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Assessing Spanish-speaking Immigrant Parents' Perceptions of Climate at a New Language Immersion School: A Critical Analysis Using "Thinking with Theory"

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Abstract: Parent involvement in schools is often developed through one-way, deficit-oriented relationships, where information flows from schools *to* families and parents are perceived to lack some capacity or knowledge. However, little is known about the conditions facing Spanish-speaking families at Spanish language immersion schools, which presumably might employ fewer deficit perspectives due to the language and culture focus of their educational model. In turn, this study asked: How does school climate discourse shape Spanish-speaking parents' abilities to engage at a Spanish immersion elementary school (SIES)? Do parents enact relational power at SIES, and if so, how? Data analysis centered on school climate surveys completed by 19 Spanish-speaking mothers. Framed by Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) and Foucault's concepts of power, the study ultimately examined not only parent perceptions, but also the research project and its own deficit-driven norms. Findings include: While parents reported trusting the school and teachers, many felt discouraged in

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SIES's climate. Some blamed their level of involvement on their own (lack of) language or ability. Analyses also explore how the language immersion school and design of the research project—despite good intentions—were not bridging the gap between hegemonic English-speaking society and Spanish-speaking families. The discussion then considers the implications for school climate, parent engagement policies, and research at diverse multilingual schools.

Keywords: language immersion schooling, parent engagement, parent involvement policy, school climate, Thinking with Theory

Examinando las percepciones de padres de familia emigrantes sobre el ambiente de una escuela nueva de inmersión de lengua: Un crítico análisis utilizando "Pensando con Teoría"

Resumen: La involucración de padres de familia en las escuelas usualmente se desarrolla por medio de relaciones con sentido único y orientación déficit, donde la información fluye de escuela a familias y los padres son percibidos con falta de capacidad o conocimiento. Pero poco se sabe sobre las condiciones que los padres de familia hispanohablantes en escuelas de inmersión en español, donde presumiblemente pueden emplear menos perspectivas con características déficit debido a la lengua y el enfoque cultural de su modelo educacional. Por esta razón, este estudio pregunta: ¿Como el discurso del ambiente de la escuela forma las habilidades de los padres de familia hispanohablante para comprometerlos en una escuela primaria de inmersión en español (SIES)? ¿A caso los padres de familia promulgan poder relacional en SIES, y si es cierto, como lo hacen? Los análisis de datos fueron centrados en encuestas sobre el ambiente escolar de 19 madres de familia hispanohablante. Enmarcados por conceptos de Ecologías del Compromiso de Padres de Familia (EPE) y el concepto de poder por Foucault, este estudio examino no solo las percepciones de las madres, sino también sobre el mismo estudio y sus normas déficit. Hallazgos incluyen: Mientras las madres de familia reportaron una confianza hacia la escuela y los maestros, muchas de ellas se sintieron desalentadas por el ambiente escolar de SIES. Algunas de ellas culparon el nivel de involucración a su misma (falta de) habilidad lingüística. Los análisis también exploran la manera en que la escuela de inmersión lingüística y el diseño del proyecto de investigación—aunque con buenas intenciones—no estaban cerrando la brecha entre la hegemonía de la sociedad de habla inglesa y las familias hispanohablantes. La discusión considera las implicaciones para el ambiente escolar, sistemas políticos para comprometer a las familias, e investigaciones en escuelas diversas y multi-lingüísticas.

Palabras-clave: inmersión lingüística escolar; compromiso familiar; sistemas políticos de involucración familiar; ambiente escolar; Pensando con Teoria

Examinando as percepções dos pais imigrantes de língua Espanhola sobre o ambiente de uma Nova Escola de Imersão em Linguagem: uma análise crítica usando "Pensando com a Teoria"

Resumo: O envolvimento dos pais nas escolas geralmente se desenvolve através de relacionamentos unidirecionais e orientação de déficit, onde a informação flui da escola para as famílias e os pais são percebidos como sem capacidade ou conhecimento. Mas pouco se sabe sobre as condições que os pais de língua espanhola nas escolas de imersão espanhola, onde provavelmente emprega-se menos perspectivas com características de déficit devido ao foco dado à linguagem cultura de seu modelo educacional. Por este motivo, este estudo pergunta: como o discurso do ambiente escolar molda as habilidades dos pais de língua espanhola para envolvê-los em uma escola primária de imersão em espanhol (SIES)? Caso os pais exerçam o poder relacional na SIES, como eles fazem isso? As análises de dados foi centrada em pesquisas sobre o ambiente escolar preenchidas por 19 mães de língua espanhola. Este estudo foi baseado em conceitos da Ecologia do Envolvimento dos Pais (EPE) e no conceito de poder de Foucault, e examinou não apenas as percepções das mães, mas também o próprio estudo e suas normas deficitárias. Os resultados sugerem que embora os pais relatem confiança na escola e nos professores, muitos deles se sentiram desencorajados pelo ambiente escolar da SIES. deles culparam o nível de envolvimento por conta própria (falta de) capacidade linguística. As análises também exploram como a escola de imersão em linguagem e o projeto de pesquisa - embora com boas intenções - não diminuíram a distância entre a hegemonia da sociedade de língua inglesa e as famílias de língua espanhola. A discussão considera as implicações para o ambiente escolar, as políticas de envolvimento familiar e a pesquisa em escolas diversas e multi-linguísticas.

Palavras-chave: imersão linguística escolar; envolvimento familiar; políticas de envolvimento familiar; ambiente escolar; Pensando com a Teoria

Assessing Spanish-speaking Immigrant Parents' Perceptions of Climate at a New Language Immersion School: A Critical Analysis Using "Thinking with Theory"

Without a doubt, parents and caregivers are central partners in their children's education (Kiyama et al., 2015; National School Climate Center, 2015), with recent and past federal policies encouraging parental and community engagement (Moles & Fege, 2011). It is widely accepted that schools must develop strong relationships with all families and make special efforts to engage with parents from traditionally marginalized groups (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). However, the relationships between parents and schools are often tenuous, with some educators declaring parental involvement as burdensome (Fernández & López, 2017; Nevin, 2008; Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011). Political and power-laden challenges remain even in schools where there should be excellent opportunities to partner with diverse families and create strong school climates; this includes schools that rely upon parents' funds of knowledge and linguistic resources, such as bilingual or language immersion programs (Dorner & Layton, 2013; Valdés, 1997). Unfortunately, few studies in language education explore school climate from the perspective of parents/caregivers, especially those who speak the target language of immersion programs (for example, Spanish, Mandarin, or French in the United States).

