

Transforming critical listening through co-design: Latine families and bilingual teachers
collaboratively reimagine dual-language literacy curriculum

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines how collaborative curriculum co-design between bilingual teachers and transnational Latine families can transform dual-language education by centering family knowledge and reshaping power dynamics. Scholars (e.g., Palmer et al., 2019) have called for bilingual educators to critically listen to Latine families, who have often been excluded, marginalized, or silenced in dual-language programs (e.g., Burns, 2017; Chaparro, 2020a; Shannon, 2011). Despite their goal of fostering sociocultural competence, dual-language programs are often shaped by neoliberal pressures and rely on translated curricula disconnected from families' language practices and cultural experiences. This participatory study positioned bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals and Latine families as critical pedagogues, combining practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) and solidarity-driven co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018) to deepen critical listening and redistribute power in schools. A group of Latina bilingual teachers participated in teacher inquiry sessions to reimagine their family engagement practice. A subset of these teachers then co-facilitated co-design circles with Spanish-speaking families in their classrooms, with researcher support. Together, each co-design

team redesigned a literacy unit to incorporate families' voices, perspectives, and expertise. Findings reveal that inquiry and co-design reshaped teachers' understandings of family engagement, prompting them to critique traditional approaches and view engagement with Latine families as a political act. Teachers and parents drew on their personal, professional, and transnational identities and experiences to inform their commitments to collaboration. The co-design process fostered trust and redistributed power by positioning parents as co-experts in curriculum design, creating opportunities for families to directly influence curricular decisions implemented in classrooms. Through this process, parents surfaced linguistic, pedagogical, cultural, and values-based expertise that enriched curriculum development. Findings also highlight the importance of transnational and intergenerational knowledge and literacies, as families and teachers drew on home literacy practices, cultural traditions, and experiences across national contexts to collaboratively reimagine dual-language curriculum. Together, these findings demonstrate how curriculum co-design can deepen critical listening, redistribute power, and support more culturally sustaining, community-centered approaches to dual-language education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ah, yo ya me imagino a mi hija ya cuando la profesora esté tomando este tema. Ah, yo veo a mi hija feliz. Porque está conociendo o va a conocer un poco más a lo mejor de mi cultura que yo todavía no le demuestro a ella... Siento que va a ser algo muy bonito para ellos porque se van a sentir orgullosos de sus raíces, van a decir “Oh, mi cultura! En mi cultura, yo hago eso, en mi cultura aprendo esto”... se van a elevar tanto de sentir ese orgullo...

[Ah, I imagine my daughter when the teacher takes up this topic. Ah, I see my daughter being happy. Because she is going to learn a bit more about my culture that I still haven’t had a chance to show her... I think it’s going to be very beautiful for them because they are going to feel proud of their roots, they’ll say “Oh, my culture! In my culture, I do this, in my culture I learn this”... they are going to feel so uplifted by that sense of pride...]

– Sandra, a mother in Marina’s co-design circles, describing how she imagined her daughter engaging with the poetry unit that she helped design for Marina’s kindergarten dual-language class

Context and Problem Statement: Dual-Language Education and the Need for Critical Listening to Latine Families

Two-way dual-language (TWDL) programs have been widely promoted as a model that supports emergent bilingual students’ development of bilingualism and biliteracy while avoiding segregation along linguistic and racial lines (Aquino-Sterling et al., 2025; Barbian et al., 2017; Howard et al., 2007). In these programs, students receive instruction in both English and in an additional program language, usually with the aim that around 50% of the students will be home

language speakers of the additional language and the other 50% will have English as a primary home language. Dual-language bilingual programs explicitly promote the development of life-long bilingualism along with biliteracy, unlike transitional models of bilingual education that view home language instruction as solely a bridge to English (Bale, 2012).

However, dual-language programs have, from the beginning, been shaped by conflicting ideological currents (Bernstein et al., 2020; Flores & García, 2017; Valdés, 1997). Because these programs were also seen as benefiting white, English-dominant students, many scholars have pointed to the rise and gentrification of dual-language programs as a clear example of interest convergence (Bell, 1980; Burns, 2017; Chávez-Moreno, 2023; Kelly, 2018; Palmer, 2010); bilingual programs are permitted only in so far as they also benefit privileged populations. Scholars have additionally called attention to the neoliberal logics embedded in the ways dual-language programs are framed and marketed (Bernstein et al., 2020; Varghese & Park, 2010). Through the lens of neoliberalism, students are framed as “human capital,” and educational programs market themselves as producing competitive global citizens who will vie for opportunities in an increasingly fast-paced international economy (Varghese & Park, 2010). Multilingualism in this context is seen primarily as a marketable skill, and dual-language programs appeal, often intentionally, to privileged parents as one more way to gain competitive advantages for their children (Bernstein et al., 2020; Heiman & Murakami, 2019). In doing so, they also are sometimes portrayed as attracting more “desirable” (i.e., white, wealthy) populations to public schools in need of “turn-around” (Menken et al., 2024). This accelerates processes of gentrification in dual-language education (Valdez et al., 2016; Chaparro, 2021). Dual-language classrooms thus often do not reflect the actual language practices and cultures of their Latine students, opting instead to teach a standardized version of the Spanish language

disconnected from the cultures and people that speak it, and utilizing direct translations of English language curricula and books that are devoid of meaningful cultural connections to students and their families (Osorio, 2015).

Dual-language programs rest on three pillars: bilingualism and biliteracy, high academic achievement, and sociocultural competence (Howard et al., 2007). This third pillar, sociocultural competence, is understood as going beyond students' superficial appreciation of each other's cultures to a deep understanding of their own and others' identities, so that "staff and students are led to accept, understand, value, embrace, notice inequalities, and work for equity" (Tabaku, 2021, February 9th). In response to inequities in dual-language education (Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017), scholars have called for a fourth fundamental pillar to be added to the dual-language framework: critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Palmer et al. 2019; Dorner et al., 2022). In Palmer et al.'s (2019) words, "critical consciousness enables educators and other members of school communities to develop political and ideological clarity about the purpose of schooling, interrogate the status quo, disrupt deficit thinking about minoritized groups, and consider alternative explanations for student underachievement" (p. 123). One tenet of critical consciousness is critical listening, which "seeks to engage students, educators, and families with others for meaningful and transformative connection" (p. 126) and "embodies a relation of curiosity and attention, sharing, caring, reciprocity, and responsiveness toward others" (p. 126). Palmer et al. (2019) called for educators on the path towards critical consciousness to critically listen to Latine families in dual-language programs. This is especially salient given that Latine families have often been excluded from, pushed out of, or silenced in TWDL programs (e.g., Burns, 2017; Chaparro, 2020a; Shannon, 2011).

I argue that critical listening must happen not only at the level of school policy and leadership, but also at the level of instruction and curriculum. For dual-language programs to develop students' sociocultural competence and critical consciousness, they must implement a curriculum that is culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) and reflects the actual home languages and literacies of their students and families. Critical listening is necessary in this curriculum development process, especially since attempts to develop culturally responsive or sustaining curricula often depend on teachers' interpretations of what will be culturally sustaining for children, without input from their families (Cioè-Peña, 2021b). I argue that solidarity-driven co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018) is a powerful tool to deepen critical listening, moving beyond schools as passively eliciting feedback from families, towards possibilities for partnership and action (Zeichner et al., 2016). What would it look like if teachers and families were to work together to develop literacy curricula for dual-language programs that truly put Latine families' experiences, desires, and perspectives at the center?

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Deficit-based perceptions of Latine parents portray them as disengaged in their children's educations, while teachers are frequently represented as disconnected from communities and disinterested in improving their practice (Hong, 2019). In this study, I chose to counter these narratives by adopting a radically asset-based approach to *both* teachers *and* families. Positioning bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) and transnational Latine families as critical pedagogues (Gonzales et al., 2023), I designed a participatory study through which I partnered with bilingual teachers to engage transnational Latine families in collaborative literacy curriculum co-design. This participatory research responds to the absence of Latine family voices and cultural perspectives in dual-language programs (Aquino-Sterling et al., 2025;

Chaparro, 2020a), and the need to deepen critical listening practices (Palmer et al., 2019) in ways that directly engage families as co-experts and co-designers in school settings. In doing so, it proposes a practical and methodological model for bringing bilingual teachers and transnational Latine parents¹ together to co-design curriculum.

This research involved two phases. The first phase of the project utilized practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) as methodology. During this phase, six bilingual teachers—all Latinas working as elementary school teachers in dual-language schools—engaged in a series of five teacher inquiry sessions with the goal of exploring practices of humanizing family engagement (Gallo, 2017), unpacking the role of Latine home literacies (i.e., Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Reese, 2012; de la Luz Reyes, 2015), investigating aperturas² (Hernández et al., 2023; Ishimaru et al., 2023) in their literacy curriculum for including family perspectives and voices, and learning about co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018) as a process for working in solidarity with families (Zeichner et al., 2016). Five of these teachers then went on to co-facilitate co-design circles with Latine families from their own classrooms, with my support. Each co-design series consisted of three co-design circles; thus, between the five teachers, 15 co-design sessions were held across five classrooms, at four school sites in three school districts. During each set of co-design circles, the classroom teacher, the parents, and I collaborated as co-experts (Mawasi et al., 2022), redesigning a literacy unit in ways that fostered increased family engagement, reflected family and community perspectives,

¹ Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms *families* and *parents* expansively. I conceive of family as the group of people closest to a child, regardless of biological relationship. I use the term *parents* to denote primary caregivers, regardless of biological relationship, gender, or generation. I use the term *transnational* to refer to families that have experienced migration, recognizing that migration processes are multidirectional and that meaningful ties to family, language, and cultures across national borders can persist across generations.

² Apertura is a term used in critical pedagogy and co-design literature (e.g. Ishimaru et al., 2023)—Spanish for “opening”—that describes an opportunity for change-making. In this project I use it synonymously with “problem of practice,” recognizing that each problem of practice is an opening for critical change.

and included parent voices. Each teacher then implemented their redesigned unit, often with the direct participation of the parents who formed part of the co-design circles.

Several questions guided this study:

RQ1: How does teacher inquiry and curriculum co-design reshape bilingual teachers' and Latine families' understandings of family engagement?

RQ2: How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?

RQ3: What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?

RQ4: How can co-design support culturally sustaining and intergenerational approaches to dual-language literacy curriculum and instruction?

This study was designed to address a gap in the literature: little is known about the transformative potential of collaborative curriculum co-design between teachers and families—particularly Latine/transnational families in dual-language settings—or about how such processes might challenge conventional assumptions about who can generate knowledge and shape curriculum in schools. The study is particularly significant for the field of dual-language bilingual education because it addresses a fundamental contradiction within two-way dual-language (TWDL) programs. Despite their stated promises of fostering cross-cultural awareness and sociocultural competence to uplift Latine students and families, in the words of Chaparro (2020a):

...we must recognize that bilingual education programs (especially integrated two-way programs) are not necessarily nor inherently culturally affirming and sustaining for Latine students. We cannot assume that just because a minority language is used, it will mean

that the minoritized local culture, students, and families will be valued. As such, an important implication, especially for integrated TWI programs, is to center the histories and perspectives of the Latine community. (p. 621)

Dual-language programs often fall short of offering a rich curriculum that uplifts Latine families' home language and literacy practices, opting instead to teach language as if it were disconnected from culture and to privilege translations of English-language materials. This study offers a glimpse of alternate ways forward, demonstrating what can happen when bilingual teachers engage in critical listening, and when Latine families partner with teachers as co-experts to embrace possibilities for collaboration and co-design.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the following exploration of the literature, I begin by analyzing the ways that Latine parents in TWBL programs have been marginalized and excluded. I then turn to the robust body of literature that highlights Latine families' home language and literacy practices—the rich resources that are all too often missing from dual-language programs' literacy curricula. I explore the potential for intergenerational learning that emerges when families' stories, languages, and literacies are welcomed into classroom spaces, first reviewing research in out-of-school family literacy spaces, and then turning to research that documents teachers' deliberate centering of family knowledge and stories within classrooms. I find that while this research offers powerful examples of the potential of centering family stories, it does not generally position parents as collaborators or co-designers of curriculum. Instead, parents are asked to provide content for curricular projects pre-designed by teachers. Finally, I turn to an emerging body of literature on working in solidarity with families (Zeichner et al. 2016) which often uses participatory methods to position parents of color as collaborators and co-designers in educational settings; I do this with the aim of exploring how these types of participatory methods might be used in dual-language settings to position Latine parents as co-designers of curriculum.

Parent Experiences and Engagement in Dual-Language Programs

Despite the established importance of family engagement and home-school relationships for students' positive educational experiences and outcomes (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Ishimaru et al., 2018), multilingual parents of color are frequently regarded through deficit lenses and alienated from public schools (Olivos, 2006; Persoon, 2024; Schultz et al., 2023). Additionally, traditional models of parent involvement have prioritized surface-level engagement

and positioned parents as helpful only insofar as they learn school knowledge, conforming to white middle-class educational practices and conveying that knowledge to their children (Baquedano-López et al. 2013; Torres & Hurtado-Vivas 2011). Such models of parent involvement contrast with more expansive conceptions of humanizing family engagement (Gallo, 2017) that foster genuine trust and collaboration, as well as visions of nondominant families as holders of essential knowledge and partners in reshaping schools towards justice (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020).

Dual-language program guidance documents (e.g., Howard et al., 2007) highlight the importance of including all parents equitably in TWDL programs. Given the stated equity/social justice aims of many TWDL programs (Bernstein et al., 2020; Olivos, 2021) and the current push towards critical consciousness as a fundamental fourth pillar of dual-language programs (Palmer et al., 2019), it would make sense for TWDL programs to seek to partner with Latine families and to integrate their stories, language practices, and home literacies into classrooms—honoring families’ funds of knowledge (González et al., 2006) and working towards implementing culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017). However, the literature on parent experiences in dual-language programs is surprisingly sparse (Chaparro, 2020b), and shows scant examples of this type of genuine partnership between dual-language schools and Latine families. Instead, Spanish-speaking parents may be pushed out or encounter barriers to accessing these schools. When they are able to participate in TWDL programs, Latine parents often experience isolation or marginalization through processes of symbolic integration and through the privileging of white parents’ voices (i.e., Chaparro, 2020b; Muro, 2016).

Several studies explore forces that push Latine parents away from TWDL programs. These might be social pressures, discouragement from teachers, or the complexity of navigating

lottery systems and school choice procedures. Chaparro (2020a) interviewed working-class Latina mothers in a TWDL program and found that many mothers narrated “encounters with those who questioned, or disapproved, of their decision to have their children in a bilingual program that emphasized Spanish first” (p. 613). Cioè-Peña (2021b) documented the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latina mothers of emergent bilinguals labeled as disabled (EBLADs), and uncovered similar struggles with external or internalized social pressures to place their children in English-only learning settings. Often children’s disability labels were used as the rationale for why a bilingual setting would not be a good fit for them, despite these children speaking Spanish as their primary home language. This resulted in children being assigned to English monolingual classrooms. In one case, the mother of a child who had been offered a bilingual classroom placement was encouraged by the teacher to consider a monolingual placement that might be a better “fit” for her child.

Gonzales (2024) identified a different set of obstacles to enrollment in TWDL programs in her interviews with middle-class transnational Latina mothers. While these mothers had strong beliefs about the benefits of bilingual instruction and did not describe social pressures to enroll their children in English-only programs—likely due to their comparative socioeconomic privilege and familial bilingualism—they did describe the challenges of navigating a complicated lottery system and identified ways in which the district erected additional barriers to enrollment for Latine families in two hyper-gentrified dual-language programs in a large West Coast city. Martín Corredor et al. (2023) similarly interviewed Mexican and Mexican American mothers about their school choice decisions; they found that these mothers had strong beliefs about the need for home/heritage language instruction, but also uncovered factors like lack of

transportation, lack of clarity around communication and program choices, and safety concerns that made enrollment in dual-language programs less likely for some of these families.

Even when Latine families are able to gain access to dual-language programs, they may continue to experience racism and alienation in schools that lack structural support or deep commitments to justice. For example, Chaparro (2020a) amplified the experiences of Latina mothers in a TWDL program through *antropoesía*, creating poems using the transcripts of her interviews with them as a way to “critically listen” (p. 599) to their insights and experiences. In one poem, she evoked the experience of a Latina mother with the school secretary. This secretary did not speak Spanish, treated Spanish-speaking parents disrespectfully, and did not make an effort to understand them when they attempted to speak English. The mother clearly identified this as racism, saying “porque eso para mi viene siendo parte del racismo. Decir ‘No entiendo tu inglés hasta que no lo hables como hablo yo’ [because for me this is part of racism. Saying ‘I don’t understand your English until you speak it like I do’]” (p. 612). Chaparro (2020a) attributed the alienation that Spanish-speaking parents experienced at least in part to the lack of bilingual personnel in the program, stating “the lack of advocates from the Latino community at the school— other than the overworked, overburdened teachers— was deeply felt” (p. 620). The fact that many TWDL programs channel parents into segregated parent-teacher organizations, with white parents participating in the PTA and Latine parents instead recruited for parent groups centered around English language learner needs or cultural affinity, only deepens this sense that Spanish-speaking families are sidelined where genuine power is concerned (Muro, 2024).

Shannon (2011) detailed an interest convergence dilemma that emerged at a dual-language elementary in a town in a western state. While the middle-class white and working-class immigrant Latine families enrolled in the program initially appeared to share

priorities, the situation deteriorated as their interests diverged. When a white principal was hired, she set about replacing Mexican American teachers with Spanish-speaking teachers hired from abroad. This same principal also refused to recognize equity as an issue at the school. Racial tensions between parent groups became increasingly intense, with white parents exerting undo authority and silencing Latine parents in meetings. Shannon concluded that, “It seemed as if the white parents wanted their children to be in a DLP [dual-language program] but one that perhaps did not include Latinos” (p. 98).

Other studies on interactions between white and Latine parents in dual-language schools may not always document the same types of open racial conflict that Shannon (2011) reported. However, they strongly emphasize themes of interest convergence (Burns, 2017; Olivos, 2021) and symbolic integration (Chaparro, 2020b; Muro, 2016). Olivos (2021) summarized the interest convergence dilemma, explaining that “despite being designed to be bicultural and bilingual, DLI programs often get molded to reflect white parents’ interests and expectations” (p. 76). Additionally, these programs may come to depend on the political support of white parents. He further explained that teachers, even teachers who want to prioritize Latine families, may find themselves spending more time attending to the needs of white families because of the ways in which these families take up space and assert themselves, demanding more time and attention from teachers and from educational institutions. Burns (2017) explored the role of whiteness in regards to parent involvement in a gentrifying TWDL program. In this case, administrators worked intentionally to center Mexican-American parents and to position their contributions as valuable. However, “structural factors, specifically lack of funding, created a context for white parents’ continued influence” (p. 339). Burns (2017) also analyzed the ways in which white parents justified their choice of TWDL program, uncovering “white intellectual alibis” related to

notions of “sacrifice” and “compromise” that undermined their professed commitments to social justice (p. 339). Others (Gonzales, 2024; Zheng, 2020) have analyzed socioeconomically privileged parents’ uptake of neoliberal ideologies in their interactions with dual-language or immersion schools, across racial groups. Finally, scholars have highlighted the prevalence of symbolic integration in dual-language programs, suggesting that English-speaking and Spanish-speaking families continue to lead “parallel lives” (Chaparro, 2020b) characterized by “polite, but surface-level interactions” (Muro, 2016) that belie TWDL programs’ claims to fully value and integrate diverse social groups. Interestingly, these findings are not restricted to Latine families in TWDL programs; for example, Ee (2021) identified themes of symbolic integration among both parents and students in a Korean dual-language program, and Sun et al. (2024) explored how Mandarin-speaking parents did not see dual-language programs as adequately meeting their families’ and students’ community and learning needs.

Finally, Olivos (2021) recommended caution in interpreting Latine parents’ high reported satisfaction with dual-language programs uncritically. He noted Latine parents’ tendency to choose silence over expressing their concerns, given frequent negative responses to critique from teachers, and posed the question, “Is it even worth the Latine parents’ time to raise concerns if they are not going to be addressed or taken seriously?” (p. 80). Given these questions, and the surprisingly small body of research on Latine parent experiences in TWDL programs, I argue that it is essential to focus on centering Latine families’ needs and desires in TWDL schools and classrooms.

In this section, I have explored research documenting inequities in TWDL programs. Particularly, I have focused on research that explores how Latine families may be excluded, passed over, marginalized, or silenced even in TWDL programs that claim a social justice focus.

This trend is exacerbated by the increasing gentrification of TWDL programs (Valdez et al., 2016) and is especially troubling given dual-language education's stated commitment to honoring students' home languages and cultures, alongside growing calls for critical listening and critically conscious pedagogies that center the experiences of nondominant students and families. I argue that one way to contest the marginalization of Latine families in TWDL programs and to cultivate culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017) that genuinely represent families' lives and experiences is through engaging Latine families in collaborative curriculum co-design. This type of collaboration is particularly salient in gentrifying program contexts where Latine families are increasingly invisibilized. In the following sections, I explore the robust body of research that highlights the valuable home language and literacy practices of Latine families that are rarely represented in TWDL classrooms; I then review research that documents attempts by researchers and teachers to cultivate intergenerational learning and center Latine families' home knowledge in out-of-school and PK-12 classroom settings.

Home Language and Literacy Practices in Latine Families

Although dominant deficit narratives often position the language and literacy practices of communities of color and immigrant/transnational communities as lacking (Valdés, 1996), research has consistently documented the rich and sophisticated home language and literacy practices present within Latine communities. These narratives position Latine families as deeply invested in their children; describe intergenerational family literacies and language teaching practices that are often devalued or invisible to schools; and explore how families' pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) provide roadmaps for navigating, resisting, and asserting cultural identity in the face of racism and assimilationist pressures in the United States (U.S.).

Taken together, such research documents the critical literacy practices already taking place in Latine children's homes and communities.

Scholars have provided detailed portraits of Latine families that contest racist perceptions of Latine parents as disengaged from, ignorant about, or indifferent to their children's personal and academic success. For example, Valdés (1996) conducted an ethnographic study of ten Mexican immigrant families that described their values, parenting practices, and their desire to be treated with respect within the context of the U.S. school system; in doing so, she questioned dominant modes of parent involvement and education that are disconnected from families' actual cultures and values. González et al. (2006) positioned teachers as potential ethnographers, discovering the rich funds of knowledge already at work in their students' lives and households, and considering how to bring them into classroom spaces.

Building off of these foundational studies, Gallo (2017) provided an ethnographic portrait of Mexican origin fathers in the U.S., recognizing how fathers' roles in their children's lives are often ignored or minimized by schools and societies, and showing how Mexican men—often pathologized by society as machista and as potential criminals—contribute powerfully to their children's education. She invited teachers to take up humanizing family engagement strategies that center ideological clarity and cultivate mutual trust.

Additionally, researchers have called attention to all the ways in which Latine families are agentic and active in their children's education — particularly through types of involvement that are often disregarded by schools. For example, scholars have highlighted how parents' immigrant rights activism and community leadership constitute powerful forms of engagement in their children's education (Paredes Scribner & Fernández, 2017; Rusoja & Gonzales, 2024). Yet other studies highlight the agentic role that Latine families take within school settings.

Cioè-Peña (2021a) centered the testimonios of Spanish-speaking mothers of children labeled with disabilities; this nuanced portrait explored the ways these mothers make sense of their children's disability labels, value their bilingualism, and use their funds of knowledge to navigate oppressive systems. Other studies portray Latine parents as actively engaged in their children's learning both in schools and at home. In school settings, parents advocate for high-quality academic and socioemotional learning experiences (Alvarado, 2025) and for policies that better support students, such as improved playground discipline practices (Oliva & Alemán, 2019). At home, they engage in robust values education (Perrigo et al., 2024) and employ diverse strategies to extend and enrich their children's learning opportunities (Poza et al., 2014). Together, these studies portray transnational Latine parents in their full humanity—as knowledgeable and resourceful actors who draw on their expertise to support their children's growth within often hostile social contexts.

Researchers have also documented diverse home literacy and language practices in Latine families that are often not recognized by schools. For example, Delgado-Gaitan (1994) described the use of *consejos*, or “nurturing advice”, as “critical tools” (p. 298) for intergenerational learning in the Estrada family, a Mexican immigrant family in Carpintería. The Estradas used *consejos* as a tool for empowerment and as a way of navigating and at times resisting the school system's deficit positionings of their children. Espinoza-Herold (2007) similarly documented a mother-daughter pair's use of *dichos*, often defined as sayings or proverbs, as an intergenerational navigational strategy, showing how “oral traditions within families of Mexican descent help create a powerful and rich context for student academic motivation” (p. 273). Indeed, Latin American oral traditions provide rich texts for intergenerational learning and connection; in addition to *dichos* and *consejos*, Reese (2012)

documented the importance of storytelling as a part of Latin American tradition. She described the storytelling practices of Mexican families, finding that families used stories to instruct children on life lessons and values, as well as to connect and entertain. Families told family anecdotes, horror stories and legends, as well as historical narratives and jokes. These storytelling practices frequently involved grandparents as well; such intergenerational stories “represent a resource for communities and individuals” (p. 278).

Scholars have noted the diverse texts, both oral and print, that form part of families’ home literacy practices; these texts are a potential resource for teachers because of their familiarity and relevance to students, and yet they are rarely incorporated into school-based literacy learning. For example, de la Luz Reyes (2015) collected the stories of educators who managed to become “biliterate against the odds,” despite attending school during an era in which bilingual education was not legal and Spanish use was punished in schools. The educators featured in her book described learning to read with texts such as novelas, fotonovelas, revistas, prayer books, and hymnals. Similarly, Farr (2000) described the literacy practices of transnational Mexican families in Chicago, noting the key role of written and oral religious texts particularly among mothers in the community. Ortiz (2004) focused on the participation of fathers in their children’s literacy activities, describing how some fathers brought brochures and pamphlets from work home to share with their children, nurturing a joint interest in, for example, the airplanes or cars that they helped manufacture in factory jobs during the workday. Other fathers shared religious texts, while some read books and board game instructions with their children.

Just as parents fostered their children’s literacy engagements, they also cultivated bilingualism through their home language practices. For example, Cristian, one of the fathers that

Gallo (2017) followed in her ethnographic study of Mexican-origin fathers, skillfully helped his daughter develop bilingualism and metalinguistic knowledge, despite her English-only school context that did not develop students' awareness of language and bilingualism. Although he did not identify as having strong print literacy skills, due to leaving school after 6th grade, Cristian modeled linguistic dexterity and appropriateness across languages and contexts for his daughter. Nuñez (2019) analyzed the multimodal practices of transfronterizx mothers, who fostered their children's bilingualism through recognizing and utilizing their interest in technology; these mothers used video games, apps, websites, and other digital tools to strategically foster their children's fluid use of both languages. Nuñez and García-Mateus (2021) recognized Mexican-origin mothers as critical border and translanguaging pedagogues, describing how they drew on "ruptures of cultural and linguistic worlds" (p. 107) to envision empowering bilingual and bicultural futures for their children, and how they worked to sustain their children's bilingualism through centering home language and cultural practices.

Importantly, in most of these studies, parents' language and literacy practices with their children included an explicit critical dimension. The Mexican-origin mothers described by Nuñez and García-Mateus (2021) recognized that they occupied spaces between worlds and were pushing back on assimilationist pressures as they cultivated their children's bilingualism and maintained their connections to home culture. Several of the Latine fathers from Ortiz' (2004) study engaged in school-related literacy activities with their children in response to the racism of their students' white teachers, who marginalized and ignored children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Similarly, Delgado-Gaitan (1994) and Espinoza-Herold (2007) noted that the use of *consejos* and *dichos* within families was not neutral, but rather functioned to guide children through the necessary processes of navigating and resisting

dominant social narratives, structures, and forces that sought to marginalize them. In this sense, all of these studies describe what Delgado Bernal (2001) referred to as pedagogies of the home. In her research into the experiences of Chicana college students, Delgado Bernal identified pedagogies of the home as the “cultural knowledge base that helps Chicana college students negotiate the daily experiences of sexist, racist, and classist microaggressions... [and provides] strategies of resistance” (p. 624). Delgado Bernal focused specifically on pedagogies of the home connected to students’ bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to their communities, and spirituality.

Other scholars have highlighted the critical language and literacy practices that Latine families employ to advocate for themselves and their communities and to challenge broader sociohistorical injustices, particularly in the context of undocumented communities’ struggles for basic human rights. Mangual Figueroa (2013) explored how undocumented mothers used public and private testimonios—a language and literacy practice grounded in Latin American oral tradition and social movements for justice—to “define their community, integrate themselves into a larger temporal framework of immigrant struggle, and define the social and moral imperatives that have given rise to their act—and that should inspire further acts of testimonio” (pp. 569-570). Rusoja (2022) explored how undocumented and documented immigrants in an immigrant rights movement mobilized a communal pedagogy of resistance, “an intergenerational pedagogy enacted in communal spaces that grows from Latine immigrants’ *facultad*, meaning the critical consciousness and epistemic privilege that results from living in the liminal space of the borderlands” (p. 301). Thus, within homes and also in public spaces, transnational Latine families enact care through intergenerational teaching practices that recognize and resist the racial and linguistic oppression they encounter in the U.S..

Taken together, this body of literature makes clear that educators have much to learn from the pedagogical practices of Latine families. Yet despite numerous studies documenting the oral, written, and multimodal literacy practices of transnational families, these practices are seldom recognized or leveraged in school spaces. Likewise, in bilingual educational settings, families' understandings of their children's dynamic bilingualism and metalinguistic knowledge remain largely unexplored. Schools also rarely attend to the intergenerational nature of learning within families and communities or to its potential to cultivate pride and resilience among bilingual students. In the following section, I examine the work of researchers and educators who have sought to create spaces for intergenerational learning rooted in families' language and cultural practices, both in out-of-school settings and in PK–12 classrooms.

Intergenerational Pedagogies with Latine Families: Outside and Inside Schools

While Latine families' home language and literacy practices are too often marginalized in K–12 schools—including dual-language programs—some educators and researchers have worked to create opportunities for intergenerational learning in both community and school settings. In this section, I review scholarship on family literacy spaces that explicitly center students' and families' language and literacy practices as a means of fostering intergenerational learning. I then turn to the smaller body of literature examining family-centered pedagogies in PK–12 classrooms that promote intergenerational learning while drawing on the linguistic, cultural, and literacy knowledge of Latine families.

Much of the research on intergenerational learning in educational contexts has emerged from studies of family literacy programs, which engage both parents and children in language and literacy learning. While some of this learning takes place in intergenerational settings, many traditional family literacy programs have instead offered parallel programming for parents and

children or programming exclusively for parents, with the goal of helping them support their children's literacy development (Shanahan et al., 1995). Scholars have critiqued the deficit orientation underlying traditional family literacy approaches (Auerbach, 1995; Countryman & Elish-Piper, 1998; Gonzales et al., 2023). In particular, many programs have adopted a "transmission of school practices" model (Auerbach, 1989), positioning parents as lacking the knowledge and literacy practices needed to support their children's success in school.

More recently, researchers in family literacy spaces have sought to move beyond language binaries and static notions of print literacy to create spaces for more fluid translingual and multimodal participation and composition. For example, Abraham et al. (2021) focused on creating a translanguaging space in a community-based writing workshop for Latine elementary-aged children. While this workshop focused on children specifically, educators brought family history into the space through having students compose family stories. Students took up translanguaging when composing these family stories, fluidly using their languages to authentically represent dialogue. Kim and Song (2019) also focused on the creation of a translanguaging space in a family literacy workshop, through a multilingual family storybook project that brought together a diverse group of parents and their children at a Spanish immersion school. They noted that families engaged together in "community translanguaging," drawing on a communally constructed language repertoire when composing their picture books, and in the process creating a "space where students, parents, extended family, and community members can collaborate using their entire literacy resources, cultural identities, and ways of representation" (p. 277). Machado et al. (2025) explored how families in a library-based intergenerational storytelling workshop engaged in multimodal composition through translingual writing and making, using their languages as an additional material in the composition/making process.

By promoting flexible use of home languages, cultural knowledge, and family stories, family literacy programs can create powerful opportunities to center families' funds of knowledge and foster intergenerational learning. Researchers have documented how parents use these spaces to draw upon their pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) and extend a curriculum of the home, "generated through parents' decisions about what their children learn, how they learn it, and the values taught explicitly and implicitly in this process" (Gonzales et al., 2023, p. 7).

For example, in Flores's (2018) *Somos Escritores* project, Latine parents wrote and drew alongside their adolescent daughters. Through sharing consejos and personal narratives, they sought to raise their daughters as chicas fuertes, emphasizing resilience, perseverance, and the importance of family and culture. Similarly, Gonzales et al. (2023) examined how transnational mothers in an intergenerational, library-based storytelling workshop acted as critical literacy pedagogues. The mothers centered their own approaches to storytelling, taught family history and values, and positioned their children as literacy learners while resisting deficit perspectives surrounding bilingualism and disability labeling. Based on these findings, Gonzales et al. (2023) argued that educators in both family literacy settings and PK–12 classrooms should seek to partner with transnational parents as fellow pedagogues.

Research on intergenerational learning that centers Latine families' home language and literacy knowledge in K-12 classrooms is understandably more rare, given the structures of schooling and increased prescriptiveness around curriculum and assessment. This research usually documents work by teachers and/or teacher-researchers to incorporate cultural knowledge or family stories into classroom curriculum, or to facilitate students' inquiry into their family and community members' lives and experiences through interviews and oral histories. For

example, Leija (2020) documented how Mr. Quintero, a teacher in a second-grade 50/50 Spanish/English dual-language program in which all students identified as Latine, created a unit about Día de los Muertos. This unit included the explicit goal of integrating families' cultural knowledge about the holiday; this took the form of an at-home family inquiry assignment and the opportunity for two parents to present in class about how they celebrated Día de los Muertos in their home countries. Nash et al. (2018) described the work of Alicia Dacosta, a second-grade bi/multilingual teacher, who created curriculum centered on honoring students' names. As part of this name unit, students took interview questions home and conducted an interview with parents about their name stories. Similarly, Hong (2019) storied the work of Julia Finkelstein, a sixth and seventh-grade ESL teacher who engaged her students in an in-depth inquiry into their families' stories of migration through conducting interviews and writing up oral histories. In all of these examples, family knowledge was brought into the classroom through inquiry conducted by students at home.

Several studies document family-engaged biliteracy projects where teachers sought to shift the literacy curriculum of their bilingual classrooms to put family knowledge at the center. These studies recognized and sought to remedy the disconnect between commercial literacy curricula used in bilingual schools and the home knowledge and literacy practices of families. For example, Lopez et al. (2022) engaged families in a bilingual family journal project in the context of a Spanish-English transitional bilingual 4th grade classroom in which all students were Latine and bilingual. Through this journal project, families responded to journal prompts throughout the year and their responses were incorporated into classroom curriculum, with curricular tie-ins both in literacy and across other subjects. After the project, participating families were invited to a focus group, where they shared their appreciation for the project.

Parents remarked that they had never had opportunities to share their stories in school before—usually family engagement focused on their students’ grades and how they could provide them with at-home support for school tasks. These families also shared joy in being able to teach about regional variation in Mexico that is often not represented in the U.S., particularly the traditions and linguistic variation from their home towns and states that is often invisible even in bilingual school settings. They also reported that increased trust and community had been built between families in the classroom, as they had had opportunities to read and learn from each others’ stories.

Flores and Springer (2021) similarly worked as a teacher-researcher partnership to use family knowledge to transform literacy curriculum, stating that their goal was “to develop a literacy curriculum that sustains students’ existing literacies and cultural and linguistic resources while supporting their development as multilingual and multicultural readers and writers” (p. 313). Centering parents’ knowledge was essential in this process, and Sandra, who taught in a third grade dual-language classroom in which all students were Latine and bilingual, incorporated family knowledge through inviting parents to share legends and folktales as well as their migration stories. These stories were then incorporated into the literacy curriculum.

In the studies reviewed above, teachers incorporated family knowledge into the curriculum either through student inquiry (Leija, 2020; Nash et al., 2018; Hong, 2019) or through inviting families to send their stories to be used as texts (Lopez et al., 2022; Flores & Springer, 2021). Other studies have highlighted ways in which educators have created intergenerational spaces connected to their classrooms, with the goal of shifting curriculum to center family knowledge. Alvarez (2020) examined two biliteracy family projects that took place in a first grade bilingual classroom; these projects occurred in phases that included classroom activities

for students, home activities between parents and children, classroom workshops that invited parents in to create biliteracy artifacts, and sharing sessions. The first project consisted of a picture book focused on the child's or family's experiences, and the second project was a visual timeline of the students' life. Alvarez documented how these projects, along with the collaborative, intergenerational process they entailed, allowed family knowledge to become the center of classroom life. She argued for an approach to family engagement that sees it as inextricable from curriculum, stating that, "When family engagement endeavors are perceived by teachers as separate efforts from classroom instruction and pedagogy, rich opportunities are missed" (p. 488).

Rivera-Amezola (2020) also created collaborative spaces for students and their families through a teacher-inquiry project focused on digital family stories. These stories could then be used as texts for literacy learning in a diverse Philadelphia school where families had many home languages. This project took the form of three family sharing nights, in which parents and children collaboratively composed and shared using digital media. Rivera-Amezola and his co-researchers found that parents shared in ways that reflected their pride in their family stories and cultures; they also shared texts that "unsettled traditional structure" (p. 326), diverging from researchers' expectations in ways that reflected their transnational identities.

Taken together, these studies document ways in which teachers have sought to redesign literacy curriculum to center families, either through student inquiry, through inviting parents to send in stories, or through creating intergenerational learning spaces within or connected to classrooms. However, while these studies showcase pedagogies committed to seeing parent knowledge as valuable, parents were positioned primarily as providing content and texts for student learning, rather than as *co-designers* who might partner with teachers to reshape

curriculum. Additionally, while many of these studies took place in bilingual settings, these were almost always classrooms with primarily or exclusively Latine bilingual students (e.g., Alvarez, 2020; Flores & Springer, 2021; Hong, 2019; Leija, 2020). I argue that more research is needed into how transnational/Latine parents might be invited to partner with teachers to co-design curriculum, as well as how this might take shape in two-way dual-language settings in which Latine parents are not in the majority and must navigate processes of gentrification and cooptation (Burns, 2017).

Collaboration and Co-design with Parents of Color

The studies explored above highlight what Zeichner et al. (2016) would refer to as a family *engagement* approach, where parents are positioned as possessing valuable knowledge that teachers might learn from and use to shift their own practice. Zeichner et al. (2016) proposed a typology of family/school relationships with three primary approaches: family involvement, family engagement, and working in solidarity with families. In traditional *family involvement* approaches, the emphasis is on sharing school knowledge with families; this might take the form of parent-teacher conferences and family curriculum nights. *Family engagement* approaches, in contrast, attempt to “flip the script” (p. 279) and position families as knowledge-holders that teachers might learn from. Home visits and community-led neighborhood walks are examples of this approach, as well as the family-centered pedagogies highlighted in the previous section. Zeichner et al.’s (2016) final approach to family/school relationships—*working in solidarity with families*—entails genuine attempts to share power and decision making with families and communities, whether at the level of school governance, curriculum design, or political mobilization and advocacy. In this section, I review literature that takes this stance, positioning parents of color as collaborators and co-designers.

There is a growing body of research that emphasizes the importance of centering nondominant parents' knowledge and visions in schooling; this research fosters meaningful collaboration through employing participatory research methods like participatory design research (PDR); community based participatory action research (CBPAR) (e.g., Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020; Bang et al., 2016; Ishimaru et al., 2018); and co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018). However, participatory design and co-design research rarely includes both teachers and families. Instead, a strong strand of co-design scholarship focuses on collaboration between researchers and educators, often positioning participatory design as a tool for teacher professional development (Kelly et al., 2019), teacher leadership (Scornavacco et al., 2022), and teacher agency within areas such as reform (Severance et al., 2016); tool design (Matuk et al., 2016); and curriculum design (Penuel et al., 2022). Some co-design projects have also focused on bringing educators or other adults together with youths to work on design efforts around teaching tools and curriculum (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016; Iriarte et al., 2023; Mawasi et al., 2023; Yip et al., 2017).

In contrast, co-design research directly involving family and community perspectives in education has focused primarily on collaborations between researchers, administrators, and families, and more rarely includes teachers. Given the historical lack of trust between families of color and the majority-white teachers of their children, and given the challenges of building dual capacity for collaboration for both teachers and families (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013), researchers have often chosen to conduct participatory research with families in out-of-school settings and/or to exclude teachers from this research if their participation is judged problematic. There are thus fewer examples of participatory research with parents that focus on changing learning

environments or curriculum specifically inside of PK-12 classrooms and that also include the collaboration of PK-12 teachers.

For example, Barajas-López and Ishimaru (2020) conducted a participatory design-based research study with African American and immigrant Latine and Asian families through which these families co-designed a new parent education curriculum. While some educators and administrators were initially involved, they were asked to step back when it became clear that they were often overlooking parent ideas or reframing these ideas to match their own priorities and ideologies. While affirming the need to center the knowledge, insights, and theories of non-dominant families in schools, Barajas-López and Ishimaru (2020) explored how educators may be a potential barrier in this process, stating that, “educators typically receive little training and support for more meaningful engagement, and thus lack the capacity to leverage the insights, understandings, and expertise of nondominant families” (p. 22). Other research in this participatory tradition exercises similar caution when it comes to the inclusion of teachers and schools in collaborative projects.

Yull et al. (2014) conducted community based participatory action research with middle-class parents of color to uncover their experiences with their children’s schooling. Parents participated in focus groups facilitated by community leaders and university staff; while the goal of this research was clearly to uncover insights that might shift school practices, school staff were not themselves involved. Bang et al. (2016) participated in a long-term community-based design research project with Indigenous families, young people, and community members in Chicago. They chose intentionally, and understandably, not to partner with schools given the history of Native peoples and schooling in the U.S. Ishimaru et al. (2018) documented three family engagement projects that used community design circles as their

methodology, seeking to document a “solidarity-driven process of partnership undertaken with families and communities of color, educators, and other researchers toward community-defined wellbeing and education justice” (p. 38). Led primarily by university-based researchers, these projects did at times include educators as participants, but at other times opted to avoid bringing families into possibly confrontational situations with teachers. For example, the CADRE program in Los Angeles opted not to include teachers in the design-circles when families shared their ongoing negative interactions with teachers. Instead, they focused on facilitating families’ development of new scripts for teacher and parent interactions, primarily through “role-playing and collective reflection with the intention of reimagining parent-teacher conversations and interactions” (p. 48).

