interventions (e. g. Head Start, High Scope Perry Preschool Project, and the Carolina Abecedarian Project). I found no longitudinal studies of children in home-based childcare settings.

Choices in Early Childhood Care

There are several options available varying in cost, convenience, and quality to families looking for early childhood care, both formal, as in center-based, and informal, whether in the child's home or another family's home (Clarke–Stewart & Gruber, 1984; Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005). Childcare.gov provides descriptions of the different types of childcare with tips for families in selecting one option over another. Using data from the national database, Child Care Aware, Care.com provides the national averages regarding costs of the different types of care (Care.com, 2020).

At-Home Childcare

Perhaps the most convenient, albeit the most expensive, would be to host an au pair or live-in nanny. According to Au Pair in America.com (2020), families host an au pair in their home, becoming a member of the family for a period of twelve months. The au pair agrees to provide up to 45 hours of childcare per week in exchange for room

and board, the use of a car plus insurance, a weekly salary, and an educational allowance. The cost to families varies depending on the education and experience of the au pair but the minimum price for this service is approximately \$20,000 per year in addition to room and board, car, insurance, and employer taxes. Frequently au pairs are citizens of other countries and desire a cultural exchange experience by living with a family in the US. Families often choose this type of care to expand the children's (and family's) knowledge of other cultures.

A nanny that does not live with the family generally charges approximately \$14 per hour, costing the family about \$30,000 for full-time year-round care plus employer taxes (Care.com, 2020). This arrangement is easily the second-most convenient, contracting with the nanny for a schedule dictated by the needs of the family. Families might choose this option for convenience or because they believe their children will feel more secure in their own home (Office of Child Care, n. d.). It might also limit exposure to diseases frequently found in group care arrangements.

Center-Based Childcare

In center-based childcare programs, children spend their day in a classroom environment. Childcare centers, licensed by a state regulatory agency, charge families an average of \$11,000 per year for each child (Care.com, 2020). Although licensing in childcare does not ensure quality, it does provide minimum standards for programs to maintain, with scheduled visits to the site to ensure compliance with regulations largely focused on safety. Children in childcare centers are usually in classrooms of homogenous age groups ranging in size according to the age of the children and state regulations. This type of care is less flexible; usually available only Monday through

Friday during extended business hours (6:00 am to 6:00 pm). Evening and weekend care may be available in larger cities at an additional expense. Due to state regulations and oversight, this option may be preferable for many families with concerns for child safety and educational opportunities. With more adults in the building, there is more support for the children in case of an emergency. The availability and variety of materials and equipment for children's learning is another reason a family might choose this option (Office of Child Care, n. d.). However, the quality of educational care will vary greatly from one site to another.

A second type of center-based care is the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Because they are federally funded, Head Start and Early Head Start offer free educational childcare to low-income families, though families are required to volunteer their time to the program throughout the year. Due to strict federal guidelines, these programs provide some of the most qualified staff and some of the highest quality programming available. Families who qualify choose this type of care because it is free while receiving high-quality services in addition to educational childcare (Office of Child Care, n. d.).

Preschool and pre-kindergarten programs (Magnuson et al., 2004) offer a third type of center-based care. The cost of preschool varies widely, depending on the location and number of days attended. Preschools are generally available only during the school year and in some areas is part of the public education system making it free to families. Other areas charge families for preschool for example, Haman (2019) uses data from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to quote preschool costs between \$4,460 to \$13,158 per year, largely dependent on

location and whether it is for a few hours two or three days per week or up to 6 hours, five days per week. For example, preschool in New York will cost more than \$10,000 per year, while the same service in Missouri is less than \$6,000. Families choosing this option generally do not require full day childcare and enroll their children for the educational activities to prepare their children for kindergarten (Office of Child Care, n. d.).

For families with children in school, a fourth type of center-based childcare is available. School-age childcare often encompasses the hours before and after school as well as full days when school is not in session; sometimes including summer. This type of care, also known as Out-of-School-Time care, may be offered on-site at the elementary school either by school personnel or another agency contracted by the school. Childcare centers, recreation centers, and houses of worship also offer this type of care, as do community organizations such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs (Office of Child Care, n. d.).

Family-Home Childcare

Alternatively, licensed family childcare homes offer a mixed age grouping with fewer children in a home environment as opposed to the classroom environments found in centers. Family childcare homes may offer extended care options for evenings and weekends, providing a bit more flexibility to families. Quality also varies here as in centers, though licensing does ensure maintenance of minimum standards. Some providers may also offer educational activities throughout the day. The price for this service averages \$10,500 per year (Care.com, 2020). Families with children in school

as well as preschool might prefer this option to keep the children together instead of separate classrooms as in center-based care. (Office of Child Care, n. d.).

Perhaps the least expensive childcare arrangement is when extended family members, close friends, or neighbors care for the children. This type of care is often exempt from licensing because only children from a single family in addition to the caregiver's own children are present. Frequently, this might be grandparents caring for their own grandchildren at no cost to the family. However, lacking oversight from state regulatory agencies, the providers may not have taken basic safety trainings, such as first aid or CPR. This type of care may also provide fewer educational activities than other types of care. Perhaps the least expensive option, for families choosing this type of care, cost savings is often not the most important reason. Families might select this option to maintain close family and community relationships. They choose individuals with a pre-existing relationship of trust to care for their children who share the same community, culture, and beliefs about childrearing (Office of Child Care, m. d.).

Several studies (e.g. see Fram & Kim, 2008; Johnson, A. D. et al., 2017; Johnson, D. J. et al., 2017; Johnson, S.B. et al., 2015; Kim & Fram, 2009; Miller et al., 2013; Vesely et al., 2013) have explored the reasons families choose one form of care over another. In some cases, families will develop an amalgamation of home- and center-based care for their children, whether as an intentional strategy to utilize the best of both types of care or a need to rely on multiple caregivers due to market conditions such as availability, schedules, finances, etc. (Gordon et al., 2013). Yet parents with “the educational, economic, and family structural resources necessary to be selective in their children care arrangements” (Kim & Fram, 2009, p. 88) typically

prioritize quality of care and academic learning, choosing center–based care, particularly if the children are preschool aged.

In 2003, Johnson et al. called for research to take into consideration the parental and cultural socialization goals and the contexts in which these goals operate when studying the use of early childcare arrangements among non–European and non–White families. Building on this, Miller et al., (2013) notes cultural differences across immigrant groups and parental country of origin may impact family choices in childcare. Therefore, I now turn specifically to Latinx families and the process in which they select childcare.

Latinx Families' Choice in Childcare

In a study at a medical clinic serving low–income Latinx children, Peterson et al., (2018) found Latinx parents of young children value school readiness but may lack knowledge of how to prepare their children for kindergarten and may not access community resources even if they are aware of them (Howes et al., 2007). Yet Mendez et al., (2018) note utilization of early childhood education services has improved significantly relative to prior decades although a range of barriers continues to restrict access for many Latinx families.

Institutional Barriers Restricting Access to Quality Childcare

One of these barriers impacting choice and utilization of childcare is the work status of the mother, i.e., mothers who work full time with predictable hours are more likely to choose center–based care than those working part time or with less predictable schedule requirements (Han, 2004; Walker & Reschke, 2004; Yesil–Dagli, 2011). A related factor posing a potential barrier lies in childcare assistance policies for mothers with non–standard work schedules (Crosby et al., 2005; Rachidi, 2016; Sandstrom &

Chaudry, 2012), though parents who do receive subsidized childcare are more likely to choose center-based care for their children (Navarro–Cruz, 2020). Neighborhood resources are another potential barrier for Latinx families in choosing the care they prefer. Navarro–Cruz (2020) noted that proximity to work, home, or family impacted the family’s decision based on who may be transporting the child to and from the care provider. Mendez et al., (2018) found lack of availability in low-income areas of the city creates a “childcare desert” for Latinx families looking for childcare; Walker and Reschke (2004) include rural areas in this childcare desert.

Cultural Barriers Restricting Access to Quality Childcare

In the US, Latinx families are less likely to choose center-based care for their children, preferring neighborhood-based family childcare particularly when their children are very young (Fram & Kim, 2008; Shuey & Leventhal, 2020). The selection of childcare among Latinx families often centers around the cultural values of *familismo*, *educación*, and *confianza* (Navarro–Cruz, 2020).

Familismo [Familism, also Familialism]

This first cultural barrier is a core cultural value among Latinx families. *Familismo* plays out in both attitudes and behaviors (Calzada et al., 2013). An inclusive definition of attitudinal familismo, developed by Lugo Steidel and Contreras (2016), contains four interrelated components: (a) family comes before the individual, (b) adults are involved in the daily lives of the extended family through strong physical and emotional connections, (c) family members provide support for each other in times of need, and (d) individuals have a duty to protect the family name and, if necessary, actively defend the family honor. Building on this, Calzada et al., (2013) identified five domains in which

these attitudes are expressed in related behaviors: (a) financial support, (b) shared living arrangements, (c) shared daily activities, (d) immigration support for extended family, and (e) collective child-rearing. This last behavior, collective child-rearing, may also be described as co-parenting and can in part explain the decision to keep children with family members through the infant and toddler years. In addition, the presence of other adults in the home through shared living arrangements coupled with the expectation to provide financial support to others in the family contribute to the ability to keep young children with family, rather than leaving them in more formal childcare arrangements.

Educación [Moral Education]

The second cultural barrier of *educación* intertwines with the value of familismo. Not to be confused with the English term education, *educación* is the moral training of children accomplished in the home. It is not preparing children academically for school, rather it is preparing children to be obedient students. *Educación* is the process through which the children are socialized to become good, moral people who will remain connected to the family (Cycyk & Hammer, 2018; Johnson et al., 2015). *Educación* prepares the child to be an obedient, responsible, well-behaved, respectful student. However, it can also prevent the young adult from pursuing higher education because older generations may fear a “lack of respect [or] limited enactment of *educación*” (Espino, 2016) if the child were to become smarter or more educated than her/his elders. This belief that the family must instill in the child this solid foundation of *educación* also discourages sending very young children to childcare.

Confianza [Trust]

Confianza, meaning trust, is the third cultural barrier for Latinx families, and a key factor influencing choices of childcare. This *confianza* also intertwines with *familismo*, reserving trust for those within the family group and distrusting outsiders. When it comes to childcare arrangements, a lack of trust was one of the main reasons Latinx mothers preferred to stay home and care for their own children (Navarro–Cruz, 2020; Shuey & Leventhal, 2020). If they were unable to stay home, mothers felt that extended family was the next best thing, believing that the children would be loved as much as their own children. Once the children grew older, mothers in the Navarro–Cruz (2020) study felt it was safe to enroll them in preschool because they valued the education and socialization the children would get there. Navarro–Cruz (2020) found that mothers also believed their preschool–aged children would tell them if they were being harmed when they were outside of the protection of the family, but they feared that as infants and toddlers, the children would be harmed and the parents would never know. “Mistrust of outsiders was especially seen in the domain of childrearing” (Calzada et al., 2013) with discrimination the parents had experienced from outsiders reinforcing this belief.

Mothers staying in the US for a longer period of time may become more knowledgeable and familiar with the system, and through acculturation, they may develop trust and put greater value on the use of center–based childcare. In addition, acculturation may be associated with the parents' educational level, family income, and mother's working status and working schedule. (Yesil–Dagli, 2011).

Assimilation or Acculturation?

“How does it feel to be a problem?” (DuBois, 2018, p. 4) W. E. B. DuBois asked this question more than a century ago, yet today, it still plagues many in our nation. “To avoid being [construed] as problems, many immigrant families engage in assimilating their children into dominant ways of being, behaving and communicating” (Souto–Manning, 2018 p. 457).

Early childhood programs are seen as a way to assimilate immigrants (Shuey & Leventhal, 2020; Tobin, 2020; Tobin, et al., 2013), including the acquisition of navigational capital, i.e., the resilience and strategies to understand and navigate the educational system for their children (Vesely et al., 2013). Unfortunately, this assimilation comes at a high cost as described by Pat Mora in her poem titled *Elena*:

My Spanish isn't enough.
 I remember how I'd smile
 listening to my little ones,
 understanding every word they'd say,
 their jokes, their songs, their plots.
 Vamos a pedirle dulces a mamá. Vamos.
 But that was in Mexico.
 Now my children go to American high schools.
 They speak English. At night they sit around
 the kitchen table, laugh with one another.
 I stand by the stove and feel dumb, alone.
 I bought a book to learn English.

My husband frowned, drank more beer.
 My oldest said, "Mamá, he doesn't want you
 to be smarter than he is." I'm forty,
 embarrassed at mispronouncing words,
 embarrassed at the laughter of my children,
 the grocer, the mailman. Sometimes I take
 my English book and lock myself in the bathroom,
 say the thick words softly,
 for if I stop trying, I will be deaf
 when my children need my help. (Mora, 1994)

The process of acculturation involves cultural and psychological accommodations and adaptations between groups (Berry, 2005; Ward & Kus, 2012) and "influenced by a complex interplay of individual and ecological characteristics" (Calzada et al., 2015, p. 1061). According to Berry (2005), the desire and freedom to maintain cultural heritage and identity while building reciprocal relationships with those from the dominant culture leads to integration on the part of the individual and multiculturalism on the part of the larger society. Conversely, to deny/drop the heritage culture, whether by choice or force, while maintaining distance from the dominant culture results in marginalization and exclusion. What has apparently occurred in US society is assimilation/melting pot strategies for various European cultures while all other cultures, particularly where physical differences (skin color) are evident, historically experienced separation and segregation but today experience marginalization and exclusion.

Valenzuela (2017) explains that the assimilationist strategies in US schools impact Latinx students primarily in two ways. One way is in the realm of caring – teachers expect students to care about school before the teachers will care about the students. Whereas Latinx students need teachers to show their care for them before they will decide to care about school. The other method lies in the assimilationist strategy of “de–Mexicanization” by taking away the student’s language and culture. Valenzuela (2017) notes, “The operant model of schooling structurally deprives acculturated, U.S.–born youth of social capital that they would otherwise enjoy were the school not so aggressively (subtractively) assimilationist” (Valenzuela, 2017, p. 276).

Intersectional Marginalization

Souto–Manning (2018) points out that the Eurocentric perspective held by those in the US education system identifies and defines young immigrant children by their deficits and differences which ultimately constructs their identities as failures. Souto–Manning (2018) expresses this feeling in the final stanza of her poem from the parents’ perspective:

It’s easy to pretend it’s about us, about what we don’t do

But no one is making the effort to see how hard we work and to tell us that we belong

I think all they see when they look at us is intervention, special classes, problems

(Souto-Manning, 2018, p. 465)

Successful transition into elementary school from a Eurocentric perspective requires assimilation for intersectionally marginalized children. But even the lack of assistance to assimilate creates yet another barrier and further marginalizes these

children and families. “Instead of blaming parents or charging families with the creation of overlaps via assimilationist processes, schools must focus on making such overlaps the basis of the architecture of transitioning in particular and of schooling in general” (Souto–Manning, 2018, p. 466). This entails building bridges from the home to the implicit curriculum of school or what Eisner (2002) refers to as “that pervasive and ubiquitous set of expectations and rules that defines schooling as a cultural system” (p. 106). Such bridges would allow for accommodation and integration without forcing full assimilation. It would also secure respect for the home culture as the foundation of one side of the bridge. I approached the research with this kind of respect grounded in my desire for social justice. Rather than marginalize the experiences of the participants or the children and families they serve, I centered their perspectives and priorities by listening carefully to their voices; honoring the knowledge they bring and knowing that in doing so, in the words of (Freire, 2017), they have the power “to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well” (p. 18).

Latina Family, Friend, and Neighbor Childcare

Latinx families, particularly those with low income, tend to rely on family, friends, or neighbors to care for their children more often than center–based arrangements. This is due in part because it is available and affordable, but also because it is culturally congruent (Mendez et al., 2018; Navarro–Cruz, 2020). Although schooling is a high priority in Latinx families (Espino, 2016), families look to the professional educator to teach their children academic knowledge, while families focus on obedience, manners, and respect toward adults (Cycyk & Hammer, 2018).

The question of whether a Latina family childcare provider's role is more like the mother/babysitter or the teacher was the topic of a study by Zuniga and Howes (2009). One difference between the two roles is whether the adult is supportive of the child's behavior (the teacher's position), or directive (the mother's position). The providers who were supportive of the child's behavior also practiced identifiable teaching strategies of scaffolding, responsive engagement, and pre-academic activities using home-related events like cooking and gardening. These behaviors are related to higher environment quality as measured by the Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (Harms & Clifford, 1989).

Research Gap

Walker and Reschke (2004) call for subsidy funding that includes informal childcare arrangements, as with family, friends, and neighbors, cautioning that such funding must also include "innovative approaches to improving the quality of such care to also ensure the well-being of the child" (p. 163). Mendez et al. (2018) explain the need for research with early childhood providers serving low-income Latinx children to "identify professional development needs and supports that can improve the quality" of early childhood education for the children and families using their services (p. 20). A few such "innovative approaches" have been implemented around the country, of which the APPLE program has been documented (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2017). The Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) study asserted that the APPLE program does indeed improve the quality of care provided and improves the school readiness of the children in their care (pp. 55–56).

Prior studies (Burchinal et al., 2002; Doherty et al., 2006; NICHD, 2002) indicate that the quality of children's experiences in childcare settings is dependent on the formal education and training in early childhood education and child development that the provider has received, with some indicating that a minimum of a bachelor's degree is indicated to provide quality childcare (Early, Bryant et al., 2006; Early, Maxwell et al., 2007; Howes et al., 2003). However, Zuniga and Howes (2009) observed Latina early childhood providers with limited formal education exhibiting this higher quality of care, specifically by implementing the behaviors usually attributed to those with formal degrees in early childhood education. Zuniga and Howes called for additional research to study how and when Latina childcare providers move from "mothering" or babysitting to teaching to help explain this variation in practices among care providers with limited formal education. This research study addresses this gap in the literature by investigating how the APPLE program influences the role of Latinx family, friend, and neighbor childcare providers as early childhood educators.

Conceptual Framework

Egbert and Sanden (2014) explain that the selection of research question, method, and meaning are all based on the epistemological lens, or worldview—informed mode of seeing, which the researcher uses to understand the nature and acquisition of knowledge. I chose a constructivist epistemology based first on personal experience in teaching very young children during which I provided experiences to facilitate their construction of knowledge of the world, also watching as they connected new ideas to what they already knew from prior experience. I then connected my experience to

Dewey's (1916) explanation of the significance of experience in developing knowledge or intellectual content:

An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance. An experience, a very humble experience, is capable of generating and carrying any amount of theory (or intellectual content), but a theory apart from experience cannot be definitely grasped even as theory. (p. 144)

This constructivist epistemological perspective on the nature of knowledge, in turn, informed the researcher's stance on how knowledge can be revealed, which Egbert and Sanden (2014) use to define the researcher's paradigm. An interpretivist paradigm emphasizes the interaction of human beings with phenomena, realizing that there can be multiple interpretations of the same event, and a critical paradigm emphasizes the lived experiences of people in context by exploring dichotomous realities to illumine power relationships that benefit some while oppressing others (Egbert & Sanden, 2014). As described in the researcher's stance section in chapter one, my current views regarding power relationships, obtained through reflection and reevaluation of past intercultural interactions, have led me to meld these critical and interpretivist paradigms into a social justice ideology, or conceptual framework, to cut through stereotypical views that cloud judgment when reflecting on evidence from the perspective of the participant (Mistry & Sood, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

"Researchers' paradigms impact their use of theory based on whether or not they feel the theory can contribute to the understanding of their area of inquiry" (Egbert &

Sanden, 2014). To further inform my social justice ideology as created by melding the critical and interpretivist paradigms, I relied on Gay's (2002, 2018) culturally responsive teaching, and the culturally relevant pedagogy of Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b). I then applied Noddings' care theory (2005, 2015) as a lens to bring the proposed research into focus.