In turn, this project was designed to explore how Spanish-speaking, immigrant parents perceived the climate and possibilities for engagement at their children's language school. (In the remainder of this study, when we discuss "parents," we are broadly referring to caregivers, which may include aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other heads of households who act as parents for children). Language immersion education in the U.S. provides at least 50% of instruction in a language other than English, with the ultimate goal to develop children's bilingualism, biliteracy, biculturalism, and high academic achievement (Tedick & Wesely, 2015). For almost 10 years, the second author (Dorner) has worked as a community research partner to various language programs. Early in the 2000s, one partner opened the Spanish Immersion Elementary School (SIES, a pseudonym), a kindergarten to fifth-grade program in a midwestern city where the foreign-born population hovered around 5%. SIES was a one-way or foreign language Spanish immersion school that provided around 90% of content material instruction in Spanish to a mainly monolingual, English-speaking student body (Dorner, 2015). However, SIES also attracted around 15% of its students from Spanish-speaking, immigrant families. Remembering the "cautionary note" from Guadalupe Valdés (1997), and knowing that the language of power in this context was still English (despite being a *Spanish* immersion school), we were wary about the school's ability to develop a climate fully welcoming to immigrant and Spanish-speaking families, even though it was positioned to do so. Therefore, when asked to support the school's development of a School Climate Survey for parents, children, and teachers, we worked with SIES to make sure that they translated and distributed the survey to Spanish-speaking parents. We wanted to better understand their perspectives on school climate and support SIES efforts to improve that climate and related family engagement, if necessary.

Specifically, as part of our long-standing partnership with the school, we designed an analysis to explore the survey responses of the Spanish-speaking families. In this project, we wanted to answer the research call to examine power dynamics between marginalized families and educators and thereby re-conceptualize school-family collaboration, engagement, and policies (Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, et al., 2017; Fernández & López, 2017; Ishimaru, 2014). Framed by Foucault's theories of power (1980) as well as the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) framework (Calabrese Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004), our guiding research questions were: (a) Do Spanish-speaking parents enact relational power at SIES, and if so, how? In other words: Who do parents trust? In what kinds of places and activities do they partake? Where do they feel welcome? And (b) how does school climate discourse at SIES shape Spanish-speaking parents' abilities to engage at school and with their children's schooling? What barriers exist? What barriers do they perceive?

As we began exploring the data following a Thinking with Theory approach (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), we realized that we needed to examine not only parents' perceptions of school climate and related policies, but also the very conceptions of school climate and parent engagement that were used in this research. Thus, while this project began with an analysis of the empirical survey data, the results presented here also highlight the power imbalances created by our own research processes. In other words, Thinking with Theory became a tool to critique our own methods and analyses and thereby gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and possibilities for family-school-researcher collaborations, engagement, and research on these topics.

The following section starts by reviewing the theories that frame this project and recent research on family engagement and school climate. After a description of methods and findings, we conclude with implications for research, policy, and practice.

Guiding Framework

When schools consider their climate and integrating families into that climate, they typically employ deficit-driven models; that is, they often consider parent involvement as a one-way relationship, with information and opportunities for partnerships primarily flowing from schools *to* parents (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004; Ishimaru, 2014; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). However, alternative perspectives exist: models like the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) encourage the development of system-wide and culturally-affirming frameworks that highlight how parents' networks, spaces, and capitals more broadly permit them to navigate relationships and understand schooling (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004). As described in the paragraphs that follow, we merged this EPE framework with Foucault's (1980) concepts of power to examine Spanish-speaking parents' experiences in a language immersion school. This section also situates our study in prior research on school climate and parent engagement in language immersion education.

Integrating Ecologies of Parental Engagement with Foucauldian Theories on Power

The Ecologies of Parental Engagement framework was designed to shift notions of parent involvement in education from deficit-oriented foci (inviting parents to be involved on school terms) to viewing parents as agents (who actively find or choose places and activities in which to be engaged). Whereas many parent involvement models and research suggest that family members must attend and complete school-sanctioned activities lest children's academic achievement suffer, EPE draws from cultural-historical activity theory and critical race theory to expose not only "what" parents do, but also "how" they actually engage with children's schooling (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004, p. 3). Looking at the whole system or ecology related to parents' actions within schools, EPE considers parental engagement "more than an object or an outcome" (p. 6); instead it conceptualizes a process that results from the interaction of three important concepts: space, capital, and relationships. Specifically, parents enter particular educational *spaces* (whether at home, school, or elsewhere) carrying specific kinds of *capital* (e.g., cultural knowledge, financial resources, and/or social networks), and these allow for certain kinds of *relationships* and interactions to occur within the school setting (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004). Viewing parent engagement in this way highlights how, for example, an immigrant parent engages in school not necessarily by attending Parent Teacher Organization meetings held in English, but by reading with students in her child's classroom where the para-professional is her neighbor and friend, who speaks her language and has supported her integration into the class. In summary, EPE draws our attention to parents' assets and agency, specifically focusing on the relational processes in which parents' capital may permit them to position themselves in certain school spaces as authorities regarding their children's education.

While EPE focuses on parents' agency and capital, Foucault draws our attention to the ways in which power at the institutional and individual levels discursively and thus hegemonically shapes day-to-day interactions. Foucault's work reminds us of the structural, discursive power within which parents (alongside educators and children) attempt to exercise agency and activate capital. Foucault (1980) defines the concept of normative (T)ruths as a set of governing norms and beliefs that are fundamental for the production and maintenance of power-inducing expectations. The assemblage of these norms renders a sovereign power that constitutes what is acceptable or falsifiable, produces knowledge-based systems, and circulates "in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted, and 'individualized' throughout the entire social body" (Foucault, 1980, p. 120). A battle ensues to maintain the historical normativity that has produced "multiple forms of constraint… induc[ing] regular effects of power" through certain rules and policies, norms and expectations, which authorize the governing standards (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). These normative, (T)ruth-enforcing, and power-bearing behaviors are enacted daily through techniques and procedures, or discourse, which enforce an oppressive, hegemonic structure that may prevent individuals from operating independently.