The choice not to include educators in many of these collaborative co-design projects is grounded in important concerns; the uncritical inclusion of teachers and administrators would likely have led to harm. However, it is hard to envision how the powerful insights of parents become integrated into school practices at the classroom level unless attention is paid to how parents and teachers can build the capacity to interact in justice-centered ways. One notable exception to the trend of excluding teachers from participatory research with families is the work of Kuttner et al. (2022), who very deliberately used design circles to engage both parents and teachers in critiquing and redesigning School Community Councils (SCCs) as a more justice-centered space for family/school/community collaboration. A mixed group of educators and parents from different schools met in a community center; the group of educators included administrators, counselors, family advocates, district staff, and teachers. These design circles were run to intentionally foster mutual understanding between families and educators. The researchers highlighted “moments of connection—moments when participants connected with

one another despite the personal, historical, social, and institutional forces that so often divide them” (p. 141). While this article shares a powerful process of healing and collaboration that offers possibilities for family/school partnerships, its focus was external to classrooms themselves, centered on district leadership structures rather than on the co-design of learning spaces or curriculum. There are thus few examples of co-design or participatory research that attend to the relationships between classroom teachers and the families in their own classes as possible sites for solidarity and collaborative work, or that focus directly on the redesign of curriculum to reflect families’ home language and literacy practices.

Notably, bilingual or TWDL settings are also underrepresented in co-design research. On the learning design side, Beltrán-Grimm (2024) engaged Spanish-speaking Latina mothers in co-design of mathematics activities for their children, but this took place in an out-of-school space and did not involve teachers. On the leadership design side, Hernández & Henderson (2022) engaged parents along with educators and administrators in a bilingual redesign committee that would help develop a new bilingual program in the school district; while this project was not framed as co-design, it used similar participatory methodologies, along with critical methodologies such as *pláticas* (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) to engage the design team. However, neither of these projects entailed collaboration between teachers and parents around issues of curriculum in bilingual school settings.

I argue that there is much value in centering the powerful relationships that teachers might develop with their own classroom families as a locus for co-design. While deficit views of teachers’ ability to partner with families might be common, and sometimes justified, other bodies of research look at the potential of teachers and teaching through asset-based lenses. Hong (2019) contested the positioning of teachers and families as “natural enemies,” instead arguing

that they can become “natural allies,” a process shaped by teachers’ own life experiences and commitments. In her collection of case studies, she storied the experiences of five teachers who connected and partnered with families in innovative, responsive ways. Kinloch et al. (2016) argued for a definition of teaching as “publicly engaged scholarship,” explaining that “Teaching as public engagement should be community-centric, inclusive, collaborative, intentional, transformative, humanizing, multiperspectival, and justice oriented” (p. 4). And finally, much of the research reviewed in the previous section that centered family stories or intergenerational learning in classrooms came about as the result of teacher inquiry, conducted by and with teachers who desired to place family knowledge at the center of their curriculum (e.g., Alvarez, 2020; Flores & Springer, 2021; Rivera-Amezola, 2020). Therefore, I argue that there is a need for more research that engages both teachers and families in collaborative, participatory ways, towards centering family knowledge in curriculum. This is particularly true for dual-language settings, which are underrepresented in literature on collaboration and co-design with families, and particularly within gentrifying dual-language settings where transnational/Latine families are underrepresented and experience increased barriers to engagement. This dissertation study was designed to address this gap in the literature.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

In developing the framework for this study, I sought to conceptualize the role of literacy, the role of parents, and the role of teachers in the process of collaborative curriculum co-design. My goal was to consider literacy in expansive ways, and to adopt a radically asset-based approach to *both families and* teachers. In doing so, I hoped to help unsettle traditional notions about what “counts” as knowledge and as literacy in schools, who is authorized to design curriculum, and who is considered a knowledge-holder and knowledge producer in school settings.

In the following section, I first explore literacy as ideological (Street, 1997), critical (Freire & Macedo, 2005; Vasquez et al., 2019), transnational (Jiménez, et al., 2009), and intergenerational (Flores et al., 2020). I then conceptualize curriculum (Dillon, 2009; Eisner, 1979) and frame the process of curriculum co-design as itself a critical literacy practice. I conceptualize transnational parents as critical pedagogues, drawing on a Chicana/US Women of Color feminism to explore the notions of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) and mothering as critical work (Gumbs et al., 2016; Gonzales et al., 2023). I additionally draw from literature that positions transnational parents as strategic language teachers (Kwon, 2017), critical translanguaging and literacy pedagogues (Gonzales et al., 2023, Nuñez & García-Mateus, 2021), and holders of transnational funds of knowledge (Kwon, 2022). Finally, recognizing the key role of teacher collaboration in co-design with parents, I conceptualize bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988). I do this by drawing from literature that explores teacher inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015), the importance of teachers’ raciolinguicized subjectivities (Daniels & Varghese, 2020), and the development of critical consciousness for dual-language bilingual teachers (Palmer et al., 2019). Finally, I ground my

understanding of collaboration in methodological literature about teacher inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) and co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018). To conclude, I argue for the importance of using these concepts together to articulate the roles of literacy curriculum, collaborative curriculum co-design, parents, and teachers in the proposed study.

Literacies as Ideological, Multiple, Transnational, Critical, and Intergenerational

Following a long tradition of scholars (e.g., Gee, 1985; Street, 1984), I begin by conceptualizing literacy as ideological and sociocultural—in opposition to past and current conceptions of literacy as an autonomous, technical skill. I then attend to literacy’s potential to be critical, transnational, and intergenerational.

Definitions of literacy are contested political territory, particularly because literacy instruction and assessment have, for decades, been a flash-point of heated debate (Durán & Hikida, 2022) and a major focus of standardization and high-stakes testing movements (Willis, 1997). New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Gee, 1985; Street, 1984) sought to define “language and literacy as social practices rather than technical skills to be learned in formal education” (Street, 1997); this perspective calls upon educators to recognize the home language and literacy practices that all students, and particularly racialized multilingual students, bring into classrooms. Street (1997) contrasted an autonomous model of literacy—implying that literacy is a neutral set of skills that exist autonomously from their social contexts—to his proposed ideological model of literacy. The ideological model sees literacy as deeply tied to social contexts and purposes; its “uses and meanings are always embedded in relations of power” (Street, 1997, p. 48). NLS thus conceived of literacies as multiple, contextually-embedded, and changing. Similarly, the New London Group (1996) proposed the concept of multiliteracies, critiquing and contesting traditional literacy pedagogy as a “carefully restricted

project—restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” (p. 61), and promoting an expansive vision of literacies that extend across modes as well as cultural and linguistic contexts and content areas.

Multilingual educators have further called attention to the need to think more expansively about literacy, particularly across languages. García and Kleifgen (2020) noted that research responding to the New London Group’s call to explore multiliteracies has focused deeply on multimodal expression but often sidelined multilingualism, while also acknowledging that research on biliteracy has often been theoretically disconnected from the expansive approach to literacies engaged by the New London Group. Drawing from translinguaging theory, which conceives of multilingual people as having “a unitary semiotic repertoire” (p. 555), García and Kleifgen (2020) called for a translinguaging approach to literacy for multilingual students which facilitates fluid and flexible use of their full linguistic repertoires in the classroom. Other scholars have taken up the call to integrate multilingualism and translinguaging with multiliteracies approaches. For example, Neville & Ibarra Johnson (2022) connect multiliteracies with translingualism and culturally sustaining pedagogies, conceptualizing their teacher education students’ literacies as including acts such as “their reading of a short story in English class; their grandmothers’ family recipes and the act of creating meals with them; their most recent Netflix binge; their use of multiple languages; their memories of gaining access to these languages” (p. 112). This list positions language as one of many semiotic resources (Canagarajah, 2013) that together paint a richer picture of multimodality in literacy.

These expansive definitions of literacy, which call upon schools and teachers to acknowledge and welcome racialized multilingual students’ actual home language and literacy practices into classroom spaces, starkly contrast with what scholars have critiqued as the

“unbearable Whiteness of literacy instruction” (Gangi, 2008) and the carceral logics embedded in urban early literacy classrooms (Beneke et al., 2022), which “[criminalize] young children along lines of race, disability, and language” (p. 1871). Despite the explicit inclusion of home languages in dual-language bilingual programs, researchers have critiqued the hegemonic whiteness that characterizes sanctioned language (and therefore literacy) practices in dual-language education (Flores, 2016), which often uphold strict language separation (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017) and thus do not reflect the ways that language is used in multilingual communities. Additionally, literacy curricula in Spanish dual-language programs are often translations of the English versions of the same programs and consequently do not reflect students’ racial and cultural identities and authentic language practices (Osorio, 2015). The importance of literacy practices that reflect students’ and families’ diverse identities and literacies becomes even more apparent as we enter another era of increased prescriptiveness around literacy curriculum (Durán & Hikida, 2022), characterized once again by attacks on the competence of teachers and teacher educators, particularly those who foreground sociocultural and social justice perspectives on literacy (Mosley Wetzel et al., 2020).

Given this need for transformative approaches to literacy, I frame literacy practices and pedagogies in this study as having the potential to be both critical and intergenerational. Critical literacy finds its roots in Paulo Freire’s (1970) popular education work in rural Brazil in the middle of the 20th century. Building from this work, Freire and Macedo (2005) articulated a conception of critical literacy in which the goals of education are conscientization and empowerment, through which students learn to see themselves as subjects rather than objects, and to read both the word and the world. In this context, reading the world means critically analyzing and contesting inequitable structures of power.

Vasquez et al. (2019) wrote about the diverse understandings of and orientations towards critical literacy that have emerged as educators and scholars take up these ideas in their own work. Particularly, critical literacy can be taken up “as a concept, a framework, or perspective for teaching and learning; a way of being in the classroom; and a stance or attitude toward literacy work” (Vasquez et al, 2019, p. 302). Vasquez et al. (2019) named key facets of critical literacy: that it incorporates students’ home knowledge as well as multimodal and multilingual practices, that students (and families) concerns are central, that texts are never positioned as neutral, that issues of power and inequity are central, and that students discover their agency to make change. Janks (2014) pushed beyond the textual critique and deconstruction characteristic of approaches to critical literacy to leverage the New London Group’s notion of redesign (New London Group, 1996), defining the redesign cycle as “an iterative process in which a design is deconstructed and then reconstructed” (Janks, 2014, p. 354). Through redesign practices, students both read the world and redesign it in ways that center justice.

While critical literacy pedagogies in classrooms often focus on connecting students outwards towards larger issues of social injustice (e.g., responding to climate change, fighting unjust legislation), critical literacy as a stance also connects to students’ identities (Kalantzis et al., 2016). Critical literacy pedagogies work to uplift students’ own home languages, interrogating hierarchies of language (Vasquez et al., 2019), and draw heavily on students’ connections to popular culture, or the “culture of the people” (Kalantzis et al., 2016, p. 182). While this often takes the form of new media that are central to students’ social worlds—for example, video games, graphic novels, memes—it also encompasses the popular cultural practices of families, expanding the range of texts, genres, and language practices that are considered valid in schools.

Vasquez et al. (2019) called for more research on critical literacy pedagogies with multilingual students. I contend that transnational literacies (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; Jiménez et al., 2009) and transnational texts offer a promising avenue for this work. Drawing on families' home literacy practices, educators can introduce texts and perspectives that are typically excluded from U.S. classrooms and use them to critically examine and redesign dominant narratives. In doing so, they create opportunities for intergenerational critical literacies that invite parents to bring their pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) into classroom learning.

Gadsden (2002) defined intergenerational literacy as “a specific strand of inquiry that focuses on the transmission of knowledge and behavior from one generation to the next” which impacts how “the patterns, beliefs, and learning that guide family practices in literacy” (p. 32) are passed down between generations. Exploring the intergenerational literacies of families of color and interracial families, Flores et al. (2020) described these as the “invisibilized, but generative, ways that families contribute to the linguistic and literate identities of their children in and out of schooling contexts” (p. 286-287). Intergenerational literacy is also bidirectional (Gadsden, 2002; Rusoja, 2022), a facet explored in depth by Flores et al. (2020), who conceived of intergenerational literacy through their case studies as dialogic, symbiotic, and reciprocal. Importantly, intergenerational learning and literacy extend beyond traditional conceptions of “nuclear families,” to be “inclusive of adults and children that share bonds of kinship across genetic relationships and generations as well as familial relationships that are built and nurtured as a result of nontraditional bonds, like that of adoption” (Flores et al., 2020, p. 288). Critical intergenerational literacies (Rusoja, 2022) are intergenerational literacy practices through which awareness of conditions of “power, oppression, and (in)justice” (p. 308) are developed, at times

leading to mobilization and action, as in Rusoja's (2022) study of intergenerational literacy practices in immigrant rights movements.

Conceptualizing Curriculum

Before connecting the above vision of critical, transnational, and intergenerational literacies to the process of curriculum redesign, I will first explore how I am conceptualizing curriculum in framing this study, drawing on the work of curriculum scholars. I will then briefly discuss why, given critiques of hegemonic whiteness in dual-language programs, I believe that curriculum is a key area to unsettle through practices of critical listening and co-design with families.

Curriculum scholars (e.g., Dillon, 2009; Young, 2014; Schwab, 1983) have proposed related but varying definitions of what a curriculum is, agreeing that there is no broad, shared definition in the field of curriculum studies and that individual definitions can be “divergent when not contradictory” (Dillon, 2009, p. 344). Young (2014) described curriculum as “a structure that constrains not only the activities of those involved – primarily teachers and students, but also those who design curricula or attempt to achieve certain goals with them” (Young, 2014, p. 7). These structures facilitate certain types of learning and limit others. Dillon (2009) proposed a series of curriculum questions, which he describes as the “things educators have to think and act about in doing curriculum” (Dillon, 2009, p. 345). This included:

- (1) Nature of curriculum—What is it?
 - (1a) Essence or substance—What, at bottom, is it?
 - (1b) Properties or character—What is it like?
- (2) Elements of curriculum—What are the things that compose it?
 - (2a) Teacher—Who?
 - (2b) Student—Whom?
 - (2c) Subject—What?
 - (2d) Milieu—Where and when?
 - (2e) Aim—Why? To what end?

- (2f) Activity—How?
 - (2g) Result—What comes of it? Who learns what?
 - (3) Practice of curriculum—How to think and act it?
 - (3a) Action—What to do?
 - (3b) Thought—How to think?
- (Dillon, 2009, p. 344)

Dillon (2009) highlighted that questions around subject matter, including “What knowledge is of most worth” (p. 346) and “Who should be taught what?” (p. 346) have tended to take center stage in curriculum discussions, but cannot be disconnected from the other questions listed above. Here, I will discuss curriculum redesign through the lens of knowledge (what is taught?) and result (for what purpose?), and then dig into questions around who is authorized to design curriculum and how. My purpose here is to explore how the proposed study might destabilize traditional notions around how curriculum is developed and what it is envisioned to include.

Eisner (1979) discussed three curricula of schooling: explicit, implicit, and null curricula. The explicit curriculum of schooling, comprising what is taught in coursework and how, rests on traditional assumptions about what knowledge (i.e., math, reading, science, etc.) is worth teaching in schools, how it should be taught, and what it should look like when it is learned. However, schools also teach an implicit curriculum, “the pervasive and ubiquitous set of expectations and rules that defines schooling as a cultural system that itself teaches important lessons” (Eisner, 1979, p. 106). Both the explicit curriculum and implicit curriculum can be directly connected to Flores’ (2016) conceptualization of hegemonic whiteness in dual-language spaces. Despite the inclusion of a language other than English, the explicit curriculum in dual-language schools tends to be roughly identical to the curriculum taught in English-medium classrooms, usually involving translations of the same commercial curriculum programs developed by private companies rather than by educators themselves. Similarly, the implicit

curriculum, rooted in cultural expectations of schooling, hew to the white middle-class norms of schooling in the U.S.. Finally, Eisner (1979) also recognized the role of the null curriculum—the knowledge and skills that schools neglect and therefore invisibilize and devalue.

In the case of dual-language schools, Latine families' actual cultural and languaging practices are generally excluded from classroom learning, comprising a null curriculum.

Scholars of culturally responsive (e.g., Gay, 1988) and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017) have long argued that curricula should center the knowledges and cultural practices of students of color, decentering whiteness as the norm in school spaces. Gay (1988) argued that “...curriculum writers need conceptually to understand the most feasible points in the curriculum development process in order to incorporate ethnically and culturally pluralistic content and perspectives” (p. 330). Kress (2000) discussed the need to shift away from curriculum as a tool for cultural reproduction in a static, monocultural society, towards an “education for instability” (p. 133); he goes on to conceptualize curriculum as a “design for the future” (p. 134) which destabilizes notions of what knowledge is sanctioned in educational institutions and what knowledge is considered less than. Thus, through centering the knowledge of nondominant families (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020), curriculum designers can design for transformative social futures where hegemonic whiteness is decentered and perhaps dismantled.

However, a large question remains: who can and should engage in this curriculum design/redesign work? In the context of the U.S., curriculum design is frequently outsourced to large, multinational, for-profit corporations who hire curriculum designers to create marketable products (Larson et al., 2010); these curriculum designers are unfamiliar with the social contexts, the teachers, and the students for whom they design their materials. It is no wonder, then, that they lack “necessary knowledge and skills to incorporate ethnic and cultural pluralism into the

core of the educational process” (Gay, 1988, p. 334).

Scholars like Giroux (1988) have argued that teachers must be central to this process. They must not be treated like technicians who deliver pre-packaged curriculum with fidelity, but rather as intellectuals who know their contexts and their students deeply. Marek et al., (2024) argue for the importance of “curriculum literacy”—teachers must be critical implementers and adapters of the curricula they are handed, in ways that foreground cultural responsiveness. Schwab (1983) recognized that curriculum must represent local knowledge and contexts, and that any curriculum design group must include teachers—as teachers are ultimately responsible for implementing that design. However, other scholars (e.g., Cioè-Peña, 2021b) have recognized that family voices are often excluded when teachers themselves are the sole determiners of what curriculum choices and pedagogical practices are deemed culturally responsive for students. Instead, non-dominant families themselves must also be offered a seat at the table (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020) when it comes to shifting what knowledge is valued and represented in schools.

This is particularly relevant for dual-language programs—which purport to represent the languages and cultures of Latine families, yet often rely on commercially produced, translated literacy curricula that lack meaningful connection to students’ and families’ lives and language practices. I argue that in order for dual-language programs to answer calls to critical consciousness and critical listening to families of color, both families and teachers must be involved in curriculum design. This study enacted a process of collaborative curriculum redesign as a way of expanding both what counts as valuable knowledge in dual-language classroom spaces, and who is authorized to make those decisions.

Curriculum Redesign as a Critical Literacy Practice

I conceptualized the process of collaborative curriculum redesign as a critical literacy practice itself, through which teachers and parents work together to read curriculum as a text and redesign it in ways that speak back to and redistribute power, disrupting hierarchies of knowledge. Vasquez et al. (2019) explained that, from a critical literacy perspective, the world itself and all of its aspects can be read as a text:

For instance, a classroom can be read as a text; even everyday objects like water bottles can be read as texts... Any issues and topics that capture learners' interests, based on their experiences, or artifacts with which they engage in the material world as they participate in communities around them can and should be used as text to build a curriculum that has significance in their lives. (p. 301)

Drawing on this expansive notion of what constitutes a text, I conceptualize the curriculum itself as a multimodal text, comprising the written curriculum materials, teacher plans and modifications, additional print and multimodal materials, as well as classroom interactions and pedagogical practices.

The New London Group (1996) introduced the notion of literacy/meaning making as Design, "in which we are both inheritors of patterns and conventions of meaning and at the same time active designers of meaning" (p. 73). They proposed three elements that constitute the design process: Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned. Applying this framework to curriculum redesign as a literacy practice, the Available Designs would be texts, discourses, and practices related to school literacies, and also those connected to home literacy and language practices, including texts that are multimodal, transnational, and connected to students' and families popular cultures. Parents and teachers bring these diverse available designs into contact

with each other as they engage in reshaping curriculum. This process in and of itself is generative: “Through their co-engagement in Designing, people transform their relationships with each other, and so transform themselves” (New London Group, 1996, p. 76) This redesign process constitutes what Kalantzis et al. (2016) describe as “acts of textual intervention and transformation” (p. 185).

Janks (2010) drew from the work of the New London Group as she positioned design and redesign as key to critical literacy. Through design/redesign, students go beyond critical reading to critical text creation, “reconstructing texts and practices in ways that are socially transformative” (Vasquez et al., 2019, p. 303) Janks (2014) described the redesign cycle as “an iterative process in which a design is deconstructed and then reconstructed. Because every reconstruction is also a new design, it, too, is available for deconstruction and redesign” (pp. 354-355). This conception of the redesign cycle aligns with the iterative processes at the core of the participatory research methodologies I utilized in this study, framing inquiry groups and co-design circles as participating in a shared process of reading the world as a text and collaboratively redesigning it.

The New London Group (1996) explained that, “as designers of meaning, we are designers of social futures” (p. 65). Notions of design embedded in critical multiliteracies thus compliment emerging visions of justice-centered design that position communities as experts and define design as a fundamentally human activity (Costanza-Chock, 2020). I believe that exploring possibilities of collaborative curriculum co-design between multilingual transnational parents and bilingual teachers can destabilize some of the normative ways that knowledge is conceptualized in schools, allowing participants to interrogate whose languages and literacies are

considered within curriculum, question how they are positioned as creators versus consumers of curriculum, and, through their redesign practices, open small windows into alternate futures.

Transnational Latine Parents as Critical Pedagogues

In conceptualizing the role of parents in this study, I explore how transnational parents of color act as critical pedagogues, fostering critical intergenerational learning that is often not recognized by schools. I draw first upon feminist scholarship that positions mothering as critical work (Gumbs et al., 2016), with the note that here and throughout, I use words like mothering, parent, and parenting expansively, recognizing that the labor of care transcends normative notions of nuclear families and gendered caregiving roles (Flores et al., 2020). I then explore the concept of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001), along with literature that calls attention to how transnational parents serve as language, translanguaging, and critical literacy pedagogues (Kwon, 2017; Nuñez & García-Mateus, 2021; Gonzales et al., 2023). Finally, I explore how scholars have described the transnational resources (Kwon, 2017) and transnational funds of knowledge (Kwon, 2022) that families draw from in their intergenerational teaching and learning practices.

Feminist scholars of color have called attention to how race and class complicate and have often been excluded from mainstream discourses about motherhood (Caballero et al., 2019; Collins, 1994). Women of color in the U.S. have had to fight for the right to mother in the face of white supremacists policies that have separated them from their children or denied them reproductive rights. In this context, asserting the right to mother Black and Brown children—and particularly those targeted by additional intersecting oppressions (White-Johnson, 2024)—is itself a revolutionary act (Gumbs et al., 2016). Given the assimilationist pressures that stem from white supremacy culture in the U.S., transnational parents engage in critical work when they

push back on these pressures—continuing to teach their languages and cultures, as well as navigational strategies and strategies for subtle and overt resistance to monoglossia and hegemonic whiteness (Gonzales et al., 2023).

As they engage in such work, families draw on varied pedagogical practices. Drawing on Delgado Bernal's conceptualization of pedagogies of the home (2001), Flores (2018) explored Latine parents' storytelling practices in a cross-generational writing workshop, noting how Latine parents' stories served to "create theories... for their daughters to draw upon in their everyday experiences while keeping them connected to the cultural, familial, and linguistic practices and resources of their homes and communities" (p. 343). Through their intergenerational teaching practices, these parents taught valuable lessons about resilience, strength, and survival.

Many researchers have called attention to the ways in which transnational parents serve as language pedagogues (e.g., Kwon, 2017; Nuñez, 2021) or engage in linguistic motherwork (Ek et al., 2013; Kaveh et al., 2025), setting family language policies and making decisions about how to foster home language use and bilingualism among their children. Nuñez and García-Mateus (2021) drew on pedagogies of border thinking (Anzaldúa, 1987; Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016) to describe Mexican mothers as critical border and translanguaging pedagogues, recognizing and using "ruptures of cultural and linguistic worlds" (p. 114) to resist cultural and linguistic oppression and envision bilingual futures for their children, as well as to sustain home language and cultural practices. Gonzales et al. (2023) built on Nuñez and García-Mateus' (2021) notion of Mexican mothers as critical translanguaging pedagogues to conceptualize transnational Latina mothers as critical *literacy* pedagogues in a family storytelling workshop, noting how the mothers used their own critical literacy practices as they read, wrote,

and redesigned the workshop space. In doing so, they provided counternarratives of resilience for their children, resisted deficit discourses around bilingualism and disability, and centered their values and cultural definitions of storytelling in the workshop.

Finally, scholars have conceptualized processes of migration and border crossing themselves as a key source of knowledge and perspective for transnational families, seeing immigrant children and their families as “cosmopolitan intellectuals” (Campano & Ghiso, 2011), and exploring how families draw on transnational strategies (Kwon, 2017), transnational funds of knowledge (Kwon, 2022), and transnational literacy practices (de la Piedra, 2011) as they engage cultural, linguistic, and community resources that transcend borders. Jimenez (2020) similarly theorized migration capital—“knowledges, sensibilities, and skills cultivated through the array of migration/immigration experiences to the United States or its borderlands” (p. 5)—as a resource that students and teachers drew upon as they critically read their world and composed counterstories to the deficit narratives that dominate public discourse about Latine communities.

Building from these varied bodies of literature, I theorized transnational Latine parents as critical pedagogues who can use their linguistic, cultural, transnational, and literacy knowledge to push back on deficit narratives, resist assimilationist pressures, and co-construct counterstories with their children. Given the rich intergenerational learning that happens in homes and communities (e.g., Nuñez & García-Mateus, 2021) and in out-of-school spaces (e.g., Flores, 2018; Gonzales et al., 2023), it is essential that we ask questions about how these practices can be welcomed into classroom spaces. For classroom practice itself to change, teachers themselves must play a key role, engaging critical consciousness to challenge the hierarchies of knowledge that position both teachers and parents in disempowering ways, seeing teachers as neutral

technicians who implement curriculum with mindless fidelity, and parents as passive and disconnected consumers of their children's schooling.

Bilingual Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

While this study focused on bringing family and home knowledge into classroom spaces through envisioning transnational parents as pedagogues, teachers are key participants in this collaboration. Teachers are central decision makers in shaping curricular implementation and classroom culture (Schwab, 1983) and must be participants in co-design processes with families if co-design is to shift classroom-based pedagogy. In conceptualizing the role of teachers in collaborative curriculum co-design, I drew upon Giroux's (1988) formulation of teachers as transformative intellectuals, as well as the concepts of inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015), raciolinguicized subjectivities (Daniels & Varghese, 2020), and critical consciousness in dual-language bilingual education (Palmer et al., 2019). By bringing these theories together, I propose a vision of bilingual teachers as reflective intellectuals who engage in meaningful inquiry into their own practice, from a stance that also acknowledges the importance of their racialized, linguicized identities and their developing critical consciousness.

Giroux (1988), in proposing the concept of teachers as transformative intellectuals, responded to trends in U.S. public education towards the deskilling and disempowerment of teachers, who then are assigned "the status of high-level technicians carrying out dictates and objectives decided by experts far removed from the everyday realities of classroom life" (p. 121). Through this logic, curriculum is developed by outside experts who "know best," despite knowing nothing at all about the identities and lives of the students in the teacher's classroom. This is possible because teaching and learning are considered neutral, technical processes that can be optimized independent of the social contexts of schooling. Teachers then are tasked with

“managing and implementing curricular programs rather than developing or critically appropriating curricula to fit specific pedagogical concerns” (p. 122). This process reaches its most exaggerated form in the marketing of “teacher-proof” curricula—packaged curricular programs, usually highly scripted and prescribed, that promise results regardless of the training and competence of the teachers who implement them.

To counter these trends, Giroux (1988) defined the role of teachers as that of transformative intellectuals. He argued that teaching is inherently intellectual labor, and that teachers, rather than technicians, can be “intellectuals who combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens” (p. 122). When teachers are conceived of as intellectuals, engaged constantly in the work of reflective practice, this fundamentally undermines the “technocratic and instrumental ideologies... that [separate] the conceptualization, planning and design of curricula from the processes of implementation and execution” (p. 126). In other words, teachers—who know their students and their contexts deeply, who engage in reflective inquiry and practice—must be key players in designing and adapting curriculum. In doing so, Giroux argues, transformative intellectuals amplify the voice and agency of students, learn deeply about their communities and identities, and root classroom pedagogy in “the particularity of [students’] diverse problems, hopes, and dreams” (p. 128).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2015) concept of “inquiry as stance” offers a powerful vision of *how* teachers may go about conducting this intellectual, critical, and reflective work. Through this lens, teachers are “deliberative intellectuals who constantly theorize practice as part of practice itself” (p. 2). As a “counterhegemonic notion” (p. 3), inquiry as stance questions and subverts assumptions about what counts as knowledge and who is authorized to create knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015). It offers a “grounded theory of action that positions

the role of practitioners and practitioner knowledge as central to the goal of transforming teaching, learning, leading, and schooling” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015, p. 119). In practice, practitioner inquiry empowers practitioners as researchers, emphasizing the collective nature of inquiry. Teachers engage in inquiry through inquiry groups and communities, with other teachers and sometimes with students, families, and communities; through this process they break down binaries between research and practice, and between theory and action (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015).

While the concept of inquiry as stance focuses on teachers’ shared identities as practitioners, most literature about this framework does not deeply explore teachers’ identities and subjectivities, particularly at the intersection of race and language. Here, I argue that a fundamental piece of reflective inquiry and practice for teachers is a deep interrogation into their complex, hybrid identities (Haddix, 2015) and raciolinguicized subjectivities (Daniels & Varghese, 2020). Drawing on poststructuralist concepts of subjectivity as a self “in constant flux and engaged in a power-laden dialectic with others and the world” (p. 58), Daniels and Varghese (2020) argued that teachers’ subjectivity is central in how and what they teach. Engaging Flores & Rosa’s (2015) reconceptualization of raciolinguistics as the interdependent way that race and language shape how people are heard, Daniels and Varghese (2020) asserted that marginalization of the role of raciolinguicized subjectivity leads to a recentering of whiteness in teacher education. While the orientation of inquiry as stance pushes back on the same technocratic notions of neutral best practices that Daniels and Varghese contest, I argue that centering teachers’ practitioner identities without also exploring their raciolinguicized subjectivities reinscribes whiteness as normative within teacher inquiry.

In addition to examining their raciolinguicized subjectivities, bilingual teachers must develop critical consciousness, which has been proposed as the fourth pillar of dual-language bilingual education (Palmer et al., 2019) and identified as essential for addressing the inequities that persist within dual-language programs (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). Scholars have argued that critical consciousness can be fostered through pre-service experiences that promote ideological clarity (Alfaro, 2019) and encourage teachers to challenge majoritarian narratives about communities of color (Fránquiz et al., 2011). Teacher inquiry likewise creates opportunities for this kind of critical reflection and growth.

Critical listening is an integral component of critical consciousness, and bilingual teachers, who often engage more deeply in conversation and relationship building with multilingual families than monolingual teachers (Hopkins & Schutz, 2019), are well-positioned to lead in this area. Thus bilingual teachers who engage in reflective inquiry from the perspective of their developing critical consciousness can seek to subvert traditional power relations in schools, deeply and critically listen to students and families, and embrace the discomfort that comes with this complex process.

Theorizing Collaboration through Collective Inquiry and Co-design

Finally, I conceptualize collaboration through the lens of methodological literature on practitioner inquiry and co-design. I draw from both of these methodological traditions in theorizing collaboration between teachers, parents, and researchers. Research on collaboration between teachers and parents is unfortunately sparse (Hong, 2019). Studies emphasize the importance of intentional work towards equitable collaboration; in their Dual Capacity-Building Framework, Mapp and Kuttner (2013) emphasized that both educators and parents must have opportunities to develop capacity for collaboration for such work to be successful. One example

of this is the LSNA Parent Mentors program documented by Hong (2011), through which both parents and teachers received training on collaboration, thus embodying the idea of building dual capacity (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

One way for teachers to build capacity towards such partnerships is through inquiry. For example, Schultz et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of teachers' critical reflections on their own and their schools' family engagement practices, particularly with multilingual families. When practitioner inquiry is conceived of as a collective project (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015), teachers may partner with university researchers, and also potentially with families and community members. Indeed, key to Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2015) vision of practitioner inquiry is that it is inherently collective, conducted through practitioner inquiry communities, which might be "pairs, groups within or across schools, face-to-face or virtual networks, graduate classes, teacher education cohorts, school-community partnership groups, and many other varieties of educational collaboratives" (pp. 139-140) and which might also involve other community stakeholders.

While practitioner inquiry emphasizes the importance of collaborative work, perspectives from participatory design research (PDR) (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016) provide specific theoretical framing around navigating collaboration, specifically how "(a) critical historicity, (b) power, and (c) relational dynamics shape processes of partnering and the possible forms of learning that emerge in and through them" (p. 174). Importantly, from a research perspective, PDR extends the "domain of the 'researched'" to all participants in design projects, including the researchers themselves, "creating potentially new openings for reciprocity, accountability, and the de-settling of normative hierarchies of power" (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016, p. 174). Similar to practitioner inquiry, an essential goal of this work is to unsettle traditional conceptions of how knowledge is

created and who participates in design processes. This entails constant analysis and reanalysis of power dynamics within design circles, and changes are made to the circles' structure and composition to shift away from traditional power dynamics when necessary (Ishimaru & Banks, 2019).

Ishimaru et al. (2018) engaged in PDR with racially and linguistically minoritized families to develop new visions of educational justice in schools. They proposed community design circles as a mode of collaboration—a “methodological evolution aimed at reclaiming the central agentic role of families and communities of color in transforming educational research and practice” (Ishimaru et al., 2018, p. 38). They defined co-design as a “method of education research that brings together diverse stakeholders in order to collectively and iteratively identify issues or problems of practice and design solutions” (Ishimaru et al., 2018, p. 43).

Solidarity-driven co-design, then, is meant to root in families and communities' own conceptualizations of well-being and justice and to uproot hierarchical research dynamics. The solidarity-driven co-design process goes through four iterative stages: “a) relationship building & theorizing; b) designing/developing tools to support new relationships and theories of change; c) implementing our theories and practices; and d) analyzing and **reflecting** on our process for continued learning and innovation” (Ishimaru et al. 2018, p. 43). Researchers engage as full participants in the co-design process.

While Ishimaru's work has primarily examined co-design relationships between researchers and families, others (Philip et al., 2016; Philip et al., 2022) have theorized teacher solidarity co-design as an approach through which researchers and teachers—sometimes alongside other stakeholders—can collaborate to enhance teacher agency, resist the deprofessionalization of teaching, and position teachers as knowledge producers. This

framework recognizes teachers as “multiply positioned both as a group that is excluded from official knowledge production by researchers, administrators, and policy makers and as members of a profession that also functions to further social reproduction” (Philip et al., 2022, p. 57). Recognizing the complexity of this role, Philip et al. (2022) emphasized that teacher solidarity co-design should never “force a false choice between the marginalized (or privileged) histories and experiences of students and teachers” (p. 57). As a result, collaboration between researchers and teachers necessarily entails some degree of engagement with students, families, and communities.

In conceptualizing collaboration among families, teachers, and myself as a researcher, I draw on both family-centered co-design scholarship and teacher solidarity co-design. In particular, I build on participatory design research’s (PDR) emphasis on critical historicity and its recognition that collaborators are embedded within historical systems of power that shape their positions, relationships, and opportunities for participation. This perspective requires ongoing attention to relationality and power, with both continually examined and renegotiated throughout the co-design process (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016).

Bringing Frameworks Together

In the sections above, I have conceptualized literacy, curriculum, parents, teachers, and collaboration in ways that I hope destabilize traditional notions about what are considered valid literacy practices in school and who is authorized to see themselves as a knowledge holder, a curriculum designer, or a researcher. I’ve conceptualized literacy as critical, transnational, and intergenerational, and have positioned curriculum redesign as itself a critical literacy practice, through which parents and teachers might collaborate to read their classroom curriculum as a text and redesign it in ways that center families’ funds of knowledge (González et al., 2006) and

decenter hegemonic whiteness (Flores, 2016). I've conceptualized transnational Latine parents as critical pedagogues, and bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals who can draw upon their developing critical consciousness to engage in inquiry and shift their practices. I've also explored methodological literature that lays out possibilities for working in solidarity, collaboration, and co-design with nondominant parents (Ishimaru et al. 2018). Together, these frameworks make the case for deepening and transforming concepts of critical listening in dual-language programs (Palmer et al., 2019) to include critical collaboration and co-design between teachers and families. Through these lenses, teachers come to recognize parents as fellow pedagogues, just as I, as a researcher, come to recognize both teachers and parents as partners in processes of inquiry and knowledge creation.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative, participatory dissertation study took place in two phases. The first phase employed a practitioner inquiry methodology (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015); during this phase, six bilingual teachers, from five dual-language schools across four districts, participated in a set of inquiry sessions. During these sessions, they explored possibilities for critical listening and family engagement in their contexts; evaluated their current literacy curriculum; and helped design and refine a plan for engaging families in collaborative curriculum co-design. Five of those teachers went on to participate in phase two of the project, which employed the methodology of solidarity-driven co-design (Ishimaru et al. 2018). In phase two, these five teachers recruited and conducted co-design circles with small groups of Latine families from their classrooms, redesigning and implementing a literacy unit as a result. Several questions guided this study:

- RQ1: How does teacher inquiry and curriculum co-design reshape bilingual teachers' and Latine families' understandings of family engagement?
- RQ2: How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?
- RQ3: What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?
- RQ4: How can co-design support culturally sustaining and intergenerational approaches to dual-language literacy curriculum and instruction?

Research Design

I framed this dissertation as a participatory study. Participatory research approaches seek to transform traditional researcher-participant relationships by positioning all participants as generators of knowledge. In addition, the knowledge produced through participatory research is intended not only to deepen understanding but also to support meaningful transformation within the local contexts in which the research is conducted (de Schutter & Yopo, 1981).

The conceptual framework of my study positions transnational parents as critical pedagogues whose curricular insights are needed to realize the promise of dual-language programs. While family knowledge is the focus of the curricular redesign, and therefore families are focal participants, teachers' collaboration and inquiry is essential to bring this knowledge into classroom practice. Thus I also conceptualize bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals engaged in reflective practice. This framework necessitates a participatory research approach, as it conceives of both teachers and parents as collaborative actors in exploring solutions to a concrete problem (the lack of meaningful connections between literacy curriculum used in dual-language programs and students' lived home languages and cultures). This collaborative process generated local knowledge which was fed back into the setting, as well as qualitative insights connected to larger social and historical structures which might be applied by other researchers and practitioners to other settings (Herr & Anderson, 2014).

The study intentionally combined two distinct but related strands of participatory research: practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2015) and solidarity-driven co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018). Practitioner inquiry in education is research where practitioners (classroom teachers, teacher educators, community organizers, college professors, etc.) do reflective research into their own practice, with the goals of improving practice and taking action

towards local and social change (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2015) defined several features that are central to practitioner inquiry, including that practitioners are positioned as researchers, that professional contexts are used as the sites of study, that collaboration is central, that divisions between inquiry and practice are blurred, and that knowledge is generated that both informs practice but also reaches a wider community. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (2015) conceive of practitioner inquiry as inherently collective, conducted through practitioner inquiry communities, which can include researchers and other stakeholders.

The second phase of the project extended practitioner inquiry by employing solidarity driven co-design (Ishimaru et al. 2018) as a methodology that focuses on community collaboration towards concrete change. Emerging from the field of participatory design research (Bang & Vossoughi 2016), co-design circles are a methodological tool through which diverse groups of stakeholders are brought together to engage in iterative phases of co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018). Co-design circles begin with relationship building and theorizing, then transition to design meetings where a process or product is co-designed. Solidarity driven co-design is characterized by a continual troubling of hierarchies and a willingness to position all participants in the co-design circles, including researchers, as equal co-constructors of knowledge within the design process—adding to and extending the framework of practitioner research towards leveling power relationships. Co-design as a process specifically takes into account the identities, funds of knowledge, and cultures of participants (Iriarte et al., 2023; Belgrave et al., 2022), and the ways that history and context shape the activity (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016)

Context

This study took place in a large metropolitan area in the Pacific Northwest. Although the region has not historically been home to a large Latine population, it is characterized by considerable linguistic diversity and has attracted residents from a wide range of national backgrounds, in part due to the concentration of technology companies in the city and its surrounding suburbs (Varghese et al., 2021). At the same time, the agricultural communities surrounding the metropolitan area have long been home to larger Latine populations.

The state itself has pushed over the last decade to expand dual-language education opportunities, primarily through a neoliberal approach that emphasizes the economic value of bilingualism to native English speakers (Varghese et al., 2021). Teacher participants in this study were all educated through an elementary bilingual teacher training program that was part of a larger, racial and linguistic justice-focused elementary teacher education program at a large public university. The bilingual teacher training program began in 2018, partially in response to the growing number of local dual-language programs and the need for teachers to staff new programs. The program has trained dual-language teachers who work in Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, and Vietnamese programs.

Spanish-speaking graduates of this program work in dual-language schools both within and outside of the metropolitan area that houses the university, ranging from urban to suburban districts or small town environments, from affluent schools to Title 1 schools. These dual-language programs vary tremendously in terms of their demographics, structures, and the socioeconomic status of the Latine families who attend the schools. Please see Appendix B for descriptions of the five schools at which teacher participants in this study were located.

Recruitment of Teacher Participants

In spring of 2024, I recruited teacher participants through reaching out to the graduates of the university's bilingual teacher training program. I was fortunate to have access to this network because I had worked for several years as a coach and instructor in the program (from 2018-2023); I also co-facilitated the program's bilingual induction program for two years (2022-2024), and continued to work with several of its graduates in a coaching capacity through a separate grant-funded professional development program. These lasting connections and robust relationships greatly facilitated teacher participant recruitment.

I created a recruitment flyer and sign-up form, which I distributed to graduates from the first five cohorts of the bilingual teacher training program (cohorts that began the 12-month program between fall 2018 and fall 2022). At the same time, I engaged in in-person recruitment conversations with several potential participants, including Ximena, Jessica, Renata, and Marina. I interacted regularly with Ximena because she taught at my children's school. Jessica was participating in the grant-funded professional development program that I worked with, and Renata and Marina—members of the sixth cohort, which began in fall 2023—had previously participated in research with me.

