

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
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Title: Hispanic Community College Student Empowerment: Developmental English
Participants Describe Their Educational Experiences.

Abstract approved:

Alex A. Sanchez

The purpose of this study was to learn about the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English in community college. A qualitative comparative case study design was used for this social critical study. The key findings fell into three categories: road blocks, motivators, and actions. The road blocks included: financial stress, language difficulty, family stress, late high school graduation, death of family or friends, inappropriate English placement, and irrelevant curriculum. The motivators included: family support, positive developmental English experiences, helpful college services, defined career goals, relevant curriculum, positive peer pressure, effective role models and mentors, and caring teachers. The actions included defining goals, choosing to attend college, role modeling for others, exercising self discipline, and selecting supportive friends; these actions empowered the students. Secondary themes included:

parental lack of education, classism in Mexican schools, experiential knowledge about Hispanics, and desire for a better life.

The participants in the study were Generation 1.5 Hispanics, born in the United States or Mexico, and were monolingual or bilingual. The participants received their K-12 education in the United States and/or Mexico.

Nine conclusions were reached during the study: 1) Families and friends support Hispanic Generation 1.5 students to attend college; 2) Being role models for others provides motivation for Hispanic students to stay in college; 3) Positive peer pressure creates incentive to stay in college. Exercising self discipline and choosing friends with college aspirations empowers students; 4) English placement is not working for all students; better assessment tools and departmental practices regarding initial placement are needed; 5) Developmental English classes with student-centered instruction provide students with improved skills and confidence; 6) Curriculum that is relevant, multicultural, and rigorous encourages learning; 7) Developmental English programs with structure and clear assessment policies provide students with information they need to achieve their goals; 8) ESL learners, whether native born or non-native born, struggled with communication and homework due to language barriers, which suggests teachers and student services providers need to actively support these students; and 9) College environments that promote collaboration, multiculturalism, student centered learning and inclusion help students feel safe and supported.

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Hispanic Community College Student Empowerment: Developmental English
Participants Describe Their Educational Experiences

by

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Education

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson, Author

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Lastly, I would like to posthumously dedicate this dissertation to two strong women, my grandmothers, whose courage, hard work, intelligence, survival, and love forged a pathway for me and my parents and my family. This work is dedicated with love to Lucy “Maria de la Luz” Aguilera and Ida “Adelaida” DeHerrera Ajax.

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Hispanic Community College Student Empowerment: Developmental English Participants Describe Their Educational Experiences

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

[D]ialoguing with the people about their actions . . . the need for the critical intervention of the people in reality through the praxis. The pedagogy of the oppressed, which is the pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation, has its roots here. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. (Freire, 1972, p. 35)

As a Hispanic community college writing professor for twelve years, I noticed the high percentage of minority student participants in developmental English (relative to their representation in the campus population). Some students were and others were not properly placed in developmental English. I have witnessed what improper writing placement does to lower a student's writing self-confidence, self-image, and academic goals. I have also seen students achieve great successes when properly placed into developmental English, and I believe it is important to capture what it is about those experiences that are especially helpful to minority students. I have witnessed the successes that a diverse curriculum, positive role models, and appropriate testing methods bring to students. Yet, I remain concerned about those educators who lack awareness about the actual experiences and perspectives of minority students.

Another area that troubles me is the misperception that a low level of academic achievement among Hispanics occurs because they are English as Second Language (ESL) learners. While Hispanic ESL students have their own challenges when they are misplaced into developmental English courses (some ESL learners would fare better in

ESL courses), they account for only a portion of the lack of parity problem in educational attainment for Hispanics. I have heard some teachers and administrators incorrectly report that the poor academic achievement of Hispanics is solely due to their status as immigrants and ESL students. To reduce the complex experience of Hispanic students into such statements silences entire generations of disenfranchised American educated Hispanic students. Further, it diminishes the incredible accomplishments of ESL learners. As a Hispanic myself and former community college student, I know how daunting the higher education world can be, especially when the curriculum has little relevance to your experiential knowledge, when few administrators and instructors understand your needs, and when some people in the education system assume you are a recent immigrant or an ESL learner because you are Hispanic. The lives of Hispanic learners vary, and placing such students into a simplistic category such as an ESL learner is misleading. For example, children of immigrants may enter the United States at early ages, receive an education in the United States, and then enter into college. These learners, referred to as Generation 1.5 students, (Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Singhal, 2004) exhibit characteristics of both first and second generation immigrants. The wide range of Generation 1.5 students include: native born non-native speakers of English; back and forth migrants; and privileged, educated immigrants (Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Singhal, 2004).

This study will address the needs of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in community college developmental English programs. This case study aims to empower students by asking students at two separate community colleges to describe in their own

words their experiences in developmental English. The goal is to help community college practitioners understand the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanic developmental English students, while empowering the students to shape how developmental English is delivered to future students.

Background of the Problem

In order to have a clear understanding of the experiences of Hispanic students in developmental English currently, one must consider the history of Hispanic experience in the United States education system. Historically, Hispanics have been excluded from higher education and have experienced educational attainment levels that are not at parity with other ethnic groups. Hispanics also experience lower levels of economic attainment than other ethnic groups.

Limited access to equal education for Hispanics. Hispanics have struggled for educational access since the late nineteenth century. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the U.S. Mexico War, and all Mexican nationals in the ceded territories (known now as California, New Mexico, Nevada, and sections of Colorado, Utah, and Arizona) became U.S. citizens one year later (Ferg-Cadima, 2004). As the Hispanic population increased in the Southwest, segregation became a common practice and policy.

Hispanic students who attended segregated schools experienced severe discrimination, according to Takaki (1993). “There would be a revolution in the community if the Mexicans wanted to come to White schools. . . . Sentiment is bitterly against it” an educator said (Takaki, p. 327). Educators prepared Hispanic children to

labor in the fields and to take the place of their parents, and superintendents and school boards did not enforce compulsory attendance for Hispanics (Takaki, 1993). A Texas farmer said this about educating Hispanics:

If I wanted a man I would want one of the more ignorant ones. . . . Educated Mexicans are the hardest to handle. . . . It is all right to educate them no higher than we educate them here in these little towns. I will be frank. They would make more desirable citizens if they would stop about the seventh grade” (Takaki, p. 327).

A superintendent echoed this sentiment by stating that it is not a question of the best way to handle the education of Hispanics, rather, “It is politics. . . . The farmers are not interested in educating Mexicans” (Takaki, p. 327).

By 1930, 85% of Hispanic children in the Southwest were attending either separate classrooms or entirely separate schools. The school officials often claimed that once the children were English speaking and assimilated, they would be integrated. However, integration into White schools did not occur often (Ferg-Cadima, 2004). Further, the “Mexican” schools were inadequate, with few teachers, poor equipment, and unfit buildings. The Alamo School in Texas was described as having “broken windows, rooms without lights, three-inch cracks in the side of the building and loose ceilings ‘just about ready to fall’” (Ferg-Cadima, p. 8). Another school was described as a “decaying one-room wooden building that flooded repeatedly during the rains, with only a wood stove for heat and outside bathroom facilities” (Ferg-Cadima, p. 8).

For those Hispanic students who did manage to persist, they experienced stereotypes that contributed to their disproportionate expulsion and suspension. Hispanics were commonly called “greasers,” “disease spreaders,” and “dirty” (Ferg-

Cadima, p. 10). Hispanic children would be examined in front of the class for lice or tick infestation and then suspended, although some of these students did not actually have these ailments. Some Hispanic students were expelled for weeks for having dandruff (Ferg-Cadima).

In 1946, a class action lawsuit, *Mendez v. Westminster*, on behalf of more than 5,000 Hispanic students in California was filed (Valencia, 2005). The U.S. District court judge ruled that Hispanic students' rights were being violated under the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment (Valencia). This was the first federal court case involving school segregation of Hispanics, and the plaintiffs prevailed. The case laid the groundwork for the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* case of 1954 (Valencia).

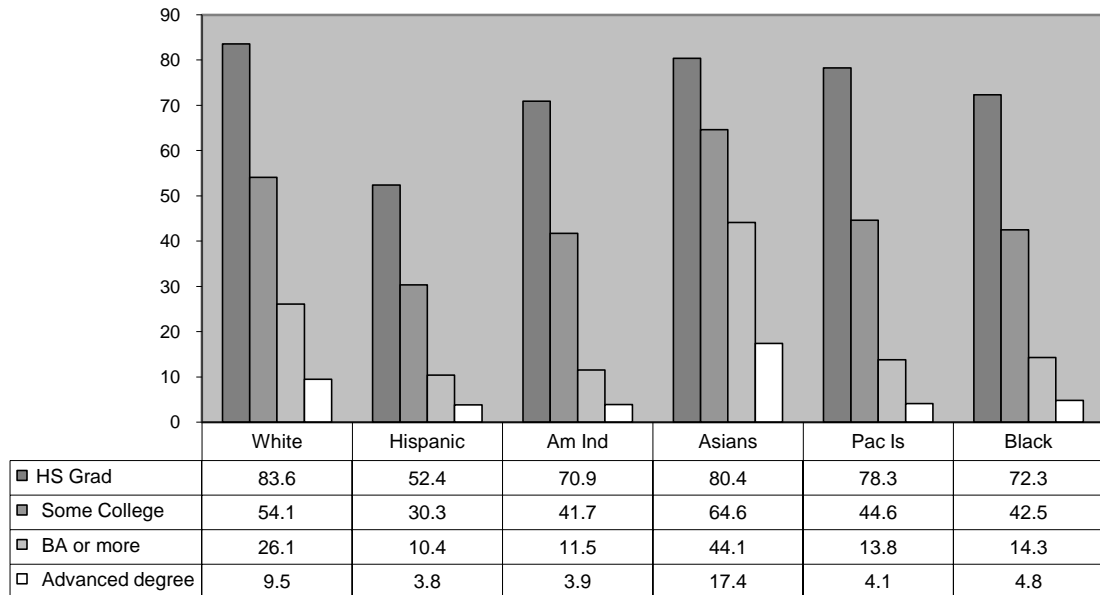
It is clear that in the past, access to public school education was denied to Hispanics. Thus, the ability to attend higher education for most Hispanics was an impossibility. In the present, the issue of access to education is still a problem. However, access is no longer due to overt segregation by country of origin, rather today's Hispanics face economic, curricular, placement testing, and instructional barriers to obtaining a higher education.

Hispanic educational attainment. Students of color have been educationally and economically oppressed for decades in the United States due to racist policies and practices (Ferg-Cadima, 2004; Takaki, 1993). All students who are citizens of the United States of America, including ethnic minorities, have the right to equal opportunity for an education. Unfortunately, the 2000 United States Census Bureau

report (see Figure 1) shows a low level of educational attainment for students of color, especially Hispanics. (This paper will refer to Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latinos as Hispanic. When specific terms are identified by study participants, their self identifiers will be used. See Appendix A for additional information). The low level of educational attainment for Hispanics is shown below:

- The Hispanic high school drop out rate is twice as high as the national drop out rate.
- Hispanics have the lowest percentage of high school graduates of all race groups
- Hispanics have the lowest percentage of overall higher educational attainment of all race groups (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. US Census Bureau figures: levels of educational attainment by race.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. *Census 2000*. Retrieved on February 20, 2006, from <http://www.census.gov>

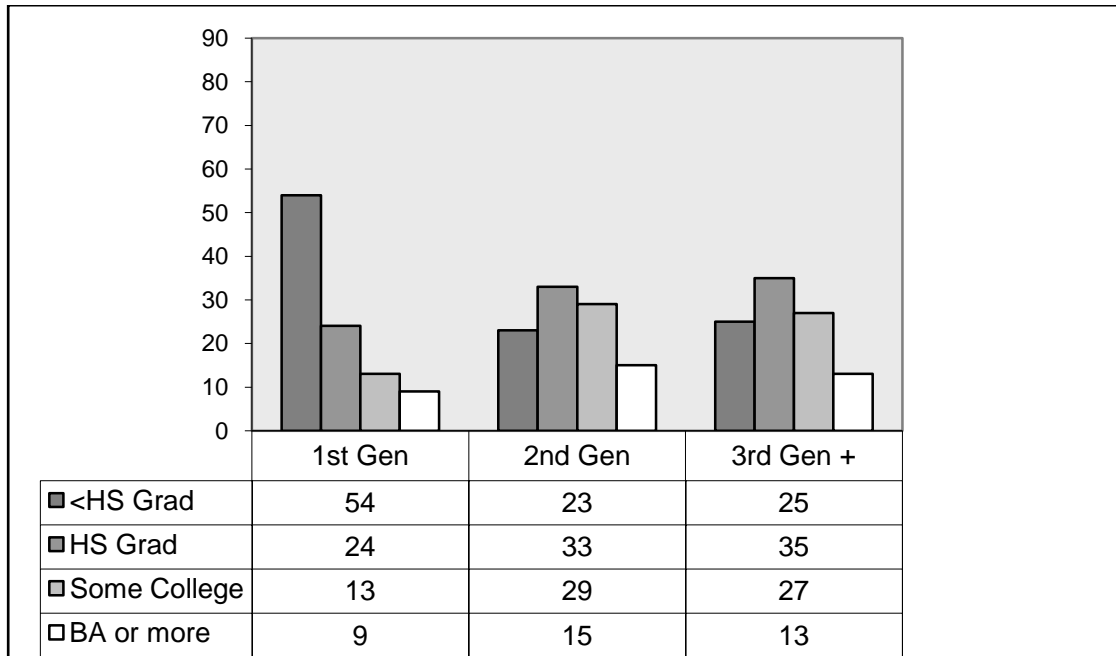
When Hispanics are dropping out of high school at a rate of 21.1%, and few Hispanics attend college, it becomes apparent that the educational attainment gap for Hispanics persists despite the *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decisions and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Generational status and educational attainment. Although Hispanic students are not achieving educational parity, there are signs of improvement for second and third generation Hispanics. The generational status of Hispanics impacts the level of educational attainment they reach (see Figure 2). Students who are first generation Hispanics (born outside the United States) are half as likely to have a high school diploma than second generation Hispanics (born in the United States with at least one foreign born parent) or third generation Hispanics (born in the United States with both parents also born in the United States).

Figure 2 reveals that Hispanics who are born in the United States and whose parents are United States born are faring better in terms of educational achievement than those who are first generation (Suro & Passel, 2003). Thirteen percent of third generation Hispanics have a Bachelor's degree or more, whereas 9% of first generation Hispanics has a Bachelor's degree or more. Second-generation Hispanics are also twice as likely as Generation 1.5 Hispanics to have earned a high school diploma, and they are more likely to have attended college as well (Fry, 2002). Two-thirds of second generation Hispanics are enrolled in school, whereas only 23% of first generation Hispanic teens are enrolled (Fry, 2002). Educational attainment for Hispanics is linked to several factors, including generational status, attitudes about work and education, and

even the age at which immigrant Hispanics come to the United States (Fry, 2002; Suro & Passel, 2003).

Figure 2. Educational attainment for Hispanics aged 25 to 64, by generation.



Suro, P. & Passel, J.S. (October 2003). *The rise of the second generation: Changing patterns in Hispanic population growth*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

In terms of the labor market, first generation Hispanic teens earn \$51 more per week than Generation 1.5 Hispanics, and Generation 1.5 Hispanic teens earn \$29 per week more than second generation Hispanic teens (Fry, 2002). This success of first generation teens in the labor market is attributed to work being a necessity and their first priority, whereas native born teens tend to favor an education over work (Fry, 2002). However, over time the educational attainment of each generation results in second generation Hispanics earning substantially more than Generation 1.5 and first generation Hispanics (Fry, 2002). One study shows that United States born Hispanics also earn just over \$100

per week more than first generation Hispanics (Suro & Passel, 2003). Although economic attainment increases with educational attainment levels, second generation Hispanics are still earning lower levels of education and \$100 less per week than Whites (Fry, 2002; Green, 2006). So amidst improvements in educational and economic attainment for Generation 1.5, second, and third generation students, Hispanics have not yet reached parity in these areas.

Low persistence rates. It is evident the educational and economic attainment gap remains, and too many Hispanic students are not succeeding academically. The literature on community colleges attributes low persistence rates for Hispanics to a lack of adequate preparation, low quality K-12 education, low standardized test scores, work demands, financial need, care of dependents, a lack of a sense of belonging, family responsibilities, and other factors as well (Breland, 2004; Bonham & Luckie, 1993; Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez, & Plum, 2004; Green, 2006; Marwick, 2004; Vazquez & Garcia-Vazquez, 1998). Although these are serious issues in the educational journey of Hispanic students, past research rarely focuses on the reality which these students experience and the causes of the barriers they face. Students with a low economic status often receive low quality K-12 education and have to work if they go to college. Is the student the problem? Standardized tests have been shown to be culturally biased, not to mention insensitive to the learning styles and needs of students, and yet they determine a student's ability to attend college or to take college level classes. Is the student the problem? Too often the literature looks at the student's family, finances, or job as the problem, rather than looking at the embedded economic, social, educational,

and historical practices that keep the lack of parity as status quo. Inadequate schools in low income areas, tests that favor some students and disadvantage others, and curriculum that is not inclusive all send a message to many Hispanic students that they do not belong in school, especially higher education.

Often the unseen and unreported experiences of students contribute to their decisions to either give up or continue on in their educational journeys. Making a personal connection with college staff, faculty, administrators, or students facilitates success for all students (Tinto, 2006). Plus, the messages that a classroom or campus environment sends to students has a direct impact of their ability to learn (Strange & Banning, 2001). Environments that include artwork, photographs, cultural artifacts, diverse staff and faculty, and a diverse curriculum make college campuses more inviting for students and help to foster learning (Strange & Banning). I have noticed as a community college practitioner that negative or racist interactions with staff, faculty, administrators, or other students and environments and curriculum that do not reflect the diversity of students within a community college surely contribute to a student's decision not to continue college.

Green (2006) pointed out that although Hispanic high school graduation rates are not at parity with those of Whites, 90% of high school seniors do plan to attend college. It is important to consider how to serve those 30.3% of Hispanics that do attend college, including those students who will require developmental education (US Census Bureau, 2000).

Hispanics in developmental education. Over 40% of first-year students of all

ethnic groups at public two-year colleges take developmental courses (Bettinger & Long, 2005). In California, more than one-third of students who need developmental English or mathematics did not enroll in developmental courses (Boroch, et al., 2007). Ten percent of those needing developmental coursework succeed in college without taking the coursework, however that still leaves a high number of students who are not successful in college level courses (Cross, 1976). Underserved groups (low income, immigrant, and ethnic minority) are more likely to need developmental courses (Chen, 2005; Twigg, 2005; Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst & Usdan, 2005). Yet, due to inadequate K-12 education and thus low test scores, Hispanic college students require developmental education at a higher rate than most other groups (Boylan, Sutton, & Anderson, 2003). Nationally students of color represent one third of the overall number of students taking developmental courses (Boylan, Sutton, & Anderson). White students make up the largest number of developmental education students (Boylan, Bonham, Claxton, & Bliss, 1992). However, Hispanics and African-Americans participate in developmental courses at a higher rate than all groups (Boylan, Sutton, & Anderson).

Generation 1.5 students, both native and immigrant, are becoming adults, and thus more Generation 1.5 students are entering into community colleges (Fry, 2002; Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999). This increase in the student population will impact community college developmental English programs. This is of particular concern when typically English placement tests relegate students into either ESL or classes for native speakers based on which test they take, rather than what is appropriate for their learning needs. If a student takes the ESL test, the exam will determine the level of ESL in

which the student gets placed. The same holds true for a student who takes the test for native English speakers. Often, the tests are taken by students without guidance from counselors (Boroch, et al., 2007). Thus, Generation 1.5 students are placed into either ESL courses or developmental English, or college composition based upon the test they choose to take. This choice and placement has implications for their success in English education and college (Bernstein, 2004).

Negative impact of developmental English placement. Once students are placed into developmental English, a variety of terms may be used to describe them. These terms include: “deficient, low ability, high-risk, underachiever, nontraditional, slow, remedial, disenfranchised, disadvantaged, under prepared, returning, at-risk” (Littleton, 1998, p. 7). Such terms may impact a student’s self-concept, self-esteem, and confidence. These students may also be stigmatized and tracked into non-degree programs. The historical practices of providing unequal education to minorities and low income students contribute to the need for these students to remediate. This may be especially damaging for minority students who often face more economic, cultural, and educational barriers than do most White students.

It is also significant to note that Hispanics fare worse in developmental courses than other minority groups. It is true that students who take developmental courses are 2% more likely to earn a two-year degree than those students who do not participate (Boylan, 1999). Nonetheless, according to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO), Hispanic students have a lower success rate in precollegiate basic skills than not only Whites, but also Asians and Filipinos (2006).

Plus, taking developmental courses results in these students taking longer to complete college, possibly discouraging them from completing their program of study (Green, 2006). Many administrators make assertions about why the completion rates are lower for Hispanics in developmental education, yet insufficient research has been conducted to substantiate these claims.

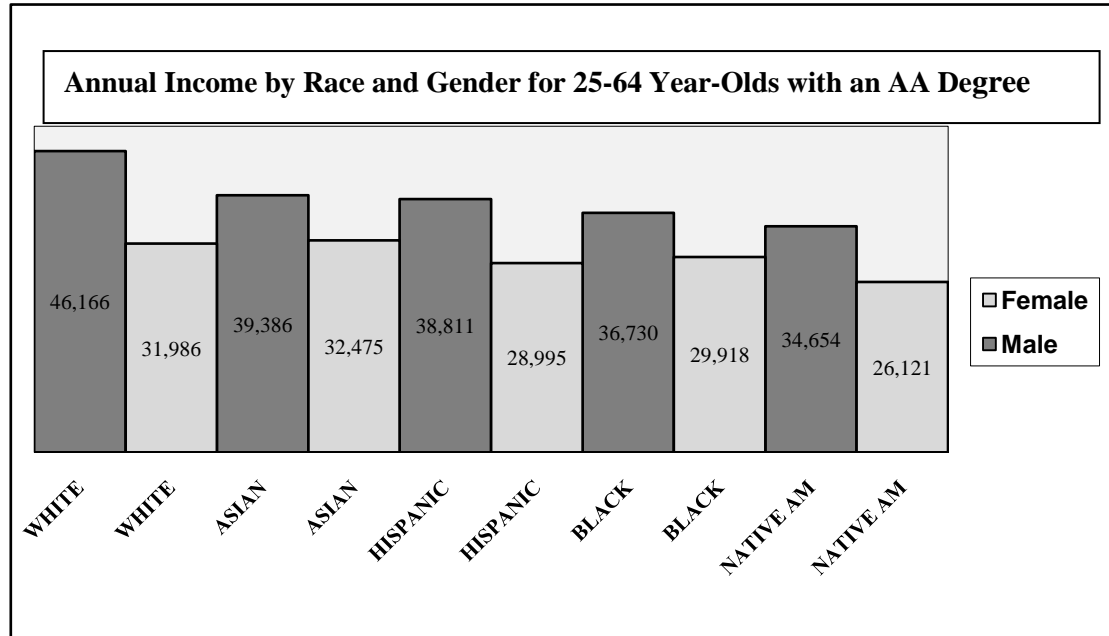
According to McKenzie and Schweitzer (2001), students of color may drop out of college for a variety of reasons (finances, isolation, lack of peer support, lack of role models, racism, poor academic preparation). Developmental education students often have a history of academic failure (McKenzie & Schweitzer), thus making them even more likely to drop out of college than other Hispanic students with the same challenges, except for the need to remediate. Moreover, an educational K-12 system that leaves students of color under-prepared and a higher education system that immediately points out their under-prepared status by way of relegating these students into developmental education courses reveal a serious gap in just educational policy (Breland, 2004; Green, 2006).

Another concern for precollegiate basic skills Hispanic students is that they are frequently tracked into vocational programs rather than the career pathways of their choice, and they end up in low paying jobs in automotive, food service, or other technical degree areas (Breland; Durdoye, & Bodley, 1997). Researchers claim that some students lack the academic ability to pursue the educational path of their choice, and therefore, community colleges need to advise students to achieve realistic academic goals consistent with their intellectual abilities (Breland, 2004; Marick, 2004). Clark

(1960) called this term the “cooling out function” (Breland). Hernandez (1999) asserts that Hispanics who entered college expecting to obtain a degree decreased their expectation by the end of their first year. Lack of degree completion and persistence and a lack of teachers of color all contribute to Hispanic occupational segregation (Breland; Gunzak, 1995; Hernandez).

Income level of educated Hispanics. Those Hispanic students who beat the odds and obtain a degree will still experience a lack of parity in wages. According to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), minorities earn substantially less than Whites with equal levels of education (see Figure 3). Clearly pay inequity exists when Whites who possess an associate’s degree earn as much as \$7,300 more than Hispanics with the same education (Kelly, 2005). The U.S. Census Bureau published in 2004 reported that the same trend exists among those workers with Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees, with Whites earning the highest wages (Caiazza, Shaw & Werschkul, 2004).

Figure 3. Annual income by race and gender for 25-64 year olds with an AA degree.



Kelly, P.J. (2005). *As America becomes more diverse: The impact of state higher education inequality*. Retrieved Dec. 23, 2005, from National Center for Higher Education Management Systems Web site: <http://www.higheredinfo.org/raceethnicity/>

Need for the Study

According to U.S. Census 2000, between 2000 and 2030 the number of Hispanics will nearly double from 12.6% of the nation’s population to 20.1% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). These demographics show that an increasing number of students of color, especially Hispanics, will enter community colleges and the labor force (Bureau of Labor Statistics). In fact, in 33% of community college enrollments are ethnic minority students (Kasper, 2002). In 1999, Hispanic enrollment accounted for 13% of total community college enrollments (Kasper, 2002). These demographic changes will impact the community colleges significantly; community

colleges will need strategies to effectively educate students of color. Colleges will need to create classroom climates that benefit the individual and recognize cultural differences in learning styles, value systems, and educational preferences of their diverse students (Szelenyi, 2001). Keeping students of color in college will help them become skilled workers that help fill the demand for labor. This study aims to help practitioners to work with the increasing numbers of Hispanic community college students, many of whom will take developmental English courses.

Economic benefits of educational attainment. The inability of the United States to raise the educational attainment of Hispanic students to nearly the rates of Whites is disturbing. Clearly, educating Hispanic students is beneficial not only because it will help to remedy the unequal and sometimes racist treatment they receive in the United States educational system, but also because doing so will benefit the overall economy of the United States. Educational capital has a direct impact on a state's economy and quality of life (National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education, 2005). Education helps the economy in that:

- Individuals with higher degrees can expect to earn higher incomes, resulting in increased tax revenue and economic activity;
- An educated, skilled population decreases demands on social services such as welfare and corrections, thus decreasing state costs;
- Educated individuals are more comfortable handling decisions about health care, personal finance, and retirement. This can result in decreased government responsibility in those areas (National Center for Policy in Higher Education, 2005).

All students are expected to progress through the educational system, from high school, into college, and into the workforce to become productive citizens who increase the

national, state, and local economic revenue (Ewell, Jones, & Kelly, 2003). Providing educational attainment equity will benefit individuals, business and industry, and future generations.

Skilled labor force. It is evident that the United States is in need of a skilled labor force to remain globally competitive. Community colleges are clearly the most equipped to provide training and education, create good citizens, and encourage personal fulfillment to the increasing Hispanic populations in the United States. Doing so will enable more Hispanics to achieve a higher rate of degree completion, to participate in a wide range of occupations, and to fully participate in the United States economy. One way to improve the likelihood that Hispanics will receive equal access to higher education and job training is to learn about their experiences in developmental education programs. This research study will focus on the experiences of Hispanics who are participating in developmental English programs in California in order to understand what strategies helps them to learn in college.

Purpose of the Study

Studying Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English is crucial since these students have already beat the odds by attending college at all. Achieving college level proficiency in English is part of the foundation for Hispanic student success in college; thus it is imperative to focus some research on Hispanics in developmental English. We must understand the experiences of these students to discover what their experiences are while they seek education in precollegiate basic skills, otherwise educators risk losing them before they enter into college level coursework. Further, it is

the responsibilities of those in higher education to provide equal access and opportunity for all students so that they can have the tools they need to empower themselves.

Clearly, the high rate of drop-out from high school and the low rate of completion for Hispanics in higher education show something is amiss for these students.

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand, through their voices, the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in California community college developmental English programs. Hearing the experiences of these students may help inform instructional practice to improve the classroom environment and curriculum at the community colleges for current and future Hispanic students.

Research Questions

What is the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English?

- What were the previous schooling experiences of these students?
- How did their previous schooling experiences influence their experience in developmental English?
- What about these Hispanic students' developmental education experiences are empowering or disempowering?
- How did the developmental English course influence the educational and career goals of the students?
- How do the classroom and college environments influence the educational experiences of these Hispanic students?

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The struggle is inner: Chicano, Indio, American Indian, *mojado*, Mexicano, immigrant, Hispanic, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the border towns and are populated by the same people. . . . Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in our society. (Anzaldúa, 1987, preface.)

When one considers the historical oppression of Hispanic students in the educational system, it is not surprising to find that educational research lacks sufficient studies on the experience of Hispanic developmental educational students in community colleges. Since Hispanics have a lower rate of successful transition from developmental into college level courses than other ethnic minorities and few studies reveal these students' experiences, a study that enables Generation 1.5 Hispanic college students to tell their educational stories is needed.

This study is informed by scholarly research on: (1) historical exclusion of Hispanics from education, (2) legal decisions regarding student of color access to education, (3) educational experiences of Hispanic students; (4) developmental education and student persistence; and (5) Generation 1.5 students.

Literature Review: Search and Selection Process

This section will reveal how the library search on Hispanic experience in community colleges was conducted, what the criteria were for literature selection or omission, and what the strengths and weaknesses were of selected studies. Although the literature uses a variety of terms, including Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Hispanic, Latino, and so forth, this paper will refer to said groups as Hispanics (for

additional information on terminology, see Appendix A). However, when the terms were identified by the study participants, their own identifiers will be used. One's cultural identification is deeply personal, political, and cultural. It is imperative to understand that students born in the same city with the same ethnic background may refer to themselves as Mexican American, Mexican, Hispanic, or Chicano. They may also have adverse reactions to labels being placed upon them by others. Thus, out of respect for the research participants, their own terms will be used.

Library Search

Elton B. Stephens Company (EBSCO) was the primary database used in the article gathering process. Initial search terms included, but were not limited to: Mexican American and community college; Latino and community college; Mexican American and retention; Latino and retention; Hispanic and retention; Hispanic and college; Mexican and college; Latino and college; two-year college and Mexican American; Mexican American attrition and community college; Mexican American attrition; Mexican American and developmental; Hispanic and developmental; placement testing and community college; testing bias; developmental English and Mexican American; developmental English and minority; remediation and Mexican American; Generation 1.5 and college writing; Generation 1.5 and community college; Generation 1.5 and higher education; Generation 1.5 and basic writing; Generation 1.5 and testing; Generation 1.5 and retention. (For additional information on terminology, see Appendix A). The search was limited to full text articles only. Further, searches were completed on retention; attrition; stopping out; developmental English; and testing in specific

journals. These journals included, but were not limited to: *The Journal of Developmental Education*, *The Community College Review*, *College Student Journal*, *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *Community College Composition*, *New Direction for Community Colleges*, *The Community College Journal*, and *College Composition and Communication*. Searches for dissertations were conducted through Dissertation Abstracts International. Also, research was completed through the web at the American Association for Community Colleges, the California Community College Chancellor's Office, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund sites.

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

When considering the social critical approach of this study, method appropriateness in educational research takes on a political and social meaning. Studies that used methods that objectified participants and those that did not were of particular interest for this study, because the method may have influenced the type of data that was collected. Past research methods were examined for the purpose of analyzing whether study participants were treated as individuals or quantified as part of a group (students of color, immigrant students, and basic skills students). Traditional quantitative studies using experimental or quasi experimental approaches do not reveal the experiences of individuals, rather they show trends. The experience of the individual Hispanic students gets silenced in these types of studies. The degree to which a study objectified and quantified or empowered and revealed individual participant experience has ethical implications for social critical research.

The articles included in this literature review were selected based on several criteria. The first criterion was that articles were peer reviewed and scholarly; this aspect is important in that other scholars in the field reviewed the findings in the studies and approved the soundness of the methods used in each article. The selected peer reviewed articles also needed to include a significant number of recent and relevant studies in their literature reviews to reflect current demographic trends and placement testing methods. Secondly, inclusion was based on the appropriateness of scholars' methods for data collection and designs that were appropriate for studying students of color of Hispanics specifically. Thirdly, literature was included if its content revealed a focused discussion that accounted for what has been stated already in other literature, how one study would contribute to previously stated points in other literature, and what the limitations were of that particular study. These criteria helped to establish past research practice and reveal gaps in the literature. Lastly, literature that emphasized student empowerment, student voices, educational historical contexts, and liberation were included due to their relevance for a social critical study that emphasized Hispanic student experiences. Studies that objectified and quantified student participants were included to reveal the gaps in the literature and how previous methods did not reveal individual Hispanic student experience. Literature that did not meet these criteria was excluded, with the exception of news articles and websites related to legal decisions and community college policy.

Literature Review: Synthesis and Critique

The following is a synthesis of literature related to the topic of Hispanic student

experience. Each section is followed with a critique of the methods used in the literature, and the significance of each article to this dissertation. Only recently have studies specifically on Hispanics in developmental education appeared. Therefore, the literature presented here shows research conducted on Hispanics in community colleges and in education, and students in developmental English in community colleges. The literature review is organized into five major sections: (1) historical exclusion of Hispanics from education, (2) legal decisions regarding student of color access to education, (3) educational experiences of Hispanic students, (4) developmental education and student persistence, (5) Generation 1.5 students. The review is organized in this way to reveal how research on Hispanics in community colleges evolved slowly (see Figure 4). Figure 4 illustrates how each of the five major sections of this literature review relates to this research project on developmental Generation 1.5 English students.

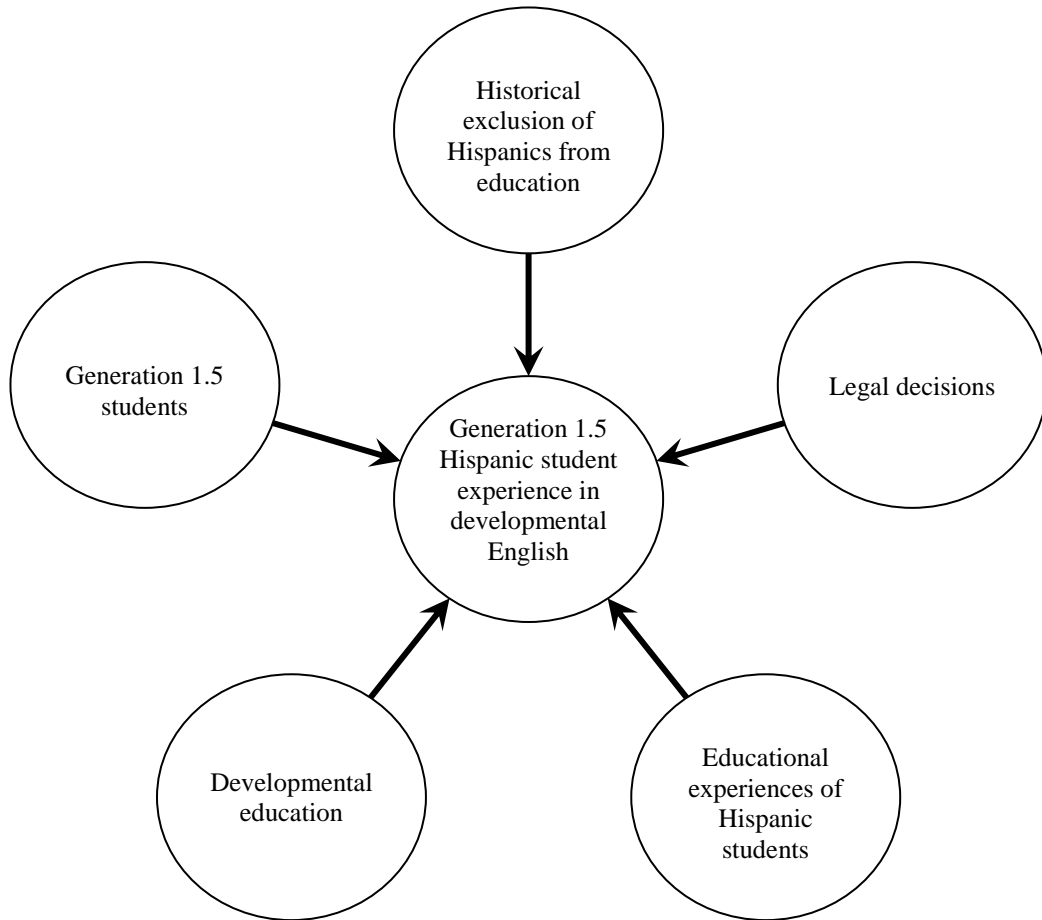


Figure 4. Summary of major sections of literature review.

Historical Exclusion from Higher Education

This section of the literature review examines the history of Hispanics in education to understand the current context of the educational struggles Hispanic students face in community colleges (see Figure 4). Past policies regarding the education of both immigrant and non-immigrant Hispanics have influenced current policies and practices in positive and negative ways, thus understanding the historical context of those policies was important for this study. Section one of this literature review focuses on the history of exclusion and the experiences of students of color in education.

From the colonial period through the early twentieth century, the emphasis was on literacy and access to any form of education beyond elementary school for Hispanics and other students of color. Higher education was something that remained largely out of reach for these student populations. The historical context of the issue of student of color access into higher education plays an important role in understanding Hispanic student experience in the community college, and that history of exclusion was connected to legal decisions, interpretations of laws, economics, and historical events.

Roots of segregated schools for Hispanics. To understand how Hispanic students became segregated, a brief discussion of relevant issues between the United States and Mexico is necessary. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the U.S. Mexico War, and all Mexican nationals in the ceded territories (known now as California, New Mexico, Nevada, and sections of Colorado, Utah, and Arizona) became U.S. citizens one year later (Ferg-Cadima, 2004). However, when the Fourteenth

Amendment was passed, which gave former slaves citizenship, others used it to exclude Indians, Asians, or other non-white peoples on the basis of the Amendment being applicable only to African Americans (Menchaca, 2001). Hispanics who were Indian (non-white) and who lived in the United States or who arrived after 1848 or who were born in the United States were not allowed to become citizens (Hayes-Bautista, 2004; Menchaca, 2001). As a result of being considered non-White, Hispanics were treated as Indians and subject to the same legal school segregation (Hayes-Bautista). Around the same time, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and other immigration laws created significant labor shortages in the Southwest. This resulted in a demand for Mexican workers, so employers recruited Mexicans for work (Ferg-Cadima, 2004; Takaki, 1993). As the Hispanic population increased in the Southwest and elsewhere, segregation became a common practice and policy.

Segregation of Hispanics. Segregation occurred in several venues, including drugstores, restaurants, movie theaters, housing, courthouses, water fountains, hotels, barber shops, maternity wards, and bowling alleys (Ferg-Cadima, 2004; Hayes-Bautista, 2006). Stores would hang signs that read “Mexicans and Dogs Not Allowed” and “No Mexicans Served,” and Hispanics were denied burial in White cemeteries (Ferg-Cadima, p. 7). Hispanics were also legally segregated into what were called “Mexican schools” (Ferg-Cadima). Mexican schools were for both native and non-native born Mexicans.

By 1930, 85% of Hispanic children in the Southwest were attending either separate classrooms or entirely separate schools, according to Ferg-Cadima (2004). Hispanic children, and even children with names that sounded “Latinized or Mexican,”

were required to register at “Mexican” schools. The schools often cited that once the children were English speaking and assimilated, they would be integrated. Those who created the schools often believed Mexicans were poor learners and slow, and would hold back others who were white if they were allowed to integrate (Hayes-Bautista, 2006). Thus, integration did not occur often (Ferg-Cadima, 2004). In 1944, Sylvia Mendez tried to gain entrance into the well maintained White school when she was age nine, since the Mexican school she was required to attend was in poor condition and located next to a dairy farm (Hayes-Bautista). She was not initially successful in her attempt to enroll into the White school, but her fight led to changes in the law (see *Mendez v. Westminster*).

Racism. Hispanics struggled for access into the realm of higher education in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Hispanic students who attended segregated schools experienced severe discrimination, according to Takaki (1993). “There would be a revolution in the community if the Mexicans wanted to come to White schools. . . . Sentiment is bitterly against it” an educator said (Takaki, p. 327). Hispanics were viewed as racially inferior according to God’s will, a threat to the daughters of Whites, and fit for manual labor in the mind of the growers (Takaki). Educators prepared Hispanic children to labor in the fields and take the place of their parents, and superintendents and school boards did not enforce compulsory attendance for Hispanics (Takaki). A Texas farmer said this about educating Hispanics:

If I wanted a man I would want one of the more ignorant ones. . . . Educated Mexicans are the hardest to handle. . . . It is all right to educate them no higher than we educate them here in these little towns. I will be frank. They would Make more desirable citizens if they would stop about the seventh grade.

(Takaki, 1993, p. 327).

A superintendent echoed this sentiment by stating that is not a question of the best way to handle the education of Hispanics, rather, “It is politics. . . . The farmers are not interested in educating Mexicans” (Takaki, 1993, p. 327).

Curriculum. The curriculum for Hispanics in the first half of the twentieth century largely consisted of domestic science, manual training, and the appropriate attitudes of hard work and disciplined behavior. In some schools, Takaki (1993) reports that Hispanics were given a sense of dignity and self respect and were encouraged to speak Spanish. But such an educational experience was rare in the early twentieth century for Hispanic students. Many students were discouraged from attending high school, much less college, and were told to prepare to be ditch diggers, laborers, and field workers (Takaki). University professors concurred. A Vanderbilt economics professor, Roy Garis, warned of the Mexicanization of the Southwest, stating that allowing Hispanic immigration would create a racial problem that was worse than the African American problem and would ruin all that was of value in White society (Takaki). A University of California at Berkeley professor said in 1886 that Mexicans were lazy thieves who owned property and were corrupt (Hayes-Bautista, 2006).

Eventually, these disenfranchised students demanded change. In the 1960s student of color demonstrations regarding higher education center on the fight for a curriculum that reflects cultural diversity. The fight for Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and African American studies predominated much of the conversation regarding student of color higher education. The students argued that a curriculum that

excluded their history was discriminatory and exclusive. In the late 1960s, \$1 million was given to Morgan State University, Howard University, and Yale University to help prepare faculty members to teach courses in African American studies (Brunner, 2006). This marks one of the first movements toward a multicultural curriculum.

Inadequate facilities. The “Mexican” schools were inadequate, with few teachers, poor equipment, and unfit buildings. The Alamo School in Texas was described as having “broken windows, rooms without lights, three-inch cracks in the side of the building and loose ceilings ‘just about ready to fall’” (Ferg-Cadima, 2004, p. 8). Another school was described as a “decaying one-room wooden building that flooded repeatedly during the rains, with only a wood stove for heat and outside bathroom facilities” (Ferg-Cadima, 2004, p. 8).

Shorter school year. “Mexican” school years were also shorter by up to two and a half years, as administrators cited the need for minority children to serve as migrant labor (Takaki, 1993). This also resulted in many Hispanic students being older than their counterparts, as they fell behind their peers. In California, 70% of Santa Ana’s Hispanic students were classified as “retarded” because they were older than their class counterparts (Ferg-Cadima, 2004, p. 9). This classification practice was common in Texas, as well (Ferg-Cadima).

Racist practices. Additional policies limited the access that Hispanics had to their education. In Sugarland, Texas, for example, in the 1930’s children who were of Hispanic heritage represented 56.6% of the elementary school population in the district but constituted only 1.9% of the eighth grade. In some cases the persistence of Hispanic

students from elementary school was so low that establishing Hispanic high schools was impractical. In the mid-1940's, then, some school districts expanded the concept of Mexican schools to include high school (Ferg-Cadima, 2004). The Mexican schools were usually staffed with beginners or incompetent teachers, and attrition of teachers within the Mexican schools was high. Some classrooms had new teachers about every three weeks.