This is not to say that Foucault deemed all individuals as powerless beings, only that they are subjugated to discursively-produced knowledge and (T)ruths. Specifically, for Foucault, discourse is a society's generalized and accepted truths, ones that are "well-bounded areas of social knowledge" (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 31) prescribed as "a material condition (or set of conditions) which enables and constrains the social productive 'imagination'" (p. 34). One can engage in a conscientious shift in discourse and disengage from such (T)ruths by changing "the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133), as found in some research (e.g., Niesche, 2013). Meanwhile, in this study, EPE helped us to analyze the system-wide, relational processes in which parents' capital might have permitted them to navigate parent-school relationships and integrate in SIES' school climate. Conjointly, using Foucault's concepts allowed us to interrogate the normative (T)ruths that may have produced and maintained certain institutional power dynamics.

Defining Parent Engagement and School Climate: From Deficit to Ecological Views

Since the 1960s the federal government has tried to influence parent-school relationships. At that time, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) incorporated a parent involvement section intended to increase student academic well-being, especially for low-income and other minoritized families (Mole & Redding, 2011). Although subsequent federal policies have aimed to support parent involvement in children's schooling, as discussed in the following review, tensions remained: educators and schools have had difficulty building school climates that support relationship-building with all parents (Nevin, 2008).

Deficit-based approaches. A large body of research demonstrates the benefits of family and school relationships fostering academic achievement in students (Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Redding, Langdon, Meyer, & Sheley, 2005; Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez, 2006). These studies provide guidelines for what parents and educators can do together to increase students' educational success. However, critics of this work point to its linear, hierarchical, and deficit-driven approaches, which tend to neglect the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics that families must navigate, especially families of low-income, immigrant, racialized, and other minoritized statuses (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Calabrese Barton et al., 2004; Lareau, 1987; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009; Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2010). In fact, interactions between families and schools are not portrayed as *conversations*, but rather, a rigid form of instructional manuals, where educators are typically portrayed as the providers of information or instruction, and parents as mere recipients (Cooper, 2009; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Olivos, 2006).

Ecological approaches. As suggested by the EPE framework, such hierarchical and linear models neglect *relational power* as part of the dynamic interaction between parents and schools (Lareau, 2003; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Warren, 2001, 2005; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). For reciprocity to exist, parent-teacher relationships must have "authentic collaboration," where there are explicit efforts "to address inequality in resources and power between the two groups" (Warren et al., 2009, p. 2212). Ethnic minoritized parents' presence, contributions, resources, and knowledge base must be acknowledged (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Ishimaru, 2014; López et al., 2001). Specifically, family-school engagement must be defined as "a dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interactions with schools and among school actors," where families become "authors" and "agents" of their children's education (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004, p. 3).

Parent-school relations and school climate. In general, social climate "reflects students', school personnel's, and parents' experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically as well as academically" (Thapa et al., 2013, p. 369). There is an overall consensus that opportunities to build trusting relationships and perceptions of institutional environments as safe play a critical role in providing strong and positive school cultures (Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker*,* 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2014; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Thapa et al., 2013). This is the link between parent engagement and school climate: if parents perceive opportunities to develop strong, trusting relationships and view their children's school as safe/comfortable spaces, they are more likely to be engaged and supportive of their children's educational experiences (Bradshaw et al., 2014; Engel, Kington, & Mleczko, 2013; Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002).

School Climate and Parent Engagement in Language Immersion Programs

There are many kinds of language immersion program models, but in the United States, the most common are "two-way" and "one-way." Two-way immersion education, sometimes called dual language immersion, mixes approximately equal numbers of English-speaking youth and youth who speak another language, such as Spanish, usually because they come from immigrant families. Meanwhile, one-way programs function as foreign language education and enroll primarily English-speaking youth (Tedick & Wesley, 2015). As with our school site, many language immersion schools, no matter their model, enroll a number of children from various linguistic, racial, ethnic, and immigrant backgrounds.

Contrary to expectations and hopes, the extant research on the climate of language immersion schools has found that they often benefit English-speaking students and families, rather than speakers of other languages (Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, et al., 2017; Flores, 2010; Valdés, 1997). Families' perceptions of school climate—including barriers such as lack of communication, collaborative efforts, and trust—may make it difficult for parents of immigrant and minoritized language backgrounds to develop partnerships with their children's schools, even in language immersion schools that presumably are designed to work with cultural and linguistic diversity (Dorner, 2010; Kavanagh, 2014; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Despite their intentions, many language immersion programs continue to reflect a political climate that values one language (English) and one identity (American) (Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, et al. 2017; López, 2013; Muro, 2016). Valdés (1997) and Dorner (2011) both found that policy and decision-makers developed programs that reflected the more dominant (English-speaking) cultural discourse, and in turn, silenced the voices of minoritized populations, which the programs intended to serve. Given this prior research, this project examined the discourse of school climate at SIES.

Research Methods

This study draws from longitudinal research on the development of language immersion schools in the Midwest (see Dorner, 2015). Using the results of a school climate survey, our initial research objective was to explore how Spanish-speaking, immigrant parents viewed and navigated the school climate at their children's one-way immersion school, SIES. As we applied our theoretical frameworks and worked through initial analyses, our research questions became: (1) Do Spanish-speaking parents enact relational power at SIES, and if so, how? In other words: In what kinds of places and activities do they partake? Who do parents trust? Where do they feel welcome? (2) How does school climate discourse at SIES shape Spanish-speaking parents' abilities to engage at school and with their children's schooling? What barriers exist? What barriers do they perceive? The following sections describe the research context, survey development, data collection, and analytical processes used in this study.

Research Context

At the time of our study, SIES was a relatively new school; it had opened five years earlier as part of a network of charter schools in a mid-sized, midwestern city. Charter schools are free public schools, which receive funding from the state and federal government, just like district-run, neighborhood public schools. However, rather than being governed by a publically elected board, charters are governed by either for-profit educational management organizations, local individuals, or non-profit organizations, presumably to allow for greater flexibility and creativity over schools' structure and curriculum. Charters are regularly reviewed by local "sponsors" or "authorizers," which have the power to re-authorize or close them down (Buckley & Schneider, 2007). A local university sponsored SIES and, along with the state department of education, regularly reviewed its students' achievement and the school's finances.