The recruitment form yielded 11 responses, not including Marina and Ximena, who confirmed their interest directly but did not complete the form. After excluding three respondents who were not currently teaching in dual-language programs, I engaged in purposive selection (Creswell, 2013), prioritizing teachers based on their enthusiasm for the project and my familiarity with their teaching contexts. I intentionally selected teachers with whom I had established relationships and/or deep knowledge of their schools and communities.

Among the six teachers who ultimately participated in Phase 1 of the study, I had

supervised or coached four during their student teaching experiences (Carmen, Ximena, Jessica, and Francisca). Two participants (Carmen and Ximena) taught at my children's school, while two others (Renata and Marina) had participated in prior research with me and had personal relationships with me dating back to our children's preschool years. I believed these longstanding and multifaceted relationships would foster the trust necessary to engage in the challenging and relational work of participatory research. During intake interviews, I explained the project in detail and reviewed the teacher participant consent form (Appendix E).

Teacher Participants

The six teacher participants all identified as Latina, but reflected considerable diversity in their national origins, migration histories, linguistic repertoires, and teaching experiences. In the following sections, I briefly describe each teacher participant.

Francisca

Francisca was in her 6th year of teaching when she participated in this project. She taught kindergarten at Vista del Valle, an affluent urban public language immersion school with a 90:10 program. Before coming to the U.S., she worked as an agricultural engineer in Colombia, with a masters in Geographical Information Systems. She worked for the government during a time in which drug trafficking-related violence in Colombia was on the rise; she and her husband ultimately chose to immigrate to the U.S. to keep themselves safe from that violence. Her first daughter had already been born when she moved to the U.S., so she initially found herself isolated in a stay-at-home mother role, particularly since she was not confident about communicating in English.

She went on to have a second daughter, and her experience raising two

bilingual/bicultural children in the U.S. public school system informed her decision to ultimately change careers and pursue her Masters in Teaching. As a mother, she sometimes felt othered and sidelined because of her linguistic, cultural, and racial identity. As a teacher, she expressed feeling very connected to other immigrant families who might not understand the context of U.S. public schools.

Ximena

Ximena was in her 5th year of teaching during the project. She taught fourth grade at Lakeshore Elementary, a suburban Title 1 two-way dual-language school with an 80:20 model. Ximena was raised in a small town in the Yakima Valley of Washington State; both of her parents are from the state of Guerrero, Mexico, and she was raised in a bilingual home but attended English-medium schools. She was the only participant in the program who did not have children, but her experiences seeing her parents' barriers to family involvement during her own schooling motivated her to think more deeply about how to engage Spanish-speaking families in schools.

Ximena completed her Masters in Teaching directly after graduating from her undergraduate program at the same institution. During the year of this study, she also began a doctorate in educational leadership, also at the same institution. Participation in this project shaped her research directions in her own program, as she became interested in pursuing co-design at the district level.

Carmen

Carmen was in her third year of teaching at the time of the study. She taught fifth grade at Lakeshore Elementary. Originally from Mexico, Carmen immigrated to the United States as an

adult. Before entering the field of education, she earned both undergraduate and master's degrees in business administration. Like Francisca, she became a stay-at-home mother after the birth of her son and navigated the experience of raising a bilingual and bicultural child in English-medium schools within the same district where she now teaches.

Carmen described her son's schooling experiences as a significant factor in her decision to become a teacher. She spoke at length about the cultural disconnection her family experienced, noting that her son had no Latine teachers during his elementary school years and that there were few opportunities for families to communicate with teachers about their language, culture, and experiences. These experiences inspired her to pursue a career in education.

When her son was eight years old, Carmen decided to return to the workforce. She initially worked remotely on a grant-funded domestic violence research project with a team from the University of Michigan before enrolling in a Master in Teaching program. She entered the profession determined to become the kind of teacher she wished her son had encountered in elementary school: a bilingual teacher of color who could build meaningful connections with Latine students and families.

Jessica

Jessica was in her second year of teaching at the time of the study. She taught second grade at Jefferson Elementary, a Title I school with a 90:10 dual-language program located in a small town just outside the metropolitan area where the other participating teachers worked.

Jessica was raised in Canada by parents who had immigrated as refugees from El Salvador. When she and her sister were in kindergarten and third grade, respectively, their mother was advised to stop speaking Spanish at home and instead practice English with them so

they would acquire English more quickly. Within a few years, both sisters had stopped speaking Spanish altogether. Jessica later relearned Spanish as an adult, a process that was supported in part through her relationships with her husband's Mexican family.

Ironically, although she was discouraged from maintaining her home language, Jessica attended a French immersion school with strict French-only language policies. She recalled these policies as a source of anxiety and shame, yet they ultimately resulted in her becoming bilingual in English and French. Her experiences with language loss and the devaluation of Spanish played a significant role in her decision to become a bilingual teacher.

At the time of the study, Jessica was also raising two daughters, both of whom attended Jefferson Elementary. Her younger daughter was enrolled in the dual-language program and was a student in Jessica's partner teacher's second-grade classroom. As a result, Jessica participated in the school community not only as a teacher, but also as the parent of a child in the dual-language program.

Renata

Like Jessica, Renata was also a parent at the school at which she worked. She had two children, one of whom was a third grader at the time of the study at Franklin International in the Spanish track; the other had completed his K-5 education at Franklin and was in middle school. Because of this positionality, Renata had strong personal relationships with many of the Spanish speaking parents at her school, some going back years and rooted in shared parenting and community experiences.

At the time of the study, Renata was a first-year kindergarten teacher at Franklin, an affluent urban dual-language school. She taught on the Spanish side in a 50:50 program where students changed languages and therefore teachers at the midpoint of the day.

Renata immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico as an adult. In Mexico, she studied the teaching of English as a Foreign Language and worked as an English and German teacher with adults in a university setting. She met her husband, a man from the U.S. who was working in an international school in Mexico, and together they moved to the U.S.. Once she moved and had her two children, she was a stay-at-home mom until her daughter was around four years old; she engaged in volunteer and community work throughout this time. When her younger child entered school, she began working as an Instructional Assistant (IA) in the multilingual learner program in the same district where she later worked as a teacher. She entered the Masters in Teaching program the same year it expanded to offer a pathway for working IAs.

Marina

Marina was a first-year kindergarten teacher at Linden, an urban Title 1 school, at the time of the study. Marina immigrated to the U.S. as an adult because of her husband's job, and initially started out as a stay-at-home mom on a dependent visa. In Mexico, she had earned a Bachelors in Oceanography, so her transition to the field of education was unexpected. One day when playing with her son, another mother asked if she'd like to work at her Spanish immersion cooperative preschool. She began teaching at that preschool, and then when her two children were older, she began working as an IA in the multilingual department at Linden International. Like Renata, Marina participated in the first cohort of full-time IAs to complete the elementary teacher certification program.

While it was Marina's first year as a classroom teacher at Linden—teaching on the Spanish side of a 50:50 program where students switch classrooms and languages mid-day—it was her fifth year working at the school, and she had a great deal of familiarity with the school community, parents, and other teachers, through her work in the multilingual department.

Table 1*Teacher Participants*

Pseudonym	Background	Bilingual teacher training program cohort/Years teaching experience	School/District	Grade Level	Children
Francisca	Immigrated from Colombia as an adult	Cohort 1; 6th year teacher	Vista del Valle (suburban/affluent)	K	Two daughters, college aged
Ximena	Raised in the Yakima Valley of Washington State; both parents from Guerrero, Mexico	Cohort 2; 5th year teacher	Lakeshore (suburban/Title 1)	4th	None
Carmen	Immigrated from Mexico as an adult	Cohort 4; 3rd year teacher	Lakeshore (suburban/Title 1)	5th	One son, high school aged
Jessica	Raised in Canada; her parents were refugees from El Salvador	Cohort 5; 2nd year teacher	Jefferson (small town/Title 1)	2nd	Two daughters, elementary aged
Renata	Immigrated from Mexico as an adult	Cohort 6; first year teacher	Franklin International (urban/affluent)	K	One son, middle school aged; one daughter, elementary aged
Marina	Immigrated from Mexico as an adult	Cohort 6; first year teacher	Linden International (urban/Title 1)	K	One son, high school aged; one son, middle school aged

Recruitment of Parent Participants

During the fourth teacher inquiry session, all the participating teachers brainstormed and made lists of families in their classrooms who might be interested in the project. The only criteria was that parent participants should be Latine-identified and native or heritage speakers of Spanish. The five teachers who chose to participate in Phase 2 of the project met with me individually to plan their circles, and in these meetings we discussed plans for how to recruit parents to participate in the project. The majority of the teachers (Ximena, Carmen, Marina, and Renata) chose to reach out to individual parents to ask them to participate. They made choices about whom to reach out to based on their personal relationships with the families in their classrooms, and they used an array of methods to contact parents, from the ParentSquare district messaging system to WhatsApp to individual text messages. They then planned their co-design sessions around parents' availability. Jessica took up a different strategy because she had so many Latine families in her class, and because her own schedule was complicated. She set the dates and times for the meetings, and then invited all the Spanish-speaking families in her class to participate, ultimately getting five parent volunteers.

I also provided teachers with an electronic and printed copy of a parent recruitment flier and the parent consent form (Appendix E). Some teachers emailed or texted these to parents; others chose to send these home as paper copies with the children of the parents they were recruiting. The flyers advertised that parents would receive a \$50 gift card as a thank you for their participation; these gift cards were primarily funded through a doctoral dissertation research award I received from my university.

Additionally, both Ximena and Jessica requested that the paraeducators with whom they worked closely participate in the co-design circles. Jessica also invited her grade-level teaching

partner, with whom she engaged in extensive co-planning. I welcomed these additions, as co-design circles are typically designed to include multiple stakeholders and perspectives (Ishimaru et al., 2018).

Project Timeline

This study took place across two phases: the teacher inquiry phase (Phase 1) and the co-design phase (Phase 2). Phase 1 of the project began in spring of 2024, when my university IRB application was approved and I recruited the six teachers who would participate in the teacher inquiry group. Over the summer of 2024, I completed intake interviews and initial site visits with each teacher; during the site visits, I helped with classroom set up and got to know more about their school contexts and literacy instruction practices. Beginning in September of 2024 and concluding in January of 2025, I completed 5 teacher inquiry sessions with the inquiry group. Some of these sessions were conducted multiple times, to accommodate teachers' scheduling conflicts and meet the need for make-up sessions. I then conducted a mid-year interview with each of the six teachers, during which I determined which teachers were choosing to participate in Phase 2 of the project.

Concurrently, I submitted applications to the four school districts that participating teachers worked in, to seek approval to conduct co-design circles with parents at the school sites. Three of the school districts approved the project, and at these school sites, teachers were able to recruit parents using school-based communication and in some cases run the co-design circles using school facilities. One of the school districts, where both Renata and Marina worked, was not reviewing new research applications for the 2024-2025 school year. In this case, these two teachers conducted the co-design circles as a community-based extension of the teacher inquiry

circles, recruiting family participants through personal communication and running the circles either over zoom or in a community-based location.

Five of the six teachers (Renata, Marina, Carmen, Jessica, and Ximena) chose to participate in Phase 2 of the project, which took place in Spring of 2025. These five teachers each met with me one-on-one for two initial co-planning meetings, during which we used a co-design circle planning document (Appendix D) to identify their apertura (Ishimaru et al., 2023) or problem of practice, make plans for parent recruitment, discuss format and logistics of the co-design circles, and sketch out co-design activities. Each teacher then co-facilitated three co-design circles with me, either in person or over zoom. I met one-on-one with each teacher after their second co-design circle to create or finalize documents based on parent input that we could share at the third co-design circle for an additional round of parent feedback. After the third co-design circle, I met with each teacher for a final co-planning session to finalize the unit. I then kept in touch with teachers as they taught the redesigned units, collecting artifacts and in some cases participating in the end of unit celebration.

After each set of co-design circles concluded I reached out to parents from the co-design circles to ask who would like to be interviewed. I conducted these parent interviews concurrent with the co-designed units being taught. After the end of the school year, I conducted a final interview with each teacher who had participated in Phase 2 of the project.

Table 2

Project Timeline

Time Period and Activities		Data Collected
Spring 2024 (Phase 1)	- Proposal finalized and approved by committee - IRB approved - Teacher inquiry group	

	recruited	
Summer 2024-Fall 2024 (Phase 1)	- Teacher intake interviews - Initial site visits	- Video recordings/transcripts of teacher interviews - Site visit memos
Fall 2024 - Winter 2024/5 (Phase 1)	- Five teacher inquiry group meetings - Mid-year interviews with each teacher - District/school approval sought for the co-design phase - Initial themes brought to the teacher inquiry group for member checking	- Video recordings/transcripts of each inquiry session - Video recordings/transcripts of teacher interviews - Collection of artifacts generated through the inquiry sessions (e.g., teacher writing, notes on slides, planning documents) - Member checking documents
Early Spring 2025 (Phase 2)	- Teachers participating in Phase 2 recruited parents for co-design circles, with my support - Parent participants filled out consent forms - Pre-circle co-planning meetings conducted with each Phase 2 teacher participant	- Video recordings/transcripts of co-planning meetings - Co-planning notes documents
Mid to Late Spring 2025 (Phase 2)	- Teachers conducted three co-design circles with parents with my support and co-facilitation (Each teacher conducted their own set of circles at their own site) - Teachers participated in two additional co-planning meetings with me, one during and one after the co-design circles - Teachers implemented the re-designed units - Parent interviews conducted	- Video recording/transcripts of co-design circles - Video recordings/transcripts of co-planning meetings - Field notes and artifact collection from curriculum redesign process - Video recordings/transcripts of parent interviews
Summer 2025 (Phase 2)	- Final teacher interviews conducted	- Video recordings/transcripts of final teacher interviews

Teacher Inquiry Group Meetings

The teacher inquiry group sessions took place over Zoom, and were 1.5 hours long each. These inquiry sessions were focused specifically on building capacity for collaboration and co-design with Latine families; through them, teachers piloted changes to their practice around family engagement. In these inquiry group meetings, teachers explored their current stances towards family engagement and their family engagement practices; reviewed visions for humanizing family engagement and working in solidarity with families (e.g., Gallo, 2017; Zeichner et al., 2016); discussed the powerful home literacy practices of Latine families (e.g., Nuñez, 2019) and how they might intersect with their literacy curricula, and learned about co-design (Ishimaru et al., 2018). Teachers were asked to set and check in about short term goals for family engagement, to identify aperturas (Ishimaru et al., 2023) in their literacy curricula for family knowledge and culture, and to pose and respond to each others' problems of practice.

Given concerns voiced in the research literature (e.g., Ishimaru et al., 2015) about teachers' capacity to engage equitably with parents in co-design, given calls for building dual-capacity (Mapp & Kuttner 2013), and given to my own positionality as an outsider at the majority of the school sites, I chose to begin with teacher inquiry in order to lay a stronger foundation to engage in co-design with families.

Table 3

Teacher Inquiry Sessions

Inquiry Session Number	Dates/Participants	Session Theme	Teacher Work
1	9/25 (All)	Reconceptualizing Family	- Prompt: What is family engagement, why is it

		Engagement	important? - Prompt: Any new thoughts, ideas, or questions about family engagement after this discussion?
2	10/17 (Francisca, Carmen) 10/30 (Jessica, Ximena, Marina) 11/6 (Renata)	Latine Home Literacies	- Introduction/Context Slides - Current and Ongoing Challenges with Family Engagement/Goals or Strategies to Try - Short-Term Goal Setting - Latine Home Literacies – In Our Experience!
3	11/13 (Marina, Renata, and Jessica) 11/20 (Ximena, Carmen) 12/5 (Francisca)	Identifying Openings for Infusing Home Knowledge and Culture into Literacy Instruction	- Short Term Goal Check-in - Short Term Goal Setting - Listing Units/structures/openings in Literacy Curriculum for Home Knowledge
4	12/11 (Marina, Renata, Ximena, Carmen, Francisca) 1/27 (Jessica)	Introduction to Co-Design	- Short Term Goal Check-in - Short Term Goal Setting - Listing Families to Invite for Co-Design Circles - Member Checking of Initial Themes
5	1/29 (Marina, Renata, Ximena, Carmen, Francisca)	Problems of Practice	- Short Term Goal Check-in - Sharing/giving Feedback on Problems of Practice - Member Checking of Initial Themes

Co-Design Circles

Each co-design circle centered around an apertura, or problem of practice, identified by the participating teacher. Three of the teachers (Carmen, Ximena, Jessica) had an existing unit that they wanted to focus the redesign process on, whereas two teachers (Renata and Marina) created units from scratch with parent participation.

Carmen centered her co-design circles on a family recipes project that she had taught the previous year using materials she had designed herself. However, the unit had not unfolded as she had hoped. Rather than engaging family members in researching a meaningful family recipe, many students had searched for recipes online and used Google Translate to translate them into Spanish. As a result, Carmen entered the co-design process with the goal of redesigning the unit to foster deeper family engagement and stronger connections to family history, culture, and language. Three parents—two Mexican/Mexican American mothers and one Guatemalan father—participated in the co-design sessions via Zoom. Together, the co-design team substantially revised the assignment rubric and sample recipes and developed new instructions and a note-taking tool for the take-home family recipe component. The redesigned assignment resulted in significantly greater family participation. The unit culminated in a potluck celebration where students shared and sampled one another's family recipes. Parent participants remained involved throughout the implementation of the unit and helped transform students' final recipes into a cookbook that each child received at the end of the school year.

Ximena centered her co-design circles on an identity unit that had originally been developed by a white male teacher. She felt that the unit did not adequately reflect the identities and lived experiences of the school's students, families, and broader community. She also noted that some of the instructional materials had been poorly translated and that the culminating identity poem assignment lacked the level of rigor she expected for fourth-grade students. To redesign the unit, Ximena brought together two mothers from Mexico and a paraeducator from Peru whose children had previously attended the school. Meeting in person after school, the co-design team reviewed and revised the unit PowerPoint, suggested culturally authentic transnational poems to serve as mentor texts, created a take-home identity survey for students to

complete with their families, developed assignment options for an identity essay, and revised the identity poem template. Participants were so engaged in the process that they organized an informal fourth meeting to finalize several of the unit materials. During implementation, students completed the identity survey with their families and used their responses to inform the writing of their identity poems. They illustrated their poems and shared them during an identity celebration. Although time constraints prevented students from completing the identity essay, the co-design team developed the assignment for future use as a way to further strengthen the unit.

Jessica brought together a co-design team consisting of five parents, a paraeducator, and her grade-level teaching partner. One parent was a father from Guatemala, while the remaining parents and educators were Mexican or Mexican American. Together, they worked to redesign the “Jobs in the Community” unit from the commercial ARC Core curriculum adopted by the school. Jessica had observed that the occupations highlighted in the unit did not reflect the jobs actually held by many families in the school community. She was also concerned about the unit’s culminating writing assignment, which asked students to argue which community job was “most important.” In her view, this task imposed hierarchical assumptions that elevated some forms of labor while devaluing others. Meeting in Jessica’s classroom after school, the co-design team evaluated the unit and proposed a range of revisions. The design team modified the curriculum’s graphic organizers, created a take-home interview assignment in which students interviewed a family or community member about their work, and developed a plan for inviting parents to present about their jobs during the unit. At the conclusion of the unit, students used information gathered through family interviews or classroom reading to create trifold poster presentations about a job within their community. Families were invited to a final celebration where students displayed and shared their projects.

Renata centered her co-design circle on enriching Spanish literacy instruction in her kindergarten classroom, where there was no formal Spanish literacy block or curriculum because Spanish instructional time was dedicated to science and math. She brought together five classroom mothers who met over Zoom in the evenings. The group included one mother from Mexico, one from the Dominican Republic, two from Chile, and one from Argentina. Together, they designed a “Where Are We From?” unit that included a sequence of activities through which children gathered information from home and used it to write “Where I Am From” poems. The unit also incorporated dictation activities using significant words from family interviews and poems, as well as classroom visits from parents who read aloud books in Spanish, ideally texts from their home countries or books that held special meaning for their families. The co-design team created a family interview assignment to help children gather information for their poems and developed a poem template to support their writing. Mothers remained actively involved throughout the implementation of the unit, volunteering as classroom readers, assisting students during poem-writing activities, and helping facilitate a culminating celebration during which students shared their poems.

Marina convened a group of five classroom mothers who met in the evenings at the home of a parent volunteer. All of the mothers were from Mexico. The sessions were characterized by informal conversation, shared meals, and the exchange of resources and stories about challenges in the mothers’ lives. Marina explained that she wanted to create a new end-of-year poetry unit but had only a draft template for a family-supported poem assignment. Together, the co-design team explored collections of Spanish-language poetry, including texts from the Mexican national curriculum, and selected poems they remembered from their own childhoods or believed would be effective for teaching particular poetic genres. Drawing on the

mothers' ideas and expertise, we developed a six-week unit plan organized around a poem of the week, along with instructional ideas for each text. We also created a take-home poetry anthology for students. Together, the design team revised the family poem template, renaming it “En mi casa, somos así [In My House, This Is How We Are],” and added a multilingual family letter and questionnaire to support families in completing the poems. Mothers from the co-design circle also helped plan an end-of-year celebration featuring students' poetry.

Table 4*Co-Design Circles Format and Participants*

Teacher/School	Format/Location	Participants
Carmen/Lakeshore	Zoom (evenings)	Rosie, classroom mother (Mexican America) Sonya, classroom mother (from Mexico) Marcos, classroom father (from Guatemala)
Ximena/Lakeshore	In-person/Classroom (right after school)	Elena, classroom mother (from Mexico) Alexia, classroom mother (from Mexico) Natalia, paraeducator/former Lakeshore mother (from Peru)
Jessica/Jefferson	In-person/Classroom (right after school)	Juan, classroom father (from Guatemala) Ana, classroom mother (Mexican American) Alma, classroom mother

		(from Mexico) Luz, classroom mother (from Mexico) Alondra, classroom mother (from Mexico) Sara, paraeducator/mother of a student in the other second grade class (Mexican American) Sally, the other second grade teacher (Mexican American)
Renata/Franklin	Zoom (evenings)	Carolina, classroom mother (from Chile) Isabel, classroom mother (from the Dominican Republic) Daniela, classroom mother (from Chile) Paulina, classroom mother (from Mexico) Marta, classroom mother (from Argentina)
Marina/Linden	In-person/Parent participant's house (evenings)	Sandra, classroom mother (from Mexico) Valeria, classroom mother (from Mexico) Itzel, classroom mother (from Mexico) Heidi, classroom mother (from Mexico) Marisol, classroom mother (from Mexico)

Table 5*Co-Design Circles Apertura and Product*

Teacher/School	Apertura/Problem of Practice	Product
Carmen/Lakeshore	<i>El año pasado, en vez de conectar con sus familias, los estudiantes buscaron recetas en el internet. ¿Cómo podemos re-diseñar este proyecto para fomentar conexiones intergeneracionales/culturales y participación de las familias?</i> [Last year, instead of connecting with their families, students looked up their recipes online. How can we re-design this project to cultivate intergenerational/cultural connections and encourage family participation?]	A redesigned cultural family recipes unit
Ximena/Lakeshore	<i>La unidad de identidad fue diseñado hace varios años y no refleja la comunidad actual de la escuela. ¿Cómo podemos rediseñar esta unidad para facilitar conexión entre los estudiantes y sus familias, y para aumentar el nivel académico del proyecto escrito?</i> [The identity unit was designed a few years ago and doesn't reflect the school's current community. How can we redesign this unit to facilitate connection between students and their families, and to raise the level of the final writing project?]	A redesigned identity unit
Jessica/Jefferson	<i>La unidad "Profesiones en mi comunidad" es parte de un currículo comercial, y no tiene conexiones a la comunidad de nuestra escuela. La idea es que estudiantes aprenderán sobre los trabajos importantes en *sus* comunidades y familias, pero la unidad solo contiene información sobre una lista</i>	A redesigned unit on jobs in the community

	<i>pequeña de profesiones. ¿Cómo podemos vincular esta unidad a la comunidad real, y fomentar conexiones entre los estudiantes y sus familias?</i> [The “Jobs in my Community” unit is part of a commercial curriculum, and doesn’t have connections to our school community. The idea is that students will learn about the important jobs in *their* communities and families, but the unit only contains information about a short list of jobs. How can we connect this unit to the actual community, and foster connections between students and their families?	
Renata/Franklin	<i>¿Cómo podemos enriquecer el plan de estudios de lecto-escritura en español con experiencias de lectura y escritura más auténticas y desafiantes, dado el tiempo limitado durante el día y el año escolar?</i> [How can we enrich literacy instruction in Spanish with more authentic and challenging reading and writing experiences, given the limited time during the school day and left in the school year?]	A new “Where are we from?” unit
Marina/Linden	<i>Profe Marina está creando una nueva unidad sobre poesía este año. Quiere diseñar la unidad en colaboración con las familias para que refleje las culturas de los estudiantes, y para fomentar conexiones familiares.</i> [Teacher Marina is creating a new unit about poetry this year. She wants to design the unit in collaboration with the families so that it reflects the cultures of her students, and to foster more family connections.]	A new poetry unit

Table 6*Co-Design Circles Materials and Final Products*

Teacher/School	Materials Co-Designed with Parents	Unit Final Product(s)/Celebration
Carmen/Lakeshore	- Assignment rubric (revised) - Take-home graphic organizer/note-taking document (new) - Example recipes document (revised)	- Family recipe for each student, with ingredients list, cultural connection, step-by-step directions, and family photos - Potluck celebration - Take home class recipe book
Ximena/Lakeshore	- Unit powerpoint (revised) - Take-home identity survey (new) - Essay assignment guidelines (new) - Poem template (revised) - Mentor text suggestions (new)	- Illustrated identity poems - Identity poem celebration
Jessica/Jefferson	- Take-home job interview assignment, adapted from the questions on the “tarjeta de investigación” included in the unit (new) - Graphic organizers (revised) - Parent letter and parent presentation schedule (new) - Class graphic organizer for parent presentations (new)	- Tri-fold poster presentation about one job in the community - Job fair/poster presentation celebration
Renata/Franklin	- Unit scope and sequence document (new) - Take-home family interview (new) - Poem template (new) - Poem examples (new)	- Illustrated “where are we from?” poems - Writers’ celebration
Marina/Linden	- Weekly plan for a poem of the week plus lesson ideas	- “En mi casa somos así” poems

	for each poem (new) - Book of unit poetry (new) - Revised “En mi casa somos así” poem template with take-home letter/family questionnaire in multiple languages (revised)	- End of year celebration
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Data Collection

Four types of data were collected during this participatory research project: qualitative semi-structured interviews (Bhattacharya, 2017); field notes and memos (Emerson et al. 1995); artifacts (Patton, 2014); and video/audio recordings of sessions (including inquiry group sessions, co-planning meetings with teachers, and co-design circles). Below, I will describe each type of data collected

Qualitative Interviews

For this project, I conducted four sets of qualitative semi-structured interviews (Bhattacharya, 2017), three sets with the participating teachers, and one set with parents. Semi-structured interviews center on prepared questions with probes and follow-ups based on participant responses (Bhattacharya, 2017). The three teacher interviews comprised an intake interview, a mid-year interview, and an end-of-year interview. All six teachers participated in the intake interview and mid-year interview, and the five teachers who went on to Phase 2 of the project participated in the end-of year interview. Interview protocols are included in Appendix A.

Questions for the intake interview were aimed at understanding teachers’ own backgrounds and school contexts, as well as their current orientations toward family engagement and towards the goals of the project. The interview protocol included questions like: “What

limits or barriers do you see to Latine family engagement in your school context?” and “What is your personal vision for family engagement in your classroom? How would you like parents, and particularly Latine families, to be involved?”

The mid-year interviews were focused on understanding the ways that the teacher inquiry sessions had influenced participants’ thinking about family engagement, about how they had experienced the inquiry group, and their questions and intentions towards continuing into Phase 2 of the project. Questions included: “How would you say that your parent engagement practices so far this year are similar and different from previous years?” and “Tell me about your experience with the inquiry group.” During this interview, I also brought out an artifact for teachers to review and reflect upon: case study documents (for an example, see Appendix C) that summarized each teachers’ comments and goals shared during the inquiry sessions.

The end of year interviews were aimed at exploring teachers’ experiences of the co-design circles, asking about how the teacher inquiry sessions informed the co-design process, how teachers experienced parent recruitment and co-planning, their experience collaborating with parents, and their experiences teaching the redesigned units. Questions included: “What was it like sharing curriculum documents with parents and having them give feedback? Make changes? Did it feel vulnerable and how did you handle that, if so?” and “How did you perceive the power dynamics in the circles? How were parents positioned as co-experts? Did any tension arise around this?”

All teacher interviews (n=17) were conducted over zoom and video/audio recorded. They ranged from 40 minutes to 80 minutes. Interviews with Renata, Carmen, Francisca, and Marina were conducted in Spanish; interviews with Jessica and Ximena were conducted in English, based on participants’ preferences.

Additionally, I conducted interviews with willing parents, with the aim of interviewing at least two participants per co-design group. These interviews investigated parent participants' experiences with their school and with family engagement in general, and then inquired into their experiences with the co-design circles. The protocol included questions like "How was this experience different from other family engagement opportunities you've participated in?" and "What felt most significant/worthwhile about the co-design circles? What felt challenging or difficult?"

Parent interviews (n=13) were conducted either over zoom or over the phone, and ranged from 15 to 45 minutes. Twelve of the parent interviews were conducted in Spanish, with one parent opting to be interviewed in English.

Field Notes and Memos

Throughout the study, I kept a running document with brief field notes and memos (Emerson et al. 1995). I took simple field notes when I informally visited teachers' school sites throughout the project; these site visit field notes (n=13) included brief notes about the school context and conversations with the teacher. Additionally, I wrote memos after each interview, teacher inquiry session, co-planning session, co-design session, and about select artifacts and personal communications. These memos served to capture questions, salient observations, and initial observations/speculations on emerging themes. Each memo (n=112) was linked to the data it corresponded to through a data log document.

Video Recording of Sessions

In addition to interviews, fieldnotes, and memos, I also video/audio recorded the teacher inquiry sessions (n=10), the co-planning sessions with teachers (n=20), and the co-design circles

themselves (n=15). This generated approximately 57 hours of additional video/audio data across the three session types.

Artifact Collection

Finally, the last form of data collection I engaged in during this project was artifact collection (Patton, 2014). Artifacts collected included:

- 1) planning materials, slides, and exit slips from the teacher inquiry sessions;
- 2) planning materials, slides, and other curriculum documents generated during the co-design sessions, as well as the original curriculum documents shared by the teachers;
- 3) the final curriculum documents from the redesigned units;
- 4) photographs (n=182) taken by myself and by the teachers — these include photographs of classrooms and teaching materials, screenshots of text conversations with teachers and parents, photographs of the co-design circles themselves, photographs taken by the teachers as they taught the redesigned units and engaged in final unit celebrations, and photographs that I took of the final unit celebrations I participated in; and
- 5) student work from the re-designed units, produced by the children of co-design circle participants (n=15) and collected with parent permission.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this project took place in two stages, described below, with member checking and triangulation (Patton, 2014) between different data sources (interviews, recorded sessions, field notes, and memos) integrated throughout the process to enhance trustworthiness (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Phase 1 Data Analysis

During Phase 1 of the project, concurrent with conducting the intake interviews and inquiry sessions, I transcribed these recordings, reviewed transcriptions for accuracy, and did an initial round of open coding (Saldaña, 2015) using NVivo software. From this round of open coding, I generated a list of initial themes that were emerging from the data. These themes included, for example, “Teachers bring authentic texts and materials from their own home countries into their classrooms,” and “Teachers’ own experiences as parents shape their commitments to families.” I considered these initial themes as I planned for the mid-year teacher interviews and prepared for Phase 2, and they often informed conversations with teachers.

Phase 1 member checking.

I engaged in member checking during Phase 1 of the project in two primary ways. During teacher inquiry sessions 4 and 5, I presented slides with initial findings to the teachers and asked for feedback. I also drew on the slides and transcripts from the teacher inquiry sessions to develop a “case study” document (Appendix C) for each teacher. These documents captured the challenges to family engagement in their specific contexts, their personal goals, and their initial plans for recruiting co-design circle participants. During the mid-year interviews, I used these case studies as reference artifacts, inviting teachers to reflect on my summary of their participation and to consider how their thinking had evolved over the course of the inquiry sessions.

Phase 2 Data Analysis

For data analysis from Phase 2, I took a different approach, as the quantity of video and audio data generated from Phase 2 of the project (comprising the 15 co-design sessions, the 20

co-planning sessions, and the 24 teacher and parent interviews conducted) needed to be analyzed selectively. I transcribed all Phase 2 data, and in order to make these selections, I considered the full data set and reviewed my memos from the project, which were rich with notes about potential findings. From this holistic process, I generated three broad emerging themes: Re-envisioning Family Engagement, Transforming Power Relationships, and Centering Transnational Knowledge and Intergenerational Literacies, which were refined through mentoring conversations and member-checking with participants, and generated in part through a deductive process where the theoretical framework was applied to the data. For each of the emerging themes, I used memos to generate a list of potential subthemes that helped me identify data that would fit in each category. For example, the theoretical framing of transnational and intergenerational literacies was used to develop the theme Centering Transnational Knowledge and Intergenerational Literacies, along with the subthemes “Teachers’ transnational knowledge and literacy practices” and “Parents’ transnational knowledge and literacy practices.”

I then reviewed the full data set, creating a document for each emerging theme that collected relevant transcript sections and artifacts. I coded each of these documents in two cycles, generating the themes and subthemes explored in each findings chapter here. The first coding cycle consisted of an open coding process that yielded 26 codes across the three documents. These included codes like “Priority to Latine families,” “Parents as experts,” and “Authentic texts.” During the second cycle, I reviewed each initial code, rearranging and subdividing codes to yield a set of category codes and associated sub-codes for each theme. Here, additional deductive coding took place as new theoretical lenses emerged that could be applied to the data. For example, the themes of “confianza” and “teacher vulnerability” emerged strongly from the data itself, and in this final coding phase I brought in additional theoretical

perspectives to understand and organize these emerging subcodes. As another example, at this point, I also brought in the theoretical lens of “convivencia as a third space,” initially generated through a mentoring conversation with Enrique David Degollado, and returned to literature about third spaces and convivencia to deductively flesh out this subcode. These second cycle codes form the basis for the findings chapters of this dissertation. The full set of second cycle codes is included in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Second Round Themes, Category Codes, and Sub-Codes

Theme: Re-envisioning Family Engagement	
Category Code	Corresponding Sub-codes
Teachers commitments informed by their experiences as parents	- Wanting more from curriculum - Giving others what they didn't have - Shared dreams as moms - Shared immigrant identity
Teachers as learners	- Being humble and open to learning - Supports and training - Learning from each other
Parents' multiple identities	- Personal satisfaction/meaningful work - Professional connections - Parenting pedagogy - Parents as learners
Changing visions of engagement	- Initial issues and barriers - Critiquing shallow forms of engagement/Looking deeper
Engagement as political	- The worsening climate - Increased importance - Priority to Latine families
Differences with traditional family engagement	- Being able to give opinions - More understandable - Quick results
Theme: Transforming Power Relationships	

Category Code	Corresponding Sub-codes
Shifting expertise	- Teachers speaking back to curriculum - Parents feeling taken into consideration - Teachers thinking about power - Leveling power dynamics between teachers and researchers - Leveling power dynamics between parents
Confianza and Convivencia	- Teacher vulnerability - Seeing the teacher differently - Convivencia as a third space - Naming convivencia - Ice breakers and humor - Getting to know and trust other parents - Space to talk and share - Concrete trust and support - Researcher and teacher reciprocal trust building and vulnerability
Parents as experts	- Community experts - Language experts - Cultural experts - Pedagogical experts - Paras as pedagogical experts - Values experts - Confidence in their contributions - Collaborative/collective expertise
Theme: Centering Transnational and Intergenerational Knowledge and Literacies	
Category Code	Corresponding Sub-codes
Teachers' transnational knowledge and literacy practices	- Transnational learning between teachers - Teachers bringing transnational literacy practices into schools
Parents' transnational knowledge and literacy practice	- Passing on identity/culture through parenting practices - Intergenerational literacies/remembered childhoods
Teachers and parents bringing in transnational texts	- Modifying transnational texts for U.S. political context
Parents' transnational dreams and desires for schooling	- School extending the curriculum of the home

	- Education for children's transnational lives - Transnational education comparisons/Critiquing the U.S. system - Interactive/hands-on learning/learning through play - Celebrations and community - Values education/higher standards of participation - Higher expectations around homework
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Phase 2 member checking.

Member checking occurred throughout Phase 2 of the project, as I continually ran my emerging understandings by teachers during co-planning sessions and informal conversations, and also shared many of my emerging themes with both parents and teachers during the final interviews, asking for feedback and engaging them in conversation. Additionally, the participatory nature of the project allowed the co-design and co-planning sessions to function as a type of member checking as well, as both parents and teachers would raise and dialogue about themes and questions relevant to the findings of this study—workshopping them in real time through the co-design circle process. For example, in our co-planning sessions, Ximena and I explicitly discussed the types of transnational knowledge that were emerging in her co-design circles, analyzing comments that parents had made and discussing how she might apply them in her teaching. Similarly, in Ximena's circles, the theme of language expertise was taken up explicitly with and by parent participants, who discussed how they felt while reading translated materials, and how they wished to alter those materials so that children would understand better.

Finally, in spring of 2026 I produced a condensed version of the study's findings as a Google Slides presentation. This was shared with the teacher participants, parent participants who had expressed interest in seeing the study findings and who were reachable by email, and

the school districts involved. Feedback from teachers and parents was incorporated into the final version of the findings chapters of this dissertation.

Researcher Positionality

As I engaged in this research, I recognized the ways in which I drew upon elements of both insider and outsider positionality (Villenas, 1996) relative to the teacher participants, parent participants, and school sites where the work took place.

I am a former dual-language elementary school teacher, and am a current parent of two children attending a dual-language elementary school. Both as a teacher and as a parent, I have experienced personal tensions around the ways in which families' voices are not always considered and language is separated from culture in dual-language schools. My own problems of practice, as a teacher and now as a teacher educator and coach, informed the research questions for this study.

Relative to the teacher participants, my identity as a white woman raised in an English-speaking family in the U.S. positions me as an outsider to their experiences as Latinas and transnational women of color. I sought to counter this source of disconnection through drawing upon our shared histories and strong personal relationships, as well as shared identities as mothers of bilingual children, and at times as friends and members of the same communities. While several of my relationships with the teacher participants drew on a multi-year history of friendship outside of academic/professional spaces, I also recognize that my position as former instructor and former or current instructional coach entailed elements of hierarchy, through which I had often been positioned as an expert. I sought to disrupt this through working to position teachers as co-inquirers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) and co-designers (Philip et al., 2022) in the inquiry space.

While I drew on long and close relationships with teacher participants, I did not have prior familiarity with the majority of parent participants. I did have existing connections with two of the parents in Carmen's circles and two of the parents in Renata's circles, because our children attended either preschool or elementary school in the same classes. In this regard, and in general for the circles that took place at Lakeshore, I did have a type of insider positionality as a fellow community member and parent of bilingual children. However, particularly in the context of Linden and Jefferson, I was fully an outsider to the community, a status compounded by my race and acquired bilingualism. In these contexts particularly, I relied upon the bonds of trust that the teachers had built with their classroom parents, and felt welcomed into these spaces because the teachers vouched for me, often introducing me to parents as their coach, mentor, and/or friend.

During solidarity-driven co-design, researchers participate in the design circles alongside participants. I co-facilitated the circles alongside the teachers and at times volunteered my own ideas for the units, but my primary focus was on moving the agenda along and capturing parents' feedback through note-taking and making changes to the curriculum documents. Along with teachers, I also participated in ice breakers and shared, at times vulnerably, about my own life, my joys and frustrations with my children, and my experiences as a teacher and as a parent. Co-design focuses on identities beyond narrow professional roles, so I elevated my identities as an educator and as a mother alongside my positionality as a researcher. I believe that by being willing to share about my own life, I helped co-create a climate of *confianza*, or trust, in the circles, further explored in Chapter 6.

Limitations

This study describes participatory work that occurred in specific contexts, drawing on a network of existing relationships between myself as the researcher and the participating teachers, and between teachers and the parents in their communities. Teachers' orientations to the project were shaped by their previous participation in a justice-centered teacher education program, as well as their own identities and experiences as transnational Latinas in their own roles as teachers, mothers, and daughters. Thus, while elements of the inquiry and co-design process may appear replicable across contexts or scalable, I want to bring attention to the fact that implementing these designs with different teachers in different communities may produce very different results. I will discuss these limitations around generalizability and scalability more thoroughly in the implications section of the dissertation.

Additionally, the time constraints typical of dissertation research limited the extent to which this project could fully engage in the iterative processes central to co-design as a methodology. In a multi-year study, teachers might begin their co-design circles in the fall and work through multiple cycles of design with the same group of families, with families taking a more central role in identifying the aperturas these circles would address. Within the shorter timeframe of this project, however, co-design efforts focused on the redesign of a single unit. Although participants engaged in multiple rounds of feedback on specific tools and materials, there was not sufficient time to complete full iterative cycles in which changes were implemented in the classroom, reflected upon, and further refined through subsequent design team meetings. While this constraint represents a limitation, it also highlights promising directions for future research that could build on and extend the processes developed here.

Conclusion

This chapter described the research design and process of this participatory study, which unfolded over two interconnected phases: a teacher inquiry phase and a co-design phase. By linking these methodological traditions, this study makes a methodological contribution to participatory research in education—demonstrating how the reflective communities of practice generated by practitioner inquiry can help develop the capacity (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013) needed to engage equitably in co-design with families, and how co-design can transform the goals of critical listening into deep collaboration and shared knowledge production.

The next three chapters present findings that arose through this participatory process. Chapter 5, “Reenvisioning Family Engagement,” explores how teachers and parents came to co-design work motivated by identities that transcend their typical school roles, and how the process reshaped their perception of Latine family engagement as inherently political work. Chapter 6, “Transforming Power Relationships,” examines how co-design disrupted traditional hierarchies by positioning parents as experts, inviting teacher vulnerability, and creating spaces for *convivencia* that allowed teachers and families to see one another differently. Chapter 7, “Centering Transnational and Intergenerational Knowledge and Literacies,” highlights how participants drew on transnational and intergenerational literacies in the curriculum co-design process, reinterpreted educational experiences across borders, and challenged deficit narratives of what transnational families know, prioritize, and are able to do as parents in U.S. public schools. Finally, this dissertation concludes with a discussion and implications section. I explore the implications of this work for deepening critical listening in dual-language schools in ways that give Latine parents voice and agency, and infuse curriculum with home language and culture.