Culturally Relevant Education

Many authors have provided the foundation of culturally relevant education, perhaps the earliest being W. E. B. DuBois's (2018) book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, originally published in 1903, striving against the tide of mediocrity in the education of black children. The ensuing history of court cases, first enforcing segregation in schools, then requiring desegregation, and more recently allowing resegregation, has accomplished little in the quality of education for black and brown children. Answering the problem presented by the Coleman Report (Coleman, 1966), researchers have taken up the challenge to "ameliorate the effects of cultural discontinuity" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 66) between teachers and their students through multiculturalism (e.g., see Banks, 2007; Nieto, 2010; Tatum, 1998). Cited more frequently than any others in the field, two enduring voices are Geneva Gay's (2002, 2018) focus on teacher practice in culturally responsive teaching and Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2006) focus on the teacher's embodiment of educational theory in her culturally responsive pedagogy (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). What they have in common is a view of the school as an arena for social change borne out of their passion and dedication to social justice. Other writers have synthesized these two lines of research under the label *culturally relevant education* (Aronson & Laughter, 2016;

Dover, 2013). This amalgamation, then, seeks to “reframe public debates in education away from neoliberal individualism.... privatization, and competition” (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 164).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson–Billings (1995a) defines culturally relevant teaching as a “pedagogy of opposition,” focused on a collective sense of empowerment, and consisting of three propositions (p. 160). These propositions focus on the students and their experiences but rely on the teacher’s ability to make these experiences a reality. They include:

- Academic success – teachers focus on the students’ academic needs and find ways to encourage students to “choose academic excellence” by ascribing value to their existing skills and then focusing those skills as an academic strategy.
- Cultural Competence – teachers deliberately connect the students’ culture to learning goals; their music, their home language, even the abilities of members from their communities can become the learning platform.
- Critical Consciousness – teachers enact a form of social action curriculum to encourage and enable students to critically examine the current social order and challenge the status quo for the benefit of their community.

However, there are no magic bullets, no best practices to advance here. What sets apart culturally relevant teachers is the way in which they *think*: about themselves, their work, and their relationships (with students, the students’ parents, the community). In short, the way s/he embodies her/his epistemological and ontological beliefs identifies the culturally relevant teacher.

In this study, I explored how the participants feel their roles may have changed while they were involved in the APPLE program. To do so, I listened from their point of view. From my own epistemological and ontological perspective, I see these women as knowledgeable, and I hoped to learn from them. In using a culturally relevant pedagogy as a lens I remained mindful of historic inequalities of power relationships and intentionally minimized my own cultural beliefs and my assumptions about their culture to truly hear their voices.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

The basic tenet of culturally responsive teaching is that education, traditionally a Eurocentric construct, can and should be accessible to every student, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. To do so, teachers must first recognize that education is a sociocultural process, that teaching decisions are influenced by the teacher's culture and requires critical examination to understand their own and their students' cultures, and to replace a deficit perspective with a perception of students "at promise instead of at risk" (Gay, 2018, p. 1). Gay's (2002, 2018) work focuses on teacher practices that will encourage equity in education by being:

- Validating and affirming: acknowledging the legitimacy of cultural heritage, incorporating multicultural information in all subjects, with a variety of strategies to connect different styles of learning, bridging home and school experiences, and teaching students to know and praise one another's cultural heritages.

- Comprehensive and inclusive: from preschool through graduate school, teachers and students working in collaboration, building cultural border-crossing skills.
- Multidimensional: impacting all areas of curricular content, socio-cultural context, classroom climate, teacher-student relationships, teaching techniques, classroom management, and assessment.
- Empowering: pursuing excellence through mastery encourages competence, confidence, courage, and the will to act.
- Transformative: explicitly respecting cultures and experiences of marginalized students, confronting and transcending cultural hegemony endemic to traditional curricular content and methods, developing social consciousness, analytical critique, and political and personal efficacy to combat prejudice, racism, oppression, and exploitation.
- Emancipatory: liberating students from mainstream canons of knowledge and ways of knowing, incorporating authentic knowledge of different ethnic groups, with cultural and communication styles accessible to all.
- Humanistic: concerning human dignity, welfare, and respect to benefit all students.
- Normative and ethical: recognizing that traditional education is culturally responsive to Eurocentric culture and works to make it responsive to all cultures.

Gay (2018) adds that one of the major pillars of culturally responsive teaching lies in understanding the difference between caring *about* and caring *for* students.

Caring *about* students is an emotional response or attitude without action, where caring *for* them is an intentional practice of action plus emotionality. Caring *for* students goes beyond emotionally supportive and respectful relationships to include a commitment to ensuring students are learning. The intended outcomes of this type of caring in both student performance and well-being include “competence, agency, autonomy, efficacy, and empowerment” (Gay, 2018, p. 58). Thompson (2004) calls this culturally responsive caring; we must see the world as it appears to the culturally and linguistically diverse student. We must see the world as it is but with a vision for how it could be; truly seeing raced relations in our racist society enables us to prepare children to transform society. Gay (2018) expands,

Culturally responsive caring is launched through teachers acquiring more knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity, becoming more conscious of themselves as cultural beings and cultural actors in the process of teaching, and engaging in courageous conversations about issues fundamental to social justice in society and educational equity for ethnically diverse students. (p. 80)

First and foremost, this study is validating and affirming toward the cultural heritage of the participants and the children and families they serve. By using culturally responsive caring as a lens, I intentionally worked with the participants to build what Gay refers to as border-crossing skills by explicitly respecting and valuing their experiences. Ultimately, I pursued an understanding of their experiences because I care.

Care Theory

Nel Noddings is a leading expert on the theory of care. She is explicit that care as an ethic is not a set of behaviors, an individual attribute, or a virtue. In explaining what she means by an ethic of care, Noddings first makes a distinction between caring *about* – implying a distance yet being open to the possibility of caring – and caring *for* – which requires an action performed in relationship with another person (Noddings, 1984). She then defines care in relationship form as “a connection or encounter between two human beings – a carer [or one–caring] and a recipient of care or cared–for” (Noddings, 2005, p. 15). Noddings goes on to explain the one–caring must first experience “engrossment” which is the level of focus, even a sense of one–ness, with the cared–for. This engrossment entails being fully present to another person, understanding another person’s reality, and as nearly as possible, seeing life from her/his perspective, feeling what s/he feels, taking pain or pleasure in what s/he recounts. Once the one–caring perceives the reality of the cared–for, there develops an urgency to act, as one would act for her/himself in that situation, though it is on behalf of the cared–for. This second feeling Noddings refers to as a “motivational displacement,” or a feeling that the one–caring *must do* something to improve the lot of the cared–for. This is a sense of being “seized by the needs of another” (Noddings, 2005, p. 16). The motivation of the one–caring “is directed toward the welfare, protection, or enhancement of the cared–for” (Noddings, 1984, p. 23.)

Noddings goes on to explain that the relationship cannot end with the one–caring. The cared–for has the responsibility to respond to the one–caring. As she notes in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*:

We shall see that for (A, B) to be a caring relation, both A (the one–caring) and B (the cared–for) must contribute appropriately. Something from A must be received, completed, in B. Generally, we characterize this something as an attitude. B looks for something which tells him that A has regard for him, that he is not being treated perfunctorily....When the attitude of the one–caring bespeaks caring, the cared–for glows, grows stronger, and feels not so much that he has been given something as that something has been added to him. (Noddings, 1984, pp. 19–20)

Noddings does note that the relationship between the one–caring and the cared–for need not be a “deep, lasting, time–consuming personal relationship” (1984, p. 180). What is required is the elimination of distraction and the complete, focused presence with that one person, however brief the encounter may be.

There are, however, points that Noddings includes, as well as those she omits, with which I cannot agree. The first of these is her stance on motherhood as the model for this ethic of care. It is as though she makes a god of motherhood and (in her words) asks “what ethical need has woman for God?” (Noddings, 1984, p. 98). Hoagland (1990) points out that to use mothering as the model for unconditional caring is akin to the stereotype of the Black mammy (hooks, 1981, pp. 84–85) who loves and cares for the young son of the master until he ultimately becomes the slave master as an adult.

Noddings also states that the care she describes is not to be confused with agape love. Agape is a pure, self–sacrificing love; the type of love that enables one to choose to set aside self for the betterment of another, or said another way, to lay down one’s life for a friend. Through my life’s experience, I know that my ability to love and

care for others is an imperfect extension of and response to the perfect love that I have personally received from God. Indeed, it is my ongoing relationship with God that encourages me to see others different from myself as equal, as well as my attempt to atone for the past 400 years of injustices I and my family before me have perpetrated or complicitly perpetuated.

This leads me to the point Noddings omitted: her “rejection of justice as a fundamental ethical concept” (Card, 1990, p. 101). We live in a world full of people different from ourselves; those whose lives are greatly impacted by our actions whether directly or indirectly. The point of social justice is to enable us to live and work in cooperative relationships as equal beings because, as Freire said, “human beings in communion liberate each other” (2017, p. 106). In her review of Noddings’ *Care*, Card (1990) comments:

It can be presumptuous to try to initiate caring relationships with those from whose oppression one has benefited.... In a pluralistic society with a history of racism, respect can be more basic than caring in that it is a precondition of the welcomeness of certain caring relationships. (p. 105)

Hoagland (1990) notes the unidirectional perspective of the one–caring may also reinforce oppressive behaviors and abuse in others toward the one–caring, particularly in the position held by Noddings that the only reason the one–caring has for attending to the needs of self is to better meet the needs of the cared–for. In addition, pursuing personal goals can only happen in the role of the cared–for because it is important to that other as one–caring to see the individual accomplish her/his goals.

Despite these criticisms, there is still a value in Noddings' care theory that influences my theoretical framework. Even though she might view my overarching position as caring *about*, I feel that it is imperative as a place to begin. Then, in the act of the interviews with the Latina childcare providers, I take on the highly focused role of the one-caring to learn their perspective of their experience. Unlike Noddings' recommendation, I cannot presume to put myself in their place due to the difference in cultures, however, by modifying Noddings' theory of care with Gay's culturally responsive caring I was able to approach these women with a deep and honest respect for their lived experiences and a desire to understand what their experiences mean to them.

Summary

This chapter has provided a review of the literature related to my topic, beginning with the methods used to find the research, followed by research explaining the significance of the school readiness of children in the United States, the importance of quality in early childhood education, and the different types of childcare options that are available to families. Next, I explained the concepts of acculturation and assimilation followed by a discussion on the Latina family, friend, and neighbor childcare bringing the review to a relatively small gap in the literature indicating the need for the proposed study. Finally, I situated the study as a single drop into the body of research leading to my selection of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the proposed study. In Chapter Three, I describe the methodology, grounded theory, that I selected for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This was a grounded theory study that employed a social justice ideology (Mistry & Sood, 2015), informed by acculturation research (Berry, 2005; Ward & Kus, 2012), including intersectional marginalization (Souto–Manning, 2018), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002, 2018), and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson–Billings, 1994, 1995a, 1995b), through a lens of care theory (Noddings, 2005). The doctoral committee and the Institutional Review Board approved the study.

This chapter revisits the purpose and rationale behind the study which led to identifying the best approach to answer the research question. Then it delineates the specific method, including the selection of informants and the methods of collection, handling, and analysis of the data. It defines the limitations and delimitations and concludes with the issues of trustworthiness and transferability of the study.

Purpose and Rationale

Existing research indicates a lack of knowledge in how and when Latina FFN providers transition from their role as mother/babysitter to the role of teacher, despite having minimal formal education (Zuniga & Howes, 2009). Similar to the findings of Zuniga and Howes (2009), the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) study documented dramatic improvements in provider competency with the corresponding improvement in kindergarten readiness of the children in their care, however, they did not consider the transformation that might occur in the FFN providers' self-perceptions

and their identity as teachers. This research study returned to the same program examined in the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) study specifically to address this gap in the literature by asking the research question:

- Q1 How do license–exempt Latina family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) childcare providers view their role as early childhood educators after participating in the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program?

As set forth in chapter two, I employed a constructivist epistemology to approach the study. This epistemology, in turn, helped to identify the need for combining the interpretivist and critical paradigms into a social justice ideology, forming my conceptual framework. The formation of a theoretical framework relied on this conceptual frame as well as the research question to inform the choice of theories for the proposed research (Egbert & Sanden, 2014). Particularly relevant to this study were the works of Berry (2005), Ladson–Billings (1995a, 1995b, 2000), and Noddings (2005, 2015) each detailed in chapter two.

Thus, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks led me to the choice of a qualitative study, defined by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) as an umbrella term for inductive techniques used to understand the meaning people have ascribed to events in their lives and to report this meaning through richly descriptive writing.

Why Grounded Theory?

The essence of grounded theory is to develop a theory, inductively generated, and grounded in the data collected from the field (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Grounded theory originated in the mid–twentieth century in the works of sociologists Glaser and Strauss and is particularly useful for finding answers to questions relating to a process of change over time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). More

recent transformations of grounded theory occurred in dialogue through the writings of Glaser, Strauss, and Corbin, with Charmaz developing a constructivist grounded theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). The resulting theory or framework (Charmaz, 2002) will have been shaped by the personal experiences of a relatively large number of people having participated in the same phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Grounded theory as a methodology is also advantageous to the novice researcher in that it prescribes a systematic procedure for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2012) “with specific steps to follow that are closely aligned with the canons of ‘good science’ without embracing earlier proponents’ positivist leanings” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). In addition, “grounded theory can also be a powerful qualitative method for social justice inquiry and a means of informing policy and practice” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019) because:

We are deterred by line-by-line coding from imposing extant theories or our own beliefs on the data. This form of coding helps us to remain attuned to our subjects’ views of their realities, rather than assume that we share the same views and worlds. (Charmaz, 2002, p. 515)

Another advantage of choosing grounded theory as a white, middle class, English-speaking, woman studying the perspectives of Latina women regarding their experience of the phenomenon because “the researcher and the researched typically hold differential and unequal positions of power and privilege” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019) which can be mitigated by components in Grounded Theory research.

Using Grounded Theory to Study the Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela Program

Participating in the APPLE program apparently results in some form of change for the FFN providers as documented by the Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, (2017) study. This research considered how and when this change occurs from the perspective of the participants themselves. Therefore, grounded theory, with its focus on understanding a process from the perspective of the participants was the best choice to answer the research question and also result in a theory that can be applied and validated or disproved through further research into this phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Strauss, 2010).

Study Design

This section provides a map of the study, beginning with the setting, participants, and selection method for the study, followed by a description of the systematic methods of collection and analysis of the data as required by grounded theory research.

Setting

This research took place in a state located in the western region of the United States. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I conducted most of the research via online Zoom meetings. However, one participant invited me into her home to conduct the interview with her in person.

Participants

One of the primary characteristics of grounded theory research is the use of *theoretical sampling*. Theoretical sampling is the choice of “individuals to study based on their contribution to the development of the theory” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 318).

This means that the sampling is intentional and solely focused on those who can best inform the theory. The participants in this study consisted of two program Tías, of those who currently teach and mentor the providers in the APPLE program, and 14 past graduates of the APPLE program. These 16 participants have each lived in the United States for varying amounts of time, though all of them attended school in their home country before relocating to the United States (See Table 1: Meet the Participants).

Two women had just completed elementary school and two only completed middle school. Nine of the women graduated from high school, of which two also attended a business college, two more completed a four-year degree, and one held a master's degree in education. Only two of the women have since earned their GED in the United States, one had previously graduated from high school and the other had attended a business college. This theoretical sampling, when used in conjunction with a constant comparative method of coding (Charmaz, 2002; Strauss, 2010), was pivotal in developing a grounded theory to determine the limits of applicability of the emerging theory.

Saldaña (2016) suggests a minimum of ten participants for a grounded study to provide sufficient variability to result in a core category with identifiable properties and dimensions. This study involved 16 participants. I initially recruited three of the APPLE program Tías who are currently facilitating the APPLE program to participate in one focus group. However, due to technology and scheduling issues, rather than a focus group, only two of the Tías were available, although at different times, so I interviewed these two Tías in separate Zoom meetings. As noted in the Augenblick, Palaich and

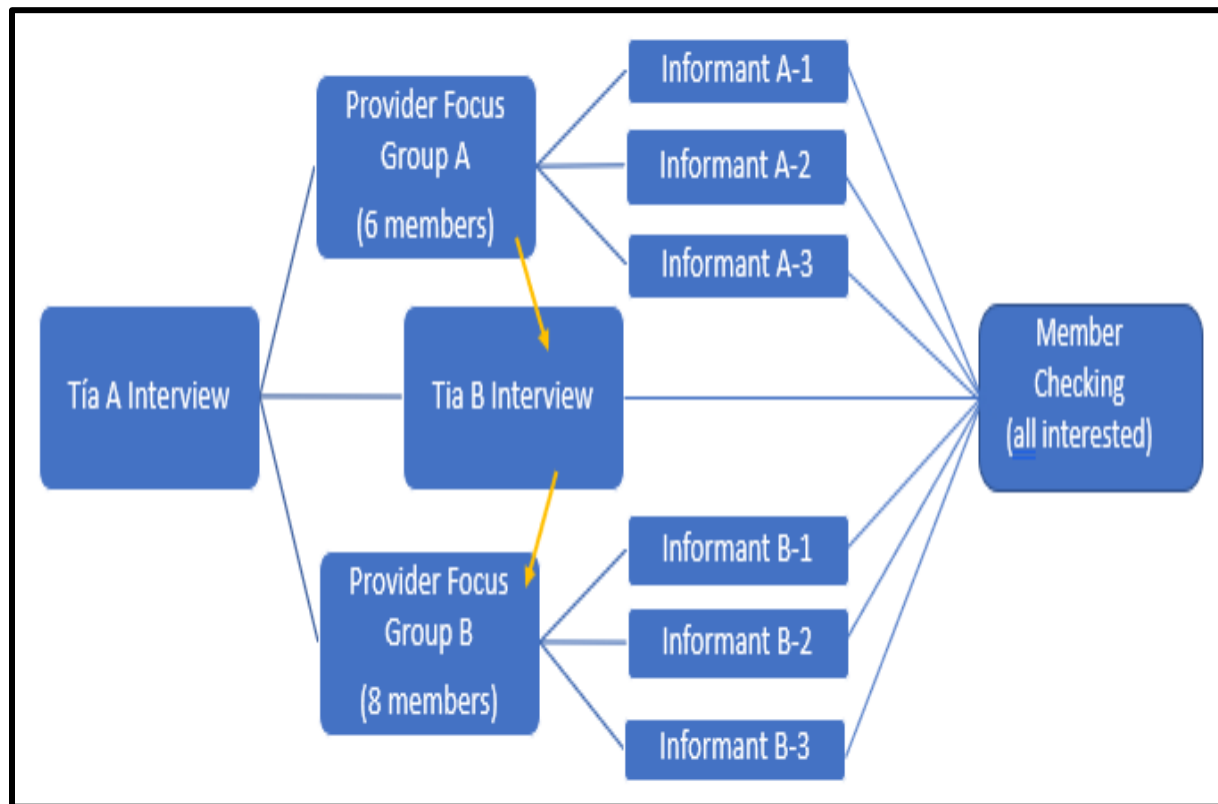
Associates, (2017) study, this population of FFN providers generally operates “under the radar” and is difficult to identify.