SIES served a diverse, but mainly English-speaking population that reflected the surrounding community: students were classified by state data as about 60% African-American and 30% White, with 50% low-income and 10% English Learners, most of whom spoke Spanish at home. School policies dictated that all teaching and learning should occur in Spanish at SIES from kindergarten until the middle of second grade. At that point, students attended one 50-minute class of English Language Arts each day, which they continued until fifth grade.

While this one-way immersion school was designed primarily for monolingual English speakers, the Mexican principal and other school staff, most of whom were from Spanish-speaking countries (e.g., Mexico, Peru, Honduras, Spain, and Puerto Rico), led recruitment efforts for new students at city-wide Hispanic and international festivals. In turn, about 15% of the enrolled students came from families where at least one parent spoke Spanish as their native/home language. About 10% spoke primarily or only Spanish; their children were most likely to be labeled by school/state policy as "English Learners" (ELs). According to the EL teacher—the only source for data on families' countries of origin—the majority of the EL families at the time of this survey were from Mexico, although in later years, a few came from Guatemala, Honduras, and Venezuela. As will be discussed further in the findings, the Mexican and other Spanish-speaking families appreciated the ability to interact with the school principal and their children's teachers in their home language; this was not available in the other city schools in the midwestern context, which was primarily monolingual English-speaking with only about 5% foreign-born population.

In terms of parent engagement, the original charter of the school strongly valued its multilingual parents and recognized that outreach should use multiple languages to be inclusive and fully engage families. For example, the original charter explained:

> At the heart of every vibrant school are involved parents, extended families and their communities, outstanding teachers and board members who are committed to excellence and the individual needs of each child…. Additionally, [SIES] will build strong relationships with the neighboring community and parent community through the School Advisory Council (SAC) and the School Enrichment Program (SEP)…. Ideally the School Advisory Council meetings will be conducted in English and the language of instruction with informal translations by bilingual/multilingual Council members. [SIES] will cultivate a partnership with the [nearby global refugee center] to provide translators for families who speak a third language in their home.

Survey Development and Data Collection

Despite the best intentions of the charter, during the first few years of the school's existence, SIES struggled to develop routines both for children within the school and for parent engagement activities (Slapac & Dorner, 2013). That is, although SIES had an environment that celebrated cultural and linguistic diversity on one hand (having teachers from all over the world; integrating Black, White, and other children from various income backgrounds), on the other hand, operational issues and tensions with how to manage school procedures contributed to an environment not always viewed as safe or comfortable by all families (as the data analysis will demonstrate).

By its fourth year, the university sponsor required SIES to administer a School Climate Survey, aiming to obtain extensive feedback about the school from faculty, students, and parents. This survey was developed and run by an evaluation center at the sponsoring university, which adapted most questions from the official, state-required survey used for "School Improvement." Knowing the second author's partnership with the school, the evaluator at the center asked second author, Dorner, for support. The resulting survey that they created included 43 questions (10 open-ended, 33 Likert-scaled) asking about the following categories: (1) demographics on respondents' children, e.g.: gender, ethnicity, grade, teacher, length of time at SIES; (2) academic performance and engagement of child(ren) at school and in academic activities; (3) parent involvement and perceptions of school environment, teachers, students, school rules; (4) satisfaction with core programs, promises, school's material condition, and opportunities for input; and (5) household demographics, e.g.: parent's age, race, income, language at home. (A copy of the survey is available upon request.)

During this survey development process, no one at the evaluation center or the school's network planned to create or administer the survey in Spanish or any other languages. However, as a partner of the school since its founding, Dorner perceived that many Spanish-speaking families were unlikely to answer the online survey in English. She offered to collaborate with SIES to provide a paper survey in Spanish to the parents of their 27 English Learners. Working with Dorner and with support from the principal, two teachers volunteered their own time to translate and back-translate the survey into Spanish. The EL teacher made individual contact with families to ensure that they understood the purpose of the survey and to collect at least one response from each household. At the end of a nearly two-year effort, we received 19 surveys (76% response rate/household), all from mothers who chose "Latina" as their ethnicity and reported that they spoke Spanish at home. Other demographic information is in Table 1.

Table 1
*Demographic Data on Survey Respondents (n=19)**

Home Composition	***n***	**%**
Single-parent household	3	16%
Two-parent household	7	27%
Blended family/Step-family	2	10%
No answer	7	27%
Education Level Completed	***n***	**%**
Elementary and middle school	2	10%
Some high school	6	31%
High school graduate	2	10%
Some college	5	25%
Some graduate school	2	10%
Age	***n***	**%**
Less than 30 years old	2	10%
30-39 years old	9	50%
40-49 years old	4	20%

*Percentages do not equal 100% because some respondents did not provide an answer.

Data Production and Analysis: Thinking with Theory

We began the analytical process by reading through the answers to all 43 questions and sorting them into four general categories: overwhelmingly positive perspectives on school climate, neutral responses, negative responses, and those who did not respond at all. Then, following procedures from Thinking with Theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), we applied concepts from EPE and Foucault to study the data, while also acknowledging our own perspectives. The following paragraphs explain Thinking with Theory in more detail and how this process unfolded for us.

In *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research: Viewing Data across Multiple Perspectives*, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) recommend utilizing "the process of plugging in" as an analytical tool (p. 2). As a post-structural perspective, this process does not claim to produce a finalized answer, like grounded theory might, but instead produces many new views on a question (p. 2). The "field of reality (data, theory, and method), a field of representation (producing different knowledge, resisting stable meaning), and a field of subjectivity (becoming-researcher)" enable the analysts to create new "assemblages" of meaning (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 2). In other words, throughout the analysis, researchers must name how they are shaped by the data and their theories (field of reality); they acknowledge their own perspectives and positions in the research field (becoming-researcher); and they explain how this results in the production of findings and different knowledges (field of representation). In this process, researchers re-assemble and understand the data from various angles, whereby "the making of meaning and the production of knowledge are always in process—a becoming" (Ringrose & Renold, 2014, p. 2).