Stereotyping. For those Hispanic students who did manage to persist, they experienced stereotypes that contributed to their disproportionate expulsion and suspension. Hispanics were commonly called “greasers,” “disease spreaders,” and “dirty” (Ferg-Cadima, 2004, p. 10). Hispanic children would be examined in front of the class for lice or tick infestation and then suspended, although some of these students did not actually have these ailments. Some Hispanic students were expelled for weeks for having dandruff (Ferg-Cadima). In the Westminster case of 1946, the superintendent of schools testified that “Mexican children were ‘dirty’; that they had lice, impetigo, dirty hands, face, neck, and ears; that they were generally inferior to the White children in personal hygiene” (McWilliams, 1947, p. 303). Although some of the old stereotypes persist, more recent stereotypes about Hispanics include: undocumented immigrants, non-English speakers, uneducated, gangbangers, welfare mothers who are failures and useless (Hayes-Bautista, 2006). Hispanics are stereotypically seen as “dark figures furtively sneaking across the border” (Hayes-Bautista).

Based on the stereotypes of the past (and even the present), it is not surprising that Hispanic students did not receive encouragement to persist at all. Attendance laws

were not enforced, and compulsory school attendance was not enforced either. The notion was that school attendance would interfere with the supply of inexpensive farm labor (Ferg-Cadima, 2004). Further, some educators did not believe Hispanics could not learn and were ruining all that was good in the United States.

This literature on the history of exclusion from education illustrates the difficulty that Hispanic students have faced for decades. This history serves as the foundation for this study in that it provides the roots of racist educational practices which many educators are unaware of. Further, it serves as part of the social critical methodology used in the study in that understanding the historical context is critical to understanding the experiences of Hispanics in community colleges today. The history sheds light on the underpinnings of policies and practices in academia in the past, and may provide insight into current policy and practice. Certainly access has improved for these students, but it took several landmark legal decisions to initiate the change (see Figure 5).

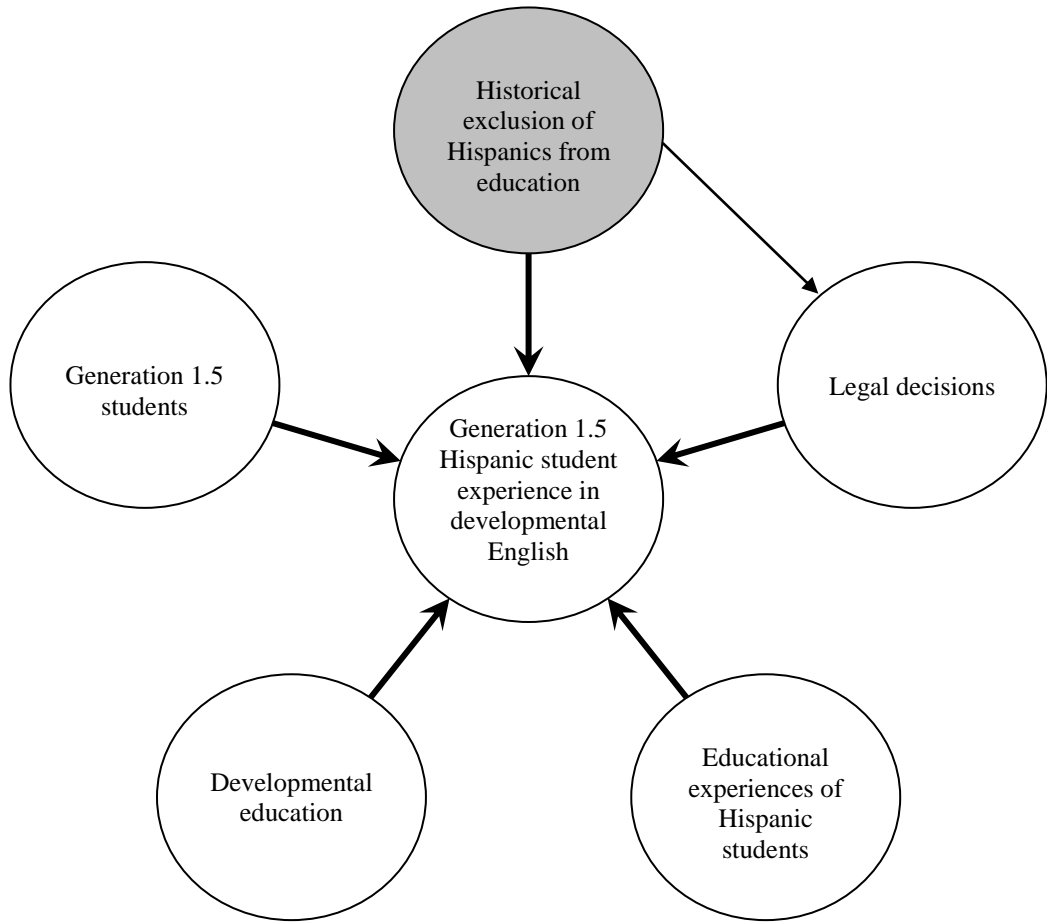


Figure 5. Historical exclusion leads to legal decisions.

Legal Decisions

This section of the literature review will highlight several landmark cases concerning educational access for students of color. This section is imperative to this study in that it reveals how racist policies were fought in legal venues and how social justice laws were ignored in order to continue the denial of access to education for students of color. Further, the cases provide an important foundation for understanding how students of color and other social justice advocates have fought for liberation and justice in education for decades.

Separate but equal 1890. Educational access has been problematic in the United States since the late-nineteenth century. According to Cohen (1998), although opportunities for African American education were available, the courts were ruling in favor of segregation. In the 1890's Supreme Court Rulings made it clear that the federal government had no jurisdiction over state laws regarding racial segregation. Further, the courts stated that equal rights were obtained if separate but equal facilities were obtained. The separate but equal philosophy of education remained largely intact until the 1950's.

Fighting for equal opportunity in employment. During the 1930's and 1940's, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People pressed legislators and brought suits to gain equal opportunity in employment and education (Cohen, 1998). President Truman in 1948 issued an executive order calling for racial equality in the armed forces, and under his leadership, equality in other areas was called for as well. So, although these events did not result in immediate access to equal education for people

of color, the stage was being set for future changes.

Separate but not equal. Some significant post secondary education rulings occurred in 1950. *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) established that separate law schools in Texas were not equal, because the professional associations that students make during their school years impacts their success (Cohen, 1998). Further, in the case of *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* (1950), the University of Oklahoma was directed to provide a black doctoral student “the same privileges and treatment as all its students” (p. 183). Segregation, though, remained prevalent “de jure in the South, de facto in many institutions in the North” according to Cohen (p. 183).

Mendez v. Westminster. In 1946, a class action lawsuit, *Mendez v. Westminster*, on behalf of more than 5,000 Hispanic students in California was filed (Valencia). This case was brought about because nine year-old Sylvia Mendez wanted to enroll in the White school; her father won the case on the loophole that not all Hispanics were necessarily Indians (Hayes-Bautista, 2006). The U.S. District court judge ruled that Hispanic students’ rights were being violated under the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment (Valencia). This was the first federal court case involving school segregation of Hispanics, and the plaintiffs prevailed. The case laid the groundwork for the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Brown v. Board of Education. The ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) made it clear that separating children because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority, therefore separate but equal facilities are inherently unequal; the Court extended the ruling to higher education in 1956 to *Florida ex rel. Hawkins v. Board of*

Control. Based on the 14th Amendment, the rulings overturned the legal foundation of segregation, but the problem of segregation remained. The Court did not specify which schools should be integrated; thus, the decision remained at the local courts level (Cohen).

De jure discrimination. Thus, segregation remained as various politicians and seats of institutional power resisted the federal ruling. In 1957, in Little Rock, Arkansas the governor blocked African American children from entering high school by calling out the National Guard. A few weeks later after being kept home for their own safety, the nine students returned to the Central High School. Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock nine who tried to enter school that day, recalled the incidents of that day in a National Public Radio (Chadwick, 2007) interview:

As I stepped out into the street, the people surged forward, I couldn't go back in the direction I had come. But I knew there was another bus stop at the opposite end. And I fastened on the thought of getting to that bus stop as some measure of safety. But before that, I had looked in the face of a woman for help. Because I had been raised to look to adults for help. And she spat on me. That was the first time that I'd ever known that there are adults who would knowingly act to hurt a child.

When Eckford finally arrived at her mother's work on the bus, she cried and cried and had nightmares for weeks after these events. To this day, Eckford does not like to see photos from that day because they are too upsetting to her (Chadwick, 2007). However, Eckford did return to the school, along with the other Little Rock nine, and the school became integrated.

In Virginia, the governor ordered the closing of racially integrated schools (Cohen, 1998). And even though local courts ruled that the University of Mississippi

and the University of Alabama needed to admit African American students, the governors defied the order (Cohen). It was clear the integration would not be readily accepted nor readily implemented, particularly in the Southern United States.

Nonetheless, by 1962, James Meredith became the first African American student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. United States marshals escort him on his first day at school. In 1963, even though Governor Wallace physically tried to block their way, African Americans Vivian Malone and James Hood register for classes at the University of Alabama.

Civil Rights Act 1964. By the 1960's, racial discrimination was still in full swing. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, it authorized federal power to be brought to bear on the right of all people to vote, use public facilities, and gain job according to their abilities (Cohen). It also supported colleges and schools by providing training to help staff deal with school desegregation problems.

Johnson's Executive Order 11375. Another significant occurrence at the federal level was President Johnson's Executive order 11375. This order specified that beginning in 1968 every federal contract had to state potential employees would not be discriminated against because of their race (Cohen, 1998). Moreover, if employers seemed to be lagging in employment of minorities, then they had to develop plans to remedy the situation. This led to the expansion in the Office of Civil Rights, which followed up on complaints and provided guidance for the programs. This impacted colleges because they had to comply with the equity in hiring of minorities, or they would be seen as being in noncompliance (Cohen, 1998). Further, the President's

Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity identified government employees as American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Previously, these groups had been referred to as “other”.

Hispanics recognized as minorities. Hispanics have experienced segregation and racism based on social constructs of race. They were initially categorized as non-white in the late 1800’s, and then were subject to legal discrimination and segregation. Then, they were categorized as White by the Census bureau in the 1940’s, which meant that birth and death and all census data contained no specific information about Hispanics (Hayes-Bautista, 2006). Hispanics were included with Whites and then in 1970, were categorized as a minority group when a Texas district court ruled that Hispanics should be treated as an identifiable minority group (Cohen, 1998). This ruling was a first step in attaining equality under the law (Cohen). So, Hispanics who had experienced segregation and discrimination now had some protection under the law.

These legal decisions reveal the difficulty Hispanics and other students of color have faced in terms of educational access. The cases and the people who fought for educational access are key to understanding the historical context of Hispanic education today. However, Hispanic experiences with legal segregation and Hispanic contributions to the fight for social justice remain largely unknown. The literature specific to Hispanic educational experiences is rather limited in scope, especially in the area of developmental English. Section three of the literature review will focus on the experiences of Hispanic students from the 1990’s to the present (See Figure 6).

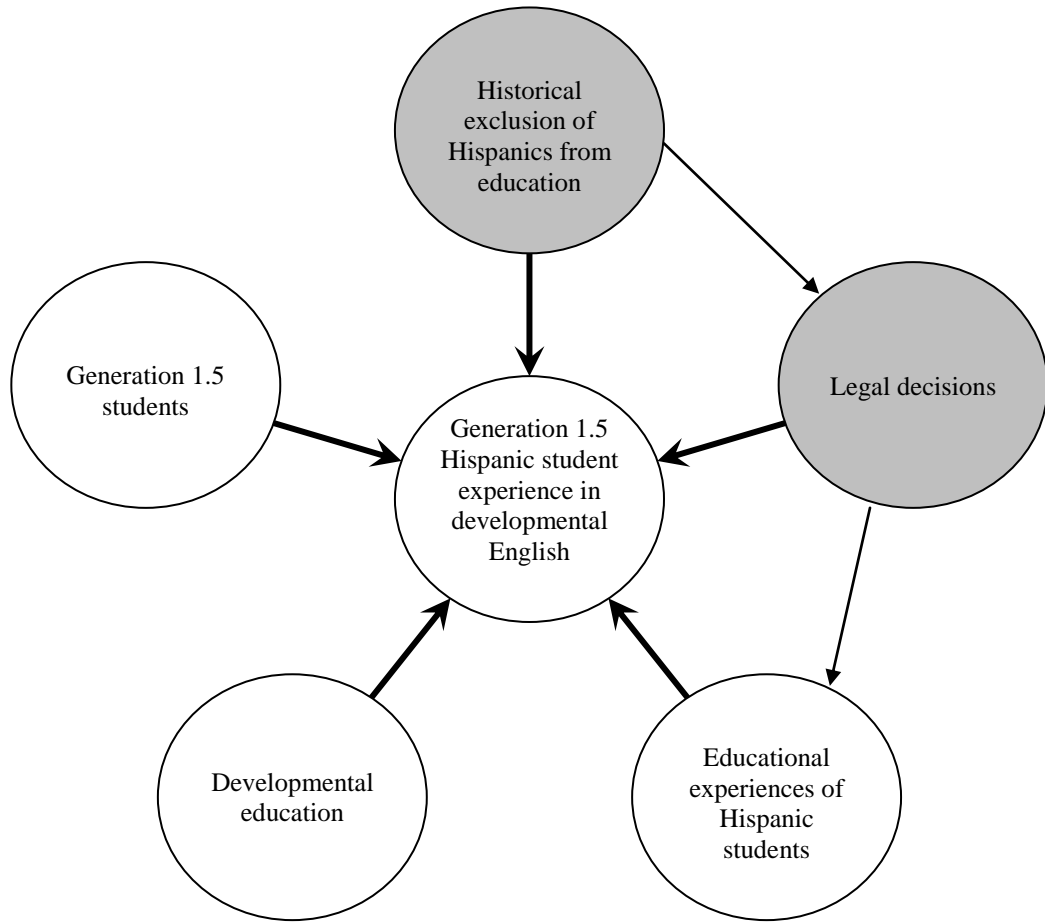


Figure 6. Legal decisions result in increased education access for Hispanics.

Educational Experiences of Hispanic Students

During the late 1990's, increasing numbers of Hispanic students enrolled in community colleges. At the same time, an emergence of studies on Hispanic educational experiences appeared in the literature. These studies center on acculturation, educational barriers, and educational power dynamics. Studies by Castellanos and Fujitsubo (1997) and Vazquez and Garcia-Vazquez, (1998) did focus specifically on Hispanics. However, studies on Hispanics in developmental English were few. It is evident in the literature from this time period that scholars were interested in understanding the experience of Hispanic students in general.

Acculturation. Castellanos and Fujitsubo (1997) determined that there was a clear relationship between acculturation and educational barriers for Hispanics. The lower the level of acculturation for Hispanics, the higher the number of educational barriers they experienced. However, they found no relationship between depression, as a result of a lack of acculturation, and academic performance, as they had theorized to be the case. Their study is important since it explores the barriers faced by Hispanic students. The researchers conducted follow-up interviews to discover that the reasons for the decreased grade point averages were varied (e.g., family obligations, financial problems, high developmental education needs, social pressures).

Power dynamics. Vazquez and Garcia-Vazquez (1998) focused their research on Hispanic experiences with power dynamics in high school with those power dynamics they experienced in the community college. In essence, these minority students experienced a lack of political and social power and less satisfaction in their education

when placed in a predominantly White high school. However, these same students' satisfaction level was more positive in a predominantly White community college than during their high school experiences. The researchers believe that this may have been the result of maturation and development of coping mechanisms to fend off racism.

Although this study reveals a difference in perception about power dynamics for the Hispanic students, the study falls short of finding a cause. The study does suggest positive self image and positive interactions with teachers influences students' perceptions about their community college experiences. However, variables such as teacher sensitivity to acculturation are not accounted for using their method of data collection. The researchers used two quantitative measurements, a scale that measures the percentage of Hispanic students, teachers, and administrators in the college, and a negative school experience questionnaire. These methods do not account for the school environment of the student, nor do they emphasize the students' experiences as told by them.

Faculty of color. A recent trend in the literature looks at the role of minority faculty. In Saveedra and Saveedra (2007) the role of Hispanic faculty members working with Hispanic students is examined. Their research focused on strategies for Hispanic female professors working with Hispanic students, and the challenges they face due to gender, and they discuss their facilitative approach to teaching to support student learning. Although the study does not specifically address the needs of developmental English students, it does address the benefits of Hispanic teachers working with Hispanic students. In Hendrix (2007), the pressure that minority teachers face is

examined. Although Hispanic faculty are not addressed specifically in this study, Hendrix discusses how she has handled the pressure of students of her race who might expect special treatment, or the perception of student not of her race who that she might be favoring people from her own race. She also discussed how three female black instructors handle disruptive students from their own race. The author concludes that communication and openness are paramount in teaching students of one's own race, and she provides 13 strategies that teachers can use to encourage learning and prevent disruptive behavior. Although this research does not focus on Hispanics, it reveals the unique challenges that teachers of color face when working with majority students and students of their own ethnic background. Wilson (2007) also explores why more minority students received degrees in engineering and science than are represented as professors at the top universities in those disciplines. A lack of role models was cited as a factor in the lack of minority faculty at these institutions. Although this study does not address Hispanic faculty in developmental English programs, it examines why minority faculty may be few in higher education.

Learning assistance centers. Yet another qualitative study suggests that learning assistance centers, which include tutoring and computer-assisted instruction, increase student persistence and preparation (Perin, 2004). Perin's study of 630 participants in 458 interviews from 15 community colleges across the country showed that centers, which provide assistance in mathematics, reading, and writing, improved persistence in English courses and improved student outcomes. Students who visited the centers more than six times showed GPA improvement of a point or higher. The learning assistance

centers visits were sometimes mandatory, as a requirement for coursework, and voluntary in other cases.

Perin's (2004) study showed that students went to a learning assistance center was a result of academic advising and, sometimes, fear of failure. The case was a qualitative, instrumental design. One criticism of the data gathering process is the use of several researchers. Variation in the results may occur based on the researchers' tone of voice, delivery, body language, etc. when acquiring the data from the participants. Nonetheless, this design seemed appropriate in that 630 interviews were conducted. However, the study did not yield data specific to Hispanics.

Post secondary attainment. Garcia and Bayer (2005) conducted research that looked at educational attainment for Hispanic/Latinos. They point out that past research analyzed this group in aggregate, yet Garcia and Bayer's research showed that individual, socio-economic, family, and high school background variables show that Mexican Americans achieve lower levels of post-secondary educational attainment than other Hispanic/Latino groups. They recommend that future research analyze individual groups rather using aggregate forms. Davis (2007) also reports that minority students have made gains in high school graduation and college completion during the past 25 years. She also notes that in 2005, the National Center for Educational Statistics reports that the percentage of 16- to 24-year-olds who were considered high school dropouts was highest among Hispanics.

Overall these studies reveal some important challenges and barriers that Hispanic students face in the educational system. The barriers include economic,

cultural, institutional, and historical factors. Faculty role models, tutoring assistance services, and positive self image and good relationships with faculty seem to encourage student progress toward their higher educational goals. Yet, the studies do not specifically address what is the experience of Generation 1.5 students in community college developmental English programs. Section four of the literature review will show what has been written about Hispanics in developmental education and their experience in higher education (see Figure 7).

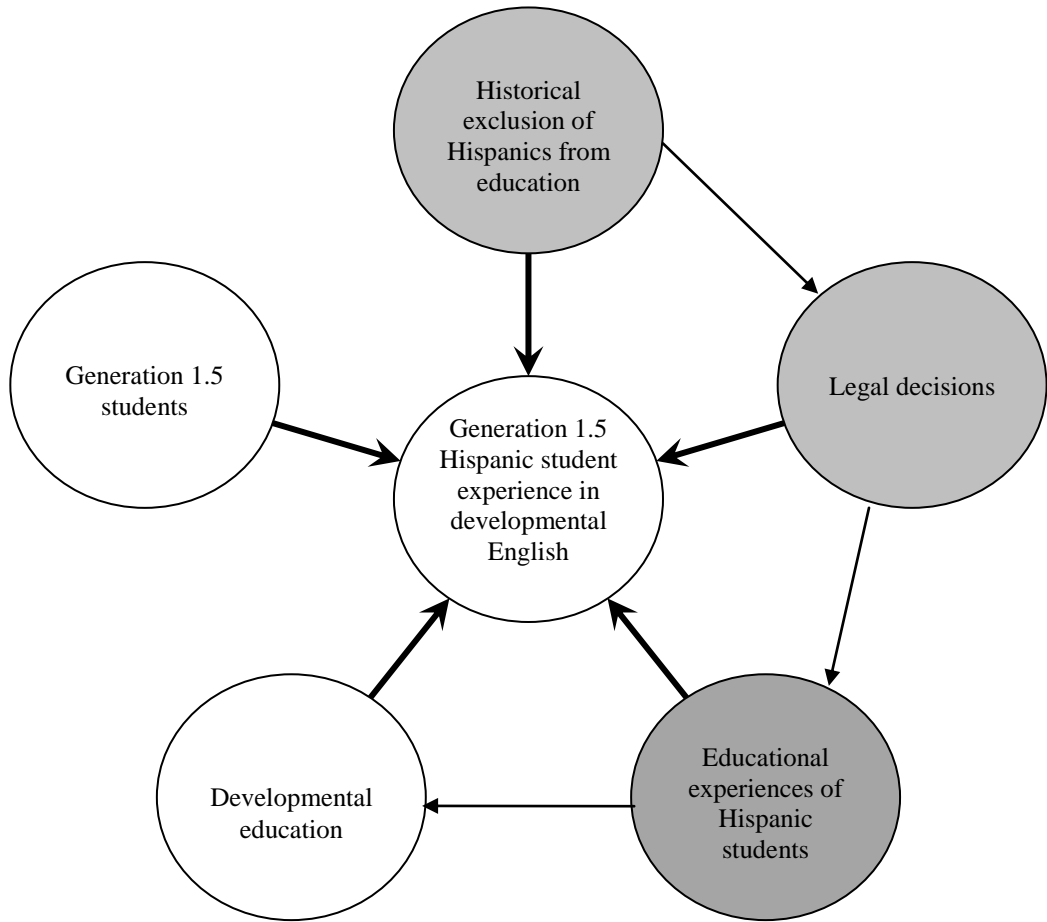


Figure 7. Increased access leads to Hispanic participation in developmental education.

Developmental Education

In the last 15 years the research on Hispanics has emerged, but slowly (see Figure 7). In the early 1990's, few studies were conducted specifically on Hispanics in developmental English. Persistence and completion research was being conducted on students from all ethnic groups, and students of color were looked at collectively. In the late 1990's, research on specific populations of students of color emerged. Studies were largely conducted in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI's) and focused on persistence of these students, but not in developmental education or at non-Hispanic Serving Institutions. Current research on Hispanic persistence reflects earlier trends. Their subjects come from HSI's and their studies focus on students of color generally. A few studies exist on developmental education students and their self-concepts, but these studies do not specifically pinpoint the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English programs. Some ethnographic and case study literature focused on the Hispanic experience in the composition classroom and in higher education. Those studies did not discuss Generation 1.5 student experience, or the diversity present among Generation 1.5 students.

Ethnic student research. Additional studies that were conducted in the 1990's focused on persistence and completion rates of students from all ethnic groups. Educational research studies on ethnic minority populations are limited (Lujan, Gallegos & Harbour, 2003). Bonham and Luckie (1993) exposed reasons students of all ethnic groups chose not to return and finish their programs (lack of money and lack of time top the list), but their research does not show specific aspects that contribute to

Hispanic persistence in developmental education.

Completion rates. Other literature from this time period focuses on completion rates. A limitation of these studies is that the students who stop out and later return do not get included in the research. None of the major developmental educational researchers, including Ackerman (1991), Starrfield (1992), Bonham and Luckie (1993) and Brazziel & Brazziel (1994), focused their research on Hispanics explicitly. These studies reveal gaps in the literature, specifically in the area of Hispanic student experience in developmental English. Studies that emphasize completion rates do not capture the experience of Hispanic students who are in developmental English programs, and what specifically contributes to or hinders their persistence.

Very few publications in the early 1990's directly concerned Hispanics (Lujan, Gallegos & Harbour, 2003), and even fewer focused on Hispanics in developmental education, especially developmental English (Crews & Aragon, 2004). Many studies had few Hispanics in them, and Hispanic students were often grouped with other students of color which resulted in limited inference. The studies do not show the individual experiences of these students, and grouping students of color together does not account for their unique cultural, linguistic, economic, or generational backgrounds and how these factors impact their completion rates.

Multicultural curriculum and developmental English. Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, and Ghare (2004) looked at the need to initiate a discussion about multicultural curricula in developmental Education. The study also presents a method for implementing a multicultural developmental approach. However, the study does not

specifically examine the needs of Hispanics in developmental education. Its approach to curricula, though, has implications for instructing Hispanic students.

English placement testing and Hispanics. Marwick looked at academic performance as a result of initial placement. Marwick's study revealed that all students' academic performance was the same regardless of which placement method was used. Marwick's research also showed that Hispanics are over-represented in developmental education when one standardized test is used as the sole measurement for placement. Hispanics placed at higher levels when more than one measure for placement was used, and so Marwick concluded that Hispanics need multiple placement instruments in order to receive an equal opportunity for access. This is particularly crucial since fewer Hispanics transitioned into college level courses, and they persisted at lower rates than other students (Marwick, 2004).

Although this study cannot be generalized to other community colleges, its findings have implications for research and policy at other colleges, particularly in the areas of student placement testing and student success after placement testing. His study has significance for this dissertation proposal, because it provides an example of how multiple placement instruments may result in Hispanic students testing into higher levels. This is significant to note because in the past, mandatory testing was usually based on one instrument such as Compass or Asset testing. Thus, some Hispanic students may have been placed at levels lower than their ability, which may have impacted their persistence. Facing more coursework, increased educational costs, and a longer time to reach academic goals may have impacted student persistence.

However, mandatory placement for students was challenged by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) in 1988. MALDEF argued that mandatory placement of students by a single instrument could disadvantage some groups. The result was multiple measures for assessments and local validation of cut scores are now used to promote an accurate placement of students (Boroch, et al., 2007). When mandatory assessment was used, student retention was improved and students were more likely to pass developmental coursework (Boylan, Bliss and Bonham, 1997) and future coursework (Roueche and Roueche, 1999).

Academic performance. Another study conducted by Long (2005) found that students who enrolled in developmental coursework reduced students quitting by 10 percent and increased their completion rates for bachelor's degrees by nine percent. Bettinger and Long (2005) conducted a quantitative study to examine academic performance as a result of mathematics and English developmental education. Their regression analysis showed that community college Mathematics developmental education appeared to improve student outcomes, but English developmental education showed neither positive nor negative outcomes for students. Although Bettinger and Long's study found no significant outcomes for developmental English students as a result of remediation, Long (2005) points out that since students who are underprepared are more likely to drop out that the study is not an appropriate test of the impact of remediation. Rather, the effects of remediation need to be separated from the effects of lower preparation. Overall, the research shows that students who pass developmental courses are more likely to pass college courses and provides them with the opportunity

to earn degrees that they would be unable to receive otherwise (Adelman, 1998; Long, 2005; McCabe, 2000).

Timing of developmental education. Another study looked at how well students fared who entered developmental English courses in their initial quarter of college versus those who take these courses later (Crews & Aragon, 2004). The research showed that students who waited to take their developmental coursework had lower grade point averages in college than students who tested into developmental courses and who decided not to take them at all. Thus, it is worse for students to take these courses after their initial enrollment in college than to not take them at all. The research pointed out Hispanics had the highest rate of late enrollment in developmental courses. The research does not explain why the students who enrolled into developmental coursework later had lower grade point averages than students who tested into developmental courses and who decided not to take them at all. However, this study shows that since Hispanics had the highest rate of late enrollment in developmental coursework, they were more likely to earn a lower grade point average than students who did not take the developmental courses at all.

Student self-concept. Roueche, Roueche and Ely (2001) and Littleton (1998) pinpointed how developmental education students feel as a result of initial placement. Once students are placed into developmental English, a variety of terms may be used to describe them: “deficient, low ability, high-risk, underachiever, nontraditional, slow, remedial, disenfranchised, disadvantaged, under-prepared, returning, at-risk” (Littleton, p. 7). Such terms may impact a student’s self concept, motivation, and confidence

(Littleton). The students in Roueche, Roueche and Ely's qualitative study at the Community College of Denver (CCD) feared failure and expulsion, and they felt unintelligent, apprehensive, and angry. The effect of being placed into developmental English may be especially damaging for minority students who often face more economic, cultural, educational barriers than White students (Littleton, 1998).

The CCD study also yielded data that suggests that by linking goals and institutional effectiveness, CCD improved student success (Roueche, Roueche & Ely, 2001). CCD focused on retaining their developmental education students through career and academic advising and support, and campus wide support of developmental education outcomes. Such methods contributed to student persistence toward their educational goals. However, they also noted that open door access does not mean equal access to education; changes in curricula and pedagogy are needed for equal access (Roueche, Roueche, & Ely).

Roueche, Roueche, and Ely's (2001) case study focusing on one institution allowed for a thorough look at the effectiveness of the institution's systemic approach to developmental educational success. Their study, though, did not show whether or not gender or ethnicity affected the psychological barriers to success. Also, the case study focused on a college with a highly diverse student population, and therefore inferences are limited.

Hispanic family support and higher education. Montano (1997) conducted an ethnographic study on *La Voz Chicana y Latina*. The purpose of the study was to develop and outreach model for Latinas to increase their participation in higher

education. Though not specific to Generation 1.5 students, this study does focus on access for Latinas in higher education generally. The research also states that having a component of parent and family engagement is critical for the nurturing of Latinas in a pursuit of higher education. Montano also points out factors that impact Hispanic women in college: culture shock, financial hardship, distance from family and friends, discrimination, racial and ethnic tension, and a failure of colleges to support Hispanic women as they adjust to college. This study reveals some critical issues that Hispanic women are facing in higher education, but the study does not address men, nor does it explore the experience of Generation 1.5 students. Nonetheless, the study provides some strong insight into the challenges that Hispanic women face in higher education.

Hispanic interaction in the developmental English classroom. An ethnography conducted by Losey (1997) focused on a basic writing course, and it revealed the types of interaction of Hispanics students engaged in during their basic writing courses. All of the students were high school graduates who were educated in the United States. The text revealed that the students were presented with assignments that were not relevant to their experiences. Losey noted that the instructors used methods that did not engage students, as evidenced by their silence, but did not explore why the instructors used these methods. It also showed that the students wanted to improve their employment opportunities, whereas instructors prepared the students for college level writing experiences. This study was significant since it focused specifically on the experience of Hispanics in developmental English who had received some education in schools in the United States during their K-12 experiences, and who graduated from high school.

However, the study did not include students who were not United States educated or students who were monolingual. Further, little emphasis was given to the various generational, cultural, and linguistic differences of Hispanics. The research perspective used also did not emphasize the liberation of the students through education.

Advising Hispanic students. Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell (2002) conducted a longitudinal study that used persistence and transfer data along with focus groups to determine barriers to student success. This three-year study looked at the patterns of 5,000 community college students in urban Los Angeles. The results included a list of 10 commandments for student success and student failure. The suggestions underscored the students' desire for everything from a feeling of belonging on the campuses to training for academic and career advisors to adequate course offerings and access to technology. The students clearly wanted sufficient classes offered in developmental English and mathematics and quality advising.

The use of a longitudinal study provides a pattern of data for analysis and is a good choice for their study, but the method is not practical for the dissertation study in this proposal. Also, since Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell's study was conducted on urban community college students in Los Angeles, it cannot be generalized to all community college students.

Advising and occupational choice. Current literature also shows that Hispanics who enter college and require developmental education often are tracked into vocational programs rather than the career pathways of their choice, and they end up in low paying jobs in automotive, food service, or other technical degree areas (Breland, 2004;

Durdoyle & Bodley, 1997; Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, 2002). Researchers claim that some students lack the academic ability to pursue the educational path of their choice, and therefore, community colleges need to advise students to achieve realistic academic goals consistent with their intellectual abilities (Breland; Marick, 2004). Clark (1960) called this term the “cooling out function” (as cited in Breland). Hernandez (1999) asserted that Hispanics who entered college expecting to obtain a degree decreased their expectation by the end of their first year. Lack of degree completion and persistence contributes to Hispanic occupational segregation, as does the lack of teachers of color employed in higher education (Breland, 2004; Gunzak, 1995; Hernandez). These findings had implications for this study since this study focused on the experiences of Hispanic Generation 1.5 students in developmental English at community colleges and included components about their career goals and experiences with counseling, academic advising, and other student services.

Hispanic immigrant educational experiences. Another study by Tracy (2004) focused on the educational experiences of Mexican immigrants to the United States and Bangladeshi immigrants in the United Kingdom. Interviews were conducted and revealed that Mexican immigrant students attend school for career purposes, yet they perceived institutional support to be inadequate. Additionally, the study revealed that Mexican immigrants students left due to inadequate counseling, cultural pressure, and economic needs. The critical roles of family and institutional support emerged as important themes for these groups.

Breland's, Hernandez's, and Tracy's studies are particularly important for this dissertation, because their work documents reasons for a lack of persistence toward degree completion by Hispanic students. Further the effect of persistence on the occupations that Hispanics pursue is examined.

This study on Generation 1.5 Hispanic student experience was conducted at two community colleges with developmental English programs. The students' experiences in developmental English and the educational setting were examined. Although this case study emphasized Generation 1.5 student experience in developmental English, the reasons for a lack of persistence among these students is crucial to understanding their experience. Recent literature looks at the increasing numbers of Generation 1.5 students in higher education (Figure 8).

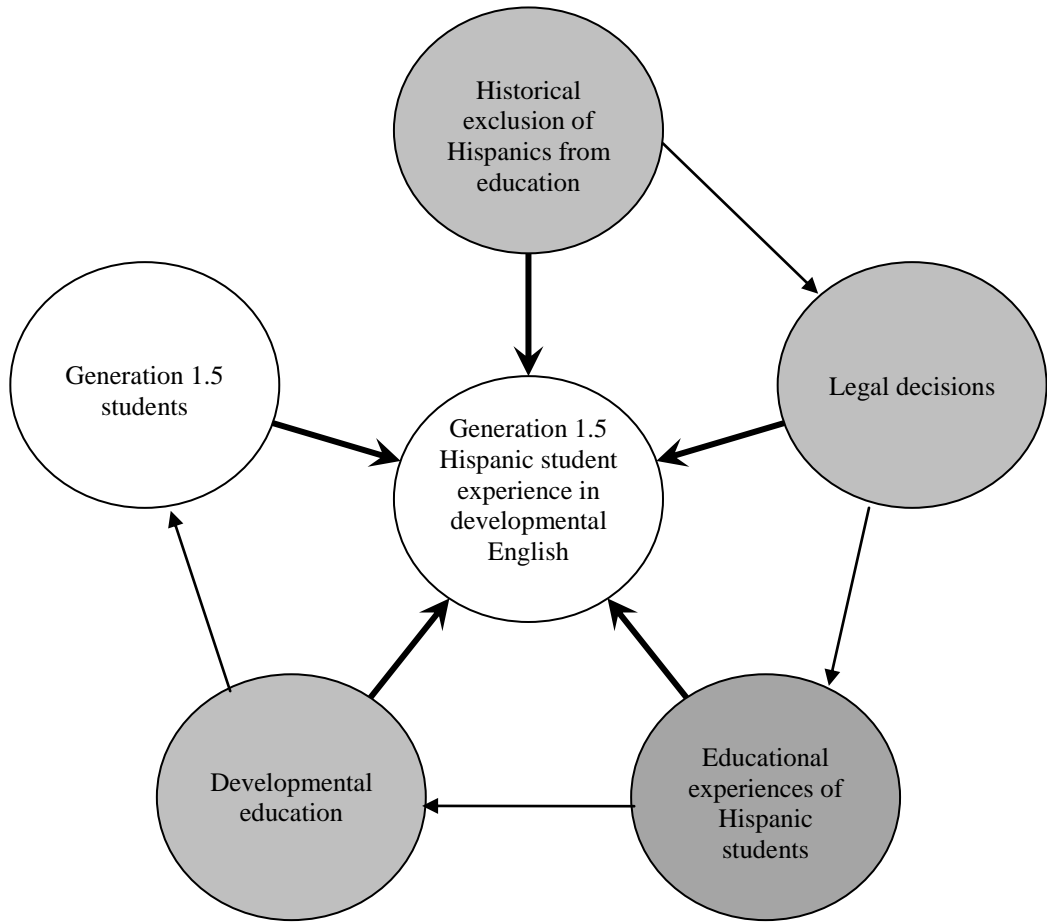


Figure 8. Colleges see increased numbers of Generation 1.5 students.

Generation 1.5 Hispanic students

The recent trend in the literature is a discussion centering on making distinctions among first, second, and 1.5 Generation students and their learning needs. In the literature, Generation 1.5 students are being defined as: children of immigrants who enter the United States at early ages, receive an education in the United States, and then enter into college; learners who exhibit characteristics of both first and second generation immigrants; native born non-native speakers of English; back and forth migrants; and privileged, educated immigrants (Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Hinkle, 2006; Singhal, 2004). These students may feel alienated from their own families and as well as from people in their schools.

Generation 1.5 learning needs. Some literature points out Latino students come to college with varying levels of ability in English literacy. Hinkle's (2006) explains that some Generation 1.5 students view high school as the gateway to college, and often, they are surprised to learn that they are not fully prepared for college. When they attend college, some of these students may fare better in English as Second Language courses, while others may perform better in traditional college composition courses. The needs of these students is based upon their ability to speak, read, and write in English, their literacy level in their native language, their educational experiences, and their ages (Bernstein, 2004; Caballero de Cordero, 2005; Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Nye, 2006; Singhal, 2004). However, the literature also points out that these students are not being adequately assessed and are thus improperly placed in traditional college composition courses or English as Second Language courses (Caballero de Cordero,

2005; Nye, 2006). Hinkle says that Generation 1.5 students are “marginalized minority students who are unfairly kept out of the mainstream through overly rigid and unnecessary gatekeeping criteria” (Hinkle, 2006, p. 43). Some Generation 1.5 students will perform better by taking a few specific English as Second Language courses before being mainstreamed into a traditional college composition program (Caballero de Cordero, 2005; Singhal, 2004). The needs of the students are as varied as their experiences, and more needs to be done to assess these students properly.

Composition instruction not meeting the needs of non-native English speakers.

Matsuda (1999) points out that although non-native speakers of English in United States colleges and universities have been increasing for forty years, traditional composition studies do not reflect this trend. Additionally, college composition courses continue to be required at many undergraduate institutions for ESL students, yet most college composition instructors who work with ESL students lack training in ESL instructional methods. Matsuda indicates that writing instructors need to be more sensitive to the needs of ESL writers. He also states that a “disciplinary division of labor” exists in the area of writing-- ESL instruction and college composition instruction (p. 700). As such, some college composition instructors believe that teaching ESL students is the responsibility of the ESL department, yet the responsibility really belongs to all composition teachers. The idea that traditional college composition instructors should be prepared to work with ESL learners has direct implications for this study on Generation 1.5 students in developmental writing.

Hispanic student experience in developmental composition. Canizales (1995)

wrote an ethnography on Mexican-Americans in developmental composition focusing on their writing process. Her findings point out that student use of code switching (the use of two or more languages when communicating) created an avenue for them to practice and improve their writing skills through collaborative learning. In groups, students who shared their ideas and spoke got rewarded, and code switching allowed them to express their ideas without being frustrated by lapses in vocabulary. The act of speaking also had connections to the tradition of storytelling common among Hispanic families. Thus some students felt liberated by working with others verbally, rather than writing in isolation. She also discussed the students' lack of making a connection between reading and writing. She encouraged students to listen and talk, rather than just write and get frustrated looking at the same paper over and over.

This study underscored good practice for writing teachers in developmental English, and its discussion of code switching as a tool for learning was useful. The study, though, did not discuss contemporary practices in composition, and it seemed a bit outdated. Generation 1.5 students are not discussed specifically, though bilingual students participated in the study. However, this study focused on Hispanics in a developmental writing class. So, although limited in its scope, the study provided insight about code switching and English language learners.

Nye's (2006) longitudinal case study describes the experiences of ESL and Generation 1.5 students at a community college. This study reveals the important role of community colleges in helping Generation 1.5 ESL learners acquire academic literacy. Further, the study reveals the various "discourses, literacies, and identities" that

Generation 1.5 ESL learners encounter on their journey through college (p. v). The study concludes that instructors need to acknowledge and recognize the differences between native and ESL students' writing, and that ESL writers should be advised to pursue individualized instruction and to seek the views of students regarding their academic literacy. This is an important study in that it focuses on the writing needs of Generation 1.5 students, reveals suggestions for practitioners, and acknowledges the various identities that Generation 1.5 students negotiate.

Nye's (2006) study emphasizes the needs of ESL learners, but it does not focus specifically on the Generation 1.5 Hispanic learners who are mainstreamed into traditional developmental English. The study does have significance, though, for this dissertation. It provides important insight into some of the reasons that ESL learners are placed into developmental writing courses rather than ESL. These reasons include: students not being identified as ESL, students required to take basic writing after taking ESL course; ESL courses may be designed for international students only; and colleges without ESL programs must place these students into developmental courses.

Generation 1.5 learners in developmental English. Oudenhoven (2006) completed a qualitative study on Generation 1.5 Hispanics English language learners in community colleges. The study is a single site case study on the experiences of Generation 1.5 United States high school graduates learning English at a community college. The study focused on comparing ESL and developmental English instruction and student experience learning English in those programs. The study was significant in that it focused on the experience of Generation 1.5 students, and it drew out some

conclusions regarding Hispanic student experiences (students wanting to self select developmental or ESL pathways, their concern over their speaking skills, and the need to use time effectively due to work obligations). However, the study does not delve into the experiences of Generation 1.5 students who did not graduate from a US high school, those who are recent immigrants, or those who are monolingual. The study was significant in that important observations about the problems faced by English language learners at community colleges are examined: no clear educational pathways for learning English; significant instructional differences within ESL and developmental English courses; and the lack of transfer credits for ESL. This case study was useful in that it contained qualitative information about Hispanic student experiences in English at a community college.

Self-efficacy. Bernstein's (2004) study focused on the experience of one Hispanic student and his experiences learning English from grade school through college. The study emphasizes instructor mentoring, linked courses, and writing as a tool for individual empowerment (Bernstein, 2004). The student reveals his awareness of standardized testing and the way it influenced his experiences learning to read and to write (Bernstein, 2004). The student advocated for future students by making a series of recommendations. He stated that high school instructors place more emphasis on "intellectual aims" than on test preparation to help students succeed in college, and to prevent students from dropping out of high school (Bernstein, 2004). Another study looked at self-efficacy of Hispanics in college and compared that experience to White student experience. The self-efficacy of Hispanics students and their enlisting of teacher

help declined quickly after entering school, while White students increased in their self-efficacy in enlisting teacher help (Caballero de Cordero, 2005). Hispanic student experiences with faculty also affects their self-efficacy, and predicts their persistence (Caballero de Cordero, 2005; Tinto, 2006). When an experience is negative, the Hispanic students decrease their self-efficacy in asking for instructor help.

Biculturalism. Olivos (2006) wrote a case study on bicultural parent involvement in school. His case study focuses on the perceptions of teachers and administrators about bicultural parent involvement with their children's education. Race and racism are examined, as are the ways in which schools expect parents to be involved. Olivos states that parental involvement is a process of transformational change. For schools to engage bicultural parents, they will need to invite them to engage in a process of collaborating to make transformational changes in the schools. Although this study is on K-12 and not community colleges, it holds implications about the students for this case study and may provide insight about their prior educational experiences.

Implications of Literature Review for This Study

Based on the research on Hispanic and developmental education from the past 15 years, it seems clear that more studies on the Hispanic experience, especially in developmental education, are needed to understand these students early on in their academic careers. Persistence studies on students of all ethnic groups have been conducted, as well as studies on Hispanics in HSI's, but few studies have been written on Hispanic experience in community colleges. The studies that have been conducted

have focused on occupational segregation, advising, completion rates, and psychological depression in Hispanics. Developmental education research has included few in depth studies on the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English. Studies have been completed on the writing processes of Hispanics in a community college, and on the experiences of Hispanic US high school graduates in developmental English. These studies provide some insight into the experiences of Hispanics in community college developmental English. Yet the limited literature on Hispanics in community colleges suggests that a study on Generation 1.5 Hispanic experience in developmental English would fill a void, while encouraging further discussion and study on Hispanics and their experiences and performance in developmental English.