Table 1

Meet the Participants

Focus Group	Participant Pseudonym	Role	Prior Schooling
A	Antonia	cares for 2 children	Bachelor's Degree in Psychology
	Aleta	cares for 5 children	High school graduate
	Alejandra	cares for 5 children	2 years of college, studied architecture
	Adelina	cares for 5 children	High school graduate
	Alondra	cares for 5 children	Primary school; finished 6th grade
	Adriana	cares for 5 children	Middle school; finished 9th grade
B	Beatriz	works in childcare center	Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration
	Belinda	cares for 3 children	High school graduate; GED in US
	Brianna	cares for 3 children	Master Teacher; 5 years of college
	Buena	cares for 2 children	Middle school; Finished 8th grade
	Bonita	cares for 4 children	Some college, studied accounting; GED in US
	Bibiana	cares for 7 children, 2 with special needs	Middle school; finished 9th grade
	Basilia	cares for 3 children	Middle school; finished 9th grade
	Belia	cares for 2 children	High school graduate
N/A	Clara	APPLE Program Tia	N/A
N/A	Claudia	APPLE Program Tia	N/A
N/A	Dorotea	Translator, Former Program Coordinator	N/A

Therefore, I relied on the two primary agencies supporting the program to recruit the program Tías and provide time in their workday to assist with the study. The interviews with the program Tías provided an understanding of the program structure which served as a foundation for the questions I asked in the other focus groups (See Appendix C for informed consent forms). These Tías each recruited ten FFN provider graduates of the APPLE program divided between two focus groups of participants according to the county of residence (see Appendix A for the script and sign-up sheet for recruiting provider participants). Glesne (2016) recommends no more than 10 participants in a focus group to prevent side conversations that would be difficult to track. Each focus group met once to gather initial data; with a second meeting of all informants together for participating in member checking on the data collected and to provide clarification. See Figure 2 for a model of the participant recruiting strategy. Because the participants were primarily monolingual Spanish speakers, a participant acted as the translator in the first focus group, and a friend (also a former APPLE program coordinator) acted as the translator in the second focus group and most of the interviews. Her presence gave me deeper access to the participants as a type of secondary gatekeeper and culture broker, particularly when a participant wanted to open a sensitive topic and asked the translator if it was safe for her to do so in this interview. I included the translator in the list of participants because in the process of translating she also provided explanations between the participants and the researcher that further informed the study in her role as a culture broker.

Figure 2*Participant Recruiting Strategy*

I recruited three individuals directly from each of the provider focus groups to provide follow-up interviews (see Appendix D for informed consent script for individual interviews). Originally, the criteria for follow up interviews were to be individuals who (a) were most willing to speak out in the focus groups, (b) are currently providing care for young children, and (c) completed the program within the past five years. In addition, I had hoped for bilingual informants to facilitate better communication in the interview setting. However, when the focus groups met, not all the women recruited by the Tías were able to log into the Zoom meeting, thus limiting my options for follow up interviews. Therefore, following each focus group meeting, I entered the transcriptions into NVivo and created cases for each participant. Then I sorted the transcript by case to review

what each person contributed and based the decision on who to interview from the comments I wished to explore further. Appendix E shows the participants and topics identified in the focus group that I chose to follow up in the interviews. I continued to collect and analyze data until I perceived saturation, in which new data is unlikely to produce any new insights for the developing categories.

Every provider participant in the focus groups received one \$25 Walmart gift card in appreciation for their time. The provider who served as an impromptu translator when the woman I had asked to translate was unavailable at the last minute was given an extra gift card to thank her for the extra challenge this entailed. Individuals who gave a follow-up interview also received another \$25 Walmart gift card at the time of the interview in recognition of the additional time they contributed to the research. Both Tías were employed by non-profit agencies supporting the program. To maintain transparency, the agencies required the interviews to take place during the Tías' regular work hours and asked that I donate the funds that I had planned to give to the Tías to the respective agency as a stipend to partially compensate for their time, which I did.

Systematic Methods of Data Management in Grounded Theory

“The rigor of grounded theory approaches offers qualitative researchers a set of clear guidelines from which to build explanatory frameworks that specify relationships among concepts” (Charmaz, 2002, p.510). The systematic design of grounded theory emphasizes specific steps in the analysis of the data corpus (Creswell, 2012) during which data are concurrently collected and analyzed throughout the study, from the first encounter to the generation of a theory, in a constant comparative method (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Saldaña (2016) describes a coding canon specific to the use of

grounded theory that includes In Vivo, Process, Initial or Open, Focused, Axial, and Theoretical, also called Selective coding.

Data Collection and Retention

The data corpus included recordings, transcriptions, and translations from focus group conversations, recordings, translations, and transcriptions of personal interviews with informants, and written notes and memos of the researcher. I employed a semi-structured focus group format, in which I began with a list of questions or conversation starters. See Appendix B for conversation starters for the focus groups. As the conversations unfolded additional questions arose that provided a deeper understanding that I needed to develop the theory. From the focus groups, I recruited individuals for follow-up interviews. As noted in Creswell (2012), grounded theory relies on an emergent design of data collection in which the data collected and analyzed immediately following one focus group informs the questions asked in the next, and so on. Therefore, questions asked in the individual interviews that follow the focus groups were based on the information gained in the focus groups.

In the single in-person interview, I recorded the conversation on two hand-held voice recorders (in case one had failed), then transcribed it to a written document. All other meetings, both focus groups and individual interviews, were recorded using the Zoom meeting platform.

All data that could potentially be used to identify an individual, directly or indirectly, was modified to remove identifiable information before saving to a password-protected computer in my home office for three years following publication of the dissertation, after which time it will be permanently deleted. All written notes and memos

are stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office, to be shredded and destroyed three years after the information is published in the dissertation.

Translations from Spanish into English

Translations that occurred in the moment became part of the recorded data. I selected Sonix.ai (artificial intelligence) for the transcription software, which allowed the conversations to be transcribed in Spanish and then translated into English and vice versa. In this way, I was able to check the accuracy of the translations done in the moment to what the translation/transcription software provided. It also enabled me to check for bias on the part of my translator, since she had formerly been a coordinator for the program. In instances where her translation differed from the artificial intelligence, I identified the Spanish words used in that section of the recording and translated these words individually using Google translate. Then I considered alternate meanings of the word to allow for context (which is a limitation of Google). I used this same process for areas where a second voice caused the words to sound garbled for the transcription software. Using this process, I felt confident in the final translated transcript used for analysis.

Data Analysis and Coding

Charmaz (2002) notes that the initial coding is a process of line-by-line coding – “examining each line of data and then defining actions or events within it.... [which deters] imposing extant theories or our own beliefs on the data.... to remain attuned to our subjects’ view of their realities, rather than assume that we share the same views and worlds” (p. 515). She recommends the use of action coding to retain the focus on what participants are doing in the setting. The term *in vivo* means “in that which is alive”

and refers to the use of a phrase from the actual terms used by the participants for the code (Saldaña, 2016). In Vivo coding is used when the researcher wishes to prioritize and honor the participant's voice; using the participant's actual words in the coding deepened my understanding of the culture and worldview of the participants (Saldaña, 2016). In the initial analysis, I originally planned to use a combination of In Vivo and action coding in a line-by-line analysis for the first round of coding of each focus group or interview. Saldaña (2016) also mentions that some writers of grounded theory acknowledge that sentence-by-sentence coding is permissible (p. 117). Due to the differences in language structure, I found it easier to code by full sentence rather than line-by-line as printed in the transcript because many individual lines made no sense when standing alone. I still maintained a focus on the words of the participants and the actions they are describing despite this modification. See Appendix F for the list of codes identified in this first round. Each code is a translation of a statement made by a speaker.

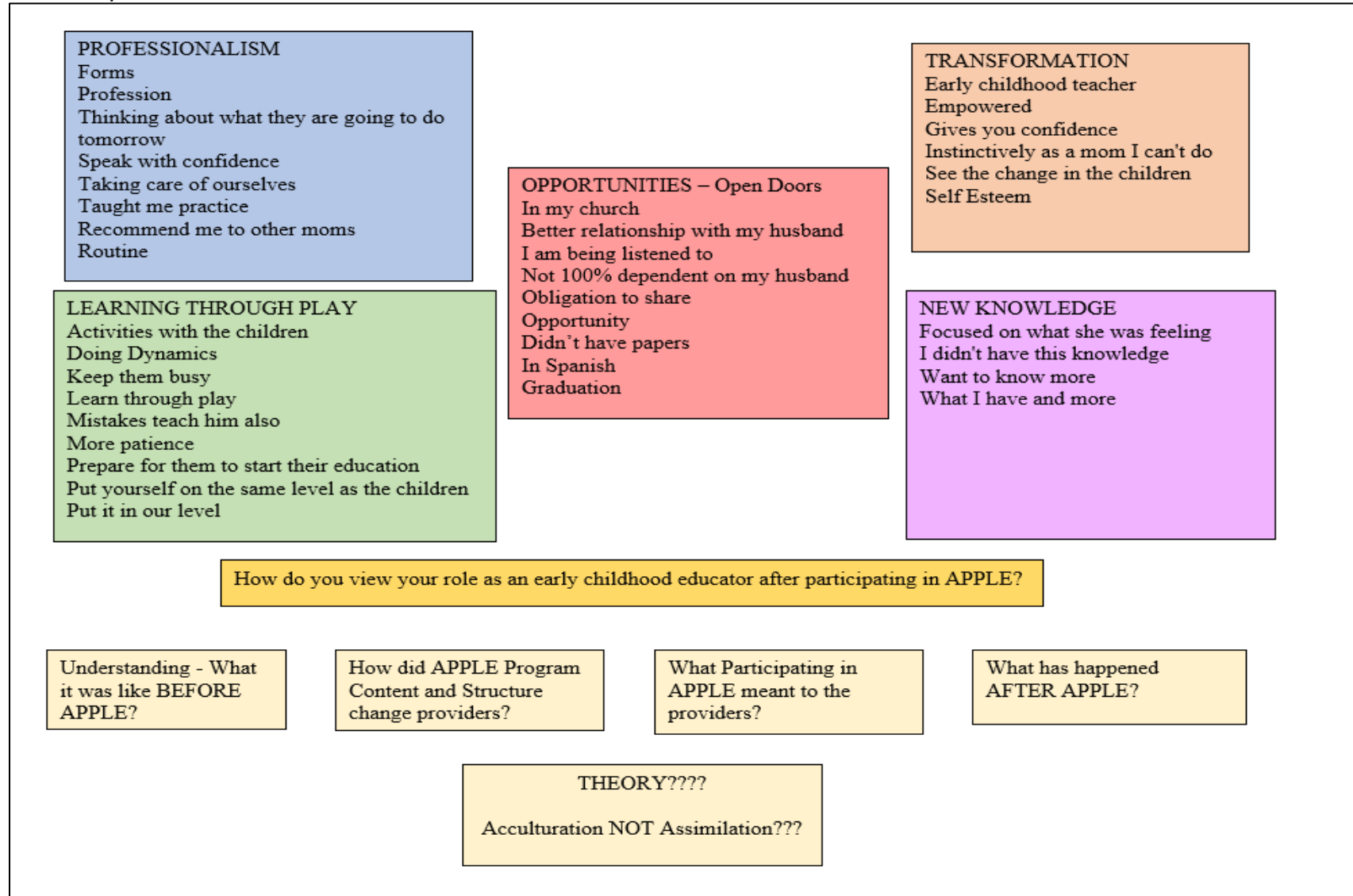
After gaining an understanding of the data from this full statement coding, I returned to the data to perform the line-by-line coding as I originally planned, thus further "splitting" the data for a "microanalysis" of the data corpus as suggested by Saldaña (2016, pp. 116–117). One difference is that I began to synthesize and reuse codes for this microanalysis as I began to see patterns emerging. See Appendix G for the compilation of codes pulled from the line-by-line analysis. Next, I compared the two sets of these "first round" codes and began consolidating the splitting of the transcriptions from these two cycles of first-round coding of all interviews in a step toward the axial coding that came next. See Appendix H for this initial comparison.

I originally thought that the second round of coding would commence with data from the second and subsequent focus groups and individual interviews. However, I needed to perform initial or first-round coding on every interview before I could see the themes emerging. In each interview, I found that my questions continued to build on what I had learned from the prior focus group or interview, yet I remained unaware of themes until I began looking at the data as a single body of work. Most likely, this was due to my inexperience, as I later found that the memos showed the final themes early on, though I did not trust them. Perhaps one reason for this mistrust came from using the NVivo software. I had assumed (quite erroneously) that by looking at the word frequency I would see the themes stand out. What I discovered was that the most often used words did not identify what I intuitively understood from the conversations.

My next step was to draw a word map using the lists of codes created in the first two rounds of coding for the axial coding (See Figure 3: Word Map). This axial coding allows for the constant comparative analysis “to develop ‘axis’ categories around which others revolve” and to synthesize these into a core category to form the basis of the grounded theory (Saldaña, 2016, p. 55). Saldaña (2016) notes, however, it is the analytic memo-writing that drives grounded theory and not the coding. As I began to develop the axis codes, I found this to be particularly helpful, because the memos culled the central themes around which practically every code revolved. Analytic memo writing is a tool “that provides researchers with an ongoing dialogue with themselves about the emerging theory” (Creswell, 2012, p. 441).

Figure 3

Word Map



Charmaz (2002) describes memo writing as an intermediary between coding the data and writing the first draft of the theory. The resulting memos take on substance, in that they become a key part of the data and provide structure to the analysis and resulting theory. Memos “define leads for collecting data – both for further initial coding and later theoretical sampling” (Charmaz, 2002, p. 517). She goes on to advocate for the use of action codes to help identify interrelated processes; making connections between categories of data to “reduce the likelihood of getting lost in the mountains of data – memo writing keeps us focused on our analyses and involved in our research” (Charmaz, 2002, p. 517).

Throughout this study, I did find the memo writing most helpful in understanding the meaning and significance of what the participants were telling me as well as making connections between main ideas or themes and the resulting theory that came from the data itself.

Trustworthiness

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) provide several potential perceptions of providing trustworthiness in a qualitative study. Of these, I used methodological rigor, respondent validation (also called member checking), and audit trail in the form of memo writing. However, an additional level of trustworthiness had to begin the study: gaining the trust of the participants. To gain entrance and the right to speak with this population, a trusted member of the community introduced me and the study by acting as a cultural bridge. As previously mentioned, the translator also aided in gaining the trust of the participants. Throughout the interviews, I worked to ensure that I understood the intended meaning of the words used by the participants, explaining my intention to be

true to their perceptions rather than assuming a common knowledge that could not exist due to our different life experiences and cultures. In the instances in which the translator was not available, I also provided my own background experiences for why I am interested in the experiences of these participants as an extra layer of researcher transparency.

One reason for selecting grounded theory is that, due to its methodological rigor, it partially accounts for trustworthiness in the study. By adhering to the practices of constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling, I continued interviewing participants until the data reached a saturation point when the descriptions of the participants no longer provided new categories for coding. This formed the dimensions of the final theory grounded in their experiences.

Another methodological component lies in the type of data analysis used. As previously mentioned, I analyzed the transcribed data using the words of the participants as codes. This type of In Vivo coding assured that the voices of the participants remain centered throughout the analysis and prevented an assumption of common world views between the researcher and the participants. By continually asking of the data, “who is holding the power here?” I attempted to eliminate bias and oppression in the process of gathering the data by subordinating my knowledge and experience, rather than comparing our experiences, to intentionally focus on the perspectives of the participants.

A second measure to ensure trustworthiness is respondent validation, in which the participants reviewed my interpretations of our conversations to ensure that I have correctly captured their perspectives. Because many participants are not fluent in

English, the translator aided in the presentation of the findings in Spanish. She first translated the English quotations I used in my writing back into Spanish before meeting with the informants. Then we presented this version to the participants, rather than the version in the Spanish transcript to ensure that I did not misunderstand what they meant. I also relied on native Spanish-speakers to verify my understanding of the connotations of Spanish terms used by the participants.

The third method to establish trustworthiness was in the writing and analysis of memos. These memos formed an audit trail of my thinking and conclusions as they “defined leads” throughout the study (Charmaz, 2002, p. 517). “An audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 252).

Transferability

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) offer the four characteristics of grounded theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss in their 1967 tome: fit, understanding, generality, and control as strengths that will enable transferability of the resulting theory. First and foremost, the resulting theory must fit the data. Next, the theory must be understandable to everyone. Third, the theory cannot be so specific that it limits its applicability to other research studies. Finally, if another researcher relies on this theory, will s/he still have control over the phenomenon the theory explains when used in practical applications. A well-defined theory grounded in data will accomplish each of these points. By following the protocols of grounded theory, the results of this study met these criteria. See the transferability section in chapter four for specifics.

Limitations and Delimitations

One limitation of this study lies in the fact that the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and how my positionality as a researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) may have influenced the findings. The fact that I am a white, English-speaking woman researching the experiences of Latina women inherently includes a differentiation of power that makes me take this limitation very seriously. I have attempted to be completely transparent in who I am as a researcher (Ladson-Billings, 2000) providing explicit details of my previous conceptions and experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). See the researcher stance section in chapter one for details. In addition, I utilized specific strategies to minimize my own power in the focus groups and interviews, for example: approaching the participants with respect, honoring their language, centering their perspectives and priorities by listening carefully to their voices; honoring the knowledge they bring, and working together to build cultural bridges between us (Souto-Manning, 2018).

A second limitation lies in reliance on a former Tía and Program Coordinator to act as translator. Because she was personally invested in the program's success at one time, there is the possibility that her cultural translation had the potential to be biased. Despite several changes, the program has experienced since she left, and all but one of the participants we interviewed were unknown to her, I still must consider this as a limitation. Therefore, I relied on the member-checking to ensure that I captured the perspectives of the participants themselves.