In turn, our analytical questions took form and shape using Thinking with Theory, while EPE framed our questions on relational power. Foucault's concepts helped us to observe whether there were any institutional policies or actions that impacted parents' perceptions and actions. For example, we first "plugged in" the concepts of space and relational power from EPE. Specifically, we considered how parents navigated various *spaces*, or contexts both inside and outside of the school, in order to form *relationships* that shaped their children's education. In our analysis, this included noting the events and situations that parents named in their perspectives about whether school climate at SIES was welcoming. We also noted who they mentioned, and who they did not, as trusting staff members in their development of parent-school relationships. Similarly, we considered the actions by the parents and the school as processes that are reproduced by relationships and practices. This process of analysis was directly related to these research questions, which crystalized throughout the analysis: Do Spanish-speaking parents enact relational power at SIES, and if so, how? In what kinds of places and activities do they partake? Who do parents trust? Where do they feel welcome?

Concurrently, Thinking with Theory asks researchers to be "deliberate and transparent in what analytical questions are made possible by a specific theoretical concept … and how the questions … *emerged in the middle* of plugging in" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 5). As we plugged in Foucault's (1980) concept of normative (T)ruth to focus on the political discourse that fostered or expected a promotion of power-ridden behaviors, our second set of questions shifted. The initial goal in this level of analysis was to understand how power was operating at a structural level, specifically, what policies and barriers parents perceived to engaging in their children's education. As we considered and "plugged in" the concept of *power*, however, we recognized that the structures of research itself were also shaping the school climate. Such analytical processes helped to develop and explore our second set of research questions, with a sharper critique of the research itself, including survey development and implementation: How does school climate discourse at SIES shape Spanish-speaking parents' abilities to engage at school and with their children's schooling? What barriers exist? What barriers do they perceive?

Researcher Positions

Another important part of Thinking with Theory is recognizing how researchers become central to knowledge production. That is, it is important to acknowledge how one's positions may impact the significance given to the data. In this case, following the Thinking with Theory approach, we provide a window into our thinking about the data by putting personal acknowledgements throughout the findings. This helps us to make visible how we interpreted parents' answers about their views of SIES, its school climate, whether they felt that they could develop relational power there, and when they felt marginalized.

In addition, we offer a brief explanation of our backgrounds here. David Aguayo is an immigrant professional who migrated undocumented from Mexico to the United States at the age of 10. In the US, he graduated from high school, college, and a graduate program to become the first of his family to have accomplished any of these educational feats. Given his personal experience as an immigrant and his early and continual involvement with families and educators in a variety of minoritized communities, he engages education through a relational and communal effort, where cooperation and partnerships have allowed his students, the parents with whom he has worked, and him different levels of accomplishments. Meanwhile, Lisa Dorner is a White, U.S.-born educator who has sent her own native English-speaking children to Spanish immersion schools in the Midwest. During years of working with immigrant communities and teaching English in Chicago and Japan, she has witnessed the hegemonic power of English in school systems across the world. In turn, she continues to strive to understand, document, and support the experiences of transnational migrants; she aims to help develop equitable language immersion education, especially in the midwestern United States (see Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, et al., 2017).

Results: Thinking with Social Capital and (T)ruth as Power

Our findings focus on two areas, which are related to our two research questions: (1) parents' perceptions of relational power, trust, and parent-engagement activities at SIES; and (2) parents' descriptions of barriers and marginalization experienced at SIES, in relation to structural discourses and research processes in this context.

Relational Power and Trust at SIES

Overall, many parents in this study did not answer questions in a way that suggested they perceived having strong relational power and significant social capital, although many reported having trust in the school, especially with their children's teachers. While they reportedly trusted the school personnel to care for their children, over half of the parents did not respond to questions about school safety. We first present the data that demonstrates where and how parents perceived relationships and trust.

Most parents (17/19) marked that they would contact their children's teachers in answer to the question, "When I have a concern or question about the school, I contact . . ." (with choices including, my child's teacher, my child's teacher assistant, the Head of School, the front office staff, other). Only two parents marked someone else, with one parent marking "front office staff," and another parent, who we call Josefina, marking many responses: the Assistant Teacher, the Head of School, the Assistant Head of School, and other parents. In answer to the question whether parents felt that they could speak with their child's teacher or the school director at any time, the large majority of the mothers (15/19) agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to reach out to the teacher or principal; two parents felt neutral about it; and one parent disagreed.

Parents seemed to trust the school to care for their children as well. When asked if they felt that there were adults who would help if students have a problem, 14/19 parents responded that someone would assist their child; 14/17 felt welcomed in the school; and 16/19 agreed or strongly agreed that adults in the school treated students with respect. (See Table 2.) On a related note, parents seemed satisfied with the communication and information received from the school, with the overwhelming majority of respondents saying that they were satisfied with the amount of information and communication from the school. (See Table 3.)

Table 2
Spanish-Speaking Parents' Trust in School

	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	No Answer
I feel welcomed in school.	14	2	1	2
The School Director considers the school community.	12	2	3	2
Adults at this school treat students with respect.	16	1	1	1
If a student has a problem, there are adults who will listen and help.	14	3	1	1
The teachers here always try to be fair.	17	1	1	0
The Head of School, Social Worker, other staff at this school care about students.	13	1	4	1
If students have trouble, teachers help them.	14	1	3	1
Parents are asked for their input about school decisions.	15	2	1	1
I am a partner with the school in my child's education.	10	4	0	5
In our community, people tend to trust each other.	15	2	0	2

Table 3
How Satisfied Are Parents With the Following?

	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	No Answer
Information is readily provided to parents	14	1	0	4
Communication between school to parents	16	1	2	0
Overall school safety	8	3	3	5

Although the responses to these questions suggest that parents generally trusted the school staff and teachers, there were several questions on the survey that respondents did not answer. The lack of responses suggests that they were not wholly satisfied with the climate at SIES, at least around certain issues. For instance, 11/19 parents did not agree, were dissatisfied, or did not answer the question regarding school safety. (See Table 3). This suggests some level of distrust or lack of information exchange among parents and teachers, especially regarding students' level of safety at the school. Moreover, in open-ended comments, one parent described the school as "desorganización administrativa [*disorganized administratively*]" while another, who we call Angelina, discussed her overall experience when asked about what she valued the most about the school: "A estas alturas del partido, no es buena idea que pregunte eso. En pocas palabras, ha sido frustrante, desanimante, desalentador, desilusionante, desgastador mi experiencia con SIES [*At this stage of the* *game, it's not a good idea to be asking this. In a few words, it's been frustrating, dispirited, discouraging, disenchanting, exhausting, my experience at SIES*]. Still others reported not feeling welcomed and comfortable. For example, Monica was worried about the security at different entrances of the school, "lo que más me preocupa es las seguridad en las entradas de la escuela," or the lack of supportive system to work with bullies and those being bullied: "Me interesaría mucho que hubiera un programa extenso para tratar a los niños que hacen bullying y a los niños afectados."