Focus of study. Thus, this dissertation focused on the Generation 1.5 Hispanic experience in developmental English classes in community colleges. Hispanic, for purposes of this study, included Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latino. Its design was a social critical instrumental case study of Hispanic students in developmental English at a community college. The focus on the student voices and their experiences was critical in that educators can learn from the students about their experiences rather than trying to extrapolate from studies on students of color generally about the experiences of a particular group. Due to low numbers of higher educational researchers of color, research written by a member of the students' group of origin remains limited.

Future trends. Future literature on Hispanics will most likely reflect the example

set by Census 2000; that example is to avoid lumping large ethnic and cultural groups under a homogenous title such as “Hispanic”. Research will begin to be conducted on specific groups of Hispanics (e.g., Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Guatemalan-Americans, Honduran-Americans, Cuban-Americans). The barriers to access, persistence, and recruitment for these students will be examined in more detail. So, moving away from the past literature that placed students of color together as one type of student, future literature will examine the individual cultural groups within the larger race and ethnicity categories. Another area that will most likely be explored is the change in educational attainment by generational status.

Great strides have been made in reaching Hispanic students. Future research will focus on best practices, success rates, multicultural and diverse curricula, generational status, and other strategies for recruitment and retention of Hispanic students. Additionally, recent literature suggests that more qualitative studies such as ethnographies, case studies, and longitudinal studies will be conducted that emphasize student experiences (see Figure 9).

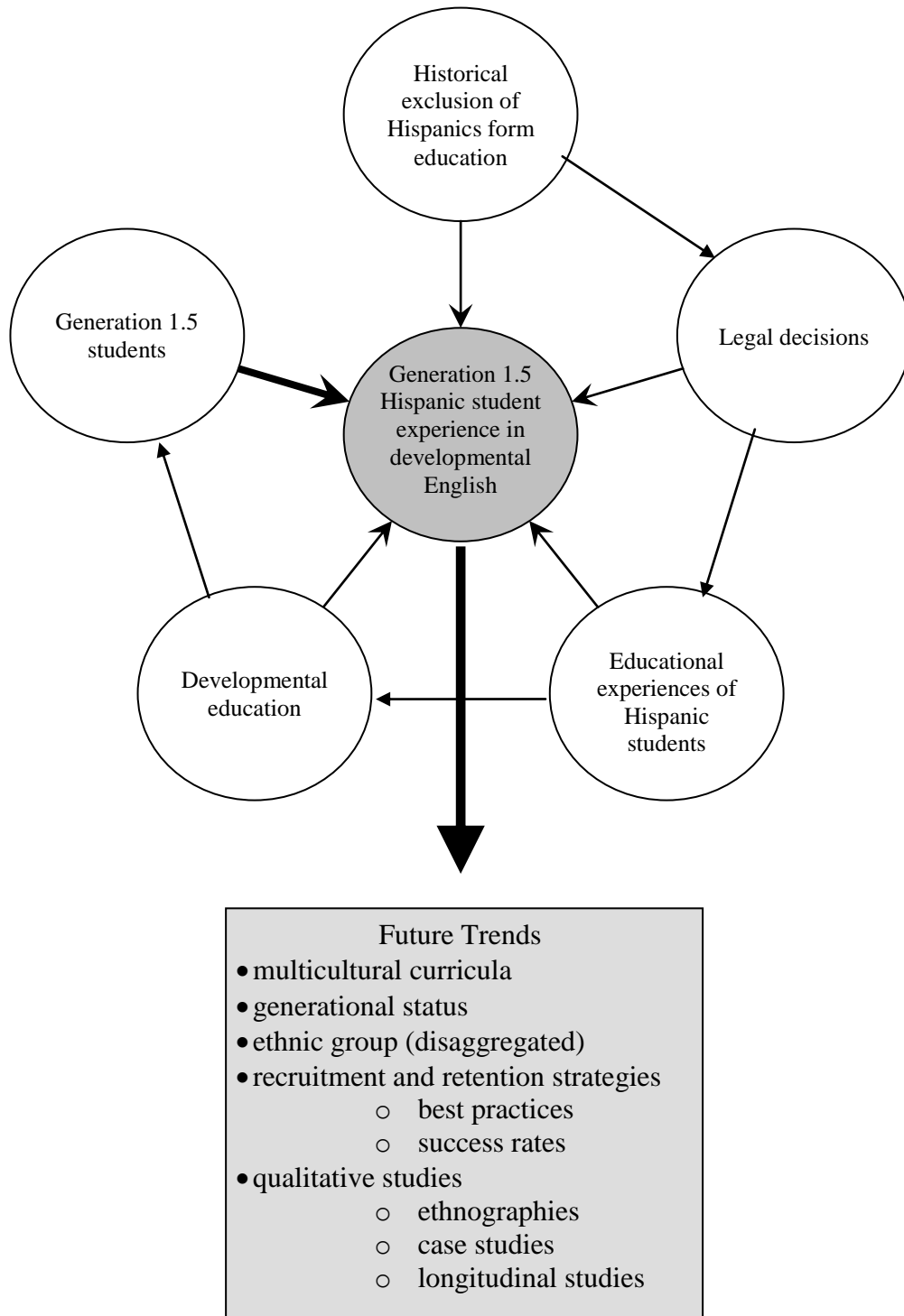


Figure 9. Need for study on Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English. Trends for future research shown.

Summary of Findings

The literature review shows that historically Hispanics were denied access to education and through legislation, they gained access to education. Although the right to an education was won in the courts, the reality of higher education for Hispanics shows a serious attainment gap. Studies have been conducted on students of color and more recently, on specific ethnic groups. However, the literature on retention of Hispanics is limited. First, some quantitative studies have been conducted on Hispanic attrition, completion, and success rates in higher education. These studies, though, do not cull the individual student experiences. Generally, the literature reveals that lack of money, cultural pressure, and lack of role models are the causes of student attrition. However, the actual experiences of students in class are not usually reflected in such studies, and attrition of Hispanic students is often blamed on the students rather than the educational system. Secondly, studies on students of color tend to look at ethnic groups in an aggregated fashion, and thus it is difficult to discern what is the experience of Hispanic students, or any other particular ethnic group. Thirdly, the literature on developmental education tends to be limited to the general student experience, and few studies exist on the Hispanic student experience. The studies that have been conducted on Hispanics in developmental education tend to focus on developmental math or on ESL programs. These studies reveal that students who are placed in developmental English may be labeled as slow or high-risk, which may impact their self concept, motivation, and confidence. The literature also shows that at times writing assignments are not relevant to Hispanic student experience and that a mismatch between instructor and student

goals in English coursework exists. Lastly, studies on Generation 1.5 students are appearing in the literature currently. These studies are looking at the Generation 1.5 college experience, high school experience, or ESL student experience. These studies reveal the importance of meeting the needs of incoming Generation 1.5 students through appropriate English assessment and placement and composition instructors who possess ESL training. Yet few studies exist on Hispanics in developmental English, particularly those that emphasize student experience. The emphasis of this dissertation is on the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English in community colleges. The study will help fill a gap in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE

Design of Study

Real education should consist of drawing the goodness and the best out of our own students. What better books can there be than the book of humanity?
(Chavez, 2006)

Theoretical Overview

This comparative case study used social critical methodology as its basis and was also informed by its derivatives, Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical (LatCrit). An overview of social critical science, Critical Race Theory, and LatCrit will follow to explain the social critical methodology foundation of this study, and how Critical Race Theory and LatCrit served as the tenets to judge and guide the research.

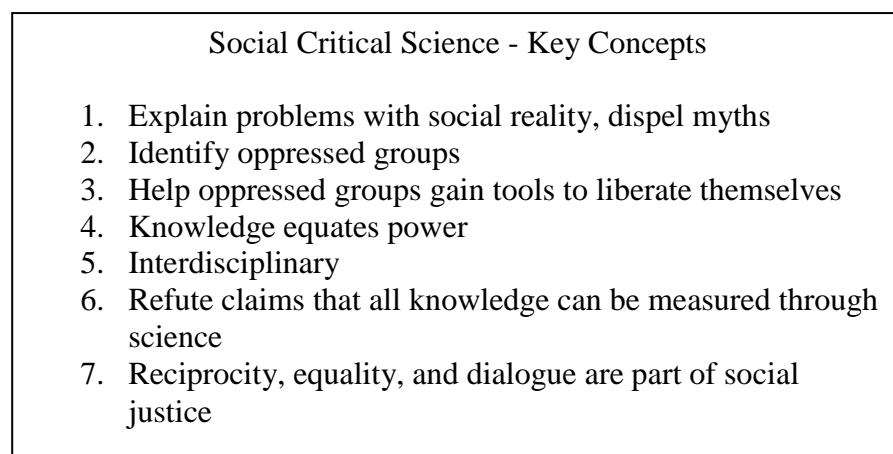
Social Critical Science

Social critical science is based on Western European Marxism and critical theories from German philosophers and social theorists at the Frankfurt School. Critical theorists distinguish “critical theory” from “practical theory” based on the notion that a theory is “critical” when its aim is to emancipate others from that which oppresses them (Bohman, 2005, pg. 1). Critical theory is adequate when it is “explanatory, practical, and normative” (Bohman, pg. 1). It must “explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation” (Bohman, pg. 1). Social critical scientists also view positivism as subjective, with knowledge shaped by the “human interest they serve” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 134). Social critical scientists refute any claims that all knowledge can be measured through science, and that adhering to reason

alone eliminates critical aspects of the human experience, including the ability to hope, pursue happiness, or take a position (Carr & Kemmis; Neuman, 2003; Van Heertum, 2005). Further, critical theorists emphasize that research should be interdisciplinary (Bohman).

In educational research, social critical science also focuses on the explanatory, practical, and normative aspects of critical theory (See Figure 10). Social critical scientists reveal the explanatory nature of social reality by dispelling myths that underlie social power structures and keep systems of power and privilege in place (Neuman, 2003). In terms of the practical and normative aspects, social critical scientists identify oppressed groups and help them to gain the tools they need to change their world (Neuman). Critical theory emphasizes that knowledge is power and that understanding how one is oppressed enables one to move into action and promote change (Seiler, 2006).

Figure 10. Social critical science key concepts.



Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory, similar to social critical science, focuses on promoting social justice and interdisciplinary research. Critical Race Theory is derived from social critical theory in that it is concerned with social justice, yet it makes central the “race-neutral institutional policies and practices [that] perpetuate racial or ethnic subordination” (Villalpando, 2004, pg. 42). Critical Race Theory came out of the work of legal scholars who developed a law framework that accounted for racism and eliminated subordination (Yosso, 2005). Current Critical Race scholars recognize that overt racism occurs less frequently in higher education today than it did in the past. However, Critical Race scholars seek to unveil the covert racism that exists within higher education policies and practices for the purpose of removing these barriers to the education of students of color (Villalpando). Critical Race Theory also examines the racism within institutions by recognizing the appropriate historical and cultural contexts of their policies (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995). Critical Race Theory aims “its critique on the slow pace and unrealized promise of Civil Rights legislation”, and the scholarship presented tends to focus on a Black/White dichotomy (Yosso). This, of course, limits the scholarly discussions about race to Blacks and Whites. These limitations of Critical Race Theory have led to additional branches of research that focus on the experiences of other people of color.

LatCrit Theory. LatCrit is not in opposition to Critical Race Theory, it is related to it. It emerged out of the “need to address issues that were broader than race/ethnicity in the case of Latinos” (Villalpando, 2004, p. 42). LatCrit expanded Critical Race Theory scholarship by focusing on how racism intersects with other types of

subordination, including sexism, imperialism, and language oppression (Crenshaw, 1989, 1993). LatCrit draws from civil rights literature, Chicano Studies, and Critical Race Theory to develop an understanding of Latino historical oppression (Gonzalez & Portillos, 2007). LatCrit emphasizes the complex experiences and identities of Latinos, including language rights, immigration, citizenship, ethnicity, gender, phenotype, culture and cultural preservation, identity, and sexuality (Gonzalez & Portillos, 2007; Hernandez-Truyol, 1997; Montoya, 1994; Martinez, 1994). It also looks at the intersection of race, sexism, classicism, and other forms of oppression (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Basic tenets of Critical Race and LatCrit Theory. Five basic tenets are shared between Critical Race Theory and LatCrit (see Figure 11). The first tenet is that both theories focus on race and racism (Villalpando, 2004). Race and racism are seen as “embedded in the structures, discourses, and policies that guide the daily practices of college campuses” (Villalpando, p. 43). The second tenet is that LatCrit and Critical Race Theory contest dominant ideology, challenging the notion that universities are race neutral, color blind, merit based, and equal opportunity institutions (Villalpando). The third tenet is that LatCrit and Critical Race Theory focus on social justice, where social justice is a recognized struggle to eradicate oppression based on race, gender, language, generation status, sexual preference, and class (Matstuda, 1996; Vallalpando). The fourth tenet is that LatCrit and Critical Race Theory legitimize the experiential knowledge of people of color and that it is indicative of understanding racial inequality. Further, the application of a LatCrit and Critical Race Theory framework requires that

experiential knowledge be seen as a resource, rather than a deficit, that is derived directly from lived experience (Villalpando). The last tenet is that LatCrit and Critical Race Theory focus on the historical context of policies and research and how they impact students of color (Delgado, 1984; Villalpando).

Figure 11. Tenets of Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Theory

Five Tenets of Critical Race Theory and LatCrit

1. Focus on race and racism
2. Contest dominant ideology
3. Focus on social justice and social justice practices
4. Recognize experiential knowledge
5. Emphasize interdisciplinary perspectives on historical context

Theoretical Perspective of Study

A social critical perspective served as the epistemological framework for this study. This framework upheld the ontology that racism and social injustice exist. The tenets of Critical Race Theory and LatCrit were used to judge and guide the social critical research for this study. This study aimed to meet the needs of Hispanic students through educational research that emphasized their lived experiences. An overview of the study design, the Critical Race Theory/LatCrit Justice Theory tenets, self disclosure statement, and description of the disciplines used to inform the research

follows.

Overview of action research. Students were asked to share their educational experiences for the sake of improving the college experience for themselves and other Hispanics. As these students articulated what helped them to learn and what impeded their progress, they became change agents of education. Through the acts of speaking about their lived experiences and listening to the experiences of others, they informed themselves, each other, and practitioners about which college practices encouraged and discouraged their learning. The students spoke, shared their insights, and dialogued with one another and their peers to improve student learning in the colleges they attend. In doing so, they helped to shape future instruction of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English. They provided suggestions about instruction and student services from the program level to the serving of individual students. The participants contributed to the improvement of instruction of students like themselves by providing practitioners with recommended strategies for teaching, learning, studying, and creating curriculum. They also dispelled myths about educating Hispanics in developmental English. “All men and women are potentially active agents in the construction of their social world and personal lives: that they can be the subjects, rather than the objects, of socio-historical processes” (Comstock, 1982, p. 371). The acts of these students illustrated Comstock’s social critical science perspective, as the participants became educational change agents. Although the students themselves were not at the stage of taking action in the sense of community organizing, they have a raised awareness about their condition within the developmental English classroom and in college. The actions

they take center on providing instructors with knowledge about instruction of Hispanics which may in turn improve the condition of education that Hispanics receive in developmental English at their colleges. The students are engaged in the initial action steps of constructing their own educational environments.

Qualitative methods. The critical social science perspective also influenced the research and methods approach of this study. Utilizing a qualitative approach for data gathering was important, because such studies that deal specifically with racism and oppression of Hispanics in development English courses were few. An in-depth study that emphasized the experiential knowledge of Generation 1.5 developmental English students was needed. The case study method selected for the research emphasized a close view of program participants and their lived experiences.

This study encouraged participant action through dialogue, and it did not employ traditional research methods that emphasized “experimental manipulation of people” (Comstock, 1982, p. 37). The students demonstrated action as they engaged in individual and group dialogues which challenged and questioned the instructional methods of their current and previous instructors and college policies. The participants and the researcher worked collaboratively through the data gathering and data analysis processes. For instance, the participants and researcher shared stories and experiences during the interactive, collaborative interviewing process. Students were asked about their educational experiences to elicit experiential knowledge, and the researcher answered questions about her educational experiences and experiential knowledge. This interview process is consistent with the tenets of Critical Race Theory and LatCrit in

that it encouraged dialogue, reciprocity, and equality. Further, students worked with the researcher on the data analysis process by way of extensive member checking. Through multiple member checks, participants had direct control over what data was included and excluded and how themes were presented. When possible, the researcher used the exact words of the students to present themes and key findings.

Justice theory. The social critical perspective in this study creates an emphasis on social justice, and therefore requires clear criteria from which to assess the research. The context in which communication exists can deeply impact the conditions of reciprocity and equality, and thus social justice. It was imperative for this study that a justice theory along with criteria for evaluating socially just research be created (see Figure 12). Using tenets derived from LatCrit and Critical Race Theory as a justice theory for this social critical research helped to maintain integrity and fairness of the research, create norms for critique, and provide criteria for evaluation. Below were the tenets used to guide this research.

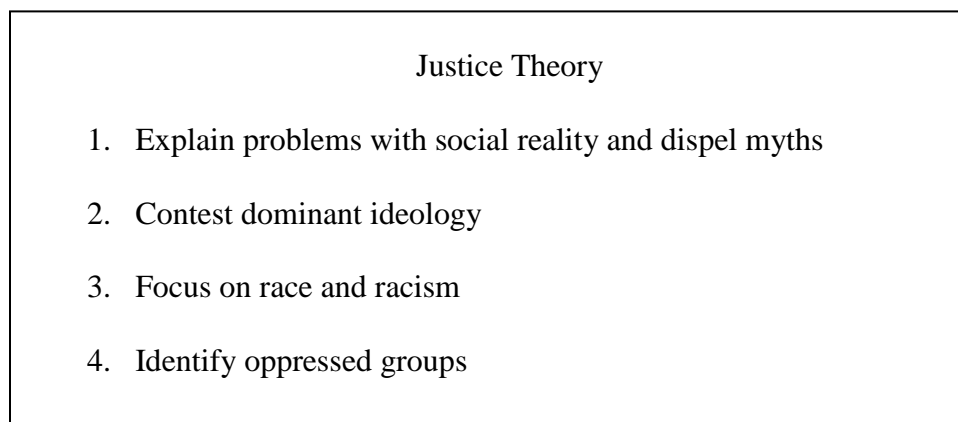


Figure 12. Justice theory tenets used to guide research for this study.

Figure 12. Justice Theory (Continued).

5. Help oppressed groups gain tools to liberate themselves
6. Use interdisciplinary research
7. Unveil historical contexts
8. Refute claims that all knowledge can be measured through science
9. Use methods that emphasize reciprocity, equality, and dialogue
10. Practice social justice

These tenets contributed to a more socially just and democratic social critical study.

Along with these tenets, it was important for the researcher to acknowledge her biases.

Self Disclosure Statement

The self disclosure of biases and assumptions when conducting a case study is critical according to Merriam (2001). When conducting a case study, Merriam suggested that an important aspect of verifying the findings of that study was to ensure that the biases and assumptions of the researcher were clearly stated early in the research. The researcher in this case study self disclosed biases to the participants, the instructors, and the college Presidents at the institutions she studied. She revealed her experience as a community college practitioner in multicultural humanities, a field which emphasizes reflectivity and sensitivity to cultures other than one's own. She also shared that in her past as a Latina student, she attended community college. She explained that she now served as a dean at a community college.

Personal experience with minority students in developmental English. As a Hispanic community college writing professor for 12 years, the researcher noticed the high percentage of minority student participants in developmental English (relative to their representation in the campus population). Some were properly placed there, while others were not properly placed in developmental English. The researcher had utilized writing portfolios and impromptu essays as alternate placement methods for students who challenged their mandated standardized test English placement. Typically these students would test into a higher level when more than one placement method was used. Many English teachers agreed that standardized testing should not be the sole determiner of student placement in English. The researcher was concerned about the high number of minority students who ended up in developmental English even though their skill levels were higher than their placement scores revealed. This low level placement resulted in the students needing more time to complete their educational goals, perhaps unnecessarily. Further, it may have negatively impacted their level of writing self-confidence, and worse, their desire to remain in college.

Personal experience as a Hispanic student. The researcher attended American River Community College in Sacramento, California for nearly two years. When she attended the college, the Hispanic population was quite small, and she was typically the only Hispanic in her classes. In her entire four years of undergraduate education (community college and a private four year university) and her two year master's program at Western Washington University, she had only White teachers. The first teacher of color she had was in the Oregon State University Community College

Leadership Doctoral Program. She was rarely exposed to African American, Chicano, or other American minorities' contributions to American history, art, and culture in her lower division education. Even after she earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature, she had never read an author of color in her entire undergraduate education.

It was not until her second year in graduate school that she read George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* and Malcolm X's *Autobiography*. Reading these works was her first experience reading authors of color, and this was the point at which she realized that not only could she analyze and interpret literature, but that she could indeed identify with it. She could be empowered by it, and she could help her community with the lessons that it taught her. This epiphany shaped her teaching of writing and of multicultural humanities for 12 years, and her current work as a Dean of Humanities at a community college.

She is passionate about a diverse curriculum for all students. She believes students need to relate to and identify with the curriculum in order to know about their group's contributions to academia, to be exposed to cultures and experiences different from their own, and to be empowered. All students deserve to have an inclusive education that validates their life and cultural experiences.

Interdisciplinary research. In addition to self disclosure, unveiling historical context through research was critical for this study. The research for this study centered on an interdisciplinary approach and included the following disciplines: Hispanic literature, Chicano studies, multicultural American history, Multicultural humanities, educational law, art, philosophy, educational research, composition studies, English as a

Second Language studies, and social science. This interdisciplinary approach helped provide the researcher with a wider knowledge base to understand the myths present about Latino students, identify which groups were educationally oppressed, and recognize the historical contexts of current educational policies and practices in developmental English. The readings included Takaki's *A Different Mirror*, Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory*, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Losey's *Listen to the Silences: Mexican American Interaction in the Composition Classroom and Community*, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*, McWilliam's *North From Mexico: The Spanish Speaking People of the United States*, Hayes-Bautista's *La Nueva California: Latinos in the Golden State*, Valdez's *Los Vendidos*, Harklau, Losey, & Siegal's *Generation 1.5 Meets College Composition: Issues in the Teaching of Writing to U.S.-Educated Learners of ESL*, and several other historical documents, reports, scholarly articles, novels, poems, plays, and books. The emphasis on the literature and history of Hispanics in several genres was an important tool for gaining historical information from their perspectives and in their words.

Traditional versions of American history and media images portray Hispanics as passive, lazy, violent, uneducated, unsupportive of education, unwilling to assimilate, undocumented immigrants, gangbangers, and welfare mothers (Cruz, 2002; Hayes-Bautista, 2004). This version of American history, though, was typically written, reported, published, and read by the elite, the educated, and those in positions of privilege. The researcher for this study read documents from various disciplines to expose myths about Hispanics and contextualize American History through the voices

and stories of Hispanic writers, historians, sociologists, artist, poets, playwrights, students, teachers, and lawyers. These writers reveal through their stories an “awaken[ing] a great consciousness of class conflict, racial injustice, sexual inequality, and national arrogance” in American History (Zinn, 2004, p. 28).

Using the Justice Theory, self disclosure of personal biases, and interdisciplinary studies helped to promote socially just research. This research identified an oppressed group of students, provided them with a manner through which to voice their concerns, and by doing so, helped them transform their educational experience and that of other Hispanic students as well. Further, since the researcher is a member of the Hispanic community and a former community college student, she was able to design a study that helped to promote social justice for the Hispanic community through egalitarian dialogue.

Method

The social critical perspective of this study influenced the method selection for the study. An explanation of the researcher’s method, criteria for truth, site selection, data needs, research ethics, and data analysis follow. The discussion of the method is presented from the social critical perspective from which the study was conducted.

Case Study Method

A social critical methodology and an instrumental collective case study method framed this research (Stake, 1995). This collective case study contained two cases, and each case consisted of a group of Generation 1.5 students of Hispanic origin in a developmental English program at a community college. One case included 5

participants and the other case included 3 participants. Hispanic students were studied for the purpose of gaining an understanding of their experiences as developmental English students. Stake (1993) called this method “instrumental” (p. 3) and “collective” (p. 3), and each case study was instrumental in learning about the experiences of Hispanic students in developmental English. The bounded system in each of the two cases consisted of individuals in a developmental English program that was “separated out for research in terms of time, place, [and] some physical boundaries” (Creswell, 2005, p. 439). These systems were also bounded because they contained a finite number of people who could be interviewed and of observations that could be conducted within it (Merriam, 2001). This study was created to provide insight into what experiences eight Hispanics students had in developmental English in the community college.

Rationale. The problem researched was the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English programs in community colleges. The choice to conduct a social critical instrumental case study made sense for several reasons. The social critical framework rested on empowering the individual through dialogue, developing and understanding of all of the participants within the setting, and studying the context and constraints of the situation for understanding (Comstock, 1982). Since interpretive researchers conduct studies of bounded systems in a natural setting, to explore a problem, and to focus on the participants’ perspectives (Creswell, 1998), using a case study was appropriate. Since this study focused on the experiences of Hispanics in developmental English at two campuses, interpretive research allowed for an opportunity to explore the experiences of two select cases in depth.

Table 1 (below) clearly shows the benefits of a case study for this research study. Although limitations were present in the case studies, the benefits far outweighed the limitations. The flexibility, in-depth exploration of a particular group and situation, and the ability to glean the individual and the group themes made this method particularly useful for this research study.

Table 1. Benefits and limitations of multiple case study method.

Method	Benefit for this study	Limitation for this study
Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed for in-depth study of Hispanic students in two developmental English programs for one semester • Occurred in natural setting, the developmental English classroom • Allowed for multiple student perspectives about an experience, in this case experience in a community college developmental English program • Cost effective in that travel to only two locations was needed • Allowed for the possibility of direct replication. Conclusions arising from two cases independently will be better than using a single case design. Context was explored in depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required a large amount of data collection • Transcription was labor intensive • Could not be generalized • Required ample time to gather data from more than one institution • Student attrition • Student self identification

This case study was particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 2001).

This study was particularistic because it focused on a particular phenomenon

(Generation 1.5 Hispanic educational experience) in a particular program (developmental English). This study was descriptive and resulted in the production of a thick description of the experiences of Hispanic students from two developmental English programs. The description included quotes from interviews and curricula, along with descriptions of events and classrooms and campus environments. This study was also heuristic in that it revealed student views about the phenomenon of Hispanic persistence and those students provided recommendations on how to improve developmental educational experiences for themselves and other Hispanics. The study was also a sociological case study that examines the interplay of demographics, social roles, institutions, power and racial prejudice (Merriam, 2001). It explored the experiences of Hispanics in two developmental English programs in light of these sociological factors.

Major authors. Table 2 (below) includes several authors on case study methodology and verification approaches in case study research. The table served as a starting point for research on case study method, and is not a comprehensive list.

Table 2. Case study methodology major authors.

Topic	Major Authors
Case study method	<p>Creswell, J.W. (1998). <i>Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). <i>Handbook of Qualitative research</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Lancy, D.F. (1993). <i>Qualitative research in education: An introduction to the major traditions</i>. New York: Longman.</p>

Table 2. Case study methodology major authors. (Continued)

	<p>Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). <i>Naturalistic inquiry</i>. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Merriam, S. (1988). <i>Case study research in education: A qualitative approach</i>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Stake, R. (1995). <i>The art of case study research</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Yin, R.K. (1989). <i>Case study research: Design and method</i>. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p>
Verification/ Criteria for truth	<p>Denzin, N.K. (1970). <i>The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods</i>. Chicago: Aldine.</p> <p>Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & Steinmetz, A.C. (1991). <i>Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles</i>. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.</p> <p>Erlandson, D.A., Harris, E.L., Skipper, B.L. & Allen, S.D. (1993). <i>Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods</i>. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). <i>Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction</i>. White Plains, NY: Longman.</p> <p>Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). <i>Naturalistic inquiry</i>. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). <i>Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods</i> (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Merriam, S. (1988). <i>Case study research in education: A qualitative approach</i>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Patton, M.Q. (1980). <i>Qualitative evaluation methods</i>. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Patton, M.Q. (1990). <i>Qualitative evaluation and research methods</i>. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Stake, R. (1995). <i>The art of case study research</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p>

Qualitative Design

This section includes discussion about the limits of knowledge gleaned from traditional research and why a qualitative design was used for this social critical case study. It also includes a discussion of the study's focus on liberation through speech, empowerment, participant self-identification, and the roles of the participants and researcher in the study.

Limitations of traditional research. Social critical scientists reject notions that all knowledge can be scientifically measured, and they recognize the limitations of traditional quantitative research. Social critical scientists posit that observable facts in research have discounted crucial aspects of the human experience, and thus traditional research has fallen short of its goal to improve all of humanity.

Traditional research held claims that all knowledge could be measured scientifically. Some of the past quantitative research, though, had limitations. The research on Hispanic students, for example, did not account for individual experiences, grouped Hispanics with other students of color into a single category, and did not account for generational status. These types of quantitative studies informed educational practice, even though some students on the tails of the bell curve got silenced. The use of the bell curve focused on what was true for the majority, but it had implications for the underrepresented people on the tails of the curve (Jacobs, 1999). The bell curve is often used to explain social class and race division as a function of "nature"; some people will naturally fall to the tails of the curve (Herrnstein & Murray, 1996). However, such claims ignore individual experience and social conditions that may impact the

research. Social critical researchers, therefore, refute such absolute claims and embrace social justice research practices that emphasize that knowledge is gained through reciprocity, equality, and dialogue (Bohman, 2005; Carr & Kemis, 1986; Neuman, 2003; Seiler, 2006).

Liberation through speech. Qualitative methods such as case study research promote the lived experiences of the participants, and they serve to uncover knowledge that may be absent in traditional forms of research. Interviews, focus groups, and dialogues are common methods for gathering qualitative research data. The dynamics of power and speaking and listening, though, can impact whose voice is dominant. Habermas, a member of the Frankfurt School and social critical theorist, recognized that the interplay of work, interaction, and power play a crucial role in the liberation or the oppression of groups. In a free society, one interest should not be dominant over the others and all people should have the same opportunity to take part in decision making (Seiler, 2006). Interaction through conditions of reciprocity, equality, and freedom derived from dialogue are critical in a free society as well (Habermas, 1998; Seiler; Simon-Ingram, 1991). Such equitable communications encourage social justice since “moral concern is owed equally to persons both as irreplaceable individuals and as members of a community, and hence it connects justice with solidarity” (Habermas, 1998). Practitioners and students who engage in a teaching and learning dialogue practice social action in education as students help improve their own education. Such practices show why a study that promotes the voices of students who have been largely silenced in educational research is critical for their liberation. Olivos (2006) discusses

the importance of dialogue in liberation: “dialogue promotes a language not only of resistance but of possibility” (p. 111). This notion is especially relevant in the United States, a free society, because it holds promises for equality, pursuing happiness, and receiving an equal education. Yet, the educating of Hispanics in the United States has shown inequity, thus impeding on the ability of some Hispanic students to take a position and strive for happiness and experience freedom in school and society. However, through dialogue, as students build their knowledge about their condition, they have the possibility to create positive change.

Hispanic participant empowerment. The role of the social critical researcher in this collective case study was to uncover the historical context and power structure of the educational experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanic developmental English students. The qualitative case study approach gave the Hispanic Generation 1.5 developmental English students an opportunity to express their lived educational experiences for the purpose of informing educational practice. Doing so helped them better understand their own educational experiences, find ways to help others, contribute to the improvement of current programs, ask questions, seek help, and talk to one another. This qualitative case study method also emphasized the experience of the individual, rather than emphasizing what is “true” for the majority, as quantitative research does. It served as an appropriate way to conduct socially just research in that it emphasized the individual experience and created research that empowers the participants of the study and their community.

Action. The Hispanic students in this study empowered themselves through their actions and choices. The students chose to participate in the study, engage in dialogue

about their experiences, and contribute to the data analysis process. The study's social critical research methodology and its collective case study method were designed to create an opportunity for participants to engage in research that emphasized their voices. The act of dialoguing was an initial step for these students in their process toward family and community empowerment. The dialoguing created the possibility for students to transform themselves, their families, and their college's developmental English program:

- as they told their own educational and personal stories
- as they learned about themselves and each other
- as they defined themselves with their own words and terms
- as they asked questions
- as they became participants in the research analysis process to promote changes in teaching, learning, and classroom environments
- as they supply practitioners with information on how to meet the needs of Hispanic students
- as they found cultural, linguistic, academic, economic, gender, and personal validation by meeting other Generation 1.5 developmental English students
- as they provided a historical context of this educational research.

Through the interviews and focus groups, the participants revealed how their experiences illustrated the complexities of the intersections of gender, language acquisition, class status, culture, race, generational status, educational attainment, and culture (Villalpando, 2004). The research used the language and identifiers that the

students used to describe themselves and reflects their perceptions in their own words. The experience of telling their stories also provided them with a sense of empowerment and validation.

Empowerment defined. Empowerment involves resisting systems of domination, and it is characterized by self-determination as opposed to coercion, intentionality as opposed to reaction, creativity as opposed to homogeneity, and rationality as opposed to chance (hooks, 1989). The participants freely chose to participate in the study, check and respond to the transcripts of their statements for accuracy, add to the transcripts, analyze and make suggestions to the research findings, and answer questions as they deemed appropriate. The very act of participating in the study was empowering for some of the students, since they had never before discussed their English education with anyone in a college. It also was the first step for some of these students in gaining knowledge about their educational environment and to understand the context in which they were receiving their education. The act of dialoguing created the possibility for positive change of their circumstances both educationally and within their communities (Olivos, 2006). Diane Gillespie (1996) explains how students can become change agents and empower themselves through telling their stories:

Analyzing the interview transcripts, we realized that how the students interpreted their experiences at the university was more important, often, than having any given experience, whether negative or positive. . . . We turned to case studies to afford students the opportunity to discuss critical moments that they might otherwise negotiate alone. During case discussions, students often become aware of the ways that they interpret their experiences; they can open up their thinking to entertain alternative ways of interpreting experience and create new possibilities for action, including changing institutional practices.

The act of student participants expressing their experiences empowered them in

multiple ways. For several students, this was the first opportunity that they have had to discuss their educational and college experience with another person. The act of intentionally speaking about their experiences produced new perceptions on the part of the speaker about those experiences. In discussing their experiences, students may change existing educational practices by bringing educators more awareness of what they need. Further, participants may tell friends and family members about their contributions to educational research. In doing so, those friends and family members will recognize that they, too, can contribute to the improvement of their own education through similar means. Student participation in the study was voluntary, and again, the choice to share their stories was a self-empowering act.

Participant self identification. Hispanics participating in the study needed to self define as Generation 1.5 Hispanics. For purposes of this study, Generation 1.5 Hispanics were defined as: students who received some of their education in the United States (K-12, GED, or ESL), of Hispanic origin, enrolled in Developmental English at a community college. Participants were bilingual or monolingual. Participants may or may not have been born in the United States, and Hispanics included only the following groups: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano and Latino. Previous studies of Hispanic students in developmental education were typically conducted at HSI's, where Hispanics constitute at least 25% of the student population, and 50% are below the poverty level as defined by the US Census (US Department of Education, 2006). However, these previous studies did not distinguish between the first, second, and third generation Hispanics on these campuses, and they did not account for student

experiences at non-HSI's or the experiences monolingual Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English. This study looked at the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English classes at one HSI community college and one community college serving significant numbers of Hispanics but that has not attained HSI status. The study will fill a gap in the literature on Hispanics students.

Role of student. The role of the student participant was multi-faceted, including roles as self-advocates, teachers, evaluators and interpreters. The participants shared their experiences in developmental English, which taught others about the “conditions of their world” and the “conditions that shape them” (Freire, 1998). The sharing of these stories will enable instructors to better understand how to improve the educational experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English. In teaching the practitioners through their storytelling, the students became self-advocates by actively participating in the creation of improved instructional methods. The participants, in collaboration with the researcher, served as evaluators of the data that were collected, and act as interpreters of that data.

Role of researcher. Additionally, the case study researcher had different roles as teacher, evaluator, biographer, interpreter, advocator (Stake, 1995). In the teacher role, the focus of the research was to determine what readers of the research needed to know about the experience these Hispanic students in developmental English. In the role of evaluator, the focus of the research was to analyze the data that were collected. In the role of biographer, the focus of the research was to explore the individual students and their experiences in depth. In the role of interpreter, the focus of the research was to

study the problem in order to connect it with better known studies, writings, and qualitative research data. All of these roles contributed to the creation of data that informs readers, describes unique participants, and adds to the scholarly literature of the topic. In the advocate role, the researcher shared the research with the study participants, and shared information with them about services available on their campuses for financial aid, transfer, and career assessment. Further, the researcher will explain to interested parties how the research helped Generation 1.5 students, and in what ways the research promoted change. The researcher will also fully disclose to the study participants how the research will be used. This is an important aspect of advocating for the students and respecting their contributions to the project.

Site selection. Site selection was influenced by the social critical perspective. Sites that served Hispanic students from various economic, cultural, and racial groups, as well as Hispanic students who possessed varying levels of language acquisition were selected to show the unique experiences of these students, and to reveal the diversity present within the group. Sites were also selected based on whether or not they were HSI's. One site possesses HSI status and the other site does not. The reason for selecting site with different HSI statuses was to expand the literature beyond studies that emphasize Hispanic student at one or the other type of institution. Two community colleges with developmental English programs that serve Hispanic students were needed for this study to ensure that an in-depth analysis was completed. The researcher examined how environment and instruction impacted the developmental English students in this study. Utilizing the collective case study design made sense for this

study because it served a “revelatory purpose” (Yin, p. 43). As a Hispanic researcher, I studied the experience of Hispanic students in two developmental English programs for the purpose of describing and better understanding their experience. The opportunity for a Hispanic researcher to gain access to Hispanic students in this bounded system in a community college was not common, and may therefore have provided information on how future educational studies can be conducted with Hispanic researchers and students. This access and the knowledge gained from the study was its “revelatory purpose” (Yin, 1994, p. 43).

Site access. As a former developmental English teacher and as a Hispanic, I had the ability to gain access to a group of Hispanic students in developmental English to conduct educational research that was not done previously on this population. I worked with the college presidents of two community colleges to seek access to their developmental English programs. These two colleges (referenced through the study by pseudonyms) were selected since Horizon Community College (HCC), a Hispanic Serving Institution, had a headcount of over 25% Hispanic students and Golden Hills Community College (GHCC) had a headcount of 20% Hispanic (CCCCO, 2006). The CCCCCO also showed that both campuses had a significant number of Hispanic students in basic skills; therefore finding study participants was more likely (HCC served 2,347 students in precollegiate basic skills in fall 2002, and GHCC served 529 precollegiate basic skills students in fall 2002). They were located in the same geographical area of Northern California, and they served Hispanic Generation 1.5 students.

Procuring the sites. The first step in procuring these sites was to receive

Institutional Review Board approval for the project. Then, once the sites were selected, the number of cases, provisions for respecting the sites, and someone to provide access to the sites was needed (Creswell, 2005). The researcher worked with administrators at potential sites and researched the viability of these sites for the intended study. After determining that these sites were viable, the researcher submitted this research proposal to site managers to gain access to each college. Once the researcher received site manager approval, she began the recruitment process. Students who chose to participate signed the informed consent documents that were approved by the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board and site managers (see Appendix C).

Data needed. In this case study, one-on-one interviews, the social context and physical settings of the sites, and focus groups were used to gather data about the experiences of Hispanics in developmental English. The one-on-one interviews and focus groups were taped with permission of the participants. Potential participants that did not want to be taped were not included in the study. Interviews occurred on two campuses and emphasized the individual student perspective as well as the group experience of Hispanic students in developmental English programs. Two interviews with each individual participant were used to provide them with an opportunity to speak with an individual voice. This aspect was an important part of empowering the individual participants. Guiding questions created by the researcher and then submitted to and approved by OSU's IRB were used during each one-on-one interview and each focus group (See Figure 13). Transcripts from the one-on-one interviews and focus groups were mailed to participants for their review and comment. Several of the

Figure 13. Sample of guiding questions used for interview of study participants.

First Interview – Guiding Questions

1. Were you born in the United States? If not, how old were you when you arrived in the United States?
2. How did being Hispanic affect your K-12 education in the United States?
3. Describe an experience when you received support in your elementary, middle, or high school education.
4. Describe a time when you experienced an obstacle to your education in your elementary, middle, or high school education.
5. Did you take developmental English voluntarily or were you placed into developmental English based on your placement testing results?
6. What is the purpose of taking developmental English?
7. How do you feel about taking developmental English?
8. How do you feel about yourself as a college student?
9. How does your family feel about you attending college? Your peers?
10. In what ways did your previous schooling experiences influence your experience in developmental English?
11. Describe a time when you received encouragement or mentoring in your pursuit of a community college education. How did this encouragement or mentoring impact you?
12. Describe a time when you experienced barriers in your pursuit of a community college education. How did these barriers impact you?
13. Describe the relevance of developmental English reading and writing assignments to your culture, experience, educational goals, and your learning of English. Did these assignments encourage or discourage your learning?
14. Describe your developmental English classroom environment. How does that environment impact your learning?
15. Who are your role models?

Focus Group – Guiding Questions

1. In what ways did your elementary, middle, and high school education impact your experience in developmental English?
2. Are Hispanics supportive of a college education?
3. Who or what encourages Hispanics to go to college?
4. Do you know a Hispanic student who has dropped out of community college?
5. What do you think causes Hispanic students to drop out of college?
6. Have you ever thought about dropping out of college? If yes, why?
7. What are the barriers to Hispanic Generation 1.5 students receiving a college education?
8. What barriers have you faced in community college?
9. What barriers have you faced in developmental English?

Figure 13. Sample of questions used for interview of study participants. (Continued)

10. What makes Hispanic students successful in college?
11. Do you know of a Hispanic student who has graduated from community college?
12. In your opinion, what made the student successful in completing college?
13. How does the relevancy of the assignments to your life experience and your culture impact your learning?
14. How do your families feel about you attending college? Your friends?
15. How have your educational or career goals changed since you entered community college?

Third Interview – Guiding Questions

1. Now that the semester is nearly over, describe how you are feeling about being a developmental English student?
2. What stood out to you from the focus group conversation?
3. What about your experience in developmental English has been useful? Disappointing?
4. What specifically in developmental English has been helpful in supporting your learning?
5. What would you change about the developmental English program if you could? What would you keep the same?
6. What advice would you give to an incoming Generation 1.5 Hispanic developmental English student?
7. How do you feel about your English writing skills? Reading skills? Speaking skills?
8. What skills have you learned in developmental English that you will continue to use in the future?
9. What does the campus environment feel like to you as a Hispanic student?
10. In what ways has attending college impacted you?

participants clarified points on the transcripts they felt did not reflect what they wanted to say, and deleted sections they did not want included. The students provided feedback and comments on the transcripts and their changes were included on the transcripts prior to coding and data analysis.

Further, the social context and physical settings of the classes within the

developmental English program at each college was studied to gain the best understanding of the student experience. Detailed notes were taken during the recruitment process and during the interviews regarding the physical campus environments. Students also shared their perspectives on the campus environments. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with participants during the beginning, middle, end of the semester to gain an understanding of their experiences as they participated in the developmental English program. All interviews, focus groups, and surveys were conducted in English. During the interviews and focus groups, some students used Spanish phrases as part of their responses. Ten students began the study, 8 students participated in the first one-on-one interview, and 6 students participated in the focus group and second one-on-one interview, and 5 participants completed the Developmental English Participant Survey (see Appendix D). Students anecdotally cited family emergencies, child care conflicts, transportation issues, work, and lack of time as reasons for not showing up for a scheduled focus group or interview or for withdrawing from the study.

The data that was needed for the study is illustrated in Table 3. The data collection focused on determining Hispanic empowerment or disempowerment in the classroom, along with the Hispanic student perception of the impact of the classroom environment. The curriculum materials, syllabi, course catalogs, student success rates in developmental education, and the classrooms, libraries, and colleges were used as additional data.