A third limitation is in determining at what point saturation occurs and the study will end. To that end, I presented the findings in a final meeting of all interested parties

from the focus groups as well as the agencies supporting the program after I felt that I had reached saturation. The purpose of this meeting was to verify the accuracy of my interpretations and to see if there were any other perspectives that they feel I might have missed. This was also part of the member-checking process mentioned in the trustworthiness section, above.

Delimitations of this study include the intentional boundaries I created for the study. The first delimitation was the decision to include only former participants who had graduated from the APPLE program and their Tías. Other studies have mentioned the advantage of including individuals who may have dropped out of the program, but that remained outside the scope of the present study. One other delimitation is in restricting the location to a western part of the US. This boundary is based on the program availability as it has yet to be replicated in other regions.

Summary

In this chapter, I have offered a description of the methodology for this research study. Beginning with a review of the purpose and rationale for the study, I follow with descriptions of the research setting and participants. Next, I explained the methods of data collection and analysis. I conclude with a discussion of the trustworthiness, transferability, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter four provides the specific findings of the study, including the analysis and synthesis of the data and a second look at the transferability and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND SYNTHESIS

Prior studies (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2017; Zuniga & Howes, 2009) indicated a shift or change in the quality of childcare following participation in a short informal education program for Latina childcare providers, despite them having a lack of formal education. Specifically, Zuniga and Howes (2009) described a perceptual shift from “mothering” to teaching, or from “didactic behaviors” to supportive, scaffolding behaviors and pre-academic literacy and numeracy experiences (p. 268). To validate their findings and answer the questions they posed for future research, that is, how and when this change occurs, I could not approach this study with the assumption that I would see a similar change. Therefore, my research question asked:

- Q1 How do license-exempt Latina family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) childcare providers view their role as early childhood educators after participating in the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program?

From my choice of theoretical frame for this study, I was also interested in finding, if there was a perceived change in quality, whether that might indicate an assimilationist strategy by the dominant culture toward the Latinx population represented in the studies. Baratz and Baratz (1970) opined “intervention programs that deal with altering the child’s home environment, with improving his language and cognitive skills, and *most particularly with changing the patterns of child-rearing*” of another population is a form of institutional racism (p. 30, *emphasis added*). They go on

to say that the research prior to 1970 had been grounded in an ethnocentric ideology, denying cultural differences, and acting against the best interests of the population under study (Baratz & Baratz, 1970, p. 31). This made my social justice ideological perspective particularly relevant to this research as I questioned the effects of the program from the participants' point of view.

To understand their answers to the research question, it was imperative to look at the women's perspectives of their experiences over time. Beginning with how they saw the type of care they provided before participating in the APPLE program, each woman described a complete change in her mindset due to her participation that has had further repercussions in her life. The findings section follows this process as they described it. From their descriptions, I dive deeper into the data to provide my interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of the findings. For this section, I use the themes that emerged from the findings as shown in the word map described in the methodology chapter (see Figure 3 on page 75). I later refined this word map, which ultimately resulted in the grounded theory (see the Grounded Theory section on page 118). I conclude the chapter by revisiting the limitations and transferability of the study.

Findings

The participants in this study who were FFN childcare providers described a transformation in the way they care for children by comparing how they saw the type of care they provided before participating in the APPLE program, to how they see their work now. The participants explained this transformation came not only from the program content but in the way the Tías presented the information to them. Then they described what their practice looks like after participating in the program, and equally

important to them, they explained what has occurred in their lives because they participated in the program. Therefore, to learn how this change happened, I structure the findings in the same way; as a timeline, although not as a particular order of dates or events, rather, as a record of the significant transformational events they shared. Despite these events occurring at different times chronologically, each woman shared experiences or events that marked her participation in APPLE leading to her individual transformation from mother/babysitter to early childhood teacher. As previously mentioned in the Methodology chapter (see Translations from Spanish into English, p. 71), most of the comments were originally in Spanish and translated first by my translator in the moment, and then with the artificial intelligence transcription software, to cross-check the validity of the translation. The comments from the Tía, Claudia, the translator, Dorotea, and one participant, Antonia, were in English with no need for translation. In this section, the quotations in Spanish are the words of the participant, followed by the translation into English in brackets.

Before Participating in the Abuelas Preparando a Los Niños Para La Escuela Program—"Solo Cuídarlos" [Just Take Care of Them]

Imagine, if you will, a woman is at home taking care of her own family, when a neighbor calls. "I just got a call that my husband was injured at work. I need to pick him up and take him to the doctor. Can you watch my kids for me?" "Of course," the first woman answers. "Send them on over. I will keep an eye on them." This may be how a woman begins caring for a neighbor's children. Or perhaps she just wants to help her adult children save money by watching her grandchildren while their parents are at work.

The women in this study described the work they were doing prior to their participation in the APPLE program as simply babysitting. They used words like basic, safe, and poor to describe the level of care they provided. Alejandra felt she was typical of most FFN providers, “Es típico de además tener a los niños aquí, no ponerles casi atención” [“Just having the kids here, paying almost no attention to them”].

Antonia added, “Before APPLE my priority was [to] just take care of the kids physically.” Even Brianna, the one participant who had been a teacher in her home country, reported,

Pero en este caso, yo los cuidaba. Yo solamente los cuidaba para que comieran; Para cambiarles el pañal, Ah! Y también yo pensaba, éste, que sólo soy la niñera, verdad? [But in this case, I was taking care of them. I only took care of them so they would eat; to change their diapers, that’s it. I also thought I am just the babysitter.]

The participants all expressed their desire to return the children to their parents in the same condition they received them. This involved feeding the children, changing their diapers, and ensuring that they were safe and not fighting with each other until their parents returned. Adelina went so far as to not let the children feed themselves, fearing they might get dirty. When Alondra added,

Pero no veía tantas necesidades que tiene un niño. Incluyendo a mis hijos. Yo como que los—los quería tener nada más, como que en una bolita de cristal [I didn’t see so many needs that a child has. Including my children. I just wanted to have them, like in a little glass ball], I envisioned a baby girl in a frilly pink and white dress with pink ribbons and white patent leather shoes carefully placed

inside a crystal snow globe to keep her perfect—clean, neat, and unspoiled (researcher memo).

With this primary goal to return the children to their parents in the same condition as when the parents brought them, some participants mentioned just having the children sit on the couch to watch television to occupy their time until the parents returned. Adelina commented,

He mirado gente que pone a los niños dice ay, para que se distraigan, para que no hagan ruido, les ponen frente a la televisión habiendo caricaturas y los niños ahí nomás están sentados como idos. No están jugando, no están haciendo nada, no están aprendiendo nada. [I've seen people who put them in front of the TV with cartoons and the children are just sitting there like they're gone. They're not playing, they're not doing anything, they're not learning anything.]

Basilía added,

Yo cuidaba nada más. Pues a estar atenta nada más a ellos. Eso no es nada más, estaría al pendiente de ellos y no de educarlos. [I was just looking after them, well, just keeping an eye on them and not educating them.]

In fact, prior to APPLE, many of the participants did not even know the parents' last name or how to contact them in an emergency.

In trying to understand this idea, I asked about the parents' expectations when they would leave a child in the care of another person. Dorotea explained that in the Latin culture, as their families raised them, many Latinx families do not really spend time focused on the children, reading to them, or doing activities with them. Brianna clarified saying,

No, sólo van a trabajar y dejan a sus niños ya que sobrevivan. Sino también en las escuelas o con la niñera, siempre vemos el mismo problema. [No, they just go to work and leave their children hoping they survive. Whether in schools or with the babysitter we always see the same problem.]

Yet, as Alejandra mentioned, “Los papás estuvieran tranquilos de que ellos estaban en un lugar seguro.” [“The parents were reassured that they were in a safe place.”] Claudia explained that prior to APPLE the FFN providers were satisfied just providing a safe place for the children, but after participating in the classes, “Now they provide more. They provide [not only] food for the body but also for the brain [by] doing activities [with the children].”

Participating in the Abuelas Preparando A Los Niños Para La Escuela Program—“No Sabía Cuál Importante Iba A Ser” [I Didn’t Know How Important It Was Going to Be]

Participating in the program was quite a commitment. Before the first class, every new cohort of potential students must meet for an orientation to learn the expectations of the program. In this meeting, the Tías provide an overview of the curriculum, the expectations they have for the participants as well as what the women can expect from the program. Every woman who participated in this study committed to attending 120 hours in class, plus homework, over a period of fifteen weeks, with at least three in-home visits from one of the Tías.

“Pero desde la primera clase yo empecé a ver cosas que literalmente pues no sabía.” [“From the first class I started to see things that I literally didn’t know,”] Adriana told me.

Regarding the content of the program, Brianna said that it was like her five years of university education, summarized in just six months, and made easy and accessible to all the women regardless of their level of prior education. Adriana went on to say,

Sé que es muy importante la lectura, hace que, es muy importante que tengan el juego dramático, de la nutrición, muchas cosas que nos dan de herramienta, y que ahora las pongo en práctica. [Now... (after participating in) APPLE ... I know that reading is very important, it is very important that they have the dramatic play, of nutrition, many things. (They gave) us tools and ... now I put them into practice.]

Antonia, with her bachelor's degree in psychology, was particularly interested in the early childhood theorists:

I remember all the theories that they were sharing with us about Jean Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner; [and] how well they were prepared to speak to us about these big answers. About these big guys but put it in our level. Put it in our level that we can understand [clearly] what they were saying and that we were able to put it into practice. You know, all those terms that are maybe not easy if we just read a book about them.

Brianna agreed,

Me imagino que las personas que no han tenido la oportunidad de estudiar como yo, lo ven como algo nuevo y punto. Pero yo puedo, yo puedo unir estas ideas y decir que, que es una gran oportunidad que que nos den ya todo hecho de pues lo que se estudia en cinco años, resumido y fácil y accesible. Como no es fácil de comprender a través de las, de las ay, ¿cómo se llaman? Las maestras,

¿verdad? Y luego el material que nos brindan... Entonces son las dos cosas que yo pienso que notan como es, como una papilla, solo de tragar. [I imagine that people who have not had the opportunity to study like me see it as something new. But I can put these ideas together and say that it is a great opportunity when they give us everything I studied in five years, but summarized so it is easy and accessible. How is it not easy to understand the teachers when the material they give us is easy to understand. I think you notice how it's like (baby food, you) just swallow.]

The information may be easy to swallow like baby food, but as Antonia explained, it was the method of teaching that made them remember the information even years later. "She keeps using the word dynamics. Now I see that she means the activities the teachers use to give a visual representation of an idea or theory with such strong impact as to be highly memorable" (researcher memo). Antonia gave an example of the teachers using a ball of yarn, tossed back and forth until it looked like a giant spider web, to demonstrate how babies make neurological connections in their brains through their early experiences.

And they were saying if you yell at your kids, see what you're doing? [Then] they cut it with the scissors. [They asked] what do you do when your daughter makes a mistake on [her homework]? Sometimes I, I knew I yelled at her a little and in fact, I was like, Oh, my god! No! I know I will never do that again! (Antonia)

Brianna commented,

Ah, entonces el niño siente cuando yo le doy una negativa firme. Hay otras formas de decirlo. De cuánto, en el baño le estamos diciendo no toque eso, eso

no se hace. Entonces habían (sic) otras formas, pero estaba tan acostumbrado a decirlo como a nosotros nos enseñaron. Esa tarde yo sentí que, que qué bonito estar aprendiendo algo mejor para ellos y por ende para mí, porque me van a hacer caso sin dañarlos. [It kind of hit me ... how the child feels when I give him a firm negative. There are other ways to say it.... From how much (even in) the bathroom we are saying, don't touch that, that's not done; there were other ways back then, but I was so used to (saying) it as we were taught... to say it. That afternoon I felt what a beautiful thing it was to be learning something better for them and therefore for me, because they will listen to me without harming them.]

The “other ways” to speak to children instead of a “firm negative” involves saying what you want the child to do, followed by explaining why you want her to do it; this is a guidance pattern taught in early childhood teacher education courses and espoused by NAEYC “best” practices. For example, in the bathroom, rather than saying, “Don't touch that!” one might say, “Please keep your hands away from the razor. I don't want you to cut yourself.” Both have the same intent, but the latter uses positive words, respecting the child's ability to understand the reason behind the instruction.

Aleta asked that I add a section about how she learned to understand a child arriving at her house angered by an event that occurred before he got there. It may have been something so small and insignificant to an adult, like not liking the juice that was in his sippy cup or his mom putting the wrong type of cookie in his lunch that had a big impact on him. Learning empathy for the children taught her to give him the time and

space to manage his feelings, to listen as he told her what had upset him, and to respect how important this felt to him.

Aleta also shared that she particularly enjoyed how the Tías taught them to be like children, learning through play. “I first thought that she was saying that children learn through play. But as the conversation progressed, I realized that she was saying that just like the children learn through play, that is how they learned the information” (researcher’s memo).

Porque pues volvimos a ser niñas. Volvimos a tener aquellos juegos que después de estar una casada con hijos, hasta rara me sentía volver a jugar, volver a compartir con compañeras juegos. [Because we became children again, we went back to having those games that, after being married with children, it felt strange to be able to play again. To share games with our companions] (Aleta).

“Because we’re no different from the kids, I believe, in terms of the learning; if it’s fun you will learn better, you will enjoy what you’re learning,” Antonia added.

Brianna agreed, saying, “Aquí me enseñaron a hacerme como niña para lograr entenderlos más” [“Here they taught me to become like a child in order to understand them better.”]

“By learning through play like the children, they also learned to see things through the child’s eyes—developing empathy for the child” (researcher’s memo).

Then Belia shared,

Las actividades y todo como nos ponemos a su nivel, como si también fuéramos niños como ellos nos ponemos a jugar. Porque parte de cuidado que nos enseñan cómo preparar a los niños para el preescolar, nos enseñan a hacer

esto. Trabajamos en una guardería o en nuestra propia casa nos enseñó cómo prepararlos a que convivan con otros niños y aprender las principales letras para su nombre. [The activities and everything as we put ourselves at their level, as if we were also children like them, we get to play. Because part of caring, they teach us how to prepare children for preschool; they teach us how to do this. [Whether] we work in a [childcare] or in our own home, they taught us how to prepare them to [get along] with other children and learn the main letters for their name.]

Buena clarified, “Como prepararlos para que ellos inicien su educación.” [“How to prepare them ... to start their education.”

Adelina had been caring for children long before participating in APPLE. She mentioned that an important part of the program for her was to create a specific place for the children to play.

Yo cuidaba niños desde mucho antes, pero nomás los cuidaba, me los traían, le cambiaba su pañal, les daba de comer y todo, y aun no les tenía un lugar para jugar. Y hoy en día desde que fui al programa APPLE les tengo su área para que jueguen. Sí sé la importancia que para ellos. [I used to take care of children long before, but I just took care of them, they brought them to me, I changed their diapers, I fed them and everything, [but] I didn't have a place for them to play. Since I went to the APPLE program, I have their area for them to play in. I know how important it is to them] (Adelina)

Bonita explained that the Tías come to check the area they have set up for the children during the home visits, to ensure that it is a safe area for them. Regarding the area that Bonita mentioned, Claudia explained,

For example, during orientation, sometimes they say, ‘oh, is that true, that I [have] to take away my furniture?’ And then we said, no, no, no, no, no. The program APPLE never [said that] you had to get rid of any furniture in your home. But we encourage you to [create] a space for the children. And [if] you don’t have a big space, that’s fine, but at least you have one corner. And that corner has to [provide] all the things that [the children] need.

Photos of providers’ homes prior to their participation in the APPLE program show what appears to be a typical grandma’s house (for example, see Appendix J: Before and After Photos). Although some may show a few toys, most are very neat with breakable items prominently displayed, in a space primarily designed for adults. After participating in the program, these FFN providers have created a space in their homes specifically for their work with children. This space is most often a corner of the living room, kitchen, or maybe a spare bedroom. The area often includes a small carpet for group time, a child–sized table and chairs, wall decorations and cubby labels for a print–rich environment, and storage for toys and games. Many of the toys and games are intentionally designed as teaching tools, whether purchased or home–made by the FFN provider. Some little areas may even take on the look of a preschool classroom with the number and letter charts; printed day, month, and weather cards with a calendar or pocket chart for calendar time; color words, and an emotions or feelings chart. Even if

the provider is only caring for babies, there are colorful toys, rattles, books, and balls for their exploration and learning.

Adelina commented on her care before APPLE,

Porque yo para los niños que cuidaba no tenía un área, tenía una sala para la visita, pero no un área para jugar con los niños. Y hoy en día tengo sus juguetitos y ellos juegan ahí. [I didn't have an area for the children I cared for. I had a room for visiting, but not an area to play with the children. And today I have their little toys and they play there.]

Antonia summed up,

From the first class to the last one, we were learning, we were trying to take as much as we can to be the best. We recognize ourselves as a very important part of these kids' lives. We recognize that we are... having a big opportunity to change; to improve their lives. Thanks to APPLE we were able to learn a lot of things; to see the kid as a whole, that he has emotions, that he's changing in a society that is changing every day.

Transformation—Fue Como Una Transformación [It Was Like Transformation]

Returning to the previous scenario, when the neighbor calls asking, "I just got a call that my husband was injured at work. I need to pick him up and take him to the doctor. Can you watch my kids for me?" After everything she has learned in APPLE, the FFN provider is more likely to respond to the request for help like this:

“Of course, I would be glad to help. I will just need contact information for you and at least one other person who can also take the children in an emergency. Do your children have any allergies, medications, or other special needs I need to know?”

Because she is a business professional, she may or may not choose to discuss her pricing given that this is an emergency. When the children arrive, the FFN provider will assign a cubby for the children to place their coats and anything else they brought with them, show them where to find the bathroom, show them to the play area and then show them her daily schedule, explaining the routines so they know what to expect. If it is near a meal or snack time, she may ask if they are hungry. Then she will likely introduce them to the other children and try to interest the newcomers in the activity or game she was playing with the other children. The children will be busy with all the activities the provider has planned: they will play outside for a while and come back in to read books, they will eat healthy meals and snacks, then have time to rest, followed by more games and projects, and maybe even a cooking activity, until their mom returns.

Every woman described her experience as a change or transformation. As one of the Tías, Claudia, said, “Some of them, [change] right away, and some of them take a little longer, but they do change.”