Chapter 5: Re-envisioning Family Engagement

In this findings chapter, I present data illustrating how inquiry and co-design fostered a vision of family engagement that challenges stereotypical assumptions about both what family engagement entails and why teachers and families choose to participate in it. Specifically, I examine how these processes prompted teachers and parents to draw upon aspects of their identities that extend beyond the narrow—and at times even oppositional (Hong, 2019)—roles they are often assigned in school settings.

For teachers, inquiry and co-design created opportunities to draw on their experiences as parents, particularly as transnational parents, as they reflected on their commitments to deepening family engagement. They also embraced identities as learners and inquirers, recognizing the humility required for collaborative work and the importance of ongoing learning in order to engage meaningfully in expanded family engagement practices such as co-design. Through learning from one another, teachers developed greater critical consciousness (Palmer et al., 2019) regarding inequities within and across dual-language contexts.

Parents likewise engaged in co-design in ways that transcended narrow constructions of parenthood. Their participation connected to their own personal growth, their identities and aspirations as established or emerging professionals, and their identities as learners. As teachers and parents brought these multifaceted dimensions of themselves into the project, the categories of “teacher” and “parent” became increasingly porous (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016), setting the stage for the shifting power relations explored in the following chapter, Chapter 6: Transforming Power Relationships.

Similarly, the co-design process troubled traditional notions of family involvement as an apolitical tool which improves children’s learning through training their parents to assist in

school-sanctioned ways (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Torres and Hurtado-Vivas, 2011). Teachers described entrenched patterns of inequitable family engagement in their school sites. Co-design offered a direct counter to this, as both parents and teachers expressed that it engaged families—their voices and opinions—in active ways that they had not previously experienced. Additionally, parents and teachers recognized the inherently political nature of the co-design work, particularly as it took place during the first months after Trump’s January 2025 inauguration, in a climate of increasing fear around draconian immigration enforcement policies (Nagel, 2025). Teachers also recognized that combating the historical barriers to Latine family involvement in school meant critiquing shallow notions of family engagement and giving concrete priority to Latine families, sometimes skirting or subverting existing school norms in order to do so.

In exploring these themes, I address several of the study’s research questions, particularly RQ1 (How does teacher inquiry and curriculum co-design reshape bilingual teachers’ and Latine families’ understandings of family engagement?) and RQ2 (How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?). I found that participation in the inquiry and co-design process fostered critical consciousness of inequities in family engagement practices among teachers, and supported both teachers and parents in positioning family engagement as political. I found that teachers’ and parents’ commitments to engaging in co-design were heavily informed by identities outside of their traditional school roles. And finally, I found that both teachers and parents experienced co-design as a marked departure from traditional school-based family engagement practices.

Beyond Narrow Roles of Teachers and Parents

When discussing their commitment to broader forms of family engagement, both teachers and parents drew on aspects of their identities that are not always visible in school settings. In particular, teachers drew on their own experiences as transnational parents—and, in Ximena's case, as a student from an immigrant family—to explain their commitment to incorporating families' cultures in more meaningful ways than they had encountered in U.S. public schools, and to becoming the kind of teachers they wished their children, or they themselves, had experienced. Teachers also embraced their identities as learners and inquirers in the co-design process, specifying that humility and additional training are essential for participating with parents in this way. Parents in turn highlighted their other identities as they explained their motivations for participating in the project. They called attention to how the co-design process provided opportunities for self-growth and learning, and connected to their professional histories or aspirations.

Bilingual Teachers as Transnational Parents

In their interviews and throughout the focus group sessions, the teacher participants described their own experiences as transnational parents of children in U.S. public schools, and highlighted the ways that these experiences shaped their commitments to teaching and to collaboration with families. These blended identities, as bilingual teachers and as transnational parents, emphasized the types of porous categories (Bang & Voussougi, 2016) that facilitate leveling of power relationships in co-design research.

Multiple teachers expressed their frustrations with the white-washed curriculum and culture their own children had encountered in schools, sometimes recounting painful experiences of alienation. In her intake interview, Carmen explained that, in the English-medium elementary

school her son had attended, there were no opportunities to share or showcase their family's Mexican heritage, and the stories he read in school were often about themes their family didn't connect with. Francisca, in her intake interview, described how her attempts to make her daughters' Colombian heritage visible in schools had gone unappreciated and ultimately pushed her to downplay their family culture. For example, she shared that one year she had made pan de bonos and Colombian empanadas for one of her daughters' classes:

Y cuando fuimos a ver los pan de bonos y las empanadas en la caneca. En la basura. Para mí fue brutal. Porque era mi cultura a la basura.... Entonces yo decía, “si yo me siento así, ¿cómo se está sintiendo mi hija? Mejor no expongo.” [And when we went, we saw the pan de bonos and the empanadas in the garbage can. In the trash. For me, that was brutal. Because that was my culture in the trash can... So I said, “if I feel like this, how is my daughter feeling? It's better we don't share it.”]

These teachers expressed wanting more—more cultural connection, more representation—from their children's schools. In her intake interview, Marina described realizing, as her son reached 4th and 5th grade in a dual-language school, that the focus was only on teaching language without culture. She began to organize cultural events as a school volunteer—“para llenar esos huequitos que veíamos que faltaban [to fill those holes that we saw were missing]”—and this in turn fueled her desire to become a bilingual teacher and to engage in inquiry around family engagement. She explained:

...esa fue una de las motivaciones, para seguir apoyando estas familias con las que uno se siente identificada. A que puedan seguir con el idioma, pero también que puedan... tengan esa celebración y que se sientan conectados con su cultura. [...this was one of the motivations, to continue supporting these families that one feels identified with. So that

they can continue with their language, but also that they can have... that they have that celebration and feel connected to their culture.]

In her intake interview, Francisca similarly connected her desire to bring families' cultures into the classroom with her own children's experience:

Abre la perspectiva de traer, de validar por ejemplo, de validar lo que traen también otras familias y migrantes. Porque yo como mamá de niñas, yo añoraba que mis hijas tuvieran como, como que les abriera una ventanita de "mira, de acá vienes tú." Pero nunca, nunca, ellas llegaron diciendo algo "Mami, hablaron de Colombia..." Nunca. O "hablaron del español" o... no, nunca. Era demasiado blanca la enseñanza. [It opens up the perspective of bringing, of validating for example what other families and migrants bring. Because I as the mother of my girls, I longed that my daughters would have, that someone would open up a little window for them of "look, this is where you come from." But never, never did they come home saying something like "Mami, they talked about Colombia." Never. Or "they talked about Spanish." No, never. The teaching was too white.

In turn, these challenging experiences as parents fueled teachers' commitments to giving other families the experiences that they themselves had desired as parents, and to being the teachers that they wished their children (or in some cases, they themselves) had had in U.S. public schools. In the first inquiry session, multiple teachers shared stories about what had brought them to teaching in dual-language schools. Carmen explained,

Fue muy difícil para mí como padre ver la experiencia de mi hijo y a mí me hubiera gustado que él hubiera tenido otra experiencia, que hubiera habido más representación en cuanto a los maestros, en cuanto a la administración, en cuanto a todo en la escuela... Y con el tiempo me di cuenta que era algo que yo podía hacer. [It was very difficult for me

as a parent to see the experience of my son, and I would have liked him to have a different experience, for there to have been more representation in regards to the teachers, in regards to the administration, in regards to the whole school... And with time I realized that that was something I could do.] (Inquiry Session 1)

Francisca shared similar sentiments, linking her role as a mother to her commitment to becoming a bilingual teacher: “Y me impactó mucho ser mamá y no poder ayudar mucho y ver como a los niños son tratados de una manera diferente. O hay un estereotipo con los latinos. [And it impacted me a lot to be a mother and to not be able to help much, and to see how the kids are treated differently. Or that there’s a stereotype about Latinos.] (Inquiry Session 1)” This was what pushed her to enroll in the bilingual teacher education program.

Ximena was the only teacher who participated in the project who grew up going to U.S. public schools. Attending monolingual schools in a rural, conservative area, Ximena shared the experience of not seeing her own identities represented. In Inquiry Session 1, she explained, “La verdad nada más tuve una maestra que fue latina y siempre me voy a acordar de ella porque ella fue la que me enseñó acerca de otras culturas... Se llamaba Miss Méndez y yo dije que también yo quería hacer algo así. [The truth is I only ever had one teacher who was Latina and I will always remember her because she was the one who taught me about other cultures... Her name was Miss Méndez and I said I want to do something like that.]” Ximena saw becoming a bilingual teacher as a way to provide children with the culturally connected experiences she had not had as a child.

Francisca also spoke about the importance of this representation: “Y estoy en una escuela donde de pronto no, no hay muchos niños latinos todavía y eso, pero estoy normalizando el hecho de que nos vemos así, de que tenemos acento. [And I’m in a school where there still aren’t

many children who are Latines and all, but I'm normalizing the fact that this is how we look, that we have accents.] (Intake Interview)" She teared up explaining how she felt that Latine people were often invisible in her school context, but that she saw her visibility as a teacher as making a small change towards increasing the awareness and presence of the Latine population: "Yo digo que no siento que estoy haciendo un cambio grande, pero un poquito. Un granito de arena. Pero seguimos siendo invisibles. Entonces, cambiar esa invisibilidad. [I say that I don't feel like I'm making a big change, but I am making a small one. Bit by bit. But we are still invisible. So, changing that invisibility.] (Intake Interview)"

Multiple teachers also shared, in interviews and inquiry sessions, about how their own identities as immigrant parents help them understand the challenges that other transnational families experience navigating the public school system. Carmen, for example, described in her intake interview how she and her husband felt ignored and sidelined while their son was in elementary school: "No sabíamos cómo funcionaban las cosas aquí en el sistema educativo y todo esto, y escribiéndole a la maestra ni te respondía una semana después. O nunca... como que no sabíamos bien cuáles eran nuestros derechos. [We didn't know how things worked here in the educational system and all of that, and writing to the teacher and she wouldn't respond until the next week. Or never... we didn't know what our rights were.]" In the second inquiry session, Marina described her own experience feeling out of place because of her race and language: "Es que no quería participar en el PTA o juntas porque me intimidaba mucho estar con gente blanca y hablar mal inglés, eh? [I didn't want to participate in the PTA or in meetings because I was so intimidated to be around white people and speak English poorly, you know?]" She shared that she was even afraid of speaking to the principal.

These teachers understood personally, through their own parenting experiences, the challenges of not knowing the U.S. school system. This translated into their family engagement practice, resulting in more attention to and solidarity with Latine families. Francisca explained:

Yo consiento mucho a las familias latinas... Y siento más empatía con el que me dice “Es que las divisiones en este país las enseñan diferente.” Y yo, “Sí, cierto.”... Sí, pensamos igual, tenemos el mismo problema en la casa. Entonces les doy más, como decimos en Colombia, más gabela en el sentido de más paciencia a la familia. Y no necesariamente tiene que ser inmigrante latino. O sea, el inmigrante sufre. Sí, el inmigrante sufre, sufre soledad, sufre ausencia. [I take really good care of the Latine families... And I have a lot of empathy for the parent that says, “It’s that we teach division differently in my country.” And I’m like, “Yes, true.”... Yes, we think the same, we have the same problem at home. So I give more, like we say in Colombia, more “gabela” in the sense of more patience with the family. And not just Latine immigrants. I mean, all immigrants suffer. We suffer from loneliness, we suffer from absence.] (Intake Interview)

Marina spoke of a similar connection when she reflected, in her midyear interview, on the teacher inquiry sessions, saying: “no sé si por todas ser inmigrantes les damos como un lugar especial y prioridad a nuestras familias multilingües. [I don’t know if it’s because we’re all immigrants that we give a special place and priority to our multilingual families.]” She added that she also saw this priority from the two teachers who were themselves children of immigrants. Marina’s personal reasons for connecting with her families had to do with her own need for community in the U.S.: “Y sabes que como estando lejos de México, ay, yo me las quiero agarrar también así. O sea, siento que a mí ellas me dan mucho. [And you know, being far from Mexico, ay, I want to embrace them. I mean, they give so much to me]. (Final Interview)”

Thus, teachers' relationships with—and desire to connect more deeply to—their transnational families were often rooted in their own experiences as immigrant mothers and/or as children of immigrant parents. From the outset, this positioned them differently from the predominantly white, culturally disconnected teachers often critiqued in the family engagement literature (e.g., Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020), whose relationships with nondominant families may at times be shaped by conflicting or even adversarial interests (Hong, 2019). Teachers' reflections on how racialization and language practices in the United States had shaped their own families' experiences in schools also underscored the importance of raciolinguicized subjectivities (Daniels & Varghese, 2020). These experiences appeared to play a key role in fostering critical consciousness (Palmer et al., 2019) about how power operates within U.S. educational and social contexts.

Bilingual Teachers as Learners/Inquirers

In addition to their identities as immigrant mothers or children of immigrant parents, the teachers who participated in this study also embraced identities as learners and inquirers. They emphasized that engaging in co-design with families required a learner's disposition, characterized by humility, openness, and a willingness to set aside personal agendas in order to learn and work in new ways. Teachers also described the supports they needed to engage in this work, particularly opportunities to collaborate with colleagues who could offer perspective, encouragement, and feedback as they experimented with practices such as co-design. This orientation toward learning and inquiry reflected the concept of inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) and contributed to the development of critical consciousness (Palmer et al., 2019), as teachers used collaboration with one another to think more deeply about inequities within dual-language education.

The theme of humility came up multiple times as teachers described in their final interviews what they felt like this project had required of them. Ximena, for example, said, “The teacher has to really be humble and step away from that mentality that ‘this is my classroom.’ You know ‘I run things this way,’ or ‘No, that’s not going to work like that for me because there needs to be more time. There needs to be more structure.’” She highlighted the importance of learning from parents: “It really is kind of seeing what the parents want, what did they need to see? What are they looking for in our classrooms?” Renata reflected the same idea:

Hay que dejar de lado lo que uno quiera personalmente... de que llegas a ser un participante más y de que la idea es que escuches y tomes las ideas de las familias y que puedan crear algo juntos sin que uno meta como lo que uno cree que se debe hacer...

[You have to put aside what you personally want... you come to be just one more participant and the idea is that you listen and take in the families’ ideas and that you can create something together, without just putting in what you think should be done.]

In their final interviews, both Jessica and Carmen expressed their desire to learn from families’ feedback. Jessica explained:

I don’t mind knowing that I’m not right all the time or perfect. You know what I mean, I always feel like it’s okay to tell me what I’m doing wrong because I want to fix it. And so even with the curriculum, I was also kind of excited for them to see this is what we have to work with, and you know, and this is the goal...I was excited to share and I was hoping they would give some feedback and criticisms and change things because that’s a valuable input. Yeah, I’m happy to get the help there.

Carmen described how feedback from families helped her redesign a unit she had developed but found difficult to teach.. She said: “...es la oportunidad de que te den retroalimentación... y que

te muestren cosas que tú no pensaste. Entonces es finalmente mejorarlas, porque pues tú ya lo viste y es el dicho de que tres cabezas piensan más que una. [It's the opportunity for them to give you feedback... and for them to show you things that you didn't think of. So ultimately you make it better, since you had already seen it and it's that saying that three heads think better than one.]” This learner’s stance—humility, openness to learning from families, and willingness to let go of control—shaped teachers’ participation in co-design. As explored more in the next chapter, it also invited deeper trust and connection with families

Teachers—embracing their identity as learners—also highlighted the supports they thought were needed in learning to engage with co-design. Carmen suggested that having both a step-by-step vision of co-design and concrete examples to learn from would help teachers embrace co-design, and Marina highlighted the importance of professional development in learning to work with families. Jessica mentioned that having another teacher participate in her circles was helpful to her and that she thought it would be helpful to other teachers, “like someone else that they can discuss what's going to happen and then they might just need that support, because I do hear other teachers say that they get very nervous. They don't like parents in their room.” Collaboration thus was positioned as an essential support in stepping into co-design.

Teachers also emphasized the value of learning from one another within the inquiry group, both for generating new ideas about family engagement and for developing critical consciousness around equity issues in dual-language programs. In their midyear interviews, multiple teachers cited specific ideas shared by other teachers that had stuck with them. Renata and Carmen described being inspired by Francisca’s plan to bring families into her classroom on Fridays to share cultural games with the students. Jessica appreciated seeing Renata’s letter home

to families asking for volunteers who spoke Spanish. Ximena loved Carmen's idea of having students bring in dichos, or sayings, from their homes. Francisca talked excitedly about Carmen's plan to create a class recipe book with family recipes, discussing how much culture is passed on in the kitchen. This cross-seeding of family engagement ideas and strategies between teachers from different dual-language schools was emphasized in both the midyear and final teacher interviews.

Another theme that emerged as teachers reflected on their learning in the inquiry groups was the value of sharing perspectives across different dual-language contexts. These conversations were particularly illuminating because of the stark socioeconomic differences among the five schools represented in the study. Francisca and Renata taught in schools where most families were relatively affluent, and Latine parents were more likely to have stable incomes and documented immigration status. Carmen and Ximena worked in a school characterized by considerable socioeconomic diversity among Latine families. In contrast, Marina and Jessica taught in schools serving largely working-class communities, where many families were recent immigrants, often undocumented. Teachers reflected on the disparate effects of Trump's 2025 changes to immigration enforcement policies across their school sites. Renata explained:

...la última reunión que tuvimos a raíz de de todo el clima político y todo eso, pues sí, fue muy impactante de conocer que a pesar de que la preocupación y el miedo que están presentes en muchas de las poblaciones, pues hay poblaciones que son mucho más vulnerables que otras y saber que en otras escuelas están teniendo que hacer varios planes para cambios que de verdad son necesarios. Este fue muy impactante, ¿no? Fue memorable de una manera un poco triste. Pero también es un recordatorio de las

inequidades en el distrito. [...the last meeting that we had, discussing the political climate and all of that, it was very impactful to know that, in spite of the fact that worry and fear are present across these groups, there are groups that are much more vulnerable than others, and to know that other schools are having to make various plans for changes that are really necessary. That was very impactful, right? It was memorable in a bit of a sad way. But also it's a reminder of the inequities in the district.] (Midyear Interview)

Francisca, also working at a relatively privileged school site, described the impact it had on her to see the realities of teachers like Marina and Jessica whose families struggled with poverty:

Trabajar con maestras... que están trabajando con pobreza. Yo estoy en un colegio privilegiado y digamos que la pobreza es invisible en mi colegio—la existe, la hay, pero es invisible, las bolsitas de ayuda se esconden, que nadie se entere, ¿no? Entonces la pobreza es invisible. Pero lo que ellas tienen que... verlas llorar por sus familias, me impactó muchísimo. [Working with teachers... who are working with poverty. I am at a privileged school and we could say that poverty is invisible at my school—it exists, it's there, but it's invisible, the charity bags are hidden so nobody sees them, right? So poverty is invisible. But what they [the other teachers] are dealing with... to see them cry for their families, that made a huge impact on me.] (Midyear Interview)

Francisca reflected that learning from and alongside teachers in less affluent school contexts deepened her awareness not only of the relative privilege of her own school community, but also of the ways that the economic struggles of some families at her school could remain hidden from view. Marina similarly explained that seeing the differences among the school contexts both opened her mind and also fueled her commitment to family engagement:

Pues ver los contextos tan diferentes de las escuelas como que también siento que te ayuda a abrir el panorama un chorro. Siento también que, pues quieras o no, te sigue desarrollando esa sensibilidad y te motivan más para seguir continuando esa colaboración con las familias también. [Well seeing the different contexts of the schools, I think it helps you open up your panorama a lot. I also think that, whether you want to or not, you continue developing that sensibility and it motivates you to continue collaborating with your families as well.] (Midyear Interview)

These conversations around political turmoil, immigration, and socioeconomic disparities provided opportunities for teachers to position themselves as inquirers, collaboratively developing more critical consciousness about the inequitable landscape of dual-language education and how their own family engagement work fit into this larger landscape.

Thus these bilingual teachers brought their raciolinguicized subjectivities (Daniels & Varghese, 2020) and their own identities as transnational mothers or as children of immigrant parents to their commitments to collaboration with transnational families. They also stepped into the role of learners/inquirers—open to learning both from families and each other in ways that facilitated the co-design process. While family engagement literature (e.g., Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020) has portrayed teachers as often disconnected from families and potentially unwilling to change their ways, therefore rendering co-design between teachers and families challenging, the teachers who participated in this study offered an alternative vision of solidarity and humility in connection with their families.

Parents' Personal Identities Beyond their Family Roles

Just as teachers brought other identities—as parents themselves, and as learners/inquirers—into the co-design process, families also connected to identities beyond their

narrow parenting roles as they explained their motivations for participating in co-design circles. Specifically, they referenced personal growth and personal satisfaction with participating in meaningful work, curiosity and desire to learn about something new, and connections to their past, current, and/or aspirational professional identities.

Several of the parents who were stay-at-home mothers at the time described their interest in the co-design circles in terms of doing something for themselves, outside of the house, beyond their parenting responsibilities. For example, Elena (Ximena)³ explained that:

Porque soy mamá de tiempo completo, entonces a veces decido hacer otras cosas, porque mis hijos como que son muy dependientes de mí. Entonces digo, “no, quiero hacer cosas por mí” y la verdad que participar en un proyecto que tenga que ver con la universidad así me llamó mucho la atención. [Because I’m a full time mom, sometimes I decide to do other things, because my kids are very dependent on me. So I say, “no, I want to do things for me,” and the truth is that participating in a project that has to do with the university really caught my attention.] (Ximena’s Circle 1)

Elena studied educational psychology in Mexico, but found herself unable to work in her field in the U.S., and missed the parts of her identity that she no longer explored as a stay-at-home mother. The circles provided her with opportunities to engage in the social and intellectual connection that she craved. Heidi, in Marina’s Circle 1, described feeling socially isolated as a very recent immigrant to the U.S., new to English and only recently reunited with her husband who had sent for his family after 4 years working in the U.S. on his own. She said, “ Mi esposo siempre me dice, ‘Estás en la casa—involúcrate en la escuela y ve a ver qué haces,’ dice ‘para que no te aburras.’ [My husband always tells me, ‘You’re at home all the time—get involved at

³ To distinguish which circles parents participated in, parents will be identified as Parent Pseudonym (Teacher Pseudonym), when needed for context.

the school and see what you can do,' he says 'so that you don't get bored.']" Heidi's husband's rationale for encouraging her to participate in school activities also had to do with breaking through the social isolation she was experiencing: "Le digo a mi a conocer personas y todo porque pues venimos y conocemos nada más a la familia de mi esposo, porque yo acá no tengo familia... [He tells me to go meet people and everything, because we came and we only know my husband's family, because I don't have family here...]" In different ways, both Elena (Ximena) and Heidi (Marina) chose to participate in the circles to explore possibilities beyond their stay-at-home parent roles and to connect with others.

Other parents described their excitement and motivation for participating in the project as rooted in the desire to do meaningful work that would benefit not only their own children but the wider community. Isabel, in Renata's Circle 1, for example, explained that she had chosen to participate in the project "Porque creo que es importante desde donde podemos y con lo que se pueda seguir aportando a nuestra comunidad. Es algo que va a beneficiar no solo a nuestros hijos, sino a todos los que vienen. [Because I believe that it's important for us, in whatever ways we can, to continue contributing to our community. This is something that's going to benefit not just our children, but those that come after them.]" Also during Renata's Circle 1, Paulina shared a similar sentiment: "también estoy de acuerdo que el poder involucrarnos en esto no solo tal vez nos beneficia directamente a nosotros, pero nosotros tenemos la oportunidad de poner nuestras ideas para que los demás se puedan beneficiar en el futuro. [I also agree that being able to involve ourselves in this doesn't just directly benefit us, but we have the opportunity to put in our ideas so that everyone else can benefit in the future.]" In her interview, Sonya (Carmen) jokingly but sincerely answered the question "Would you participate again in a similar experience?" with "Yes... because I love making history now!" Sonya shared that she loved learning about research

and meeting new people, and clearly saw her participation in the circles as contributing to a larger, and meaningful, project.

Parents as Learners and Professionals

Like Sonya, multiple parents also explained their enthusiasm for the project by connecting to their identities as learners. Paulina (Renata), Elena (Ximena), and Sonya (Carmen) all specifically described wanting to support, connect with, and/or learn about university-based research. Alexia explained in Ximena's Circle 1 that she had decided to participate in the project because she liked the word "co-design" and wanted to learn more about it, as she thought it would involve working in a united way to design something new. Juan (Jessica) explained in his interview that he had signed up without understanding what the word co-design meant or what it would entail, but "...conforme fue pasando el tiempo y los días, yo fui entendiendo más. Y fue diferente porque aprendí, aprendí algo nuevo. [...as time passed, as the days passed, I started understanding more. And it was different because I learned, I learned something new.]" Natalia (Ximena), in her interview, also expressed that she would like to continue engaging in co-design work because of the possibilities it offered for learning:

Me encantaría participar en todas las veces que se pueda, porque me encanta seguir aprendiendo. Como lo digo, ahorita no tengo el tiempo de poder volver a estudiar, pero siento de que cada cosita que hay en la escuela quiero como ir y aprender y hacer o preguntar y que me sigan enseñando y seguir participando. [I would love to participate as many times as I can, because I love to continue learning. As I say, right now I don't have the time to go back to school, but I feel like everything that happens in the school I want to go and learn and do it, or ask about it, and that they keep teaching me and I keep participating.]

In her interview, Natalia (Ximena) also connected this desire to learn to her role as a paraprofessional at Ximena's school, saying "Y necesito saber más, porque como también tengo a cargo niños y siempre estoy como en el constante o preguntando o queriendo aprender más. [And I need to know more, because I also have children I'm responsible for, and I'm constantly asking or wanting to learn more.]"

Other parents also made connections to their current or aspirational roles as educators. Sandra (Marina) worked as a preschool teacher and was in the process of applying for a district-run Head Start job while participating in the co-design circles. She explained in her interview that she benefited from the opportunity to get to know "más a fondo como está el sistema por dentro [more deeply how the system is from the inside]." She also connected the benefits of the circles to her professional development saying, "Me ayudó también a mí a darme ideas de cómo involucrar a mis familias en mi trabajo [It gave me ideas for how to involve the families at my job]." She thus asserted that participating in the circles wasn't just to benefit her own child, but also served a purpose for her as a professional educator and allowed her work to reach the larger community. Marcos (Carmen), who had recently become a stay-at-home dad, talked in the second circle about how he was hoping to get formally involved at his school as a recess monitor and possibly to run his own summer camps. He mentioned in his interview that participating in the co-design circles had inspired him to try to get involved at the district level in shaping the expanding dual-language program.

Other parents connected their participation in the circles to their past or current professional identities. Elena (Ximena) spoke passionately about her desire to work in her field again, and saw the co-design project as a way to reconnect to that side of herself. She had recently discovered that her academic credits might be valid in the U.S., and was excited that she

might be able to work again in the future. She vulnerably shared during Ximena's Circle 2, "Entonces estoy súper feliz porque o sea, yo pensaba que no tenía nada como para mí, o sea, personal. Entonces sentía yo, como estaba todo el tiempo en casa, pensaba que no había hecho nada con mi vida. [So I am super happy because I had thought I didn't have anything for me, I mean, personal. So I felt, since I was at home all the time, that I hadn't done anything with my life.]" The co-design circles created a space for Elena (Ximena) to engage intellectually and collaboratively with adults in ways she felt she needed, while also providing an opportunity to reflect on and imagine her future professional aspirations.

In his interview, Marcos (Carmen) also connected the co-design circles to his former career as an engineer, saying:

Viniendo de un mundo de ingeniería, me gustó la estructura en la que iniciamos primero con una evaluación de lo que existió, una buena definición del problema que estábamos atacando y luego la colaboración para encontrar más de una solución. Eso me fascinó. En vez de solo ser muy directos y no permitir una diversidad de pensamiento. Me gustó como también iteramos varias veces y como concluimos cual era la mejor solución. [Coming from the engineering world, I liked the structure where we started with an evaluation of what existed already, a good definition of the problem we were addressing, and then collaboration to find more than one solution. I loved this. Instead of just being direct and and not permitting diverse ways of thinking. I also liked how we iterated multiple times and how we decided on the best solution.]

Marta (Renata) in her interview similarly connected her participation in the co-design circles, which focused on poetry, to her emerging career as a writer and student of literature. She explained "Entonces para mí fue como una doble satisfacción involucrarme con un poquito de lo

que mi hija iba a hacer... y a su vez también poder aplicar algunas cosas que yo estoy trabajando en mi carrera. [So for me it was a double satisfaction: getting involved with a bit of what my daughter was going to do... and at the same time being able to apply a few things that I'm working on in my studies.]” Thus families cited many motivations and identities outside of the narrowly defined role of parents that brought them to and sustained them in the co-design circles; they found spaces for personal development, participation in meaningful work and learning, and extensions of their professional identities into co-design spaces.

Changing Visions of Family Engagement

In the previous sections of this chapter, I presented data that complicates conventional notions of teacher and parent identities by moving beyond their school-defined roles. This shift is significant because these more porous identity categories—for instance, as teachers identify as parents and parents as educators or professionals—created space for new kinds of relationships through co-design. In the following sections, I turn to the concept of family engagement itself, examining how both teachers and parents redefined it through the lens of co-design. Through the inquiry and then co-design process, teachers critiqued the current inequities in family engagement at their school sites and pushed for deeper, more meaningful ways to connect with families. As they participated in the project, both teachers and some parents began to frame engagement as political, particularly in response to the rapidly worsening climate around immigrant rights in the United States following Donald Trump’s 2025 inauguration. Teachers also recognized that addressing inequities in family engagement at their school sites required moving beyond simply inviting Latine families to participate, toward intentionally prioritizing their voices and presence—even when doing so challenged existing school norms. Finally, both teachers and parents highlighted how co-design differed from traditional approaches to family

engagement, especially in its active incorporation of parents' perspectives into outcomes that were immediately visible to all involved.

Critiquing Shallow Forms of Engagement

Through their intake interviews and during the first two inquiry sessions, teachers described a set of barriers to meaningful Latine family involvement often shared across contexts; they discussed issues like families' long work hours and limited schedule flexibility, inaccessible school locations and lack of transportation, logistical issues around completing background checks, and unfriendly front office reception. Teachers described how standard attempts to bring families into classrooms or into the school resulted primarily in the participation of more privileged, frequently white, families. Marina stated “se ve que las familias que más están activas en la escuela son familias que pues sí que tienen más privilegio [you see that the more active families in the school are families that have more privilege]. (Intake Interview)” Ximena explained that she had tried to set up opportunities for parents to come in and support reading centers in Spanish, and “I had a turnout, but most of them are just English-speaking parents who were coming in, and I never had a Latino parent walk in to help, unfortunately. (Intake Interview)” Renata shared that even at her school site, where many Latine families are privileged professionals, the families that come in the most to volunteer are still the primarily white families who live closest to the school and have flexible work schedules. In regards to her school, Francisca said that patterns of exclusion towards Latine parents persisted despite the school teaching in Spanish and celebrating Latine culture: “Es como queremos tu cultura, pero sin ti. [It's like we want your culture, but without you.] (Intake Interview)”

As the project went on, teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with the shallow forms of parent engagement that they observed in their school sites, and shared visions for deepening

family engagement, particularly through co-design. For example, in her midyear interview, Renata said she was happy to have more parent volunteers in her classroom who came in on a weekly basis to help out, but that she felt that was not enough: “Peor es no tener nada de presencia de padres, pero al mismo tiempo siento que es como una manera muy superficial de tener presencia de los padres. [It would be worse not to have parent engagement, but at the same time I feel like it’s a really superficial way of having parent engagement.]” Ximena, in her final interview, critiqued school-wide forms of engagement that didn’t reach into actual classrooms, saying “as a school, building leaders... were probably doing family engagement by doing multicultural night. But that's not enough. Parents want direct access to the classroom.” She continued her critique, saying:

I can’t get my mind off of that piece of the school saying, “but we have family engagement, what are you talking about? We reach out to our families; if we're not hearing from them, we reach out. We hope that the teachers are reaching out.” Exactly. Are they? No, no, they're not.

In her final interview, Jessica talked about how the co-design circles had felt like a much deeper form of engagement compared to listening sessions and committees where parents don’t see the direct results of their feedback. She said:

So I like what you did, having the board up and making the changes while they're speaking like, “oh, you're saying this and we're changing it.” Like literally “what you're saying we are doing,” you know. Um, so we're not just saying, “oh, yeah, we want your feedback” and then you're not listening. Because that's happened too many times on different levels of things. You know like “we want your feedback, be on this committee,” and it's the same people that are always being heard. And, you know, why am I here?

In her intake interview, Carmen described her hopes that co-design would provoke deeper critical listening to families and result in curriculum changes, saying, “las familias están siendo escuchadas... que esta lección es el fruto de que alguien dijo ‘yo creo que esto es importante.’ Y está siendo validado y que está siendo parte del currículum. [the families are being listened to... that this lesson is the result of someone saying ‘I believe this is important.’ And its being validated and becoming part of the curriculum.]”

Through their participation in inquiry and, ultimately, co-design, teachers began to question not only entrenched inequities in their schools’ family engagement practices, but also whether common approaches such as classroom volunteering, multicultural nights, listening sessions, and committee work were sufficient to cultivate the deeper forms of partnership with families that they envisioned.

Engagement as Political Resistance

In addition to critiquing inequitable and shallow forms of family engagement, teachers during the inquiry sessions considered that simply including and inviting Latine families to participate in their classes would not be enough. In fact, multiple teachers shared that they had opted to give priority to Latine family involvement—sometimes deprioritizing or limiting the involvement of white families in subtle ways that broke with established practices in their schools. This constituted a critical, counterhegemonic stance that drew upon these teachers’ critical consciousness.

Another change that took place over the course of the project was a shift among teachers and parents towards seeing Latine family engagement as inherently political, particularly in the worsening climate after Trump’s 2024 election and 2025 presidential inauguration. As fear of ICE raids grew across the school communities, teachers and parents considered both the

increased challenge around conducting projects like this one, as well as the increased importance, in their minds, of this type of work.

During teacher inquiry sessions, teachers shared strategies they used to give priority to Latine families in their engagement practices. For example, Ximena (Inquiry Session 2) said that when planning fieldtrips, she would choose families to reach out to directly and give priority to Latine families that she knew might need some of the limited spaces on the school bus. Marina and Francisca both described reaching out specifically to Latine families for types of volunteer work that were culturally connected. Francisca (Inquiry Session 2) discussed inviting Latine families to help with the art appreciation program, specifically so they could share about Latine artists like Frida Kahlo, Rayo, and Botero. Marina (Inquiry Session 2) described wanting to invite Latine families to create the ofrenda, or altar, for the Day of the Dead, and that this sometimes put her in conflict with the PTA: “yo todavía peleando con el PTA diciendo ‘la ofrenda la tienen que poner las familias latinas, no las blancas.’ Y creo que van a terminar las blancas. [I’m still fighting with the PTA, saying ‘the altar should be put up by the Latine families, not the white families.’ And I think it’s going to end being the white families.]”

Renata used the inquiry sessions to consider how to selectively invite Spanish-speaking parent volunteers, particularly within her relatively privileged school context, where some white families readily took up every opportunity to engage. During the second session, she considered opening the opportunity to all families, with the stipulation that, because instruction in her classroom was conducted exclusively in Spanish, volunteers would need to be able to lead centers in Spanish. At the same time, she wanted to reach out more directly and personally to the Latine families in her class, emphasizing that they were especially welcome to visit regularly to read books from their home countries and engage with students.

She expressed concern about potential pushback, worrying she might face criticism for prioritizing Latine families' involvement—particularly if others perceived the approach as unfair or preferential. By the third inquiry session, however, she shared that she had implemented her plan: she first sent personalized messages to specific Latine families inviting their participation, and then followed up with a broader letter—reviewed by her principal—to room parents for distribution to all families. Securing administrative approval allowed her to feel she had taken appropriate precautions against accusations of favoritism, while still intentionally prioritizing the engagement of Latine families.

Renata shared her letter with Jessica, who was excited to do something similar in her own classroom. In her midyear interview, Jessica talked about learning from Renata, saying: “I do like how [Renata] framed that. She's like, hey, I need Hispanic families in my classroom... And so she had a plan for it. You know. It wasn't like a blanket letter to everybody and hopefully getting the parents that she wanted. Like she targeted what she needed.”

Marina also described how she found ways to communicate more directly with her Latine families. She created a WhatsApp group through which she sent news and opportunities, and occasionally additional materials for students to work on. For school events, knowing that many families did not use email, she reached out via text and phone calls to personally invite them. She also made a point of arriving at school early in the mornings to spend time with families in person. Ximena similarly explained that she felt a need to focus on Latine families. She said, “we chose the specific families, and for me it was because I want to focus on native Spanish-speaking parents, because they don't get these opportunities to be involved in schools. Especially not at this leadership level.” Thus teachers conceived of their choices of how to engage families, and

which families to reach out to first or most strategically, as inherently political—and as an extension of their values around Latine family engagement.

Trump's 2025 U.S. presidential inauguration took place right before the final teacher inquiry session, sending shock waves through the inquiry group. In that fifth session, teachers shared their fears and frustrations, as well as snapshots of how the climates at their schools were changing. Renata said she felt, “Enojada, frustrada, muy triste. No puedo creer que esté pasando todo esto. [Angry, frustrated, very said. I can't believe that all of this is happening.] (Inquiry Session 5)” Marina choked up while she described an emergency meeting at her school that day to discuss how they would handle potential ICE raids:

Pues vamos a cambiar muchas cosas. Van a recoger a los niños adentro de la escuela. Hay mucho miedo. Y noté también mucho miedo dentro del staff, porque pues hay mucha comunidad latina también dentro del staff. Y lo que nos estaba diciendo un compañero es que a su amigo igual le tocó una redada y aunque tenía ciudadanía se lo llevaron, ¿no?... Y pues sí, me hace como increíble que esto esté pasando. O sea, como que no lo puedo creer, eso de estar hablando y “¿que si se meten?” “¿y cómo vienen vestidos?” Y “¿podemos grabar?” [Well we're going to change a lot of things. Students are going to be picked up now from inside the school. There is so much fear. And I noticed a lot of fear among the staff too, because there's a lot of staff from the Latine community. And what one coworker was telling us is that his friend was in a raid and even though he is a citizen, they still took him, right?... It's insane to me that this happening. I can't believe it, to be talking about “And if they come into the school?” “And how are they dressed?” And “Can we record?”] (Inquiry Session 5)

Ximena shared in her midyear interview, right after that inquiry session, that Latine parents at her school had pulled their children from the school play because they didn't want their students walking up to the high school theater, and they didn't want to be out at night. At her school, the Día del Niño event, originally scheduled as an evening event, had been canceled with the idea of rescheduling it during the school day. Sonya (Carmen), a volunteer with the Latine parent group who would have hosted that event, explained, "We didn't want to invite all the Latino families at the same place at the school, especially with everything that was going on." Natalia (Ximena), a paraprofessional at Lakeshore, said:

Ha cambiado demasiado, demasiado en la escuela... porque hemos tenido que cancelar eventos, porque los padres no se sentían seguros de ir a la escuela y de llevar a sus hijos a eventos escolares. Últimamente tuvimos la Noche de Cultura y siempre esa ha sido uno de nuestros eventos donde ha habido muchísima gente y no he sentido que ha habido tanta gente como otros años. [It's changed so much, so much at the school... because we've had to cancel events, because the parents didn't feel safe coming to school and bringing their children to school events. We recently had Multicultural Night and that's always been one of our best attended events, and I didn't feel that there were as many people as in other years.]

In her midyear interview, Ximena expressed fear that this change in parent trust and engagement would undermine the co-design project, saying:

I was gonna post a question around like, how is this going to affect our work with family co-design circles, because the families that we want to work with, our Latino families, they're the ones who don't want to come out right now. I was wondering how is this work going to be possible, right?

Carmen in her midyear interview, however, reaffirmed her stance that in this political climate this work was more important than ever:

Carmen: Y más ahora con justo con lo que mencionaste. O sea, con el clima político. Yo dije no, es que justo es el momento para que las familias vengan a la escuela pues entonces.

Grace: Que se sientan a gusto y que sepan que nuestras escuelas siguen siendo lugares seguros, ¿no?

Carmen: Así es.

[Carmen: And now even more so with what you just mentioned. I mean, with the political climate. I said no, this is just the moment for families to come to school then.

Grace: So that they feel comfortable and know that our schools continue to be safe places, right?

Carmen: Exactly.]

While teachers shared concerns about whether families would want to participate in co-design circles in the current climate, they ultimately found that recruiting families was not challenging and that parents were perhaps even more eager to participate than they would have been in other circumstances. Paulina (Renata), for example, explained in her interview that projects that uplift Latine culture are more essential than ever in these times of oppression and erasure:

Yo creo que este proyecto con este ambiente tan negativo políticamente que tenemos...

Yo creo que este tipo de proyectos lo hace todavía más importante, porque es mucho más importante para mí que los niños, que todos los niños vean que la gente [Latina] es parte de la comunidad y que tienen un rol en la comunidad muy importante. Entonces es

mucho más importante que nosotros estemos siendo incluidos en este proceso... Y entonces este proyecto de círculos que tú has organizado se me hace todavía mucho más importante, porque realmente nos involucra a muchas mamás latinas para poder enseñarles a estos estudiantes lo importante que es lo que sabemos, lo que hacemos, y cómo podemos nosotras ayudarles a que ellos crezcan. [I think that this project with this very negative political environment that we have... I think that this type of project becomes even more important, because it's much more important for me that the children, that all the children see that Latine people are part of the community and have an important role in the community. So it's much more important that we're being included in this process... And so this project and the circles you've organized seems much more important to me, because it involves a lot of Latina mothers being able to teach students to value what we know, what we do, and how we can help them grow.]

In Ximena's Circle 1, Alexia brought up the event cancellations and ICE raids, and made the point that creating a unit like the identity unit they were redesigning would teach students that all cultures are valuable and to respect and take care of each other. She talked about the importance of working together as Latinas to support each other and be in solidarity as well, saying "sí, acoplarnos, porque pues somos culturas unidas con acentos y todo. Pues nos tenemos que co-diseñar, rediseñar o de alguna manera crecer. [yes, connect up with each other, because we are united cultures with accents and everything. We need to co-design, redesign, and somehow grow.]" Parents and teachers resonated with this sentiment, describing that the ability to reshape curriculum to celebrate Latine culture, and for families to show up in schools and share their knowledge, pushed back on the creeping invisibility and fear that Latine families in the U.S. were feeling at that moment. As Elena (Ximena) put it in her interview, "con tantas cosas,

cambios políticos, así pareciera que no somos importantes, ¿no? [with all these things, these political changes, it would seem like we aren't important, right?]" Engagement that gave priority to Latine families, and that put their opinions and culture as important and at the center, was thus a deeply political act.