Table 3. Data and data sources needed to answer research questions.

Questions	Data Needed	Source
<p>What is the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English?</p>	<p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in the initial English placement process (e.g., mandatory or voluntary placement testing, self placement, academic advising).</p> <p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics with developmental education curriculum.</p> <p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics with curriculum.</p> <p>Previous schooling experience.</p>	<p>Placement tests and policies</p> <p>Academic advising policies</p> <p>Curriculum</p> <p>Classroom textbooks, materials, syllabi</p> <p>One-on-one interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Informal conversations</p>
<p>How did their previous schooling experiences influence their experience in developmental English?</p>	<p>The previous schooling experiences experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics.</p> <p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English.</p>	<p>One-on-one interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Informal conversations</p>
<p>What about these Hispanic students' developmental education experience is empowering or disempowering?</p>	<p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English.</p>	<p>One-on-one interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>College web site</p>

Table 3. Data and data sources needed to answer research questions. (Continued)

<p>How did the developmental English course influence the educational and career goals of the students?</p>	<p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in the developmental education classroom.</p> <p>Previous educational and career goals.</p> <p>Current educational and career goals.</p>	<p>Placement tests and policies</p> <p>Academic advising policies</p> <p>One-on-one interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p>
<p>How do the classroom and college environment influence the educational experience of these Hispanic students?</p>	<p>The experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in the developmental education classroom and in the college environment.</p>	<p>College catalog</p> <p>College web site</p> <p>One on one interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Environmental assessment of the classroom and the campus.</p>

Institutional review board. To ensure the protection of human subjects, consultation with experienced researchers and intensive study and reflection on the ethics of working with human subjects was done. After the proposed study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and after the IRB approved the study, written permission to access the colleges and program facilities was procured from the college Presidents at each institution. The IRB approval gave the researcher permission to do research at two institutions and with no more than 10 participants. At one institution, the study also underwent an internal ethics board process. The study

received approval from that college's ethics board prior to receiving written permission for access from that President. Then, the researcher contacted instructors to gain access to their individual classes in order to read a recruitment letter to students. Hispanic Generation 1.5 students were asked to voluntarily participate in the study, and interested students received an overview of the project. Students who wished to participate in the study submitted signed Informed Consent Documents (See Appendix C). The participants, the college Presidents, and the instructors were given detailed information about the scope of the project, institutional and participant anonymity, and distribution plans for the research (Stake, 1995). The anonymity of the colleges and participants was critical when conducting this case study since it was an intensive investigation of a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 2001). In order to minimize a violation of anonymity or the presentation of the case study in an offensive manner (Merriam), transcripts, written documents, and drafts of the findings were mailed to participants during the study. Participants were given the opportunity to review the final draft of the results and conclusions prior to its submission to the Dissertation Committee. The researcher presented results of the research with as little distortion as possible, while maximizing the potential benefits of the research (Kimmel, 1988).

Participants were selected based on the following criteria: be educated in the United States, be of Hispanic origin (Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Latino), be enrolled in developmental English at a community college, and be a member of Generation 1.5. Participants were bilingual or monolingual, and participants may or may not have been born in the United States.

Data analysis. Throughout the process, participants collaborated with the researcher and gave their perspectives on raw data, reports, and other aspects of the research process to ensure that the data were sound. To analyze the data, the researcher then used categorical aggregation and direct interpretation to identify patterns and develop naturalistic generalizations (Stake, 1995). Data were coded during the interview process and from transcripts (Stake). The researcher gathered the data, coded, assembled, and reassembled it to find its meaning. Themes emerged from the data which revealed “issue-relevant meanings” (Stake). After analyzing the data, the researcher developed “naturalistic generalizations” that others can apply to other cases or to their own experience (Stake). The researcher provided the context for the collective case study that encouraged readers to find their own connections to the stories, and thus create their own meanings.

Verification. Case studies require the collection of “extensive data using multiple forms of data collection” (Creswell, 2005, p. 439) and extensive verification (Stake, 1995). Triangulation, member checking, and thick description, along with Stake’s 20 criteria for assessing a good case study report (see Figure 14) were used to verify data for this study. Additionally, the researcher’s biases were provided to the participants to clarify assumptions about ideology and epistemology. The focus of verification was internal (Merriam, 2001). Data analysis was holistic for the purpose of seeking trends in the experiences of Hispanics in this program.

Triangulation. The researcher triangulated to increase confidence by using interviewing, observation, and document review as well as varied sources, methods, and

theories to verify and corroborate evidence and to find plausible explanations about the phenomena that was studied (Creswell, 1998; Mathison, 1998). The need for triangulation was contingent upon the data situation. When a data situation was critical to an assertion or was a key interpretation, extra effort toward confirmation was necessary (Stake, 1995).

Data source, investigator, theory, and methodological triangulation are the most common ways to triangulate a source. Data source triangulation, when the researcher looks to see if the case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently, was used in this study (Stake). Also, to increase confidence in an interpretation, researchers can follow direct observation with a review of old records (Stake). In this case study, varied methods for data collection and varied sources of data was used. The methods of data collection included one-on-one interviews, focus groups, informal conversations, and a Developmental English Participant Survey (see Appendix D). The Developmental English Participant Survey was developed by the researcher, and was pilot tested on developmental English students. The pilot test resulted in changes being made to clarify the language used in the survey. The survey was administered to the participants of this study after they had completed the final one-on-one interview. Additional sources of data included curriculum guides, syllabi, college student handbooks, college policies for advising and testing, course assignments, college websites, and classroom environments. These various methods and data sources together with the observations of the researcher and the participants created a procedure for triangulation (Creswell, 1998; Stake). The students were interviewed to give their

observations and their viewpoints about the description of the phenomenon. The taping of the interviews and focus groups allowed the researcher to capture as closely as possible the exact words of the participants. Verbatim transcriptions were created to ensure that the data collected was complete and accurate. These triangulation procedures were used to describe the experiences of the Hispanic students in developmental English programs. Member checking was also built into the research plan for working with participants.

Member checking. Member checks occurred as the researcher solicited participants' views about the "accuracy and palatability" of "rough drafts of writing where the actions or words of the actor are featured" (Stake, 1995, p. 115). The process was collaborative, and the researcher aimed to reveal the information with language and themes that resonated with the participants as much as possible. The participants were given the opportunity to express their perspectives, rather than to have their words interpreted, and possibly misinterpreted. The researcher mailed the students copies of the drafts and transcripts with postage paid envelopes so that they could provide written feedback or changes on the documents. The verbatim transcripts were member checked for accuracy and for additional participant input prior to those transcripts being coded. The participants defined themselves and their experiences, thus providing the data for thick description (Merriam, 1998; Stake).

This type of member checking was particularly important when considering working with Hispanic populations because Hispanic respondents may have showed deference to a researcher, especially if that researcher was a stranger (Marin & Marin,

1991). Part of this deference comes from the notion of “respecto;” (Marin & Marin, p. 15) which refers to the necessity to acknowledge one’s personal power. So, when the researcher asked respondents for disclosure of personal information, the researcher allowed Hispanic respondents to save face in order to maintain “respecto.”

Another component of this dynamic was that some Hispanics have a fear of disagreeing with those in power (Marin & Marin, 1991). So, the research design procedures acknowledged power dynamics and the attainment of “respecto” to help protect participants and to allow them the opportunity to clarify their statements as needed. Some women in the study, for instance, let the males speak first or remained silent on certain points during the focus groups. However, some of the women then chose to express their opinions on issues or clarify their viewpoints through the member checking process. Thus, these women were able to remain respectful of cultural and gender dynamics during the focus groups, while clarifying their perspectives in the member checking process.

Building trust. One issue that can arise when interpreting data collected from Hispanic participants in this type of study is the possibility that respondents may “provide extreme, acquiescent, or socially desirable responses; the possibility of responses not reflecting reality; and the presence of incomplete responses or of missing data” (Marin & Marin, 1991, p. 111). Deference to those in power and acculturation pressure may influence the responses of Hispanic interviewees. One way to encourage a sense of trust and to encourage self-disclosure among Hispanic respondents was to use a Hispanic interviewer (Marin & Marin). Since a Hispanic researcher interviewed the

participants, the level of trust may have been positively influenced.

Ortiz (2003) states that research designs should match the characteristics of the researcher and the participants so that “rapport can be established easily and a rich array of data resulting” (p. 42). Ortiz also points out that characteristics such as economic status and cultural variation may impact the “displays” (p. 42) of participants even when the interviewer and the participant are from the same ethnic group. The researcher was of Mexican descent, but also a former community college student from California who struggled in high school English and whose parents are Generation 1.5 Hispanics. In her thirties and a mother, she was close in age to the three older students in the study who also had children. She also taught developmental English at a community college. The researcher and the participants shared several characteristics, which also may have positively increased trust levels. The researcher believes that sharing common characteristic with the study participants helped to establish rapport. The three interview design (two one-on-one interviews and one focus group) was used to help build trust. Marin and Marin (1991) also suggest using informants and direct unobtrusive observations to corroborate findings in the data. The students were asked to provide direct observations and to give their perspectives on the experiences of their peers, thus they served as informants.

Stake's 20 criteria. The criteria suggested by Stake (1995) were used to assess the soundness of the case study report in this study (See Figure 14). The researcher determined the audience for the study and then examined the report to decide what needed to be done to make the case report accessible for those readers (Stake, 1995).

First and foremost, this case study report was written using the words of the participants in order to be accessible and understood by the participants in the study, as well as other Hispanics. Additionally, the report needed to be understood by practitioners in the community colleges.

The design of this study accounted for the need for extensive verification, through triangulation, member checking, thick description, and report criteria. Additionally, the study accounted for cultural differences that may have impeded the accurate flow of information. Doing so helped to provide descriptions that provided plausible explanations for the phenomena studied and the data presented in the case study.

Closing Thoughts

This case study research will add to the literature on Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental education. The case study provided an understanding of a specific group of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students who required developmental education in English. Previous studies have not been written on the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanics in developmental English. My aim in conducting this research was to empower Hispanic students by giving voice to their experiences, and to inform practice through student voices in the area of English instruction.

Figure 14. Stake's 20 criteria checklist for a case study report.

Stake's 20 Criteria Checklist for Case Studies.
Is this report easy to read?
Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole?
Does the report have a conceptual structure (i.e. themes or issues)
Are its issues developed in a serious and scholarly way?
Is the case adequately defined?
Is there a sense of story to the presentation?
Is the reader provided some vicarious experience?
Have quotations been used effectively?
Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, indexes effectively used?
Was it edited well, then again with last minute polish?
Has the writer made sound assertions, neither over or underinterpreting?
Has adequate attention been paid to various contexts?
Were sufficient raw data presented?
Were data sources well chosen and in sufficient number?
Do observations and interpretations appear to have been triangulated?
Is the role and point of view of the researcher nicely apparent?
Is the nature of the intended audience apparent?
Is empathy shown for all sides?
Are personal intentions examined?
Does it appear individuals were put at risk?

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Findings

“I thought all teachers were white when I was coming up”
 (“Cesar,” Student Participant, 2007)

This study was guided by the research question, “What is the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English?” The research results found will be presented in the following manner. First, each case will be presented with an overview of its campus and developmental English program. Second, physical descriptions of the campuses, their students, and their climate are provided to give readers a vicarious experience of each campus. Third, after these campus snapshots are presented, an overview of the students who participated in the programs will be given to provide a vicarious experience for readers about the students. Fourth, a description of each campus focus group will be given to provide readers with a sense of how each focus group was conducted and what issues emerged in each group. The case studies will include information about the student participants, physical campus locations, student demographics, conditions under which the interviews took place, and examples of data collected in the interviews. The key findings will be presented thematically at the end of this chapter, indicating verbatim the responses that students provided individually and in focus groups. The researcher presented the themes in the students’ voices, and minimally interpreted the words of the students. This choice was consistent with the methodology in that student voices are primary in the research.

Case Study: Horizon Community College

This case study includes an overview of HCC’s history, demographics, service

area, and developmental English program. The information presented comes from researcher observation, interviews, college catalogs, campus websites, approved curriculum, curriculum guides, instructional materials, syllabi, and assessment handouts from summer session of 2007. However, the actual college is referred to with a pseudonym, in accordance with IRB and the study protocol, to protect the participants and the colleges. Therefore, specific references that would compromise the identity of the institutions are not identified by the researcher.

Campus history and demographics. First, an overview of the College's history, who its students are, and the county it serves is necessary to have a clear understanding of the experience of the students within HCC's developmental English program. HCC is located in central California and was founded in 1935 as part of the local school district. In 1962, it was separated from that school district and formed into a college district. Today, the district covers a territory encompassing 2,400 square miles, spanning five counties. The present campus was built in the 1970s and it features five instructional classroom buildings and seven other buildings, including a library and a child care center that was established in 1994. The campus also contains a 1,400 seat theater.

HCC is a Hispanic Serving Institution (CCCCO, 2006). However, Hispanic students are underrepresented when compared to their presence in the county population (24% of students, but 30% of the county population), and this suggests a need for greater outreach to the Hispanic community. The college is one of the top 50 schools in the nation for 2007 in terms of Associate degrees awarded to Hispanics (Bradley, 2007).

HCC served 2,347 students in precollegiate basic skills in fall 2002 (CCCCO,

2006). The college also serves Hispanic Generation 1.5 students. The College had 19,000 students registered for classes in 2001. The College serves more female students than males (59% and 41% respectively in 2001).

According to data from the California Department of Finance and the US Census Bureau, more than seven percent of the population received government assistance. The per capita income of County residents is \$21,544, over \$8,000 less than the California average.

Developmental English program. The English 79 Program is a developmental composition course one level below college transfer level English. HCC English faculty recognized in the past that several students in college level English courses were not adequately prepared for such a course. The English faculty created a course that would help students gain skills they need to be successful in English 1A, or college transfer level English. English 79 currently fulfills the composition requirement for the AA degree, but it does not count for college transfer level English.

Currently, students are required to take a placement assessment to determine their English language proficiency. The assessment department policy at HCC states that the purpose of assessment is to help students enroll in courses in which they can be successful and to provide students with a productive educational experience. The department policy does not define “successful” nor “productive.” Several exams for assessment are offered to students, and the assessment center recommends that:

- 1) Computer-Adaptive Placement, Assessment, and Support System (COMPASS);

- 2) ESL students without a US high school diploma take the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA); or
- 3) Students seeking financial aid take the Career Programs Assessment Test (CPAT) to satisfy federal regulations.

The program is designed to serve students with varying backgrounds to provide them with the appropriate writing and grammar skills needed for success in college writing. Most of the instructors use a process model for instruction that includes prewriting, drafting, editing, and final drafts. The curriculum includes: grammar, syntax, punctuation, the writing process, reading and analyzing essays, and in-class writing practice.

The program also includes a Mastery Exam which occurs during the sixteenth week of the semester. All students take the expository exam, which determines whether or not they are eligible to enroll in English 1A. It also counts as 40% of their course grade. The students are given a timed exam to write on a prompt that is based on a reading. According to the department policies, all essays are scored by faculty other than the instructor of record for that student, and the essays are marked only with class codes and social security numbers.

The program provides materials to help English 79 students prepare for the Mastery Exam, and those materials include sample readings, prompts, essays, grading rubrics, explanations about essay prompts and taking in class exams, and suggestions about what a student can do if s/he does not pass the Mastery Exam. If a student does not pass the Mastery Exam, instructors may choose to support a student whose work

they feel is passing, who has attended class, and who has produced quality work all semester. The portfolio includes already completed essays that were written in class, the student's Mastery Exam, a letter written by the student expressing why the portfolio should earn a passing grade, and other forms of evidence that show the student's writing ability.

Overall, the program has defined policies, clear explanations of how developmental English classes articulate, established procedures for assessment, and models and tools in place to assist students in their completion of the course sequence. The course also benefits students who are not planning to transfer, but who matriculate and pursue their Associate's Degree.

A journey on the campus. The campus, upon initial approach was very easy to locate. It was well signed from the highway, and it was simple to find the campus. Parking was ample. The grounds of the campus were wooded, with lots of shade trees. When approaching the buildings, one gathered the sense of leaving the town and entering another community. What contributed to this sense was a gate that opened into a courtyard setting. The main courtyard contained a large fountain and pond area, the library, the cafeteria, and the bookstore. Buildings were situated around the main plaza. Most of the buildings were designed in a similar way, with doorways that led to open plazas. The open plazas were surrounded by classrooms that rose up three and four stories. The sky, though, was visible from the plaza floors. Each plaza contained seating areas for student interaction, and in some cases fountains and plants. The plazas created a sense of peacefulness and were clearly promoting student interaction.

The students. While waiting for class, students spoke amongst themselves. They also spoke to the researcher without prompting. Outside of class, students discussed their previous classes, their upcoming assignments, and their personal lives. They talked on their cell phones, yelled across the plaza to other students, and joked around. In one building, students from a local junior high school were touring the campus. They were attending a summer camp for math that is held on this campus annually. Some students were bilingual, and conversations in Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, and English were heard throughout the campus. Hispanic, Black, Asian, and White students milled around the campus and in the main plaza.

The classrooms. Although the classrooms had plain walls, little advanced technology, and were cramped, these features did not seem to hinder the sense of community created by the instructors and students. The classrooms contained basic technology, such as overhead projectors, chalkboards, and instructor desks. The classrooms felt a bit crowded, since very little free space remained in them. However, the classroom communities exhibited a feeling of warmth and comfort. Within the classes, it was evident that the students felt comfortable to ask questions, interact with the instructors, and speak to one another. The interactions were friendly, jovial, and relaxed.

The developmental English classrooms were held in various locations on campus, and the department itself was not segregated from the main campus. The instructors in the program were responsive to the inquiry for classroom access, and showed tremendous interest in the study and its use for their program. They encouraged

students to participate in the study, and they discussed the importance of educational research with their classes. Again, this was unprompted, for the researcher abided by the protocol established with Oregon State University's IRB. The researcher only read the recruitment letter and answered questions that the students asked. The students and the teachers had a good rapport with one another.

The climate. Staff in the bookstore, assessment center, administration office, President's office, mail room, library, and cafeteria were friendly and supportive. The staff also appeared to represent a wide range of ethnic diversity. When walking around the campus, it was common to be greeted with a smile from students, staff, faculty, or administrators.

The core area of the campus, near the pond, bookstore, cafeteria, and library, was constantly active. Club sales, art classes, advising booths, students interacting, children playing, and outside vendors were common sights in this main area. Most of the students in the study requested to meet somewhere in this main area. The library contained pictures of leaders from various cultures in its entry way (which could be seen through its windows from the quad area). The library was named for Hispanic leader Cesar Chavez and displayed a Dios de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) altar during October. The food in the cafeteria consisted of the usual junk food, but it also served foods from several different cultures, including Thai, Mexican, and Italian. The campus was vibrant, active, and comfortable.

Case study: Golden Hills Community College

This case study includes an overview of GHCC's history, demographics, service

area, and developmental English program. The information presented comes from researcher observation, interviews, college catalogs, campus websites, approved curriculum, curriculum guides, instructional materials, syllabi, and assessment handouts from summer session 2007. However, the actual college is referred to with a pseudonym, in accordance with IRB, to protect the participants and the colleges.

Campus history and demographics. The College is part of a college district that was founded in the 1960's. It is also located in central California. When the College was first developed, a site was selected that encompasses around 200 acres. GHCC became a part of that district, and the College first opened in 1970 with around 2,000 day students. The campus consists of 12 permanent buildings. In recent years, the campus completed its master plan.

GHCC continues to grow. Enrollment at the GHCC campus is approaching 14,000 students currently. Of this total, the student population is one-third White, one-third Asian, and one-sixth Latino. The campus serves around 60% females and 40% males. Ten percent of the graduates from GHCC are Hispanics. The College serves diverse students.

Students come from varied economic backgrounds with nearly one-third of students reporting incomes that are considered below poverty and over one-third of students reporting incomes that are considered middle income. GHCC served 529 pre-collegiate basic skills students in fall 2002 (CCCCO, 2006).

The developmental English program. The GHCC English department describes itself as teaching skills useful in all other disciplines, and emphasizes that these skills

will improve a student's chance of success in other courses as well. The department possesses a clear description of entry and exit skills for each course offered at below college level (courses numbered below 100), at basic skills competency level (100 level), and for college level transfer (300 level and above).

Students are encouraged to take placement tests when they enroll for classes. However, students cannot easily find information about the specific types of exams that will be given in the college catalog or on the assessment, English, or college web sites. Students are informed that academic tests are scheduled for no cost, and the tests include English, ESL, and mathematics assessment. Multiple measures are used for assessment, but the identical measures are not used by all counselors. Counselors may consider study skills, English language proficiency, motivational level, goals, learning skills, career aspirations, transcripts, academic performance, and need for special services during the assessment process. Students are also placed into courses by completion of a course prerequisite with a C or better. Faculty, though, must check for completion of the proper prerequisites.

English 101 is a course that meets writing proficiency requirements for the Associate of Arts degree, but it does not meet the requirement for college level transfer English. The English 101 course also provides preparation for students to take the college level transfer English course, English 300 (previously English 1A). The curriculum includes emphasis on reading and writing, and the writing process (predrafting, drafting, revising, proofreading, editing). Skills learned included summarizing, using correct sentences and grammar, mastering punctuation, and

incorporating sources in an essay. Students are expected to produce an adequate time essay. The approved curriculum for the course states that the class includes a departmental final.

Overall, the English department website provides materials useful for instructors of composition, and somewhat useful for students. The materials include sample syllabi, samples of students from varying levels of English writing (developmental through college level), grading rubrics, entrance and exit skills for students at all levels in the developmental and college level program, and information pertaining to instruction (e.g. teacher roundtables, departmental practices for prerequisite checking, electronic classroom instruction information). The link to the English page has a section for student resources, but the section is blank. Students seeking specific information on what type of assessment test to take, how to prepare for a departmental exam, or what to expect in a Writing 101 course would find it difficult to do so. The college catalog, though, does contain a short list of career options for people seeing English degrees, and such a list is helpful for students looking for career pathways.

A journey on the campus. The campus, located between two major highways, was easily accessible from both. The campus was well signed from the highway, and it was simple to find the campus due to its clear campus signage. Parking was ample, but it was hard to know where the main buildings on the campus were located. However, upon walking up the main stairs from any of the four main sides of the campus, appropriate signage made it clear where all of the buildings on campus were located. The grounds of the campus were largely flat, with few shade trees (well groomed) and

ample cut grass and swept concrete. The main grassy areas contain tables for sitting and eating. These tables were adjacent to major walking pathways, though, and did not appear to be used largely for studying. Food wrappers and plastic containers were on the ground near the tables. The main area of the campus was its library, and it was undergoing construction. The sounds of huge machinery digging and the beeping of trucks as they backed up permeated the campus. The wind also blew frequently through the campus, stirring up dust and leaves.

The instructional and student services buildings are one-story brick structures, with long hallways in between the rows of classrooms. Faculty offices are sprinkled throughout the classrooms. In between the structures were concrete steps that led to wooden seating areas. These areas were quieter than the areas along the main grassy areas near the library. Although the areas were sunny and hot, with little shade, they were quiet and more conducive to reflection and study. At times, the buildings seemed abandoned, since they were so quiet.

The cafeteria and bookstore, adjacent to one another, had tables and benches in front of them. They were partially shaded and seemed to attract students, since more students congregated near this area than anywhere else on campus. The cafeteria contained a colorful, multicultural mural on one large wall. Round tables with chairs filled the area, and several students studied, ate, and talked in this area. The atmosphere inside was low key and quiet, but it was inviting. The bright colors, warm lighting, and round tables made it a comfortable location for students to study. In front of the cafeteria, though, the atmosphere was louder as students joked with one another

and talked in large groups.

The students. Few students congregated outside their classrooms. While waiting for class, students sat quietly in the classrooms, or leaned on the brick walls adjoining the classrooms. Students tended to congregate near the cafeteria and bookstore; some students socialized loudly outside of the cafeteria while others met quietly inside the building. A mixture of White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic students walked throughout the campus, but Whites appeared to be in the majority. Students seemed comfortable talking to others in their peer groups. Some students spoke in English, others in Spanish, and others in a mixture of Spanish and English. Within some classrooms a genuine sense of camaraderie and collaboration among the students could be felt. The writing lab also had students who were working with their tutors, or in groups. A sense of focus and collaboration among students was apparent in that lab space. Other students also met near the library in an indoor area. They talked and socialized, though seating was limited in this open area.

The classrooms. The hallways leading into some of the classrooms contained posters of projects, advertisements for multicultural programs, and sample writings. The classrooms varied in terms of their temperature, as some were very cold (and the weather outside was exceeding 90 degrees typically) and some were quite stuffy. The classrooms had ample physical space, did not feel crowded, and all contained large windows that brought in a great deal of natural light. The classrooms varied in terms of the technology available, but several possessed computer aided instruction capabilities.

The developmental English classrooms were held in various locations on

campus, and the department itself was not segregated from the main campus. The instructors taught multiple levels of English. The instructors in the program were responsive to the inquiry for classroom access, and two instructors showed clear interest in the study and its use for their program. One instructor encouraged students to participate in the study. Again, this was unprompted, for the researcher abided by the protocol established with Oregon State University's IRB. The researcher only read the recruitment letter and answered questions that the students asked. The students and that teacher had a good rapport with one another. They asked questions, interacted with one another, joked around with the researcher, and even waved goodbye to the researcher, and yelled, "Good luck." Other classrooms exhibited an atmosphere opposite to the one described. An atmosphere of apathy on the part of both the instructor and the students seemed apparent in some instances. The students sat in silence as the instructor talked about class for that day and introduced the researcher. The students did not ask questions, interact with one another, or exhibit any indication of interest or disinterest either through smiling, nodding, frowning, or shaking of their heads. The buzz of the lights could be heard clearly in some of these classrooms.

The climate. The staff members in the administration office were friendly and helpful. Many instructors were enthusiastic, student-centered scholars, who cared deeply about the well being of their students. The staff also appeared to represent a wide range of ethnic diversity. The writing center tutors were helpful and eager to assist students with their learning. When walking around the campus, it was common to see few people, perhaps because it was summer session. It was quiet, with the exception of

the constant roar of construction equipment. The core area of the campus was not easily distinguished, but the library was a prominent building, and the area in front of the bookstore and cafeteria seemed to promote interaction among students. The campus was fairly quiet, calm, and formal. No campus events were witnessed by the researcher, even though the researcher was on campus in the morning, afternoon, and evening on more than 15 occasions. Again, perhaps summer session contributed to the lack of campus events.

The Interview Participants

All of the students were willing to share their experiences and to ask questions. The interviews were interactive and including storytelling from the researcher and the interviewees. The students were asked the guiding questions as outlined in the protocol (See Appendix B). Follow-up questions were asked as necessary when relevant, as the researcher attempted to help the participants describe their experiences. It is appropriate within this methodology for sharing of stories to occur, and the storytelling brought out additional data. The researcher will describe her interaction with the participants to provide a vicarious experience for readers. Her descriptions are based on field notes and conversations with study participants, and the intention of such descriptions are to provide up-close representations of the participants and their backgrounds using their words (see Table 4). Students were given the opportunity to select their own pseudonyms; 5 participants chose their own pseudonym. The researcher assigned the other 3 participants pseudonyms. Also, references to schools or towns were given pseudonyms or were referred to with common nouns to protect the identities of the

students and the educational institutions they attend.

Table 4. Participant demographics.

Student	Bilingual	1st Gen College Student	Age Entered USA	Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Dependent Children	Married
Cathy	X	X	US Born	X		1	
Ryan	X	X	1	X		0	
Maria	X		27		X	1	
Mama	X	X	25		X	2	X
Cesar		X	US Born		X	4	
Michael	X		US Born	X		0	
Ana	X		US Born	X		0	
Alex	X	X	8	X		0	
TOTAL	7	5	n/a	5	3	8	1

Source: Participant interviews

Cathy. “For some reason I have this feeling inside of me that I can do it. . . . I’m going to go strong for that master’s,” she said. When the researcher met with Cathy, the first interviewee, the student was initially a little bit late because she had checked on her son in the campus child care center. “I had to work my butt off to get him in that daycare,” she said. She came back to school after being out for one year because she had a son. She met the researcher outside on a bench in front of her classroom. No students were present since it was between class sessions. Cathy smiled a lot, and she

spoke confidently and clearly.

Cathy, a developmental English student in her early twenties, worked and had a one year old son. She was also the first in her family to attend college. “My mom graduated high school in Mexico which I don’t think counts over here. My dad finished in like the seventh or eighth grade only,” she said. She established a clear educational goal for herself to obtain a master’s degree in the area of criminal justice. “So yeah, you take a lot of English classes. It’s hard, but you know, I can get through it,” she explained. She tested into developmental English, even though she was a high school graduate. She has found developmental English to be helpful, “Cause right now I am learning so much more than in high school. I understand everything. I’m actually getting A’s on my essays now.” English 79 was her second developmental English course; her first course was English 33 and was a part of the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS).

She first decided to come to college and join EOPS when she was in high school.

During high school, they would bring us to [college] just for tours and stuff like that. And one student mentioned the EOPS program and how much it helped her. She mentioned how they helped to buy your books and all this, and this was when I was freshman I think. And that EOPS stayed in my mind. I kept telling myself I’m gonna be in that program once I go to [college]. And I did. So I found out about it when I was a freshman, and I just became a student in the EOPS.

Her mother also supported Cathy’s education from an early age, and she helped her get into programs for advanced children. Cathy began school in preschool. She possesses bilingual skills and was born in the United States.

Ryan. “I feel good about being in school. It is more important to me than it was

before. . . . I wanna give my parents the joy of seeing me graduate college,” Ryan said enthusiastically. Ryan, a first generation college student in his early twenties, came to the United States from Marguerite, Mexico when he was age one. His parents spoke only Spanish, and he learned English growing up: “It was a little rough at first kindergarten, first grade, and stuff like that ‘cause you’re not too familiar with the lifestyle, language.”

The first interview was conducted at a table that sat next to the library in a shaded area. Since the location was next to the library’s wall, it was unlikely that passersby would hear. Ryan was eager to talk, friendly, and had high energy. He arrived in casual work clothes (a bright button down shirt and trousers). Ryan spoke with a quick pace, energy, and enthusiasm. He asked many questions and told several stories about his educational background.

I actually went to school in [one town], and that was not too good of a neighborhood. My parents are like there is too much gang stuff. And I started getting a little bit involved in that you know. And she didn’t like that and she actually moved me to [another city] . . . then I went to high school there, finished my junior high there and graduated from [that school]. . . . It definitely changed my pathway. I definitely got aside from all that stuff. Just a different area.

He contrasted his educational experiences in a diverse, lower income school with those in a predominantly white middle class school. When he experienced being in the minority at his school, he said, “it wasn’t really too serious of an issue. ‘Cause you can tell you know. . . . People wouldn’t actually believe that I was Mexican or Hispanic. I look, I fit in pretty well.”

Ryan identified himself as Hispanic. He graduated from high school in 2003,

and he came to college after being out of school for three years. English 79 was his second developmental English course. “When I got into my 70 classes, the one that I was in before the one I’m in now, 79, it all just started making sense to me. It started clicking.” He made plans to transfer to a four year college to pursue his bachelor’s degree in communications.

Maria. “I think I am very dedicated. I am very dedicated. I am perseverant. And I am tired, too. ‘Cause I am a single mom and I have to take care of that little person, and I am taking child development classes to learn. To help him,” Maria said. Her son is three years old. Maria spoke slowly, with very little energy. Her voice was soft and her words began at a medium volume and then they would decrescendo as she spoke. Maria wanted to be interviewed in front of the cafeteria, at a table near the front doors. Students came in and out of those doors during the interview, and a few times, she waved at people. She appeared to be middle class and wore a navy blue dress. When the first interview took place, Maria was eager to share her experiences from her education in Mexico. However, she seemed distracted a bit during the interview. It soon became evident why Maria was distracted:

The barriers I have experienced is that I am not receiving any money. My ex husband is not providing at all, and everything that I got to pay the things that I got to pay. And, uh, coming to school is kind of challenging these days because I don’t have money. Sometimes I feel dizzy because I came early, and I don’t bring lunch because there is nothing to bring from home. ‘Cause my mom is the one who cooks, and she doesn’t have anything. We are struggling.

Maria clearly showed the signs of a person who needed food. However, she insisted on finishing the interview.

In her mid thirties now, Maria came to the United States from Mexico City

when she was 27 years old. She attended law school in Mexico, but she had to leave.

I was about to finish, but I didn't finish because I came to see, well my family was here and I was the only one living over there. I only studied; I didn't work, because they supported me. But because of family situation I decided to give up everything over there for a, my dad was very ill and he needed me.

Her father, who passed away, was a chemical engineer. After working in real estate and restaurants, Maria went to adult school in the United States, then enrolled in ESL courses at a community college, and was then referred to a developmental English course. She said she came to college "just to learn the language, because the jobs are really, really ugly." Her current goal included finishing her Associates degree and then pursuing a law degree in the United States. She referred to herself as Hispanic.

Mama. "I feel satisfied what I am doing. I know I can do more. Better grades but I cannot give 100% because I am mother so I have to share time with my family," said Mama. She and her husband have two young children, a son and a daughter. Mama was born in Michoacán, Mexico and came to the United States when she was 25 years old. She is 35 years old now, and she speaks English and Spanish. Mama wore casual clothes, jeans and a short sleeved light blue top, to the interview that took place outside at a table in front of the cafeteria. Students were passing by, but this did not distract Mama. She appeared excited, but perhaps a bit nervous about her English speaking skills. "I notice I need more English to write correctly, to understand when I read it and to speak it. Especially to speak and to understand it." (At times during the interview, she asked for questions to be repeated). She took ESL courses at a community college, and then she was referred into English 79, which was her first developmental English course.

Mama was soft spoken, polite, and exhibited enormous caring for others. Her

tone and volume were even and steady as she spoke. Mama discussed her purpose in attending college: “To be prepared. To be ready to help out other people and be a part of this country. Specially that the country can see me as part of it.” She referred to herself as Hispanic, but clearly she wanted to contribute and help others in the United States. Her academic goal was to earn her bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education.

And once I came here to college I. At the beginning I just wanted to learn English but later I learned the possibility to study, to continue my study because my dream was always to have a career. And I was told it was more difficult. I say okay I want to take only one certificate, the mini one. But when I almost got it, why can I not try it to be more prepared, I decided to go get more. Now I almost get my AA degree.

Mama showed gratitude for the opportunity to receive an education: “Since I was a child, my parents told me that the education was the only inheritance they could let me someday. They said that the knowledge was the key that open a lot of doors.”

Cesar. Cesar met the researcher in front of the library, but wanted to go to a less busy location near the main plaza for the interview. They walked to an area that contained a tree surrounded by a brick planter, and they sat on the planter to talk. The location was semi-private, and students walked by in the distance. When asked about his educational history, Cesar shared the following:

There was a math test that high school students take. And I took it when I started studying for my GED and I took it at the end. And I just scored off the chart, and the teacher was like, “Man, go to school and get your Math degree.” So right there when that teacher suggested that, that’s when I said, “Hey I’m gonna do that.”

When Cesar was in his senior year of high school, his girlfriend got pregnant: “We had a child that year, so I had to go to work instead of going to school.” He did go back to finish his GED and graduated when he was 25 years old. “I had to take that crazy test.

The writing an essay test. I passed math and everything and the other parts. But it was the essay test I had to take it like three times.”

Cesar returned to college in his thirties, and he now has four children (ages 15, 12, 9, and 6). When Cesar arrived for the interview in his painting clothes directly from work, he was punctual. Cesar had a strong, deep voice and he spoke with conviction about his love of math and his desire to receive a higher education. He did not ask for clarification about any of the questions, and it was evident he understood them. He possessed a high level of knowledge about academic methods, even if he did not use the traditional nomenclature to describe those methods. When discussing his sixth grade teacher, he said, “She just made things more simpler. And then, I guess she put things in layman’s terms where I could understand them. Where other teachers stuck to the book.”

“My immediate family right now, they’re supportive with it. My kids don’t understand why. They just know I am going to school,” he said when asked how his family felt about him attending college. His parents have died, but he thought his mother graduated from high school and his father “had a fourth or fifth grade education.” He is a first generation college student, born in the United States, who does not speak Spanish. He identifies himself as “human first” and mixed race:

I go with mixed, because I don’t really consider myself one or the other. Because I am part of them both I guess. When I go to my mom’s family, it’s all predominantly [Mexican]; when I go to my dad’s family it’s predominantly Black.

Michael. A recent high school graduate, Michael exhibited enthusiasm about his future.

We encourage ourselves. “Let’s go and get this done. We have gotta do this.”

Then, if we do good we, just like it is like a step closer to our goals and dreams. We like to daydream a lot. You know we talk about what we're gonna do and what we want to do. Professions and what we think.

Michael had plans set for his future in the area of business. "I want to become a business major; I want to transfer to San Jose State." He is twenty years old, and he felt encouraged by his parents to go to school. "And my parents, they of course really want me to go to college." His mother, a real estate agent, "graduated from college when she was 23, I believe," and his father, "graduated from high school in Mexico." Michael lives at home with his parents and has no children, but he wants to go away to San Jose State to "grow apart and mature." He works between 24-32 hours per week.

Michael was born in the United States, and he was raised speaking Spanish and English. He first attended kindergarten when he entered school. He identified as Mexican American, but he didn't feel that being Mexican American affected him much in school. He said that "If anything . . . they said in high school that when I applied for financial aid it is beneficial to be a race besides White American."

Michael wanted to meet the researcher in front of his classroom at 9:00 in the morning. Since it was summer, the air was dry and hot, yet not unbearable due to the early morning hour. Michael was on time, and wanted to be interviewed in a spot that was more private. The interview was conducted at a site on the outer perimeter of the building that was next to a heating and air conditioning unit. There were several tables with fixed chairs in this location, and limited shade provided by partial roofs covering the tables. The location was quiet, and it was unlikely that other students would hear the conversation. Occasionally the heating and air conditioning unit would turn on and off

during the interview. Michael was dressed in a casual shirt and trousers that were neutral in color. He spoke clearly and articulately, with a broad vocabulary. Michael spoke thoughtfully, and selected his words with care and precision. His voice was medium in tonal range, and he spoke somewhat quietly, but not timidly. He talked about the experiences he had with two different teachers in developmental English.

My first teacher was older and she was an older teacher from [the college], she was more of a lecturer, monotone. The teacher I have now is younger, and she can relate more to us and joke. So she sets a setting that's more, you can pay attention to it.

Ana. Wearing jeans and a trendy shirt, Ana was on time for the interview. It was early in the morning, but Ana exuded energy. When asked about her experiences in K-12, Ana discussed the challenges she faced when she first learned English.

It felt kind of awkward 'cause at first I didn't know how to speak English that young. So I had trouble. I understood it. My parents didn't really spoke it at home, English. So, it was kind of hard, so I had trouble. But I understood. And through the years I got better and understood.

Ana was born in the United States and raised by Spanish speaking parents. She attended kindergarten when she entered school. Her father received some college education, as did her sister. Ana has seven sisters and one brother, and she "is the fifth one." She spoke concisely and giggled intermittently throughout the interview. She asked for clarification a few times during the interview when she was unsure about a question.

The interview took place prior to her English class, and she met the researcher initially in front of that classroom. She appeared a bit nervous at first, but she seemed willing to engage in the conversation. Her speaking voice was bubbly, and her pacing was quick and concise. The interview with Ana took place at a table along the main

concrete pathway adjacent to the library. Students passed by on occasion, but this did not seem to bother Ana. She discussed her experience in her second developmental English class. She said, “We help each other out basically. She, our teacher, makes us get together in partners and groups. So, we try to help each other out.”

Ana worked 30 hours per week during summer session. She has no children, but babysits her siblings and her nephews. She established a goal to own a small business. She was not sure yet what she wants to major in: “When I came to enroll here, they asked me for what my major was. And I said, ‘business,’ but I wasn’t quite sure. . . . So probably like an AA.” Ana was exploring her options for a major and said she just needed to figure out what she was passionate about.

Alex. Although he arrived a few minutes late, Alex did not appear to be stressed. He carried a large backpack, and did not seem deterred by the high temperatures of the day. When asked about his K-12 education, Alex talked about his experiences with his instructors.

My high school teachers they support me, and they wanted me to go to college or a university. They just said that they wanted me to continue with my education. And I play like soccer, too, and they encouraged me to go and try out for some soccer teams, too, in colleges. And I did that. I played for [this college] for two years.

The interview took place on a windy day around noon at a table near the front of the library. No students were in hearing distance. He dressed in nice jeans and a t-shirt. He spoke with confidence in a relaxed voice. “It was a good experience . . . they help us a lot.” He shared his goal of becoming a physical education teacher, and he said that “the coaches they encourage us to do our work and try to transfer us to the next level. So

four-year college.”

Alex, a recent high school graduate, came to the United States from Jalisco, Mexico when he was in the second grade. He was unsure of his mother’s educational background “I not know how far she go,” but his father “just went to high school in Mexico, then he just came to the US.” Alex is a first generation college student. He shared information about his goals, his supporters (both family and friends) and his bilingual educational background. He said, “At first it was hard. I didn’t know the manner of which. The good things was there was a lot of Hispanic kids in there so they helped me out. . . . Yeah, they were bilingual.”

Alex self-identified as a Generation 1.5 Hispanic during the recruitment process. During the summer session, Alex worked 30 hours per week and took one class. He has no children. He originally placed into English 51, two levels below college level writing, so English 101 was his second developmental English class. “I didn’t feel bad, and it has been helping me a lot. The teacher says that this class will help me a lot with the next one.” He said he felt “great” since he was going to college. “I am trying to do something with my life. I don’t see that many Hispanics around (laughs). But it feels good to be here,” he said.

HCC Focus Group

On the day of the focus group at HCC, the temperature was nearing triple digits. Students of all ages walking around with backpacks stuffed with books filled the campus. One student showed his children some koi in a nearby pond, while another student painted at her easel. Other students sat on benches, talked on their cell phones,

and studied. One student in a wheelchair with limited use of his arms was trying to pick up his lunch, which had fallen on the ground, and another student walking by stopped to help him. One by one, four of the focus group participants arrived at the arranged meeting spot in front of the library. About five minutes prior to the focus group, one student called and said she could not make it due to transportation issues. In the meantime, the other students decided to sit at a table near the cafeteria for the focus group.

The focus group lasted about one hour and fifteen minutes. Throughout the focus group conversation, several students walked by the group on their way into or out of the cafeteria. This did not seem to distract any of the focus group participants. The researcher began the focus group by asking the students if they had ever experienced discrimination in their education. Quickly, all of the students jumped in to share their perspectives.

MAMA: For here, some other people feel like even when teachers say I don't discriminate to anybody, they do against the Hispanic people. She said that. But personally, I haven't feel it.

RESEARCHER: So you have heard of other students going through that, but you haven't experienced it yourself?

MAMA: Uh hm.

MARIA: I think the form of discrimination, that I told you about my mom, that she, it was that they didn't consider her native. And that was the teacher wasn't Hispanic. A woman. She was kind of old to be teaching, so maybe.

MAMA: I think discrimination comes more from Hispanic teacher than American teachers.

RESEARCHER: That's interesting, so why do you think that is?

MAMA: Maybe they want to force you to be more uh, they want you to work harder.

RESEARCHER: Maybe push a student harder to do better?

MAMA: Could be.

MARIA: I think they they're not impacted. They don't know where you come from. And they just ignore that, everything you do. Here in the college, in the school for adults. But here in the college I haven't experienced anything like that. In fact, it's really good compared to the education in Mexico. Because in Mexico they cannot discriminate you that the teachers they think they are gods.

MAMA: Especially if you look different to them, economic level.

RESEARCHER: And that's something I have gathered from other students. Where you could go to school. Do you think class status impacts education in the United States?

RYAN: Yeah, in a way because people who go to private schools get a better education. Private schools. People who don't have money have to go to public schools. Out here, too.

The conversation was interactive and lively. The students continued talking about everything from how they self identify, to financial aid, to barriers they have faced, to gender roles in the family, to the stresses of raising kids, working, and going to college.

Ethnic background. The students were asked to share how they referred to their ethnic background. These are the thoughts they shared about their self identification, but also about how native born and immigrants Hispanics feel about each other.