In describing her own change over the course of the program, Buena said that she learned

A reflexionar sobre sobre como debemos de a cuidar a nuestros hijos como los encaminamos. Era una persona que no tenía paciencia Era una persona que consideraba siempre cuidé de la mejor manera a mis hijas. Pero una como madre fuerte, de ver si ellos van a la cama, pienso que lo que uno hace es lo

mejor. Cómo jugar con los niños para que a la vez aprendan. A veces nos sentamos con los niños a que aprendan, pero queremos que aprendan de una manera, quizá como la que nos habían enseñado a nosotros. Y APPLE nos enseña que debemos de enseñarlos a base de juegos; a base de estas hechos, asegura darle su tiempo a hablar, a querer ver que cada niño aprende de diferente manera. APPLE cambio de una manera de ser una persona más solidaria con los niños. Y digo que cambió algo en mí porque yo ahora lo veo muy diferente a como yo crié a mis hijas. [To reflect on how we should care for our children as we guide them. I was a person who had no patience. I was a person who considered myself to have always taken the best care of my daughters, to see if they go to bed. As a mother, (one) thinks that what one does is best. (APPLE taught me) how to play with the children and at the same time they learn. Sometimes we sit with the kids to let them learn, but we want them to learn in a way, maybe as the teachers had taught us (when we were children). APPLE teaches us that we must teach them based on games; based on these (games) to give her time to talk, to see that every child learns differently. APPLE changed (me) to be a more supportive person to the children. And I say that it changed in me because I see it very differently now than I did when I raised my daughters.]

Some women mentioned this personal transformation beginning in the very first class. This first class, according to Claudia, is “Yo Sí Puedo” [“I know I can.”] This class is about the women themselves. Claudia said they encourage the women to

Think about the work they are doing, what is the purpose of their own lives and what goals they want to reach. Some of them came with no real expectation at all, but this first class made them think really hard... and ‘Oh, I can do that. I can make a difference for the children. And I can make a difference in my own life.’

Brianna agreed, saying, “Si a mí me hicieron, como volver a nacer mis sueños, mis anhelos.” [“They made me revive my dreams, my longings.”]

Other women reported the classes in which they learned about the records they need to keep and the First Aid and CPR classes they took in the first weeks of the course as the turning point for them. Alejandra said, “Porque con esa clase me siento un poco más segura al tener niños y en caso de que algún accidente pasara.”

[“Because with those classes I feel a little safer having children in my home in case an accident should happen.”] The idea of being a professional businesswoman was also the key to their transformation. As Antonia explained:

It’s not like before [when] they just bring him in and [you] do whatever. You know... when you have someone telling you to... watch my kids. It’s not just going to be like, yeah, I can do it. Not even for one or two hours. No, you know it’s a big responsibility... a profession that you take seriously.

A few women mentioned the graduation ceremony as being the most impactful; particularly those who had never graduated from anything before APPLE. Adelina shared,

Era algo muy hermoso pasar por esa experiencia de estar graduándose uno aquí y estar, poder haciendo uno algo, porque uno a veces se quedó con ideas de que se quedó con su deseo de ser como yo. Yo quería ser maestra, pero

'pos' ya se me trabó el estudio y ya no pude hacerlo. Pero sí me sentí realmente realizada, muy contenta. Sí, porque quiere decir que comenzamos algo y lo terminamos. Algo muy importante ya. [It was a very beautiful thing to go through that experience of graduating here and being able to do something, because sometimes you get stuck with ideas of wanting to be. Like me, I wanted to be a teacher, but then my studies got so hard that I couldn't do it anymore. But I felt really fulfilled, very happy. Yes, because it means that we started something and finished it; something very important.]

Bibiana expanded on this idea, given that she did not have much formal education:

Pues en mi país, a mi me dijeron desde niña que las niñas no estudiaban. Así pues, nosotros nos quedábamos en casas de una, esta, zona. Nunca me dijeron que el tiempo que yo cuide de niños era algo bueno. Pero cuando yo lo conozco, APPLE, por la influencia de mí, de la escuela, de mis hijos. Y ella me enseñó y me dijo todo lo bueno que decidida tomé. Y no sólo eso, sino que mi hermana, mi mamá, mi cuñada lo hicieron. Pero sé que fue influencia porque me vieron lo que Yo estaba haciendo. Y ahora no solamente somos un cuidadoras de niños, sino somos maestros para ellos y ellos son maestros para nosotros. [Well, in my country, I've been told since I was a child that girls don't study. So, we stayed in houses in this area. I was never told that the time I took care of children was a good thing. APPLE was like a delivery for me. And not only that, but my sister, my mom, my sister-in-law saw what I was doing and (also) took the course. Now we are not only caretakers of children, but we are teachers to them, and they are teachers to us.]

Seeing Yourself as a Teacher— El ser Maestro [Being a Teacher]

Most of the women reported that thanks to APPLE, they were now teachers. As Buena said, “Me describo como una profesora de educación temprana.” [“I describe myself as an early childhood teacher.”] Only one woman was a bit uncomfortable with this term, preferring the title of FFN provider, saying that the children she cares for all call her mom, my love, and my darling. She values this love relationship she now has with the children that has blossomed from the empathy and patience she learned in APPLE.

For the other women, the realization that their new role was as a teacher rather than a babysitter also came at different times for each woman. Bonita said she felt like a teacher when she got her diploma. Bibiana noted that when one of the parents thanked her for teaching their child, “Pues yo pienso que desde entonces ya me sentí como importante. Me la creí. Pero yo pienso que si no fuera por APPLE todavía no me la creí.” [“Well, I think that from then on I felt important; I believed it. But I think that if it wasn’t for APPLE, I still wouldn’t have believed it.”]

Antonia said,

With APPLE you learn many things about how they learn, what [you can] do with them like playing to help them. How you are a very important part of their lives. And how [you can] teach them to recognize their emotions. So, APPLE is... a program that it really changes your life and the way you see yourself. Because you start recognizing yourself as a very important person in their life.

Buena said that she also learned “A reflexionar sobre sobre como debemos de cuidar a nuestros hijos como ir los encaminando.” [“to reflect on how we should care for our children as we guide them.”] When the Tías explained that the parents didn’t have much time to spend with the children, Basilia understood that she had to take advantage of the time she had with the children to teach them. Later, when a little girl told her that she wanted to come to her little school, Basilia said, “Ya cuando los niños te dicen es porque pues ellos ya lo creen y también uno se la cree.” [“When the children tell you it is because they already believe it and you also believe it.”] Belia agreed, saying,

No es saber otra experiencia bonita que se siente que a veces lo de dar los niños, que cuida, hacerlos llegar a encontrar uno a las tiendas y le grita Mamá, mamá, mira, llamo a mi maestra. De manera que uno se cree que sí, de verdad. [To find one of the children at the shops shouting, ‘Mom, Look! That’s my teacher!’ so that one believes, yes, I really am a teacher.]

Brianna added,

Y cuando me puse a cuidar niños, pues no aplicaba todo lo lo que paso, me enseñó. Sólo los cuidaba. Y ahora en [APPLE] Si mi autoestima se elevó cuando volvía a sentirme profesora maestra de los niños [When I started taking care of children, I didn’t apply everything that (I had learned in college). I was just looking out for them. And now in APPLE, my self–esteem soared. I felt like a teacher, an educator for the children again.]

Both of Adriana's children had some speech delays and she found that APPLE gave her the tools to teach her younger child skills that she didn't have for her older child, saying,

Definitivamente a él no lo pude ayudar porque no tenía este conocimiento que obtuve gracias al programa APPLE y entonces ahora lo puedo poner en práctica con mis hijos y pues en un futuro con mis nietos también y me siento muy capacitada ahora para poder hacer algo que verdaderamente tiene conocimiento. Y no nada más, es algo que por instinto como mamá no lo puedo hacer. [I definitely couldn't help him because I didn't have this knowledge that I obtained thanks to the APPLE program and now I can put it into practice with my children and in the future with my grandchildren as well. I feel very empowered now to be able to do something that really has knowledge. It's something that instinctively as a mom I can't do.] (Adriana)

Whether teaching her own children or teaching other people's children, Brianna shared most eloquently the importance of being a teacher,

De ser maestro es la oportunidad de crear seres de aire unos seres especiales, seres que a nuestra sociedad la hagan grande. [To be a teacher is the opportunity to create beings out of air, special beings, beings that make our society great.]

**After the Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para
La Escuela Program— La Oportunidad
en Este País [Opportunities
in This Country]**

Opportunity was, in fact, a major theme running through the conversations when the women described the APPLE program. Some described the program itself as an

opportunity. One reason was that the classes and all the materials were in Spanish, making it accessible to them. When Brianna first learned of the APPLE program, she thought it was unattainable. For about three years a friend of her husband's kept pushing her to investigate it. When she saw that she now had an opportunity to take the course online [due to the pandemic] she finally agreed, feeling it would be easier for her. During the classes, Brianna reported telling everyone, "Qué oportunidad más grande. Fíjese que todo lo que yo aprendí en la universidad está resumido aquí en seis meses." ["What a great opportunity. Look how everything I learned in college is summed up here in six months."]

Many of the women described opportunities that are now available to them that they did not have before APPLE. Brianna expressed it as opening a door to another world. For example, in addition to taking care of children in her home, Bibiana had been caring for children at church when the Pastor asked her to run the children's ministry. "As the relationship with her husband changed, they first became in charge of the children. Then they began to offer classes to support other women. Recently, she became a minister in her church. She feels that none of this would have been possible before APPLE" (researcher memo).

Some opportunities came because of a new level of confidence, a boldness to put oneself at risk, if necessary, to better provide for herself, her family, and to make a difference in society. Beatriz reported that she had no idea the program would help her as much as it did. She said:

Hasta que no terminé el curso fue como empecé a trabajar en una guardería.

Porque la dueña reconoce y me ha dicho, tu trabajas muy bien con los niños y los niños te quieren y te siguen mucho. Y de hecho tengo, voy a cumplir dos años en el trabajo donde estoy. Y en tan poco tiempo ya me hice encargada del grupo de los más recién nacidos y tuve ese grupo de bebés. [It wasn't until I finished the course that I started working in a (childcare center). The owner recognizes and has told me that (I) work very well with the children and the children love (me) and follow (me) a lot. And in fact, I'm going to be two years in the job where I am and in such a short time I was already in charge of the newborn group.] (Beatriz)

Beatriz credits her experiences in APPLE not only for the knowledge she gained but also for the courage to apply for a job in a childcare center. Beatriz, like several of the women in the APPLE program, lacks the proper documents to work in the United States. Even so, Beatriz continued,

APPLE cambió mi visión en cuanto a poder aspirar a un trabajo como este tipo, cuidar niños fuera de casa. [APPLE changed my vision in terms of being able to aspire to a job like this, caring for children out of the house.]

Beatriz, like many of the women, felt that the knowledge she gained from APPLE because it was from an organization in the United States and not from their home countries, “Por eso es algo que te respalda mucho que” [“backs you up”] and whether you are working for an employer or yourself, “Y puedes, vas a obtener un trabajo” [“you can have a job.”]

But not just any job, as Belia noted,

Porque también nos emociona a nosotras, porque creo que a todas las que estamos aquí nos gusta trabajar con los niños, cuidarlos no es nada más por lo que va a ganar, el pago, sino porque nos gusta cuidarlos. [because it also excites us, because I ... like to work with children, taking care of them is not just for the payment (we) will earn, but because we like to take care of them.]

Bonita agreed, saying,

Pues yo me siento orgullosa de poder ayudar a otros niños, enseñarles. Y pues que no dependo al 100 por ciento de mi esposa. Porque puedo trabajar desde aquí desde la casa. Y pues así estoy al pendiente de mis hijas también. Sobre todo ahorita que muchos niños están tomando clases en casa. No batallo para andar buscando, que me las puede, porque como ya están grandes, muchas personas no quieren hacerlo. [Well, I'm proud of being able to help other children, [to] teach them... because I am not 100 percent dependent on my husband. I can work from home and keep an eye on my daughters as well. Especially now (during the pandemic) that many children are taking classes at home. I don't struggle looking for care ... since they are already big, many people don't want to do it.]

Belinda explained that she enjoys parents recommending her to other parents due to participating in APPLE, noting her surprise that parents will travel 30 minutes to bring their children to her house. One parent specifically told her that “Tengo muy buenas recomendaciones tuyas dice porque estudiaste el Programa APPLE.” [“very good recommendations (about) you because you studied the APPLE Program.”]

Even though they could operate this business in their home because of APPLE, Belia expressed frustration that they cannot all license their home without the proper immigration documentation. Bonita explained their frustration, saying,

Pues sí, porque ha salido en la televisión de muchos casos, de personas que cuidan a niños de su casa, y por decir, si pasa algún incidente más grave. Y luego luego dicen, pero no tener licencia. Pero después tendrá otra razón. Sólo todo el tiempo andan desde que todo el tiempo andan apuntando a eso, o sea, que no tienen la licencia. Y todas esas personas a lo mejor son personas que no han estado o no han asistido a un entrenamiento así como ustedes. [There have been many cases on television, of people who take care of children in their homes (when) a serious incident happens. And then they say but (they were) not licensed ... and all those people may be people who have ... not attended a training like (the APPLE graduates)].

Basilia said that it is not only the immigration documentation that is a problem, “Es bueno que aún esté, pues unas que tienen todos sus papeles, todos sus documentos bien y no pueden hacer nada.” [“because some who have all their follow up papers, all their documents, and cannot find a job].” Belinda added that she wished there were other opportunities like APPLE to help their community. Perhaps other programs could be developed that will provide people with knowledge in other fields to build their own businesses from home. Still, she went on to say,

Me hace muy feliz poder sembrar una semillita a los niños para que sean hombres y mujeres en el futuro, que sean buenos y que tengan éxito en su vida. [It makes me very happy to be able to sow a little seed for the children so that

they will be men and women in the future, that they will be good and successful in their lives.] (Basilía)

Cultural Repercussions—Lo Que Tengo y Más [What I Have and More]

Antonia remarked, “This is a program that I remember Alondra [said] the whole world has to be thinking about doing.” Brianna also mentioned that

porque el desarrollo de un niño es mundial estándar. Sí, y con esas actividades lo que yo promuevo es que el desarrollo para la vida. Y pienso que no, no cambia la cultura [a child’s development is a world standard, and with these activities, I promote life development... It does not change the culture.”]

Even when asked to consider that in the Latin culture they were not taught to do activities with the children, to read to them, or to have conversations with them, yet this program is teaching them to do these things that are all common to European-based cultures, her response was,

Y vuelvo a decir lo mismo, yo pienso que no. Simplemente Estoy aprendiendo algo nuevo. Aquí estoy agregando conocimiento a... Pues mi cultura sigue ahí. [I say again the same thing, I don’t think so. Simply I’m learning something new. I am just adding knowledge to ... my culture is still there.]

Bibiana put it a bit differently, “Yo así me siento como más, más este, como empoderada a poder, a como la que tengo y más” [“I feel it’s more like this: as empowered to power; it’s kind of what I have and more.”]

To clarify what I was trying to get at, in the interview with Brianna, I shared the image of the culture tree from Hammond’s (2015) book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

and the Brain (see Appendix K: Hammond's Culture Tree). I explained that the leaves represent the visible parts of the culture, the trunk represents the parts of a culture that are unspoken rules but hold a strong emotional impact, and the roots hold the unconscious beliefs and norms of the culture that are intensely personal. As Hammond said, "It is the bedrock of self-concept, group identity, approaches to problem-solving, and decision making" (2015, p. 24). I then showed her that the child-rearing principles are located right at the root of the tree. At this point Brianna understood, saying,

En este sentido, sí. Sí, porque no, nunca nos han criado así con estos patrones. Es nuevo y por eso esa cultura está influyendo en nuestras vidas. Y lo he adaptado. Y es muy productiva. Yo me estaba refiriendo a que, yo me refería más, a como que no cambiamos nuestras tradiciones, nuestras costumbres. Ah, pero en este sentido definitivamente que nos ha influenciado otra cultura. Y la hemos adaptado y trabajamos. En beneficio de los niños. [In this sense, yes. Yes, because no, we've never been raised like this with these patterns. It is new and that is why that culture is influencing our lives.... I have adapted it. It is very productive. I was referring to the fact that we don't change our traditions, our customs. Ah, but in this sense, we have definitely been influenced by another culture. We have adapted it and we work that way ... always for the benefit of the children.]

The closest thing to a negative comment that I heard was from one of the women feeling sorry that the classes were all online now, due to the pandemic. She felt that the women taking classes now would miss out on the camaraderie with the other women that she enjoyed when she took the classes. None of the women reported anything

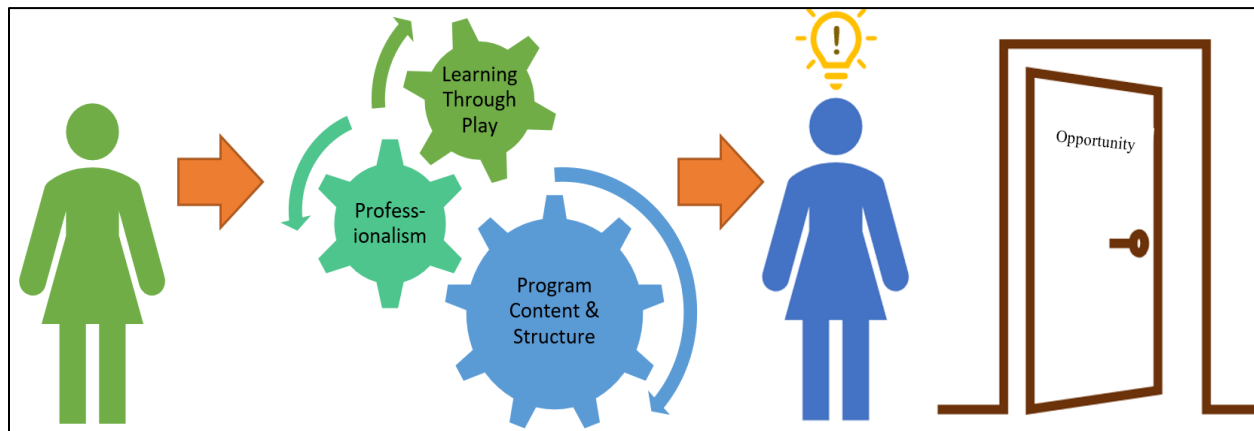
negative about the program, its content, or expectations, not even regarding the apparent change to their culture.

Analysis and Synthesis

Previous studies (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, 2017; Zuniga & Howes, 2009) indicated participation in this or similar programs causes Latina family childcare providers with limited overall education, and specifically lacking formal early childhood education, to demonstrate high-quality teaching practices without explaining how and when Latina FFN providers moved from babysitting to teaching. The current study corroborates their findings of change from mother/babysitter to early childhood teacher and elaborates on the process of transformation from the perspective of the participants themselves. As shown in Figure 4: Transformation Model, the woman participating in APPLE experiences the program content and structure and emerges transformed by this new knowledge with new opportunities available to her. This section now delves deeper into the themes that became evident and led to the formulation of the grounded theory.

Figure 4

Transformation Model



How Change Happened—The Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela Program Content and Structure

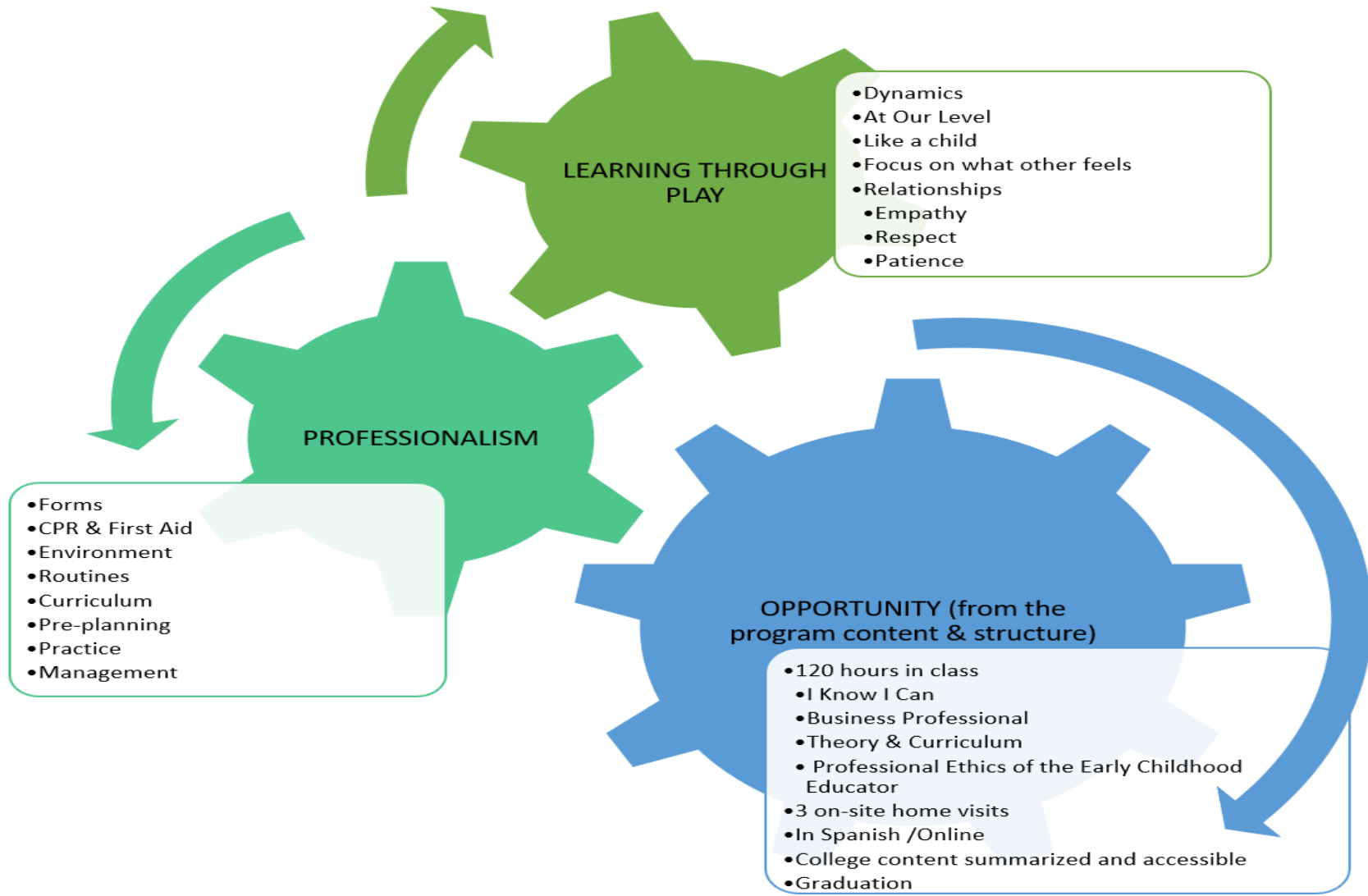
Once I had determined that this study did, indeed, corroborate the previous findings in that a perceptual shift has occurred, I proceeded to explore how this transformation had taken place. As seen in the findings, this transformation was a process over time. So, what was it about the program that led to this transformation? Although this study was not concerned with the APPLE program itself, three themes emerged from discussions regarding the program content and structure that significantly contributed to the development of the grounded theory. These themes were opportunity, professionalism, and learning through play, as shown in Figure 5: Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela Program Content and Structure.

Opportunity

The participants mentioned two levels of opportunity in the discussions, the first of which concerned the program itself, the second level appeared in the results of their transformation. Key to this first level was that the program materials, as well as the teaching, were in Spanish which is the primary language of the participants. This was a significant influence in accessibility along with, for some participants, the ability to participate in the classes online. For some of the participants, the graduation ceremony was another opportunity, particularly for the women who had not completed school, preventing them from graduating in their home country.

Figure 5

Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela Program Content and Structure



Because one participant had a career as a teacher in her home country, she had a knowledge base most others lacked. However, as seen in the findings, before APPLE she did not see a connection between her knowledge as a teacher and her role as babysitter. Still, as she was participating in the APPLE program, she found herself recalling this knowledge from her former life, and frequently shared with the other participants how the APPLE classes condensed all her university education into this short time span and made it much easier to understand; she reported seeing these classes as an incredible opportunity for all childcare providers.

Professionalism

The notion of being a professional businesswoman operating a small business in her home was the second theme to emerge in the discussions of the program content. The participants described thoughtfully creating a specific area of their homes designated for caring for and teaching the children, including space for parents to complete the forms the providers now required for children in their care. Several of the women mentioned the importance of the records they now keep for their businesses, including maintaining current certificates for Pediatric First Aid and CPR, parental sign-in and -out forms documenting attendance, and permission for transportation and field trips away from the provider's home.

They now approach their work, not simply according to whatever they felt like doing that day but by following a set routine including intentional preplanning of their meals and curriculum activities for the children. They discovered how routines provide a sense of safety for the children. In learning this concept, it became a priority for each of the participants to incorporate into her practice some set routines in working with the

children. This incorporated both the activities for the children and the planning that went into their preparation, as well as the order of the day in providing the continuity and safety that children need to thrive.

Learning Through Play

This final theme related to the content and structure of the program caused some initial confusion on my part. When the participants mentioned learning through play, I assumed that they were talking about the curriculum they presented to the children, as learning through play is a common pedagogical philosophy in early childhood education. It took a good deal of back-and-forth discussion to understand that the women meant that they, themselves, were learning through play in their classes. The Tías were not only teaching the content but intentionally modeling how they wanted the providers to interact with the children in their care.

One of the participants frequently stressed the term *dinámicas* (dynamics) in this part of the conversation. Due to the struggle many monolingual English speakers have with words that sound similar in both languages but have related yet differently nuanced meanings, it took time to understand what she meant. I first thought she was using the term to simply mean “energetic or forceful” (Merriam–Webster, Inc., 2021). In this case, however, she was referring to the interactions—the power of the visual presentation of an idea or theory—which resulted in such a strong emotional response as to be highly memorable (researcher memo).

It was the combination of these two ideas, dynamics and learning through play, that I believe make this program extremely successful in transforming the practice of the FFN childcare providers from babysitting to teaching. In fact, many of the participants

referenced these ideas in how they learned empathy, patience, and respect for the children in their care. By becoming like children during their classes, they found they could understand how a child feels in any given situation that might transpire during childcare in their homes. Some referred to the choice of words or tone they might use when speaking to children, others mentioned how this freed them to be more loving to the children, and most reported engaging more fully in the children's play with them.

Results of Changes

When describing the results of their participation in the APPLE program, there also arose three themes, one was the second level of opportunity. The other two themes were new knowledge and transformation.

New Knowledge

The theme of new knowledge resonated most strongly when the participants discussed all they had learned in APPLE. Many explained that before APPLE they didn't have this knowledge, but one participant went on to say that this knowledge was not intuitive to her, and without it, she found that she was unable to help her own children. This inability to help her children left her with a sense of helplessness. The knowledge learned in APPLE countermanded that, providing specific strategies and resources for her to use.

Most of their new knowledge was regarding their practice with children. Key to this idea of knowledge-based practice were the activities they learned to keep the children busy while simultaneously preparing them for entry into the education system. Some participants mentioned the notion that mistakes teach children even more than their successes in completing the activities. This concept was significant particularly to

providers who also mentioned learning to have more patience with the children. They were beginning to understand that learning is a process of trial and error as the child builds her own knowledge, and as her teachers, they must make room for this experimentation, thus recognizing learning in action.

The aspect of self-care as a characteristic of a professional childcare provider and teacher of young children was also mentioned by several participants. They recognized that to have the energy necessary to teach young children, they must care for themselves with proper nutrition, rest, and exercise to be at their best.

Transformation

Another theme emerging as a result of the changes they learned through their participation in the APPLE program, and one that dominated the conversations, was their transformation. Whether referred to as a changed mindset, a new way of acting, or even the changes they noticed in the children, each woman described experiencing a complete transformation in herself. This transformation played out in more confidence, improved relationships, better communication, a sense of empowerment, and independence. This transformation was a liberating experience for these women, described as something that APPLE added to them rather than taking something away from them. Therefore, they denied seeing the APPLE program as an assimilationist strategy, seeing assimilation as a removal of their culture and traditions, whereas APPLE is additive in nature, by giving them knowledge they did not have, without taking anything away.

Opportunity Part Two

The transformations the participants experienced led to the second level of opportunity and referred to how the women viewed the new opportunities, or “open doors” that became available to them following their participation in the APPLE program.

One particularly sensitive topic for this population is their immigration status in the United States. Wary distrust of outsiders is commonplace, not only because of the cultural value of *confianza* but also for the very real threat of deportation if the wrong person learns of their identity. For the women to speak openly with me about this issue implied the level of trust they granted me based on the word of the *Tías* and the translator. In both cases, these women vouched for me and my integrity in doing this research, assuring them that I would not betray their trust.

This theme of opportunity emerged, in some cases despite their immigration status and in other cases because of it. One participant mentioned that she is the only person working in the childcare center who lacks the immigration documentation to be employed in this country. This opportunity came about principally from the new-found confidence learned in the APPLE program; she was willing to take a risk to apply for work in a childcare center. Then, because the owner chose to hire, and later promote her, based on the knowledge gained from APPLE rather than her papers or lack thereof, this became another kind of opportunity.

Other opportunities arose within the protection of the community, such as in the elevation of roles within their churches. These opportunities did not require any sort of immigration documentation, and therefore, did not require such a risk as previously

described. However, it was the transformation in self-esteem and confidence that led others in authority to notice these women and then tap them for new roles of leadership. Several women described the opportunities they have received as an obligation to share what they have learned with others. One woman reported sharing with friends and relatives living in other states within the United States and several reported sharing their new-found knowledge with relatives remaining in their country of origin. As Bibiana noted, “Como común que yo puedo cambiar el mundo, a través de los niños.” [“How common/typical that I can change the world, through the children.”]

Cultural Integration

As previously mentioned, the values of *confianza* and *familismo* directly influence with whom Latinx parents are likely to leave their children. Preferring extended family members to care for very young children (Calzada et al., 2013), parents assume that family members will care for the children as their own (Navarro–Cruz, 2020; Shuey & Leventhal, 2020). However, as these women have explained, to care for children the same way in which they were raised is insufficient in the United States today. This is the point where Berry’s (2005) Acculturation Model becomes relevant.

Berry (2005) presented a multidimensional view of acculturation that resists the “melting pot” concept as the ultimate goal for blending non–dominant people groups into the dominant society. Seeing integration as the antithesis of assimilation, Berry proposed the former as a means of obtaining a multicultural society, saying, “Acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer–term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups” (p. 699).

In this acculturation model (see Figure 6: Acculturation Model) I have superimposed his diagram of the Strategies of the ethnocultural group over the strategies of the dominant society to better see the results of each in relation to the other. In this view, the dominant society at large is represented by the large square, the inner circle represents the ethnocultural group. For the ethnocultural group to maintain their heritage culture and identity, while seeking relationships within the dominant society, there must be some cultural integration on the part of the ethnocultural group that will result in multiculturalism within the dominant society.

As the women participating in the APPLE program have explained, they feel they have maintained their heritage culture and identity despite adapting their child-rearing practices by incorporating the dominant culture's practices of child-rearing in the realm of school readiness. This integration does alter the culture, but as far as the participants in this study are concerned, they concluded this change was a positive addition of knowledge that does not detract from their culture.

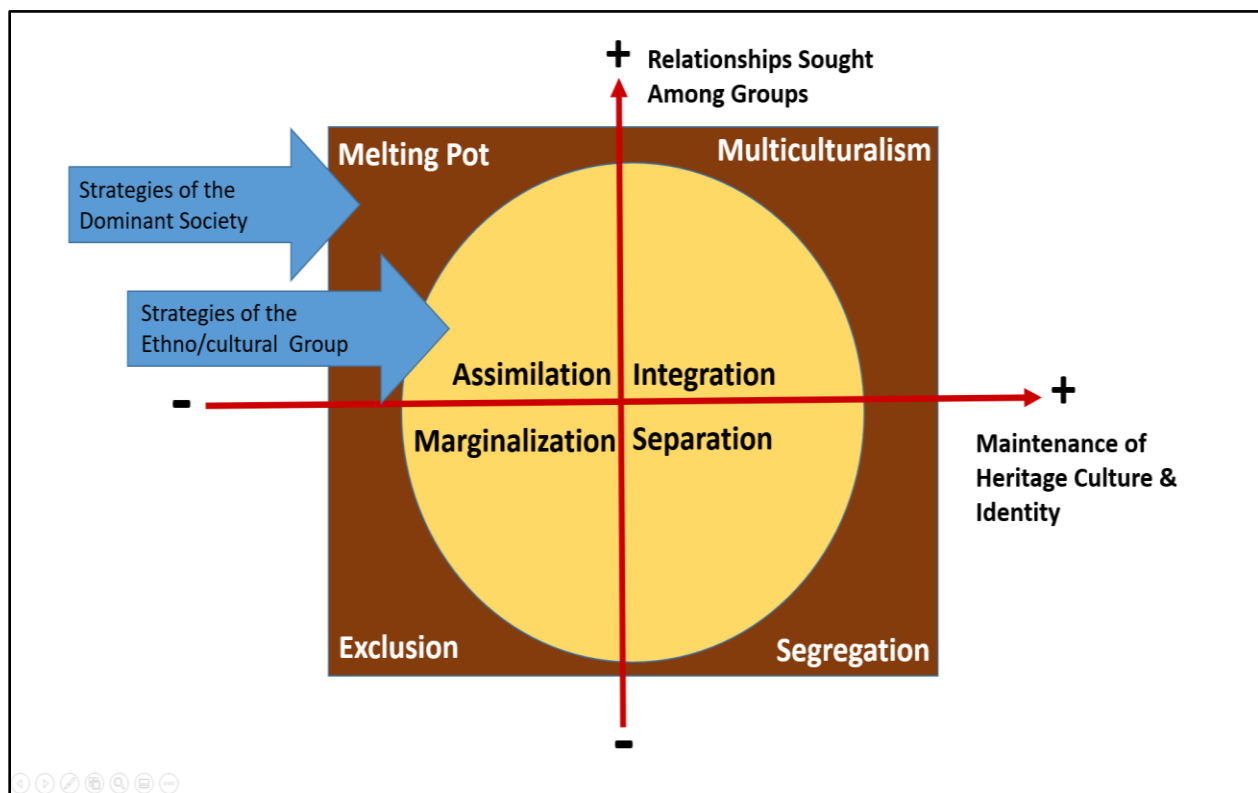
Explicitly Teaching the Implicit Curriculum

It is important to note, the participants in this study never attended school in the United States. Therefore, prior to their participation in the APPLE program, they were unfamiliar with the expectations of the education system in this country. The only system of schooling with which any of them were familiar was that of their home countries. This is particularly relevant because it explains the connection to Eisner's (2002) notion of an implicit or hidden curriculum of the education systems in the United States. By explicitly teaching that which is common knowledge to parents, childcare workers, and early childhood teachers of the dominant culture, the APPLE program is

teaching these women to prepare their children for an education that will, in many cases, both begin and go beyond that which they have experienced themselves. In implementing these practices, the APPLE program graduates, as represented by the participants of this study, are preparing their children to meet the expectations of the school system in the United States. When their children arrive at school with the skills that are expected by the teachers, perhaps they will no longer be seen as a deficit.

Figure 6

Acculturation Model

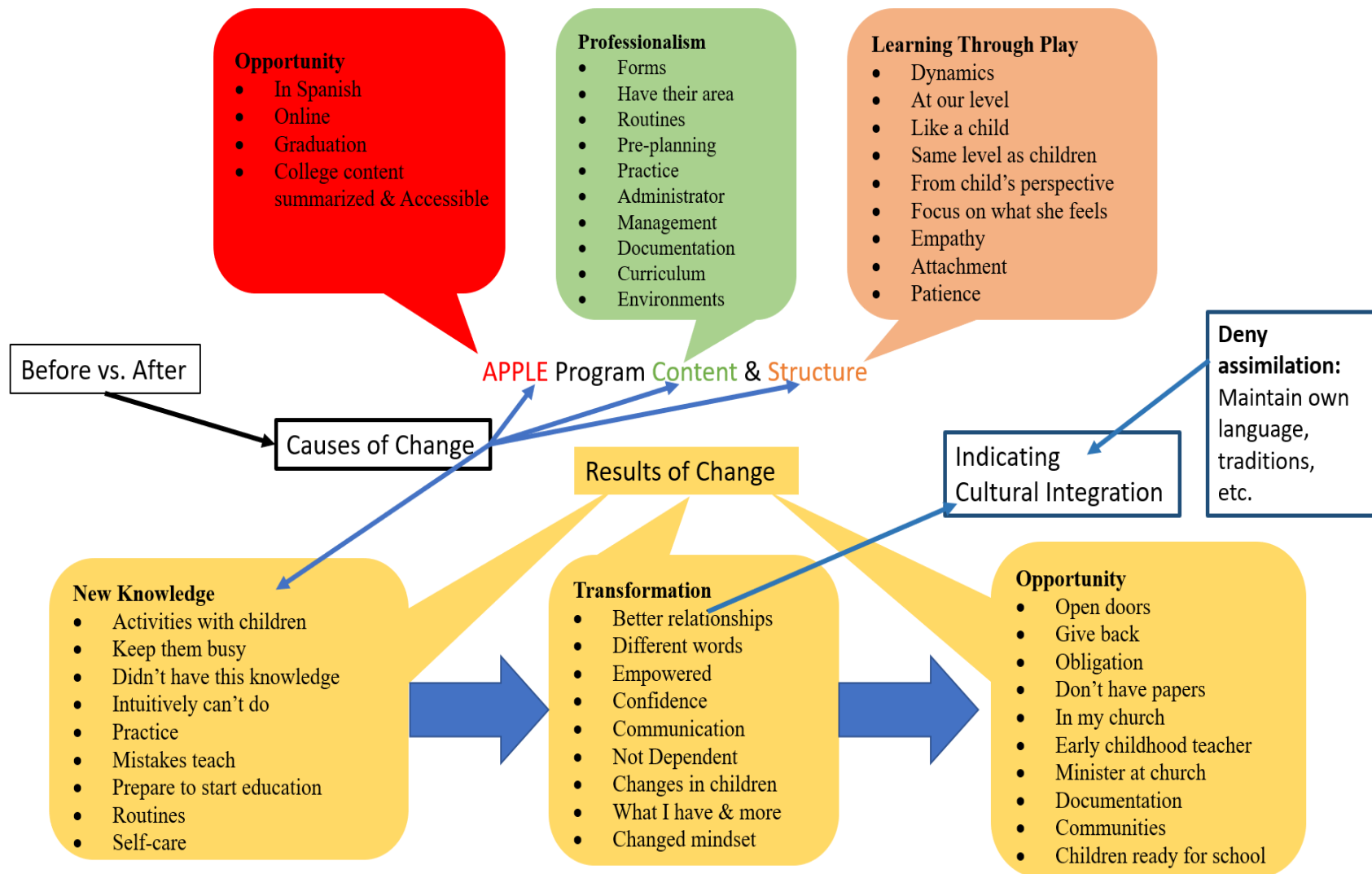


Freire (2017) explains that for any liberation of oppressed peoples to succeed, it must be led by the oppressed themselves (p. 21). The dismal failure of one education policy reform effort after another, all supposedly trying to “close the achievement gap,” proffers proof that true reform will not come from Capitol Hill. For, as Spring (2014)

comments, “colonial policy viewed education as a means of establishing the superiority of one ethnic group over another” (p. 23). This colonial policy remains enmeshed in the Eurocentric understandings of education and school–readiness, and so long as narrow-minded men of the dominant culture maintain their parsimonious grasp on education policy and funding, it will remain. The recent “explosion of overt racism ... exclusionary behaviors ... and fundamentalist reactions” (Coll et al., 2021) bear witness to this truth. However, there is a higher road. By explicitly teaching the implicit expectations of schools, the APPLE program enables Latinx families to adapt and excel in the current educational system without losing their culture. In doing so, I believe these women are taking the first steps toward liberation and a desired multicultural pluralistic society in which everyone can thrive.