Engagement as Action

When asked to describe their experiences with co-design, parents highlighted in their interviews that the co-design experience had felt different to them than their previous family engagement experiences. They felt taken into account in a new way, and that their opinions were welcomed. Not only were they listened to, but they were listened to in a way that generated immediate and concrete changes and made them feel like part of a team. This constituted a type of critical listening to families that moved beyond empathy and learning across differences, into the realm of action and change.

The theme of being able to give opinions came up across parent interviews. For example, when Alondra (Jessica) was asked what made the co-design experience different from other experiences she'd had with her children's schooling, she laughed out loud and said, "Ah, pues ¡el hecho de que nos hayan pedido opinión! [Well, the fact that they asked our opinion!]

(Interview)" Elena (Ximena) explained:

hay veces que piensas que a lo mejor no puedes dar opiniones o que solo lo que dice la maestra es lo que se va a hacer. Entonces pues se siente bien porque dices ah bueno, sí pues los papás también pueden, podemos colaborar a los proyectos de la maestra y pues que nos tome en cuenta. [there are times that you think maybe you can't give opinions or that what the teacher says is what's going to happen. So it feels good because you say, oh

ok, the parents can also, we can also collaborate on projects with the teacher and she'll take us into account.] (Interview)

Heidi (Marina) shared a similar reflection:.

Llegas a la escuela. Ahí en la escuela, pues no opinas, vas a obedecer pues porque eres colaboradora y solamente si necesitan de tu ayuda pues te dicen oye, necesitamos esto aquí, aquí. Y acá y en esta colaboración que hicimos con Miss Marina, pues fue muy diferente, porque ya pudimos dar nuestro punto de vista, nuestras ideas y pues es un poquito más abierta la experiencia. Porque ya nosotros pudimos colaborar haciendo una clase. Entonces, pues eso es mucho mejor, ¿no? [You get to the school. There in the school, you don't share opinions. You obey because you're helping out and only if they need your help they'll say, hey, we need this here and here. And here in the collaboration that we did with Miss Marina, it was really different, because we could give our point of view, our ideas, and it's a more open experience. Because we could collaborate making a lesson. So this is much better, right?] (Interview)

Marcos (Carmen) echoed:

La diferencia número uno es que mi opinión es escuchada y genera un cambio. Muchas veces como voluntario solo vas y haces lo que se te dice... Y no hay una forma recíproca de dar feedback. Entonces, por ejemplo, si voy a la clase a leerles un libro. Este es el libro, y este es el ... que tienes que leer, okay. Un ejemplo más bonito hubiera sido. "Hey, mira, aquí hay dos libros. Cuál quisieras leer? O si tú quieres un tercero, cuál quisieras?" Como que te motiva más no solo llegar a hacer el trabajo, sino ser parte del trabajo. [The biggest difference is that my opinion is listened to and it creates a change. Most of the time as a volunteer, you just go and you do what they tell you... There's no reciprocal

way of given feedback. So for example, if I go to school to read them a book. This is the book, and this is... what you have to read, right. A better example would be, “look, there are two books. Which do you want to read? Or if you want a third one, which do you want?” It motivates you not just to show up to do the work, but to be part of the work.]

(Interview)

Thus parents from all five circles agreed that co-design had represented a new experience for them—one where instead of simply following directions and helping the teacher, they were able to be actively involved in collaborating and shaping something as co-experts whose opinions and vision mattered and would result in changes to classroom instruction.

Another point that multiple parents commented on was that, in contrast to typical engagement forms like surveys or listening sessions, the co-design circles produced results that were immediately observable and that parents themselves could participate in—each co-designed unit was taught right after the circles, and the parents involved in the co-design were often involved directly as classroom volunteers, supported their children with unit activities, and participated in final celebrations. Paulina (Renata) in her interview expressed delight in “el hecho de que pudiéramos ver resultados así luego luego. [the fact that we could see the results right away.]” Carolina (Renata) commented:

lo que más se me quedó grabado es primero, el entusiasmo que teníamos como las mamás del curso, por participar y dar nuestra opinión. Y lo concreto que fue de hacer activamente este círculo y esta tarea que Renata ya está aplicando y ver como el resultado concreto a corto plazo. [what really stuck with me was first, the enthusiasm that all of us moms had, to participate and give our opinions. And how concrete it was to actively do

the circle and create the work that Renata is applying and see the concrete result in a short time period.]

Thus through both the inquiry sessions and the co-design circles, teachers and parents critiqued traditional notions of family engagement, rearticulated Latine family engagement as a political project, and celebrated the active way that co-design sought families' opinions in service of concrete, immediate curriculum changes.

Conclusion

In this findings chapter, I presented data that address two of the study's research questions: RQ1 (How does teacher inquiry and curriculum co-design reshape bilingual teachers' and Latine families' understandings of family engagement?) and RQ2 (How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?). In addressing these questions, I sought to trouble simplistic notions of who teachers and parents are—i.e., which identities they bring into collaborative spaces with each other—and what family engagement is.

This chapter presents teachers and parents as multifaceted, coming to and engaging in co-design work through the lens of their different identities. Far from the stereotype of culturally disengaged white teachers and adversarial, disinterested parents (Hong, 2019), we see teachers and parents here slipping in and out of identities as porous categories (Bang & Voussougi, 2016) that created abundant space for learning and connection. Teachers connected with parents from their shared identities as transnational parents and/or children of immigrant parents, and approached co-design as learners and inquirers. Parents connected with teachers and with the co-design processes through lenses of personal growth and their own present or future professional aspirations. Both teachers and parents consistently positioned themselves as

learners. Seeing both teachers and parents as bearers of multiple and flexible identities beyond their school-defined roles creates more space for the transformative, radically asset-based approach to both families and teachers that this study sought to promote.

Just as it troubled traditional notions of parent and teacher identities, the data presented here also works to unsettle narrow definitions of family engagement by showing how bilingual teachers began to question what they perceived as shallow family engagement practices, and how both teachers and families reconceived of Latine family engagement as political—as taking on increased importance in the current environment of erasure and oppression of Latine people in the U.S. Far from seeing family engagement as an apolitical process that casts parents as simple helpers who move school agendas forward through volunteer work—such as making copies, chaperoning fieldtrips, and listening and learning at back-to-school nights (Zeichner et al., 2016)—family engagement through co-design is explored here as creating space for collaborative and critical re-design, in a way that creates immediate effects.

This repositioning and redefinition of teachers, parents, and family engagement has implications for dual-language education. It suggests that traditional family engagement literature from non dual-language settings may be less relevant in dual-language contexts when teachers share important racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds with families, as it may underestimate possibilities for connection and understanding. By recognizing the complex identities of Latine parents across backgrounds, countries, and social class, this work also suggests that research into family involvement in dual-language settings would benefit from creating more complex pictures of who the Latine families in dual-language programs really are (Gonzales, 2024). Finally, framing family engagement and co-design as political aligns with the call for critical listening in dual-language education (Palmer et al., 2019) while also extending it,

suggesting that listening to families is essential but insufficient if it does not lead to collaborative action and concrete change.

Chapter 6: Transforming Power Relationships

In this second findings chapter, I present data exploring how the co-design process reshaped expertise and transformed traditional school power dynamics—particularly by positioning bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) and transnational families as critical pedagogues (Gonzales et al., 2023). I begin by examining how teachers, both before and during the co-design circles, positioned themselves as curriculum designers, challenging the literacy curricula they were assigned and advocating for collaborative changes to make the materials more rigorous and culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017). Next, I analyze how these teachers reflected on sharing power in curriculum redesign during the co-design circles, as well as how they considered navigating potential power dynamics among the parents.

I then explore the role that developing *confianza*⁴ (Newcomer & Puzio, 2016) and fostering new types of *convivencia*⁵ (Flores, 2021) played in facilitating these shifts in typical school power relationships. I explore how teachers demonstrated vulnerability (Bhansari et al., 2024) in making their curricular decisions and teaching practices public for parents to critique and change. This vulnerability generated a type of *confianza* that changed the ways that parents perceived and interacted with their children’s teachers, both during the co-design circles and after. Additionally, the co-design circles fostered the creation of *convivencia* as a type of third space (Gutiérrez, 2008)—where “the formal and informal, the official and unofficial spaces of the learning environment—intersect, creating the potential for authentic interaction and a shift in the social organization of learning and what counts as knowledge” (p. 152). Existing between traditional school spaces for parent participation and traditional home spaces for community and

⁴ *Confianza* is a Spanish word meaning “trust.”

⁵ *Convivencia* is a Spanish word with no precise translation in English. Literally translated as “living together” this word captures a sense of positive time spent together through connection, or communalism.

cultural knowledge sharing, the co-design circles blurred these boundaries. As parents and teachers, along with myself as the researcher, revealed silly and deeply serious details of their lives, laughed together over shared food, and offered each other concrete forms of support, we also blended school and home knowledge and leveled power structures that typically configure parent-teacher relationships.

Finally, this leveling of power allowed parents to emerge as critical pedagogues (Gonzales et al., 2023), showcasing their expertise across multiple domains as they critiqued and redesigned curriculum. They positioned themselves as language experts, as pedagogical experts, as well as authorities on the values that should be taught to their children in school. Parents made concrete contributions that aligned the curriculum more closely with their community's realities, enhanced the authenticity and accessibility of the Spanish used, and grounded content in their cultural knowledge and values. They expressed strong confidence in the value of their contributions and highlighted how the co-design process fostered collaborative, collective expertise.

In exploring these themes, I address several of the study's research questions, particularly RQ2 (How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?) and RQ3 (What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?). I found that teachers and parents experienced the co-design circles as offering new opportunities to transform power relationships through inviting *confianza* and fostering *convivencia* between families and teachers. This intentional and organic shift in power relationships allowed parents to reposition themselves as experts and pedagogues who could make key changes to improve dual-language curriculum, ultimately co-creating units that connected with culture, engaged families, and better fit their communities' needs.

Teachers Shifting and Sharing Expertise

The teachers in the co-design circles engaged in two key practices that challenged traditional school norms around expertise. First, they positioned themselves as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988) by taking ownership of the curriculum design process. Rather than seeing themselves as technicians whose role was simply to implement curriculum with fidelity, these teachers—both before and during the inquiry groups and throughout the co-design circles—critically engaged with their literacy curricula, questioning and responding to its content. They considered the need to adapt curricula, whether commercially produced or teacher-created. This pre-existing inquiry-oriented stance toward curriculum (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015) not only prepared them to engage parents in the co-design process but also provided a foundation for identifying the problems of practice around which the co-design circles were centered. Second, teachers reshaped expertise through the intentional work of leveling power dynamics—considering how to share authority with parents during co-design and pondering how to ensure that all voices were included and valued within the circles.

Teachers Speaking Back to Curriculum

Teachers leveraged their critical consciousness to evaluate whether the curricula that they were given would meet the needs of their students. For example, Marina, as a first year kindergarten teacher, critiqued the kindergarten version of the commercial curriculum (ARC) that her school had adopted for its lack of focus on identity and culture:

en kínder era sobre “escribe una narrativa de este animal, escribe sobre...” Todo animales, zoología, que es bonito, pero... siento que por el assimilation y todo eso, es súper importante hacer trabajo de identidad en grados pequeños, o sea, desde chiquititos... [In kinder it was about “write a narrative about this animal, write about...”]

Everything about animals, zoology, which is lovely, but... I think because of assimilation and everything, it's really important to do identity work in the lower grades, with young kids... (Intake Interview)

In response, Marina approached the principal to request permission to develop her own set of units to use in place of the ARC curriculum. She framed her request academically as well, noting that ARC was time-consuming and that, in kindergarten, she wanted students to have ample time for literacy centers. Drawing on her experience as an instructional assistant in the multilingual department, she observed that many students entered first grade without knowing all their letters. Marina argued that her own units would not only be more culturally responsive but also provide more opportunities for literacy skill development.

Over the summer, she and Renata co-created an “Origin of My Name” unit, which she planned to use along with other units she was developing. She began the school year with a “My Multilingual Superpowers” unit, highlighting how multilingualism allowed students to support their families and communities. Later in the year, she co-created one of the units she had proposed, the poetry unit, with her co-design team.

Different teachers in the project experienced different types of pressure around curriculum—some given free reign to adapt curriculum, some expected to create their own units, and some expected to teach commercial curriculum with fidelity. Jessica’s school had also adopted the ARC curriculum and the expectation was that teachers would teach it with fidelity. However, she discovered that she had some freedom to change aspects of her “Jobs in the Community” unit in ways that also connected to critical consciousness. Particularly, she found that the jobs covered in the unit did not represent parents’ real jobs in their community, and also that the culminating opinion writing project was problematic. It asked students to choose one job

and argue that that job was the most valuable job in the community, artificially imposing hierarchy and value judgements that could be harmful, particularly to those whose jobs are deemed less valuable.

In her final interview, Jessica reflected on how she explained the changes she made in her curriculum through co-design to the ARC trainer who came in to observe and train them on the unit: “You know like I told them like, Well, we're going to make this as an end product and we're having parents come in... I didn't say that we changed [all the graphic organizers]... we did say, you know the graphic organizers, it's just like too much for some of the kids.” Jessica chose to move strategically, highlighting the value of parent involvement, explaining the shift to the final project, and downplaying how many of the unit’s graphic organizers they had chosen to alter.

Ximena and Carmen both taught in a context where dual-language teachers were expected to create their own interdisciplinary, thematic units that aimed to teach literacy across both languages by incorporating science and social studies themes. These were referred to as Biliteracy Unit Frameworks (BUFs), and were created through trainings connected to Beeman & Urow’s (2013) biliteracy model. While this entailed a great deal of work, it also gave teachers the freedom to redesign their units as long as they covered the standards and connected explicitly to the three pillars of dual-language instruction (Howard et al., 2007). Carmen discussed her process of curriculum creation as one that is iterative and open to feedback, making it ideal for co-design: “siempre pienso que como el currículum debe ser relevante, qué más relevante que invitar familias y que escuchar su punto de vista y qué es lo que piensan. O sea, no hay más relevante que eso. [I always think that curriculum should be relevant, what is more relevant than inviting families and listening to their points of view and what they think. I mean, there’s nothing

more relevant than that.] (Final Interview)” She explained that every year, she changed her teaching to suit her students and continued refining her lessons and units:

...inclusive aunque un año estuvo súper buena, el segundo año le tienes que hacer modificaciones porque son otros estudiantes, porque se te ocurren otras cosas que cambió algo. Entonces la verdad es que no son escritas en piedra. Todas las lecciones tienen manera de mejorarse. [Even if one year it went really well, the next year you have to modify it because there are different students, because other things occurred to you that changed something. So the truth is they aren't written in stone. All lessons can be improved.] (Final Interview)

Positioning herself as a designer of curriculum, in her final interview Carmen talked about her experience going to a district training where she was shocked to see teachers in English-medium programs act resistant to the idea of creating their own units. She explained that in her view dual-language teachers would never act that way because they have always been expected to create curriculum in Spanish. Carmen brought her commitment to iteratively improving her teaching into her co-design circles, where she solicited feedback on her unsuccessful family recipes project from the previous year.

Ximena also made her critique of her BUFs clear both to me and to parents. The set of units she was expected to teach had been passed down by the previous fourth grade teacher. She explained in her midyear interview, “I've already voiced it to the DL coordinator that my BUFs, all the BUFs that I have, have been written by a white male, they're just not authentic.” She reiterated this dilemma to her parents in her co-design circles, inviting them to help recreate the identity unit in a way more reflective of the community. In her Circle 2 she explained, “El currículum, no lo escribí yo, sino un hombre blanco. Y yo creo que pues allí hay una

desconexión... no refleja las culturas que tenemos aquí en las clases, principalmente la cultura latina. O se, no es como la misma manera que nosotros aprendemos. [The curriculum, I didn't write it, it was written by a white man. And I think that there's a disconnection there... it doesn't reflect the cultures that we have in the class, principally Latine culture. It's not the same way that we learn.]" Ximena described changes that she had already made to bring her curriculum more into alignment with the identities and needs of the students in her class; she then involved parents directly in this process.

Thus these bilingual teachers entered the co-design process already seeing themselves as curriculum designers capable of critiquing, selecting, replacing, rewriting, and iterating on their own curricula to make them more accessible or culturally responsive for students. As such, these bilingual teachers already acted as transformative intellectuals, shifting conventional norms that position teachers as implementers rather than designers of curriculum.

Teachers Reflecting on Power and Participation

Another way that teachers enacted critical consciousness and shifted expertise in this study was through reflecting on power when preparing for, participating in, and reflecting on their co-design circles. In the midyear interviews, as teachers considered co-design, some teachers wondered about how they would get parents to step up as equal participants, and how they themselves could work to step down from their typical position of authority. Jessica for example pondered, "how do I make myself not try to structure everything you know? How do we break that part? Because I know they would look to me to tell them what to do." Teachers recognized how easy it would be to fall into traditional roles—exerting authority over parents and limiting their participation.

However, in their final interviews, teachers reflected on how they had been able to shift power and expertise, decentering themselves and authentically working alongside parents.

Ximena said, “I totally felt like I wasn't even a teacher. I completely forgot my role. Like I wasn't thinking about like ‘oh, I'm the expert.’ Because the parents, I really let them take on the discussion and I was doing my best to be in tune.” Jessica, in her final interview, reflected back on her previous concerns, saying: “So I do think that like this was one of the harder parts. Not for me to give up power, but to... I didn't know how to really let them feel like they had it. You know, to be like really comfortable to know that they did, and I feel like they did in the end. We did get to that point.” Jessica recalled how parents started out relating in a somewhat timid way, but by the end were calling out critiques, sharing honest opinions, and confidently proposing rewrites.

Marina and Renata both expressed in their final interviews that they felt that power had been shared naturally between the co-design participants. Marina said, “todo se dio muy natural... No sentí que hubiera cero fricción ni entre ellas ni entre nosotras. Siento que que todas estábamos como muy abiertas a colaborar [everything developed very naturally... I didn't feel like there was any friction between them or between us and them. I feel like we were all very open to collaborating].” Renata remarked that it had been helpful to frame the co-design circles explicitly to parents as a space where hierarchies were leveled: “Si sucede o no es otra cosa, pero que se entienda que la intención es que todos somos como co-experts [If it happens or not is a different question, but that they understand that the intention is that we are all co-experts.]” In reflecting on the co-design circles, Renata expressed pride in how she had moderated her own participation and how families felt free to express themselves:

...siento que no se sintieron las familias para nada intimidadas... Yo, por ejemplo, al principio yo sentía como que “ay, tal vez no van a soltar tanto”... Yo tenía miedo que se sintieran así, como que “ay, no puedo expresar tanto lo que quiero ver... porque pues aquí está la maestra,” no sé, y siento que no fue el caso... Realmente yo no quería decir tanto porque realmente quería que saliera más de ellos. [... I feel like the families weren't intimidated at all... For example, at the begin I felt like “ay, maybe they won't really let loose that much”... I was afraid that they'd feel like “ay, I can't express that much of what I'd like to see... because here is the teacher,” I don't know, and I feel like that wasn't the case... Really I didn't want to say that much because I really wanted it to come more from them.]

Yet while the teachers overall believed they had created space for families to act as co-experts and shifted power and expertise in their direction, multiple teachers commented on the power dynamics between parents within the circles, expressing the need to further consider ways to equalize participation between parent participants. Ximena, for example, commented in her final interview:

I did feel like there's power dynamics. Maybe throughout the circles. Because you know, I am very observant... Like sometimes I just sit and watch and listen, but I do watch like who is talking, who is leading? What are they saying? And I did notice that there's a mom who was taking up that leadership.

Renata made a similar comment, expressing:

...se nota quién tiene la voz que se escucha más... y también cómo esa voz puede ser muy dominante. Para mí fue interesante también ver y pensar en cómo quizá empoderar más las voces más pequeñas y no dejar que la voz o las voces más dominantes tomen

toda la iniciativa. [...you notice who has the voice that you hear most... and how that voice can be very dominant. For me it was also interesting to see and think about how you can empower the smaller voices and not allow the most dominant voice or voices to take all of the initiative.]

Marina thought about power dynamics between parents when she selected participants for her co-design circles. Specifically, she discussed her choice not to invite several Latina moms who were more privileged, because she thought that their presence might silence the mothers in her group. She also remarked on how one of her participants, Sandra, could have dominated more from her positionality as a preschool teacher, but that “a pesar de que pude haber dicho más, ella dio espacio... para que pudieran las demás mamás participar [although she could have said more, she gave space... so that the other mothers could participate.]”

When asked in her final interview what could make co-design more successful for other teachers who wanted to take up the practice, Renata stated: “Quizá un poquito más de entrenamiento en cómo manejar esas relaciones, esas dinámicas de poder. [Maybe a bit more training on how to manage those relationships, those power dynamics.]” Thus while teachers were ultimately happy with the ways they were able to cede power and position parents as co-experts, they expressed a desire to continue considering and working through power dynamics, particularly relative to differentials of privilege and power between parents.

Confianza and Convivencia

In the previous sections, I unpacked how teachers saw themselves as curriculum designers and were able to open up their curricula to parents—shifting expertise in ways that invited parents in as co-experts and co-designers. In doing so, they worked to level traditional school hierarchies that position teachers as technicians who implement professionally designed

curriculum and parents as supporters rather than designers of pedagogical decisions. Overall, teachers judged their efforts to be successful, remarking that parents were able to take on roles as experts and speak freely about their opinions and ideas. In the sections below I will explore what conditions made this shift in power possible, beyond the simple invitation to engage in co-design. I will argue that teachers' vulnerability shifted the ways that parents perceived them and resulted in transformed power relationships and increased confianza and willingness to share ideas. Additionally, the co-design circles fostered convivencia as a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), permitting the development of relationships between parents, and between parents, teachers, and researchers, that are unusual in school settings.

Teacher Vulnerability

When teachers made their curriculum and teaching practice visible to parents, openly inviting critique and feedback, they engaged in a type of vulnerability that caught parents' attention and shifted power relationships.

This feeling of vulnerability was particularly acute for teachers like Carmen who shared curriculum that they had created themselves. In Carmen's case, this was magnified by the fact that, in her own estimation, the unit had not been successful the first time she taught it, and she recognized that many of her materials had errors or were incomplete. In her words, she felt:

Totalmente vulnerable. Porque... cuando chequé otra vez la unidad, yo dije "Ay no, tiene un chorro de fallas." Pero luego también dije, "no, pues así lo voy a dejar, no es que ahorita lo cambie porque pues ellos lo van a ver... para que haya varias cosas que cambiar."... [Totally vulnerable. Because... when I checked the unit again, I said "Oh no, it has tons of flaws." But then I also said, "no, I'll leave it like that, I'm not going to

change it now because they are going to see it... so that there's a lot to change"] (Final Interview)

She committed to receiving parent feedback on the unit, even though it was difficult: "por ejemplo, que Marcos corrigió tanto y yo... no invente, eso, se va corrigiendo todo. O sea, de la receta y que la reescribió y yo ahí... O sea que vergüenza... [For example Marcos corrected everything and I was like... oh my god, he's correcting everything. Like the recipe, and he rewrote it, and I'm like how embarrassing...] (Final Interview)"

Carmen noted that even in this challenging process, parents gave feedback in a way that was "completamente respetuoso... nada de mala vibra. [completely respectful... no bad vibes.]" However, she worried about whether parents might look at the unit she had brought forward for co-design and think that "así tengo todas mis lecciones mal hechas [all of my lessons are poorly done.]" Yet in spite of these fears, Carmen continued to show up and accept feedback, and this was powerful for the parents to witness. In his interview, Marcos (Carmen) reflected that "Es demasiado vulnerable... La confianza que se creó con ella por la vulnerabilidad que tuvo ella de participar, ¿eh? Me agradó mucho y quisiera que todo mundo tuviera una experiencia similar. [It's so vulnerable... The trust that was created with her because of the vulnerability that she showed when she participated, you know? It made me really happy and I would love for everyone to have a similar experience.]" Parents noted and respected the risks that teachers took.

Ximena also felt vulnerable sharing her curriculum. Though she had not designed the identity unit herself, she had taught it in its current form in past years. In her final interview she said, "It did put me in a vulnerable spot. I didn't know if they were gonna ask me like 'Oh, so do you still do this? How have you carried this out differently?'" She was embarrassed at the low academic level of the unit, which was part of her problem of practice, and said, "clearly even one

of them said, ‘this looks like it could be for a first grade classroom!’” But through collaboration with the parents, Ximena generated trust that kept her nerves at bay. She explained:

I do remember standing up there and feeling very nervous... but something about the parents just kind of helped me ease off. Like you know the reminder of like we were here to work together and that they're really looking forward to helping me and seeing how they could change the activities, like the outcome for their students, their children, and that's what it came down to a lot. (Final Interview)

When Ximena reminded herself that she and the parents were on the same side, working to improve the activities for the students, she was no longer as concerned about parents being adversarial or questioning her judgement. Jessica made a similar point that this activity was based on trust, especially for teachers:

And for the teachers to have trust in the parents. I think it's just kind of like the reassurance like that they're signing up... They have their kid in your class, so they want the best... And if they really hated you then they would ask for their kids to be removed. I mean like if they were so against you, you would already know maybe. And if they're there, then they do want to help and they're going to try to put their opinions like, “Well, you know, I don't like this. So I think you should be trying this.” That's really not that offensive. It's just like, that's their opinion. And that's what you asked them to come for... I just think teachers do have to trust the parents.

Jessica reinforced that parents and teachers are on the same side—that of improving children's experience and learning—and that teachers must lean into trusting that parents' comments and criticism will be aimed towards that goal. That means allowing parents to see teachers as imperfect and growing, not as invulnerable professionals who have nothing left to

learn.

Marina expressed feeling vulnerable and embarrassed when she had to reach out to parents to explain that one of the poems in the poetry unit would need to be cut due to time constraints, worrying that they might judge her for not realizing that the planned content was too much for kindergarten students. But then she explained, “Pero al mismo tiempo siento que como ya teníamos esa conexión, me hizo ahorrarme la pena un poquito más... pues somos humanos, nos equivocamos, las cosas no siempre salen como uno quiere. Y hay que aprender a ser flexible. [But at the same time I feel like since we already had that connection, it helped me feel less embarrassed... because we’re all humans, we make mistakes, things don’t always work out the way we want. And we have to learn to be flexible.]” By presenting themselves as imperfect humans—capable of making mistakes but willing to learn—and by demonstrating trust in parents, teachers fostered a sense of mutual confianza that fundamentally reshaped school power dynamics.

Seeing the Teacher Differently

In their interviews, parents consistently described how the co-design process had transformed their relationships with their children’s teachers. Spending time together in a new context, and observing teachers’ openness and vulnerability in the co-design circles, allowed parents to see them as individuals beyond their professional roles. This recognition, combined with teachers’ receptiveness to feedback, created new possibilities for meaningful interaction.

Across interviews, multiple parents recognized how sharing space with their children’s teachers had allowed them to break through the barrier that often divides parents and teachers. Elena (Ximena) said “platicar, compartir cosas personales... Esa es la gran diferencia, como un acercamiento y también más por conocer a la maestra, porque muchas veces uno dice la maestra

pues está haciendo su trabajo y ya. [talking, sharing personal things... That is the big difference, like getting closer, and also getting to know the teacher, because a lot of times you say the teacher is doing her job and that's it.]” Elena had wanted to get to know Ximena better, but that said she always saw the teacher so busy with work that it felt like a burden to take up her time. However the co-design circles allowed a different type of relationship:

Estar con ella un poco más tranquila, como verla como se preocupa por los niños. Saber un poquito más de ella. Incluso compartir comida es una experiencia muy bonita. Me quedo con ganas de conocerla más... y romper como esa parte de maestra/papá y que no puede haber otro tipo de relación, no? Y sí. O sea, es algo muy bonito porque pues ya la conoces un poquito más como persona, no como maestra. [Being with her when things are more relaxed, seeing how she is always thinking about the kids. Knowing a bit more about her. Even sharing food is a very nice experience. Now I want to get to know her more... and break through this part that's like teacher/parent and that there can't be any other type of relationship, right? And yes, it's really beautiful because you get to know her a bit more as a person, not as a teacher. (Interview)]

Multiple parents discussed this idea of dissolving the traditional divide between teachers and parents. Marta (Renata) explained that this type of work together:

aporta otra relación... como hay otra cercanía. Y también rompe barreras. Porque siempre hay un poco una barrera de la cosa de la maestra, no? El maestro es el que sabe. Es la autoridad del conocimiento y me parece que rompe un poco con esa estructura, eh? [it brings in a different type of relationship... like there's a different type of closeness. And it also breaks barriers. Because there's always a barrier with the teacher, right? The

teacher is the one that knows. They are the knowledge authority, and it seems like this breaks a bit with that structure, right?]

Heidi (Marina) similarly explained that the co-design circles had created “un poquito más de confianza [a bit more trust]” with the teacher. She remarked on the same barrier that Marta (Carmen) and Elena (Ximena) noted, saying “padre de familia a maestro, siempre hay como un límite, no?... No es tanto respeto, como se podría decir, como una valla en que me limito... [from parent to teacher, there’s always like a limit, right?... It’s not so much respect, but like a fence that limits me...]” Heidi (Marina) explained that the co-design had broken through that fence.

In turn, teachers also felt more seen and recognized by the parents. In her final interview, Ximena described the change that she felt like took place when she opened up about her personal life:

Alexia even chimed in, said “Yeah, like I’m a witness, I see her at church. You know she goes to the same church, you know.”... I seriously do believe in that... There’s families who really want to know you as a person because they know that you’re human too. That you have a life outside of your role.

Thus both parents and teachers felt a concrete change in their relationships in terms of trust and mutual recognition, establishing connections beyond their parental and professional roles.

This change in how teachers and parents interacted lasted long after the co-design circles. For example, Marcos (Carmen) described that before the co-design circles, he would ask Carmen if she needed help with anything, and that she would tend not to take him up on it. Now, he explained, she frequently looks for him and asks for his help with things in class. He reflected, “Me gustó muchísimo como nuestra relación como adultos que estamos enseñándole a los niños se hizo más sólida. [I really liked how our relationship as adults who are teaching the kids

became more solid.]" Alondra (Jessica) explained that now that she feels more confianza with the teacher, she says hi to her more often when she sees her at school, and has experienced a positive change in their relationship. Sandra (Marina) explained that before she had sometimes felt shy or embarrassed about bothering the teacher and asking her questions, and that now she feels "un poquito más de confianza para yo poder entrar a la conversación con ella o mandarle un mensaje, o ahora ya somos puros mensajes de voz [a bit more confianza to be able to start conversations with her or send her a message, and now we're [always exchanging] voice notes.] (Interview)"

When asked about how his relationship with the teacher had changed, Juan (Jessica) made a comment that suggested that co-design could result in a lasting change to how parents considered the teacher's ability to hear feedback and take their opinions and expertise into account. He said:

Entonces mi relación con ella se podría decir que se hizo un poco más estrecha aún en el sentido de que... ahora sé con confianza que puedo venir y decirle "Oiga maestra, a lo mejor pues esta forma de que le está enseñando a los niños, a lo mejor pues no le puede resultar. Tal vez le pueda resultar mucho más entendible al niño que le diga que le explique de esta manera," porque sé que es una maestra que lo va a poder tomar en cuenta. [So my relationship with her, you could say it became tighter in the sense that I now know with confianza that I can come and say to her, "Listen teacher, perhaps the way that you're teaching the children, perhaps it's not going to work. Maybe it would be easier for the children to understand what you're saying if you explain it in this other way," because I know that she's a teacher who can take this into account. (Interview)

This represents a significant departure from traditional power relationships between teachers and parents; parents are generally not invited to critique teaching practices from a place of collaboration and collegiality.

In their final interviews, teachers also described shifts in how parents interacted with them following the co-design circles. For example, Jessica shared that Alondra, who had never previously contacted her about concerns at school, reached out one day to inform her about a problem involving a substitute teacher. Alondra explained that her daughter had come home from school crying. Reflecting on the interaction, Jessica wondered how many times, prior to the co-design circles, Alondra's daughter had come home upset about something that had happened at school without Alondra feeling that she had permission or standing to reach out to the teacher.

In addition to feeling more comfortable reaching out via text, parents also came in more frequently to volunteer in the classroom. Marina reported that all of the mothers in her co-design circles sent her photos and messages in the summer, and that some of them invited them to their houses to eat, and invited her out to children's parties. She also remarked that Sandra, who had previously been shy with her, reached out to ask for help with her application for a Headstart position. Marina remarked, "Ellas piden ayuda. Sin ese miedo también. Porque muchas veces hay esa confianza, pero ya de cosas más personales a veces hay un poquito de pena y ya no. [They are asking for help. Without that fear as well. Because a lot of times there's that trust, but with more personal things there's some embarrassment and they don't ask.]" Thus both teachers and parents felt that co-design had generated trust, broken through barriers, and shifted typical power relationships.

Convivencia as a Third Space

The co-design circles didn't just change the relationship between teachers and parents, but also created a sense of convivencia and community that many participants noted as unique in school settings. This sense of convivencia allowed participants to laugh and eat together, come to know each other and feel more connected as people, and ultimately express confianza in concrete ways—sometimes through offering support and trusting each other with hard emotional truths and painful stories.

In interviews and in circles, parents remarked on the unique opportunity the co-design circles had given them to “convivir un rato,” to share food, and to chat and laugh together. For Marina's circles, hosted at Heidi's house, Heidi prepared food each time to add to the food I brought, including tostadas, tacos dorados, and café de olla. Ximena's Circle 3 fell on Elena's 40th birthday, and we sang her las mañanitas (a traditional birthday song from Mexico) and gave her flowers, joking with her about how she was turning 22 years old.

Figure 1

Participants Sharing Food During Marina's Circles



In interviews, parents frequently named the icebreakers we used at the beginning of each circle as something that made them feel closer to each other. Marcos (Carmen) shared:

me gustó mucho que tuvimos los icebreakers porque te ayudan como set the tone...

también recuerdo que compartí cosas que me hacían vulnerable, o que me hacían relacionarme. Y lo traté de hacer de una forma alegre para que todo el mundo se sintiera cómodo. [I loved that we had the icebreakers because they help you set the tone. I also remember that I shared things that made me feel vulnerable, or that made me connect to others. And I tried to do it in a funny way so that everyone would feel comfortable.]

Sonya (Carmen) similarly said, “Icebreakers. I love it!... I really like that we're able to share little things with each other. And we learn little things.” Paulina commented that the icebreakers “unió a todas desde el principio. [brought everyone together from the beginning.]”

Additional activities also provided participants with opportunities to share personal experiences and aspects of their pasts. For example, Renata noted that the small-group activity in her Circle 1, where parents discussed how they had learned literacy as children, helped them connect with one another, feeling like “ay, sí, es cierto. Yo también hacía eso. [oh yes, it’s true. I also did that.]” In Ximena’s second circle, participants wrote “I am from” poems, sharing about the origins of their names and where they came from.

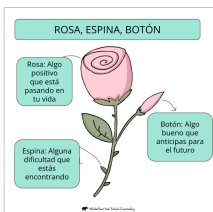
Figure 2

Ice Breaker Slides

¿Quiénes somos?

- ¿Cuál es tu nombre?
- ¿Cómo describirías tu familia?
- ¿De dónde vienes?
- ¿Por qué decidiste participar en este proyecto?
- ¿Qué es una cosa que a tí te encanta hacer para divertirse?

¿Cómo estamos?



¿Cómo estamos?

- 1) ¿Qué es una comida que no te gusta?
- 2) ¿Si pudieras conocer a cualquier persona famosa, a quién conocerías y por qué?
- 3) ¿Cuál es tu programa de televisión favorito?
- 4) ¿Cuál animal serías y por qué?

Amid the backdrop of shared food, playful icebreakers, and opportunities to reflect on their lives, parents noted that they were getting to know and trust one another while also appreciating their shared commitment to their children's education. For example, Alondra (Jessica) expressed in her interview: “tuvimos pues comunicación entre todos. Y siento que también me sentí como que más segura al saber que hay más papás preocupándose también sobre el aprendizaje de todos los niños en general en la escuela. [we all communicated with each other. And I feel that I also felt more secure knowing that there are more parents worrying about the learning of all of the children in general in the school.]”

Parents expressed joy in community connection. Heidi (Marina) explained that she had not met most of the other mothers because they had jobs, and that the co-design circles gave them a chance to connect. Sonya (Carmen) exclaimed, “I really also like the other parents. They were really kind too. And they were very... everybody was really like, ‘oh, yeah. This is great.’... I felt like we were all so all in and on the same page.” Isabel explained, “me gustó conocer más de algunas mamás con las que intercambio saludos y nos llevamos bien, pero no somos amigas. Entonces me gustó conocer de su cultura, de su país, de cómo ellas fueron educadas. También me ayudó a verlas un poquito mejor como persona. [I liked getting to know some of the moms that I say hi to, and we get along, but we aren't friends. So I liked getting to know their culture, their countries, how they were educated. It also helped me see them better as people.]”

Marta brought up another positive side to this type of convivencia, which she had rarely experienced in U.S. schools. She pointed out that knowing other parents more deeply could help avoid misunderstandings and problematic assumptions between families:

Yo ya llevo cuatro años con los mismos grupos, con mi hijo mayor, y muchísimos padres y madres que no conozco... Y también han surgido algunos malos entendidos a raíz de que no nos conocemos, de que no conocemos cuál es la realidad de cada familia y presuponemos con los prejuicios sobre lo que está pasando en esa familia. Entonces sí me parece que debería haber espacios donde los papás pudiéramos intercambiar algunas cosas más... volvernos un poquito más cercanos. [I've been with the same groups for four years, with my older son, and there are a lot of parents I don't know... And there have been some misunderstandings because we don't know each other, we don't know what's the reality of every family, and we might make biased assumptions about what's happening with that family. So it seems to me that there should be spaces where we parents can share more, and get closer.]

Thus spending time together in the co-design circles allowed parents to see each other as whole people, learn more about each other's backgrounds, and root relationships in an understanding of their shared care for their children's education.

Parents also opened up about more personal experiences, expressing solidarity around shared challenges such as feeling isolated and homesick as recent immigrants, coping with mental health struggles, navigating language and financial barriers, and dealing with family separation. As Alexia put it in Ximena's Circle 1, "todos pasamos por procesos similares. [we've all been through similar processes.]" This feeling of shared challenge and mutual understanding deepened the trust that was built through the circles.

Heidi (Marina) and Elena (Ximena) both shared in their first circles that they felt isolated in their lives in the U.S. because their own extended families had remained in Mexico. Elena explained that "en este momento me siento un poco solitaria, como que mi familia tampoco

como que se ha acercado aquí... [right now I feel a bit solitary, as my family hasn't come here... (Ximena Circle 1)] As a stay-at-home mom, Elena felt cut off both from her social network and from her professional aspirations. Heidi (Marina's Circle 2) described the challenges of recently moving to the U.S., where the only people she knew were her husband's family, leaving her feeling socially isolated and without reasons to leave the house. Valeria (Marina Circle 2) expressed homesickness and a longing to return to Mexico to be with her family—sentiments echoed by many of the other mothers in the circle.

During the “rose, bud, thorn” icebreaker, multiple parents chose language as their thorn, or current struggle. This was more common in Marina and Jessica's circles where more participants were recent immigrants. In Jessica's Circle 2, Alma mentioned that her thorn was struggling to learn English. Alondra then vulnerable shared:

Yo ahorita tengo una bebé recién nacida de un mes y hace siete meses que dejé de trabajar. Pues por lo mismo mi embarazo fue muy difícil, muy difícil. Ah, debido a eso sí tuve poquita depresión, pero ya lo estoy superando y una de mis dificultades, la espina, sería el idioma... Quiero aprender el inglés y estoy estudiando también maquillaje y cosmetología... Sí, el idioma es lo que me ha obstaculizado para llegar al botón. [Now I have a newborn who is a month old, and I stopped working seven months ago. Because my pregnancy was difficult, very difficult. Because of that I had a bit of depression, but now I'm getting over it, and one of my difficulties, the thorn, would be language... I want to learn English and I'm also studying makeup and cosmetology... Yes, language is what's gotten in the way of me getting to my bud...]

Participants responded supportively to what Alondra shared, with many making connections in their own check ins to difficulties with language, and also to making job changes.

Like language, money was another challenging theme that came up, particularly in Marina and Jessica's circles. In Jessica's Circle 2, Ana shared that she had left her job in property management and was looking for new opportunities: "apenas acabo de agarrar un curso para tatuar ombré powder eyebrows.... Estoy practicando y algo de dificultad es casi como el dinero, porque no tengo like you know, dinero consistente con eso... [I just took a course on tattooing ombré powder eyebrows... I'm practicing and a difficult thing for me is money, because I don't have like, consistent money with that...] Many mothers in Marina's circles described their money challenges, particularly with paying off debts that they had accumulated crossing the border. Valeria (Marina), in Circle 2, said, "...las deudas... Si no es una cosa es otro, que ni un cheque queda libre para nosotros por pagar y pues pa mandar pa mi papá, sino no queda nada. [the debts... if it's not one thing, it's another, there's never a paycheck that's free for us after we pay them and to send money to my dad. There's nothing left over.]" Itzel, in Marina's Circle 2, said:

...pienso que las espinas son ahorita como unos problemillas que traigo por ahí y tal vez mi montón de deudas que también tengo. Algo positivo, digamos que ahorita tengo pues es mi trabajo de ahí. Como que trato de ahorrar un poco para terminar de pagar lo que hace sufrir. [...I think that the thorn are some little problems that I have and maybe my mountain of debts that I have as well. Something positive, let's say that it's my job here. I'm trying to save to finish paying off what is making me suffer.]

Later in that circle, Itzel opened up more about the seriousness of her debt—that after many failed and traumatic attempts at crossing the border as a teen, she now owed \$45,000 to the *coyotes* who got her and her children across, and she has to pay because they have the deed to her mother's house in Mexico and they will take the house away if she doesn't pay.

Also during Marina's circles, mothers connected around the heartbreak and challenge of having been separated from their husbands for long periods of time, and the effect this family separation had on their children. Heidi, in Circle 2, described being recently reunited with her husband, who had left for the U.S. when their son was only a year and three months old. She shared how difficult this had been for her son: "Cuando estábamos en México él lloraba y decía que su corazón estaba roto porque su papá estaba acá y nosotros allá... Entonces para mí fue un proceso bien difícil, pero le digo a él pero vale la pena ver a mi hijo sonreír y decir que su corazón ya está unido. [When we were in Mexico he would cry and say that his heart was broken because his father was here and we were there... So for me it was a difficult process, but I tell him it was worth it to see my son smile and say that his heart is whole again.]" Valeria, in Marina's Circle 2, also talked about how she and her two children are finally reunited with her husband, also after four years of separation. She discussed the effect of this separation on her son, saying, "Pero es bien travieso y bien hiperactivo. Y la psicóloga me decía que el niño está así porque extraña a su papá... Y hasta que no esté con su papá se la va a quitar. Y ahorita digo, y cuando le va a quitar? [But he's really mischievous and hyperactive. And the psychologist told me he's like this because he misses his dad... and it's not going to get better until he's with his dad. And now I'm like... ok, when will it get better?]" This final comment, delivered humorously, was met with uproarious laughter, and also with empathy and connection from other mothers. Heidi expressed skepticism about the psychologist, and made a reassuring comment that her son had gone through something similar but had started to calm down. I shared that sometimes the age itself is difficult, saying my own son had a difficult experience in kindergarten but that things had gotten easier after, and Sandra linked this to the educational system and how much it demands of kindergarteners.

The transformation that took place particularly in Marina's circles, which felt more personal because they were hosted at a participant's home, was notable. Marina said in her interview:

...de la primera reunión que estaban así como tímidas a la última carcajada y hablando de deportación y que era? O sea, eso se me hizo súper bonito, como nos fuimos abriendo y estando más en confianza... Sí, sintiendo cada vez más y más y más cómodos... Y siento también que fue bonito que entre ellas pudieron hacer esas conexiones y esas relaciones. [... from the first meeting where they were like timid, to the final burst of laughter and talking about deportation and everything else? I mean, I thought this was so beautiful, how we were opening up and trusting each other more and more... Feeling every time more and more and more comfortable... And I feel like it was beautiful that they could make these connections and these relationships.]

These relationships opened the way for participants to offer each other concrete support and to trust each other even in challenging situations. For example, Sandra (Marina) commented in her interview that she had talked to her husband about inviting Heidi along on outings with their daughter, since Heidi was feeling lonely and isolated in this new country, and Sandra, who had lived in the U.S. for longer, identified with that struggle. Participants also turned to us for support; Sandra brought her cover letter for her Head Start application in to get feedback from me and from Marina, and Marina set up opportunities for the mothers in her group to connect with resources for English classes, cultural events, and sewing classes.

One key moment was that on the day of Marina's second circle, the community at her school was extremely flustered because possible ICE trucks had been spotted outside the neighboring middle school. After a lot of back and forth, Marina checked in with all the mothers

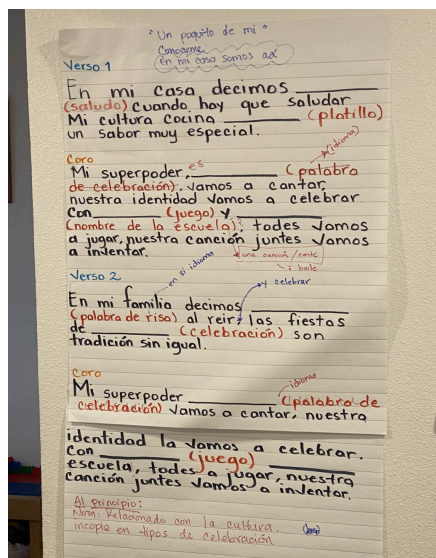
and they opted to meet anyway and just lock the doors, saying they would feel safe all locked in together. This type of trust and community support highlighted the unique space the co-design circles created. As parents shared from their lives and made new connections, the co-design circles offered a type of third space, outside of traditional school structures, for different ways of relating and for surfacing different types of knowledge.

Parents as Experts

The themes discussed in this chapter so far—teachers’ moves to shift power dynamics, the development of *confianza* and *convivencia*, the creation of a third space outside of traditional school logics—paved the way for parents to continually surface their expertise during the co-design circles towards reshaping the curriculum. Stepping into this third space created for alternate forms of knowledge, parents positioned themselves as language experts, pedagogical experts, and values experts over the course of the circles.

Language Experts

Parents took on the role of language experts during the co-design circles by drawing attention to the quality and authenticity of the Spanish used in the curriculum materials they were re-designing. During each set of circles, we engaged in a great deal of line-by-line editing of existing and new curriculum materials. In Jessica’s and Ximena’s circles this editing took place in person, as I projected documents up on screen in a classroom and made changes in real time as parents made suggestions. In Carmen’s and Renata’s circles, this editing took place over shared Google docs; sometimes I would make changes while sharing my screen, and at other times parents would make changes and add comments simultaneously during work time. In Marina’s circles, we made collaborative edits on poster paper.

Figure 3*Collaborative Edits of the Poem Skeleton in Marina's Circle 3*

One focus of these edits was improving poor translations and removing errors that impeded understanding. This was especially relevant in Carmen and Ximena's circles because some of their teacher-created curriculum had relied on Google Translate or been written by teachers who were not as fluent in Spanish. Marcos (Carmen) commented on this quality difference in unit materials, saying "no está traducida correctamente. Se nota que fue en Google Translate y quedó así. [it's not translated correctly. You can tell it went in Google Translate and stayed like that.] (Interview)" Natalia (Ximena) expressed pleasure in being able to fix errors, saying, "me gusta que hayan querido cambiar el curriculum en español y me gustó mucho poder ayudar y corregir esos errores que tuvieron y mejorarlos. [I like that they've wanted to change the curriculum in Spanish and I really like being able to help and correct those errors that they had, and improve them.] (Interview)" She also commented on the problems with Google Translate and the need for improvement:

parece que lo había puesto en Google Translate... Aunque te lo dice a veces correctamente, pero a veces no te lo dice correctamente... entonces no siento de que sea algo al menos que entendible... Tenía buenas ideas, pero sí, sí, siento que le faltó muchísimo. [it looked like they put it in Google Translate... Although sometimes it tells you correctly, sometimes it doesn't tell you correctly... so I didn't feel like it was something understandable... It had good ideas, but a lot was lacking.] (Interview)

In her interview, Natalia (Ximena) called attention to the fact that these problems with translation affect student learning: “siento que no estaba bien traducido, porque yo lo tenía que leer muchas veces para entenderlo. Y si yo lo tengo que leer muchas veces para entenderlo hablando español, no me imagino a los niños tratando de entender esa pregunta. [I feel that it's not well translated, because I had to read it a lot of times to understand it. And if I have to read it a lot of times to understand it, speaking Spanish, I can't imagine the children trying to understand that question.] (Interview)” Elena (Ximena) described a similar challenge that she had encountered at home with her own child, saying: “a veces cuando son esas traducciones que si mandan... la tarea... yo de repente también me quedo como que quiere decir, o sea, como es de traductor. [sometimes when it's these translations that they send... the homework... I also am like what does this mean, since it's from a translator.] (Ximena's Circle 2)” Thus multiple parents expressed eagerness to rewrite translated curriculum so that it would be more understandable and flow more naturally in Spanish.

Families also expressed excitement about modifying the language in curriculum documents so that it would represent a Spanish that was more authentic to their community and more understandable for their children. For example, Alondra (Jessica), in her interview, described her work to help modify the language in ARC, a commercially translated curriculum

that often relied on extremely formal Spanish, which parents felt did not reflect the way they and their children actually spoke. Alondra explained:

pues las opiniones que dimos sobre, pues como nuestro lenguaje a veces es diferente, eh?
Como las formas en decir las cosas a veces no son igual a los demás. Pero pues siento que traté como de decir “Oh, de esta manera siento que mi hija lo entendería. Siento que si a ellos le dicen esto, siento que mi hija... va a entender un poquito más.” [well the opinions that we gave about, well our language is a bit different, right? Like the ways we say things sometimes isn’t the same as everyone else. Well I feel like I tried to say “Oh, this is how I think my daughter will understand. I think that if they say this to her, I feel like my daughter...will understand a little more.”]

In Jessica’s circles, this frequently took the form of parents modifying formal phrases from the curriculum to use more accessible and familiar language. For example, in Jessica’s Circle 2, Alma suggested substituting “¿Qué se necesita para hacer tu trabajo?” in place of the more formal phrase used in the curriculum, “¿Qué se necesita para desempeñar bien esta profesión?” These types of edits were common across circles.

Marta (Renata), in her interview, called attention to the wide variety of Spanishes spoken in Latin America: “Mucha gente cuando me pregunta, ‘Hey, hablas español?’ Bueno, habría que ver que español, porque son muy distintos. [A lot of people when they ask me, ‘Hey, do you speak Spanish?’ Well you’d have to say which Spanish, because they are very different.]” She went on to explain that these variations exist not only between countries, but between regions within countries, and even between families themselves: “Hilando más fino, incluso cada familia tiene también ciertos códigos de la lengua que hacen diferencias a veces mínimas. Pero ciertos dichos, ciertas palabras... [Splitting hairs a bit, even every family has their own language codes

that can make small differences. But certain sayings, certain words...]" By highlighting the richness of the multiple Spanishes spoken within families and communities, parents became language experts who not only enhanced the clarity and quality of materials but also aligned them with the authentic ways Spanish is used in their communities, linking language closely to culture. Paulina (Renata) reaffirmed:

Y entonces esta idea de hacer estos círculos me dijo... Me pareció increíble. Porque es meter cultura. Es no solo estar traduciendo y saber que es traduciendo. No, no, no, sino realmente entender por qué estamos hablando español y de donde es el español y por qué hay tantas diferencias de español, como que darle más sentido a todas nuestras... nuestra lengua. [And so this idea of doing the circles, I told myself... it seemed amazing to me. Because it's putting in culture. It's not just translating and knowing that it's translating. No, no, no, it's really understanding why we're speaking Spanish and where Spanish comes from and why there are so many differences in Spanish, like making more sense of all of our... of our language.]

Both parents and teachers noted that parents often served as language experts, complementing teachers' language skills and experience—especially in cases where teachers felt less confident in their Spanish. For example, Marta (Renata) explained in her interview: "Ajustar el material es fundamental. Y me parece que ahí los papás tenemos un rol muy importante que cumplir, porque no siempre el maestro tiene esas herramientas. [Adjusting the material is fundamental. And it seems to me that here the parents have a really important role to perform, because the teacher doesn't always have those tools.]" Jessica, in her final interview, reflected on her own fears about running the co-design circles when, as a heritage speaker of Spanish who experienced language loss, she worried parents would judge her Spanish. However, she

ultimately decided that her struggles with Spanish were instead a kind of strength: “I guess it was kind of good that I was a little unsure of words and stuff. Because then they're like you know, ‘Okay, it's okay. We got you.’ It was nice, like I'm here, like I know the school curriculum stuff, but you are the language experts in Spanish.” Thus throughout the circles, parents took on the role of language experts, correcting translations that hindered comprehension and ensuring that the Spanish used in materials authentically reflected the culture and language of the Spanish-speaking families in the school community.

Pedagogical Experts

Just as parents positioned themselves as language experts, they also positioned themselves as pedagogical experts as they helped redesign curriculum. Particularly, they stepped in to suggest changes targeted at making teaching materials and assignment/homework instructions more easily understandable for children and families. They also made suggestions based on their own knowledge and beliefs about how children learn best and how that learning can be most enjoyable. In this sense, parents made it clear that they are experts on their own children, leveraging this knowledge to help design learning experiences tailored to be understandable, interactive, and to foster learning.

In interviews, parents frequently cited how they had intervened during the curriculum design process to make sure the content would be presented in a way that was most accessible to children. Juan (Jessica), when discussing the revisions that he and other parents had suggested to the complex graphic organizers included in the ARC curriculum, explained:

Bueno, yo creo que coincidimos con la mayoría de los padres que estuvimos ahí presentes, de que eran preguntas que los niños no iban a poder entender o eran conceptos que los niños no podían entender, y pues tuvimos la oportunidad de poder sugerir y que

pudieran cambiar esos conceptos. [Well, I believe that the majority of the parents present, we all agreed that the children wouldn't be able to understand, or that they were concepts that the children couldn't understand, and we had the opportunity to make suggestions and to make it so they changed those concepts.]

Alondra (Jessica) described being proud of how parents had worked together to tailor the curriculum to fit what their children needed:

Pienso que fue cuando, cuando dimos nuestra opinión para... la facilidad de los niños. O sea, cuando pensamos más en ellos, para ellos. Son más chiquitos. Y nosotros como adultos, a veces decimos las cosas y ellos no nos entienden y dicen... "¡Oh, mamá! ¿Qué es eso, mami? ¿Qué es eso? O sea, no lo entiendo..." O sea, nos preocupamos por el hecho de que ellos lo entendieran. [I think it was when we gave our opinion for the... ease of the children. I mean, when we thought more about them, for them. They're smaller. And we as adults, sometimes we say things and they don't understand and they say... "Oh, mamá! What is that, mamá? What is that? I don't understand"... I mean, we took into consideration whether they would understand.]

She talked about how parents had connected around this shared goal, and even though they had not always had the same opinions to begin with, they had been able to share their opinions and arrive at consensus around how to make the curriculum most accessible to the children.

Sonya (Carmen), when reflecting on what felt most significant about the co-design process, emphasized the importance of making the curriculum more accessible: "we were saying some suggestions. But we also had to reword them in a way where the kids would also understand." Marta (Renata) extended this idea to the family level, explaining that when

designing a family survey, parents drew on their understanding of families' time constraints and energy levels to tailor homework in ways that felt more realistic and manageable:

Noté que las madres podíamos aportar el simplificarlas para que sean más accesibles a las familias. No accesibles en el sentido intelectual, sino en un sentido de, bueno, las familias llegan cansadas en la semana, ¿eh? A veces hay poco tiempo para trabajar con los niños, hay un montón de tareas que hacer en la casa. Entonces cómo hacemos para que las preguntas no sean algo que a los padres les choquen y digan, hay que hacer esto, qué terrible, qué difícil, que como es un montón. Me parece que esa parte en la que trabajamos para que las preguntas sean sencillas y hacérselas... no más fácil, sino más accesible a las familias... [I realized that, as mothers, we could contribute by simplifying things to make them more accessible to families. Not accessible in an intellectual sense, but rather in the sense that—well, families come home tired during the week, right? Sometimes there is very little time to work with the children, and there are a ton of chores to do around the house. So, how do we ensure that the questions aren't something that overwhelms parents—making them think, “We have to do this? How terrible! How difficult! It feels like such a huge burden!” I feel that this aspect—the work we did to make the questions simple, and to make them... well, not necessarily easier, but more accessible to families...]

In addition to focusing on making the activities more understandable for children and families, Isabel (Renata) frequently highlighted the importance of addressing the diverse academic needs of students. Drawing on her perspective as the mother of a son who was learning literacy skills more slowly in kindergarten, she often referenced his experience while advocating

for adjustments to the writing project to accommodate varying learning needs. In her interview, she explained:

Entonces sí fue refrescante poder decir ah, pero cuando hablan de que van a leer o que van a escribir, pensemos también en los niños que van más lentos, como el niño que va a necesitar ayuda, ¿eh? Sí, eso me gustó mucho que tomáramos en cuenta los diferentes grados y niveles. [So it really was refreshing to be able to say, “Ah—but when we talk about what they're going to read or what they're going to write, let's also keep in mind the children who are moving at a slower pace—like the child who is going to need some extra help.” Yes, I really appreciated that we took those different grades and levels into account.]

In addition to considering different learning needs among students, parents also considered supports for families and students who were less familiar with Spanish or with elements of Latine culture. For example, parents in Blanca's Circle 3 intentionally added definitions of ingredient terms (like *jicama*) that they thought might be unfamiliar to non Spanish-speaking students and families.

However, parents did not simply leverage their pedagogical expertise towards making curriculum more understandable. They also weighed in on how to create activities that better facilitated children's learning—drawing on what they knew about how their children learn and what they enjoy. For example, Sandra (Marina) explained in her interview that she leveraged her knowledge as a mother and also as a preschool educator to suggest more engaging and interactive activities, saying:

lo que pude aportar fue un poco de conocimiento acerca de las canciones también.

Pensando en la edad de los niños y pensando yo también como maestra en mis niños...

Tiene que hacer de forma divertida o de música o de baile y es la forma que más ellos se enganchan... Porque si se los enseñamos nada más así de como leer, leer, entonces a veces ellos se aburren y no, no tenemos su atención como quisiéramos. [What I was able to add was a bit of knowledge about the songs as well. Thinking about how old the kids are, and thinking also as a teacher for my kids... You have to do it in a fun way, like with music, or dance, and that's the way you engage them the most... Because if we just teach them like just reading, reading, then sometimes they get bored and we don't have their attention the way we'd like to.]

Other parents also considered how children learn best as they suggested things to include in the units or modifications for activities. In Marina's circles, mothers suggested using tongue twisters and riddles both to engage children and to help them with articulation and critical thinking. In Jessica's Circle 2, Alma proposed modifying an activity to include drawing, saying "Pienso que sería como si vas a entrevistar a alguien... que también los niños dibujaran como para que ellos sepan... 'Oh, ya sé qué es lo que trabaja,' porque nada más como hablando y hablando no lo entiende. Se le olvida. [I think that like, when you're going to interview someone... that the kids can draw so that they know... 'Oh, now I know what his job is,' because just talking and talking they won't understand it. They'll forget it.]"

Parents also drew from their knowledge about their children's interests to make silly suggestions, like rewriting a poem to the tune of a *Peso Pluma* song—a suggestion that made all the mothers in Marina's circles laugh. Yet though they sometimes drew on their knowledge of their children in humorous ways, parents clearly positioned themselves as able to use their pedagogical knowledge about how their children learn to make content more accessible, understandable, and engaging for them.

Values Experts

In both subtle and explicit ways, parents infused their values into the materials they helped co-design, positioning themselves as experts in determining which knowledge and understandings would be most meaningful for students. In some circles, these lessons in values were more implicit. For example, in Renata's and Marina's circles, the co-designed units celebrated the richness of families' cultures and literacy practices, implicitly teaching that intergenerational connections and ties to family history and home culture are important. Similarly, in Carmen's recipe unit, parents suggested activities that emphasized intergenerational communication, learning family stories, spending quality time with parents, and preserving culinary traditions.

For Ximena's identity unit, parents like Alexia engaged deeply with the concept of identity, helping to shape a curriculum that connected identity not only to students' goals and hobbies but also to values and traditions. They encouraged children to interview their parents about family values and the roles families played in their communities. Alexia highlighted the importance of values education in Mexico, noting how social cohesion and high expectations for children's behavior and community participation contribute to raising strong, capable adults.

For Jessica's unit on jobs in the community, parents engaged in deep conversations about the value of work and what they would want their children to learn from a unit that highlighted the diversity of jobs in their community. Here, parents' strong values around working hard and respecting others came into high relief. In Circle 1, Alma (Jessica) shared about the importance of taking your job seriously:

Pues yo lo que quiero que mis hijos aprendan es que cualquier trabajo que ellos elijan, pues lo tomen en serio. Que se enamoren de su trabajo... pero que lo tomen con toda la

responsabilidad del mundo... Pero que siempre el respeto por delante. [Well, what I want my children to learn is that whatever job they choose, they should take it seriously. That they fall in love with their work—but that they approach it with the utmost sense of responsibility. But always put respect first.]

Alondra shared about the value of persistence: “ellos van aprendiendo que pues todo es un proceso... No todo está fácil, pero... sigues igual. Iba a haber personas que no te van a apoyar. Personas que sí. Pero tienen que ser persistente. [they’ll learn that everything is a process... Not everything is easy, but... even so you keep going. There are going to be people who don’t support you, and people that do. But you have to be persistent.]”

Juan (Jessica) shared, in Circle 1 and during his interview, his core value that “todo trabajo es digno [all work is dignified]” and that no one should be treated as more or less valuable because of their job:

Lo que pude aportar... como le digo que los niños aprendan a que todo trabajo es digno de toda persona. Y como ya lo dije antes, no hay un trabajo que haga mejor a una persona de la otra o que la haga diferente. Porque como seres humanos todo trabajo es valioso y más un trabajo si es para la comunidad o para nuestro entorno, entonces no hay un trabajo que sea más que otro. [What I was able to contribute... was helping the children understand that all work is dignified; that any job is worthy of any person. And, as I said before, there is no job that makes one person superior to another, or that makes them fundamentally different. Because as human beings, all work is valuable, and even more so work performed for the benefit of the community or our immediate environment, and, therefore, no job is greater than another.] (Interview)

He discussed how his hope was that students, after interviewing adults about different types of jobs, would recognize the value of all jobs and consider how their actions affect other people. He used an example from his own experience doing janitorial work:

Por ejemplo, cuando vemos a alguien que está limpiando nuestro espacio, entonces muchas veces no tomamos conciencia de que si hacemos basura le ponemos más trabajo a esa persona y muchas veces caemos en el error de decir “ok, yo hago basura porque para eso le pagan,” pero eso no es así. Entonces tenemos que ser más empáticos con las personas y con el trabajo que hacen. [For example, when we see someone cleaning our space, we often don’t realize that if we create more garbage, we are simply creating more work for that person. We frequently fall into the trap of thinking, “It’s fine if I make a mess—that’s what they get paid for,” but it’s not like that. So we need to be more empathetic toward people and the work they do.]

Thus parents across the circles stepped into the role of values experts as they weighed in on how to design curriculum. Through elevating values such as the importance of family connection, intergenerational literacies, traditions, community, hard work, persistence, equality, and empathy, parents shaped curriculum to foster learning opportunities for their own and other children.

Celebrating Collective Expertise

In their interviews after the co-design circles concluded, parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their collective contributions. Marcos (Carmen) said “al final sí comparé el de cómo estaba la actividad y cómo va a ser la nueva actividad. Y me fascinó como pudimos hacerla mejor. [at the end I did compare how the activity was before and how the new activity is going to be. And I loved that we could make it better.] (Interview)” Heidi (Marina) described a similar sense of excitement seeing the co-designed unit be taught: “Ay, pues sí es como algo que

te satisface de ‘Oh guau! Pudimos ayudar a que eso pasara, no?’ [Ah yes, it’s something that satisfies you, like ‘Oh wow! We could help make this happen, right?’] (Interview)” Parents expressed delight in how they were able to work together, leveraging collective expertise, and bridging multiple opinions to produce consensus and a useful product. For example, Sandra (Marina) highlighted how putting their heads together, they were able to build off of each other’s ideas to create a better product than any one design team member could have produced alone:

Es como todos decimos, verdad? A veces seis cabezas piensan más que uno. Entonces, con la idea de una, con la idea de otra mamá y de otra, así como estuvimos haciéndolo, ya son más ideas. Y por ejemplo, si algo no nos suena bien. Ok, ya. Ya. Otra mamá de otra idea. Entonces se va elaborando algo bonito y ya no es nada más de una persona, sino está creada por varias para que quede algo bien definido. [It’s like we all say, right? Sometimes six heads think better than one. So, with the idea of one, with the idea of another mother, and another, like we were doing it, it’s a lot of ideas. And for example, if something doesn’t sound good, ok that’s it, another mom gives another idea. And so we are creating something beautiful and it’s not just from one person, but it’s created by all of us so that it ends up better defined.]

Thus parents were able to leverage their language expertise, pedagogical expertise, and values expertise in a collective manner to create products they were proud of.

Conclusion

In this second findings chapter, I presented data that addresses two of the study’s research questions:

- RQ2: How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?

- RQ3: What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?

In addressing these questions, I sought to highlight the concrete ways that co-design challenged traditional power relationships in schools. First, I presented data showing that teachers themselves pushed back on de-professionalizing notions of teachers as technicians who simply implement curriculum with fidelity (Giroux, 1988), instead operating as critical readers, creators, and re-designers of curriculum. I also attended to the ways that teachers leveraged their own critical consciousness (Palmer et al., 2019) as they reflected on how to intentionally shift power in the circles, decentering themselves, and working as co-experts with parents.

I then focused on how *confianza* (Newcomer & Puzio, 2016) was developed through the circles, both through teacher's vulnerability (Bhansari et al., 2024), and through the creation of a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) through and for *convivencia* (Flores, 2021). Traditional school-based relationships were re-written as parents, teachers, and myself as the researcher shared food, shared personal stories, and laughed together. This in turn created space for parents to surface their expertise, showing up as language experts, pedagogical experts, and experts on the values that they want to impart to their children. This shifting and sharing of expertise rewrote traditional scripts about what knowledge is valuable in schools (Gutiérrez, 2008), and reconfigured traditional relationships between teachers and parents.

Calls for critical listening (Palmer et al., 2019) emphasize the importance of attending to voices that are often marginalized or undervalued in dual-language settings and highlight opportunities for meaningful collaboration between families and educators. In this chapter, I demonstrated how co-design reshaped power dynamics by creating opportunities for Latine parents to step into roles as curriculum experts, bringing their perspectives on language,

pedagogy, and culture directly into the design of dual-language instruction. In doing so, co-design transformed not only curriculum, but also the relationships between parents and teachers. This reimagined form of critical listening moved beyond hearing families' perspectives to engaging them as collaborators in educational decision-making, while also fostering community and creating new forms of connection.

Chapter 7: Centering Transnational and Intergenerational Knowledge and Literacies

In this third and final findings chapter, I explore the ways that curricular co-design between bilingual teachers and transnational parents allowed for the centering of transnational and intergenerational knowledge and literacies in the development of dual-language curriculum. First I explore how participating in inquiry around family engagement and co-design prompted teachers involved in the study to bring their own transnational literacy practices (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; Jiménez et al., 2009) into their teaching, and to learn from each others' differing transnational experiences. I then explore how parents harnessed their transnational knowledge and experience to engage in intergenerational literacy practices (Gadsden, 2002; Rusoja, 2022)—passing on their culture through their parenting, and exploring their own childhoods as inspiration for co-design. Both teachers and parents considered the role of authentic, transnational texts in both parenting and teaching contexts. Thus teachers' and parents' childhood memories—the songs, rhymes, sayings, and stories they grew up with in their home countries (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Reese, 2012; de la Luz Reyes, 2015)—as well as the literacy resources they acquire and share from those countries, became materials that could be used in the co-design process to enrich dual-language curriculum and root it in intergenerational and transnational literacies.

The rest of the chapter focuses on how parents leveraged their transnational resources and perspectives in service of their dreams and desires for their children's schooling. I look at how parents' used co-design to extend their curricula of the home (Gonzales et al., 2023) into the classroom, using school instruction to reinforce the cultural and language teaching they carried on at home, and how they considered the ways that their curriculum revisions could further their

family aims of preparing children for transnational lives—whether that meant being able to interact with and talk to family in other countries while continuing to live in the U.S., or preparing them academically to return to countries like Mexico or Chile and integrate into the school system there.

Additionally, parents continued to draw upon their past experiences as children and sometimes as parents in schools in their home countries, engaging in a type of critical nostalgia (Cashman, 2006), through which perhaps somewhat idealized versions of the past fueled critique of present social injustice and elevated values such as communalism. Parents often drew from their own histories to position schooling in Latin America as more interactive, more celebratory and community engaged, and more rigorous than schooling in the U.S.. By leveraging these transnationally informed critiques of U.S. schools, parents contradicted stereotypes that immigrant families always regard schooling in the U.S. as superior in terms of educational opportunities, and that their goal is to stay permanently in the U.S. and to assimilate (Rumbaut, 2015). Instead, families shared strong opinions about how to make U.S. schooling both more rigorous and more suited to their families' transnational goals and aspirations.

In exploring these themes, I address several of the study's research questions, particularly RQ3 (What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?) and RQ4 (How can co-design support culturally sustaining and intergenerational approaches to dual-language literacy curriculum and instruction?). I found that teachers and parents drew from their transnational identities to bring in critical perspectives and literacy practices shaped through their childhoods and sometimes adulthoods in Latin America, as well as authentic texts from their home countries, to enrich dual-language curriculum. As they rewrote curriculum, they fostered intergenerational learning—connecting across borders and through

generations to knowledge and resources that could enrich their children's current school lives in the U.S. and help them cultivate transnational identities themselves. Contrary to the culturally disconnected, translated curriculum often used in dual-language schools, many of the co-design teams' revised units were rooted deeply in families' histories and offered diverse windows into Latine cultures.

Teachers' Transnational Literacies and Learning

Before the co-design process began, the teacher inquiry sessions surfaced many teachers' own transnational literacies, drawing on their childhood experiences and highlighting the strategies they leveraged in their classrooms to connect to transnational knowledge and literacies—strategies sometimes inspired by conversation within the inquiry group.

During the second inquiry session, teachers worked together to remember and name Latine family home literacies that they themselves had experienced, considering types of home knowledge they might incorporate into their teaching or explore through co-design. Together, they listed a variety of traditional practices, such as recipes, dichos, coplas, rondas, clapping games, oral histories, calaveritas, as well as more modern media such as TV shows and popular music.

Figure 4

Teacher Inquiry Session 2 Brainstorming Slides

Latinx Family Home Literacies - From Our Experience!

- Juegos de mesa!
- Recetas
- Dichos – related to figurative/literal language lessons – asking parents for dichos / exploring dichos paralelos
- Coplas - armar nuestras propias coplas, algún problema y la solución, o algo triste y luego algo contento
- Las rondas / materile / la vibora
- Clapping games / juego de manos
- Name stories
- Oral histories (language learning, migration)

Latinx Family Home Literacies - From Our Experience!

- Calaveritas para día de muertos – rimas tradicionales
- En la lotería cantas las cartas
- En matemáticas, go fish en español (por ejemplo); centros que tienen una expectativa de lengua
- Curriculum de home countries
- Canciones / música
- Family presentations
- Bringing in things that represent Latinx families that are not Mexican

Latinx Family Home Literacies - From Our Experience!

- Inviting parents in to teach juegos de manos
- Things that parents learned in Spanish – tricks, tildes, how was that taught to you??
- Juegos afuera (la vaca lechera, el lobo) durante recreo
- TV shows
- Popular music

Transnational teachers' descriptions of their home literacy practices were rich. Francisca evoked her own childhood in Colombia to discuss coplas, a sung literary form that she remembered composing as a child. She explained:

Es cantadita, se va diciendo una historia, se pueden echar pullas, o sea, como indirectazos al otro, ¿eh? Y siempre tienen como un mismo ritmo. “Allá arriba, en aquel alto donde nace la quebrada...” Y siempre tienen ese sonsonete “había un monte muy bonito y el agua nunca faltaba.” ... Y entonces el otro le contesta “Pero un día,” algo así como “un hombre irresponsable vino y quemó el monte, la cañada se secó” y todo eso. [It’s sung, you tell a story, and you can put in jibes, or hints for the other person, right? And it always has the same rhythm. “Up there, in the high place where the ravine starts...” And it always has that same singsong “there was a beautiful forest and water was never lacking.” And then the other person answers “But one day,” something like “an irresponsible man came and burned the forest, the glen dried up” and all of that.]

She explained that when she was a child, they would be asked to make up their own coplas,

starting with something positive or beautiful, and then something bad that happened, and then a solution. The other teachers present, who were all from Mexico, expressed interest in this literary form that they were not previously familiar with.

Similarly sharing from her own background, Renata described *calaveritas*, a type of poem celebrating the Day of the Dead in Mexico, that she had composed in her hometown in Chiapas as a child:

Las calaveritas son muy de Día de Muertos porque... los personajes son la calaca, la muerte... y tiene que ser rima y es como chistoso acerca de que alguien que conoces, o sea le haces una calaverita a Grace y entonces ahí escriba “La huesuda se llevó a Grace que estaba escribiendo su tesis... [Calaveritas are really a Day of the Dead thing because... the characters are the calaca, Death... and it has to rhyme and be funny, about someone you know, like if you made a calaverita about Grace and then you write “Death took away Grace, who was writing her dissertation...]

She also discussed the tradition of calling out the cards when playing *lotería* in a traditional way, using riddles with a description of the card. Multiple teachers recalled *rondas*, or interactive children’s songs or rhymes, from their own childhoods—such as “Materile” or “Juguemos en el bosque”—and considered how they could apply these in their own classrooms. Francisca made direct connections to teaching, saying “Es el tema de saber jugar, es que el juego te enseña muchas cosas de la parte socioemocional. [It’s the theme of knowing how to play, that games teach you lots of socioemotional skills].” Indeed, through these inquiry sessions, teachers considered how they might bring such rhymes, songs, games, and traditions into their own teaching, and how they might form a connection with parents and children through both appealing to shared cultural background and also eliciting the unique songs, games, and sayings

that families could contribute from their own home countries.

For example, during an inquiry session, Carmen considered how she might add dichos (or sayings) into her literacy instruction around literal and figurative language as a way of eliciting home knowledge. She explained, “creo que es de tarea, tráiganme un dicho en cualquier idioma, el dicho que dicen en su casa, ya sabes, de que ‘camarón que se duerme se lo lleva la corriente.’ [I think that it’ll be homework, bring me a saying in whatever language, the saying they say in your home, like ‘the sleeping shrimp is carried away by the current.’]” She and Francisca went back and forth sharing about how they use dichos in Spanish with their own children, with Francisca explaining that she learns sayings in English from her daughter, who always will bring her the “dicho paralelo” or the matching saying in English. For example, she had just learned the saying “people who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones” from her daughter, and explained that the matching saying would be “el que tiene rabo de paja, no se acerque a la candela. [someone with a straw tail shouldn’t get close to the candle.]” In a later session, Carmen shared that some of her students had brought family sayings into the class to illustrate, and that many had connected with other students whose parents speak the same language and use the same sayings at home. Carmen was also inspired by conversations in the inquiry group—particularly with Francisca, who was planning family game afternoons—to organize a lotería event in which parents would come to play with their children. As part of the activity, students would write their own rhymes to “cantar la lotería,” or call out the cards in the traditional way, incorporating their own language and humor.

While Francisca, Carmen, Renata, and Marina all drew from their own childhoods in Latin America to imagine the types of transnational literacies they might engage in with children and with parents, Ximena and Jessica both reflected on their opportunities, as Latinas raised

outside of Latin America, to learn from both parents and from the other teachers in the inquiry group about transnational knowledge and literacies. For example, Jessica expressed a desire to engage with parents around how they learned certain literacy skills, like for example, rules about where to put accent marks, in their own education—and to bring these strategies into the classroom. In Inquiry session 2, she said “like los tildes. How did you guys learn that? How was it taught to you? You know, because we're teaching that right now... The way it's organized, maybe there's a different way, or something like a neat trick for us to remember.” She also discussed bringing in family folktales for an animal stories unit, reflecting on how she wasn't familiar with such folktales from Latin America but would love to learn about them. Ximena in turn focused on how much she learned from the other teachers' ability to bring in perspectives from their experience in their home countries. She said:

And for me the most impactful or memorable piece of it was I'm hearing other educators in their ideas. Like for example like with Carmen's idea of doing the los dichos and like having the students come in with things that their families say was, I like wow, I didn't think of that. How come I can't think outside of the box? ... I believe that it's because I was raised in this country. I was trained to listen to the teacher... And it was never connected to my family's expertise, my culture's expertise. They never ask me to bring in something from home... unfortunately, I'm very limited to thinking outside of the box because of my schooling experience... So that's the thing that really stuck with me. Just like the dedication. They're willing us to really bring in the families and like all those ideas they had from their countries... When I learned that damn, the way I was schooled, you know, gosh... All these words I should know because it's the system, it's this white supremacy system. (Midyear Interview)

Ximena continued to consider this theme of learning from others to think outside the box she was confined to in her English-medium U.S. public schooling. In her final interview, she expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn in a similar way from parents through the co-design circles, saying:

going through the schooling system here in this country and then also being trained as a teacher in this country, you see what we carry on here in American public schools... I don't know how it works abroad. Until now, because of co-design circles and also parents' transnational perspectives.

Thus teachers' explorations of transnational literacies and perspectives—both their own and each others'—created space and inspiration to welcome families' transnational knowledge into the classroom, both through instructional design inspired by inquiry group sessions (as with Carmen's dichos project) and later through the co-design circles.

Parents' Transnational Literacy Practices

During the co-design process, parents drew deeply from their own childhood literacy experiences to make suggestions for developing the co-designed curricula—particularly in Ximena, Renata, and Marina's circles where traditional songs, rhymes, and poems were intentionally added into the units to connect them with families' experiences and to root Spanish language instruction more strongly in culture.

This desire to infuse curriculum with families' cultural practices was in line with many of the parents' stated values around transmitting home knowledge to their children. For example, Elena (Ximena) spoke about how her children, despite growing up in the U.S., know their parents' hometown in Mexico well and love visiting. For example, eating chapulines (crickets) is a cultural tradition in that village, and Elena's children loved eating chapulines, and happily

would eat them in the U.S. too, at a local restaurant where they sell them. She explained, “Nosotros estamos muy contentos aquí... pero también ellos se reconocen de donde vienen sus papas. Entonces, sí es necesario como papás transmitirles esa identidad. [We are very happy here... but also they recognize where their parents are from. And it is necessary, as parents, to transmit that identity to them.] (Ximena Circle 1)” Marta (Renata) discussed the importance of connecting language learning to culture:

También para mí es muy importante el anclaje cultural, es decir, el lenguaje está anclado en la cultura, entonces no es un lenguaje el lenguaje y nada más... preocupándose de si es con... una v corta o... sino que las tradiciones expresadas a través del lenguaje, no? O sea, hablemos de la historia argentina. Tienen muchos libros sobre historia argentina en cuentitos de para niños de próceres de Argentina. No porque me interese que sepan eso, sino porque me parece que el lenguaje se ancla en lo cultural. [For me, the cultural anchoring is also really important, that is to say, language is anchored in culture, so it's not just a language and nothing more... worrying about whether something is spelled with b or v... but rather the traditions that are expressed through language, no? For example, we talk about the history of Argentina. They have a lot of books about Argentinean history, stories for kids about Argentinean heroes. Not because I care whether they know this, but because for me it seems like language is anchored in culture (Renata Circle 1)

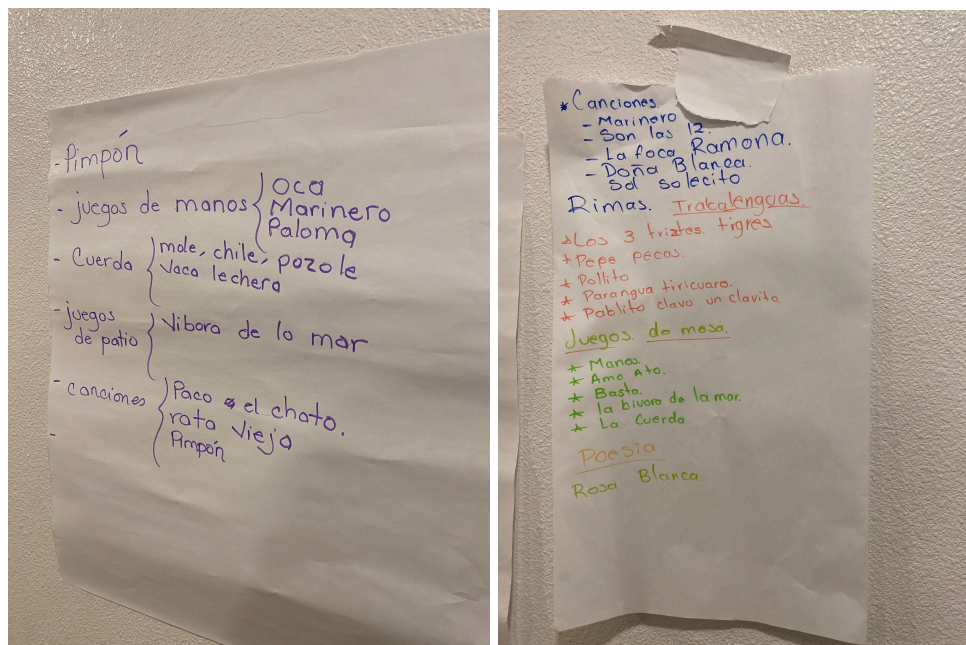
Clearly to parents like Elena (Ximena) and Marta (Renata), translated curriculum was not sufficient to address their desire that Spanish language teaching happen in a way that explores children's backgrounds and roots language learning in families' home cultures.

Thus, during the co-design circles, parents frequently drew from their memories of their own childhoods and histories to consider culturally significant poems, songs, values, and learning experiences they might want to bring into their children's classrooms, sometimes spontaneously and sometimes in response to prompts designed to elicit these memories. For example, during Marina's circles, a shared nostalgia pervaded the co-design space as parents remembered and sang songs, repeated tongue twisters, made each other laugh, and made connections to traditions that were similar and different in their childhoods. During Marina's Circle 1, the participating mothers wrote down shared lists of important songs, rhymes, games, and poetry from their childhood.

Figure 5

Participant Generated Lists of Songs, Rhymes, Games, and Poems from their Childhoods

(Marina Circle 1)



In Marina's Circle 2, Marisol excitedly suggested teaching a circular hand clapping game called "El Juego de la Oca [the Goose Game]" to the children, and a number of the mothers started singing and playing. Marina shared a different version she had learned as a child, and said she would need to learn Marisol's version; Marisol said she would record an audio note with the song, and would come into class to teach the game to the children

In Ximena's Circle 2, Elena and Alexia reflected thoughtfully about literacy experiences they had growing up in Mexico that they felt benefited their learning. For example, Elena brought up the tradition of school contests for the best calaverita for the Day of the Dead: "Y es así como que tienes que combinar el vocabulario o tienes que rimar. Este pues obviamente es de tu creatividad, no? [And you have to combine the vocabulary or you have to rhyme. That obviously comes from your creativity, right?]" She also recalled learning about fables as a child: "Las fábulas y era como 'Y por qué crees que a fulanito le pasó esto?' ... Ya como que era un debate, no?... Como que eso yo creo que les abre la creatividad para hablar, para ser críticos. [The fables, and it was like 'And why do you think that happened to so-and-so?' ... It was like a debate, right?... And I think that opens up their creativity to talk, to be critical.]" By considering the experiences in school that had been meaningful for them, these mothers brought that insight to their suggestions of texts and genres to use in the redesigned unit.

Parents repeatedly expressed that this opportunity to collectively reflect on their own childhoods and connect intergenerationally to their children's learning had been meaningful to them. Heidi (Marina) expressed:

El participar en el co-diseño fue una experiencia muy buena, ya que pudimos recordar también nuestra infancia... Entonces cuando nosotros íbamos a la escuela pues no había tanta tecnología... Entonces nuestra forma de divertir era muy diferente. Habían muchas

dinámicas, muchos juegos, muchos cantos, muchos poemas... Y entonces ahorita al ver que toman interés por reforzar o traer a presente todo eso, pues sí, es muy grato para cada uno... “Ay, mi hijo va a aprender un poema, a lo mejor, o una rima, un trabalenguas de los que yo hacía.” A veces nosotros les enseñamos, pero no es lo mismo que lo aprendan con sus compañeritos a que le enseñe mamá. [Participating in the co-design was a really good experience, since we could remember our childhoods... When we went to the school, there wasn’t so much technology... So our way of playing was very different. There were a lot of games, songs, poems... And now seeing that there is interest in reinforcing or bringing this into the present, it’s very satisfying for each of us... “Ay, my son is going to learn a poem, or a rhyme, or a tongue twister that is something I also learned as a child.” Sometimes we teach them, but it is different when they learn with their classmates than just when mom teaches them.]

Sandra (Marina) echoed the importance of these oral literary forms in passing along culture:

“aquí con lo que es de poesía es de que ahí viene casi casi todo de nuestra cultura, nuestra infancia [starting with poetry, almost all of our culture, our childhood, comes along with it].” For example, she remembered singing the song “Pimpón” with her grandparents, with her mother, and at school, and felt happy that she and the other mothers could share about their songs, rhymes, and celebrations in ways that created new experiences for their own children in school.

Mothers from Renata’s circles also engaged in an activity, in Circle 1, where they remembered their own literacy learning in their childhoods; multiple participants commented in final interviews that this had been meaningful for them. Isabel, for example, shared that:

Se me quedó grabado eso. Cómo buscar en mi memoria cosas de “cómo yo aprendí?”

Puede impactar la forma en la que mis hijos aprendan. Y me impactó mucho

emocionalmente. Me gustó mucho. Y como esa combinación de compartir ideas y como compartiendo, vamos recordando cosas entre todas. Entonces me gustó mucho esa parte, como buscar en mi pasado y que eso pueda servir a mis hijos y a esta generación. [That really stuck with me. How to search in my memory things about “How did I learn?” It could impact the way my children learn. And that affected me a lot emotionally. I liked it a lot. And this combination of sharing ideas and, through sharing, we remember things together. So I really like that part, like looking into my past and that it could serve my own children and this generation.]

Marta (Renata) also mentioned that remembering her own experiences of learning literacy through play made her reflect on the importance of bringing these games and that playful spirit into her children’s current learning environment:

...cuando empezamos a charlar sobre las diferencias entre lo que nos acordamos de nuestra experiencia en la escuela.... creo que ahí sí estuvimos atravesadas por un mismo eje, porque por más que éramos de países diferentes—Chile, México, República Dominicana, Argentina—como había algo que nos atravesaba todas de la experiencia lúdica en la escuela, sobre todo en los primeros años, que me pareció muy lindo... creo que lo que aprendemos jugando, no se nos olvida más. En cambio, lo que aprendemos por presión, es algo que no siempre nos queda. No? Bueno, siempre digamos que son semillas que no siempre terminan floreciendo. [...when we started to talk about the differences in what we remembered about our experiences in school... I believe that there was a common theme, because as much as we were from different countries—Chile, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Argentina—we all shared the same experience of [learning through] play in school, especially in the early years, and that seemed very

beautiful to me... I believe that what we learn through play, we don't forget. In contrast, what we learn through pressure doesn't always stick. Right? Well, we could say they are seeds that don't always sprout.]

Marina also reinforced the personal and emotional nature of this type of collective remembering, from her position both as a teacher and as a mother, explaining, “Son cosas que ya no recuerdas y que te hacen recordar... Hay cosas que viviendo fuera se te empiezan a olvidar... Pues siento que fue súper bonito por eso, para seguir pasando la cultura y las tradiciones, para reconectar otra vez. [There are things that you don't remember anymore and that this makes you remember... there are things that when you live outside [of your home country] you start to forget... I thought it was beautiful because of this, to continue passing on culture and traditions, to reconnect again.] (Final Interview)”

Thus, across multiple circles, parents drew on transnational literacies from their own childhoods and connected with others who shared similar experiences and memories. They used these insights to reshape curriculum—adding poems, songs and stories that were important to them, considering what elements of culture to pass on, and pondering how to best foster learning through bringing play into classrooms.

Authentic, Transnational Texts as Curriculum Resources

While the prior two sections have focused primarily on oral forms of transnational literacies (e.g., songs, sayings, rhymes, clapping games), both teachers and parents brought transnational print texts in as resources to redesign curriculum, and both groups expressed a shared belief in the importance of enriching children's learning with authentic texts, versus using translated curriculum. As Marta (Renata) put it, “es terrible la diferencia entre una cosa traducida y algo con un lenguaje más amasado, más trabajado por la experiencia del lenguaje [there's a

shocking difference between a thing that's been translated and something with language that's been more massaged and worked through by experience with the language itself.]" While expressed in different ways, dissatisfaction with translated materials was a common theme among the co-design circle participants.

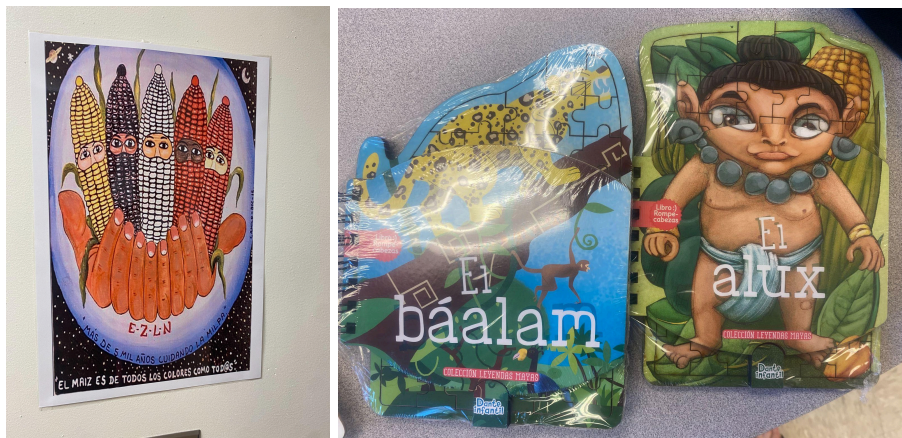
Several of the teacher participants, particularly Carmen, Renata, and Marina, discussed their practice of bringing books back from Mexico when they go to visit. Before becoming teachers, they did this as parents for their own children; now as teachers they used some of those same books in their classrooms and often brought back more. Marina explained, "me encantan los libros infantiles, entonces cada vez que íbamos a México compraba muchos para mis hijos y ahora ya los traje al salón porque ya están más grandes. [I love children's books, so every time we went to Mexico I bought a lot for my sons, and now I brought them all to the classroom because now my kids are bigger.] (Circle 1)" Renata discussed the practice that she and other Latine parents shared of finding traditional early literacy materials in their home countries to supplement and perhaps compensate for the lack of early reading instruction in Spanish at her school. For example, she described how several Chilean friends of hers would bring back a commonly used Chilean "silabario" (an early literacy primer) to work with their own children. Renata had engaged in a similar practice, using popular phonics books from Mexico to teach reading to her own children, and now in her classroom. She continued to look for literacy teaching resources on her trips back to Mexico, stating, "Y ahora que fui a Mérida compré uno de trazos y no sé qué, pero los que están buenísimos y la verdad que siento que hay tantas cosas que quiero hacer. [And just now when I went to Merida, I bought a tracing book, and those books are very good, and the truth is there's a lot of things I want to do.]"

As I conducted initial informal site visits at the beginning of the project and helped

teachers set up their classrooms, my memos often included comments about the prevalence of teaching materials and decorations that transnational teachers brought from their visits to their home countries. For example, Marina's classroom was decorated with posters connected to the Zapatista movement in Mexico, and she shared with me puzzle books about Mayan legends that she had brought back from recent travels (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Posters and Books Marina Brought from Mexico



In interviews and during co-design circles, parents also described choosing to bring literacy resources from their home countries to help their children's learning. For example, Alexia (Ximena) explained:

En México nos enseñaban mucho la caligrafía.... Santi viene de pandemia con Señora Alonso, de kínder, mitad a Zoom y mitad presente. Entonces él no aprendió mucho la escritura. Sí, parece que está dibujando cuando escribe, y ya mandé yo que me trajeran el “libro mágico” de México para que le enseñe. [In Mexico they really taught us handwriting... Santi came through the pandemic with Señora Alonso in kinder, half on Zoom and half in person. So he didn't learn much writing. It looks like he's drawing

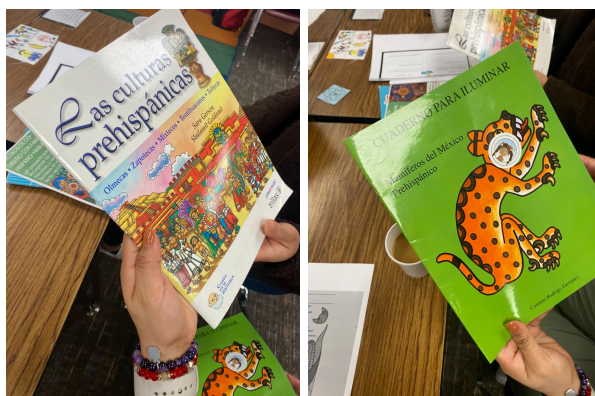
when he writes, and so I asked to be brought the “magic book” from Mexico so I could teach him.]

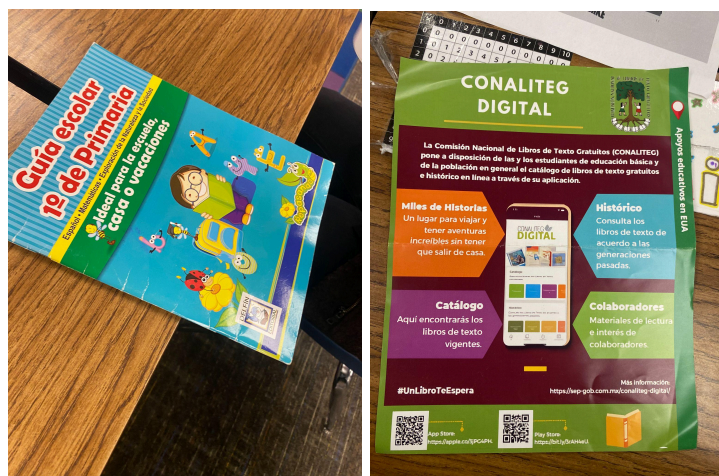
Alexia used resources she was aware of from her own education in Mexico to fill in holes she noticed in her son’s school-based learning.

In multiple co-design circles, transnational texts were brought in by teachers or parents and incorporated directly into the curriculum co-design. In Renata’s circles, one component of the re-designed unit was a sign-up for Spanish speaking parents to come in to read aloud a text that was important in their home country or in their family. In Ximena’s Circle 2, Elena and Alexia both brought in authentic texts that they used at home, with the idea that it might make sense to incorporate them into the identity unit, particularly to substitute for the translated poems that were originally part of the unit. Elena, connecting to identity and to her desire for her children to understand their family’s Indigenous roots and language, shared books about Mexican pre-hispanic history. She also shared a playful and culturally rooted poem about corn. Alexia brought in a Spanish language children’s book about the importance of community, explaining that it would help students understand that having a diversity of identities in the classroom is positive.

Figure 7

Materials Brought in by Parents During Ximena’s Circle 2





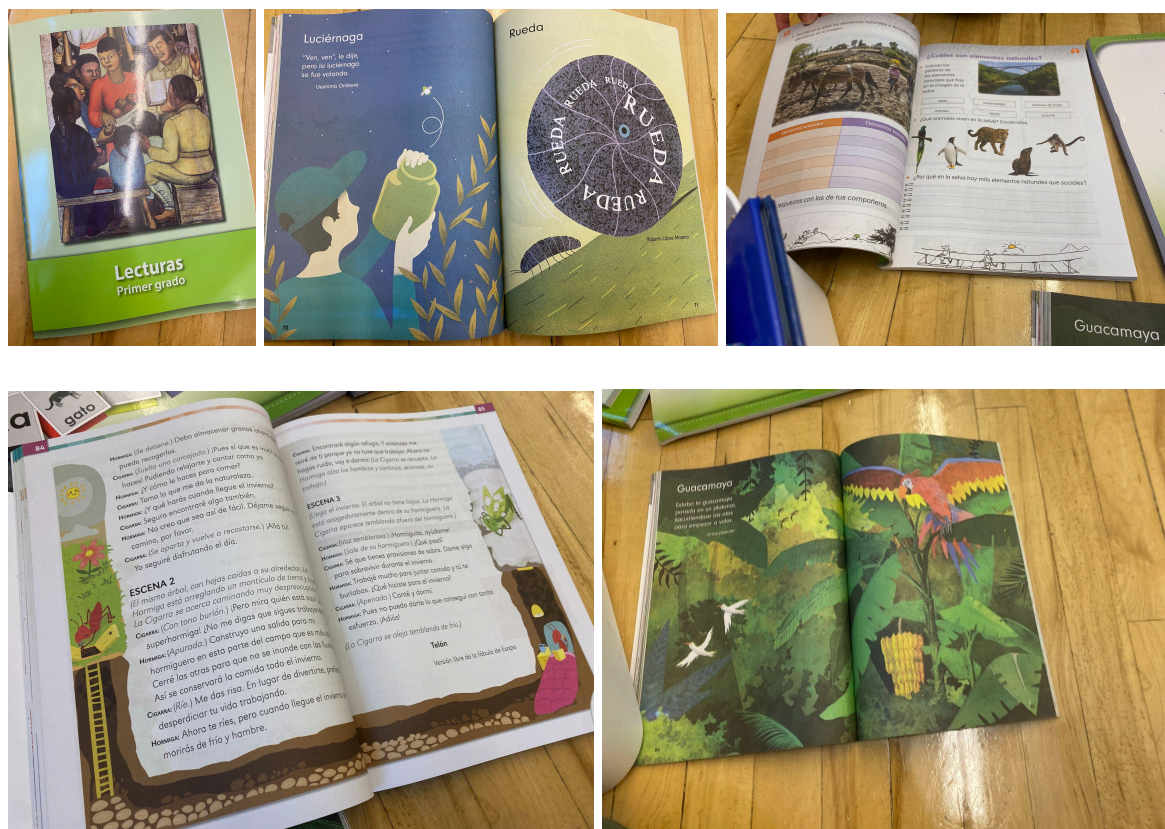
Elena (Ximena) also brought in a flyer, pictured in Figure 7, with information about how to access resources from the Mexican national curriculum to share with Ximena, who did not know that such materials were available online. In fact, the fact that Mexico makes its curriculum materials freely available both online in digital form, and in physical form through its consulates, came up multiple times over the course of the co-design circles. Renata, in the second inquiry group session, explained that she and Marina had both gotten physical copies of Mexican national curriculum books since another teacher at Linden had written a letter to the consulate asking for them. She expressed appreciation for these as beautiful and high quality teaching materials:

Bueno, alguien de la escuela de Linden pidió porque había que escribir una carta, cuántos estudiantes sirve tu escuela y no sé qué. Y entonces le dieron como seis cajas de todos los libros. Y Marina me dijo “nadie las está usando.” Y yo... “Yo quiero una caja.” Y claro, ahora tengo una caja. Y los libros están buenísimos porque tienen las... O sea, son muchas de las lecturas y ahora ya son como más modernos, su perspectiva de género y todo eso. [Well, someone from Linden asked for them, because you had to write a letter and say how many students your school serves and all of that. And then they gave them

like six boxes of all of the books. And Marina told me no one was using them. And I'm like... "I want a box." And now I have a box. And the books are great because they have... It's a lot of the readings and now they are more modern, their perspectives on gender and all of that.]

Figure 8

The Mexican National Curriculum Books that Marina and Renata Acquired from the Mexican Consulate



Marina's copies of these Mexican curriculum books were used in her co-design circles as one source for mothers to select traditional songs and poems that they remembered from their childhoods. Given that many of these mothers plan to return to Mexico with their children, using the Mexican national curriculum to supplement U.S. dual-language curriculum also provided

potential continuity, exposing children to the type of materials that they would use if they returned to Mexican public schools.

Figure 9

Mothers in Marina's Circle 2 Looking Through Spanish-Language Books, Both from Mexico and from the US, for Poems to Include in the Unit



In addition to bringing transnational resources to the co-design circles, parents also sometimes offered to leverage transnational social connections in service of acquiring quality materials that might benefit teachers and children. For example, Daniela (Renata) offered to reach out to a childhood friend of hers in Chile who is an illustrator, and who works on children's books, including one about Chilean riddles. She later offered to bring her friend's book in to read to the class as part of the unit. In Ximena's circles, Elena offered to reach out to friends of hers who are teachers in Mexico to ask about resources, and Alexia suggested contacting her uncle

who works for the Mexican government, in order to facilitate getting more Mexican curricular resources.

Thus, both teachers and parents leveraged their transnational connections to bring in resources from their home countries—in working with their own children, in teaching their classes, and in engaging in the co-design circle. Elena (Ximena) spoke in her interview about how important this was to her:

...tenemos libros así para los niños no? O sea que también nosotros queremos involucrarles o inculcarles acerca de nuestra cultura... Y compartirlo en la escuela, pues es algo bonito porque piensas que a lo mejor tú lo tienes que hacer en tu casa, porque en la escuela no importa. [We have books like that for our kids, right? That is, we also want to involve them and teach them about our culture... and sharing that at school is something beautiful because maybe you think you just have to do it at home, because in school it's not important.]

Just as teachers and parents had reflected on the profound impact of sharing childhood songs and rhymes in school, they also described the significance of bringing transnational texts into the classroom to more deeply root the curriculum in families' aspirations for their children's learning.

Parents' Transnational Dreams and Desires for their Children's Schooling

Parents contributed rich transnational resources to the co-design process, drawing on oral traditions, written literacy practices, and their own childhood memories and perspectives. When given the opportunity to bring these resources into school curricula, many remarked on how novel it was for the school to support the cultural teaching they already practiced at home. In this

sense, co-design allowed parents to extend their curriculum of the home (Gonzales et al., 2023)—here defined as home-based pedagogical priorities “generated through parents’ decisions about what their children learn, how they learn it, and the values taught explicitly and implicitly in this process (p. 314)” —into academic spaces. The co-design process also supported parents in advocating for education that might concretely benefit their children’s transnational lives—whether facilitating communication with families in home countries or easing the process of academic transition back to those countries. In this regard, parents also leveraged their perspectives from their home countries to critique what is missing in U.S. education, advocating for schooling that is more interactive, communal, celebratory, values-driven, and rigorous for their children and others.

School as a Mirror and Support for the Curriculum of the Home

Multiple parents discussed co-design as a process through which they communicated with the teacher about their culture so that she could help them extend the type of teaching they do at home into the classroom. For example, Marisol (Marina) described her participation in the co-design circles saying, “...con la enseñanza de uno cuando estaba niño, lo que fue aprendiendo uno mismo, pues lo traté de transmitir a la maestra para que se los exponga a los niños [...with the teaching one received as a child, what one learned oneself, I tried to transmit it to the teacher so she could expose the children to it.]” Elena (Ximena) similarly explained in her interview that it was relieving to feel that the teacher could support the type of teaching that she does at home in school:

...yo creo que muchas mamás tenemos como que esa parte de transmitirles esta cultura... y que tal vez pensamos que en la escuela no lo van a aprender... que lo tienes que hacer tú y llevarlo a la escuela pues. Y saber que a la maestra le importa o le genera interés,

pues es algo bonito porque ya sabes que no solamente eres tu, sino si es algo muy importante en la educación del niño no? ... no es ir a la escuela, aprender a nada más leer y escribir y hacer las matemáticas. O sea, no es solamente eso. [I think that a lot of moms have this part of wanting to transmit our culture... and maybe we think that in school they aren't going to learn it... that you have to do it yourself and take it to school. And to know that for the teacher it's important or that it interests her, well it's something beautiful because you know it's not just you, but something important for children's education right? I mean, it's not going to school to just learn how to read and write and do math. It isn't just that.]

Marta echoed this feeling of support from the school, particularly the idea that home knowledge didn't need to be taught only at home and that immigrant parents don't need to be isolated in transmitting that knowledge to their children. Discussing the importance of teaching culture in school in her interview, she said:

Para mí es fundamental. Sobre todo para los que somos inmigrantes. O sea, si no, parece que se circunscribe la cultura y el lenguaje de origen solo a lo que suceda dentro de la casa. Entonces llevar esa experiencia a la escuela me parece que enriquece todo, enriquece el aprendizaje y enriquece la comunidad. [For me it's fundamental. Especially for those of us who are immigrants. Because if not, it seems like culture and home language are limited to only what happens at home. So taking this experience to school seems like it enriches everything, it enriches learning and enriches the community.]

Thus many parents expressed gratitude that teachers were helping bridge home knowledge into the classroom, and embraced the idea that school could be a place for learning that extends beyond neutral academic content.

Several parents also noted that this approach could help prevent the alternative—children becoming disconnected from, or even embarrassed by, their identities and cultural backgrounds. For example, Marcos (Carmen) explained that he hoped to spare his children the experience he had—discounting his own culture until adulthood: “Espero que ellos, cuando estén mayores puedan reflexionar hacia atrás y no decir ‘Tengo 30 años y esta es la primera vez que pienso sobre mi cultura.’ [I hope that when they are older they can reflect back and not say ‘I’m 30 years old and this is the first time I’ve thought about my culture.’] (Interview)” Sonya (Carmen) suggested that incorporating culture in school will “show the kids where they’re from ...to be proud of it and to embrace it and to be happy to be part of that, and not kind of be like embarrassed by it,” describing how her own kids are sometimes embarrassed by Latin American cultural traditions like giving a hug and a kiss to say hello and goodbye, and that seeing their culture reflected in school can ease that embarrassment. Natalia (Ximena) described that, while her younger daughter attended the dual-language program and felt rooted in her Peruvian identity, her older daughter “está perdida con su identidad. Ella habla muy poco del español... se siente que en el high school no sabe si ir para allá, ir para acá, no sabe realmente quién es ella. [is lost with her identity. She speaks very little Spanish. In high school she doesn’t know which direction to go in, she really doesn’t know who she is.]” Thus parents saw co-design as an opportunity to extend their curriculum of the home into classrooms in a way that would reinforce their parenting, enrich learning, and foster resilient and proud identities for their children.

Education for Children’s Transnational Lives

Parents also reflected on how co-designed dual-language curriculum could prepare their children to fully participate in transnational lives—whether that meant communicating with or visiting family abroad, reconnecting with prior educational experiences, or eventually returning

to their home countries and reintegrating into those school systems. In her interview, Marta (Renata) emphasized the importance of Spanish-language education for maintaining her family's ongoing connection to their extended relatives in Argentina, saying "respecto a mi familia, que es muy grande, nadie habla inglés, absolutamente nadie. Entonces yo no me imaginaba teniendo dos hijos que encima de que los tuve lejos no pudieron comunicarse con mi familia. [in regards to my family, which is very big, nobody speaks English, absolutely nobody. So I didn't imagine having two children who in addition to being born far away, couldn't communicate with my family.]" In Renata's Circle 1, Daniela and Paulina also echoed the importance of language for their children's identities and family connection. Daniela explained "Esa es una parte súper importante para nosotros, para nuestras raíces, que los niños se sienten chilenos. [That is a super important part for us, for our roots, that our children feel Chilean.]" She shared that her family in Chile does not speak English, so she wanted her children to learn Spanish to facilitate their communication with their relatives. Paulina similarly explained that "para mí más que nada era muy importante que pudieran comunicarse con mi familia, porque la idea era estar yendo a México y conviviendo con mi familia y meterlos en la cultura latina lo más posible. [for me more than anything it was important that they could communicate with my family, because the idea was to be going to Mexico and spending time with my family, and immersing them in Latin culture as much as possible.]" For these families, education for their children's transnational lives meant developing the language skills and cultural confidence to interact with and feel part of their extended families abroad.

However, transnational education was not limited to only family communication. It also considered how children themselves might move (and in some cases had moved) between countries and educational systems. Rather than reinforcing the common narrative that

immigrants come to the U.S. to settle permanently and assimilate, these parents highlighted the realities of transnational life—where families move back and forth and often hold aspirations of eventually returning home. This was true across circles, despite the large economic differences between parents in different groups. For example, Renata's families were primarily professionals who either had work visas or residency in the U.S., while most of Marina's families were undocumented and facing the challenging realities of surviving in the U.S. while supporting family, paying off debts, and working to build a potential future life in Mexico. Even so, mothers across both circles discussed possibilities of returning home and wanting their children to be prepared for such a transition. For example, Marta (Renata), in Circle 1, discussed how she and her husband had planned for their children to at least spend the first half of their childhood in the U.S., but wanted them to be strong in their Argentinean identities. In her interview, Carolina (Renata) linked her family's potential return to Chile with her academic goals for their language learning, saying:

Queremos que nuestros hijos aprendan a leer y escribir en español y si el colegio nos puede apoyar en eso [mejor], pensando eventualmente en que vamos a volver a Chile, aunque no lo tenemos claro. Queríamos como que nuestros hijos no tuvieran que adaptarse aún más a un cambio más. [We want our children to learn to read and write in Spanish, and [it's great] if the school can help us with this, thinking eventually we'll return to Chile, although we don't have a clear plan, and we want our children to not have to adapt to one more change.]

In Marina's Circle 2, multiple mothers spoke in emotional terms about their desire to return to Mexico. In the conversation below, the tension between the lived reality of Marina, who can visit Mexico and return, and the undocumented mothers who risk deportation, is painfully evident:

Valeria: Bueno, pues nuestro deseo es regresar a nuestro país. Vamos a luchar por ello y vamos a echarle ganas para regresarnos primero a Dios... nosotros estamos poniendo un plazo de cinco años no más, pero lo que Dios tiene todavía. Todavía extrañamos a México.

Marina: Sí, igual. Cada vez que voy...

Heidi: Tienes la oportunidad de ir. Pero imagínese no solo que no puede ir.

Marina: Ni a visitar a sus papás.

Itzel: Nosotros solo ay que nos miran y vámonos pa allá [Laughter]

[Valeria: Well, our great desire is to return to our country. We're going to fight for it and we're going to work hard to go back, God willing... we are planning on staying 5 years or less, but we'll see what God's plan is. We still miss Mexico.

Marina: Me too. Every time I go...

Heidi: You have the opportunity to go. But imagine that you can't...

Marina: Not even to visit your parents.

Itzel: Well for us, if they [ICE] just see us we'll be on our way back there [Laughter]]

In addition to exposing the harsh differences between the lives of documented and undocumented immigrants, this conversation also evokes how deeply families often long to go home. Educational opportunities that connect their children to their home countries can create important links between the present, the past, and the imagined future. For example, after Elena (Ximena) brought in the flyer for accessing the Mexican national curriculum online, in Circle 3 she talked about how using these materials would give children who hadn't had the chance to study in Mexico an idea of what children in Mexico learn. Heidi (Marina) discussed how using materials and traditional songs and rhymes from Mexico would be meaningful to her son, who

had gone to preschool in Mexico. In her interview she said, “Entonces cuando ahorita que llegue la unidad... mi niño va a decir ‘¡Mami esto es de México, esto es de allá!’ ... Yo pienso que mi niño va a tener una reacción muy buena, positiva para su aprendizaje. [So now when the unit starts... my son is going to say ‘Mom this is from Mexico, this is from there!’ ... I think that my son is going to have a really good reaction, positive for his learning.]”

A notable theme across Marina’s circles was how ongoing conversations about the desire to return home coexisted with mothers’ efforts to reshape the curriculum their children encountered in U.S. public school classrooms. They worked to connect instruction to their own childhood learning and literacy experiences in Mexico, celebrate their home culture, and incorporate materials from Mexico that could support children’s transitions both to and from the Mexican education system as families moved between countries. Mothers spoke about the “sueño mexicano”—the plan to spend several years working in the United States in order to build a home in Mexico and eventually return. Within this context, their co-design efforts extended a form of transnational educational project into the U.S. classroom they were reshaping, creating a bridge between the expectations of dual-language schooling in the United States and their aspirations to prepare their children to one day continue their education in Mexico.

Transnational Education Comparisons and Critique

Regardless of whether parents expressed a desire to return to their home countries, a theme that emerged across multiple circles was their tendency to reflect fondly on their own educational experiences abroad. They identified strengths in the systems they had encountered as children—and sometimes as parents—that they perceived as lacking in U.S. public schools. This critique of the U.S. system evoked a form of critical nostalgia (Cashman, 2006), challenging

stereotypes that immigrant parents view U.S. schooling as inherently superior or accept school practices without question. Instead, parents drew on these perspectives to offer pointed critiques and propose changes during the co-design process. In particular, they described schooling in their home countries as more interactive, more community-centered and celebratory, characterized by stronger social cohesion and values education, and marked by greater academic rigor—especially in terms of homework expectations and family engagement.

Heidi (Marina) in her interview discussed how her experience with schools in Mexico involved more hands on learning, less technology, and more cultural activities:

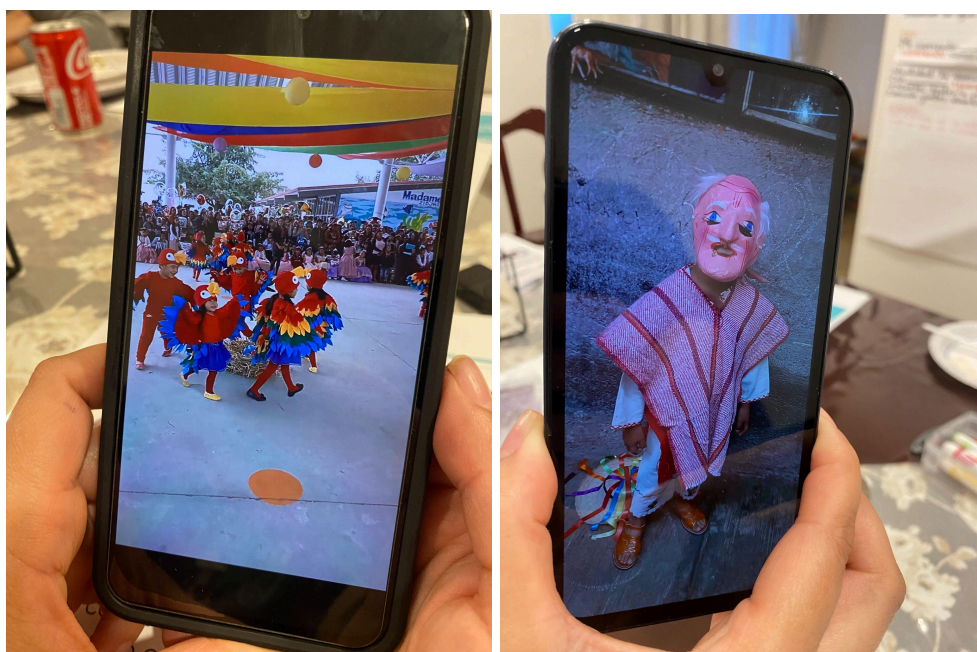
El método de enseñanza siempre es como más manual todo... ellos tienen muchas actividades culturales. Ellos festejan todo... Y pues allá los niños siempre están un poquito más activos... los estudiantes son un poquito más abiertos... Entonces ahorita poder implementar algunas actividades, por ejemplo, en el canto, en las rimas, en todo eso, pues es como traer un poquito de lo que se hace ahí. [The method of teaching [in Mexico] is more hands-on... they have a lot of cultural activities. They celebrate everything... And there the kids are always a little more active... the students are a bit more open... So now being able to implement some activities, for example, songs, rhymes, all of that, well it's like bringing a bit of what they do there here.]

Parents frequently remarked on how few celebrations were part of U.S. schooling. In Marina's Circle 1, Heidi elaborated, "Nosotros los mexicanos festejamos todo. Sí, acá todos los festejos los hacen así como muy light. [We Mexicans celebrate everything. Here all the celebrations are very light." Sandra jumped in, describing how important el Día del Maestro (Teacher's Day) and el Día del Niño (Children's Day) are in Mexico and how much energy goes into preparing these festivities. In Ximena's Circle 3, Alexia described that in Mexico her school would prepare a

breakfast for the mothers on Mother's Day, and give out roses, and that students would prepare a dance for the mothers. The theme of bailables, or dance performances, was another that came up across circles. In Marina's Circle 3, moms excitedly talked about how in Mexico children would perform dances with costumes that the parents would participate in creating, and that mothers would do similar presentations for their children on the Día del Niño. Heidi proudly shared pictures she had taken of dance performances that her son had participated in in preschool, including his complex costumes she had helped make.

Figure 10

Heidi Sharing Photos of Her Son's Performances in Mexico



In the co-design circles we discussed the limitations on celebrations in U.S. schools, particularly rules about not celebrating religious holidays, and safety regulations about food in the classroom. Even so, the co-design teams drew inspiration from their experiences in other countries to plan parties as culminating activities for the co-designed units.

Another point of comparison and critique centered on parent engagement and social cohesion in the U.S., with participants noting that expectations for participation were higher in their home countries. Marta (Renata) explained in her interview that, “En Argentina todos los padres se conocen y los padres hacen actividades aparte de la escuela y en cambio acá es todo más distanciado. [In Argentina all of the parents know each other and the parents do activities outside of school, and here in contrast everything is much more distant.]” Alexia, in Ximena’s Circle 1, explained that she believed that in Mexico, parents were more involved with their children in schooling. Elena (Ximena) responded explaining that there was more of a sense of social obligation around participation: “En México, por ejemplo, cuando yo estudié en la elementary pues todos los papás iban porque iban. [In Mexico, for example, when I studied in elementary school all of the parents went no matter what.]” She continued explaining that that sense of social obligation extended to expectations for children’s participation:

Elena: ...tu hijo participa porque participa. Así por ejemplo, a mi hermano no le gusta bailar. No, pero tenía que bailar.

Alexia: Te ves mal si no vas, o no mandas a tus hijos a eventos o si te quedas.

Elena: O sea, yo creo que generalmente en México es “tú vas a bailar porque vas a bailar” ... “Yo no quiero cantar.” No, pero sí. O sea, todos nos sabemos las canciones de.... Por ejemplo, en donde yo soy, había como himnos de mi ciudad. Y todos nos los aprendimos. Pues, es muy bonito porque al final, cuando eres niño no te das cuenta, no? Pero cuando eres adulto pues todo eso pues dices no sé, por ejemplo yo llevo 15 años fuera de donde yo soy. Entonces cuando lo recuerdo pues lo recuerdo con mucho cariño, la verdad.

Alexia: Porque como que te moldea, aunque a veces los niños no quieren algo, es que igual es como que no sé, parte de... Poner límites y el de aprender a disfrutar. Y si no te gusta algo tal vez te va a gustar. Y si eres tímido pues tal vez eres un poquito más extrovertido, o sea, un balance siempre, con respeto.

[**Elena:** ... you child participates no matter what. For example, my brother didn't like to dance. No, but he had to dance.

Alexia: It looks bad if you don't go, or if you don't send your kids to events or if you stay home.

Elena: I mean, I think generally in Mexico it's that you're going to dance because you're going to dance... "I don't want to sing." No, but you will. Like all of us know the songs of... For example, where I'm from there are like hymns of my city. And we all learned them. Well it's really beautiful because in the end... when you're a kid you don't realize, right? But when you're an adult... I don't know, for example I've been out of my city for 15 years. And when I remember it, I remember it with so much love, truthfully.

Alexia: Because it shapes you, even though sometimes kids don't want something, it's like part of... putting limits, and learning how to enjoy yourself. And if you don't enjoy it, maybe later you will. And if you're shy, maybe it'll make you a bit more extroverted.

A balance always, with respect.]

Elena and Alexia applied the same critique to the standards around homework in the U.S. Both of them fondly remembered doing a lot of projects, experiments, and making models for homework in Mexico; while it was stressful, they felt these high standards benefited their learning. Alexia expressed, "Pero es bonito. Sí hay tareas que te complican, pero por lo bonito y por lo que ya sabes que ya has tomado práctica. [But it's lovely. Yes, homework can be

complicated, but in a good way, and that way you know that you've practiced.]" Alexia expressed frustration that here, homework is sometimes referred to as optional by teachers and treated as optional by parents, saying that in her culture the expectations were higher. In Ximena's Circle 2, the mothers excitedly suggested including homework—in this case a survey about identity and culture that students would complete with their parents—in the redesigned unit. Alexia said she thought that this kind of meaningful cultural homework might shift students' engagement with homework in a positive way and benefit their learning in the classroom.

Parents also critiqued lower academic expectations in U.S. schools around Spanish language learning and literacy in general. In Renata's Circle 1, mothers reflected on their own schooling in their home countries, pointing out that their schooling had involved higher expectations around handwriting practice, spelling, homework, dictation, and grammar instruction. While these mothers recognized that cultural differences and shifting understandings of learning had changed the academic landscape, their co-designed unit included authentic reading and writing experiences in Spanish, dictations, and explicit vocabulary development.

Thus, far from accepting the educational realities of the U.S. at face value, parents across circles drew from their critical nostalgia (Cashman, 2006) about their own schooling experiences, their standards, and their cultural values, to promote shifts in the co-designed units. In this sense, they leveraged their transnational critiques in favor of extending their children's learning, and questioning assumptions about the way things must be done in U.S. public schools.

Conclusion

In this findings chapter, I presented data that addressed several of the study's research questions:

- RQ2: How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?
- RQ3: What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?
- RQ4: How can co-design support culturally sustaining and intergenerational approaches to dual-language literacy curriculum and instruction?

In addressing these questions, I highlighted the ways that both teachers and parents brought transnational literacies and knowledge into the inquiry and design process. They drew from oral literacies like songs, rhymes, riddles, clapping games, and tongue twisters, often reflecting on their own childhoods as a source of literacy experiences to pass on to the next generation. They additionally considered transnational texts and how these resources might be integrated into co-designed units in the spirit of creating authentic language and cultural experiences for students. Parents also read the co-design process through the lenses of their own transnational dreams and desires for their children, considering how redesigned curriculum could extend the cultural teaching they do at home, prepare students for transnational lives, and push back on deficits they perceived in U.S. schooling. Drawing on critical nostalgia (Cashman, 2006) about the literacy practices and positive school experiences of their childhoods in their home countries, parents transformed dual-language curriculum in a way that fostered culturally sustaining and intergenerational learning.

Dominant narratives of immigration in the U.S. characterize transnational families as desiring assimilation (Rumbaut, 2015) and as elevating U.S. schooling above educational practices in their home countries. The findings presented here paint a very different picture. In fact, families sometimes expressed deep longing to return home, nostalgia for a type of schooling

that was more communal and celebratory, and pride and pleasure at being able to show their children some of what they themselves had experienced in their childhoods.

The push towards redesigned curriculum that centered intergenerational and transnational literacies is significant for dual-language education because it contrasts sharply with the all-too-common practice of teaching language without attending to culture. As participants repeatedly emphasized, language is inseparable from culture. Transformative dual-language teaching draws directly on the languages and cultures of Latine students, families, and communities to guide how literacy in Spanish is taught. Co-design provided a space for teachers and parents to integrate their transnational literacies, knowledge, and aspirations directly into the curriculum.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Implications

This study set about to address two consequential issues in dual-language education. First, dual-language programs often focus on teaching language in a way that is disconnected from culture, frequently utilizing curricula that are directly translated from English and have no connection to families' home knowledge and rich literacy practices (Osorio, 2015). Second, particularly in the current landscape of rapid co-optation and gentrification of dual-language programs (Valdez et al., 2016; Chaparro, 2021), Latine parents are often sidelined. This runs directly counter to calls for critical listening (Palmer et al., 2019) that emphasize the need to listen to and work with Latine families in ways that counteract entrenched power relationships. An emerging body of participatory, community-based research highlights methodologies like solidarity-driven co-design circles (Ishimaru et al., 2018) to give families a seat at the table, but little of this research has been conducted in dual-language settings, or involves parents in the co-design of classroom curriculum with teachers. Thus, the current study was designed with the hope that, using and fusing tools such as practitioner inquiry and co-design, bilingual teachers could collaborate with the transnational Latine families in their classrooms to elevate their voices, infuse dual-language curriculum with their perspectives, and trouble traditional hierarchies of power and conceptions of who can be a creator of knowledge or a designer of curriculum.

Discussion

Several questions guided this study:

RQ1: How does teacher inquiry and curriculum co-design reshape bilingual teachers' and Latine families' understandings of family engagement?

RQ2: How do teachers, families, and researchers negotiate identity, collaboration, and power within a co-design process?

RQ3: What types of family and community knowledge surface through collaborative curriculum co-design?

RQ4: How can co-design support culturally sustaining and intergenerational approaches to dual-language literacy curriculum and instruction?

In the findings chapters, I presented evidence that the inquiry and co-design process reshaped bilingual teachers' perspectives on family engagement, pushing them to critique shallow forms of engagement and to reposition engaging Latine families as a political act, one that both teachers and parents considered more consequential given the current political climate. I analyzed how parents' and teachers' commitments to co-design were shaped by their multifaceted identities, with many teachers drawing on their own identities as transnational parents, and parents drawing on their own personal and professional aspirations. Both teachers and parents also positioned themselves as learners through the co-design process, which they experienced as diverging from traditional forms of family engagement. Through co-design, parents were able to share their opinions and participate actively in reshaping curriculum that was then immediately implemented, providing an unusual opportunity for critical listening to parents to result in direct action.

This process reshaped power dynamics between parents and teachers. Teachers intentionally positioned parents as co-experts and, by exposing their own teaching to critique and feedback, modeled vulnerability that fostered *confianza*, enabling parents to share more openly. The co-design circles also created spaces for *convivencia*—sharing food, laughter, and personal stories—which in turn deepened that trust. This foundation allowed parents to surface diverse

forms of expertise, positioning themselves as language, pedagogical, and values experts who could collaboratively reshape curriculum.

Another form of knowledge that emerged in the co-design circles was transnational knowledge. Both teachers and parents drew on their own and each other's transnational and home literacy practices to enrich the curriculum with songs, stories, and authentic texts from their home countries. They also leveraged childhood experiences in different educational systems to critique U.S. schooling and propose changes that would strengthen community connection and academic rigor. Together, the co-design circles functioned to bring intergenerational knowledge, cultural continuity, and transnational perspectives directly into dual-language curriculum.