RESEARCHER: I asked a lot of you how you liked to be referred to as Hispanic, Chicano, Latino. Can you talk to me about how you like to be referred to and then why. . . .

RYAN: Um, I don't know. I consider myself Hispanic. I don't really. You know, that's what I consider myself, I don't mind. I don't know, I don't really know the difference.

MAMA: Hispanic.

MARIA: I'd say Hispanic, too.

RESEARCHER: What do you say?

MAMA: Hispanic.

RYAN: I don't say like you know Mexican or Latino or anything like that. I say Hispanic. I don't know.

CESAR: I was taught to say Mexican and American or Mexican.

The conversation continued.

MAMA: Yeah, for some reason when I hear that words I don't understand who is Chicano. Actually like Chollo, Chicano something similar for me. Sounds like that, though.

MARIA: And the way they say that in class, Chicano. There is class isn't there? It's like the Chicanos that have been, like Cesar Chavez, like that have done something outstanding. . . . I think the most general term would be Hispanic. Because there are certain, and I know certain Chicanos they use the term Chicano to exclude the one who don't necessarily speak fluent English. And I feel discriminated by my own people. I consider them my own people, but they don't consider me their own. I can't tell them you're Mexican; you're free to have both nationalities. But, they don't see themselves, they, maybe because we don't speak the same language.

RESEARCHER: What do you think about that Cesar?

CESAR: As far as?

RESEARCHER: In your case do you feel like there is the other side of that coin? In terms of, do you feel that people who are born in Mexico, do they look at you the same?

CESAR: No. No they don't. Because I don't, especially me. My mom chose not to teach me Spanish. Because she said it would be hard for me to learn English and Spanish. So all she taught me was English. Sometimes I feel like I don't fit in.

RESEARCHER: See and I have that experience, as I told you, my Spanish is so, so. So I feel that way around other Mexicans, that it's like well, or well you're one of those. You're not a real Mexican, you don't really speak Spanish. You know. So that's why I am saying when you're saying that there is the other side of that, too. Which is unfortunate, because I think you know, we all share backgrounds and ancestry you know.

MAMA: Right now? It's like, "Are you a citizen or are you a resident?" No, oh you're illegal. Okay you go. It's like a separation.

RYAN: Separation.

MAMA: Yeah, a separation.

MARIA: The way that I personally feel, I feel rejected when someone doesn't speak the language.

RESEARCHER: Doesn't speak Spanish or English?

MARIA: If they had the chance to speak it, if you're Hispanic and you now cannot do Spanish. You can learn the language. Why, I kind of feel there is rejection, I don't know. Or they don't want us to fit in. Maybe I don't know because we don't have the language.

The students expressed their feelings of rejection and not being included because of citizenship, language acquisition (Spanish or English), and immigration. The conversation during this portion of the focus group was somewhat tense, but the students were listening carefully to one another trying to understand the various perspectives they brought to the table. This moment in the focus group was the area that revealed a lot of trust among the participants.

In the one-on-one interviews, a few students reflected on this moment of the focus group and shared these observations. Cesar, a native English speaker, reported his thoughts about students who were ESL learners. He discussed, "how much more difficult it must have been for them. Them not having English as a first language, and as a second language." He showed an understanding of how the experience of ESL learners was different from his own experience. Maria also commented on the focus group, saying that "[Chicanos] got more the message of the teacher," but she also acknowledged they struggled as well.

Ryan said this about the focus group experience:

Mainly how everybody kind of related to one another about the reason why none of us, you know, qualified, the way at school does their financial aid now. Even though we're all different classes, of you know, economically, like. All of us had a complaint about that. Just, you know, people, even though some of us are a little bit different, as far as you know, English and how much time we've been here in the States, and if we were born here. English has always been a struggle it seems like for most of us. Um, fortunately enough, I've been here my whole life so it's been a little bit easier for me. But that's just one of the things that stood out for me. Learning English, learning language, financial aid. A barrier that a lot of us have. And also the support, you know, from my parents and my family members. Some parents are you know like go ahead and do it you know, but some are like, "oh, do it," but at the end of the day they tell you not to. It's very mixed, you know, kind of.

His comments reveal another perspective about the similarities and differences among the students. The time at which a person immigrates or if they are native born impacts their experiences in school and in everyday life.

Overall, this focus group exchange and the one-on-one interviews afterward showed the complex intersections that exist regarding language acquisition, immigration status, native born and non-native born Hispanics, cultural affiliation, and even regional affiliation. The students in the final interviews talked a lot about the commonalities they shared with their peers, yet this area prompted a lot of discussion amongst the group members as they explored some of the facets of being Hispanic.

Drop outs. As the focus group continued, some different perspectives emerged about why Hispanics drop out of school.

MARIA: They have all the intentions, but there is road blocks, one after another.

RESEARCHER: So tell me about that? What are those road blocks?

RYAN: Especially Hispanics because a lot of Hispanic families, you know, both families, both mom and dad work or just dad. You know, and they don't, you

know. To them, it's more about supporting the family than, you know, taking time to go to school. And that's sometimes a road block, too, for a lot of people.

MARIA: I don't think, I think because the economic factor is the problem in the Latino family. I don't know. Eh, what's stops like people with good intentions? They are like, they are thinking I'm gonna be a doctor, but just by saying that they are not gonna get to do that. Uh, and then their dreams, their family starts telling them that dream is not going to work. And then they start finding obstacles like the money that you don't qualify. Because it's really, really.

MAMA: And sometimes there are fathers who that they don't think it is not too much important to get an education. Like as a student, you don't find motivation, and you don't find that your father is proud of you that your motivation goes down so to speak. "Why I have to study, they don't say nothing. They never go to my school to ask."

MARIA: Yeah, there is a lot of discouragement.

RESEARCHER: What do you think Cesar?

CESAR: Yeah, I think the kind of thing with the financial being either there or not there. And some families think it is just better to go to work and find a job right after high school.

RESEARCHER: Uh huh.

MAMA: Sometimes they say next year you can go. We need the money right now.

RYAN: Yeah.

MAMA: And once you stop the school, it is very hard to go back.

CESAR: Very hard to go back.

RYAN: That's how it was for me, you know, when I graduated high school I took three years off and then I came back and it was hard, you know.

The students continued their discussion about the barriers faced by Hispanics in college and the barriers they faced themselves.

Mixed messages. As the conversation continued, it was evident that the women

received mixed messages from their family members about their attending college. The men talked about the pressure they experienced to go to work to support the family.

MAMA: Yeah, especially how she said, we sometimes feel. The first time I feel guilty sometimes because I said oh my God, I am putting a lot of attention on my own study. But I need to be worried about their school. They are just learning. They need to have to be, they need to have good, um I don't know how to say "aciminetos"?

MARIA: Foundations.

MAMA: Foundations, yes. And I already know how, I know. I need to put more attention on them. And I feel guilty of that. Sometimes at times we don't have time to play with them.

MARIA: Yeah, that is a big one. I'm like ah but. My mom says, "Oh, he's been waiting for you." But I'm like. I have been at the tutor lab all day long. I need to get this. I need to get this. She's like. She supports me, but she says, "Poor him, you abandoned him." And I'm like.

MAMA: Or sometimes, husbands and wives and kids, don't support us, and don't say okay. That is not important. My job is important. That is for fun. You need to stay home.

MARIA: Yeah that was the case with my brother. He always discouraged me. But, now that he has some, some, how do you say some downfall in his life, because he's been busy now and all that being a business person you know. And right now he is not doing good really for thinking health as a consequence of things not going the way he thought. Now he's telling me, "Go to school, go to school. That's good. That's good."

RESEARCHER: So he's kind of rethinking what he thought before?

MARIA: And then I, I tell him of people you like they say that are in college. And he just stares at me and he's like I know that this thing is a possibility.

RESEARCHER: So, Cesar what do you think about that since you have kids and you are coming back to school?

CESAR: Well it was hard. I had to go to work because I started having kids at a young age, at 18. So, work. I had to cut school off. I had an athletic scholarship, and I had to turn it down because of kids, school, and work. . . . I kind of think like I lost out on something. But, you know, with my daughter, I love her. So I

gained something, too.

The students kept talking about how family encouraged them to attend school, but on the other hand their families discouraged them. As the discussion continued, the gender roles were explored a bit more. “It’s more sentimental for us and it’s more economical for them,” said Mama about the gender roles in Hispanic families. Cesar responded, “Yeah all my aunts and all, all them hardly ever worked. The husbands did all that.”

In all, the students listened intently to one another, and they discussed their experiences in detail. The students had vibrant discussions about Hispanics who are ESL speakers and Hispanics who are non-Spanish speakers. They discussed their experiences in developmental English, the curriculum, and the mastery exit exam. As the focus group ended, some of the students supported one another by sharing books and specific information about their developmental English classes.

GHCC Focus Group

Establishing meetings with students at GHCC was difficult. Initially there were five students in the study from their campus. Students agreed on times and dates to be interviewed, and several times students did not show up and had to be rescheduled. One student never showed due to a family medical emergency. Another student withdrew before being interviewed due to school and work and family pressure. Thus, GHCC had three participants who completed the first round of interviews.

The focus group was scheduled for 4:00 in the afternoon. The air was hot and dry, and the parking lot was nearly empty. Day classes were over, and the evening students were not yet on campus. The campus was quiet, and campus construction had

pretty much ended for the day. Michael and then Ana showed up at the designated meeting spot in front of the cafeteria for the focus group, but Alex did not arrive. He was phoned, but he did not return the call. Since this was the second attempt to hold the focus group (only one student showed up for the last scheduled meeting), the small group met without Alex.

The focus group lasted about one and half hours and took place at a table near the library along the concrete walkway. The students seemed relaxed. A small group of students were goofing around nearby, but they were far enough away that their presence did not seem to distract the participants. The participants and the researcher talked about how the semester had been going and about their lives in general. Then, after a few minutes of catching up, the researcher asked the first question about their high school English experiences. The students shared a bit of information, but the conversation really began after the next question was asked.

RESEARCHER: Um, okay. In general do you think Hispanics are supportive of a college education?

ANA: Supportive. It depends.

MICHAEL: Yeah, it depends the percentage. Like of where the type of Hispanics like native born or immigrants or.

RESEARCHER: So tell me some of those differences. How would a native born person who is Hispanic versus um somebody who is Hispanic versus um somebody who is an immigrant?

MICHAEL: A native born would have like more support like uh from their parent. Like if they're first generation, they will have more support from their parents. Or rather than the immigrants that once and try to like it. It is harder for Them 'cause they have to work. They have to start from scratch when they come down here.

RESEARCHER: Okay.

MICHAEL: They're just more focused. I think they focus more on work. It depends. There's a lot of them who come to school part of that.

RESEARCHER: So you think there is tension of like just having a responsibility just to survive and that trying to go to school is harder if you're an immigrant?

MICHAEL: Especially when it's your second language.

ANA: I agree with him. I feel like it's harder on immigrants. They are the ones that have to start from scratch. Compared to all the Chicanos that are born and raise here. They don't have to start from scratch, they're in a position where they have a choice to either continue with education or not. As for support, I feel that Chicanos have more support rather than immigrants because of the position they are in. But it all depends upon the situation, too.

MICHAEL: Because they already have a house and a family.

As the questions were asked, Michael usually answered first. Ana followed his statements with her responses. Michael exhibited confidence in his speaking abilities and was able to process information quickly without hesitation. Ana tended to be more reflective, a non-verbal processor, who liked to listen to others and think about her answers. (Her style was reflected during the member checking process, when she expanded and clarified several of her statements with written notes). The interactive, thoughtful listening and speaking continued on for the next hour and a half.

Encouragement. After a few more questions, the students discussed what encourages Hispanics to go to school. They talked about the desire of some students to get "bigger money" and "things." Then one student started talking about the various types of groups of Hispanics.

RESEARCHER: Yeah. Like you're saying there are different types of groups, and who are those groups?

MICHAEL: Some of those groups are just like um, like the groups of Hispanics that kind of like hang out in cliques in high school and they kind of get in trouble. Any race really has that type of group. But, like some Hispanics might get um, more gangbangers. A lot of gangbangers don't go to school. They would be the ones who live in low income communities.

RESEARCHER: Uh huh.

MICHAEL: They don't tend to go to college.

RESEARCHER: Have either of you had experience with like gang members in high school at all? Or did they stay in high school or do you think?

MICHAEL: Uh, somewhat. My sister hung out with people that were related to gangs. She was never involved. They were good people to me; it's just that I didn't see them graduate school much.

RESEARCHER: So you thought that they were good people but not, they weren't necessarily involved in school?

MICHAEL: Involved, yeah. Not in school.

RESEARCHER: So that kind of goes, it moves forward into college then. They don't come here.

MICHAEL: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: So, okay.

MICHAEL: And the funny, the ironic thing is that they um recommend me stay in school, do well in school.

Ana continued the discussion by talking about the types of things that motivated Hispanics to stay in school.

ANA: I think what encourages people to go to college is seeing their own family or relatives or others and decided they don't want to live that way. They want their lives to be better. And to be doing something with their life and not to settle for whatever.

Positive role models and peer pressure also emerged as important factors which encouraged Hispanic to attend and stay in school.

Drop outs. The students were asked to discuss what causes Hispanics to drop out of college. They said:

ANA: Too much homework. Other problems. Personal problems. Too much going on with anything.

MICHAEL: Lack of discipline.

ANA: Yeah.

MICHAEL: 'Cause a lot of families that, first generation families, don't have the, um, like um, they didn't. Most of them like work hard, in like hard labor work force. So, they like raise their kids um, like differently from educated parents do. I just see that.

RESEARCHER: So tell me what you mean by that.

MICHAEL: I see that sometimes. My mother came as an immigrant and she continued her school. And she came and got her AA. And my father he works just plain hard in construction. But um, I see sometimes I lack a certain discipline that I wish I had. But as like my parents raised me, I don't know, uh, I wasn't taught like certain skills. Compared to other students. They do their homework easily. . . . Yeah, I think it would be different. I think they'd probably. Just the way you are raised. Like doing homework or something like that. And probably a time frame would be used differently. Instead of like. Or, I'm not sure it would be different. Because I am trying to think about my parents and I don't see how they did stuff wrong. I see how I lack certain discipline, now learning.

RESEARCHER: So when you talk about the work ethic, okay, you were saying immigrant families come in and they work really hard. You don't think that, you're saying that you don't see a connection between that, that the work ethic is emphasized more on jobs rather than on education? Is that what you're getting at?

MICHAEL: Yes, to succeed more. Like to get more money like at the current time.

RESEARCHER: Do you think that, when you say that, do you think that that's for survival or for luxuries or?

MICHAEL: I think it's just um, like used to it. I'm not sure what the word is, accustomed to it.

RESEARCHER: Okay. Okay. And, why do you think that? You were saying Hispanics drop out of college because of stress and too much homework and personal problems. So tell me a little bit more about stress and personal problems. Like what kinds of things?

ANA: It could be anything. Like say somebody loss their family member. Like someone close especially. You see there is no point. . . .

RESEARCHER: And tell me about stress. What kind of stresses do you think Hispanics are under when they are in college?

MICHAEL: Not immediate results. Like a lot of people want to make money soon. And college is kind of like time. Continuing. Passing, if you don't at first.

RESEARCHER: So what do you think stresses Hispanics?

ANA: What stresses?

RESEARCHER: Uh huh. Or like think about your own life, what stresses you when you're in college? Does anything, just, make you think I just can't take that anymore. I'm getting to that point writing this dissertation. I should answer that question—no I'm kidding. (All laugh).

ANA: Let's see, when there is too much homework, especially. And then.

RESEARCHER: Tell me why that's stressful.

ANA: Especially, for me it's kind of like I haven't been reading my book. And I do go to class, but it's good to read before you go to school. And I haven't been doing that. So, it's kind of stressful to catch up in class.

RESEARCHER: So why have you not read your books?

ANA: I just don't like it.

MICHAEL: Lack of discipline (laughs).

RESEARCHER: So maybe motivation problems?

MICHAEL: Yeah.

The students listened carefully to each other, and they engaged in a rich conversation about their life experience and how those experiences impacted their education. They

also talked about specific skill sets they gained from developmental English.

Skills gained from developmental English. The students continued their discussion and they talked about the benefits of assignments in reading and writing that they could relate to, teaching strategies, and classroom environments.

ANA: Some of the topics weren't interesting. When I was in the last English class I was in, she let us choose. She didn't really give us, what do you call it?

MICHAEL: Audience?

ANA: Yes, an audience to write to. It was our choice to how, what, who to write to.

MICHAEL: Set our tone.

ANA: Yes.

RESEARCHER: Did you like that or did you not like that?

ANA: Yeah, I did. 'Cause it gave me a different, it was kind of like a challenge. 'Cause it was all up to you and how to do it.

RESEARCHER: So more control over your writing?

ANA: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: So you like that part, but some of the topics were not interesting?

ANA: I'll say.

RESEARCHER: Sounds like maybe you like the idea that you get to choose your audience and that kind of thing, but you didn't care for the topics that were given?

ANA: No actually. It was like, I don't know. (laughs)

MICHAEL: I think developmental English in college is a lot more interesting than in high school. I had no motivation whatsoever to do any of the writing.

RESEARCHER: Uh huh.

MICHAEL: But in college, I figured that , maybe it was like in my head, that it was actually more interesting because it supposed to be like a higher level of education.

The students discussed the curriculum of English 101 and how it helped them to find writing more interesting. The skills they gained had helped them to improve their writing ability. They also discussed their negative and positive experiences in high school English. They both felt they had improved their writing skills and they had developed strategies that would help them in their futures.

Community college graduates. When asked if they had known anyone who graduated from community college, both students answered no. Michael knew someone who graduated from Stanford, but neither of them knew of a Hispanic who had graduated from a community college.

Themes

Several themes emerged from the interviews, focus group conversations, the literature, college websites, curriculum materials, college catalogs, and direct observation. Those themes are presented in this section in emphatic order under three main areas: a) road blocks, b) motivators, and c) actions. Road blocks and motivators indicate what the Generation 1.5 developmental English students in this study reported that they must balance while pursuing an education (see Figure 15). The figure shows the types of issues that face these students, yet it also illustrates how tenuous their situations are due to their circumstances. The scale can easily tip in one direction or the other, and many of those road blocks and supports may influence the outcome of the

student's pursuit of a college education. The third area, action, denotes how the students take action to improve their knowledge and their lives.

The students were asked several guiding questions about their educational backgrounds (See Appendix B). During both one-one-one interviews and the focus groups, students spoke about their varied backgrounds and experiences in Mexican schools, United States schools, adult schools, ESL programs, community colleges, and Mexican universities. In accordance with social critical methodology, the words of the students serve as the primary basis of the themes. Additional data sources were used as well, including direct observation, college catalogs and websites, and approved departmental curriculum. As the students' words are presented, though, it has been noted if the information was shared in a focus group or an individual interview session. This notation is designed to provide a context for readers so they know in what manner the information was received.

Road Blocks

In the HCC focus group, one student discussed the "road blocks, one after another" that stand in the way of Hispanics attending college and pursuing their career aspirations. Students from both colleges mentioned several types of road blocks: financial stress, language difficulty, family stress/lack of support, late high school graduation, death of family or friends, inappropriate English placement, and irrelevant curriculum.

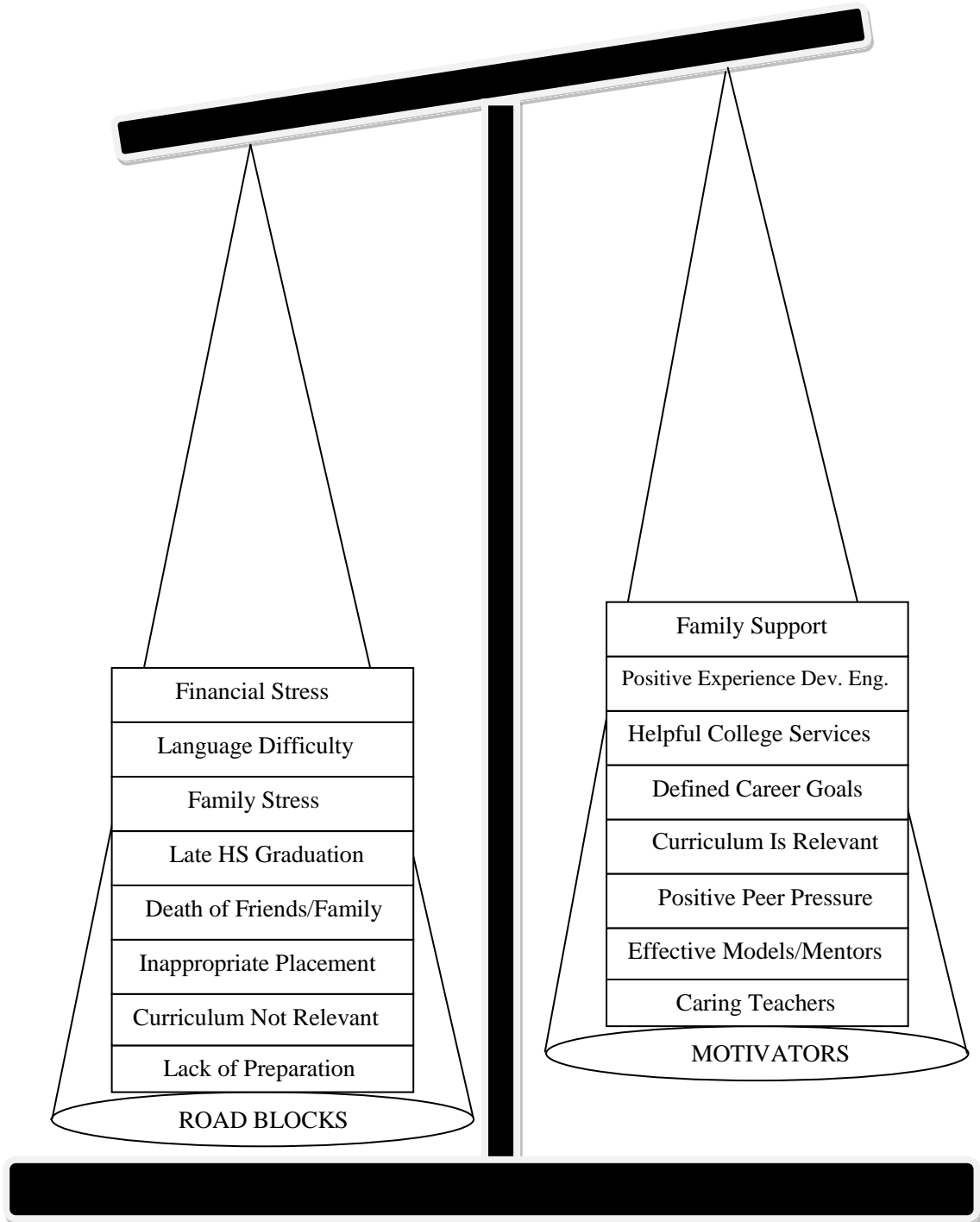


Figure 15. Road blocks and motivators: Hispanics balance home, college, and work.

Financial stress. In the one-one interviews, students said the following about the financial stress they face.

MAMA: That is another help I get from the college is childcare. If not, I do not have money to pay another person to take care because I qualify for state program and I paid only one part. And I know they are learning they are having good people are around them. So that is another advantage I have here.

Mama also discussed the other types of financial assistance she has received, “I got help from FAFSA and waiver. Especially economically. In case that I do not qualify to pay for my classes I cannot afford to come to college.”

CESAR: Well, my first barrier was talking about being disqualified for financial aid. Struggling in one class, and I failed it which made me disqualified for financial aid. So, my first barrier was coming up with money to buy all the books and stuff. And at first, the first year, I was funded by financial aid. . . . It was uh, well, the second class I failed. That’s why I’m not on financial aid this year again because of the English class. The first class I failed it was uh, a science class, earth science class about the world.

MARIA: They denied my financial aid because last I tried to come to a guidance class. And I had to drop it because I got my car repossessed. So, last semester, so I drop it but the teacher did not do something right so it appeared like I was an F. Two F’s. So, because of that they denied the financial aid to me this semester. I am taking nine units, so I receive an email, they revised it, and they are going to give me financial aid on the 20th. Next week. Next week I will be fine.

In focus groups, the students shared the following perspectives on financial stress.

RYAN: I feel like. When you are middle class, you are not low income and you’re not rich. But you’re in the middle. You can pay your house and pay your cars. But, you know, you make enough money to pay your bills, but you want to go to school. Well they see, okay he makes enough money but they don’t know about all the other bills you have. And they think you can pay for school, when you really, you know, can’t. I know I have to like get loans. I don’t qualify for financial aid. I don’t qualify for any of that stuff. Because my parents make more money than, you know, low income families. So I don’t qualify for any of that stuff. So I have to get stuck with you know student loans, and I can’t get any waivers. I have to pay for everything. So, I think that is one of the road blocks for a lot of people. You know, especially Hispanics because a lot of

Hispanic families, you know, both families, both mom and dad work or just dad. You know, and they don't, you know. To them, it's more about supporting the family than, you know, taking time to go to school. And that's sometimes a road block, too, for a lot of people.

MAMA: Yes, my nephew. He has a great dream. He loves the sport. So, he is dreaming of higher education. But, um, my sister cannot afford to, to give a lot of money, so even when he get help to support to pay the schools and books, he doesn't have enough money to himself. So that in the summer, he say, "Okay I'm gonna start working, and then I'm gonna go back to school." But once he start working, he say, "No. I got money, I need money to do this and to do that. I know maybe I can get another job," and things like that and he stopped school.

In this focus group exchange, the students were asked to talk about whether or not they thought Hispanics were supportive of people receiving an education.

MAMA: As parents, we don't know the problems or we don't know how if you say yes, what is your obligation? Or did you sign something?

RESEARCHER: Uh hm.

MARIA: Or to motivate the kids. Because they are really unmotivated because the wages are too low or something. And they say, "Well I need to help, I need to work."

RESEARCHER: So kind of the conflict of needing to provide support at home but then you know saying education is important be we need to.

MAMA: The economy is the most, uh, the biggest problem why our kids and adults do not go to school.

Mama also shared a comment about financial stress when students were asked if they had thought about dropping out of college.

MAMA: The second time I thought to stop the school was when we had a house economical situation. And I think maybe if I stop going to school and I start working. A little money take out and later I continue to school. But my husband say it's okay, go to school. That's right. Sometimes they stop it, sometimes they say keep going. Yeah, keep going.

The basic financial stress that students discussed in the interview and focus groups

centered around money needed for books, food, supporting the family, child care, and costs associated with college. Students emphasized the need to help support the family, and they said some Hispanics will choose not to attend school so that they can earn money. The students' experiences are consistent with the figures available about the economic status of students attending both campuses. GHCC reports that one-third of its students are below the poverty level, and HCC serves a County whose residents earn \$8,000 less than the California average. Further, the students' words support the literature which cites a lack of money as a reason that students do not return to school (Bonham & Luckie, 1993; Montano, 1997; Tracy, 2004).

Language difficulty. In the study, six of the participants were second language learners during their education, and seven were bilingual. They talked about receiving support from other bilingual students and from programs established in schools. They also discussed the challenges they experienced when trying to get an education as second language learners. In the final one-on-one interview with Maria, she talked about what it was like to be a second language learner in developmental English.

MARIA: For ESL. We need the content of the course more explicit, more understandable, and the teacher.

RESEARCHER: How could the teacher do that?

MARIA: Uh, explain like a kids. Explain it like she's teaching someone that is stupid. (laughs). I told you I am mad because I didn't pass. Are you gonna write my?

RESEARCHER: Your name won't be there. Your teacher's name won't be there. Remember you, you get to look at it and cross out things you don't want. You get to see it before.

MARIA: So, like they're teaching to little kids. I don't know.

RESEARCHER: More basic.

MARIA: Yeah, more basic. More easy. More dynamic. “This is easy, look. Look. This is easy, don’t complicate”. If I know something, that is the way I would put it to students.

In an one-on-one interview with Ana, she said that knowing two languages can be confusing when you are learning to write.

ANA: How did it affect? Just by, you know, knowing two languages it is kind of hard to figure out the differences, not the differences, but you know to write better ‘cause you know two languages. It is kind of difficult.

Alex also shared his challenges of getting his elementary school education as an ESL learner: “And I had trouble with the homework, and I had to go to some program to help the students. So, in a way, they helped me a lot, too.”

Ryan shared another difficulty that bilingual students face when their parents do not speak English. He found himself in an interesting predicament when he knew he would not be graduating from high school.

RYAN: Yeah, I was the designated translator. Um, yeah I did, that’s something I found myself doing a lot. For my mom mainly, ‘cause my dad never really went to meeting because he was always at work or doing something that had to do with work. Um, but yeah, I was always the translator. We didn’t really have any teachers in my high school who were able to translate or anything like that. I was the one who had to go and translate.

RESEARCHER: So you had to translate the bad news to your parents?

RYAN: Yeah. I just wanted to let you know that I am doing bad in school.

RESEARCHER: That must have been interesting for you.

RYAN: Sometimes I would try to cover it up, “She’s lying.”

He also talked about the difficulty of getting his homework completed or understanding college entrance requirements.

RYAN: Yeah my parents never, especially with them not knowing English, you know it is kind of difficult. I can't really say, you know, what is this? Do you understand this better than I do? They wouldn't. So, I was gonna have my peers around me you know to break things down for me. To me I didn't understand. But I couldn't ever really count on them for something like that, to push me to college. They are glad I am going to school but it's not, you know, I guess they wouldn't be able to mentor me and stuff like.

During the focus groups, students shared more thoughts on being ESL learners in college and in developmental English.

MAMA: I remember when especially when I came to study English. Oh, some days, oh I can't give up everything. I can do everything because I understand to the teacher today everything he said. But, when I came and didn't understand the homework, I don't understand what the people say, so I'm losing time. So, it's better to stay at home. I'm never gonna learn English.

RESEARCHER: Was this at the adult school or in ESL?

MAMA: Even here. Yes. Because I saw a lot of friends, they got it. They understand faster. They can answer. And I can't even understand the teacher say what he say. I can't answer because I don't know what he said. Why coming if I am never am gonna learn? And I told to stop. And, I don't know why I don't leave, I still coming. I still coming. And I feel great.

Mama continued.

MAMA: Exactly. And it's completely different. They speak so fast. And you say what? And when you ask one word that you don't understand, they say, "Okay I'll explain it to you later." And they never do. . . . I remember when I took one class, the teacher told me you can use a tape recorder but it's the same problem. I use it, but when I try to understand, I can't, I can't.

Ryan also added the following comments about his experience as an ESL learner with parents who do not speak English.

RYAN: It has to do with a lot. It has to do with the families. My family they couldn't go to the school to find out what was going on, or you know talk to my teachers, or find out about my homework, or help me with my homework. They didn't understand English. My parents barely understand English now. So you know when you don't have any support and you are doing it all by yourself. Sometimes you need help and you know it's hard for one person to go to school

and be able to get help with their homework or talk to their teachers you know the parents so. That's what I think for a lot of Hispanic people who come from Mexico or their families don't speak English or they don't understand it. So, I think that has a big part in why a lot of Hispanic people quit school.

The students revealed their viewpoints on instruction and the unique pressures that Generation 1.5 second language learners face. Their concerns support the findings from the literature on Generation 1.5 student needs (Canizales, 1995; Hinkle, 2006; Matsuda, 1999; Nye 1990; Perin, 2004), particularly in the areas of inadequate instructional methods and the positive influence of tutoring programs. However, their challenges stretched beyond the challenges most students encounter (peer pressure, gaining core competencies, and feeling accepted). They also must translate the lesson, the materials, and the books for themselves and advocate for themselves. The observations of the students conflict with HCC's message that its developmental English program provides students with varying backgrounds with the grammar skills needed for success in college and GHCC's message that its English curriculum will improve student success in other courses. Clearly, the student experiences show that the curriculum and developmental English programs meet some of their needs, but more changes must occur to address the additional pressures they face as English language learners.

Family stress/lack of support. The students spoke about the strong family values shared among Hispanics. The emphasis on having children, raising them at home, caring for one's parents, women taking care of the children, and supporting one another were commonly discussed. These values provided support for students, but they also caused stress. In a one-on-one interview, one student expressed how she experienced family stress.

MARIA: Well, my brother, the one that has always given me housing was very angry when I got into school. When I got here, because he say I should be working. Then I went to McDonald's, and I decided this was not going to be my fate.

Women in the focus groups spoke about the messages they received from some family members about attending school.

MAMA: The machismo is, is. I remember when I get my AA, my GED, sorry, I was so excited telling my husband this class. "No big deal," he says. I feel terrible, "Say what"? I was so excited. But when a friend called and told me, "Yes, you can do it. Continue going to school." And I say, okay, don't worry about what you say. And all those people. Go to school. And now she is saying, "Oh you are doing it, you are almost there". So now, it's like I feel like a man sometimes, they don't give you too much importance maybe to see how much you able to do by yourself. I think they want to see that we fight to get our goals.

Mama also said: "Maybe they don't tell you, 'Go, go, go'. But, they don't stop you.

Sometimes they will stop you if they say it's not important. But it's like you have to hide the struggle." Ana talked about how her family was surprised when they heard she was starting college.

ANA: My family never really said anything about my going to college. It was just one day when I told my ma and my dad that I was going to start school in college. I know they were surprised, but they never told me anything. I do remember one time though. That my sister had told me that my mom had ask her why I was going to college for? I never talked to my mom about it. But when my sister told me what my ma had said, I kind of questioned, like does really feel like [I] am wasting my time? Or does she even sees me doing anything with my life? I felt kind of bad hearing that especially coming from my mom. But it don't even matter, as long as I end up doing something that I love, and to be happy. That's all that matters. . . . Yeah. Both. The positive. Sometimes negative. But also positive.

Maria talked about what it was like to juggle parenthood and learning a second language .

MARIA: My mom says, "Oh, [your son has] been waiting for you." But I'm like. I have been at the tutor lab all day long. I need to get this. I need to get this.

She supports me, but she says, “Poor him, you abandoned him.”

Maria and Mama show the difficult place that some Hispanic women find themselves in as they try to improve their lives, but face tremendous pressure at home to take care of the children or receive little acknowledgement of their educational pursuits or accomplishments.

Maria also revealed her thoughts about why Hispanics drop out of college, which included being pushed toward work rather than college.

MARIA: Uh, he really loved to study. This is my nephew. He is the opposite of his dad. He knows his dad used to hate school because in Mexico he took a really, they really harmed children. And then he hated school. And his son is the opposite. And he was coming here, but then, uh, my brother pushed him to work. Stopping him.

As these students attempt to receive an education, they must also balance their home lives and families. This becomes very difficult when receiving one’s education causes others to question their actions, their choices, and their contributions to the family. Thus, the Hispanic emphasis on the family that provided support for these students and their children ironically served as a road block for some of them as well. These students’ experiences are consistent with research which shows that having a component of parent and family engagement is critical for nurturing Hispanics in higher education (Montano, 1997; Olivos, 2006). Since these developmental English programs lack a component of family engagement, perhaps the students would experience increased support from their families if such a family engagement component existed.

Late high school graduation. High school graduation was also mentioned as a major road block for some students. Four study participants were recent high school

graduates (who graduated on time), two graduated late, and two students received GEDs from adult school in the United States. The two students who did not graduate on time discussed the barriers that they had to overcome in order to graduate.

RYAN: Part of my freshman. In my senior year in high school I had a, like I said, school was not a big thing so I started slacking off a little bit. I had to try to keep up all my grades my senior year before I graduated. That was probably a big obstacle for me and my family 'cause if I was gonna graduate on time and everything. I actually didn't end up graduating on time. I ended up graduating during summer school. So, it was so hard because I had to try to get all my grades up and catch up on all that stuff that I didn't do while I was in high school. My teachers didn't give me chance, they were like well you messed up, that's it. It's your fault. So, that was probably a big obstacle for me to overcome. Get my diploma. The year that I was supposed to get it, I didn't get to walk. But I still got everything done, not on time, but, I got it done. That was probably one of the biggest obstacles that I have had to conquer so far as far as education goes.

When Ryan did not graduate, it caused him to feel badly since his parents had prepared for his graduation by buying his class ring and other symbols of high school graduation. Ryan, though, made the choice to finish high school even if he did not get to walk on time. So, he did graduate and he felt better about himself for having completed that goal. Not graduating on time was a road block in his past, but it also served as a motivator for his future.

Cesar also revealed what it was like to fall behind in high school and not graduate.

CESAR: An obstacle. My first obstacle, I guess in high school. I had an obstacle. I got an A in math and failed the rest of my classes. I don't know if I was just not prepared for it, or if I was just uninterested. But I had to battle back from that to get good grades.

RESEARCHER: And did you graduate from high school?

CESAR: Yes.

RESEARCHER: And you graduated on time or?

CESAR: No I graduated late.

RESEARCHER: So tell me about what happened there.

CESAR: Well, my 12th grade year, I was seventy credits short and I was set to did a fifth year, be a five year high school student, and, well for me what happened was my girlfriend got pregnant and we had a child that year so I had to go to work instead of going to school that following year. So that was the drawback there. I eventually went back. . . . I graduated when I was 25.

Cesar's struggle was based on falling behind and needing to provide financially for his new baby. But even before Cesar's baby was born, he said his parents expected him to go to school, finish high school, and then go to work. So going to college had not really entered his thoughts at that point in his life. He did graduate at age 25 and enrolled in college in his thirties.

And although Cathy graduated on time, she changed school three times to escape trouble and problems at school. She said, "The first time I changed school, yeah it was to avoid trouble. An incident happened at the second school. I just ended up going to a different high school and just stayed there." She was worried about whether or not she would graduate.

CATHY: An obstacle. Let me see, I would say in high school, I wasn't sure if I would graduate high school, getting into trouble and stuff and not doing so well in classes by that time.

RESEARCHER: Did you end up graduating on time?

CATHY: I did. . . . I was by myself going through high school like that. I had to change high school a couple of times, but I graduated.

What stands out among these students is that they overcame the obstacles they faced, and they still earned their high school diplomas. They turned what had served as road

blocks in their lives as ways to find different pathways to help them achieve their goals. So although their initial dropping out and lack of a high school diploma was consistent with recent statistics on Hispanic educational attainment (Fry, 2002; U.S. Census, 2000), it is apparent that the statistics do not tell the whole story. The students in this study were motivated by their goals and families to complete their high school education.

Death of friends or family. When asked about the barriers they faced in their K-12 education, two students in one-on-one interviews cited the death of friends as a barrier.

MICHAEL: Oh, my friend passed away in high school. And I was really close to him, which I grew up with. I didn't go to school for a couple of days, and that really affected my homework grade after a while. And I missed a major assignment in my English class which made me go to night school for a term. And, uh, that's probably about it. . . . It was sudden. It was out of nowhere. I was so caught off guard. Shock.

RESEARCHER: And so did the school offer any counseling?

MICHAEL: No.

RESEARCHER: Or did you receive any support or anything like that, or how did you work your way through that?

MICHAEL: I just, mainly through my parents for supporting me. And my teachers, they understood. But they didn't really view it as an excuse to not do my assignment. Which is understandable.

Ana shared a similar experience.

ANA: Yeah, I had some friends that passed away through the years. So that was a difficulty for me, to get through school.

RESEARCHER: And that was during high school?

ANA: Yeah, that was during high school.

RESEARCHER: Did you say more than one friend or?

ANA: Two friends.

RESEARCHER: How did you work through that experience? With your family? Your school?

ANA: Try to move on, get away. Even though they are not coming back, and life goes on.

Ana also brought up death again in the focus group conversation.

ANA: [An obstacle] could be anything. Like say somebody loss their family member. Like someone close especially. You see there is no point.

Both of these students are recent high school graduates and are in their early twenties.

The researcher did not ask very many follow up questions out of respect for the students and their experiences. The researcher listened carefully, and when the students were finished with their stories of loss, the researcher shared similar stories. The loss of a friend or a loved one did not appear as an educational barrier in the literature.

Inappropriate English placement. Students were asked if they volunteered to take developmental English or were placed into developmental English based on their placement testing results. All students in the study were assessed and then placed in developmental English or ESL courses. According to the college web pages and catalogs, assessment was required at HCC, but only encouraged at GHCC. Some students then were referred into developmental English from their ESL instructors. The students initially did not question their placement into a certain level, and even when they felt they were placed in classes that were too high or too low of a level for their skills sets, they remained in those courses. However, after failing classes or enduring classes that were too basic, some students stated they were not placed properly.

Maria enrolled and remained in a class that she assessed into three years earlier, even though she felt the class was too difficult for her ability level.

MARIA: I think I took, uhm, I took a whole year of English here at [the college], and I took like another whole year of English at the adult school. . . . I went into the adult school for the Basic English and then I came here to ESL. . . . I took ESL like two years ago, like three years ago. And the teacher had told me I was ready to go to English 79. But to other students that were not as good as I was, she, well, he send them to English 87, which is one below English 79. After three years I came back to school. And then I realize, I enrolled in English 79, but I realized it was too hard for me. Because I may had forgotten something from the ESL classes that was fresh, now it was different. . . . I just went to 79. I went to 79. . . . I am just staying there.

Another student revealed in his one-on-one interview that the course he was placed in prior to English 79 was too simple for him:

CESAR: Yeah, I felt that I belonged higher than that. I felt that I, well English 79, I felt comfortable there. But I didn't feel, I just, I just, I did not feel comfortable in English 70 'cause it was just kindergarten stuff. You know punctuation.

Cesar also shared his thoughts on his English placement in English 70.

CESAR: Um, I guess it's okay. It helped me; I think it helped me become a better writer. But English 70 was really just slow. It was just really; I think that I shouldn't have had. That class was horrible. It was like first grade English class or something. And there was, the teacher didn't even, he passed everybody. And he didn't even care as long as you just showed up.

Cesar also said he felt the placement test did not place him in the correct course.

RESEARCHER: So in that class, did you feel like you were placed in the right class?

CESAR: No. I think I could have scored higher on the assessment test. I think I just scored a low score. So, I was placed in that class.

RESEARCHER: But you feel like didn't you belong there?

CESAR: No.

RESEARCHER: Do you think they should keep the assessment test the same way that it is?

CESAR: Hm. I did good on the math part, so I guess it's okay, it all comes around.

Other students individually said that placement in developmental English was helpful to them and prepared them for the college level transfer English.

CATHY: Based on my placement testing. I was thinking about it at the same time. 'Cause I think it helped me out more. 'Cause right now I am learning so much more than in high school. I understand everything. I'm actually getting A's on my essays now.

RYAN: I placed into based off the placement testing results. Now that I am in it. English has always never really been a difficult subject for me. It's just the fact that I waited so long to go back to school that I kind of forgot some of the main things, the important things.

MICHAEL: Yeah, I was placed in there due to my testing results. . . . I guess the testing scores showed where I stood. I guess I accepted it. I wanted to be placed in 300, and someone told me that um, I was able to if I retake it again, because I had a high score. I was like on the borderline. I guess I was placed in 101. . . . I thought it would be better that way if I can got a higher score in this class, better than a lower score in English 300.

ALEX: I took the English assessment test and I was placed in English 51, which is the class before this one. . . . I didn't feel bad, and it has been happening to me a lot. The teacher says that this class will help me a lot with the next one. 'Cause like most of the students that are placed into the 300 first have the most trouble even more than the developmental English classes coming in.

And another student was referred to the class by her ESL instructor.

MAMA: Oh, yes. I did it. . . . I started in ESL class, level 84. . . . When I finished my ESL classes, I took other classes of ECED for two years. And now I come back to continue with my English. . . . Yes [my ESL teacher] tell me what was my English level, and if I was ready to pass to a specific level. I tried to skip one level, 87, but I need to come back so. I come back and do all my steps.

Students entered into developmental English through different pathways and had different results, some successful and some failing, with their course placement. Even

when the students were unsure about their placement, they accepted the results. For some students, this experience was frustrating since they had to sit through classes they felt were “too basic” or “kindergarten” level. Others felt that the choice to remain at a lower level would benefit them as they took courses at the college transfer level. Maria expressed her disappointment about her placement in the final interview, after she failed the course.