The Grounded Theory of Transformative Professional Development

To explain how the data produced this grounded theory of transformative professional development, I have prepared a graphic to illustrate the process (see Figure 7: Grounded Theory Model). This model begins with the verification that a change did indeed occur because of the program as identified by contrasting the before and after descriptions from the participants. Next, I identified the causes of these changes, showing components within the content and structure of the APPLE program as being responsible for the changes in provider practice according to the participants. These included the opportunity made available to participate in the program, the professionalism learned through the content, and learning through play as modeled by the Tías.

Figure 7**Grounded Theory Model**

The new knowledge the participants mentioned gaining from the program became both a result of the changes as well as a cause for change—when you know more, you do more—as this new knowledge led to the transformation described by the participants. These transformations, in turn, led to the new opportunities available to the participants after they participated in the APPLE program. Although the participants primarily denied any change to their culture, the transformations they described do indicate a cultural integration as explained by Berry (2005) and seen in Figure 6: Acculturation Model (page 116).

These transformations include changes to their teaching practices, homes, and relationships with children. The participants also indicated improved self-esteem, confidence, advocacy, and family and community relationships. Some described shifts in familial roles, such as the husband arriving home after work to fix his own dinner because she was online for a class or, in our case, in the interview. All of these are cultural markers that have shifted due to their participation in the APPLE program. Therefore, from the data gathered in this study, I have arrived at a Theory of Transformative Professional Development to describe the process of Latina FFN providers changing from mother and babysitter to early childhood educator and teacher.

Limitations and Delimitations

As previously mentioned, a white, English-speaking woman researching the experiences of Latina women, the process inherently includes a differentiation of power that I have attempted to mitigate through several means. First, in the interest of researcher transparency, I provided several examples of my former perspective showing how I have changed in my perspective to become an anti-racist ally. I

intentionally minimized my power by remaining focused and centering the participant's words, honoring the knowledge they brought to the discussions, and working to build cultural bridges. In addition, I have held their identities in the strictest confidence to warrant the trust they extended to me. A related limitation was determining the point of saturation. By returning to the participants for member checking, I was able to verify that I had interpreted their perspectives correctly, while at the same time, verifying that there were no new perspectives I had overlooked.

By limiting the selection of participants to only graduates of the APPLE program, there may be other perspectives within the Latinx population that would disagree with these findings, particularly regarding the view of cultural integration. Additionally, as these participants were recruited by the Tías who have worked with them, I had no control over the selection of participants. There may be other graduates of the APPLE program who would disagree with the perspectives presented here. Finally, although there appear to be similar programs in other states, the APPLE program is only available in the northeastern section of this single state in the Southwest. Therefore, the results of this study may be quite different if working in another section of the country.

Transferability

As previously mentioned, a well-defined theory grounded in data will accomplish the four criteria of grounded theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), fit, understanding, generality, and control, to enable transferability of the resulting theory.

Fit

First and foremost, the resulting theory must fit the data. Eisner (2002) identified the implicit curriculum as the “set of expectations and rules that defines schooling as a

cultural system” (p. 106). Berry (2005) explained that cultural integration allows the ethnocultural population to successfully interact with the systems of the dominant culture yet maintain their own distinct identity. In this study, the participants described a transformation from mother/babysitter to early childhood teacher. This transformation was founded on the new knowledge they obtained from participation in the APPLE program while maintaining all other aspects of their existing culture. By adapting their child-rearing practices, these Latina women enable the children to begin their education prepared to meet the Eurocentric expectations of the United States’ school system while maintaining their unique ethnocultural identity. Therefore, the data itself birthed this theory of transformative professional development by explicitly teaching the implicit curriculum in a professional development program for Latina FFN providers.

Understanding

Next, the theory must be understandable to everyone. Contrary to other uses of the term cultural integration focused on subsuming another culture, as in the absorbing of Eastern Bloc nations into the European Union, I use the term as Berry (2005) described it, in which the ethnocultural group chooses to integrate a specific cultural practice that will benefit the two cultures as a liberating strategy for them both as Freire (2017) explained. In this case, the theory of transformative professional development is a strategy used by the ethnoculture to prepare their children to succeed in the dominant culture’s system of schooling while maintaining its unique identity.

Generality

To be generalizable, the theory cannot be so specific that it limits its applicability to other research studies. Although this study focused on Latina FFN providers working

to improve the school readiness of Latinx children, the theory of transformative professional development can apply to other areas of research. Within most systems there exist implicit or unspoken rules and expectations known only to those “inside” the system. By explicitly teaching these implicit rules and expectations to those “outside” the system through professional development classes as an intentional strategy of integration rather than assimilation, it may liberate people on both sides of the system to work toward a pluralist and inclusive view.

Control

Finally, another researcher may rely on this theory of transformative professional development in practical applications and still maintain control over the phenomenon. Regardless of the system being studied, to explicitly teach the rules and expectations of that system, known implicitly by insiders, to those outside the system should result in an ability of those learners to integrate into the existing system.

Summary

Chapter four contains the findings of the research study as a timeline of sorts. Beginning with a description of the type of care they provided to children before they participated in the APPLE program, the participants explained how the structure and content of the program transformed their practice, enabling their children to function successfully in the Eurocentric system of schooling while maintaining their existing culture. I have revised Berry’s (2005) acculturation model to show the interrelation of the ethnocultural group’s integration and the resulting multiculturalism within the dominant society, explaining it as a form of liberation espoused by Freire. Then I revisited the limitations and delimitations of the study before addressing the generalizability of the

grounded theory of Transformative Professional Development. In chapter five I will provide conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study began with a “puzzle box analogy” to explain the problem of differentiation in school readiness between children from the dominant, Eurocentric culture and those from the global majority beginning school together in the United States. Therefore, this chapter begins by revisiting this analogy, showing the results of participating in the APPLE program from the perspective of the participants. From there, I offer the conclusions based on what I have learned from this study and recommendations for further research. The chapter ends with my thoughts on the research process and what I have learned from the experience.

Puzzle Box Analogy Revisited

A Latinx child races to his childcare provider’s home, clutching his puzzle box to his chest. He is so excited! Yesterday, his teacher said she would help him open the box and show him what is inside. When he arrives, he shows her the puzzle box. His teacher, an APPLE program graduate, sits down at the table with him to open the puzzle box. She is very careful as she helps him to remove the plastic wrapping. She encourages him to touch the box with the wrapping removed. Then she shows him how the box is sealed. She asks if he is ready to open the seal. He nods quickly, eyes bright with excitement. His teacher gently slices open the seal and then carefully lifts the lid, to show the wonders inside. The child tentatively reaches inside the box, then stops, looking quickly to his teacher for approval. She smiles and nods. Then he picks up the

first piece of the puzzle, turning it over and back, then turning it around, feeling the edges, the cool smoothness of the printed side, comparing it to the slightly rougher back side before picking up another piece. He brings the two pieces to his cheeks, feeling the smooth coolness, and grins at his smiling teacher. Then he drops these two pieces into the box before putting both hands into the box. He notices the bumpy feeling of the pieces as he grabs several pieces in his hands. Sensing that he is ready to explore further, his teacher asks if he notices how some pieces have a flat edge and others have rounded parts, some sticking out from, and others cut into, the pieces. He tilts his head to one side as he considers what she said. He takes out two pieces and compares them, then runs his finger along the flat edge, nodding slightly as he confirms this new information for himself. His teacher suggests they might try sorting out the pieces with flat edges.

A few years later, when the child starts kindergarten, he arrives with the border of his puzzle completed, and several other pieces connected, just like the children from the dominant culture. His teacher is surprised by this since he is monolingual Spanish. She will still need some help to teach him English, but hopefully, she is not as concerned about this, because she believes he is welled-prepared and ready to learn.

This version of the child's first experience with the "puzzle box" shows the patience, empathy, and respect the child deserves from his teachers. This is what the APPLE program graduates have learned. Whether the kindergarten teacher sees him in this positive light remains to be seen.

Conclusions

Although some research (Bustamante & Hindman, 2020) suggests Latinx children are better prepared with strategies for learning, including higher levels of social–emotional competence and executive function than their peers, the “alignment between Eurocentric ways of being and behaving and readiness that disproportionately advantages White children” (Souto–Manning, 2018, p. 457) has maintained a deficit perspective of Latinx children entering kindergarten. Baratz and Baratz (1970) expressed intervention programs that alter patterns of child–rearing and attempt to improve language and cognitive skills are a form of institutional racism. However, this study of the APPLE program graduates shows Latina FFN providers have learned and implemented these Eurocentric strategies for school readiness, without experiencing cultural nullification, in their opinion. This is perhaps due to their perception that they are learning, or adding, knowledge previously unavailable to them as suggested by Eisner’s implicit curriculum of schooling in the United States. Yes, the APPLE program does alter the Latinx culture of these women, however, it appears the participants consider it no more significant than learning the traffic rules when living in another country, such as the difference between right– and left–hand driving. With this new knowledge comes freedom—liberation from societal constructs that have previously limited their opportunities—whether that is the ability to drive to see places that public transportation will not take you, or ensuring your grandchildren are equitably prepared to meet the expectations of the schools. Despite altering the Latinx culture, the participants consider the transformation they experienced through APPLE as acculturation; a positive change in themselves and the educational care they provide for the children that in no way

diminishes their culture; instead, they consider it an opportunity for them to improve society.

Key to this transformation from mother/babysitter to early childhood educator is a professional development program that condenses significant content knowledge of child development, child guidance, pediatric health and safety, curriculum studies, and business practices and then makes this information accessible to the participants in a manner that connects with their emotions as well as their minds while making the learning engaging and fun. For a professional development program to be transformative in this manner, in addition to making content knowledge accessible and fun, it must help the participants reconnect with their own childhood dreams for their lives, instill in them the belief they are still capable of accomplishing their dreams and provide tools and resources for them to do so.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, these are my recommendations for parents, other childcare providers, the proprietary agency for the APPLE program, and future researchers.

For Parents

Based on the discussions with the participants, I believe that FFN providers graduating from the APPLE program do create a high-quality learning environment by understanding how the child feels, keeping her busy and learning through the day, and meeting her physical, emotional, and cognitive needs. Parents searching for childcare in the Latinx community would do well to find one of these women to teach and care for their children.

**For Other Family, Friend, and Neighbor
Childcare Providers**

Expanding the APPLE program into other communities and different minoritized populations presents a tremendous opportunity for FFN childcare providers. I highly recommend this program be expanded to improve the knowledge and quality of care provided by FFN childcare providers, and the resulting satisfaction with their role in the lives of children and families in their community.

For the Proprietary Agency

I am aware that after successfully replicating the program in different communities around the state, the APPLE program is now testing its replicability with other minoritized populations. I do agree that this is an important part of research and expansion. Whether this is successful or not, I believe a next step for the agency would be to publish the curricula and procedures, market these to other states desiring to assist Latinx FFN providers, and provide the necessary training to replicate the program to fidelity.

The agency can also continue to build ongoing relationships with past graduates. This currently exists in various informal methods, but I would recommend a more formal approach to online opportunities for providers to connect with each other and to get additional support from the Tías after they have graduated from the program. This may require adding additional staff, solely to support past graduates. You might also consider a “family reunion” of past graduates once the threat of COVID abates.

For Future Researchers

One of the participants mentioned she wished that there were other programs like this to teach people skills that will enable them to earn a decent income for their

families. Are there other fields that can be adapted in this manner? Is there a way to consolidate field-specific knowledge sufficiently, make the content fun and engaging, connecting both mind and emotion, to transform participants and enable them to work in that field?

While the APPLE program does change the participants, who in turn change the preparation of the children in their care, it does not change the systemic oppressions prevalent in the United States' education system. Although there is documentation showing children cared for by APPLE program graduates score as well as children from the dominant culture on kindergarten entry assessments, there is no data showing the teachers' perception of children equitably prepared for kindergarten when they enter school monolingual in their home language. Nor is there data to show the long-term outcomes for these children. There remains to be a longitudinal study of the children in FFN childcare with APPLE graduates to determine whether this equitable preparation for school is sufficient for the children to overcome the multitudinous systemic oppressions within the education system itself as they progress toward high school graduation.

Therefore, recommendations for future research include the following questions:

- How could this example of transformative professional development be implemented in other fields?
- How do kindergarten teachers view children starting school with equitable literacy and numeracy skills, despite being monolingual in a language other than English?

- What are the long-term outcomes for children in FFN care with past graduates of the APPLE program compared to other FFN providers?
- Are the changes the APPLE graduates experienced sustainable through future generations? As the children who have attended childcare with the APPLE graduates grow up and start their own families, how will their child-rearing practices compare to those who did not have this experience?

Final Thoughts

The opportunity to study the APPLE program from the perspective of the participants has brought me full circle through the vast learning journey I began when I first learned of the APPLE program and became aware that children in the United States today are still being judged by the color of their skin and their families' economic situation regardless of their immigration status. I was appalled when I first began to comprehend this truth. In all honesty, from my privileged view of the world, I believed that teachers treated all children equally, and any failures were due to the student's own poor choices. I have now learned how intentional oppression, built into the education system at its origin, sustained throughout its existence, and maintained in my own classrooms, however ignorant I may have been.

Learning to see the world through another person's perspective was something the participants said they did for the children, but it was also what I did for them. As one participant explained, this requires focused listening, giving time and space to others for them to express themselves. I am so grateful for the trust these women placed in me by sharing their thoughts. In addition to all that I learned from the participants regarding

their experiences, I feel that my research and writing the literature review gave me a better understanding and appreciation of the Latinx community and their cultural values.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this process of research and writing. It challenged me far more than I could have imagined, but it has rewarded me far more than I ever dreamed. I never got tired of what I was learning, though near the end I did begin to envision a life when I no longer had this dissertation hanging over me! The systematic, step-by-step process from beginning to end helped to keep me focused and engaged. It is hard to believe it has been one year since I actively began writing. I had no idea that I could remain this focused for so long on a single topic without getting bored! If anything, I am more interested now than when I began.

I learned more about myself through the writing process as well: from deciding on a topic to exploring the literature that exists, and the excitement I felt when I found an article that specifically requested more research on the very topic I chose. That was a big help in removing the imposter syndrome because it showed me that I chose a topic that will interest other researchers.

The process of writing the researcher stance and reflecting on why I should be allowed to research this question when I am outside the population of interest gave me a new insight into myself, the privileges I enjoy, and my own lived experiences; all contributing to my understanding of how ubiquitous oppression is for intersectionally marginalized people groups.

By the time I got to the actual research, I was still unsure of myself as a researcher. I chose grounded theory because it gave me a blueprint to follow, though I was not sure that I understood how to find a theory in the data. It was in the writing that I

began to trust myself. It was in the revisions, questioning what I wrote, and then trying to draw a picture of what I was thinking, that I found not only the grounded theory but confidence in myself as an academic.

Summary

Beginning with a second visit to the puzzle–box analogy, this time from the perspective of a child in the care of an APPLE graduate, this version proffered hope for a future of educational equity for both children and adults. Next, I provided my conclusions from the study and make recommendations for the potential stakeholders of the APPLE program as well as future researchers. I concluded this chapter with some final thoughts on the overall experience of researching and writing this dissertation.

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APPENDIX A
SCRIPT FOR RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS



SCRIPT FOR RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Would you be willing to help in a study of the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program? This study will add to the understanding of how Latina Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) childcare providers feel about their work with children after their participation in PASO. As a graduate of the program, you have a unique perspective of the program's influence on your work.

If you agree to help with this research, you will meet in a focus group with other graduates to talk about APPLE. The focus group meeting will take about one-and-one-half hours to complete. You will have an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the reporting in a second meeting. To thank you for the time spent in the focus group, you will receive a \$25 Walmart gift card.

You may be invited to participate in an individual interview to provide more information in addition to the focus group. If you do provide an individual interview, you will receive a second \$25 Walmart gift card for the additional time you will spend helping the study.

Both your name and the program name will be changed in the final report so that you cannot be identified in any way. Deborah Becker is the researcher, and Dorotea Hernandez, a former APPLE Program Coordinator and Tía in Weld County, will help with translations.

Due to COVID-19, the focus groups and interviews can take place on the computer or in person (mask-to-mask), whichever is best for you. If you are willing to participate in this important work, please add your name and indicate your choice below.

Name:

Phone:

Choose one:

_____	_____	Online Mask-to-Mask
_____	_____	Online Mask-to-Mask
_____	_____	Online Mask-to-Mask
_____	_____	Online Mask-to-Mask

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Grounded theory relies on emergent design in which one focus group informs the questions asked in the next, and so on. Therefore, questions asked in subsequent focus groups and interviews will be based on the information gained in the initial focus group, hence, impossible to list at the present time. Below is a hypothetical list of potential topics for these discussions and interviews based on my present limited knowledge.

Tía Focus Group Conversation Starting Questions

1. Describe the overall structure of the program. For example:
 - a. How do you find the providers to recruit for the program?
 - b. How often do they meet, for how long, how often do the Tías visit their homes, etc.
 - c. What is the order of the various training components?
 - d. What is the order or schedule for an average training meeting?
2. Describe the impact the program has on the providers.
3. When do the providers begin to change their practices?
 - a. What is the first thing they usually change?
4. At what point in the program do you usually notice changes in the providers themselves?
5. How do you recognize these changes? For example:
 - a. Is there a difference in the way they talk about the children, in the way they talk about the work, or in the questions they ask?