On the surface, parents appeared comfortable and able to communicate with their school system. However, Ishimaru (2014) has suggested that when parents discuss their feelings about the school-parent relationship, parents continue to have a difficult time trusting their children's educators. To develop trust requires that both parents and educators have space, time, and motivation to establish and foster trusting relationships. The educators may be able to provide time and motivation to show respect and a level of care for children's education while in the classroom. However, some parents in this study suggested that the school space was disorganized and did not feel that time was spent to help them engage in collaborative practices with their children's educators. Given what seems to be a high level of social capital, a parent like Josefina was willing and able to traverse different spaces to engage in conversations and find answers to any concerns. She seemed to be the only parent that enacted agency and relational power, per the EPE framework.

In discussing the production of relational power and trust, we must also include the conditions that captured the voices of the parents; that is, we must consider the functionality of the survey, along with the manner the survey questions were answered. As we analyzed the data qualitatively, we began to question the usefulness of this survey instrument to obtain the thoughts of populations who have been traditionally marginalized. Desiring to obtain their thoughts through this survey, a mechanical mean, likely did not promote an environment of warmth and trust. Instead, it could serve to further separate parents from educators (including the researchers, the teacher, the principal, etc.). Obtaining the thoughts and opinions of parents for the sake of improving their children's schooling requires more than a survey. That may be the reason why 11/19 parents showed hesitancy, dissatisfaction or did not answer the question of whether the school was a safe place (Table 3.). Five of these eleven parents did not answer this question. Did this question itself make them uncomfortable? It could have been survey fatigue, but then again, the question was in the middle of the survey.

We know that social capital and relational power facilitate the way parents navigate schools' spaces or systems. For this reason, we now challenge the survey's ability to acquire a genuine answer from parents who may have already felt uncertain about the school system. It appears that the school, which intended to be a welcoming space for Spanish-speaking parents, was not creating as many opportunities as it could for parents to exercise their power, including how the school collected parents' perspectives. This finding aligns with others who found parents feeling inferior when they were unable to participate in their children's schooling (Kavanagh, 2014).

Parent Engagement Activities at SIES

The parents responded to multiple questions about the ways that they were involved at school. In general, parents were most engaged in activities that directly involved their child (school celebrations, field trips, etc.) rather than larger school-wide meetings such as the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) or School Board meetings. The great majority of parents marked either "regularly" or "sometimes" to participating in activities or field trips (16/19), committing money/resources to class (17/19), speaking to their child about their experiences at school (17/19), and attending school celebrations (17/19). (See Table 4.) In addition, parents reported frequent contact with their child's teacher and attending parent-teacher conferences. In contrast, parents marked attending PTO meetings and School Board meetings much less frequently, with the majority marking that they never attended at PTO (63%) or School Board (84%) meeting or leaving the item blank. (See Table 5.)

Table 4
Parent Engagement at SIES

	Regularly	Sometimes	Never	No Answer
I participate in activities or field trips with my child's class.	5	11	2	1
I commit money and/or resources to my child's class.	4	13	0	2
I participate in PTO activities or meetings.	3	9	4	3
I talk to my child about his/her experiences in school.	14	3	0	2
I attend school-wide celebrations (such as literacy/movie night, La Posada, Back to School Activities).	9	7	0	3

Table 5
Frequency of Parent Engagement at SIES

	10+ times	6–10 times	3–5 times	1–2 times	Never	No response
Talked to your child's teacher.	4	0	7	5	0	3
Attended parent/teacher meetings.	2	3	5	7	0	2
Visited the school on your own.	5	1	3	4	0	6
Gone to an open house at school.	0	2	3	8	2	4
Helped with school activities	1	2	2	4	5	5
Attended a PTO meeting ("SAC" at SIES)	1	0	3	3	6	6
Attended a Board meeting	0	0	0	3	12	4

Overall, the data suggest that Spanish-speaking mothers were engaged in the daily educational experiences of their child(ren), but not the policymaking aspects of the school, via the PTO or Board. However, the data also suggest that parents felt positive about their level of interaction with their child(ren)'s schooling: 16/19 agreed that the support they provided at home for their child's education had improved their children's achievement. Similarly, when asked if they felt they were partners with the school for their children's education, most of the parents agreed (*n*=16), with only three not responding to the question.

Parents' responses here suggested that they felt positive about a relatively large amount of educational interactions with their children, while at the same time, they had a lack of interactions at the policymaking level. It was not surprising to us that parents were less likely to report engagement in PTO or Board meetings. Unfortunately, such meetings never had a translator nor were they ever held in Spanish, not even in this Spanish immersion environment. Moreover, the PTO and Board meetings rarely had other services to encourage involvement, like childcare or dinner/snacks available. In contrast, all the teachers spoke Spanish, so attending school celebrations or parent-teacher conferences, run by teachers, were more likely perceived as welcoming and/or comfortable to Spanish-speaking parents.

At the same time, it is critical to note that 70% of the survey questions had at least one person not responding. As we thought about this, we began to consider how power and authority were (re)produced by the survey itself, a tool that had removed personal relationships from our interactions. In this case, the survey introduced topics and defined "parent involvement" in traditional and perhaps narrow ways. It did not ask parents how they thought about engaging in their children's schooling. From prior work, however, we know that families' conceptions about education do not fit the "boxes" of traditional scholarship. Reese and colleagues (1995), for example, have examined how the idea of "educación" encompasses much more than academics for Spanish-speaking families. We recognized and remembered this as we analyzed the survey data, leading us to consider that we cannot understand "school climate" from a survey alone. To understand Spanish-speaking families' interactions, relationships, building trust, and engagement in this environment required much more intimate conversations. Automated question-and-response surveys likely deprived parents from providing suggestions regarding engagement and involvement, as it removed their power and authority to express themselves and their agency.