MARIA: I think it was because I was not well prepared for that class. And then uh because the teacher saw my flaws, she was not motivated to help me. And besides that it was summer, and the course was a lot. But I feel that I am gonna learn. I went one level below and then I think that I’m gonna learn what I have to learn. I’m gonna learn it well. Even if it takes me four times. But, uh, I think the teacher was good, except for the materials that she tried to give real quick and those materials were really important. I got the impression she tried to make the subject difficult to try to make herself feel important. I don’t know, but she was, but then, she was saying she had all these credentials and she was a doctor in such and such. And I think if she have all those knowledge, she should have to put the knowledge easy for us. But I think, I think she didn’t have the time because it was summer school. And I did all my effort and I got an “F,” and I got mad. But I’m taking the class that is gonna lift me to a class to get an “A” in that one eventually.

When asked what she would change about the program if she could, she said:

MARIA: If I could, I would make sure the student share all the information that the teacher has. And the teacher has to be patient. And has to do her job and adapt to the pace of their students. But that’s kind of difficult because what if the students belong to another level, you know?

Of the 6 students who completed the study, 2 of them passed the course and were admitted into college level transfer English. No results for the students who withdrew were received. The other 4 students did not pass the course. Maria felt she was not properly placed, but Cesar and others cited summer session as a factor that led to not passing:

CESAR: Since I didn't pass, I don't feel so good. I think I can pass it. It was just too hard in the summer, too fast.

RESEARCHER: I have heard that from several students now. Yeah. That summer session is tough.

CESAR: Yeah, 18 weeks combines into six.

RESEARCHER: So do you think that was a factor in you not passing?

CESAR: Yeah, because I like missed four days, and that was like missing a month or a month and a half of the semester.

Mama expressed the she had gained confidence during the semester, and she knew she could pass the class, but she felt the instructors needed to be more understanding of the ESL students and their situations. She said some teachers were too strict and others acted too much like a peer and friend rather than a teacher. She was disappointed since she had been told her essays were good, and then she did not pass the mastery. She also said the instructor taught the material too quickly, probably because it was a compressed summer session. Mama also questioned if marking off the ESL box on the mastery exam may have contributed to her not passing.

MAMA: Oh yes, mark if you are ESL student.

RESEARCHER: Yeah.

MAMA: I don't know why they ask that.

RESEARCHER: Is that something the program should keep or is that something they should do away with?

MAMA: They think it was like a. The person that I ask, they didn't check the ESL student. And the two persons that I know that we marked that we didn't pass. I don't know if it was coincidence or maybe another people checked the box and I don't know.

RESEARCHER: So do you think they should keep using that method or?

MAMA: I think it is a good to keep it, if the teachers are going to consider our situations. But if it just like a, to discriminate to say like, "They don't know."

RESEARCHER: Uh hm.

MAMA: It's wrong.

Cesar felt that having students check off the ESL box should be eliminated. The ESL box on the mastery exam came in the focus group as well.

MAMA: And I don't know how you say, not all the teachers know how to teach to ESL classes. Right here, just yesterday only two people and another girl, and but before the test, the teacher say mark who is in ESL classes. And just she and me mark, and nobody else mark. So just we, both of us, don't pass the class. I know that I need more. She said, maybe it is because we mark ESL class.

MARIA: Did you pass?

MAMA: No. Everybody pass the test.

RESEARCHER: So what is the process, to decide if you pass or not? Does your instructor grade it or does it go to a committee?

CESAR: It is a committee grade.

RESEARCHER: Is your instructor on that committee or is it?

MAMA: No it's in there.

MARIA: What I know is. Is this English 79? What I know is that the teacher is not even allowed to look at your work.

CESAR: She's not grading her, she's grading papers from other classes.

RESEARCHER: It's like a blind committee, then, right?

MAMA: It's more like that in the regular summer.

RESEARCHER: Were all of you asked to check off if you were ESL or not?

CESAR: No.

RESEARCHER: Did you say that your teacher asked you to check a box or

something did you have to do that, or you don't know?

MAMA: She say check the [box].

The program information at HCC states that students will place their social security numbers and their course codes on their exams, and the exams will be blind graded. The students reported that some of them were asked to check a box that indicated if they were ESL or not, and other students were not asked to do so. Thus, the students reported that the test was not entirely a blind test since they had to mark the ESL box. Other students questioned the fairness of the test as a result of having been asked to check the box. The administering of this test was not consistent with published program materials that indicated the test would be blind graded. It is apparent that the published program materials should be more consistent with the test administration. The program could make their process clearer by indicating that ESL students will be asked to check a box, or the program could omit the use of this identifier during the mastery exam.

The students generally accepted their placement results. Michael, though, in his final interview said this about assessment:

RESEARCHER: Okay. Okay. That's good. What would you change about the developmental English program if you could, and what would you keep the same?

MICHAEL: I would probably change the assessment test to more of a writing skill type of exam. I'm talking short paragraph essays. That would better show the skills, the actual skills of the student. And we should probably use that to, uh, maybe as statistics what to teach. And like have a better understanding of what they're dealing with. Teachers. And as far as the classes, um, I guess as a beginning student I guess it's always set up fine, except for that test. I'm pretty sure I will have a different perspective after I finish, I go through these English classes.

What is evident from the experience of these students is that the assessment process

impacted them in different ways educationally, depending on whose course they enrolled in, how long they had been out of school, and whether they felt they were placed at levels too high or too low for them. The literature shows that assessment along with multiple measures improve student retention and pass rates in developmental coursework (Boroch, et al., 2007; Boylan, Bliss, Bonham, 1997). However, the students in this study had varying results after being assessed and placed into developmental English. None of them challenged the assessment results when they were given. Based on these students' experiences it is evident that more research on the effectiveness of multiple measures and the timing of developmental education is needed (Crews & Aragon, 2004; Marwick, 2004).

Curriculum not relevant. Students were asked to discuss the types of high school writing assignments they were given and what relevance these assignments had. Students explained that they adapted to what was expected of them, wrote about "plain" topics, and sometimes lost motivation to write because the assignments were "too basic." Some students thought high school topics were easier than college and were on "American authors" and American history. In Mexico, the topics were based on the classics. The student observations expressed in their one-on-one interviews follows:

CESAR: It was just an essay to graduate from high school. But it had to be written a certain way. And, I don't know, I think, I think that, 'cause what I wrote about I think that, um what I wrote about is kind of what made me not pass the first time. So I had to like write it to people's standards, 'cause I, instead of writing about what I really wanted to write about. I had to change it up and write it.

When asked about what he wanted to write about, Cesar said:

Well on the first test, what I wrote about was um, was about gangster rap and

how it could be positive in a community. And the teacher, that you know, he read it after they graded it. And he said that he would have passed it, but he said probably some mother with a child of three was reading this and probably just didn't agree with your topic. So that was a challenge. Then having to take that test three times before I could graduate. . . . Well, I definitely didn't write about nothing negative, that people would see as negative. I just wrote; I just tried to pick the most plain topic to write about so that I could pass the test.

Cesar said he felt that he could write about culturally relevant topics in college, and that multicultural readings held his interest. However, it was evident that at least some of the evaluators of his writing test for his GED lacked culturally responsive teaching methods.

Maria talked about the reading materials in her developmental English class, which she felt did not support student learning.

Uh hm. So the pace, but um, I think, I think that's a great idea for English. 'Cause for ESL they should have different approach. Because the books that are for here, are here. I believe if I was studying those books even in Spanish, they were boring. They were boring for people who were ESL.

Michael discussed a concern similar to Maria's about a "boring" writing topic he was given.

One time I had an assignment which was an essay that we had to write about. And, it was, the topic was just like too boring to me. I couldn't relate to it because it just like, I forgot what it was, it was something like comparing one article to another. But it was just too like basic. So, so basic to the point that I didn't even want to pursue it.

Michael's boredom with the topic led to his not even wanting to complete the assignment; he felt the topic was too basic, even for high school.

Ryan talked about the types of assignments he was given in high school, and how he handled the writing curriculum offered in high school.

The writing assignments I had a lot were mostly in English class and history class. Most of them were about you know history itself of the people who you know history that we learn about now . . . current events. Like mainly, just about,

you know, like the presidents, the fourth of, you know the history of the United States. You know none of them obviously weren't going to really be um Hispanic, you know, community, high school, or anything like that. I would say everything was kind of more based on Caucasian history and the history of the United States and stuff like that. It wasn't really hard, 'cause it's what I've gotten used to. I've learned to accept it. I know that we're not gonna sit here and spend you know spend days and days you know on Hispanic culture or anything like that. So, it was something that I got to accept, it wasn't difficult for me to do, and most of them they were like that. In English class, they were mainly about books you know that we read, American authors. So, it was something that I kind of just got going to get used to.

Ryan shared his strategy of acceptance of the type of curriculum that was offered in high school. He said he did not expect to read about Hispanics, and he got used to doing whatever assignments were given.

In Mexico, the curriculum was also based on canonized literature. Maria described the assignments she was given.

The writing assignments they were mainly about literature... That was world literature, like they always said India, Spanish, mainly Spanish authors, classic. . . . Like Sor Juana, like Cervantes. What's it called? I don't remember the authors. It was like it was Hispanic and world, like the *Odyssey*. What else. . . . Yes, Cervantes.

When asked if those assignments motivated her, she said:

I was completely apathetic. I was distracted by the environment. I didn't fit in it because I was so young. So after the bullies bother me, so I think I just withdraw. And I used to attend classes all the way through. And I was in the class and staring at the teacher, without listening anything, I was in my world. And the teacher was thinking that I was paying attention, but I was absent. Absent from the class. I went to the class. I didn't, I think I didn't have any absence. I think I lost focus, and no one told be to put attention.

The curriculum in some cases served a major road block to high school graduation and it discounted experiential knowledge. In other cases it was something students adapted to, lost interest in, or became acculturated to. As the literature shows, students exhibited

that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) can help engage all students and that high standards also promote learning (Boroch, et. al., 2007; Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs & Ghere, 2004; Losey, 1997). The lack of CRT and high standards, as noted by the students here, results in apathy, loss of interest, and a loss of cultural knowledge.

Lack of preparation. Students were asked how their previous schooling experiences influenced their experience in developmental English. Students reported in the Developmental English Participant Survey that their previous education somewhat prepared them or did not prepare them for college. They also said the following:

CESAR: When I was going to high school and grammar school I think they passed everybody just because they passed them. I don't think I really learned much. Because when it came down to really write an essay, I had to go from basic. I didn't really know, I didn't have the first thing about how to break it up and. So either I forgot everything that I did learn, or I wasn't taught very well to begin with. . . . I don't remember doing much writing in high school or grammar school. All I remember is spelling. They did it based it on spelling tests and stuff like that. I don't even remember doing writing essays in high school at all.

Maria made these comments when she was asked how she felt about being a developmental English student at the end of the semester:

Oh, I feel very challenged because I don't think I was like prepared for that level. And I think I got, I got mad because I made all my efforts, I did all my homework, I put attention to class, I tried to participate, everything, but um, I got mad because the teacher show a lot of frustration with me.

In the focus group, Ana reported the following about her level of preparation.

Basically it taught me a few things, but to get to this point. And from here I learned more I would say then in high school. . . . When I was in high school, they didn't really have me write essays or anything, or research. Not until I got into my senior year, so my senior actually got me kind of prepared for college.

A student in the Developmental English Participant Survey said: "I felt I was not [prepared] for my higher learning. I realized I just passed through school and did not

understand the English language.” And another respondent noted, “I wasn’t surprise that I was going to be place in developmental class. The reason for that is through K-12 I have been a special ed student, which means someone who needs extra help for whatever reason.”

The students in this study recognized that they were not prepared for college level English work based on their high school experiences, and they were generally not surprised by their placement into developmental English. The students in this study contradict Hinkle’s (2006) findings, which show that often Generation 1.5 students view high school as a gateway to college and are surprised to discover that they are not fully prepared for college. The students also contradict the literature in that their self concept was not lowered (Littleton, 1998) and they did not feel unintelligent or angry (Roueche, Roueche & Ely, 2001) as a result of being placed into developmental English. In fact, some students were glad to be placed into developmental English. Their attitudes about themselves were positive, and they saw developmental English coursework as a necessary step toward achieving their goals.

Motivators

The counterbalance of many of the road blocks that student face are the motivators that encourage them to continue their pursuit of an education. Such motivators include: family support, positive experiences in developmental English, helpful college services, defined career goals, curriculum that is relevant, positive peer pressure, effective role models and mentors, and caring teachers.

Family support. The students revealed that family support for Hispanics was a

critical part of their reasons for going to school and staying in school. The extended family provided opportunities for some students to attend school, as their relatives watched their children. It was clear that Hispanic parents were proud of their children for attending college.

CESAR: I think their parents; they got together in community college. They both, she got pregnant; she didn't get to finish college. They both went to work. The main thing is they pushed them all the way to get a degree, to wait to have kids. They kind of pushed them that way. And they actually did it. Both of their daughters graduated from college. So, but one's gonna graduate; one graduated from a four year college and the other one is like on her last year.

ALEX: I had support from my parents. They wanted me to go to school.

CATHY: Oh, they keep telling me every single day, "We're proud of you, don't go out, keep going, don't quit. Finish your career." They support me. They are happy about it. Especially my dad. They are like; they can't believe what I'm trying to major for. They keep telling me they are proud of me.

CESAR: My immediate family right now they're supportive with it. My kids don't understand why. They just know I am going to school.

MICHAEL: My friends support me, because I choose to hang around the right people. And my parents, they of course really want me to go to college. I am currently living with them, so.

ANA: They really don't say much about me going or anything like that. As long as I know what I want to do, they will support me, basically.

ALEX: They feel great 'cause I am going to school. I don't live with them, but they just still call me to check up on me and how I am doing and stuff. They are very supportive.

RYAN: My family feels really good about it, they want me to, they're glad that I am bettering myself and that I am shooting for a goal that I want to do. . . . Yeah, well you know, that's my family. They didn't think I could do school so good. And now I have been here for almost two years, so, you know it's going. They are all behind me. As far as my peers, I think that was the question, as far as my peers everybody is happy, you know that I am going to school, they are behind me.

MARIA: So yeah, they are supportive. All of them.

MAMA: They feel great. They feel proud of me because even when I couldn't study before I get married because we cannot afford to pay for school in Mexico. Now that I have the opportunity to study they told me they are proud and they motivate me to continue because they know that is the best way to do something and to be somebody and especially because I will be a role model for my kids.

In the focus group, Ryan also talked about his parents and said, "Yeah, yeah, so I mean but in general even if they don't understand what is going on, at least for me my parents still want me to go to college and are behind me."

So, although Hispanic students experience family stress and pressure, their families are also supportive of them and their individual goals and dreams (Montano, 1997; Olivos, 2006). The students debunk the myth that the Hispanic family is not supportive of an education. Claims that Hispanics do not value education and therefore do not support their loved ones as they pursue an education oversimplify the complex experience of these students. For Hispanic cultural values run deep, and one's loyalty to family does not equate a lack of desire for an education. Encouraging these students to complete their education requires educators to understand those cultural realities. A Hispanic family may have cultural values that conflict with the values in the educational system. Thus, Hispanic students may experience tension as they try to be loving, caring members of the family, while fulfilling their educational obligations. As Mama said:

Maybe like teachers, some teachers be more like push, be strict with us, but understand that some of us work so hard and we have a family. And sometimes the kids are sick. Because now the teacher say you need a doctor proof. And sometimes you're sick, have a temperature, but you don't need to go to the doctor and they want to see a proof. So you don't know how to do it. I think some teachers can be more accessible or what.

HCC and HGCC discuss their comprehensive program for serving students of varying

backgrounds in developmental English, and indeed its coursework is centered on the acquisition of skills necessary to be successful in college English. However, it is clear that students within these programs are experiencing family support and stress due to family obligations. Both HCC and GHCC lack programs that include family engagement. Creating family engagement components into their developmental English programs would emphasize and recognize the strong family values of Hispanics, while offer additional support for Hispanic students (Montano, 1997).

Positive experience in developmental English program. Students were asked to describe the purpose of developmental English. Several students explained the purpose of developmental English as a course to improve their writing, grammar, and writing process skills and to help them move on to college level writing courses. Other students described the course as a more comprehensive course that emphasized their speaking and reading skills in English as well. The students explained how positive experiences in the developmental English program at their college helped them improve their skills and confidence in English.

CATHY: Seems to me, it's about my writing skills. I really, it's taught me a lot about how to write. Not just write something meaningful, not meaningful, but write something that doesn't mean anything. That's what I used to do, and write four pages and ended up with nothing. Now I can write one page, and it says a lot. It's teaching me a lot. It's teaching me how to write well. It's teaching me how to speak well. So called dead words, she tells us not to use.

CESAR: For me? I guess they said that I had to build up my reading, my writing skills to be equivalent to take college English.

MICHAEL: As far, I think. In the classes I have taken so far? Especially this one. It helps to build a writing process. It helps it go to your own writing classes that you can use that help you establish in other writings so you can mature in other classes, I guess. In grammar, all the basic grammar.

ANA: First, to take all my requirement classes. [The course was about] how to write essays better. To pointing to what is the meaning of it, what is the purpose of it.

ALEX: So I can get better at the language. Help your way around reading.

RYAN: The main purpose according to the teacher is to perfect writing skills, you know learn all your abbreviations, punctuations, and how to write a paragraph an essay. All that stuff. Just kind of the core of, you know, getting ready to transfer to a college course English class. You have to know all this stuff before you can really go into the college course or else you won't really do too good. For me, the impression I get is to develop those skills that you need to move on to a higher grade, a class, I guess you can say.

MAMA: Because I notice I need more English to write correctly, to understand when I read it and to speak it. Especially to speak and to understand it. Other people, because I am living in the United States so I need to do it. Being a fluent speaker. Being able to write, read, understand perfectly to other people and being a fluent speaker.

The participants were also asked how they felt about taking a developmental English class. Most students had positive feelings about taking a developmental English class, stating they felt “happy,” “okay,” “pretty good” and that they liked it. One student explained that he felt “confident” and the class seemed “mediocre.” These findings contradict existing literature which shows that students may have poor self images, decreased confidence, and feelings of anger after being placed into developmental English (Littleton, 1998; Roueche, Roueche & Ely, 2001).

CATHY: I feel good. Because I wasn't sure I would be able to get into English 79, but it turned out that I could. I'm very happy about it.

ANA: I feel like it's helpful, yeah.

RYAN: It's, to me, I mean I am learning some things that I didn't learn maybe in high school. It seems kind of mediocre just cause most of it I already understand. Like, I have like a lot things that a lot of other people don't have who are in this class. Like spelling write, or putting punctuation in the places and stuff. A lot of it is just a lot of review for me. It is not something I am

having a difficult time in, and I feel pretty confident in my class status and in these developmental English classes.

MAMA: I liked it. When I am studying I not only learn about English I learn about myself, my own life. We read essays about how everybody or everything can affect a life or you can affect others. So it is like a personal growing.

ALEX: Well, before I just, it was just like I was in [high school English]. I think about it more, I want to try harder, try to get to a class that you wanna be at. Try to do your best. . . . I think more seriously. It's something that's toward your life. . . . It's something you wanna do. And before it's like you never go. . . . It's a choice.

MICHAEL: My previous school experience? In a way college writing is less basic than high school in my previous classes they more like taught structure and the basic, um, essay format, the five paragraph, conclusion, thesis. Which is all important in college writing. But college writing elaborates more on other concepts. Getting your point across, really understanding concepts and making your writing clear as far as establishing it like, making your point clear to another reader.

Students were also asked to describe their developmental English classroom environment. They were also asked if that environment impacted their learning. Students described their classroom as “homey,” “comfortable,” “interactive,” “laid back,” “a little crowded,” and described their peers as “mature,” “grown up,” and “diverse.” Several students felt the rooms were initially crowded, but got better as students dropped the course. The instructors created collaborative, supportive environments, generally. One student discussed another developmental English course he took, where the instructor was teacher centered and used lecture mode for instruction. The student did not find that environment to be engaging.

CATHY: Well the room is pretty small. But the people, we have different, different people. And they have people with Mohawks, we have people with like them they are called gauges with holes in their ears and stuff like that. They're all nice, there so nice. They're not, how can I say, it's like we say you don't judge a book by its cover. You'll see a person who is scary looking. There is this

guy who I thought would be mean, but he was the nicest guy I was talking to in that classroom. So everyone's like, they're all mature, they're not like in high school talking behind people's backs. You know, they're all very grown up. It's very nice and comfortable in that classroom. . . . On the first day, it was too crowded. But um, the people started dropping out. I guess you can say I am getting used to it. It's not nothing that I would be picky about 'cause I guess it is the only classroom she could get. But um, I am used to it. It may be small, but it's cold. They have the AC on all day, so it's not like stuffy in there. It's okay. It's well maintained in there. It's just a little bit small.

CESAR: Environment. I think it was a good environment; we did a lot of group work. So she made that environment even better. A lot of, most, maybe ninety percent of the work was done in class. Eighty percent of the work was done in class. . . . It was fine. Yeah, you know. Always at the beginning, the class is crowded, and it always thins out. . . . Yeah, I like this campus.

MICHAEL: They're small, not small, but smaller than my other classes. And uh, they were packed with students at first. And, big windows. And they are mainly open. And the temperature was nice, nice and cool. The teacher surrounding more like I had two different teachers. My first teacher was older and she was an older teacher. . . she was more of a lecturer, monotone. The teacher I have now is younger, and she can relate more to us and joke. So she sets a setting that's more, you can pay attention to it. . . . More interactive. . . . She makes it simple to join in with a simple comment.

ANA: Everybody is basically facing forward. And, there's one row that's facing against those. Um. Let's see. Everybody pretty much sits where they want. They talk to each other. We help each other out basically. She, our teacher makes us get together in partners and groups. So, we try to help each other out.

ALEX: I like the class, um; we're kind of close to each other. She does a lot of group work, and that is where we get to meet each other more. And not have like the same group, 'cause she assigns the groups. So, we have the chance to meet with other people and like get to know each other better. . . . I mean it gives us the chance to meet each other, have more friends. Um, just have different points of view from other students like their own opinions, different opinions from other students.

RYAN: It's pretty laid back classroom. It is a very cultural class. There is every kind of race in that class. It's a very, everyone is very understanding. Everybody is okay with everyone. Everybody accepts everyone. Different cultures. Different you know religions. And nobody sits there and criticizes everybody. So it's a real laid back, you know warm type of feeling. You don't have to go to class and say, "Why can't I say what I did this weekend?" or "Why can't I say

this?" or whatever because are going to think of me weird. So everybody kind of accepts you, they all, it's a good class. It's probably one of the better classes that I've had. And I feel like that is how it is a lot, now in community college or college itself in general. You don't really get to a point of where you are judging people on who they are or what they're wearing and it is more about you know learning what you have to learn. And you know, for most people, you know getting it out of the way. Making it a good environment for yourself and for everyone else who is in the class. . . . It seems pretty homey. Everybody's pretty close together. It's not you know extremely cold or extremely warm. It's more of a homey feeling; you're not too far from everyone. You can talk to all your peers. And you are not set a part like in a big forum with 200 or 300 seats. Um, mostly English classes I have been to here have been pretty small you know set up, pretty nice. I mean nice classes. Nothing you know extremely nice. It's a good enough environment for you to learn, to pay attention, to see what the instructor is doing. I would say just about right.

Overall, the students had positive comments about their developmental English experiences in the classroom. The Developmental English Participant Survey also showed that four out of five respondents marked adequate or good when asked how their developmental English classes prepared them for college level work. This data supports the interview data, showing that students indicated that their developmental English courses prepared them for college work. The interview data showed that relevant skills were being taught and instructors generally used student centered methods. It also showed that the programs contained some aspects of culturally responsive teaching practices. Many classes were student centered with assignments that had relevance to the life experience of the students. The positive experiences of the developmental English students in this study supported the literature findings on the utility of CRT, relevant curriculum, student centered instruction, and student centered learning environments (Boroch, et al., 2007; Caballero de Cordero, 2005; Canizales, 1995; Strange & Banning, 2001; Tinto, 2006).

Helpful college services. Students at HCC tended to use a range of student services available at the college, including child care, EOPS, financial aid, the tutoring lab, academic advising, and the assessment center. Even students who did not use the services were aware of several services. Here are some thoughts on student services from the final one-on-one interviews:

RYAN: I've used counseling. Yeah. I went to counseling. I've went to what is it called. I've been to counseling meetings just to like get you know a plan for me set up or you know a schedule for the next year, you know, what I need to do or what I'm gonna take. I definitely have taken advantage of the counseling side. Not really too much else besides that.

RESEARCHER: How would you describe that experience?

RYAN: It was good. I got a better understanding of what I need to do. What I need to touch up on. What my grades need to be. So I can go where I need to go. You know, make it to the school that I want to go to so. It helped me better understand things.

Another HCC student said the following:

RESEARCHER: Uh hm. Describe your experience with academic support services such as English tutors or writing labs. Do you use any of these services on campus?

MAMA: Yes.

RESEARCHER: Okay.

MAMA: About English or writing lab?

RESEARCHER: Specifically in English.

MAMA: I get help, and I like it.

RESEARCHER: You got help from where?

MAMA: Tutoring in the lab.

RESEARCHER: Is that a drop in service? You come by when you need help?

MAMA: Sometimes you have to make an appointment. Before you need to ask when they are able to do it. Like last semester was so hard because they don't have a lot of tutors. Um, but the tutor that they have, two tutors was great, were great, excellent, they tell me. You need to do it in advance. But sometimes can I say, you need to do homework, and you need to go home. And you need to do it. You don't have time to come back. You go and as for help and they don't have time. Or there is no tutor, or you need to wait. Or the schedule doesn't fit with you. Like that. So you have to.

RESEARCHER: So there is tutoring in the summer?

MAMA: Yes. . . . And the great thing is we can use the computer to do homework. And you can bring them free, and that helps a lot. Because even when you say okay a piece of paper is just \$.10. But sometimes you don't have the card or you don't have change. And it's great; you can do it for free.

Another HCC student discussed her experience with student programs and EOPS. She expresses a challenge that people educated in other countries face in the United States higher education system:

MARIA: Like the programs, like the government programs because in order to receive here EOPS which is for single parents, they told me you are required to go and apply for cash aid. And I was not receiving it but I was like. You know what I am not getting child support; I should go and do it. But then I got over there, and the woman, a woman interview me, I think it was from college jobs. And she told me, and what is your goal? My goal is to become an attorney. And she say you have to find an occupation that is quick and in demand because you have to work.

RESEARCHER: Uh hm.

MARIA: And then I have the impression um they were trying do was to reduce the help. Which is good because many people they just have kids and kids and they.

RESEARCHER: Do you feel that uh. Are you currently in EOPS?

MARIA: Yes, just yesterday.

RESEARCHER: I didn't know that.

MARIA: Just yesterday they approve that.

RESEARCHER: Oh, good.

MARIA: And then when I was about to hand my transcripts to the teacher, to the counselor. I ran into my teacher and she say keep those hidden. And that woman at the welfare office she's lie, "Oh, okay." And I told her I about to receive my transcripts from Mexico. And she's like, "If you went to so far in Mexico, you are well above the seventy units that the college is gonna allow to you." And then I realize that then. Or maybe I need more information, you know. . . . Yeah. But it is my understanding that they wanted the transcripts because if I, if had to go there were gonna (sneezes). Thanks. If I had to go to study math and all the, you know, classes to get the AA. They tell me you don't need an AA, you can go straight to. The teacher told me. The teacher told me they're gonna send you without being prepared because you won't qualify for he help if they see that you go above the seventy units, then you won't get that help.

Cathy said she used several services.

CATHY: Well they are really helping me out. I signed up for financial aid, and they give me a check every semester. And for the day care I signed up for the state funded program. I only pay \$7 a week. As for EOPS program, they pay for my books, my parking permit, everything. So, I don't have to spend much here at school.

Alex, an HCC student had a positive experience with support services in the athletics programs.

ALEX: They have some like a study group where like all the soccer team went and did like the homework. . . .

RESEARCHER: So was that study group held in like the gym area?

ALEX: Yes, in the gym area.

The students who use student services found them to be helpful and in many cases critical support for their continuation in college. Campus child care, EOPS, financial aid, the tutoring center, and academic advising were critical components of the educational experiences of these students. These programs were also well publicized on the college websites, especially at HCC. The student comments were consistent with previous

studies that show that student services, tutoring centers, and advising help support student learning (Hagedorn, Perrakis & Maxwell, 2002; Perin, 2004; Roueche, Roueche & Ely, 2001).

Some students, though, reported that they were unaware of student services on the GHCC campus and that their experiences with student services were not helpful. Michael, a student at GHCC, said the following about his experiences with student services.

MICHAEL: No. I used to um. For some reason I am like shy. Shy as far as seeking help. I don't know where to go. Or if I did, I wouldn't feel like. I don't know. I don't want to bug anyone. That make sense?

RESEARCHER: Okay, you like to be more independent, then.

MICHAEL: Yeah.

RESEARCHER: Do it yourself.

MICHAEL: Yeah. I'd try to. Even if I end up struggling. If anything I'll ask my teacher. And that just helps me out. Or I'll have a second opinion with a student that's in higher English. Especially them.

RESEARCHER: So you'd be more likely to do that than to go to a tutoring center or something like that?

MICHAEL: Yes.

RESEARCHER: To your knowledge, is there a tutoring center on campus?

MICHAEL: I'm pretty sure there is. I've heard of it. I've never.

RESEARCHER: So, you've never been there?

MICHAEL: No, I've never been there.

Michael said he would encourage other students to use student services, but he wasn't sure what services were available.

Ana, who also attends GHCC, had similar comments about her experiences with student services.

RESEARCHER: Okay. Good. Describe your experience with academic support services such as English tutors or writing labs?

ANA: I really haven't gone to any.

RESEARCHER: Okay, and why is that?

ANA: I don't know (laughs). I just haven't.

RESEARCHER: Is there a writing lab here?

ANA: Yeah, I think so. I'm not sure.

She also shared her experience with academic advising services.

ANA: I've been here like a year.

RESEARCHER: A year. Okay. Since you've been here, have you receive encouragement or mentoring in your pursuit of a community college education?

ANA: No.

RESEARCHER: Um. I have talked to a couple of students here in terms of, did you work with the counseling center at all in terms of getting your schedule together or?

ANA: The first time enrolled here, yeah. I did.

RESEARCHER: And so did you find that helpful or not?

ANA: Not really.

RESEARCHER: Do you want to elaborate on that at all?

ANA: When I came to enroll here, they asked me for what my major was. And I said, business, but I wasn't quite sure. I was just trying to. They didn't really tell me what classes I needed to take to get to my major, they just told me just, what classes I need and to, my requirements for college that's it.

The few students who did not use student services or find them particularly helpful were

largely lacking knowledge about the types of student services available on their campus. This suggests that they need more information about student services, especially since other students and the literature report that student services can greatly benefit students.

Defined career goals. Students were asked to describe their educational and career goals. One student had aspirations to obtain her Master's in criminal justice. Most of the students were pursuing their bachelor's degrees, and their areas of emphasis included: Math, Communications, Early Childhood Education, Law, and Physical Education. One student wanted to go into business and was pursuing an associate's degree. The other student was undecided about her area of emphasis, but she was pursuing a degree and a career.

Several students talked about their aspirations to earn their bachelor's degree or higher. Cathy shared her goal in a one-on-one interview.

I am going for my BA, but um I am really hoping I can get my masters on me. . . . For some reason I have this feeling inside of me that I can do it, I could do it, I could do it. I can't fail. It's sort of like, wow. I'm gonna go strong for that master's.

Cesar also shared his goal in the area of mathematics.

High school math. Definitely high school math, 'cause I'm not going to get all those others. I am just getting my basics. Just 'cause I, I guess to teach elementary math you have to get your full curriculum and your full, take other classes. So I'm not doing all that. I am focusing on a math major and then getting my basics done. Where I'll have to start at the high school level.

Cesar also said, "Degrees. Education. To get a job where I use my mind more than my body. Because I have been labor since I was 16, 18. I've had jobs where I used my muscle and my body." Alex also expressed a strong interest in becoming an educator, yet he was unsure as to what level he wanted to teach: "My career goal is to graduate

from a four-year college. I want to be a PE teacher. That's what I want to do in the future."

Michael's goals center on the field of business, as he explained in a one-on-one interview:

I want to, at first, after I get my degree. I want to go work for someone. Probably a large type of business or organization and gain experience through that. I really want to go into business with my family. My mom is a real estate agent. She was an accountant, so, she has lots of goals. She teaches me a lot as far as you now like certain goals I can establish. So she helps me like she helps me guide me well. I want to go into business with her and my sister and maybe possibly open up a like some type of salon and my sister and help her run it cause I'll be able to help her manage it. . . . Yeah. Pretty accurate. Just go from there. Wherever we feel like in the skies.

Maria said she was still exploring her options based upon her circumstances as a single mother who needs to provide for her child.

[I'm] gonna get at least a bachelor's degree. But, I have to decide. I still have to decide because I am waiting for my transcripts from Mexico, whatever things I didn't finish, I don't know how they are going to evaluate them. What doors will be opened for me or closed for me. But I will go, something that goes with my, me raising my child in an appropriate way because my mom is not always going to be there. I have to take charge of that.

Maria also said she wanted to be a lawyer.

I feel pretty good because my goal is to get into the law probably mostly that's most likely to happen I was thinking teaching or something. But since my background, and I know a lot. I know I can help, and I can really enjoy my life practicing law.

Mama is pursuing her degree in early childhood education. She talked about her interest in learning about children.

I think I like to be to continue to study because it is always there is something that I can learn. Things are changing, the kids are changing, how do you say, I cannot remember the word, the people who study kids are discovering new things new ways to take care or to teach them. . . . I like too much about

psychology. I like that area. Some people one time told me that I cannot be enrolled in that area because I am sentimental.

In the focus group, Ana and Michael provided more commentary about their plans for the future.

ANA: It gives more options for me. I can do anything I want to do. I just gotta know what I want. And try to achieve it. . . .

RESEARCHER: Okay, how about for you?

MICHAEL: I feel kind of similar, I think. I'm sure I still like being like a business major. But, I kind of also want to do other things. But I'm just still debating. But I'm like starting to narrow it down, starting to be more programs I want to, I want to choose and explore in the major.

RESEARCHER: So let me ask you a question. When you came in, did you know that you wanted to be a business major, or is that something you discovered when you got here?

MICHAEL: I did. I was in the business academy in my high school. I was always interested in business.

The students had very clear goals for themselves, and it was evident that these goals provided support and direction for them in their pursuit of higher education.

RESEARCHER: So what made you stick it out?

RYAN: My family, and my girlfriend. I also knew that I would get better at it, and understand it more. Now that I have been here three semesters, it is getting better every semester. And I have goals that I want to do. So, without going to school I can't do what I want to do.

Of the five participants who responded to the Developmental English Survey, four respondents entered and exited developmental English with the same educational and career goals. So, the students had clear goals before they entered the courses and maintained those goals, even if they did not pass the course. Some students had increased the educational aspirations after enrolling in college. The focused goals and

increased expectations of the students in this study contradicted existing literature which asserted that Hispanics who entered college expecting to obtain a degree decreased their expectation by the end of their first year (Hernandez, 1999). However, Hernandez's study did not focus specifically on the experiences of Generation 1.5 students, so perhaps generational status and educational goals should be explored in more depth in future research.

Relevant curriculum. Students were asked to describe the relevance of developmental English reading and writing assignments to their culture, life experience, educational goals, and their learning of English. They were also asked if the assignments encouraged or discouraged their learning. Students stated in several conversations that curriculum that is culturally relevant and student centered supported their learning. They mentioned that authors who wrote about topics that the students could identify with helped them to comprehend and remain interested in their reading. Multicultural and culturally relevant readings also facilitated their writing of academic essays.

CATHY: I think they are encouraging me. I am learning more. They're all these essays we have to read throughout the book. They are like real life situation stories. There's essays regarding the 911 incident. There are stories regarding television commercials. So, it is actually teaching me stuff that is going throughout life right now.

Cathy also said:

CATHY: Yeah. You can tell when it's like a Hispanic person, an African American person. You are talking about your personal, how can I say, well it's about the Hispanic guy talking about where he was living at. So he was talking about his environment there. And there was this one essay by this African American man being judged, judged by the way he was looking. Just walking

down the street, he would see women grab their bags and stuff like that. So it's very different views, very diverse in the books.

CESAR: I would say they encourage my learning. . . . Uh, this last class, the book we were in had some authors of color. But mainly, it wasn't. I prefer [reading authors of color] because when there is different stories in this book about barrios and different stuff that I'm relative to, um you know, that I can relate to. Yeah, I liked it 'cause I relate to what they're talking about more. . . . Versus just all standard curriculum.

MICHAEL: If you really get into the writing, I guess. . . . Right now in this class I am more motivated and encouraged to do the work. Writing, I can apply it more to the writing because it's about college writing and about different concepts of language and all that. So I can compare and distinguish the differences and really go into the writing, but it depends on what class I am taking as well. I was taking sociology; it was an interesting class as well. I guess it's just a, an assignment or the particular article or essay the teacher chooses. Overall, it's more encouraging here. . . . Uh. It would be more like, uh, more like out of the box kind of you know looking in and looking around and comparing and realizing, realizing what um kind of like philosophy, I like that, and psychology, I like psychology a lot. I always like stand back and view what I am doing, constantly, and how I act around others and how I talk and act. I like reading about stuff like that and how society does that. . . . Yeah. I can compare more in the way to how I can see how society acts rather than a person, even though it might be interesting and it might apply to me more as far as like, the situation.

ANA: Yeah, well, she makes us read things, like articles, and kind of find what is the purpose and the meaning of it. And then try to write it, or try something related to it to know what is the meaning of it. So I'd say it's kind of helpful in a way.

ALEX: Yes, some of the assignments the teacher gives it has to do with like a culture that we're coming from. And she gives us the right to write our own experiences. And to like express ourselves like how we feel about going to college and stuff. . . . It helps me lot, 'cause I know what to say. 'Cause I've been through it. And, uh, it really does, it helps a lot.

RYAN: Like if one of the essays we had, if I could create the perfect world, or um, well that's one of the ones I remember. Everybody wants to you know do that, everybody has that in their mind. The, I don't know. I don't really know how to answer that question. . . . Honestly, like writing has never really been a problem for me. I can get the topic and just sit there and write about it without a issue, without a problem. So, all the topics that we had, like, I said the one I

remember is like if you can create the perfect world. The other one, I remember one, you know whatever, we did have one, what would be your perfect future, your successful future. And stuff like that. So, nothing, I wouldn't say I ever got stumped by anything in particular with the topic. I have always been able to kind of get the topic, write about it for a couple of minutes and just write. So that's just one of the positive things about that.

MARIA: Well, right now I am learning the structure of how to write and that is kind of more a technical. . . . Oh yeah, it motivates me to write. . . . Because they are mainly about myself, I like myself. Like we all do.

The Developmental Education Survey also contained questions about developmental and K-12 English assignment relevancy to students. The survey results showed that 3 of 5 participants strongly or mostly agreed that their developmental English assignments increased their ability to read and write in English, whereas the other 2 students mostly disagreed. Of the survey respondents, 5 out of 5 students marked that they somewhat or mostly agreed that their developmental English assignments were relevant to their life experience. Three of 5 respondents marked somewhat agree when asked if their developmental English assignments were relevant to their cultural experience, whereas the other two respondents marked mostly disagree.

The data from the survey supported the interview data and revealed that all of the respondents felt that their developmental English assignments were somewhat or mostly relevant to their life experience, and three felt the assignments increased their ability to read and write. These findings support the literature which shows that CRT increased student learning, especially in basic skills (Boroch, et al., 2007). Respondents at best only somewhat agreed that the curriculum was relevant to their cultural experiences. No students indicated that they strongly agreed that their K-12 or their developmental English assignments were relevant to their life experiences, cultural

experiences, or even the course. So, although students stated that culturally relevant assignments encouraged and supported their learning, the assignments they were given were only “somewhat” relevant to their cultural experience. Since the literature shows that CRT promotes learning, especially in basic skills courses, it seems clear that students would benefit from assignment that were relevant to their cultural experiences (Boroch, et al., 2007).

Positive peer pressure. In addition to having career goals that drive them toward their education and a relevant curriculum that supports their learning, students also discussed the impact of positive peer pressure from their peers and members of gangs. Michael shared the positive peer pressure he has received from gang members during the focus group.

RESEARCHER: Some of [the gang members] recommend that you stay in school?

MICHAEL: Yeah. To keep in school. I see that a lot, like a lot of Hispanics, if they don't see themselves they recommend you.

RESEARCHER: Like what kinds of things did they say to you?

MICHAEL: Like they way you know, “It's good that you go to school, but it's just not for me.” I hear that a lot.

Michael's words undercut the myth that Hispanic gang members do not believe in or support education. Michael reveals that in his experience, persons in gangs support those who are pursuing their own goals and dreams in education, even if those gang members are not interested in pursuing education themselves.

Ryan shared another perspective on positive peer pressure.

RESEARCHER: What made you want to go to college?

RYAN: Well, I always wanted to go. Even when I was in high school, I knew I wanted to go at one point or another. Just kind of getting down to reality, just made me want to go more, though. First I was living on my own, I didn't really go to school I was living the party lifestyle. Then I came home, and I realized well, I need to do this like I have been putting it off for so long. And seeing everyone else doing it. It kind of like, my peers had an impact on me because everyone else was going to school. I didn't want to be one of the ones that didn't go to school and didn't get a degree you know and didn't do something better with your life than you know stay at home. So it was myself and probably my peers around me that made me want to go to college.

Ryan shows how positive peer pressure encouraged him to go back to school after high school. He chose to follow this type of peer pressure, rather than negative peer pressure, and by making that choice he has empowered himself.

Michael, as does Ryan, receives support from his friends.

MICHAEL: My friends support me, because I choose to hang around the right people. . . . To me that means encouragement as far as going to school. People with the same goals, same attitudes, even though sometimes they encourage me to go hang out, but that falls back on me and how disciplined I am. Mostly I give in, but lately I have been doing my work. I am really proud because I'm doing all my work in this class.

Michael chooses his friends and exercises self discipline in his study habits and his selection of friends. He empowers himself through these choices, for those choices support his goals. Alex also talked about being part of a group of people who are pursuing their college education.

ALEX: Uh, I got friends that go here, so they are like in the same style, or like the situation. But yeah, they feel good that I am going to school. Some of them they want to go back to school, too. They see that I am working at the same time I am going to school. That it is possible.

Alex has positive peer relationships with others who are in school, and he acts as a role model for others. Acting as a role model for others can empower a student in that the student sees how he is helping others in his community, his family, and peer group. In

addition to having positive peer pressure, having positive role models also provides support for these students. Although the literature discusses the importance for a student to feel they belong on a campus (Strange & Banning, 2001; Hagedorn, Perrakis & Maxwell, 2002), studies that explicitly discussed positive peer pressure were absent. This positive peer pressure seems to be a function of both the collectivism apparent in Hispanic communities as well as a lack of Hispanic role models who are community college graduates.

Effective role models and mentors. The literature and the students reveal the importance of positive role models. The role models that these students describe, though, are not usually other students who have gone to college. When the students were asked to describe their role models, they showed that their role models included family members, political activists, movie stars, boyfriends/girlfriends, friends, and teachers. When students responded to questions about their role models, several of them immediately stated their parents, but others struggled to find an answer. Michael, Ana, Alex, and Mama all named their parents as role models.

MICHAEL: My role models are my parents. Not too much with my teachers. Because I did not really talk to them. I talked to them, but I wouldn't try to get to know them. And if I did, they were my role models at the time. So I guess through the school years my main role models changed. But off and on it's my parents. . . . Yeah, I'm really close to my parents.

ANA: I'll say my parents . . . 'cause [dad] has a pretty good job right now.

ALEX: My parents. . . . Well it's 'cause they support me a lot through my entire life. They want the best for me. And they are very supportive.

MAMA: My parents. I remember that they finished their elementary school when I was just a child. I looked how hard they studied to learn to read and write being adults. And especially one brother. He struggled with a lot of things to get

a career, and now he did and he have a great family. And I think in this country I have a friend that who she show me uh new ways to get my goals. . . . Even when I have my fears to this country, at this school she give me information about the college and she helped me to enroll my kids in a sports activities and motivate me to continue. She teach me that I don't have to wait for somebody to help me. I have to look for it. I need to struggle to get my objectives. . . . Especially she is happy with me when I told her, "I got a B; I got an A". She said, "Yes, you can do it." And when I can pass with good grades one class, she would say, "No problem, you can do it. Do not defeat." The way how you learn and things like that.