Provider Focus Group Conversation Starting Questions

1. What was your favorite part of the program? Why? Was that also the most important part?
2. Do you think that you changed from participating in the program? How?
3. How do you describe your role with the children in your care?
4. Did your relationships within your family change after participating in the program? In what ways?
5. How many children were you caring for at that time?
6. Describe a normal day before you participated in the program.
7. Describe a normal day now. What is the most important part of your work with the children?
8. How did the program change your practice with children?
9. Did the program change you? In what way?
10. How would you describe your role with the children in your care?
11. Is that different from how you thought before you participated in the program? In what way?
12. Describe the relationships you have with the children's parents. Is that the same or different from before the program?
13. Have your other relationships (family, friends, community) changed after the program? In what way?

APPENDIX C

**CONSENT FORMS FOR HUMAN PARTICIPATION
IN RESEARCH**



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Thank you for helping my study of the *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE) program. As a graduate of the program, you have a unique perspective of the program's influence. This study researches the ways you feel the program may have influenced how you think about your role as you care for and teach very young children.

Study Title:

Latina Family, Friend, and Neighbor Childcare Providers Transitioning from Mother to Early Childhood Teacher: A Grounded Theory

Researcher:

Ms. Deborah Becker, Doctoral Candidate, Educational Studies
Phone: (999) 555-5555 Email: beck.1234@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor:

Jennifer Harding, Ed.D., School of Teacher Education
Phone: (970) 351-1029 Email: jenni.harding@unco.edu

Purpose and Description:

This study will seek to develop a theory for how Latina Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) childcare providers may change through their participation in APPLE. This information will build on knowledge from a prior study of the program. It will add to the understanding of its impact from the participant's perspective.

First, you will meet in a focus group with other graduates to talk about APPLE. I will transcribe conversations from the focus group meetings. I will have help to translate where needed. Then I will analyze the conversations to develop a theory based on your experiences. I estimate that the focus group meeting will take about one-and-one-half hours to complete. You will have an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of my reporting in a second meeting. I may invite you to participate in a follow-up interview to gain more information and compare it with the data from the focus group.

(Participant Initials)
Page 2 of 2

I will alter all personal information and assign a pseudonym so that only I will ever know your real name. Data collected for this study, as well as this consent form, will be stored on a password protected computer or locked filing cabinet in my home office. I will destroy all data from this research three years after completing my dissertation.

Cost:

The cost for participating in this study is the time spent in the focus group and interview. Foreseeable risks are no more than you might encounter in a conversation with a friend about your career.

Benefit:

Every focus group participant will receive one \$25 Walmart gift card as a thank you. Participants giving an individual interview will receive a second \$25 gift card to Walmart as thanks for their additional time.

Questions:

You may direct any questions to the researcher or the researcher's advisor by phone or email. See the contact information above.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participating you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. I will respect your decision. If you started talking with me and then choose to withdraw you will still get the gift card. After reading this form and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. You will have a copy of this form to keep. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____



Página 1 de 2

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA LA PARTICIPACIÓN HUMANA EN INVESTIGACIÓN

Gracias por ayudarme a estudiar el programa *Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela* (APPLE). Como graduado del programa, tiene una perspectiva única de la influencia del programa. Este estudio investiga las formas en que cree que el programa puede haber influido en su forma de pensar sobre su papel al cuidar y enseñar a niños muy pequeños.

Título del estudio:

Proveedores latinos de cuidado infantil familiares, amigos y vecinos en transición de madre a maestra de la primera infancia: una teoría fundamentada

Investigadora:

Ms. Deborah Becker, Candidato a Doctorado, Estudios Educativos

Phone: (999) 555-5555 Email: beck.1234@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor:

Jennifer Harding, Ed.D., School of Teacher Education

Phone: (970) 351-1029 Email: jenni.harding@unco.edu

Objeto y descripción:

Este estudio buscará desarrollar una teoría sobre cómo los proveedores de cuidado de niños Latinas Familia, Amiga y Vecina (FFN) pueden cambiar a través de su participación en APPLE. Esta información se basará en el conocimiento de un estudio previo del programa. Contribuirá a la comprensión de su impacto desde la perspectiva del participante.

Primero, se reunirá en un grupo focal con otros graduados para hablar sobre APPLE. Transcribiré las conversaciones de las reuniones de los grupos focales. Tendré ayuda para traducir donde sea necesario. Luego analizaré las conversaciones para desarrollar una teoría basada en tus experiencias. Calculo que la reunión del grupo de enfoque tardará aproximadamente una hora y media en completarse. Tendrá la oportunidad de confirmar la exactitud de mis informes en una segunda reunión. Puedo invitarlo a participar en una entrevista de seguimiento para obtener más información y comparar con los datos del grupo focal.

(Iniciales de las participantes)

Página 2 de 2

Modificaré toda la información personal y asignaré un seudónimo para que solo yo sepa tu nombre real. Los datos recopilados para este estudio, así como este formulario de consentimiento, se almacenarán en una computadora protegida con contraseña o en un archivador cerrado con llave en mi oficina en casa. Destruiré todos los datos de esta investigación tres años después de completar mi tesis.

Costo:

El costo de participar en este estudio es el tiempo dedicado al grupo focal y la entrevista. Los riesgos previsibles no son más de los que podría encontrar en una conversación con un amigo sobre su carrera.

Beneficio:

Cada participante del grupo focal recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de Walmart de \$ 25 como agradecimiento. Los participantes que den una entrevista individual recibirán una segunda tarjeta de regalo de \$ 25 para Walmart como agradecimiento por su tiempo adicional.

Preguntas:

Puede dirigir cualquier pregunta al investigador o al asesor del investigador por teléfono o correo electrónico. Consulte la información de contacto anterior.

La participación es voluntaria. Puede decidir no participar en este estudio y, si comienza a participar, aún puede decidir detenerse y retirarse en cualquier momento. Respetaré tu decisión. Si comenzaste a hablar conmigo y luego eliges retirar, aún recibirás la tarjeta de regalo. Después de leer este formulario y haber tenido la oportunidad de hacer cualquier pregunta, firme a continuación si desea participar en esta investigación. Tendrá una copia de este formulario para conservar. Si tiene alguna inquietud sobre su selección o tratamiento como participante de la investigación, comuníquese con Nicole Morse, Administradora del IRB, Oficina de Programas Patrocinados, 25 Kepner Hall, Universidad del Norte de Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Firma del participante: _____ Fecha: _____

Firma del investigador: _____ Fecha: _____

APPENDIX D

**INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT FOR
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Before we begin the interview, I want to remind you of the consent form that you signed before we held the focus group meeting. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to stop the interview at any time without penalty. Both your name and the program name will be changed in the final report so that you cannot be identified in any way. There are no foreseeable risks beyond what you might encounter in a conversation with a friend about your career. To thank you for the time spent in this interview you will receive another \$25 Walmart gift card.

Remember that you also have the name and contact information of the IRB Administrator at UNC on the original consent form if you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant.

Do you consent to this interview?

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Date: 02/26/2021
 Principal Investigator: Deborah Becker
 Committee Action: IRB EXEMPT DETERMINATION – New Protocol
 Action Date: 02/26/2021
 Protocol Number: 2011017206
 Protocol Title: Mothering or Teaching? Latina Family, Friend, and Neighbor Child Care Providers Improving School Readiness: A Grounded Theory
 Expiration Date:

The University of Northern Colorado Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol and determined your project to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.104(d)(7)(2) for research involving

Category 2 (2018): EDUCATIONAL TESTS, SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, OR OBSERVATIONS OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR. Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7).

You may begin conducting your research as outlined in your protocol. Your study does not require further review from the IRB, unless changes need to be made to your approved protocol.

As the Principal Investigator (PI), you are still responsible for contacting the UNC IRB office if and when:



- You wish to deviate from the described protocol and would like to formally submit a modification request. Prior IRB approval must be obtained before any changes can be implemented (except to eliminate an immediate hazard to research participants).
- You make changes to the research personnel working on this study (add or drop research staff on this protocol).
- At the end of the study or before you leave The University of Northern Colorado and are no longer a student or employee, to request your protocol be closed. *You cannot continue to reference UNC on any documents (including the informed consent form) or conduct the study under the auspices of UNC if you are no longer a student/employee of this university.
- You have received or have been made aware of any complaints, problems, or adverse events that are related or possibly related to participation in the research.

If you have any questions, please contact the Research Compliance Manager, Nicole Morse, at 970-351-1910 or via e-mail at nicole.morse@unco.edu. Additional information concerning the requirements for the protection of human subjects may be found at the Office of Human Research Protection website - <http://hhs.gov/ohrp/> and <https://www.unco.edu/research/research-integrity-and-compliance/institutional-review-board/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Morse".

Nicole Morse
Research Compliance Manager

University of Northern Colorado: FWA00000784

APPENDIX F

REASONS FOR SELECTING A FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

REASONS FOR SELECTING A FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

Participant	Interest Point
Bonita	Opportunity – Being independent of husband
Bibiana	“Girls don’t study” + value as women
Belinda	Learn as a child
Brianna	Become like a child + Teacher in her country + most schooling
Buena	Least amount of schooling
Antonia	Bilingual + higher education than others
Aleta	Grandma + licensed
Alejandra	Unable to be in focus group; provided individual interview
Adelina	Business before & after

APPENDIX G
FIRST-ROUND CODES

FIRST ROUND CODES

Activities with the children
 Also in my church
 Before APPLE
 Better relationship with my husband
 Different Words
 Doing Dynamics
 Don't have papers
 Early childhood teacher
 Empathy
 Empowered
 Focused on what she was feeling
 Forms
 Gives you confidence
 Graduation
 I am being listened to
 I didn't have this knowledge
 In Spanish
 Instinctively as a mom I can't do
 Keep them busy
 Learn through play
 Mistakes teach him also
 More patience

Not 100% dependent on my husband
 Obligation to share
 Opportunity
 Prepare for them to start their education
 Profession
 Program Structure
 Put it in our level
 Put yourself on the same level as the children
 Recommend me to other moms
 Routine
 See the change in the children
 Self Esteem
 Speak with confidence
 Taking care of ourselves
 Taught me practice
 Thinking about what they are going to do tomorrow
 Told that I needed full English
 Transformation
 Want to know more
 What I have and more

APPENDIX H
LINE-BY-LINE CODES

LINE-BY-LINE CODES

acculturation	learned	qualifying:
ages	learning/empathy	learning/beautiful
babysitting	learning: recycling	qualifying: not
buying materials	learning style	mine
can't work	limitation	qualifying: work
casual before	limitation:	she likes
challenging	language	recruiting
child	limitation: small	recruiting:
child	house	persistence
transformation	more customers	regret
community	new knowledge	reminders
communication	objection:	reputation
comparison to	unattainable	respect
prior education	obligation	responsibility
confidence	observation	role
connection to prior	opportunity	school
education	others	school readiness
cultural perception	other's	school referral
demographics	perspectives	Self-advocacy
didn't know	pandemic	Self-care
disappointment	patience	Self-esteem
disenroll	pay it forward	Self-perception
dynamics	personal	sharing
emotions	improvement	support
empathy	personal	theory
environment	perspective	time in US
expansion	practice	time: after
family	preparations to	time: during
forms	work	transformation
grateful	prior education	US validity
guilt	prior practice	value
home: career	prior opportunity	volunteer
home: country	professional	where in US
home: cultural	program content	why in US
norms	program structure	work in US
home: family	progress	
home: husband	qualifying	
home: schooling	qualifying: family	
investment	obligations	
lack of time		

APPENDIX I
INITIAL CONSOLIDATION OF CODES

INITIAL CONSOLIDATION OF CODES

From Appendix F:

Better relationship with my husband
 Different Words
 Doing Dynamics
 Don't have papers
 Early childhood teacher
 Empathy
 Empowered
 Focused on what she was feeling
 Forms
 Gives you confidence
 Graduation
 I am being listened to
 I didn't have this knowledge
 In Spanish
 Instinctively as a mom I can't do
 Keep them busy
 Learn through play
 Mistakes teach him also
 More patience
 Not 100% dependent on my husband
 Obligation to share
 Opportunity
 Prepare for them to start their
 education
 Profession
 Program Structure
 Put it in our level
 Put yourself on the same level as the
 children
 Recommend me to other moms
 Routine
 See the change in the children
 Self Esteem
 Speak with confidence
 Taking care of ourselves
 Taught me practice
 Thinking about what they are going to
 do tomorrow
 Told that I needed full English
 Transformation
 Want to know more
 What I have and more

 Yo sí puedo

From Appendix G:

acculturation
 home: cultural norms
 dynamics
 limitations: documentation
 role
 empathy
 empowered
 self-advocacy
 forms
 confidence
 graduation
 communication
 new knowledge
 limitation: language
 didn't know
 practice
 program structure
 learned
 patience
 Self-advocacy
 communication
 opportunity

 school readiness
 professional
 program structure
 program structure

 empathy
 reputation
 practice
 child transformation
 self esteem
 confidence
 Self-care
 practice

 practice
 limitation: language
 transformation
 personal improvement
 acculturation
 Self-advocacy/ confidence/
 program structure

APPENDIX J

EXAMPLE PHOTOS OF PROVIDER HOMES

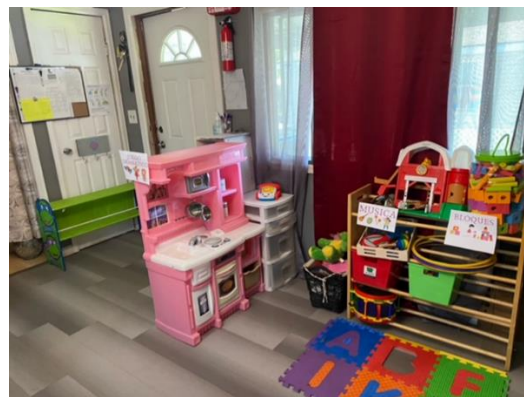
EXAMPLE PHOTOS OF PROVIDER HOMES

(Photos courtesy of the sponsor agencies; people & homes are representatives and *not* participants in this study)

Before APPLE:



After APPLE:



Example Photos cont.

Before APPLE:

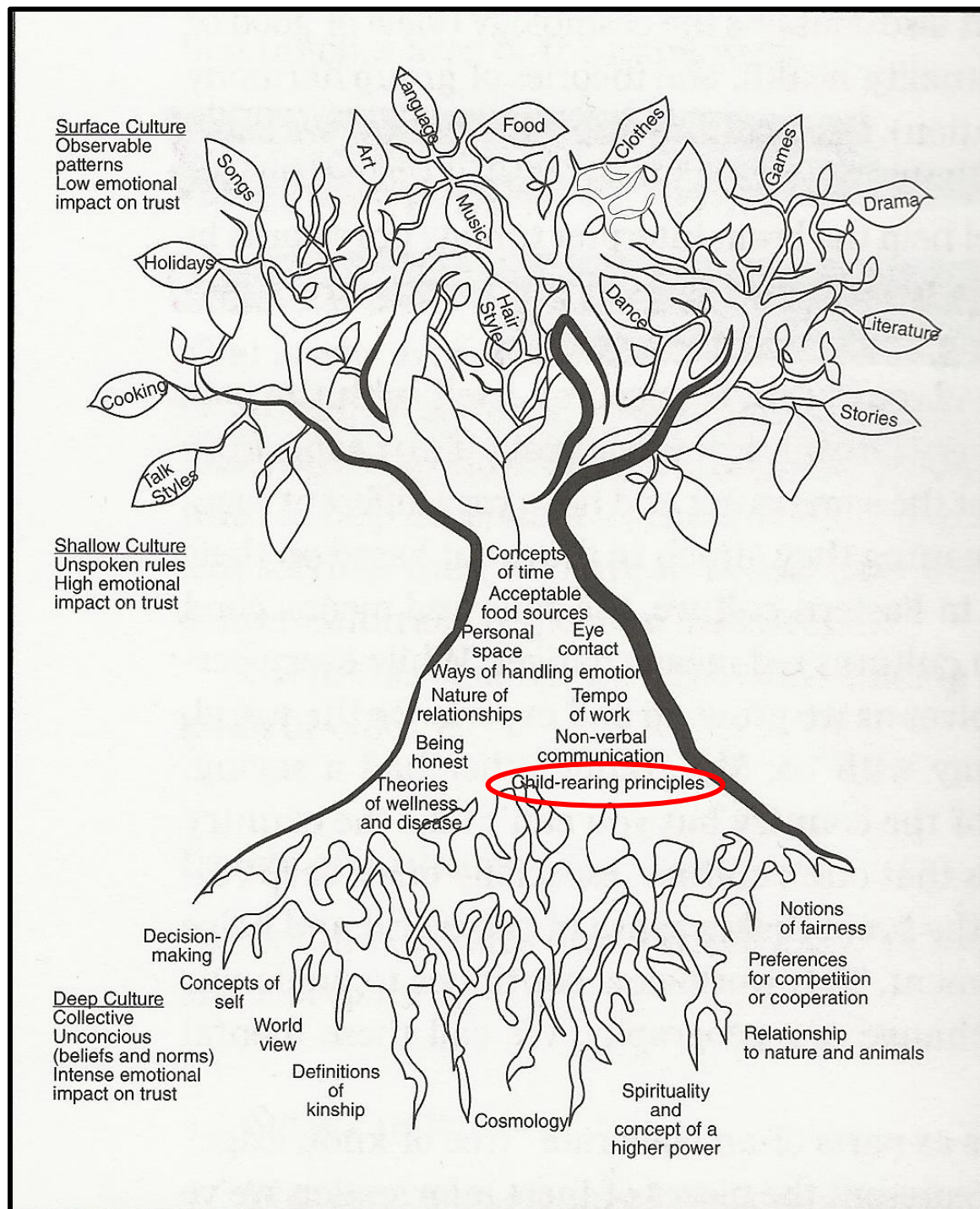


After APPLE:



APPENDIX K
HAMMOND'S CULTURE TREE

HAMMOND'S CULTURE TREE



Source: Hammond, Z. L. (2015). Figure 2:1 Culture Tree. In *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students* (p. 24). illustration, Corwin Press. (Highlight added)

APPENDIX L
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning	Definition
APPLE	<i>Abuelas Preparando a los Niños Para La Escuela</i> [Grandmothers preparing children for school]	A pseudonym for the early childhood professional development program for Latina FFN childcare providers being studied in this research.
ECE	Early Childhood Education	A branch of education focused on the physical, cognitive, language, and social/emotional growth and development of children from birth through 8 years of age (third grade)
FFN	Family, Friend, and Neighbor	A term used to describe informal childcare provided in the home of the caregiver.
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children	A large non-profit association in the United States representing the early childhood profession and promoting high-quality early childhood education through practice, policy, and research
US	United States	A federal republic in the northern hemisphere, comprised of 48 contiguous states, Alaska, District of Columbia, and Hawaii