This study was framed through considering transnational parents as critical pedagogues (Gonzales et al., 2023, Nuñez & García-Mateus, 2021), and holders of transnational funds of knowledge (Kwon, 2022). Similarly, my framework conceptualized bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988), capable of critically reading curriculum, considering power relationships, and developing and exercising their critical consciousness (Palmer et al., 2019). Through the inquiry group and co-design circles, teachers and parents were indeed able to step into roles as critical readers and rewriters of curriculum, critical pedagogues, and holders of transnational and intergenerational knowledge. The co-design process itself highlighted that the roles of parents and teachers are themselves porous categories (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016); both parents and teachers drew on diverse and overlapping aspects of their identities as they engaged in design work.

Through the lens of literacy as ideological (Street, 1997), critical (Freire & Macedo, 2005; Vasquez et al., 2019), transnational (Jimenez, et al., 2009), and intergenerational (Flores et al., 2020), I conceptualized the process of curriculum co-design as itself a critical literacy

practice. I found that transnational teachers and parents critically read curriculum, drawing on their childhood memories, experiences in other school systems, knowledge of the ways that Spanish is spoken in their community, and insights into how their children learn. From the basis of this critique, they then critically rewrote the curriculum towards various aims. In Carmen's circles, the co-design team sought to recreate the central project assignment to connect better with families. In Ximena's circles, the team redefined identity, brought in authentic texts, and created opportunities for students to talk with families about their home culture. In Jessica's circles, parents leveraged their knowledge of their own community to make the "Jobs in the Community" unit more relevant for their context, and to eliminate problematic hierarchical assumptions and re-assert the dignity of all jobs. In Marina's circles, the design team drew deeply from their own childhoods and home literacy experiences to craft a poetry unit that would connect children with their cultures. Finally, in Renata's circles, the design team critically considered how to create rigorous language experiences in Spanish that would prompt kindergarteners to reflect on where they and their families are from. In all of these contexts, myself and the classroom teacher worked alongside parents, adding our own insights and design ideas where appropriate. Together we critically rewrote curriculum to make it more meaningful, relevant, and authentic. I position this reading and rewriting of curriculum as a critical literacy practice (Vasquez et al., 2019).

Finally, the findings of this study countered several dominant narratives in U.S. schooling. First, the results here speak back to narratives that place teachers and parents as "natural adversaries" (Hong, 2019), instead exploring deep potential for *confianza* and solidarity in teacher-parent collaboration. Far from the image of teachers as culturally disconnected and apathetic, and of Latine parents as disinterested in their children's education, the teachers and

parents in the study were eager to work together. They connected through multifaceted identities (as transnational parents, as pedagogues, as learners) that troubled binary distinctions between educators and families. By surfacing the diversity of Latine families in the United States through encompassing schools with very different Latine populations, this study also speaks back to narratives that homogenize Latine families (Gonzales, 2024), ignoring the wealth of cultural diversity and the divergent socioeconomic realities that different groups of Latines face. Finally, the results here contest the dominant idea that Latine families are unwilling to question teachers or critique educational practices; instead, when *confianza* was built, families emerged as thoughtful readers and insightful critics of curriculum, often drawing from transnational education comparisons to highlight ways that schooling in the U.S. was not living up to its full potential.

Implications for Theory

This study sought to further operationalize and deepen the concept of critical listening (Palmer et al., 2019), providing a vision of how critical listening can move beyond working to assure that nondominant voices are *heard*, into plans for concrete collaboration, power distribution, and action. I propose co-design as a powerful tool for deepening and transforming critical listening in dual-language settings.

This study also developed the concept of Latine parents as critical pedagogues who can leverage educational spaces to extend their curriculum of the home into classrooms (Gonzales et al., 2023). Parents had strong visions for how they wanted their children to learn about and sustain home language and culture, and, once trust was built, they were eager to expand that project into school spaces. By framing transnational parents as critical pedagogues and bilingual teachers as transformative intellectuals, this study offered a radically asset-based approach to

understanding teacher inquiry, parent–teacher collaboration, and solidarity—highlighting how traditional patterns of knowledge production in schools can be shifted. By treating curriculum reading, writing, and redesign as critical literacy practices, the study illuminated the critical literacies of both teachers and parents—literacies that were deeply informed by their intergenerational and transnational experiences.

I also forwarded the role of critical nostalgia (Cashman, 2006) in the unearthing and understanding of these intergenerational and transnational literacies. Transnational teachers and parents drew heavily from their childhood memories, idealizing a past with less technology, more interaction, more community, and more social cohesion. However, they used this nostalgia critically, to identify current day challenges and promote change. In some cases, they drew from the rich home literacy practices of their childhoods to infuse the current day curriculum with opportunities for play and oral language development. By celebrating the educational systems of their home countries as more rigorous and cohesive, they pushed for higher expectations around community building, participation, and Spanish language learning in the here and now.

Key to this study was the role of teacher vulnerability (Bhansari et al., 2024) as an element that allowed *confianza* to form and parent knowledge to emerge in the co-design circles. When teachers opened up their own practice to critique and allowed parents to see their imperfections, they put trust in parents to hold that vulnerability with care, and at the same time leveled traditional power relationships that place teachers above parents and enforce distance. I also forward the concept of *convivencia* as a third space, recognizing that the space created through personal sharing and communal time spent together opened possibilities for different types of relationships and diverse knowledge to emerge at the intersection of school and

home/community spaces. This was true across circles, but particularly impactful during the in-person circles where food was shared and time was spent in casual conversation.

Implications for Practice

I believe that this study has implications for practice—for teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders. Teachers remarked in their final interviews that the co-design circles were less time consuming than they had initially feared, and felt they had benefited from the extra support around unit design. Additionally, co-design changed their relationships with parents for the better, and deepened their family engagement practice. In total, each teacher spent four hours in co-planning sessions with me over four zoom sessions, and three hours running co-design circles. Far from being a bulky and challenging intervention, these co-design circles required comparatively little planning and monetary investment, and yielded positive results. While co-design circles are rarely run at the classroom level, I believe this study demonstrates that this is a practice that teachers can take up with coaching and support.

Teacher educators might include discussion of co-design in classes that focus on possibilities for deepening family and community engagement in schools, and when discussing pathways for developing culturally sustaining curriculum. Teacher educators can also work to develop critical consciousness among dual-language teachers through fostering discussion of the inequities in dual-language programs that result in the marginalization of Latine parent voices.

School leaders working with dual-language programs might consider engaging in co-design at the district and/or school site level to bring more authentic Latine parent perspectives into the process of shaping dual-language programs and their priorities. School administrators and district curriculum leaders might encourage classroom teachers to take up co-design at the classroom level. Yet here, I want to extend a caution. The teachers who

participated in this project participated from the place of their own raciolinguicized subjectivities and after developing their critical consciousness through a teacher education program focused on justice-centered work. Importantly, as Latinas, and in most cases as transnational parents themselves, they shared key identities and perspectives with parent participants. Because of the personal connections that I as a researcher had with the teachers in the study, in all cases spanning years and weaving in elements of friendship and shared parenting experiences, teachers came to co-design with a high level of commitment and trust. Some of the teachers also knew and trusted each other already. This made them more willing to try something new and uncertain, in collaboration with me and with each other. Without attention to teachers' identities and dispositions, without initial inquiry work to reenvision family engagement, and without strong bonds of trust between teachers and researchers, co-design circles like these might unfold quite differently and risk replicating the harm that other researchers have observed when teachers and parents work together without an attention to leveling hierarchies and questioning assumptions (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020). Findings from this study suggest that teachers benefit from engaging in collaborative inquiry to build capacity around family engagement before jumping into co-design, and that professional development, clear guidance on the process, and support are key to positioning teachers to successfully engage in co-design alongside families. Findings also suggest that teachers need additional support and guidance when it comes to critically analyzing and intervening in hierarchies of power within co-design circles.

This study offers several implications for dual-language programs in general. It suggests that collaboration between teachers across multiple dual-language sites with very different Latine populations can sharpen teachers' criticality and attention to systemic injustice, while also creating more nuanced, less stereotyped visions of who Spanish-speaking parents in

dual-language are and the multiple identities they hold. These more nuanced understandings of Latine families create jumping off points for deeper connection. Additionally, this study suggests that collaborative work between dual-language teachers raised in the U.S. and dual-language teachers who were educated in other countries can open up new insights, potentially allowing teachers from here to, as Ximena put it, “think outside the box” and incorporate transnational insights into their curriculum.

Finally, this study found that, whether teaching scripted commercial curricula or designing their own, dual-language teachers can use co-design to integrate parents’ knowledge and perspectives into literacy instruction, creating units and projects that are more authentic and grounded in Latine families’ languages and cultural practices. Even a single short set of co-design circles per year could, over time, allow parent perspectives to shape multiple literacy units, or be extended to other subject areas. The result is the potential for dual-language classrooms in which every unit taught throughout the school year reflects meaningful input from families in the community.

Methodological Implications

One methodological contribution of this study is the fusion of practitioner inquiry with co-design to create classroom level co-design circles that incorporated both teachers and parents towards redesigning curriculum. Practitioner inquiry complemented co-design by creating opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other, reenvision their family engagement practice, and build capacity (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013) before jumping into co-design with parents. It also facilitated teachers’ identification of a curriculum-related *apertura*, or problem of practice, to bring to families. In addition, conducting co-design circles with teachers and parents at the

classroom level is itself a methodological contribution, as co-design circles with families have generally been focused at the community or school governance level.

In comparison to the co-design teams described in most of the solidarity-driven co-design literature, the co-design teams that were part of this study were small. Co-design circles usually involve various stakeholders, and future iterations of this research might involve broader calls for participation of school personnel and community members. However, this study shows that meaningful co-design work is possible with just a classroom teacher and a few parents from their classroom. This enhances the accessibility of this type of work to teachers who would like to implement it without a lot of external support.

Structured as a dissertation study, this project was confined to the term of one academic year, and thus there were limitations to the purview of the co-design circles. Ideally, co-design circles are ongoing and there is time for iterative cycles (Ishimaru et al., 2018), where processes or products are designed, put into action, and then reflected upon and redesigned. Because of the short nature of these co-design circles, comprising the minimum of three sessions, possibilities for iteration were limited. While future research might take up iterative curriculum design circles, I also call attention to the fact that even a set of three circles allowed for the re-design of curriculum units that were then successfully taught. The small grained nature of this intervention holds promise for feasibility, in a context in which teachers and families are pressed for time and pulled between competing obligations

An additional methodological implication of this study centers on the need to think more deeply about what design is and how visions of design in multiliteracies and critical literacy research might intersect with how design is envisioned in design-based research. Bang and Voussoughi (2016) critique the fact that “There seems to be a broad and subtle assumption in the

fields of design and intervention work that designing and intervention is not a routine human activity and is introduced from the outside” (p. 189). They contest this notion, stating that “design and intervention are endogenous to human activity” (Bang & Voussoughi, 2016, p. 189). This is precisely the point made by the New London Group (1996), who conceive of all language and literacy acts as acts of redesign, and by critical literacy researchers (e.g., Janks, 2014) who see processes of design and redesign as critical acts of reading and rewriting the world towards more just futures. By framing curriculum redesign as a critical literacy practice, this study aims to unsettle notions of what counts as design and of who can be seen as a designer in classrooms and in schools.

Directions for Future Research

This study suggests a number of directions for future investigation. Future research might expand the size and composition of the co-design circles, including other school staff and community members, while still remaining focused on classroom pedagogy. For example, teachers on a grade level team might collaborate to run bigger co-design circles with parents from across their classes, family advocates, and/or instructional coaches. District curriculum leaders might engage in redesign of broader curriculum initiatives with larger teams of teachers and parents. Given the diversity present in dual-language schools across districts, teachers might even engage in cross-district collaboration for co-design circles, creating products informed by the more nuanced understanding of inequities that can result from gaining familiarity with divergent contexts.

Future research into collaborative curriculum co-design could look at circles over longer periods of time, allowing multiple iterative cycles on the same product. While the circles in this project were anchored in teachers’ problems of practice as a rapid starting point for curriculum

work, longer co-design circles would allow collective designation of *aperturas*, further shifting power towards families. A more sustained co-design process would also allow for deeper and more fine grained analysis of power relationships in the circles, especially if they brought together multiple levels of district personnel, and families from across different backgrounds and socioeconomic groups. While this study focused on Spanish-speaking, Latine families in order to bring their specific insights into dual-language curriculum, other studies might bring together more diverse groups of non-dominant families. In these cases, it would be important to attend to how circles could be run using multiple languages and still maintain deep points for social connection, *convivencia*, and collaborative work. Additional focus is also needed on how to best facilitate participation for parents who have less access to print literacies than those who participated in this study.

Further research on collaborative curriculum co-design could dig deeper into tension points that occur when different design team members bring divergent ideologies or pedagogical beliefs to the table. While the potential for this existed in this study, it never fully manifested in the context of the co-design circles we ran. However, there were hints at possibilities for future conversations around diverging beliefs or priorities. For example, in Ximena's Circle 1, Alexia mentioned feeling discomfort around the idea of gender identity, because of her religious beliefs. Because the unit did not specifically address gender identity as a required topic (though there was space for students to incorporate gender identity into their poems), this tension did not surface again. Similarly, parents brought up desires for explicit handwriting and grammar instruction, which is no longer emphasized in most U.S. elementary schools. Depending on the teacher and the school's approach towards literacy, these different pedagogical priorities could also cause tension. Working through significant differences would require co-design teams to

explicitly name tensions and divergent ideologies, further analyze power relationships within the circles, and develop processes for conflict resolution. Future research could analyze how design teams navigate these ideological or pedagogical tensions while attempting to not reinforce school-based hierarchies. This deep work would be more sustainable in co-design circles that run for longer periods of time, so that more relational foundation building can be done.

Another tension that might be explored through future research is deeper analysis of how curricular co-design can still be fostered in environments with limited curricular freedom. Of the five teachers who participated in the co-design circles, only one (Edith) taught in a school site where there was an expectation that she teach the commercial district adopted curriculum with fidelity. Notably, she was still strategically able to make modifications to the unit's final project, even while a curriculum trainer was present at the school. However, teachers with even less curricular freedom might need to explore additional options to co-design elements of the day (morning circle, transitions, subject areas like social studies and science) where there is less intensity or surveillance around mandated curriculum.

Finally, collaborative curriculum co-design circles could and should include youth alongside families and educators to create curriculum that reflects their interests and their desires. Other co-design projects have focused on bringing educators or other adults together with youths to work on topics relevant to instruction (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016; Iriarte et al., 2023; Mawasi et al., 2023; Yip et al., 2017). Research in dual-language contexts that includes youths and families, along with educators, would be a powerful next direction for this work.

Conclusion

As the co-designed units were taught, I was able to participate in moments of joyful celebration as this work came to fruition. I ate a heaping plate of delicious food from Carmen's

class' family recipes, and talked with other parents—those who had not been involved in the project—about how much they had loved the opportunity to cook with their children and tell them about their family's history and culture. I also milled around among parents as we read students' wonderful trifold presentations about jobs in their community during Jessica's class' final job fair—and appreciated the beautiful posters celebrating what students had learned from their own family members about jobs such as teachers, doctors, aestheticians, construction workers, and store clerks. Teachers and parents sent me pictures and text messages celebrating students' identity poems, recipes, and job surveys.

In their final interviews, teachers reflected on how students responded differently to the co-designed units compared to other lessons. Carmen described how students whose parents had participated in the co-design circles were bursting with pride: “Ay, sí, les dijeron a todos, ‘¡Mi papá ayudó en esto! ¡Mi mamá lo hizo!’ Estaban súper orgullosos que sus papás habían ayudado en hacer el co-diseño. [Ay, yes, they told everyone, ‘My dad helped with this! My mom made it!’ They were so proud that their parents had helped to do the co-design.]” Both Carmen and Ximena highlighted increased engagement and participation. Carmen said, “estaban como que 100% pilas los niños... Ese entusiasmo hizo que tuviera éxito pues. [The kids were, like, 100% fired up... That enthusiasm is what made it a success, really.]” Ximena added, “Those kids, like the majority of the class, they were just so focused... I'm telling you, their behavior will tell you so much about the structural changes that we do, especially with co-design.”

Beyond the connections and empowerment experienced by teachers and parents, the co-design circles produced dual-language curriculum that was deeply infused with family, community, and cultural knowledge. Children noticed and responded to this authenticity. As Ximena emphasized, these responses offer a window into the transformative potential of

co-design, showing us how centering families can reshape classrooms in ways that engage, inspire, and sustain students' learning.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Interview Protocols

Teacher Intake Interview Protocol

- 1) I would love to know some general information about you: What was your journey like to become a bilingual teacher? What else about your history or life experiences has shaped your commitments to bilingual education and to family engagement?
- 2) Tell me about your school and classroom context next year. What grade are you teaching? What are the students and the school community like?
- 3) What does family engagement look like in your school context?
- 4) What limits or barriers do you see to Latine family engagement in your school context?
- 5) What is your personal vision for family engagement in your classroom? How would you like parents, and particularly Latine families, to be involved?
- 6) In what ways do you see families' home cultures and languages included or excluded in your school context?
- 7) As a parent yourself, what have your own experiences been like with family engagement?
 - a) How have you seen your family's identities reflected or not in your children's schooling and curriculum?
 - b) How do your experiences as a parent shape your own beliefs and feelings about parent engagement?
- 8) Tell me about the curriculum you use at your school (I am particularly interested in the literacy curriculum).
 - a) How do you like it? What are its strengths and disadvantages?
 - b) How much freedom do you have to adapt it?
 - c) How much does it reflect your families' languages/cultures/identities?
- 9) What drew you to participating in this project? What do you hope to gain from participating?
- 10) What other questions do you have about the project?

Teacher Midyear Interview Protocol

- 1) How is your school year going so far?
- 2) How would you say that your parent engagement practices so far this year are similar and different from previous years?
- 3) Tell me about your experience with the inquiry group.
 - a) What are your major takeaways from our work together? What is memorable to you?

- b) How did the short term goal setting we did impact your parent engagement practice, if at all? Looking at your goals, is there anything you notice or want to add?
 - c) What have you learned from other teachers in the group/what has stuck with you?
 - d) Looking at these challenges, are there ways these have shifted?
 - e) What gets in the way of prioritizing family engagement?
- 4) How is literacy going for you this school year? How is it similar or different to previous years?
 - 5) Looking at this table of aperturas, are there things you would want to change or add?
 - 6) Looking at this list of families, are there any comments you have about these families or families you'd like to take away or add?
 - 7) What questions or concerns do you have about the co-design process?
 - 8) What hopes do you have about the co-design process (if you're interested in pursuing it)?

Teacher Final Interview Protocol

- 1) Looking back over the year, how would you describe your overall experience with the practitioner inquiry work and the co-design circles? What stands out to you?
- 2) Looking back on the 5 teacher inquiry sessions we did in the fall and winter (we talked about humanizing family engagement, Latine home literacies, and co-design, and set small family engagement goals that we checked in on), how do you think these sessions prepared you for the co-design circles (if they did)?
- 3) How was the experience of recruiting parents for the co-design circles? Was it easier or more difficult than you expected?
 - a) How did you choose which parents to recruit and how to reach out to them?
 - b) Did the work you did through/because of/in tandem with the inquiry group (setting those goals) help with parent recruitment?
 - c) How did you feel about the group of parents that ended up participating?
- 4) How was the experience of co-planning the circles with me? This includes determining your problem of practice and outlining the three sessions.
- 5) How was the experience of the co-design circles in general? What stands out to you from the experience?
 - a) What do you think worked well?
 - b) What might you change if we did co-design circles again in the future?
- 6) What was it like sharing curriculum documents with parents and having them give feedback? Make changes? Did it feel vulnerable and how did you handle that, if so?
- 7) How did you perceive the power dynamics in the circles? How were parents positioned as co-experts? Did any tension arise around this?
- 8) How do you feel like the co-design circles and the units shifted your relationships with participating parents, if they did?

- 9) How do you feel like this experience shifted your understanding of parent engagement/availability/capacity, if it did?
- 10) How did the co-design circles feel different from other types of parent engagement you engage in (parent volunteers, etc)?
- 11) How was the process of finalizing the new materials for the unit?
 - a) Notes on our use of chatgpt, if we used it?
- 12) What was it like teaching the co-designed unit? What was wonderful and what was challenging?
- 13) What do you think teachers need, in terms of training/capacity/disposition, to be able to engage in co-design work?
- 14) What's your vision for parent engagement going forward?

Parent Interview Protocol

Introducción:

Hola, muchas gracias por tomar el tiempo para hablar conmigo. Esta entrevista es para entender mejor cómo fue su experiencia en los círculos de co-diseño con [nombre de la maestra] y conmigo. Todo lo que usted comparta será confidencial. Puede saltarse cualquier pregunta si así lo desea.

¿Está bien si comenzamos?

1. Contexto Familiar y Relación con la Escuela

- ¿Cómo llegó su familia a la escuela donde estudia su hijo/a?
- En general, ¿cómo ha sido su experiencia con la escuela y con la participación de padres/madres allí?
- ¿Cómo se sintió al recibir la invitación para participar en los círculos de co-diseño con [maestra]? ¿Qué lo/la motivó a decir que sí?

2. Experiencia en los Círculos de Co-Diseño

- ¿Cómo se sintió al colaborar con el/la maestro/a en la creación del currículo?
- ¿Qué aspectos del proceso le parecieron más significativos o valiosos?
- ¿Hubo algo que le resultó difícil, confuso, o desafiante?
- ¿En qué se diferencia esta experiencia de otras oportunidades que ha tenido para involucrarse como padre/madre?
- ¿Qué es lo que más recuerda de los círculos de co-diseño? ¿Qué se le quedó grabado?
- ¿De qué manera cambió (si es que cambió) su relación con el/la maestro/a después de participar en los círculos de co-diseño?
- ¿Y con los otros papás?
- ¿Cómo sintió que pudo aportar a los círculos? ¿Cuáles fueron tus contribuciones?

- ¿Hubo oportunidades para incorporar la cultura de tu familia o perspectivas de tu país de origen en el currículo? ¿Qué importancia cree que tiene incluir la cultura y experiencias de las familias en el currículo escolar?
- ¿Cuáles son sus esperanzas por como su hijo participará en la unidad?

4. Reflexión Final

- ¿Participaría otra vez en una experiencia similar? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?
- ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartir que no hayamos mencionado?

Cierre:

Gracias de corazón por compartir su experiencia. Su voz es muy importante para entender cómo las escuelas de inmersión dual pueden incluir más las perspectivas de las familias latinas.

APPENDIX B: School Demographics Information***Lakeshore (Carmen and Ximena)***

Lakeshore was a Title 1 public elementary school located in a diverse suburb close to the main metropolitan area. The geographic zone that the school pulled from encompassed a wide socioeconomic spectrum, as it included affluent areas with large houses along the lake, as well as low-income apartment complexes along main thoroughfares. Additionally, as the only dual-language elementary school in its district, Lakeshore enrolled Latine students from across the area to fill the 50% of its dual-language spaces that were reserved for native/heritage Spanish speakers. There was one dual-language classroom and two English-medium classrooms at each grade level, K-5. The student body, during the 2024-2025 year during which the study took place, was 0.2 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native, 13.2% Asian, 9.2% Black/African America, 24.1% Hispanic/Latino, 0.2 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 10.5% two or more races, and 42.5% white. Twenty three point two percent of the students were classified as English Learners, and 35.7% of the students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch (OSPI, 2025, December 15). The Latine families that participated in the program were socioeconomically diverse, ranging from recent, working class immigrants to affluent professionals. These families came from a range of countries, with many families having immigrated from Mexico, alongside other families from all over Latin America—for example Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Perú.

The dual-language program followed an 80:20 model (modified from the popular 90:10 model), with 80% of classroom instruction in Spanish in kindergarten, tapering to 50:50 by third grade. Within the dual-language strand, the literacy curriculum—while supplemented by phonics instruction through Estrellita and UFli—was primarily focused on interdisciplinary, thematic,

teacher-created units that sought to teach literacy across both languages by incorporating science and social studies themes. These are referred to as Biliteracy Unit Frameworks (BUFs), and were created through trainings connected to Beeman & Urow's (2013) biliteracy model.

Linden International (Marina)

Linden was a Title 1 urban public elementary school in a historically Latine, low-income neighborhood undergoing a rapid process of gentrification, through which older apartment buildings and single family homes were being replaced by townhomes. These catered to more privileged potential residents, often younger people without children, who were attracted to the historical diversity and lower prices of the neighborhood. Linden was a neighborhood school, and applications from outside of the neighborhood were accepted only if there was space in the program. The school had both Spanish dual-language and English medium tracks, but, for the first time, during the year that the study took place, all the kindergarten classes were designated as dual-language. This, along with ongoing neighborhood gentrification, resulted in a lower percentage of native Spanish speaking students in the kindergarten classes, compared to at higher grade levels.

The student body during the 2024-2025 year was 7.5% Asian, 10.4% Black/African American, 60.4% Latine, 7.8% two or more races, and 13.8% white. Forty eight point nine percent of the students were classified as English language learners, and 52.6% of the families qualified for free or reduced priced lunch (OSPI, 2025, December 15). The Latine population at this school was diverse, but the majority of the families that participated in this study had arrived recently from Mexico.

Linden International had a 50:50 dual-language program where students spent half the day with an English teacher and half of the day with a Spanish teacher. Literacy was taught in

both languages, and the dual-language program used the commercial curriculum ARC Core, from the American Reading Company. This was marketed as an all-in-one reading curriculum that combined foundational skills with content knowledge across science and social studies; the Spanish version of the curriculum was a translation of the English version. However, the kindergarten teacher from Linden who participated in the study opted to petition the principal to create her own literacy units for kindergarten instead of using the ARC Core curriculum; her teacher-created units focused on bilingualism and student identity.

Franklin International (Renata)

Franklin International was an “option school” in an affluent urban neighborhood that did not have a large Latine population. There were two international (dual-language) schools in the same neighborhood, both started at the behest of primarily non-Latine groups of parents who wanted a dual-language option for their children. Franklin had a Spanish language and Japanese language track, and admission to the program was done by lottery. Preference was given to students who lived in the neighborhood zone around the school and to siblings of students in the program, with twenty percent of the spaces reserved for native or heritage speakers of the program language. This was a departure from the typical model of two-way dual-language programs that emphasizes having even percentages of native/heritage speakers of English and the other program language. It put this program somewhere between a two-way and a one-way dual language program, with the priority on teaching Spanish and Japanese primarily to students from the neighborhood who were affluent native English speakers.

The student body during the 2024-2025 year was 7.7% Asian, 25.7% Latine, 23.2% two or more races, and 42.9% white. Fourteen percent of the students were classified as English language learners, and 6.1% of the families qualified for free or reduced priced lunch (OSPI,

2025, December 15). The Latine population at this school had increased in recent years through community networking; Latine parents pulled in other families in their community through providing them with information and tips about how to strategically navigate the lottery and admissions process (Gonzales, 2023). The Latine population at the school came from a wide array of countries, and parents primarily worked in professional fields that required higher education.

Franklin International had a 50:50 dual-language program where students spent half the day with an English teacher and half of the day with a Spanish teacher. Math and science were taught in Spanish, with the idea that literacy would be embedded in content area learning. There had recently been growing awareness of a need for explicit biliteracy instruction, and a phonics program in Spanish (El Camino al Éxito) had been purchased, but at the time of this study there was no designated literacy block during Spanish time.

Jefferson (Jessica)

Jefferson was a Title 1 elementary dual-language school in a small town on the outskirts of the larger metropolitan area. The town centered around a large correctional complex, and additionally served as a bedroom community for commuters. Many Latine families in the area worked in retail and other blue collar jobs in the town. The student body at Jefferson elementary during the 2024-2025 year was 63.7% Latine and 30.1% white, with the Spanish language track composed primarily of Latine students and families. Fifty two point one percent of students were classified as English language learners, and 75.6% of students qualified for free or reduced price lunch (OSPI, 2025, December 15).

Jefferson had a 90:10 dual-language program, with the majority of instruction in kindergarten through second grade taking place in Spanish. Literacy was taught in both

languages using the ARC Core curriculum. The Spanish version of this curriculum was a translation of the English curriculum.

Vista del Valle (Francisca)

Vista del Valle was a choice school in a suburban school district. Serving an affluent suburban city at the center of the local tech industry, this district was racially diverse partially as a function of the presence of many international tech workers. Vista del Valle was structured as a one-way dual-language program, described in district literature as Spanish immersion. It enrolled students through a lottery, with no specific set aside for native/heritage Spanish-speaking students. However, several factors resulted in a growing Latine population at the school. One was that the school's new location was closer to multifamily housing with a larger Latine population and had therefore become more accessible. Another was that, like at Franklin International, many Latine families from around the district gravitated towards and strategized about how to gain access to the Spanish language program.

The student body during the 2024-2025 year was 15.6% Asian, 38.5% Latine, 1.4% Black/African American, 10.9% two or more races, and 33.4% white. Fifteen point eight percent of the students were classified as English language learners, and 23.7% of the families qualified for free or reduced priced lunch (OSPI, 2025, December 15). Vista del Valle had a 90:10 dual-language program, and had recently adopted the ARC Core curriculum for Spanish literacy.

APPENDIX C: Example Case Study Document (Carmen)**Context**

School and District	██████████
Grade Level	5th grade
Program model (what percentage of the day in Spanish/what subjects)	Dual Language 50/50 Spanish: Social Studies, Science, Spanish Language Arts. English: Math, English Language Arts
What percentage of your students speak Spanish at home and where are their families from?	62% of my students are Spanish Heritage speakers from Mexico, Honduras, Venezuela, Peru and Guatemala. English heritage speakers: USA.

Challenges

- Solo una mamá se puso de voluntaria cuando invité a las familias. Los invité por parent square. Questioning parent square – is there a better way to communicate directly?
- Background check scares off families
- Upper grade engagement is harder
- Families have inflexible work schedules; scheduling is a challenge

Goals

Parent-student cultural game. Dichos familiares.
Crear un recetario con recetas familiares, los niños piensan en un platillos, preguntan a sus padres la receta, escriben la receta en español con una introducción acerca de la ocasión especial donde disfrutaban ese platillo. Esta pendiente invitar a los padres a jugar loteria en el salon de clases.
Necesito agendar la fecha de tarde de juegos con las familias para darles oportunidad de planear y poder asistir al salon. Preguntar si quieren traer algun juego. Mandar mensaje a los papas.

Other Ideas for Engagement

- * Asking parents in the letter home to “ask your child about their project” / sending paper forms / communicating in ways other than parent square? / class whatsapp group?
- * Tarde de juegos y proponer vamos a jugar lotería, me traje unos de México.
- * Recetas culturales
- * Giving specific examples to families of ways they could come in to share their culture

Curriculum Ideas

Units (Reading/Writing/Subject Area)	Structures	Openings/Possibilities
Research -Compare & Contrast Personal Narrative Poetry Informational Text Fictional Narrative Family recipes	Research about a hispanic country and compare and contrast with their own culture. Mentor text -Themes: linguistic practices, being new to a place, family moments, traditions. Sacred place. Personal connection:Traditions. Holidays, home practices.	Family member share a tradition -craft, recipe

Families to Recruit [Pseudonyms]

Familia Gutiérrez
 Familia Lara
 Familia López
 Familia Vallejo
 Familia Camacho

APPENDIX D: Co-Design Circle Planning Document (Master)**Co-Design Circles Planning Document**

Teacher Name	
School	
Grade Level	

Family Co-Design Circles Planning Sheet – Logistics

Goals for Co-Design Product / Problem of practice	
Potential Family Participants	
Recruitment Plan (e.g., how will you share the info about the project + consent form)	
Rough Schedule for Sessions (dates/times)	
Notes on Scheduling Process/Concerns	
Location for Meetings	
Food Plan	
Additional Participants/Collaborators	
Other Logistics/Concerns	

Co-Design Circle 1 Planning

Date and Location	
Overarching Goals	

Brainstorm Possible Activities	
Detailed Agenda	
Materials	

Co-Design Circle 2 Planning

Date and Location	
Overarching Goals	
Brainstorm Possible Activities	
Detailed Agenda	
Materials	

Co-Design Circle 3 Planning

Date and Location	
Overarching Goals	
Brainstorm Possible Activities	
Detailed Agenda	
Materials	

APPENDIX E: Participant Consent Forms***Teacher Consent Form*****TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM*****Family Engagement and Co-Design in Dual Language Education***

Investigator: Grace Gonzales, gcgonza@uw.edu, (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Manka Varghese, mankav@uw.edu, (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Investigator's Statement

Investigator:

Grace Gonzales

Doctoral Student, UW College of Education

(XXX) XXX-XXXX

gcgonza@uw.edu

Investigators' Statement

I am asking you to participate in a research study through the University of Washington. The purpose of this consent form is to give you all the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to be in the study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent."

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how bilingual teachers can partner with Latine families to bring family insight, culture, and stories into classroom practices and curriculum. The study aims to answer these research questions: "How does participating in teacher inquiry reshape bilingual teachers' beliefs about family engagement? How can bilingual teachers and Latine/transnational families engage together in co-design of literacy curriculum? How do families and teachers experience a collaborative curriculum co-design process? How does a collaborative curriculum co-design process facilitate the creation of spaces for transformative and intergenerational learning?" My hope is that this study will provide insight into ways that dual-language programs, and particularly classroom teachers, can better center the voices, experiences, and cultures of Latine families, particularly in gentrified/gentrifying DL settings.

Procedures

If you choose to be in this study, which will take place over the course of the 2024-2025 academic year, you will be invited to participate in teacher inquiry sessions (~5) and semi-structured interviews (~3), which will be conducted over zoom and last about 1.5 hours each. I will audio-record the interviews and inquiry sessions so that we have an accurate record of our conversation and keep the recordings in a secure location. These recordings will be

transcribed. Additionally, you may choose to participate in facilitating co-design circles with a small group of families from your class/school. Additional data collection might include field notes or recordings/transcripts of informal meetings or planning meetings with me, collection of artifacts like lesson plans and materials you choose to share with me, recordings/transcripts of co-design circles, classrooms observations, and parent or student interviews. If you would like a copy of any of the transcripts from the interviews or meetings, or copies of any other data gathered, I will gladly provide you with these. Additionally, you may ask at any time that any of your data be excluded from the study.

This study has already been approved by the University of Washington Internal Review Board. I will also petition for approval from your district to collect data with families at your school site.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concerns for your privacy in the section below. Some people feel self-conscious when notes are taken or interviews are recorded.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

You may not directly benefit from taking part in this research study. One benefit of this study is that through engaging in this research you will be supporting and furthering efforts to learn more about family engagement and bilingual teacher/Latine parent collaboration in dual-language settings. Another benefit is that you may learn new approaches to family engagement, and receive support with family engagement and curriculum redesign efforts in your classroom.

OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Information about you is confidential. I will assign you a pseudonym when I code the study information, unless you ask for your name to be used. If the results of this study are presented or published, I will not use your name, or any other identifying information, unless you request otherwise. I will use a pseudonym for your school site and district, and this information will never be made public.

If you have any questions about this research study or about your rights as a research subject, please contact me at the telephone number or email listed at the top of this form.

Participant's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research, I can ask the investigator listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact the investigator.

YES/NO I consent to participate in the study as described above

Signature of participant	Printed Name	Date
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Copies to: Investigators' file, Participant

Parent Consent Forms

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Co-design circles with Spanish-speaking families in dual-language programs

Investigator: Grace Gonzales, ggonza@uw.edu, (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Manka Varghese, mankav@uw.edu, (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Investigator's Statement

I am asking you to be in a research study that I am completing as part of my doctoral coursework at the University of Washington. The purpose of this consent form is to give you all the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to be in the study. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to bring Spanish-speaking families' voices, stories, and perspectives into the curriculum in dual-language classrooms, through facilitating parents' engagement in co-design circles with their children's bilingual teachers.

PROCEDURES

If you choose to be in this study, you will be invited to a series of three co-design circles co-facilitated by your child's teacher and myself, a researcher and doctoral student at the University of Washington. Each circle will be around 60-90 minutes long; if held in person, food will be provided. You will also be invited to participate in one ~60 min long interview, during which I'll ask about your experience in the co-design circles and your experiences as a Spanish-speaking parent in a dual-language program.

The co-design circles will be audio/video-recorded, and I will audio-record your interview so that I can have an accurate record of our conversation. I will transcribe these recordings without identifiable information. Only I will have access to the recordings, which will be kept in a secure location. If you would like a copy of the transcript of the interview or co-design sessions, I will gladly provide you with one. I may also collect or photograph individual and group work generated during the co-design sessions.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concerns for your privacy in the section below. Some people feel self-conscious when notes are taken or sessions/interviews are recorded.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

One benefit of this study is that it may help dual language programs better engage with Spanish-speaking families. Additionally, families who participate will be offered a \$50 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time.

OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Information about you is confidential. I will assign you a pseudonym and code the study information. I will keep the link between your name and the pseudonym code in a separate, secured location until the study is complete. Then I will destroy the information linking your information to the pseudonym. If the results of this study are published or presented, I will not use your name, or any other identifying information, unless you ask for it to be shared.

I may want to re-contact you to clarify information. Please indicate below whether you give me permission to re-contact you. Giving me permission to re-contact you does not obligate you in any way.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact me (Grace Gonzales) at the telephone number or email listed at the top of this form. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact me or my faculty advisors, Manka Varghese, at the telephone number or email listed at the top of this form.

Participant's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later on about the research, I can ask the investigator listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact one of the course instructors. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

YES/NO	I consent to participate in the study as described above
YES/NO	I give permission for the researcher to share photographs or video of my participation in the study when sharing the results of this research (if NO, my face will be blurred in any still or video images)
YES/NO	I give permission for the researcher to contact me to set up a one-on-one interview
YES/NO	I give permission for the researcher to re-contact me to clarify information

Signature of participant

Printed Name

Date

Copies to: Investigators' file, Participant

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO DEL PARTICIPANTE

Círculos de codiseño con familias hispanohablantes en programas de inmersión dual

Investigadora: Grace Gonzales, ggonza@uw.edu, (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Asesor académico: Dr. Manka Varghese, mankav@uw.edu, (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Declaración de la investigadora:

Le estoy solicitando participar en un estudio de investigación que estoy conduciendo como parte de mis estudios de doctorado en la University of Washington. El propósito de este formulario de consentimiento es proporcionarle toda la información que necesita para ayudarlo a decidir si desea o no participar en el estudio. Lea este formulario con atención. Puede hacer preguntas sobre el propósito de la investigación, lo que le pediré que haga, los posibles riesgos y beneficios, sus derechos como voluntario y cualquier otra duda que tenga sobre la investigación o este formulario. Cuando todas sus preguntas hayan sido respondidas, podrá decidir si desea participar en el estudio o no. Este proceso se llama “consentimiento informado”. Le proporcionaré una copia de este formulario para sus registros.

PROPÓSITO DEL ESTUDIO

El propósito de este estudio es incluir las voces, historias y perspectivas de las familias hispanohablantes en el currículo de las aulas de inmersión dual, para así facilitar la participación de los padres en círculos de codiseño junto con los maestros bilingües de sus hijos.

PROCEDIMIENTOS

Si elige participar en este estudio, será invitado a una serie de tres círculos de codiseño cofacilitados por el maestro de su hijo y por mí, investigadora y estudiante de doctorado en la University of Washington. Cada círculo tendrá una duración aproximada de 60 a 90 minutos. Si se lleva a cabo en persona, se ofrecerá comida. También será invitado a participar en una entrevista de aproximadamente 60 minutos, en la que le haré preguntas sobre su experiencia en los círculos de codiseño y sobre su experiencia como padre/madre hispanohablante en un programa de inmersión dual.

Los círculos de codiseño serán grabados en audio y video, y la entrevista será grabada en audio para que pueda tener un registro preciso de nuestra conversación. Transcribiré estas grabaciones sin incluir información de identificación personal. Solo yo tendré acceso a las grabaciones, las cuales serán almacenadas en un lugar seguro. Si desea una copia de la transcripción de la entrevista o de las sesiones de codiseño, con gusto se la proporcionaré. También podré recopilar o fotografiar el trabajo individual y grupal generado durante las sesiones de codiseño.

RIESGOS, ESTRÉS O INCOMODIDAD

Algunas personas pueden considerar que proporcionar información para la investigación es una invasión a su privacidad. En la sección a continuación, he abordado las inquietudes sobre su

privacidad. Algunas personas pueden sentirse cohibidas cuando se toman notas o se graban sesiones/entrevistas.

BENEFICIOS DEL ESTUDIO

Uno de los beneficios de este estudio es que puede ayudar a los programas de educación en dos idiomas a lograr una participación más efectiva de las familias hispanohablantes. Además, las familias que participen recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de 50 \$ como muestra de agradecimiento por su tiempo.

INFORMACIÓN ADICIONAL

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Puede negarse a participar y tiene el derecho de retirarse en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalización ni pérdida de beneficios a los que tendría derecho de cualquier otro modo. La información proporcionada será confidencial. Le asignaré un seudónimo y codificaré la información del estudio. Mantendré el vínculo entre su nombre y el código del seudónimo en un lugar separado y seguro hasta que el estudio se complete. Posteriormente destruiré la información que vincula su identidad con el seudónimo. Si los resultados de este estudio se publican o presentan, no se usará su nombre ni ninguna otra información de identificación personal, a menos que usted solicite que se comparta.

Es posible que necesite volver a contactarlo para aclarar información. Por favor, indique a continuación si me da permiso para volver a contactarlo. Darle permiso para volver a contactarlo no le genera obligación alguna.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio de investigación, comuníquese conmigo (Grace Gonzales) al número de teléfono o correo electrónico que aparecen en la parte superior de este formulario. Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, comuníquese conmigo o con mi asesor académico, Manka Varghese, a través del número de teléfono o correo electrónico que aparecen en la parte superior de este formulario.

Declaración del participante

Este estudio me ha sido explicado. Acepto participar voluntariamente en esta investigación. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas. Si tengo preguntas en el futuro sobre la investigación, puedo contactar a la investigadora mencionada anteriormente. Si tengo preguntas sobre mis derechos como participante en la investigación, puedo contactar a uno de los instructores del curso. Recibiré una copia de este formulario de consentimiento.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| SÍ/NO | Doy mi consentimiento para participar en el estudio según lo descrito anteriormente |
| SÍ/NO | Doy permiso para que el investigador comparta fotografías o videos de mi participación en el estudio al presentar los resultados de esta investigación (si marco NO, mi rostro será difuminado en cualquier imagen fija o de video) |
| SÍ/NO | Doy permiso para que el investigador me contacte para programar una entrevista individual. |
| SÍ/NO | Doy permiso para que el investigador me vuelva a contactar para aclarar información. |

Firma del participante	Nombre en letra de molde	Fecha
------------------------	--------------------------	-------

Copias para: archivo de la investigadora, participante