Cathy said her boyfriend was her mentor.

My role models right now, I have to say my boyfriend. That guy is just too strong minded. He's been jail so many times. And but, he, people tell him you are just gonna end up in the streets, you're gonna end up dead. Somebody tells him that. Right now he is doing his best to keep his family moving forward. He is the one that brings me to school, picks me up. He encourages me to finish school; he helps me with my homework. Anything I need to do for school, he is right there encouraging me so. I have to say my boyfriend. . . . He is trying to apply. He wants to be a chef. He wants to own his own restaurant and all that. So yeah.

Cathy's choice of a role model reveals that a Latino who is not in school and who has been in jail can serve as a positive educational role model. Even though Cathy's boyfriend has been in jail, he values education and even aspires to receive an education himself. Ryan also said that his girlfriend was his role model, but he mentioned his father as well.

I would say one of my role models is my girlfriend. She put her mind on something and got it done. Got it done as far as widely recognized. And as far as education goes, she's probably one of my education role models. A role model in life I would say. Um, I'll probably say my dad. Not necessarily his career path or anything like that. Just the way that he is so dedicated to his family and no matter what he is always there to be there for us and help us out. That's kind of what I want to do some day you know, if I have children or something. I always want to help them out and you know be there for them. And learn some of the things that I learned from him, have my kids learn that someday. It's not as easy as it looks sometimes, and it's definitely a difficult task being a parent. But he's probably one of my role models in life just because he's always been there for

us. All the hard situations and pulled through and got everything you know back to a little bit normal. That would probably be my role model in life. And I don't really; I wouldn't say I look up to too many people besides those two.

Cesar talked about a few role models.

Hmmm. Not too many. I don't have too many role models people I look up to. I have friends. I know those great men that lived before, like Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, and Cesar Chavez. Men like that, yeah.

It was clear that based on Cesar's experience, he did not personally know many people he would consider role models. However, he certainly looked up to African American and Hispanic civil rights leaders. Maria's role model, on the other hand, was unique in that rather than looking to community leaders, she had created a role model in her mind.

My role models for now are the person who make a good job and having a good life. And I mean not only economically, but they have a good marriage, and they have a successful kids, and happy. . . . Besides that they are kind to others, and they like to help. I don't really know many people like that because the ones, some of the ones that like to help people their relationships are messed up or they haven't done a good job raising the kids. So I am kind of perfectionist, but I would say my role model is imaginary. . . . And I have an ideal that I learned that I met in Mexico, but they were not such a good role models because they got their, their money, their well being from, from the people. So, that was not, that was the only flaw that I find there. . . . Their personal thing was success. Successful in their families, but the thing is that they were politicians, and politicians in Mexico are corrupt and dirty. They're not honorable.

The students indeed had role models, and these role models were people who reflected the family, cultural, ethical, and political values of the students. Their role models were not necessarily people in professions that the students were interested in or even people who had received a college education themselves. Rather, their role models reflect their lived experiences and their choices reveal their strong cultural and familial ties. Yet what was also clear throughout many conversations is that they empowered themselves as they acted as role models for others. A one-on-one interview with Ryan

demonstrates how role modeling empowers him to complete his goal.

RYAN: Yeah. All of them are younger than me, I am the oldest one. So, kind of something. I want to do it for myself, but I want to do it for my family. You know, it is kind of like an effect I guess you can say sometimes. When the older one graduates college and they see that, they want to go to college. Hopefully you now I can throw that down at them and you know and make them realize how important it is.

RESEARCHER: How many other siblings?

RYAN: There are four of us total. So, three younger siblings. Eighteen, 12, and 10. They're not too bad a part. But, um, yeah they pretty much, they're really behind me, they want me to do good, they want me to you know succeed. I want to kind of , I know it's kind of weird, but I want to make up what I didn't do in high school for them, I want to show them, let them see me walk you know. To me it will mean more, a little more to them, you know than the high school graduation because it is a lot more important. So that is kind of why I wanted to, that's is not why I decided to go to school. But, you know, that's my initial goal.

Ryan acts a role model for his younger three siblings. As he says, he wants them to realize the importance of school and he wants his family to see him walk as he graduates from college. This desire to provide positive role modeling is important to Ryan, especially after he did not graduate on time from high school. The role modeling also empowers Ryan as it motivates him to graduate for himself and for his family.

Mama talked about how she acts as a role model for her kids.

RESEARCHER: Okay. How does your family feel about you attending college?

MAMA: They feel great. They feel proud of me because even when I couldn't study before I get married because we cannot afford to pay for school in Mexico. Now that I have the opportunity to study they told me they are proud and they motivate me to continue because they know that is the best way to do something and to be somebody and especially because I will be a role model for my kids.

Mama strives to provide “acimientos” for her children, a solid foundation. Part of that foundation is Mama's role modeling for her children the importance of education.

Providing that role modeling for her children provides Mama with empowerment, as it motivates her to complete her own goals, which in turn improves her own family.

Cesar also acts as a role model for his children; he uses his skills from class as a part of parenting.

RESEARCHER: I know that feeling. And, uh, what skills have you learned in developmental English that you will continue to use in the future?

CESAR: Organizing my thoughts. Taking time to write my papers. I guess I just told my oldest daughter. Well, she had a punishment, I gave her a punishment to write an essay. And to properly explain to her how to write it. I think that is a better punishment for the older the teenage kids.

RESEARCHER: How old is he?

CESAR: Twelve. She got in trouble for disobeying her mom, and she done a few things wrong. And her punishment was to write an essay.

RESEARCHER: (Laughs). That was not an answer I expected, I have to admit.

Cesar uses the skills he has learned in college to teach his own children to prepare them for the future. As a parent, he is providing role modeling as he chooses to discipline his daughter by teaching her skills and helping her understand her own behavior. This empowers Cesar as he takes action to improve his own family situation based on the skills he is gaining from his educational and life experience.

Maria shared with the focus group that her brother, who had been discouraging her from attending school, was now encouraging her to go and was thinking about going to school himself. “And then I, I tell him of people you like they say that are in college. And he just stares at me and he’s like I know that this thing is a possibility.” Maria empowered herself by going against her brother’s wishes and staying in school. By taking this action, she served as a role model for her brother and her family, and she

actively worked to improve their family's economic struggle.

Alex also serves as a role model for his younger brother.

RESEARCHER: And do you have any siblings?

ALEX: Yes, one, one brother?

RESEARCHER: And is he older or younger?

ALEX: He is younger.

RESEARCHER: He is younger, you're the oldest; is he in college?

ALEX: No, he is about to be in high school.

RESEARCHER: So are you encouraging him to go to college?

ALEX: Yea. We talked a lot about that.

Alex also chooses to discuss college with his younger brother. He tries to motivate his brother to follow in his own footsteps and to go to college. Alex takes this action step toward trying to help his own family.

Cathy acts as a role model for her child and her friends.

Most of them have babies; they're just staying at home, doing their thing. A couple of them are working. I am the one that keeps bugging them go to school, go to school. Some of them are taking it into consideration. I think they just don't think find school that important; it's just after high school, work. I told them it just much more than that. It's so much. I just keep bugging them, go to [college], it's a different environment, and you'll enjoy it. But they are not taking me seriously. They're, "Yeah, sure, whatever."

Cathy's attempts to encourage others like her to go to school. Some of them are receptive to her suggestions, and some are not. Cathy uses her life experiences to try to support her friends so that they can experience college, too. Ryan also acts as a role model for his friends.

If I have friends that just don't have anything going for themselves, you know I try to help them out. Or I try to get them on some kind of track. And if they're just not willing to go that route, I'd just really rather not waste my time. 'Cause I know at the end of the day, you know, it's not really gonna get me anywhere. Those people, you know, stuff like that.

Ryan tries to help out friends who want to help themselves. He is trying to empower others through his knowledge of the educational process, yet he uses self discipline by not wasting his time with those friends who do not want to get on track.

Both watching role models and acting as role models support the academic pursuits of these students. The students actively choose who they want to be like and actively role model behavior for others. These roles result in a stronger motivation and foundation for achieving their own academic goals. Role models provide someone for students to look up to, whereas mentors try to help and guide students through their individual pathways.

When asked about their role models, students did not typically name their teachers. They did mention civil rights activists, their parents, and movie stars as role models. However, students did say that teachers had helped, mentored, and guided them during their K-12 experiences especially. Students were asked to describe a time when they received encouragement or mentoring in their pursuit of a community college education. All of the students had received support either from student services, friends, teachers, or role models. Several examples of mentoring came from students' one-on-one interviews.

CATHY: It's like this teacher told me, time is gonna go by, no matter what. So, just think about it. You want to stay home and do nothing, get a minimum paying job. Just go to school and enjoy it. . . . The same teachers in the EOP program. They are the only ones that have really kept insisting [HCC], and

know it is good to further your education and stuff like that.

Cathy felt inspired by a student in the EOPS program which led to her choice to attend HCC. She found her teachers' mentoring helpful. The mentoring also gave her a new perspective on college and on life; since time will pass no matter what choices you make, why not go to college? Cesar also had a teacher that encouraged him to get his college education.

Well, when I was going back to high school. I took this math test, I scored so high on it my teacher said go back to college and major in math. Ever since then, that when I was working on my high school diploma, and ever since then, it was some exam that was given to all high school students. So I took it. When I took it the first time, I scored relatively high. But the second time I took it, I scored like off the charts. So he was like, that was a very high score. He was the first one I guess that put it to my idea to go back to college. To go to college . . . this is when I, I was out of high school and I had some kids by then, and then, this is when I went back to get my GED. This is when I was doing that. . . . Yeah, ever since he planted the seed then I. It's something I've been wanting to do for the longest anyways, so.

Cesar's words revealed how a suggestion from a teacher in his GED program led him to set a goal of going to college. He already knew he enjoyed math, and the suggestion "just planted the seed". Cesar made the choice to go to college. He is empowering himself by choosing to pursue a career where he can use his mind. He said:

It was because I feel like I am doing something positive now. I guess while I was working full time, it was positive. But, I just I feel education is, I can devote more to society with a better education than being a truck driver. Though we need truck drivers, too. Wondered what would happen if we didn't have truck drivers?

As he explained, Cesar wants to contribute more to society by using his skills in math. He empowered himself by making the choice to learn more so that he can see his own dreams come to fruition.

Alex's high school teachers also mentored him. "My high school teachers they support me, and they wanted me to go to college or a university. They just said that they wanted me to continue with my education," he said. Alex followed their advice, and he plans to go to a four year college.

Maria said that a woman in her eighties was an inspiration to her, guided her, and acted as a role model, too.

Yeah. The reason I came back was because I was working in real estate selling houses, and I was being miserable. Uhm, and uhm, then the mom of one of my sister's-in-law, she's very old. She's in a, a house where the old live. And she used to be uh, she's 80 something, she used to be a nurse. And, it motivated me because she's gives me advice, and she told that me she finished nursing when she was 50.

In Maria's case, her mentor was also a non-traditional college student. This was an important factor for Maria, since she questioned if she was too old to pursue her own dreams. This woman was instrumental in providing support for Maria when she decided to go to school in the United States. She gained knowledge about her own situation and used it to empower herself to go to school.

The mentoring that students have received is mostly formal, yet effective. A teacher's words, a friend's encouragement, or the advice of a person who had pursued their dream all provide informal mentoring for students. That mentoring was an important tool and support for the students, for they used that knowledge to guide them toward their goals. This informal mentoring helped to fill a void for the students who lacked educational role models. The students' lack of educational role models was also consistent with the literature (Wilson, 2007). In fact, the students are the role models in their families and their communities. They are shaping their own futures and their

communities by choosing to attend college and to act as role models for others.

Caring teachers. In addition to the role models and mentors the students had named as their supporters, several students spoke about the teachers who had helped them during their K-12 education, both in the United States and in Mexico. However, the students did not name teachers as role models. Rather, they spoke about the encouragement they received from their teachers. Students shared these stories about the teachers who had supported them in their pre-college education.

CATHY: It was a good feeling of receiving support. . . . Some of the [4th grade] teachers during recess would take me to this room and try to like work with me to do the math groups and stuff like that.

CATHY: The teachers [at the alternative school] were so understanding, it was all about the student. If a student had a problem or an issue, go straight to the student and talk to them one-on-one. . . . They really take the student as a priority.

CESAR: I had one teacher in 6th grade who went out of her way for me. An Oriental teacher. She really pushed me farther. . . . She just made things seem more simpler. And then, I guess she put things in layman's terms where I could understand them. Where other teachers stuck strictly to the book and the curriculum they had. . . . I think it definitely got me more interested in the class. It kept me interested in what she was talking about. . . . I think it had to do with her ethnicity, and her style, but her. Mostly her ethnicity, it was something different, something I had never experienced before.

MICHAEL: In 5th grade I had a science teacher, uh, she saw that I needed help and had questions with the science project because we were having a science fair. So she stayed after class to clarify any things I had questions about as far as the assignment.

ANA: There are many teachers that helped support me along the way, help me out, doing things I needed, give me extra help.

RYAN: [She] was really there for me and offered any kind of help she could. Just you know, wanted to make sure that I understood the subject, understood the context of school, and how it would benefit me you know later on in the future. . . . [She] was just always there for all of those students that really cared

about . . . there for me you know if I needed someone to talk to.

MARIA: [The Mexican school] was like, kind of philanthropy work. They were journalist, one was, one studies philosophy. It was whole group of different disciplines that went into teaching that school. But the area where it was located was of disadvantaged people. People who wouldn't dream of having an education. Very poor. I think they did a great job.

Alex shared a story about a “teacher,” but not one who worked in a school or a higher education setting.

[My friend] has been supporting me since the day I got here. [He] calls and checks up on me . . . helps me a lot with the homeworks.

Alex's comment shows that students learn from teachers both through formal and informal channels. The students spoke warmly about their teachers, and only Cesar mentioned that having a teacher of color was beneficial to him. His comment supports the literature that teachers of color, even teachers from ethnic group outside of a student's own group, can help to support the learning of a student of color (Saveedra & Saveedra, 2007). The other students did not specifically mention teachers of color, but shared the notion that teachers who cared for them as individuals and about their lives were the ones who most helped them, which also supports the literature (Caballero de Cordero, 2005; Tinto, 2006). Some of the experiences shared also reveal the types of culturally relevant and student-centered teaching strategies that encouraged the learning of these students.

Actions

In addition to motivators and road blocks, the theme of student action emerged from the interviews, focus groups, and direct observations. The actions included defining clear goals, finishing high school, choosing to attend college, acting as role

models to others, exercising self-discipline, choosing supportive friends, and participating in the study. These actions empower the students in that they are dispelling myths about Hispanic students as well as promoting better education for Hispanics in developmental English by contributing their suggestions for instructional and program improvements. The teachers will take the immediate action, as the students lead the changes. The students challenge myths about Hispanic gangbangers by pointing out that gang members have been supportive of their educational pursuits. Since they lack role models, they become the role models for themselves and others. They exercise self-discipline by choosing friends who are supportive of education, going to class, doing their homework, and attending tutoring sessions. These acts of self-discipline are critical in that they are using the tools of education to succeed in their educational pursuits. Increasing their knowledge through education is a step on their pathway toward liberation and justice.

Further, the action of attending college has had an enormous impact on the families of these students. The students' methods for disciplining their children, supporting their own children in school, advocating for their families, communicating with their spouses, and encouraging other family members to consider school result directly from their choices to attend college. These choices set the stage for change at the local level within their families. These grassroots efforts at home may lead to bigger changes in the future that impact the broader Hispanic community in terms of increased participation in education, improved family relationships, better paying jobs, and community organizing.

Other Themes

In addition to the themes that answered the study research questions, some other themes were produced as well. These themes do not necessarily serve as road blocks or motivators of the student's progress. Rather, the themes shed light on the lived experiences of the students in the study, and they are factors often not considered when looking at student's lives. The themes included their parents' low level of formal education, classism in Mexican schools, experiential knowledge about Hispanics, and desire for a better life.

Parents' low level of formal education. The first of these additional themes is the level of education of the student's parents. The students talk about how they have witnessed their own parents' struggles to get an education. During different parts of one-on-one interviews, students shared stories about their parents' level of education and their attempts to receive an education.

MAMA: My parents. I remember that they finished their elementary school when I was just a child. I looked how hard they studied to learn to read and write being adults. And especially one brother. He struggled with a lot of things to get a career, and now he did and he have a great family. And I think in this country I have a friend that who she show me uh new ways to get my goals.

MARIA: I put my mom into English in school for adults and there was a teacher, she never went back to school, there was a teacher who asked her to go and make a sentence on the blackboard, on the chalkboard. And she got scared and never went back to school but she prefer to read. There is people who doesn't have those skills. She is even finished. She barely knows how to write and read.

CATHY: My mom graduated high school in Mexico, which I don't think counts over here. My dad finished in like the 7th or 8th grade only. Yeah the furthest they went in [their] education.

Cesar said that "I don't think neither, I think my mom graduated high school,

and my dad had a fourth or fifth grade education”. Ana said that “My dad [went to college]”. Michael report that “My mom, yes. My father he just graduated from high school in Mexico. [My mother] graduated from college when she was 23, I believe. Twenty-five”? Alex wasn’t sure about his mother’s level of education, but knew his father’s: “[My father] just went to high school in Mexico, then he just came to the US. Then, he brought my, our family to the United States. . . . I not know how far [my mother went].”

Four of the students shared that at least one of their parents had less than a high school education as adults. Others were unsure of their parents’ level of education or knew that they had a high school education either from the United States or Mexico. A few had parents who went to college, and just one mentioned that his mother graduated from college.

Classism in Mexican schools. Another theme that came out of the research centered on discrimination students had witnessed in the Mexican school system. Non-native students who received their K-12 education in Mexico reported that classism impacted the education students received, and that the teachers were not always supportive. Mama said, “In the same school, when you meet other people that goes to private school there is discrimination between public and private . . . especially if you look different to them, economic level.” Maria also spoke about that type of class based discrimination, saying that “the teachers they think they are gods.” The students felt that schools in the United States were less discriminatory than schools in Mexico. They discussed that privilege was connected to color: “Yeah, because. Yeah, you go

to the private school and you see a lot more blue eyed and a jueta,” said Maria.

The students shared their views that education was less discriminatory in the United States. They said that in their experiences, Mexico’s educational system had more people who discriminated against others based on their socioeconomic status.

Experiential knowledge about Hispanics. Another theme that students spoke of centered on how students get their information about Hispanic contributions to the United States and its history, art, and culture. Students in the study were asked how they received their education and knowledge about the contributions of Hispanics in literature, civil rights, history, art, or other areas. Their answers revealed that few of them received knowledge about Hispanic contributions to academia in their K-12 experience, yet several learned this knowledge through television, their family stories, books, and movies. In one-on-one interviews, the students shared from what sources they had acquired their knowledge about Hispanics.

Cathy said she received her information about Hispanics, “At home.” Cesar, though, said: “Um, history. History. . . . Family and documentaries and stuff like that. My cousin, that’s what she always talks about, the Cesar Chavez movement and stuff.” Mama offered another viewpoint: “Maybe the TV, but more it is friends and family and now the college.” Similar to Mama, Ana said: “Probably in all, kind of, a little bit. Also, through school, TV, my parents also.” And Alex suggested he got his information from school: “Literature classes, we read about some Hispanic authors and their experiences, too. And I kind of know a lot about the culture, too, because of my parents and stuff.” A few other students shared some differing views as well:

MICHAEL: Uhm. A lot of the history and the knowledge that took place here? I guess I learned mainly in school. My parents don't tend to explain to me the background of what happened here too much. But, mainly their history in Mexico, I guess because that is what they knew more. They grew up there and they went to school there. . . . Yeah. In the United States you learn more of the history of the United States in class. All of it in class, basically. . . . Yeah. And then more about some things, events, that took place over there, rather than things that happened over here. . . . Yeah. Sometimes I would ask them questions like what took place back then and they were here and they would tell me like about their experiences and how they felt toward certain leaders or events that happened.

RYAN: No. I mean my parents never really discuss too much of what is going on in the world. Every now and then we will, but not really anything as far as from my parents, probably. Most of the stuff I have gotten is from school. My parents aren't really; I mean they watch the news and stuff like that. But they don't, we don't come home and say, "Guess what book I read today." So, not really from them.

Maria said she got her information mostly from movies.

MARIA: I would say true. I haven't heard of contributions really. I don't know anything. I know of like Edward James Olmos, Cesar Chavez, Joe Cerna. I know those persons.

RESEARCHER: How do you know about them?

MARIA: Because of movies. And because of this guy, I don't remember his name but he is the one who created *La Bamba*, the movie *La Bamba*. He is a very famous in L.A. or something like that. I went to see him, and I think he's very outstanding people.

Although students had not received a great deal of formal education about Hispanic contributions to academia and to the United States, they did indicate that they were receiving more formal knowledge about Hispanics in their developmental English classes and in college classes.

RYAN: I have gotten a lot of information from my current teacher, my class now for developmental English. Knowing a lot more about Hispanic culture and who's done what and who helped who and got a lot more information about like Hispanic writers, like one we're reading now, Soto. I forgot his first name. . . .

Yeah. Um, so I mean I've learned a little bit more maybe cause my teacher himself is Hispanic. You know obviously he may want to enforce that a little bit more, but I've definitely learned a little bit more about the culture, like the history, some of the writers, how to write about you know certain topics in that history and culture. It's been a good experience for me having a teacher who is Hispanic himself and actually likes talking about what's going on and whose made a difference in his life and stuff so.

Desire for a better life. Students were asked what made them want to go to college. Wanting good jobs, support from teachers and family, wanting a better life, and fulfilling personal goals were the predominant reasons given.

CATHY: Just, to have a good life. And I want a well paid job. I seen people, 'cause this person told me, you know, the people around you is who you're gonna become. I have friends like I said who are just staying at home taking care of the kids. I think I'm too young. I just turned twenty. I'm not gonna stay at home. I still have a whole lot to go for. Just go to college to see what else is out there for me.

CESAR: Made me want to come back. Like I said, when I went back and got my high school diploma. And I, there was a math test that high school students take. And I took it when I started studying for my GED and I took it at the end. And I just scored off the chart, and the teacher was like, "Man, go to school and get your Math degree." So right there when that teacher suggested that . . . I said hey, "I'm gonna do that."

MICHAEL: Um hm. I always wanted to become successful later on. And, I like the environment. I like how the responsibility is on me. So I can see how I am doing in life. . . . I remember in high school I just did the work to just get out. It was simple things, and I would be walking to go home and I'd be on my phone, and "Hey! Get off your phone!" and it's like I'm calling my mom. And over here there is more freedom.

ANA: To get a better job.

ALEX: My parents. I wanna help them out, too. 'Cause they did a lot for me, too. My friends. My teachers. They all encouraged me to come here.

MARIA: Wanting all those things, a good life. To have a certainty that I am gonna be safe when I am old because I am gonna have an income. I'm not gonna have to worry about the money.

MAMA: I feel the necessity to learn English and later I understand it is not

enough to just learn English and do nothing. Yes, that motivate me I think -- especially my kids because I want to do something for them. Since I was a child my parents told me that the education was the only inheritance they could let me some day. They said too that the knowledge was the key that open a lot of doors.

The students discussed their reasons for coming to college, and their comments reveal their desire to help their parents, find better jobs, pursue their goals, and support their families.

Summary

Themes emerged from the research conducted that answered the question, what is the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanic development English participants. The themes show the many pressures and choices that Hispanic students must cope with in their efforts to go to school, stay in school, and complete a degree. Their self-discipline, selection of role models and friends, clear goals, and choice to attend college serve as acts of self empowerment. By acting in a manner that provides them with opportunities to gain information about their lives, they empower themselves. By speaking about their experiences to each other and the world of academia, they empowered themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes this case study on the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English, presents key findings and conclusions, makes recommendations for developmental English programs and students, suggests research strategies for working with Hispanic students, discusses contributions of this study to the literature, and suggests possibilities for future research.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English at a community college. The primary research question that guided this study was: What is the experience of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English? Secondary questions for this study were: a) What were the previous schooling experiences of these students; b) How did their previous schooling experiences influence their experiences in developmental English; c) What about these Hispanic students' developmental education experiences are empowering or disempowering; d) How did the developmental English course influence the educational and career goals of the students; e) How do the classroom and college environment influence the educational experiences of these Hispanic students? Ten students signed up as participants in the study: 8 students participated in the first one-on-one interview, 6 students participated in the focus group, and 6 students participated in the final one-on-one interviews. The interviews were conducted using guiding questions (see Appendix B) to encourage students to share their stories about their

experiences in developmental English. The questions were designed to elicit stories from the students that would ultimately answer the primary and secondary research questions for the study. The social critical methodology framed the case study research and the Critical Race/LatCrit-based justice theory served as criteria by which the research was evaluated. The words of the students were emphasized throughout the case study in order to allow the reader to hear the experience of these students in developmental English as they described it. The students were engaged in their own liberation through their actions. They provide instructors with the changes they want made to their educational programs, so that the instructors can then take action to improve the educational experiences for Hispanics.

The participants in the study self-identified as Generation 1.5 Hispanics. For purposes of this study, Hispanic included: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latino. Seven of the 8 students were bilingual; half of the students were native born and the other half were born in Mexico; the 4 participants who immigrated did so at ages 1, 8, 25, and 27; 1 participant was married; 4 participants had children; 5 participants were in their twenties and 3 were in their thirties; 6 of the 8 participants worked; 5 participants were first generation college students. The students expressed how they balanced the road blocks and motivators that they faced in their educational journeys.

Key Findings

The key findings surfaced through the interviews and focus groups. The key findings fell into three primary categories: road blocks, motivators, and actions. The road blocks included: financial stress, language difficulty, family stress/lack of support,

late high school graduation, death of family or friends, inappropriate English placement, and irrelevant curriculum. The motivators included: family support, positive experiences in developmental English, helpful college services, defined career goals, curriculum that is relevant, positive peer pressure, effective role models and mentors, and caring teachers. The actions included defining clear goals, choosing to attend college, acting as role models to others, exercising self discipline, and choosing supportive friends. These actions empowered the students during their educational experiences. Secondary themes also came out of the interviews and focus groups that show important aspects of the lives and motivations of these students. The secondary themes revealed motivators and road blocks for these students as well. For instance, a parent's lack of education could sometimes motivate a student and at other times serve as a barrier to a student's education. The secondary themes included: parental lack of formal education, classism in Mexican schools, experiential knowledge about Hispanics, and wanting a better life.

Research Question One.

What are the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English?

The students in this study reported that assessment and English placement do not work for all students. Some students had been improperly placed at levels too low or too high for their abilities. Thus, they had to take additional coursework and spend more time to complete their English requirements. The students expressed frustration over having to take additional coursework and sit through classes that were too hard or too easy for them.

Research Question Two.

What were the previous schooling experiences of these students?

The students had varied previous educational experiences, which included graduating from high school on time, graduating late, earning a GED, attending adult school, and receiving ESL courses in elementary school or in college. In total, 1 participant received a GED, 4 participants graduated from high school on time, 1 participant graduated from high school one semester late, 2 participants received ESL instruction in college, and 2 participants attended adult school prior to taking ESL courses at the college.

Research Question Three.

How did their previous schooling experiences influence their experiences in developmental English?

Study participants expressed that they felt they lacked appropriate preparation for college English. Their high school courses did not adequately provide the skills they needed to read and write for college. In some cases, the students reported that they were not asked to write essays or conduct research in high school English. Others said that high school provided them with the five paragraph essay format, which was useful, but not in depth enough for college writing.

Other students reported that their previous education in ESL prepared them well for developmental English. They felt confident coming out of ESL coursework, especially in the area of written grammar. However, they also discussed their desire to receive more practice in spoken English.

Research Questions Four.

What about these Hispanic students' developmental educational experiences are

empowering or disempowering?

The Hispanic students in this study stated that curriculum with rigor and relevance supported their learning and empowered them. Group work, student-centered instruction, social learning, and students being responsible for portion of the lessons were cited as methods that promoted learning. The students also spoke of their increased confidence as they gained skills in grammar, sentence structure, essay writing, and reading. Further, they felt motivated by their ability to act as role models for their friends, siblings, children, and parents.

The students named teacher-centered instruction, irrelevant curriculum, testing bias, and family stress as disempowering. Instructors who chose curriculum that did not interest students or lacked life relevance bored students and impeded their progress. Teachers who did not answer student questions, who did not employ collaborative methods, and who did not seem interested in student learning frustrated students and in some cases made them lose motivation. The students also felt that exit exams which required them to denote their status as ESL learners were biased and resulted in an unfair assessment of their work. Students also expressed that family stress was disempowering. Although the students felt supported by their families, they also felt disempowered when family members did not understand the challenges they faced at school or did not recognize their achievements.

Research Question Five.

How did the developmental English course influence the educational and career goals of the students?

All of the students in the study entered developmental English with clear career and

educational goals. Students were pursuing certificate and degrees in the areas of Physical Education, Mathematics, Communications, Law, Early Childhood Development, Business, and Criminal Justice. Some students raised their educational aspirations during their developmental English experiences from a pursuit of a certificate to that of an Associate's degree, and one student raised her goal from achieving a Bachelor's degree to that of a Master's degree. In all, 2 participants are pursuing their Master's degrees, 4 participants are seeking their Bachelor's degree, and 2 participants want to earn an Associate's degree. Some students are still clarifying exactly what careers they want in their chosen fields.

Research Question Six.

How do classroom and college environments influence the educational experiences of these Hispanic students?

The students discussed the environments of the classrooms and the colleges in mostly positive ways. They felt these environments were multicultural, friendly, reflected their culture, and promoted interaction. Students described their campus environments as safe and inclusive. Campus support programs, such as child care centers, helped students feel comfortable about how their children were being cared for, and increased their opportunities to attend classes.

In some cases, individual classroom environments did not promote student interaction and thus student did not feel engaged. When teachers were not supportive of students in the learning environment, conversation and student interaction were stifled.

Conclusions

From the study and the students' words, nine conclusion and program

recommendations emerged. These nine conclusions are:

- 1) *The Hispanic Generation 1.5 student participants feel supported by their families and friends to attend college, even though family pressures and a lack of encouragement sometimes put students in the difficult predicament of having to choose between school and family obligations. Thus, creating programs that promote family engagement can provide added support for students.*
- 2) *Being role models for others provides motivation for these Hispanic student participants to attend and stay in college.*
- 3) *Positive peer pressure creates incentive for these study participants to stay in college. They reported that positive peer pressure comes from peers from all walks of life, such as: gangbangers, ex-convicts, current college students, soccer players, single mothers not in school, and students who dropped out of high school. The acts of exercising self discipline and choosing friends with similar college aspirations empower these students and help them to achieve their goals.*
- 4) *English placement is not working consistently for all students, which could argue for the need for better assessment tools and departmental practices regarding initial placement.*
- 5) *Developmental English classes with student-centered instruction provide these student participants with improved skills and confidence in writing, reading, and speaking.*
- 6) *Curriculum that is relevant, multicultural, and rigorous encourages learning for these student participants.*
- 7) *Developmental English programs with structure and clear assessment and policies provide these student participants with information they need to achieve their aims in college. This information provides study participants with knowledge they need to accomplish their goals and make choices that impact their own futures.*
- 8) *As ESL learners, these study participants whether native born or non-native born, struggle at times with communication and homework due to language barriers. Thus, teachers and student services providers need to actively support these students to facilitate their understanding of class materials.*
- 9) *Classroom and college environments that promote collaboration, multiculturalism, student centered learning, college services, and inclusion help these student participants feel safe, comfortable, and supported in their*

learning.

These conclusions were drawn from the one-on-one interviews with students, the focus groups, observations of the campus and classroom environments, and instructional, program, and college materials, and from previous literature on basic skills and students of color.

Conclusion One.

The Hispanic Generation 1.5 student participants feel supported by their families and friends to attend college, even though family pressures and a lack of encouragement sometimes put students in the difficult predicament of having to choose between school and family obligations. Thus, creating programs that promote family engagement can provide added support for students.

A stereotype about Hispanic parents that persists is that they are uninterested in their children's education and do not want to participate in the children's education (Olivos, 2006). However, the students report that their parents are highly supportive of them and their education and career pursuits, even if those parents did not attend college. The students also illustrate their own concern for their children's education, as they enroll them in head start, provide them with knowledge they have gained about writing, help them with homework, and mentor them. Olivos points out that bicultural parents are blamed for not participating in their children's education, yet when the schools invite parents to participate the schools use approaches that are "contradictory to their authentic involvement." He also states that schools need to invite parents to participate with the understanding that the school and the parents share equal responsibility for transforming the schools (2006). Montano (1997) addressed the notion of family engagement in four year universities. She points out that engaging parents early on can

help support the educational pursuits of Hispanic females. Such notions can be applied to Hispanic students in the community colleges. Family engagement can provide support for students who state that even though their family responsibilities sometimes created pressure on them to choose either family or school, they felt supported by their families. Family engagement programs can build upon the strong bonds of Hispanic families, while providing students and their families with information that can help to support the student.

It was also clear that the students received support from their peers. The students talked about how their friends in college and not in college encouraged and supported them, even if those peers had no college aspirations. The students also discussed support they received from gang members, boyfriends and girlfriends, and even an ex-convict.

Conclusion Two.

Being role models for others provides motivation for these Hispanic student participants to attend and stay in college.

The students discussed how they served as role models to their children, their peers, their siblings, and even their parents. They talked about how serving as role models also empowered and motivated them. Role modeling empowered them to help improve their own economic and community situations by providing others with knowledge about what it is like to attend college, what skills are learned, and how they can balance work, family, and school. Choosing positive role modeling also motivated them to complete their goals so that they can be good role models for family and peers and show others what is possible.

These students also supported the findings of Olivos (2006) and debunk the myth that immigrant Hispanics, especially those who are not middle class, do not go to school and become undesirable members of the community. The non-middle class immigrant students in this study go to school and serve as positive role models for others.

Conclusion Three.

Positive peer pressure creates incentive for these study participants to stay in college. They reported that positive peer pressure comes from peers from all walks of life, such as: gangbangers, ex-convicts, current college students, soccer players, single mothers not in school, and students who dropped out of high school. The acts of exercising self discipline and choosing friends with similar college aspirations empower these students and help them to achieve their goals.

The study also showed that the students received positive peer pressure from several peer groups. Their friends encouraged them to go to class and told them they had what it took to achieve their goals. They reported that their friends checked in on them, encouraged them when they received good grades, told them about how college programs worked, and one provided transportation for his girlfriend. The students said that even those members of the community who did not think perceive themselves as college bound, still provided support and encouragement for those Hispanics who were in college.

Some students discussed how they empowered themselves by making choices to hang around others who shared their career and academic aspirations, and how they also chose not to spend time with those friends who did not want to help themselves or their situations. They shared how they chose to give in to positive peer pressure and do their work and not give into other types of peer pressure to socialize. They wanted to make

something of their lives, and some of the students said they and their friends pressured each other to reach for their goals.

Conclusion Four.

English placement is not working consistently for all students, which could argue for the need for better assessment tools and departmental practices regarding initial placement.

Although the students understand that assessment was necessary and they did not express that assessment should be eliminated, they did share their frustrations with being placed in courses too high or too low for their level of ability. Some students said their teachers informed them at the beginning of class or the end of class that the course they were in would require a lot of extra work or seemed too low of a level for them. However, the teachers did not recommend to the students that they should be reassessed, nor did they refer the students to a different level. One student who had been referred to a course several years prior to actually taking it was not advised to do otherwise, yet her absence from school for those years impacted her skill acquisition.

MARIA: So, like me, when I came to study the ESL classes, the teacher told me you are doing good. You're really only "A." and you can go to English 79 class. After five years, not as well. After five years, I forgot.

Thus, she took a course that was too hard, failed it, and then reenrolled in a course at a level lower than the one she was originally referred to.

Since these students have already beat the odds by being in college, it seems logical that colleges want to place students correctly. HCC even states that one of their goals of assessment is to help students have a productive and successful experience with course placement. So, colleges need to assess how well their current placements work

for Hispanic students, and explore policies and practices that allow students to be referred to other levels. The instructor-driven referral process at HCC worked well for most students, as ESL instructors referred students to the developmental English program when those instructors felt those students were ready to make that transition. The timing of when the student will reach the next level, though, is critical. Lapses in student enrollment in college may result in the need for a student to reassess. Nonetheless, colleges can employ a referral process driven by faculty, trained assessment staff, or academic counselors. Making sure that all students are placed correctly and that multiple measures are used effectively for each population may provide less frustration for instructors working with students who are not prepared for their courses. It may also help students have a more positive experience by being placed in a course that benefits them, rather than one that bores or frustrates them.

Conclusion Five.

Developmental English classes with student-centered instruction provide these student participants with improved skills and confidence in writing, reading, and speaking.

Consistently, students in both programs discussed the benefits they had received from developmental English courses. These courses increased their levels of confidence about speaking, reading, and writing. They named collaborative activities, the writing process, constructive instructor feedback on their writing, peer review, and supportive environments as beneficial to their learning. Some instructors supported student learning as they used varied teaching methods as a way to entertain the students.

RYAN: Um, well in my experience based on my teacher, I would keep the environment the same. He was always friendly. He always, you know, gave us a good laugh in the morning. Kept us entertained. You know it wasn't dull. It was.

You knew what you had to do. You know had to learn. While you had to learn that day do what you had to do. But, he always found a way to keep us entertained, you know. You didn't go in there and think, "Wow, this is gonna be another one of those days." It was always something different. Even though we learned something every day, it was always something different. We always learned different things. He always kept a way to kind of entertain you. Educate or entertain you.

Their observations echo the current emphasis on student centered environments in the literature. Although the students did not use the terminology, their words described that the teaching and learning in their classes included constructivism, social learning, cooperative learning, and transformational learning (Baumgartner, 2001; Prickel, 1998). Students talked about building on the skills they had gained previously in high school and ESL courses. They shared that working together helped them to better understand other perspectives and class materials. Students also talked about how their new knowledge helped them improve other areas of their lives, including communicating with a boss or their families.

MICHAEL: Well it's about audience, purpose, methods, content, voice, persona. So if you put those all in perspective, and um, I think your writing is more powerful and more focused. So, like, um, an example I use is email. Like shortly after the class, that's all you think about is just, the rhetorical square, rhetorical strategies. Pretty much that's all they put in your head. Which is good, because you are able to apply that. And after awhile if you keep using it, and keep going back to it, then it just helps you out.

RESEARCHER: So it's interesting because you say you even use those strategies even when you are writing emails or doing any kind of correspondence.

MICHAEL: You use those strategies before, but then after you realize what you're really using. And you think of it in a different way. Because like I was writing a note to my boss about requesting certain hours. And not like rush, that's another. If I sent the letter now I was thinking like, okay, he's my audience, you know, he's my boss. What message, content should I use? What kind of persona do I want to reflect on him?

They also felt liberated as they better understood the rules of English, the strategies for writing, and improved speaking and listening skills in English.

Conclusion Six.

Curriculum that is relevant, multicultural, and rigorous encourages learning for these student participants.

The students talked about the importance of the curriculum being relevant to them. Assignments, topics, and readings that were relevant to their life experience, their culture, their coursework, and their goals helped maintain their interest and motivation in the subject. Some students indicated that the curriculum in high school and college that was too simple or basic made them lose interest and motivation to complete the assignments. Again, the students' observations echo the literature about basic skills students. The literature makes it clear that teaching that is responsive to the culture of students engages students. *The Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* report from California names Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) as effective basic skills practice, focusing on high expectations and building on the use of multicultural curriculum with emphasis on pedagogy, and giving students more control and some responsibility during instruction (Boroch, et al., 2007). The students found that these types of methods made them want to read, helped them "connect" with the assignments and supported their learning. The students did not, though, indicate in their interviews or in the focus groups that they were given responsibility for presenting portions of lessons. The researcher did not observe instructors, and thus no evidence was uncovered that showed instructors asked students to engage in student led activities in the classroom.

Conclusion Seven.

Developmental English programs with structure and clear assessment and policies provide these student participants with information they need to achieve their aims in college. This information provides study participants with knowledge they need to accomplish their goals and make choices that impact their own futures.

When students talked about their developmental English programs, at HCC the students talked about the mastery exam. They had all had a basic understanding of the requirements of the mastery test, how to prepare for it, and what it would include. They were less clear on why some students had to check an ESL box, who graded it, why one teacher could give it one score and another teacher a different score, and what the process was for the portfolio alternative. The structure of the curriculum and the supporting materials that students were given for the mastery helped students understand what was expected of them. At the 79 level, students received course content that was consistent with the course curriculum. The structure of the program also supported student learning. The guidelines were clear and were mostly followed. However, one area of confusion centered on the box some students had to check that indicated if they were ESL students or not. Some said they had to check it, others said they were not asked to do so.

The structure of the program at GHCC was less clear and the policies were not clear. However, the curriculum for the course was centralized. The students experienced a curriculum that was consistent and focused on the writing process. The class instruction matched the approved course curriculum. However, the approved curriculum for the English 101 course also stated that students would be given a department test. However, the students were not given a department test, and they were promoted to the

next level based on their essays and work completed for the course.

The Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges report from California states that effective practice in development courses is a structured curriculum (Boroch, et al., 2007). They also report that a structured environment benefits the weakest students. The curriculum in both programs was structured and centered on teaching the writing process along with grammar and punctuation. The students spoke of the curriculum they had experienced and reported they had learned strategies for invention, proofreading, writing, and revising. They also said they had improved their spoken English as well. This curriculum corresponds with the skills needed to achieve success in college transfer writing and was useful for the students.

Conclusion Eight.

As ESL learners, these study participants whether native born or non-native born, struggle at times with communication and homework due to language barriers. Thus, teachers and student services providers need to actively support these students to facilitate their understanding of class materials.

The students in the study who were ESL learners, both native born and non-native born, reported that they experienced communication difficulties and homework problems. Students, native and non-native born, in K-12 who had non-English speaking parents and non-Spanish speaking teachers said their parents could not ask questions about their progress, help them with their homework, or clarify paperwork that was signed or brought home by the student. This also put some of the students in the role of translating for their teachers and parents, and this act was stressful at times for them, especially if they were not doing well or were having trouble. Students who immigrated

in their twenties discussed their frustration with not understanding what the teacher said, what the instructions were for homework, or being able to understand their own children's homework or paperwork from their schools. Schools and colleges should provide as-needed translators for students. Providing translation services would send a message for students and their families that schools do want to work with them and understand their needs. Further, providing translators would help to alleviate the pressure that bilingual students experience.

These difficulties show a need for educators and student service providers to do more to actively help these students understand what they are signing, what the assignments are, and what tools they can use to better understand the instructions in class. For instance, instructors can provide written materials for ESL students that summarize lecture materials. This act still encourages communication in the target language, but reinforces the learning for ESL students, but would also benefit other students as well. It does not require money for additional translators, but provides an opportunity for ESL students to better grasp what is expected of them on assignments. Instructors can also provide tutoring or additional help outside of class for students who are struggling. Ryan shared these observations:

Um, hm. More. Um, most of the time the classes are treated, nobody getting more attention than you know, others, but teachers should realize, you know but who needs the help? Who needs it more than others? Obviously you can see, this person is catching on, knows what he's doing. He'll be good at the end of the semester. They should see, you know, okay this person is really having a hard time doing it. We should focus a little bit more on this person. Or you know, maybe, take some more time and give some tutoring. Try to do the best for the student that don't understand and who can't catch on to this easily. And, you know, maybe more of a welcoming type of environment. 'Cause for a lot of students, even me, like I know if I go to class I don't expect you know, my

teacher to be like, “come in, you know, this day for a couple of hours. We’ll look over it. We’ll go over it and make sure you understand it.” And I think that would help out a lot of students, you know, who are having a hard time and struggling. Kind of like more hands-on tutoring, I guess. Take a couple of hours out of our day to just dedicate to the students that aren’t finding it as easy as others.

When instructors rely primarily on verbal communication, they limit what information ESL learners and other learners may receive, especially for assignments and key lecture points. Therefore, on-on-one tutoring or additional help outside of class can assist those students who need academic support.