Barriers and Perceptions of Marginalization

While most of the responses reviewed so far portray several positive perceptions from families concerning school climate, many parents responded that there were barriers to becoming involved at SIES. Specifically, resources such as time, knowledge, and language were marked as barriers. (See Table 6.) Only half of respondents (8/19) indicated that the school's President (the equivalent of a Superintendent in this charter school network) was perceived as responsive to community needs. Josefina, one of the mothers mentioned earlier, noted that the President did not value parents' inputs. Three parents faulted the administration for a lack of organization in the school, and two others reported something similar in open-ended comments, e.g.: "La administración necesita urgentemente restructurar su comando. Me da la impresión que la mayoría de las veces ni el personal sabe lo que está hacer; no tienen una visión con claridad [*The administration needs to, urgently, restructure its command. It gives me the impression that most of the time, not even the staff members know what they are doing; they don't have a clear vision*]." In this way (and ironically), *language* and, at times, the highest school administrator—two important systems assumed to be critical in the functioning of this one-way language immersion school—were perceived as barriers to parents and may have prevented them from enacting their relational power.

Table 6
I Haven't Been Involved in School Because…

I haven't been involved in school because:	***n****
I don't have time.	3
Don't know how to go about it	2
My English is weak.	3
Other	5
No Answer	6

*Parents could respond to only one option on this question.

In addition, referring to Table 3, parents were far less satisfied with "overall school safety" than other items. In an open-ended comment, one mother noted: "Lo que más me preocupa es las seguridad en las entradas de la escuela [*What most concerns me is the safety in the entrance of the school*]." Feelings of safety are important in the school environment as safety has been shown to increase student learning and complete development (Bradshaw et al., 2014; Thapa et al., 2013). On questions about safety, it appeared that parents felt dissatisfied with the staff's abilities to develop safe environments or respond to student quarrels, which suggests that relational engagement and trust were not fully developed for Spanish-speaking families at SIES.

Safety within any school also includes the ability for the school to ensure basic resources, such as an outdoor play space, nurses, or even that it will remain open the following year. As a new charter school, SIES did not have a nurse, school counselor, or playground. In addition, the school was under intense scrutiny from the sponsor and the state during the time of our study for its lack of resources and disorganization. The school's inability to provide some basic level of safety, defined in these ways, may have contributed to a dissatisfied attitude, distrust, and/or disengagement in the school.

Finally, referring back to Table 5, while we do not know the reasons for the disengagement, the findings on traditional involvement categories (attending parent-teacher conferences, PTO meetings, board meetings) suggest that half of the Spanish-speaking families were rarely involved, if at all. These findings contrast with what families may consider *engaged parents*, who support children at home (Table 4).

Although parents reported that the staff and leadership of the school cared for their students and attempted to make the school a better place, the school lacked sufficient resources to respond to children's needs and develop what parents perceived as a fully responsive school climate. Some parents in the study viewed the school's personnel as managing a chaotic school system, within which they were not fully engaged.

Discussion: Parent Engagement as Discursive Power

Since 1965, the federal government's Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently through the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), has framed families as critical contributors to children's education. These federal policies have mandated and allotted funding for schools, particularly those receiving Title I funds, to develop policies to involve families in their children's education. Despite these federal mandates, however, schools continue to have difficulties involving, engaging, and thus, building relationships with families (Moles & Fege, 2011; Nevin, 2008). Moreover, certain educational programs, such as language immersion schools, may not have policies in place that allow them to serve their entire population, most specifically the minoritized children that they are created to serve (Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, et al., 2017; Dorner, 2011; Valdés, 1997).

From Perceived Support to Language Barriers

We found that Spanish-speaking parents at SIES felt mostly supported by the school—especially their teachers—and, overall, many felt welcomed in the school's environment. Just as important, the parents in this study found that the school provided opportunities and encouraged collaboration and interaction between parents and teachers. Although it was difficult to gauge whether there was a culture of "equal engagement" (Dotson-Blake, Foster, & Gressard, 2009) from the data analyzed here, a collaborative spirit seemed evident as many parents reported that the school asked for their input and readily provided information and opportunities for two-way communication exchange. Similarly, parents felt that there existed some trust among people in the community.

That said, most of the parents committed to a form of parent involvement not usually or easily measured by the traditional school-family involvement literature: speaking to their child about their school experience. In addition, parents reported some issues regarding the school infrastructure and safety, and they mentioned their own lack of English as a barrier to involvement. Parents did not frequently attend meetings that did not include Spanish speakers or translators. In fact, the school never provided translation at large public meetings, despite original intentions for active engagement opportunities and activities to exist in families' different home languages. When considering parents' sources of power as they navigated their social context (inside and outside the school), it appeared that for some parents, they viewed their own native language as a *detractor* from becoming involved at their child's school, rather than an asset. In other words, the school intended to support language learners and their parents, but the school did not fully develop parents' relational power and trust; they were unable to rewrite the narratives that marginalize parents of color (Ishimaru, 2014), even in this multilingual school.

To review, the language immersion school in our study was a space that, theoretically, could have uniquely supported those who speak Spanish as their home/native language. However, many respondents named *language* as a barrier between them and the school personnel. Their Spanish language, which they utilized outside the school, was not seen as useful inside the school walls. Some participants' felt discouraged from participating in their children's schooling due to their lack of communication skills, which falls in line with Calabrese Barton et al. (2004) who argue that traditional school norms and values position the cultures of minoritized families as subordinate (p. 5). In some cases, the power that parents carried with them into the school was diffused and thwarted.

EPE and Social Capital

EPE (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004) recommends that educators conceive of parental engagement to encompass more than the actions taken by parents to connect with school personnel and acknowledge other efforts put forth by parents to improve their children's schooling. One clear example of this approach was Josefina, the mother who named contacting "other parents" when she had a concern or question about her child's schooling. Conventional parental involvement models might characterize this parent as uninvolved at *school* because she was approaching another parent, rather than a staff member, with her concerns (Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013). In contrast, the EPE framework suggests that when parents support other parents, social capital is being employed for the improvement of a child's academic progress. The social capital being utilized by parents is a form of power production that permits school engagement to exist, while producing and giving value to a knowledge base set forth by these parents. In this manner, Foucault notes that the power produced by parents influences "the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and every lives" (as cited in Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 54).

On one hand, EPE would suggest the parent reaching out to other parents *is* utilizing her agency to find a solution for the related concern her child is having with schooling. On the other, an analysis informed by Foucault's discussion of power would add that the form of asking and way of being answered constructs a power dynamic that validates that relationship, in turn giving power and meaning to that form of relating: it translates into discursive, local power. Applying EPE with Foucault advances Ishimaru's (2014) recommendation for future research on a school's organizational contexts and its asymmetrical power dynamics towards immigrant parents. Further research is needed to understand parental power development, particularly as it relates to rewriting dominant narrative scripts, for parents and for the institution.

The School and Researchers as Holders of Power

SIES collaborated with local university researchers to deploy a survey to examine school climate. What ensued showcased the top-down power infrastructure as discussed by Foucault (1980) and EPE (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004). Specifically, the first "normative (T)ruth" that we found existed within the relationships between the educational research field and the school. Under a traditional assumption of knowledge creation, researchers were the persons acting as the experts, leading conversations on what is needed to be collected on school climate. However, in this study we began to challenge this normative assumption and include ourselves in our examination of who holds, negotiates, and shares the power in this context? Here at SIES, the institutional field of school climate research shaped the nature and questions in the survey, which was administered by the local university's evaluation office, who created the survey by lifting most questions from the standardized state survey for school improvement. While there were some attempts to adapt the questions for this context and administer the survey in Spanish, the questions were not adapted significantly and not through any collaboration with the parents themselves. Power was not renegotiated in any process of 'translating' the survey for this new context.

Another normative (T)ruth existed in the assumption that surveys are a mechanism of knowledge productions. When the school, its sponsor, and the evaluator determined that a survey was the best form to gather answers from parents, it signaled to the parents that information needs to be extracted in a one-way, linear fashion, rather than a dialogue that could better allow for genuine relationship building. This point is evident in the way the survey asked about parent participation, as well. The survey focused on traditional forms of parental involvement, failing to ask and thus capture the nuances that entail parental engagement (Baquenado et al., 2013; Galindo & Medina, 2009). Instead, the survey itself showcased a normative assumption about data collection—helicopter researcher as extractor of knowledge—rather than collaborator (Pasque, Carducci, & Kuntz, 2012). Bryk and Schneider (2002) would instead recommend collaborative meetings that enable power to be exerted by both parties. To have a collaborative partnership, a normative (T)ruth about top-down knowledge production must be challenged and exchanged with a dialogic knowledge interchange. More research is needed to enhance understanding on how school organizational context attempts to negotiate or even relinquish its normative (T)ruths and power so authentic collaboration occurs between parents and the schools.

Implications for Research, Policy, Practice

The discussion here suggests that researchers and policymakers need to better integrate marginalized families in the processes of education policy development, implementation, and research. In other words, in this final section of the paper, we advocate for educators, policymakers, and researchers to challenge deficit-based, hierarchical or linear research procedures. Instead, we recommend an inclusion of asset-based frameworks in pedagogical and scholarly projects (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Gunter, Mills, & Hall, 2014; Ishimaru, 2014; Lopez et al., 2001).

Changing Discourses

Part of the challenge in considering immigrant families' school engagement is in redefining school system discourses to incorporate an ecological approach to parent engagement (Calabrese et al., 2004; Mediratta & Fruchter, 2003; Warren et al., 2009). This redefinition should consider parents as vehicles of power, enabling them as contributors to change and recognizing their roles in their children's schooling. This research supports a redefinition of parents as *contributors*, to work against the discursive practices in the policy boardroom, district office, and/or principal's desk that continue to have a common sense (Emery, 2016) or deficit-laden vocabulary (Hernández, 2016) towards underrepresented groups.

But how can we do this? In constructing educational policies to support language immersion schools (and schools in general) with parent engagement, one must address two large traditional expectations: linear-deficit thinking and the power of surveys to gather the right kind of data (i.e., outcome-based versus process-centered: Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013). For families to be engaged in their children's education, educators must consider families' abilities and agency without using their background or situational contexts as excuses to *not* offer opportunities for involvement—that would only further develop deficit-thinking, particularly towards minoritized families. Instead, we need new discourses to help educators visualize families as having a range of skills and resources that can assist their children's education, broadly conceived. Once we (as educators, researchers and policymakers) change our perceptions about families, family-school engagement may occur with a motivation to learn from and with families. Educational policies and participatory action or humanizing research on school climate that supports empathetic, genuine collaborations are necessary to begin re-conceptualizing families as contributors and collaborators in their children's education (Paris & Winn, 2014). One example of empathetic collaboration is meeting parents where they are (e.g., their educational level, physical contexts) and using our role as educators and researchers to facilitate understanding and even mobilization on certain school policies and procedures. In turn, empathetic, genuine collaboration will help school leaders, teachers, and staff to build trust with and among families, and in turn, engage with them on educational efforts.

Redirecting discourse in terms of research requires that investigators fully capture the nuances and dynamic processes of familial engagement. To change research trajectories would necessitate challenging traditional methodologies—like the kind of survey and wording used in this standardized state survey—and adjust them to genuinely meet the needs of participants. For this reason, researchers are advised to engage in the politics of research (Baez & Boyles, 2010) to examine the role of methodology and researcher's worldviews (Pasque, Carducci, & Kuntz, 2012), and thus disrupt traditional research practices (Brown, Carducci, & Kuby, 2014) to open ourselves up to possibilities of newness in our inquiry.

Limitations as Strengths

We are aware that our study focused on a single case. Yet, we felt it was necessary to delve into one case to consider the context and use Thinking with Theory to expand issues related to parent engagement and school climate. Future research in language immersion schools is necessary to interrogate school contexts and the normative (T)ruths and the impact it may have on parent engagement.

Conclusion

Public schooling is charged with the education of children as critical for students' own personal development and for social progress. Such a hefty responsibility should not be left to educators alone; in fact, decades of research shows that collaboration with families is necessary throughout children's education. Due to the novelty of school climate research in language immersion schools, we set out to hear parents' perceptions about their children's school climate; we examined the challenges confronted by these parents as they engaged with educational processes and practices. Using Thinking with Theory allowed for a different kind of interrogation, leading us to hear the participants' voices and confront our own research processes in new ways.

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