Explanations of assessment processes and implications of the assessment tests should also be available in translation not only in Spanish, but in several other languages as well. This holds true for documents parents must sign regarding their children. Providing Hispanics with information about their education and the education of their children helps them to empower themselves to make informed choices for them and their children.

Conclusion Nine.

Classroom and college environments that promote collaboration, multiculturalism, student centered learning, college services, and inclusion help these student participants feel safe, comfortable, and supported in their learning.

Students talked about the campus and classroom environments that promoted their learning. The common threads they expressed included collaboration, student centered learning, and multicultural education. Their words again supported the literature on campus environments. Strange and Banning (2001) emphasize that one’s environment plays a part in one’s ability to learn: “the actual features of the physical environment can encourage or discourage the processes of learning and development” (p. 31). They

also discuss the importance of creating a climate of inclusiveness among the students, staff, and faculty. One student discussed how she felt about being a Hispanic student at the HCC campus.

RESEARCHER: Uh huh. Okay. What does the campus environment here feel like to you as a Hispanic student? We're almost done by the way.

MARIA: It feels good. I like it. I really like it.

RESEARCHER: What is it you like about it?

MARIA: Um, I like that there is a lot of things, that with the culture and some sort of respect like you know, accomplishments of the culture. Something like that. In fact, I think here we have more recognition than other minorities.

RESEARCHER: Hm. The Hispanic community?

MARIA: Yeah, look, the library name is Cesar Chavez. And, actually I used to see more discrimination in Mexico from the teachers, but you know.

Maria's observations were supported by field observation as well, when a Day of the Dead altar was displayed at the entrance to the library. Cesar said, "It's comfortable here. It doesn't bother me at all. It seems like everyone is laid back. There is no, it is a really diverse campus, it's not all. Campus is not, there is no real majority here." And Ryan said this about HCC:

Um, I haven't really been at many other college campuses. It feels. To be honest with you I don't really spend too much time here. I just come to class; you know try to get my stuff done, or go home or go to work. So. But from seeing everybody and seeing the environment. It seems like a good, you know friendly environment. You know people have a lot of; there is a lot of interaction going on. It's not one of those campuses where you don't see anybody out on the floor or out in the yard or in the main center. You know, everybody's interacting with one another. You know, it's a very friendly campus. And you know the instructors and the people always out, you know everyone out.

Ana, a student at GHCC, described the campus as feeling, "safe." Michael said, "It feels

like multicultural. I see. I feel proud when I see other Hispanic people, students attending school. . . . I encourage them and I'll help them as much as possible if they need help.” Other students said they liked the broad cultures and religions represented in their classrooms, and they liked it when they had a teacher of color as an instructor.

Recommendations

In addition to the conclusions drawn from the research, recommendations for developmental English practitioners and students emerged from the research as well. The recommendations are presented using the students' words as they actively participate in contributing to the knowledge for their own college in their own community.

Student recommendations for other Generation 1.5 Hispanic students. The students shared their advice for other Hispanic Generation 1.5 students entering developmental English. Here is what they said:

RYAN: Be ready. Dedicate a lot of time. Ask questions if you don't know. Don't be scared to look, you know, differently from anybody else because you don't know what is going on. Or you don't understand it properly. Just, I know for a lot of people it can be a little bit, you know, hard. That's not, when English is not necessarily their first language it can be a little bit harder. Um, just ask, you know. Just ask. And get involved in the class. Don't be one of those people who sits in back of the room and you know just expects to pass the class at the end of the semester 'cause it's not gonna happen. Unless you get really, really lucky.

MAMA: Maybe do it in the summer so that you can recognize that it can help. You have more to develop your ability in writing and get ready for the next semester. . . . That don't feel bad if you didn't pass. There are a lot of people who have to take it three or four times. I know my friend is taking it for the fourth time. The teachers tell us during the semester that we go and we all know already to do the mastery. Because some of the teachers they wait until one day before mastery. And okay, if you don't pass you are not able to get a “W.” You

will get a “D” or “F.” So your last semester, and you can no pass, you have to learn more to take another class.

MARIA: Don’t lie to themselves. Realize that you are learning another language. And it’s gonna take little steps to get there and do it well. If I want to do a career or something like that. Writing is very important. And it has to be well learned. . . .

CESAR: Do all the homework. . . . Don’t take the course. Don’t take a five unit summer course. Just think creative when you’re writing.

MICHAEL: Um. Just do your work and seek help. Seek help if you’re struggling in anything. ‘Cause your teachers are there to help you. Knowing the teachers you have know more sources available on campus.

ANA: To be prepared um to work, to be ready to work hard. And to be dedicated to what you’re doing. Just try their hardest, to do their best.

Student recommendations for practitioners. In addition to recommendations for other Generation 1.5 Hispanic in developmental English, throughout the study, the students made several statements about curriculum and pedagogy. Their words and suggestions are based on their lived educational experiences.

The students talked about experiences they had that did not support their learning. Some of their experiences follow:

CESAR: It was just, the teacher just didn’t teach it very well. . . Well, he just, I didn’t even study for the final, and he still passed me. I didn’t know how. ‘Cause I didn’t think I was gonna pass anyways, but he still passed me anyways. It was a two hour class, and he would keep us there for 30-40 minutes, and send us home. It was supposed to be a two and half hour class. So, he just told us what to do, and he just wanted us to do it and as long as we seemed like we did it, he just passed everybody.

MARIA: The fact that I couldn’t do it. The fact that the teacher. Well, first of all, the teacher at the beginning. She analyzed the first paragraph that I did. She said, “Oh no, you’re gonna need much help. You’re gonna need a lot.” She say that.

MAMA: Like, at the beginning I feel like, he was telling me my essays was

correct. So I said okay I'm gonna pass this class even if I don't learn anything. That's okay. I feel like that. When I looked that I didn't pass I say that it's very important, it's like being a mother. You are a mother, but you don't worry about to be a friend with your son. He's gonna have a lot of friends. But you need to discipline, things like that. I feel that it is the same with the teacher. He can be nice, but he has to push us. Because not valuable, not valued, how to say, by something natural, I think, like the teacher don't tell you, don't push you. You gonna, "Okay, later. That's okay." We need the teacher push us a little bit more.

MAMA: I remember one rule, and I ask a teacher, why that word you has to use it in this way and we cannot use it in the other way. And he told me, "Because it's just like that, it's just like that. You have to learn it exactly". Later I asked two other teachers, maybe that teacher doesn't know how to explain to you, but everything has a reason.

And Ana said this about her reading for English class.

ANA: Especially, for me it's kind of like I haven't been reading my book. And I do go to class, but it's good to read before you go to school. And I haven't been doing that. So, it's kind of stressful to catch up in class.

RESEARCHER: So why have you not read your books?

ANA: I just don't like it.

Students also shared what teachers did to support their learning. This is what students shared about what they felt worked instructionally in their educational experience.

ANA: I think college actually helped me. Like I say the same thing through high school. Um, I was basically taught like you said the basics. Not actually going into detail, whatever. Or like, actually know what you're talking about or writing. As in like college, I was taught more in like how to write it, what would make it better. And not by doing, by learning that I improved my skills in how to write better.

Ryan also made a specific suggestion on teaching methods:

I definitely can say that, well, I wish that we would've had. Like the teacher, nothing against the teacher or anything, but I wish he would have had a little more like a hands on type of assignments. And our English was basically read and write, read and write. You know, I guess that is kind of how some teachers do it in their English class. Me personally, I like being able to talk more, you know, get out there. And you know, be in front of the class, go up to

the class. So, more hands on type things.

Cathy discussed the importance of teachers attending to the whole student.

It did. The teachers out there were so understanding. It was all about the students. If a student had a problem or an issue, go straight to the student and talk to them one on one. Besides, it wasn't like, it wasn't a school with over, it was actually regular schools have over a thousand students. Right there the most was like thirty. It was a good ratio, teacher to student. . . . So that's what I liked about it. They really take the student as a priority.

And Mama discussed her needs as an ESL student in developmental English.

MAMA: I feel so much better. I know I can do it. I know I need more vocabulary, maybe. I know I have the qualities to do it. And I, the classes it too, the only thing I didn't find in the college is a class to learn more, to speak more clearly and to understand other people. I found classes to write and to read, but not to listen and to speak it.

RESEARCHER: Even in the ESL curriculum, or in the developmental?

MAMA: In the developmental. Right now, yes, 'cause before in the lower levels I found it for that level for that words. Bu right now, I find that like I can understand people sometimes and they can understand so. I feel like I need a specific class to speak with other people, especially with American people. Because, for example, with her I understand her perfectly. Maybe she can understand me maybe because we have the accent. I would like to take a class with American people who have the real accent of every word.

Recommendations for developmental English programs. The students in the study pointed out several features of developmental English programs that promote positive learning experiences for Hispanic Generation 1.5 students. Based on the observations of the students, the following recommendations for program improvement were created. These recommendations include strategies for the following areas: curriculum and teaching, classroom environments, campus environments, academic and student support services, assessment, and structured programs.

This study and part research on students of color indicate that culturally

responsive teaching strategies promote student learning in K-12 environments. CRT is designed to further form strategies for including diverse readings in the classroom, and it focuses on skill development, core competencies, knowledge building, student-centered learning, and positive perspectives on experiential knowledge. Developmental English programs should employ CRT as a foundation of their curriculum. Practical ways to do this include teacher training on CRT methodology, cultural competency, and pedagogy. Instructors need to recognize their own cultural values and biases and understand how those cultural values and biases impact the way the students interact with them. Further, teachers should understand how cultural values and biases impact communication among students, department members, and the instructional and student services areas on campus. They should promote all student experience by using instructional examples and materials based on the cultures, words, music, literature, and art of those students (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs & Ghare, 2004). This type of teaching promotes social justice values, and does not believe in erasing one canon to replace it with another; rather the notion is to broaden the ideas of the literary canon to acknowledge experiential knowledge and provide equitable representation at the table of academic discourse. Further, in conjunction with already established good practice, such as structured programs, CRT can improve student learning for all students.

Developmental English programs should have clear programs outcomes and policies that support student learning. The policies should emphasize the completion of student work in developmental English as soon as possible in the student's academic plan (Boroch, et al., 2007; Crews & Aragon, 2004). Programs also need to have clear,

but flexible, guidelines for students about which assessments to take and what are the implications of taking those assessments. When students self select placement tests, in high school for instance, they may take the ESL test not knowing that it does not place them into the traditional pathway. Just because a student has English as a second language does not automatically mean that the student should be taking ESL courses. The student's educational background in the United States is a critical factor in making assessment determinations. Did the student receive a high school diploma in the United States, for example? Many programs, though, do not provide clear guidelines for students.

HCC does an excellent job of guiding students through assessment on their web site. The web site explains each test and who should take those tests, describes what do to if a student disagrees with the placement, and gives sample questions from tests. This information helps students to know which test they should take and which will help them get on the proper pathway toward their English education. However, as indicated by students who took the test, instructors also need to talk to students about placement. Conducting in-class assessments of a student's ability to write early in the semester is important. Programs should employ methods that allow for students to be referred to a different level by instructors. Although this would not impact a large number of students, it can affect those students on the margins who would benefit from either a higher or lower course level placement.

Student participants and the literature both report that curriculum with structure benefits student learning (Boroch, et al., 2007). The mastery exam at HCC was touted

by students as a positive part of the program (with the exception of the ESL identifying box). The program provided supporting materials that helped students prepare for the exam and the courses were designed to help students pass the Mastery Exam. The policies were communicated to students and stated on the college's website.

Developmental English programs should create clear policies for students and clear criteria by which students are promoted into the next level of English learning. What is critical, though, is that programs must follow their own policies and be consistent in administering those policies.

Another area for developmental English programs to consider is collaboration with speech departments or the creation of speaking courses in English in the traditional pathway of developmental English. As Mama points out, she wants more practice with students who are native speakers of English at the developmental level. The literature shows that other Generation 1.5 students in community college in developmental English and ESL programs want similar assistance (Oedenhoven, 2006).

Developmental English programs also need to work closely with student and academic support services staff and administrators on the issues of campus environment and climate. Environments that promote a sense of belonging and camaraderie among students help to encourage students to remain in school. When the staff and faculty are positive and friendly toward students, the students have a more positive experience and are more likely to ask questions, use campus services, and attend classes. A large portion of this issue, though, depends on staff obtaining a degree of cultural competence. Physical environments with areas for student conversation, interaction,

studying, and reflection encourage learning (Strange & Banning, 2001). These types of student-centered environments focus on the needs of students and the instructors, staff, and administrators. Campus environments that have several areas for collaborative tutoring or studying that can be accessed by all students promote a sense of community for students and will help them see that the campus is responsive to their needs.

HCC is a great example of a campus that promotes student learning and student needs. The campus website, signage, services, physical environment, and climate all show an emphasis on student learning and student needs. It was clear, as well, from observation that the environment worked well for students. Students were interacting with one another and with faculty and staff from the early morning hours to late into the evening.

The physical environment of the classrooms should also be flexible to accommodate a variety of collaborative teaching methods. (Unfortunately many community colleges do not have the flexibility or the finances, though, to develop ideal teaching environments with existing furniture). Instructors can help create a welcoming feeling by including pictures of role models, art, maps, and posters from a variety of cultures in their classrooms. This sends a message to students that they are indeed a part of academia.

The climate of a classroom environment, as expressed by the students in this study, is also central to a student's level of comfort. The students discussed how a collaborative, supportive, student-centered, culturally diverse classroom created a positive learning environment. At HCC for example, although the classrooms were

much more crowded than at GHCC, the students repeatedly reported that the classroom was comfortable. The power of social and cultural climate should not be overlooked by developmental English programs.

As evidenced in the literature and in the study, support services for students are fundamental to their experiences (Boroch, et al., 2007; Hagedorn, Perrakis & Maxwell, 2002). Services such as tutoring, writing labs, academic advising, financial aid, child care, EOPS, Puente, MESA, and other such programs provide students with opportunities to receive an education. Without these services, these students most likely would be unable to attend college. For students who are aware of the services, they report receiving great benefit from them.

Developmental English programs can support students by collaborating with student services programs. Creating a handout, putting phone numbers for services on syllabi, inviting student services representatives to their classes, taking students on student services tours, or creating liaisons between student services and developmental English programs are just a few ways that programs can work together to improve student learning. Students, especially first generation students, are not always sure what the writing lab offers, why academic advising is important, or where to find out about campus child care. Simply assuming that students understand these processes or services constitutes poor practice. All members of the campus need to understand the importance of basic skills and the needs of basic skills students, and all developmental English instructors need to convey the importance of programs that can benefit students. The students in the study talk about being improperly placed into a class, being afraid to

talk to counselors, not finding advising to be helpful, not knowing about career advising, and losing their financial aid. Student support services should be a critical component of any developmental English program.

Developmental programs should use mandatory assessment with multiple measures for proper assessment. *The Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* report shows that as long as “regulatory safeguards” are in place, then mandating assessment for placement is legal in California (p. 25).

Developmental English programs need to establish cut scores based on what produces the best results for students at their campuses. Assessment practices that include multiple measures have been shown to be the most accurate for Hispanic students, so it is imperative that the multiple measures be used (Marwick, 2004). Multiple measures include critical components, such as how long a student has been out of school, when the last assessment was conducted, transcripts, experiential knowledge, family circumstances, and financial status. Assessment practices should look at the whole student, both as a person and as an academic performer, in order to properly place students. Just because a student was placed into a course several years ago does not mean that student is still performing at that same level.

Contribution to the literature. The study presented the experiences of Hispanic Generation 1.5 students in developmental English at community colleges. Previous literature on Hispanics in community college developmental English programs were limited, and this study will add to the literature by including a focus on the lived experiences of Hispanic Generation 1.5 students in developmental English at two

community colleges, one HSI and one non-HSI. Some of the previous studies on Hispanics focused on HSI's and used quantitative approaches to reveal trends on persistence for students of color generally. This study also looks specifically at the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students who were educated in the United States, enrolled in developmental English at a community college, born in Mexico or the United States, and monolingual or bilingual. In this study, Hispanic included only the following groups: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latino. Previous literature tended to group all students of Hispanic descent together (e.g. Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Guatemalan, Spanish). This study also explored the experience of Hispanic students with culturally relevant curriculum. Other studies have looked at multicultural literature in developmental English, but did not specifically focus on the needs of Hispanic students in developmental English (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs & Ghery, 2004). The studies that focused on Hispanics in developmental English discussed classroom interactions and experiences of those students who had graduated from high schools in the United States (Canizales, 1995; Oudenhoven, 2006). This study explored the diversity within Generation 1.5 students and their experiences in two community college developmental English programs. It included native and non-native speakers of English, monolingual and bilingual students, and students who received their K-12 education in the United States as well as others who had received all of their previous precollege education in Mexico. Further, this study contributes to the literature by its use of social critical methodology as a way to promote the voices and liberation of Hispanic students in community colleges. The research was also conducted by a

Hispanic researcher, whereas few developmental English studies on Generation 1.5

Hispanic students in the past were conducted by a member of their own group.

Limitations of present study. This research study had some limitations, and one limitation was that since these students were in the early stages of their English education, action steps at a community wide level were not yet feasible. The students were engaged in the process of understanding the educational environment and the historical context of that environment. Thus, it was too early for change beyond the grass roots level. However, a longitudinal study could have allowed for an increased opportunity to observe further action by these student participants.

Additionally, student attrition was a limitation in this study. Due to the barriers and pressures that these students face in and out of the college environment, maintaining student participation was difficult. Including more study participants would have potentially increased the numbers of students who completed the study.

Another limitation in this study was the difficulty of balancing the student voices and actions with the description of the individual cases. Since each case included several participants, providing a true vicarious experience of each case would result in a lack of emphasis on the student voices. However, the description of the environments and cases were essential to understanding the experiences of these students. So, a limitation was choosing the appropriate balance between student voices and the cases without losing their importance. The need to preserve the verbatim comments of the students further complicated this balance. Rather than choosing the essence of their words, which would be in conflict with a social critical methodology, it was essential

to present the students' words with minimal changes for grammar, brevity, or emphasis.

Recommendations for future research. Since the literature regarding the experience of Hispanics in higher education, specifically in developmental English courses is quite limited, the opportunities for future research are plentiful. Based on this study, suggestions for future areas of research include:

- a) Examine the effectiveness of multiple methods for placement of Hispanic students into English courses. Which measures work best?
- b) Compare the experience of native born Hispanic students with non-native born Hispanic students. What are the shared and different experiences of Hispanics who are native born and non-Spanish speaking , native born and ESL, or non-native born and ESL? Do Hispanics feel rejected by other Hispanics based on language ability, immigrant status, and generational status?
- c) Conduct a longitudinal study of Hispanic Generation 1.5 students on their journey from developmental English through their highest level of academic achievement. What actions do they take to empower themselves and their communities as they increase their knowledge and achieve their educational goals?
- d) Examine the gender differences among Generation 1.5 Hispanic students. What experiences do these students share and what differences do they experience?
- e) Conduct an ethnographic study of Generation 1.5 students in community

college developmental English programs.

- f) Compare the persistence rates of ESL Hispanic students who enter developmental English from the ESL pathway with those rates of ESL Hispanic students who enter directly into developmental English without receiving ESL education.
- g) Conduct a study that explores the reasons Hispanic Generation 1.5 students select or take the assessment test for ESL or the assessment test for native English speakers. This choice impacts students financially, academically, and even socially; what is the rationale for taking one test over another?
- h) Do a case study on the assessment processes at community colleges. What information do Hispanic Generation 1.5 students receive?
- i) Research the psychological and physical health of Generation 1.5 students in community colleges. Does the stress of barriers impact the health of students?
- j) Explore the experiences of mixed race Hispanics in community colleges. Do they have experiences similar to or different from other Hispanics?
- k) Conduct a phenomenological study on positive peer pressure among Hispanic students in community colleges. Who supports these students? Why do Hispanics who are not in college support others who are in college?
- l) Research classism in Mexican schools and how previous educational experiences in Mexico impact Hispanic students who enter college in the United States.

- m) Conduct a study on Hispanic experiential knowledge. How does a Hispanic student's experiential knowledge about Hispanic culture, art, music, literature, and history impact their education in community colleges?
- n) Conduct a case study on how Hispanic students relate to and communicate with non-Hispanics in the academic world.

In addition to suggestions for further research that emerged from this study, more suggestions for future research follow. These suggestions are based on the researcher's experience as an instructor and academic dean.

- a) Research how categorical and other money for basic skills initiatives is spent in community colleges. Does the funding actually get spent on improving instruction and student outcomes?
- b) Research the experiences of Hispanic faculty at community colleges and universities. What challenges do they face? Do generational, language acquisition, and immigrant status differences impact their experiences with one another or the institution? What facilitates their success?
- c) Conduct a study that examines the knowledge of developmental English teachers about ESL students and programs. What do English teachers know about second language learners? Generation 1.5 learners?
- d) Explore the perceptions of faculty about Hispanic students and Hispanic faculty. What do they believe are the cultures, attitudes, and values of Hispanics in college?

Recommended strategies for future research with Hispanics. If possible, as

Marin and Marin (1991) suggest, the research should be conducted by a Hispanic researcher. This helps to build trust and promotes a clearer opportunity for dialogue. A limitation of this study was that students were not given written copies of the interview questions. Providing students with written copies would have helped learners who are ESL and visual learners to process the information in ways that may have improved their understanding of a question when it was asked. Several ESL students asked for clarification of questions because they did not hear or understand the question when it was asked. The questions were pilot tested with community college ESL students in written form, and the students had no problem understanding them. So, the students in the study would have had perhaps fewer communication problems if they had been given the questions in written form.

Further, when working with ESL students, depending upon their level of proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening, it may be advisable to hold interviews or provide questions in translation. Because of the level of English ability and proficiency of the students in this study, translated documents and interview questions were not used. The researcher, though, had to seek the help of family members and a Professor of Literature from a university in Mexico City to help her translate one student word and one spelling of a slang Spanish word to ensure she understood their meaning accurately, since she is not a native speaker of Spanish.

Also, conducting research on Hispanics is difficult when their numbers are small at an institution. However, non-HSI schools should be included in the research because the programs and services they offer also impact Hispanics. Talking to campus

researchers to find out peak periods for Hispanic registration should be pursued. In this study, the researcher did that research and it helped ensure that student recruiting was possible. However, a limitation of the study was that the programs examined were summer programs, and students who attend summer session may have different experiences than those enrolled in other sessions during the year. Further, a higher rate of attrition from the study may occur in summer due to the compressed sessions and other social, family and work pressures. Researchers need to consider when they will have the best chance for recruitment.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to understand the lived educational experiences of Hispanic Generation 1.5 students in developmental English in community colleges. As a Hispanic, the researcher focused on understanding the unique experiences that Hispanic students face. As a former community college student herself, the researcher shared stories with the study participants to build trust and to create a dialogue with them. She also used her knowledge of Hispanic culture and values to form questions that would help her to best understand the experiences of the study participants.

The students in this study shared many experiences and stories, which revealed their perseverance, intelligence, compassion, and inner strength. Their direct involvement with this research and their recommendations for practitioners contribute insight and practical suggestions for those who want to improve education for Hispanics in developmental English. Their choice to engage in the action of dialoguing illustrates the beginning stages of their own liberation and that of their communities, as they

provide the changes to practitioners for the improvement of the education of Hispanics. The dedication of these students to their studies, their families, their peers, and their jobs shows the tremendous promise that Hispanics in the future will bring to the fields of law, communications, early childhood education, physical education, business, and other fields. They dispelled some myths surrounding Hispanics, especially the myth that Hispanic families do not support their children's education. They also dispelled the myth that Hispanics do poorly in developmental English because they are simply English as a Second Language learners. The students in the study showed that the ESL students benefitted tremendously from ESL education as they entered into developmental English, but that both Hispanic native and non-native English Language learners struggled in developmental English. They showed that an educational system that does not properly assess, place, teach, and support Second Language Learners and native speakers creates unnecessary road blocks for these Hispanic learners in developmental English. They also provided insight into what motivated them to stay in school, and how those motivators helped them to negotiate the road blocks they faced in their own pursuit of an education. Educators and administrators who are serious about educating Hispanics need to listen to the stories, advice, and aspirations of these students. Practicing student centered instruction, providing appropriate student assessment, gaining cultural competency, creating welcoming environments, and exercising culturally responsive teaching methods are ways that community college teachers and administrators can support and promote the success of Hispanic students. Creating campus communities that support Hispanic students (and all students) makes

sense when increasing numbers of Hispanics are entering community colleges.

Educating Hispanics is one crucial step toward providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to improve themselves, their families, and their communities. As educators, we should take the crucial steps of building campus communities that support these students and strive toward a positive and just future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Asians/Pacific Islanders – Includes multiple ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, etc.

Adult Basic Education – includes the range of literacy and basic skills options that offer skills below the level of high school completion. ABE is designed to raise the level of education of adult learners so that they can benefit from further education and job specific training.

Basic Skills – Basic skills refers to classes in reading, writing, computation, learning skills, study skills, and English as a second language, may be considered college level at some institutions, but not at others (Lieu, Contreras, Fator, Flournoy, Illowsky, & SnoWhite, 2004).

Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA). Assesses and places high school, college and adult ESL students quickly and accurately. Approved for Federal Financial Aid (Association of Classroom Teacher Testers, 2008).

Computer-Adaptive Placement, Assessment, and Support System (COMPASS) – A series of exams created by the American College Test Program (ACT) that assess student writing skills in order to place them in appropriate courses.

Career Programs Assessment Test (CPAt) – The CPAt consists of three basic-level, multiple-choice tests in the areas of Language Usage, Reading Skills, and Numerical Skills.

Critical Race Theory– Derived from critical social science in that it is concerned with social justice, yet it makes central the issue of race as a factor in the subordination of some groups based on ethnicity or race (Villalpando, 2004).

Critical social science – Strives to empower communities through knowledge and education. Critical theory is social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining it.

Developmental English – Below college transfer level English.

Discipline segregation – Separation into particular academic areas of study based on race.

Drop out – When students quit college.

Epistemology- Deals with the nature, scope, and origin of knowledge. Asks how do we know what we know?

Generation 1.5 - The wide range of Generation 1.5 students include: native born non-native speakers of English; back and forth migrants; and privileged, educated immigrants (Harklau, Losey & Siegal, 1999; Singhal, 2004).

Hispanics – The United States census Bureau adheres to federal standards for data on race and Hispanic origin. Thus, a Hispanic or Latino is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture regardless of race. Although the scholarly literature uses terms including Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Latino, Hispanic, and so forth to identify people of Hispanic origin, this paper will refer to said groups as Hispanic unless the terms were identified by the study participants. Out of respect for the study subjects, when the terms are identified by the participants, their self-identification terms will be used.

HSI – A Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is a non-profit institution that has at least 25 percent Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment, and of the Hispanic student enrollment at least 50 percent are low income (US Department of Education, 2006).

Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) – Derived from critical race theory. LatCrit seeks to address issues beyond race and ethnicity that a pertinent to Latinos. Such issues include language rights, immigration, citizenship, ethnicity, gender, culture, phenotype, identity, and sexuality (Gonzales & Portillos, 2007; Hernandez-Truyol, 1997; Montoya, 1994; Martinez, 1994).

Mandatory Placement – Tests that must be taken by all students in order to enroll in English Courses.

n – Statistical notation meaning size of sample

Occupational Segregation – Separation into particular work fields, such as automotive or food Service, based on race.

Ontology – Study of being and existence.

Placement Testing – Standardized or written test that determines a student's ability level in writing, reading, and math.

Precollegiate Basic Skills – Courses below college level in reading, writing,

computation, learning skills, study skills, and English as a second language which are designated by the community college district as non-degree credit courses. Precollegiate basic skills occupational courses designed to provide foundation skills for students preparing for entry into college-level occupational courses or programs. (See Basic Skills.)

Qualitative Methods – Not statistical. Focuses on data gathering techniques such as interviews and focus groups. Qualitative research focuses on the understanding of research phenomena within their natural contexts.

Quantitative methods – Data gathered for the purpose of creating statistically valid samples. Quantitative methods are used to gain deeper understanding of the causes of social Phenomena.

Remedial Education/Courses – Below college level courses in math and English.

Remediation – Students who have graduated from high school, but who cannot test into college level courses and are placed in below college level coursework.

Stop out – The point when students temporarily quit college.

Appendix B

First Interview – Guiding Questions

1. Were you born in the United States? If not, how old were you when you arrived in the United States?
2. What grade did you enter when you first started school in the United States?
3. How did being Hispanic affect your K-12 education in the United States?
4. Describe how it felt to be a Hispanic student in an American high school.
5. If Hispanics were in the majority at your elementary, middle or high school, how did it feel to be a member of the majority group? If Hispanics were in the minority at your elementary, middle, or high school, how did it feel to be a member of the minority group?
6. Describe an experience when you received support in your elementary, middle, or high school education.
7. Describe a time when you experienced an obstacle to your education in your elementary, middle, or high school education.
8. Describe the types of high school writing assignments you were given and what relevance they had. Did these assignments support or create barriers to your learning?
9. Did you take developmental English voluntarily or were you placed into developmental English based on your placement testing results?
10. What is the purpose of taking developmental English?
11. How do you feel about taking developmental English?
12. How do you feel about yourself as a college student?
13. How does your family feel about you attending college? Your peers?
14. In what ways did your previous schooling experiences influence your experience in developmental English?
15. Describe a time when you received encouragement or mentoring in your pursuit of a community college education. How did this encouragement or mentoring impact you?
16. Describe a time when you experienced barriers in your pursuit of a community college education. How did these barriers impact you?
17. Describe the relevance of developmental English reading and writing assignments to your culture, experience, educational goals, and your learning of English. Did these assignments encourage or discourage your learning?
18. In what ways have you received your education and knowledge about the contributions of Hispanics in literature, civil rights, history, art, or other areas?
19. Describe your developmental English classroom environment. How does that environment impact your learning?
20. What is the purpose of college for you?
21. What made you want to go to college?
22. What are your educational and career goals?
23. Who are your role models?

Focus Group – Guiding Questions

1. In what ways did your elementary, middle, and high school education impact your experience in developmental English?
2. Are Hispanics supportive of a college education?
3. Who or what encourages Hispanics to go to college?
4. What is the purpose of developmental English?
5. Do you know a Hispanic student who has dropped out of community college?
 - a. What do you think causes Hispanic students to drop out of college?
 - b. Have you ever thought about dropping out of college? If yes, why?
6. What are the barriers to Hispanic Generation 1.5 students receiving a college education?
 - a. What barriers have you faced in community college?
 - b. What barriers have you faced in developmental English?
7. What makes Hispanic students successful in college?
 - a. Do you know of a Hispanic student who has graduated from community college?
 - b. In your opinion, what made the student successful in completing college?
8. What about your developmental English program participation has been empowering? What has been disempowering?
9. What do you think about the reading and writing assignments in developmental English?
10. How does the relevancy of the assignments to your life experience and your culture impact your learning?
11. How do your families feel about you attending college? Your friends?
12. How have your educational or career goals changed since you entered community college?

Second Interview – Guiding Questions

1. Now that the semester is nearly over, describe how you are feeling about being a developmental English student?
2. What stood out to you from the focus group conversation?
3. What about your experience in developmental English has been useful? Disappointing?
4. What specifically in developmental English has been helpful in supporting your learning?
5. What makes a developmental English class empowering?
6. What makes a developmental English class disempowering?
7. What would you change about the developmental English program if you could? What would you keep the same?
8. What advice would you give to an incoming Generation 1.5 Hispanic developmental English student?

9. How do you feel about your English writing skills? Reading skills? Speaking skills?
10. Describe your experience with academic support services such as English tutors or writing labs.
11. How many hours do you spend studying English outside of class each week? What gets in the way of studying? What helps you study?
12. What skills have you learned in developmental English that you will continue to use in the future?
13. What does the campus environment feel like to you as a Hispanic student?
14. In what ways has attending college impacted you?
15. Have you ever considered dropping out of college? If yes, what made you stay?

Appendix C



Adult Education & Higher Education Leadership

Oregon State University, College of Education, 403 Education Hall, Corvallis, OR 97331-3502

Phone 541-737-4317 Fax 541-737-3655 www.oregonstate.edu/education

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Empowering Hispanic Community College Students: Generation 1.5 Developmental English Participants Describe Their Educational Experiences

Principal Investigator: Dr. Alex Sanchez, College of Education

Co-Investigator: Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson, College of Education

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This is a research study designed to understand the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic community college students who are taking developmental (below college level) English at a community college. For purposes of this study, “Hispanic” includes only the following groups: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latino. Generation 1.5 students include the following people: children of immigrants who enter the United States, go to school in the United States, and then enter into college; learners who self-identify as both first and second generation immigrants; United States born non-native speakers of English; back and forth migrants; and educated immigrants. In this study, the participants will be Generation 1.5 Hispanic students who have been educated in the United States and are enrolled in the highest level of developmental English at a community college. Participants may speak Spanish and English or only English, and must have been born in either the United States or in Mexico.

Past research has found that Hispanic students in developmental English are less likely than other ethnic minority groups and whites to take college level coursework. Further, few studies on Generation 1.5 students in developmental English have been done, even though the numbers of this student population in community colleges are increasing. Hearing the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in developmental English may help teachers improve their teaching to best meet the learning needs of current and future Hispanic students. The results of this study may be used for publication and presentation.

This research study is being done as partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Philosophy degree requirements at Oregon State University.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT?

The purpose of the Informed Consent Document (consent means agree) is to give you the information to help you decide whether you wish to be a participant in this study.

Please read this document carefully. You may ask questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this Informed Consent Document that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered and the purpose and procedures of the research study are clear, you can decide if you want to be in this study as a participant or not. This process is called “informed consent.”

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

You are being invited to be a part of this study as a participant because you meet all of the following criteria:

- a Hispanic Generation 1.5 student
- a participant in the highest level of developmental English at a community college
- a Spanish and English speaker, or an English only speaker
- a United States native or a Mexico native
- age 18 or older

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE STUDY AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

If you agree to participate in this study, your involvement will take place sometime between June 2007 and September 2007. Your participation in the study would take four months, but the length of the study is six months. If you participate, the researcher will ask you to be interviewed alone twice about your experiences in community college developmental English, participate in one focus group, and complete one survey.

During this study, you will be contacted in the following manner:

Initial contact

Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson, co-investigator/researcher, will read to you a letter in your developmental English class. This letter will briefly explain what the study is about and request your participation. The co-investigator will answer any questions you have about the study at that time. If you are eligible for and interested in being a participant for the study, the Informed Consent Document and an outline of the study will be sent to you via the United States Postal Service.

Second contact

Co-investigator/researcher, Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson, will call you to answer your questions about the Informed Consent Document or the research study.

Third contact

If you agree to take part in the study, you will need to sign and send the co-investigator the Informed Consent Document. Once the co-investigator receives your signed Informed Consent Document, she will send you a copy of it with her signature on it for your records. Then Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will call you to set up two face-to-face interviews. This will include determining a date, time, and campus location of the interviews. The date and time of the interviews will be at your convenience. The researcher will conduct the interviews at the community college you attend.

Fourth contact

The co-investigator/researcher Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will meet with you to interview you (One-on-one Interview #1). The interview will be audio recorded and will last for no more than one hour. The interview will begin with open-ended questions. This methodology recognizes that both you and the researcher will share stories and experiences. Open-ended questions will be asked during the interview process that may encourage you to share stories about your educational experiences. The researcher will interview you to collect your educational “stories” or experiences.

Fifth contact

The co-investigator/researcher Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will meet with you and the other focus group members to facilitate the first focus group. The focus group will be audio recorded and will last for no more than one hour. The focus group consists of you and the other students from your college who are participants in this study. Through the focus group, the researcher will collect stories of the study participants. A number of open-ended questions will be asked during the interview process that may encourage focus group members to share stories about their educational experiences.

Sixth contact

The co-investigator/researcher, Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson, will meet with you to interview you (One-on-one Interview #2). The interview will be audio recorded and will last for no more than one hour. The interview will begin with open-ended questions. The researcher will interview you to collect your educational “stories” or experiences. This methodology recognizes that both you and the researcher will share stories and experiences. Open-ended questions will be asked during the interview process that may encourage you to share stories about your educational experiences.

Seventh contact

The co-investigator/researcher Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will email you copies of both of your transcribed interviews and the focus group transcription. You may make changes or deletions to the transcriptions as you see fit. If you do not have an email account, the transcriptions will be delivered by the United States Postal Service.

Eighth contact

The co-investigator/researcher Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will send you a survey through the United States Postal Service and email within two weeks of the end of summer

session. The survey asks about your experiences in developmental English. The survey will take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. You will be sent a postage paid envelope in which to return the survey. This contact will conclude your participation in the study.

Ninth contact

The co-investigator/researcher Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will send you a summary of the research findings by way of the United States Postal Service sometime between November 2007 and December 2007.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

The risk to you as a participant in this study will be minimal:

Since there are few Hispanic Generation 1.5 community college students in developmental English, it is possible that the readers of the study could figure out your identity.

To reduce this risk, a false name will be utilized on all forms of the written responses, analysis, and summaries of the study. Further, any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain private and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The names of the colleges will also be kept private. Finally, items mailed to the co-investigator from the participants will be sent to the co-investigator's P.O. Box to ensure that no one but the co-investigator receives the correspondence.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY?

You will receive no direct benefits from the study. However, the research may help future Hispanic Generation 1.5 developmental English community college students by helping instructors, administrators, and staff members learn ways to best serve those students. Further, everyone who reads this research study will have gained knowledge about the experiences of Hispanic Generation 1.5 developmental English students at a community college.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will receive from the co-investigator a \$5.00 gift certificate to your college bookstore for your participation in the study. The gift certificates will be sent to you via United States Postal Mail once you have completed both of your one-on-one interviews, the focus group interview, and the survey. You will not be paid for participating in the study, nor will you incur any costs.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?

The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the amount permitted by law. If your permission is required for disclosure, you will be asked to complete a separate form at a later date. Federal government regulatory

agencies and the Oregon State University Institutional Research Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies involving human subjects) may inspect and copy records relating to this study. In trying to maintain confidentiality, a false name will be used for participants and the colleges on all documentation including the final written research report.

The researcher will not reveal the names of the participants or the colleges.

Your identity will only be known to the co-investigator/researcher, Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson and principal investigator, Dr. Alex Sanchez. Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will personally transcribe all of the audio recordings. All audio and written recordings will be under lock and key in a filing cabinet at her place of residence when she is not reading or transcribing them. All audio recordings will be destroyed three years after the completion of this research study.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You have a choice to be in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop participating at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

This research will not affect your grades.

You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. You are also free to choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the interviews.

Should you choose to withdraw from this study and data has been collected, the information obtained will be included with the data given by other participants in this study. The audio recordings will be stored and later destroyed at the end of the three years as discussed previously.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with the community college you attend or Oregon State University.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this research project, please ask us. If you have any additional questions later, Dr. Alex Sanchez or Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson will be happy to answer them.

Dr. Alex Sanchez
402 Education Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, WA 97331

or

Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson
P.O. Box 5832
Auburn, CA 95604

(541) 737-8202

481-2003

sancheza@oregonstate.edu

(916) 484-8654 or (360)

lawrenl@arc.losrios.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator at (541) 737-4933 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

Researcher's Name (printed): _____

(Signature of Researcher)

(Date)

Appendix D

DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH PARTICIPANT SURVEY

This survey asks about your educational background and experiences as a student in developmental (below college level) English at a community college. It has twelve questions and takes about fifteen minutes to complete.

Demographic Information

1. Which best describes your racial/ethnic identity? (Please check all that apply)?

- American Indian or Alaska native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition
- Asian or Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands and Samoa
- Black, not of Hispanic Origin: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa
- Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- White, not of Hispanic Origin: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East
- Other (please specify) _____
- Decline to respond

Experience in K-12 Education

2. In what country did you receive your K-12 education?

- The United States
- Mexico
- The United States and Mexico
- Other (please specify) _____

3. Which answer best describes how your K-12 education in English reading and writing prepared you for higher education.

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Poor
- Failing

4. Which answers best describe the reading and writing assignments in your K-12 English classes.

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Relevant to my life experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Relevant to my cultural experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant to the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased my ability to write and read in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant to my educational goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Describe your reaction and thoughts when your English placement score indicated that you should take developmental English.

Experience in Community College Developmental English

6. How many courses of developmental English have you taken at a community college?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

7. Which answer best describes how your community college developmental English classes prepared you for college level work.

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Poor
- Failing
- Not sure

8. Which of these strategies helped you to learn to write in the developmental English program at your college? (Check all that apply)

- Classroom group work
- Classroom lecture
- Instructor office hours
- Tutoring
- Working with other students
- Working with family members
- Assignments
- Other (please specify) _____

9. Which of these strategies helped you to learn to read in the developmental English program at your college? (Check all that apply)

- Classroom group work
- Classroom lecture
- Instructor office hours
- Tutoring
- Working with other students
- Working with family members
- Assignments
- Other (please specify) _____

10. Which answers best describe the reading and writing assignments in your developmental English classes.

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Relevant to my life experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant to my cultural experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant to the course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased my ability to write and read in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant to my educational goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Which answer best describes your educational goals **prior to** taking developmental English.

- Personal enrichment
- Job training
- Certificate program
- Two-year degree
- Four-year degree or higher
- Other (please specify) _____
- None

12. Which answer best describes your educational goals **after** taking developmental English.

- Personal enrichment
- Job training
- Certificate program
- Two-year degree
- Four-year degree or higher
- Other (please specify) _____
- None

Appendix E

Recruitment Letter

Hello, my name is Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson and I am a Doctoral Candidate, in the School of Education at Oregon State University, in the Community College Leadership Program.

I am visiting your class today to invite you to consider participating in a research study that I am doing for my dissertation on Hispanic Generation 1.5 community college students in developmental English. The purpose of this study is to understand through the voices of students the experiences of Generation 1.5 Hispanic students in California community college developmental English programs. For purposes of this study, Hispanic includes only the following groups: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Latino. Generation 1.5 students include the following people: children of immigrants who enter the United States, go to school in the United States, and then enter into college; learners who self-identify as both first and second generation immigrants; United States born non-native speakers of English; back and forth migrants; and privileged, educated immigrants.

Your participation in this study would consist of the following (in order):

1. If you express interest in participating, I will send you via email and United States Postal Service an outline of the study and the Informed Consent

Document along with a self addressed stamped envelope. You will need to read and review the study outline and Informed Consent Document.

2. Then, I will conduct a follow-up phone call you so that you may ask any questions you have about the Informed Consent Document or the study.
3. If you agree to participate, you will need to sign the Informed Consent Form and send it back to me via postal mail in the envelope that I provided for you. Once I receive your signed Informed Consent Document, I will postal send you a copy of the signed Informed Consent Document with my signature on it for your records.
4. Then, I will call you to set up a time, date, and place on campus for both interviews and the focus group. The time and date will be based on what is convenient for you.
5. Then, you will be engaging in two interviews with me, both about one hour in length. Also, you will be participating in one focus group discussion with me and the other study participants. A date and time for the focus group will be determined based on what is convenient for all participants. You will also be sent via postal mail and email a survey that takes no more than 15 minutes to complete. Finally, I will send you an email with the transcription of both of your interviews and a transcription of the focus group interview to allow you the opportunity to review the collected information. The length of this study will be over a period of four months beginning June 2007.

If you are a Hispanic Generation 1.5 student in developmental English at a community college and over the age of 18 and would like more information, please fill out an individual confidential recruitment card (see attachment) and submit it to me at this time. If you choose to fill out the recruitment card for potential participants, I will send you the Informed Consent Document and the summary of the study for your review.

If you have questions about or are interested in participating in this research study, you can call me at (916) 484-8654 or email me at Lawrenl@arc.losrios.edu.

Thank you.

Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson
Oregon State University Graduate Student

Individual Confidential Recruitment Card for Potential Participants

To be eligible for the study, potential participants must meet the following criteria: be a Hispanic Generation 1.5 student who is participating in developmental English at a community college; a Spanish and English speaker, or an English only speaker; a United States native or a Mexico native; and age 18 or older.

Please check one:

___ Yes, I meet all of the above eligibility criteria

___ No, I do not meet all of the above eligibility criteria

Name:

Email:

Phone Number(s):

Best Day(s) and Time(s) to Contact You:

