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Cultural Models of Latino Immigrant Parent Knowledge of Their
Children's Specific Learning Disabilities

Harriet Faith Jewson Welling

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

Cultural Models of Latino Immigrant Parent Knowledge of Their Children's Specific Learning Disabilities

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Master of Science

The author investigated shared cultural models among nine Latino immigrant parents of children with specific learning disabilities aged 6-12 years old. Interview questions addressed what participants thought it meant to be educated, their descriptions of specific learning disabilities, and their reports of effective teaching methods for their children. Although many varying themes emerged from the interview data, three distinct cultural models surfaced from the data on education and disability. Implications include cultural beliefs informing IEP content, knowledge of cultural models enabling increasingly open communication between school and home, and culturally sensitive classroom instruction.

Keywords: Latino immigrant parents, special education, learning disability, elementary education

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DESCRIPTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis, *Cultural Models of Latino Immigrant Parent Knowledge of Their Children's Specific Learning Disabilities*, is presented in a dual or hybrid format. In this hybrid format, both traditional and journal publication formatting requirements are met.

The preliminary pages of the thesis adhere to university requirements for thesis formatting and submission. The first full section of the thesis is presented in the new journal-ready format and conforms to the style requirements for the journal *Urban Education*, including the findings section that combines results and discussion. The full literature review, consent form, and interview protocol are included in Appendices A, B, and C respectively. Two reference lists are included in the thesis format. The first includes only the references found in the first journal-ready article. The second reference list includes all citations from the full literature review found in Appendix A.

Introduction

Families who speak Spanish in the home account for an expanding population in elementary and secondary schools within the U.S. In 2011, the United States Census Bureau reported 12.8% of homes use Spanish as their primary language (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). In that same year, 14.4% of all Utah families spoke a language other than English at home, with 6.7% using Spanish (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b). Furthermore, Utah schools serve 88,285 Latino students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010b), accounting for over 15% of all students in Utah enrolled in public schooling at the elementary or secondary level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010b).

Latino students are also served in special education. Of the disabilities defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the category of specific learning disability represents 37.5% of all individuals served, or 4.9% of the entire public school population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The percentage of Latino students enrolled in U.S. public schools from kindergarten through 12th grade is 23% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010a). Of all Latino students enrolled in public schools, 6.5% are classified as having a specific learning disability (Donovan, Cross, & National Academy of Sciences, 2002). Of the individuals in the total public school population, 4.9% are classified with a specific learning disability, of which 43.6% are classified as Latino (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010a).

IDEA mandates that schools involve parents in developing their children's special education Individualized Education Program (IEP). Although involvement in school meetings for students is important, parents of students who have disabilities often struggle to comprehend the special education system (Goldstein & Turnbull, 1982). It is vital that parents advocate for

the rights of their children with disabilities (Field, Sarver, & Shaw, 2003). Sadly, without parental advocacy, students with disabilities are susceptible to receiving inadequate services (Fish, 2008), and Latino students as a whole are less likely to educationally benefit from being served in special education in comparison to Caucasian students (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2004). Higher rates of parental involvement with schools increase the likelihood that the legal requirements of IDEA will be provided (Worley, 1989). Lower levels of Latino parent involvement have been identified as one of the main factors explaining why Latino students gain less educational benefit from special education than Caucasian students (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2004). Moreover, parental participation for Latino students has been described as a critical component for academic success, more influential than English language proficiency and parent's education (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). It is likely that parent participation is driven as much by culture as by school expectations; therefore, it is instructive to understand cultural models of schooling and education as a way to discuss parent participation.

Cultural Models of Immigrant Parents About Educación

Understanding the cultural models of immigrant families is crucial to understanding their perceptions and knowledge of disability (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Culture is fluid; it adapts and evolves in order to survive, but culture is taught and adopted from generation to generation (Erickson, 2001). Thus, learning cultural practices is a process that lasts a lifetime as culture is constantly changing (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992). A cultural model is a common way of thinking for interpreting the world and society (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001) and cultural models are embedded in the educational system and its policies (Artiles, 2003). Cultural models are not synonymous with declarative knowledge; instead they are a form of implicit knowledge that comes from schemas or models (D'Andrade, 1995). Each individual possesses models or

schemas; when these models are found to be in common with others (due to socially mediated experiences) they become cultural models (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Cultural models influence the knowledge individuals possess and how individuals make meaning of the world (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001).

An example of a cultural model is the belief that teachers rather than parents are children's resource for learning (Crafter, 2012). As a result of some families' recent immigration, and others who are second-generation (or older), cultural models embody different viewpoints and beliefs about education depending on previous experience (Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Immigrant parents often place significant emphasis upon their children's moral development, viewing this as a responsibility of parents and public schooling (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Reese, 2001). The Spanish interpretation for the word "educated" (*educado*) means a child who is moral, responsible, and a "persona de bien," a good person (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Reese, 2001). Further interpretations of *educación* held by immigrant families suggest "respect for authority, group solidarity, family loyalty, good manners, and self-dignity" (Jensen & Sawyer, 2013, p. 1). Immigrant parents seek to teach their children the values they were taught in their home countries, such as respect for parents, respect for older siblings, and gratitude for a "bonita herencia," (beautiful inheritance) given from each generation (Reese, 2001).

The interpretation of *educación* does not solely rely on a moral state, but rather complements academic achievement. Being well-educated (to be a good person) is a base upon which school success can be built (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995). Whereas the American classroom often encourages individualism and fosters competitiveness (Apple, 1996), Latino students often struggle to choose between having high academic success and their

family's cultural identity (Gay, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). Understanding and working within cultural models may be integral to enhancing parent knowledge of disability, promoting informed parent participation, and helping students to advocate for themselves.

Self-advocacy for students with specific learning disabilities is composed of legal rights, knowledge of applicable accommodations, and an in-depth comprehension of academic strengths and weaknesses, and is a type of parental participation (Merchant, 1997; Trainor, 2010). Parents play a crucial role in promoting self-advocacy in that communicating with their children about their disabilities is vital for student self-advocacy (Eisenman & Tascione, 2002); however, knowledge about disability is a critical prerequisite to communication.

Despite the legal requirements for parental participation in special education processes, IDEA does not address parental knowledge. Yet, knowledge is an important ingredient to parental participation and advocacy. Lack of knowledge of disability and special education has been identified as a barrier hindering immigrant parents' advocacy and involvement in their children's education (Gregoire, 2010). Studies examining beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of Latino families have documented varying degrees of opinion (Garcia, Perez, & Ortiz, 2000; Gregoire, 2010; Torres-Burgo, Reyes-Wasson & Brusca-Vega, 1999), but it is notable that research about immigrant parents' knowledge of disability is both dated and minimal. Since knowledge, in contrast to opinion, is a critical component of advocacy, further research in this area is vital to understanding parental knowledge.

Parent Knowledge of Disability and Special Education

For parents of students with learning disabilities, knowledge of disability and special education falls into three areas: knowledge of IDEA, knowledge of the IEP process, and knowledge of specific learning disability characteristics and effects on student achievement. The

first area of parent knowledge, IDEA, includes understanding that the law requires parental participation in special education. Knowledge of IDEA also includes familiarity with procedural safeguards and specific rights accorded to parents and students. Knowledge of the IEP process is separate and distinct from other parental knowledge areas as it comprises understanding rights and procedures involved in developing an IEP. This second area of knowledge includes awareness of prior notice, meeting participants, the process of drafting the IEP document, and signing permission at the conclusion of an IEP meeting. Third, knowledge of specific learning disability characteristics and effects on student achievement incorporates the IDEA definition of the disability.

This broad definition, paired with comprehension of notable differences in learning processes in academic areas and appropriate interventions or accommodations that address such areas, comprise this area of parental knowledge. This study focuses on the third area of parental knowledge: knowledge of specific learning disability characteristics and their effects on student achievement directly linked to advocacy (Trainor, 2010). This knowledge is influenced by the unique models each parent possesses.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study derives from the assumption that schools can improve communication and make better decisions about their student's special education services if they are knowledgeable about parents' cultural models of education and disability. Contrary to deficit-minded approaches that assume minority parents lack knowledge, this study adopts an analysis of cultural models to understand parent knowledge as a resource to schools. Because disagreements between school and home can occur when the school's mainstream culture does not match that of minority cultures (Hedegaard, 2005), teachers can be more

informed of parents' central schema on disability and education as they work closely in IEPs and other school meetings. This study posits that parents' factual knowledge of their children's disabilities is greatly influenced by the unique models that each parent possesses, even though these individual models have characteristics in common with the culture. Thus, cultural models are vital for understanding parent knowledge. Furthermore, this study posits that language and cultural differences contribute to schools' lack of access to knowledge about parents' cultural models. Because of this, communication between home and school about the child's disability is often minimal.

Statement of the Problem

Latino immigrant parents' knowledge of disability characteristics, their understanding of the influences of disability on academic skills, and their understanding of effective interventions are rarely investigated. Yet parental knowledge is assumed to be integral to advocacy for effective special education. In order to address this lack, research is needed to identify immigrant parents' knowledge, rather than opinion, of disabilities at the school level. This study focused on parent knowledge and understanding of specific learning disabilities.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine immigrant parents' cultural models about their children's specific learning disabilities. Specifically, the researcher investigated how parents use cultural models to develop knowledge of characteristics of the disability, what it means to be educated, current academic performance of their affected children, and effective teaching methods.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of this research, the questions sought to identify how Latino immigrant parents use cultural models to interpret and describe education and disability.

The study addressed three questions:

1. How do Latino immigrant parents of students with specific learning disabilities characterize education and the ways people learn?
2. How do Latino immigrant parents of students with specific learning disabilities characterize learning disabilities?
3. What teaching methods do Latino immigrant parents of students with specific learning disabilities believe are effective for helping their children learn?

Method

The researcher employed cross-sectional survey research to describe the subjective views and experiences of a specific population of individuals. Cross-sectional survey research can be conducted using questionnaires, interviews, or both, and consists of data collected at one point in time (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2003). The study used semi-structured interviews to investigate immigrant parents' descriptions and understanding in reference to the study questions. Interview data were coded and categorized into themes that are interpreted in the discussion.

Participants

The nine parents in the study were drawn from an urban elementary school in central Utah. The school district has five secondary schools and thirteen elementary schools and the state's highest number of Latino students, with 24.8% classified as learners of English as a second language, (Provo City School District, 2006). Participants were selected using purposive

sampling. Purposive sampling matches the study participants with the specific purpose of the research, in this case immigrant parents (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2003). The participants in the study fit certain criteria. First, they were parent(s) of a child with a classified specific learning disability and a current IEP. Second, they spoke Spanish as their native language and were from or born in Mexico, Central America, or South America. Third, their child was aged 6-12 years old. Fourth, parents were the child's primary caregiver. Furthermore, parents gave consent to be part of the research and participate in interviews. There were no specifications of gender; both mothers and fathers were interviewed about daughters or sons. The study school identified parents who fit the criteria and then contacted participants through a letter informing them of the interview opportunity. Follow-up phone calls and home visits were also used to recruit and inform potential participants. Of the nine participants, five were from Mexico, two from Argentina, and one couple (comprising a joint interview) was from Mexico and Guatemala. Participant demographics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Country of Origin	Years in U.S.	Level of Education	Number of Children	Children in Special Education
Guatemala	20	High school	2	1
Mexico	15	High school	2	1
Mexico	10	High school	2	1
Mexico	24	10th grade	2	2
Mexico	15	High school	3	3
Mexico	18	Jr. high	2	1
Mexico	15	Jr. high	4	3
Argentina	12	1 yr. of college	1	1
Argentina	15	Jr. high	5	1

Setting

The researcher interviewed participants in their homes or at the local school. Prior to the interviews participants were given the option of holding the interview in their home or at a convenient location close to their residence (the majority of respondents chose the latter). Thus, each interview setting differed according to the participant's preference. Conducting interviews in the home of the research participants provided an environment that was familiar and comfortable to the parents. However, for parents who were uncomfortable with having the interviewer and translator in the home, the local school offered an alternative venue.

Measures

Measures took the form of semi-structured interview questions (Appendix C). Although all interviews differed as clarifying and follow-up questions occurred, the interview procedure was structured using an interview protocol. In order to uncover participants' cultural models, the interview protocol began with more general questions on learning and education, then narrowed down into questions concerning the participants' children and specific skills. For example, the first three questions were (a) what does it mean to be educated? (b) how does a person learn? and (c) what can you tell me about how your child learns? This sequence of questions helped discover participants' cultural models as they fostered rapport before asking personal questions about their specific children.

Procedures

The researcher conducted a pilot study of the translated consent form (Appendix B), interview questions, and audio-recording procedures by enlisting two Latino immigrant individuals to act as participants. The pilot exercise confirmed the readability of the consent form, the function of the translator, the ability of the participants to understand the interview

questions, the time needed to complete the interviews with two-way translation, and the audio-recording system functionality.

Data were collected during qualitative interviews conducted by the interviewer and a Spanish-language interpreter. The Spanish-language interpreter was a familiar individual from the local school who was known to the parents. This interpreter was selected upon the basis of rapport that had previously been built with participants, thus allowing for more open and honest communication. At the start of each session the interviewer introduced herself and explained the purpose and procedures for the interviews. The interviewer provided the participant with a consent form in Spanish, answered questions and clarified if needed, and asked the participant to sign two copies, one of which was left with the participant. The interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription and translation.

The interviewer activated the recording device, stated the date, her name, and the participant's name, and presented the first question. Following the completed response, the interviewer presented the next question and so on. The interviewer presented prompts as appropriate to elicit deeper or clarifying responses during the interviews. The interviewer and interpreter clarified vocabulary, as needed, e.g., the terms *learning disability*, *accommodations*, and *teaching methods*. The interviewer did not proceed until the interpreter was satisfied that the parent understood each question and term. At the conclusion of the session the interviewer thanked the participant.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive design using cross-sectional survey research and one-time interviews to collect data regarding immigrant parents' understanding of their children's learning disabilities. Descriptive research is used to report on an aspect of the environment, or in

this case a specific demographic of people (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). The limited amount of existing research on the topic was addressed by describing the current state of knowledge in the research sample. No treatment variables were introduced or studied.

Data Analysis

All interviews were audio recorded digitally using a computer, then transcribed in Spanish, and lastly translated into English. The transcriptions were coded using methods of thematic analysis, a technique for organizing, evaluating, and identifying themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The analysis was data-driven in that no predetermined framework was used. The researcher and faculty advisor completed thematic analysis using six steps: the researcher and faculty advisor independently became familiar with the interview data, generated initial codes, and searched for themes using interview transcriptions.

Next, initial themes were revised and refined, then defined and named during a final analysis. To ensure a thorough analysis, themes were cross-checked by the two coders together to confirm that they matched the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Following this, the coders conducted a cross-thematic analysis occurred across the three major themes that emerged from the data. This was conducted by comparing participants' demographic information across themes to identify commonalities. Each participant was given a color code, and then themes were listed with accompanying participant color codes. Following this, the researcher conducted an analysis to see if groups of colors were repeated across multiple themes. Once color pattern groups were identified, the research compared participant demographics to determine how descriptors influenced responses. This cross-thematic analysis also allowed for cultural models to be explored.

Findings

Themes from the data were organized into three main sections corresponding to the research questions: descriptions of education and ways people learn, descriptions of specific learning disabilities, and effective teaching methods for children with specific learning disabilities. The three themes are summarized below.

Education or Ways People Learn

Several interview questions asked what participants felt characterized being educated and how people, in general, learn. These broader questions began the interview, before questions addressed narrower topics of disability in order to build rapport and help discover respondents' individual models or schema. These responses mainly answered the first research question, "How do immigrant parents of students with specific learning disabilities characterize education and the ways people learn?"

Respect. Five respondents drew upon their cultural models to explain that being educated means to have respect, or to possess morals. One participant stated, "Well, I think that primarily they must be morally and religiously educated, so they can respect other people." Respect was discussed as an indicator that an individual was educated, shown by respect to one's family, to one's self, and to others. Examples of respect were being able to apologize and being respectful in the way an individual speaks to other people. Further, multiple participants expressed the importance of teaching respect within the home, "I truly try to do the best of my abilities when teaching him. I teach him not to strike someone, not to steal, to respect other people." Some participants explained learning respect at home, from parents, to be vital in how their children learn. This adds to the existing literature that to be educated can be interpreted as a child who is moral, and a "persona de bien," or good person (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Reese, 2001).

Participants who expressed these sentiments had no common demographics; they varied in country of origin, the number of years they had lived in the United States, and their highest level of education. Being educated relating to being respectful was a common ideal in parents' shared cultural models from the sample.

Career and future. The second most common theme was the notion that to be educated is characterized as having a promising future or career: "That's the purpose of studying, to have a career." Thus, these participants held shared cultural models about what it means to be educated. They described education as laying a foundation for the future of children and their families, which ultimately results in a career. Further, one participant explained that education is the "most valuable thing that one as a parent can leave for his children..." an investment in the future. The majority of participants, who described being educated as having a career in the future, also described academic learning as primarily occurring within schools but moral teaching occurring within the home. While the idea of being educated meaning a future career differs from the literature, the belief of moral teaching occurring within the home does not. The literature describes immigrant parents as seeking to teach their children values such as respect for authority and good manners (Jensen & Sawyer, 2013).

Parents teach. Among responses specifically about how their children learn, three participants described responsibility for teaching their children academic skills, often using examples to explain their cultural models "For instance, reading, this skill is very important for schools and it has to be included also at home." In addition to reading, participants mentioned academic endeavors such as homework, learning English, and one-on-one teaching. Research indicates that parents interpret educación as "persona de bien" as a base upon which academic success can be built (Reese et al., 1995). Similar findings emerged as parent's descriptions

included academic learning in the home. Of the parents who described that their children learned from their teaching, two finished high school and the other completed one year of college; among the highest level of education of all participants. This may indicate that those who have a higher education feel responsibility to transfer their academic skills to their children. Due to the participants' levels of education, they may have experienced the positive externalities that accompany education (e.g., career and lifestyle) and thus want their children to have similar advantages.

Specific Learning Disabilities

This topic was addressed through multiple interview questions designed to identify participants' definitions and perceived characteristics of specific learning disabilities as well as how their children's disabilities affect specific academic skills. Narratives in this section of the interview sought to answer the second research question, "How do immigrant parents of students with specific learning disabilities characterize learning disabilities?"

Differences in learning. Of all interview participants, eight respondents described an element of difference in the way their child learns. Therefore, the majority of participants possessed aspects of shared cultural models, yet in more detail their beliefs on differences in learning varied. Some participants described that her child needs more attention or time, another parent described that their child learns with patience and with love, "Talking to him, but at the same time, explaining things to him with love...so that he can grasp the explanation at a deeper level." Many parents shared specific examples of how they help their children learn within the home. Existing research in this area is minimal, however some has found that immigrant parents hold vital knowledge on their children's disability, as shown here, yet it is often overlooked (Harry, 1992).

Capacity to learn. Parents were highly aware that their children had the capacity to learn. However, participants' views based on their cultural models differed on the degree of capacity their children possessed, "...they don't have the capacities to learn like other children that are very smart." It can be inferred from this quote that this respondent does not believe the child has the aptitude to be what he described as "smart" due to the specific learning disability. Comparing this quote with another participant who commented, "I see that they are understanding...they have a normal life" shows the variance in responses. Several parents expressed that their child, had a lowered capacity to learn. The interpretation of specific learning disabilities pertaining to differences in capacity is new to the minimal and dated literature on Latino immigrant parents' cultural models of education. Parents who included learning capacities in their descriptions of specific learning disabilities lived in the United States for 10 to 15 years, lower than the average number of years for the study sample.

Slow learning. Six of the parents expressed from shared cultural models that their children with specific learning disabilities learn at a different pace, mentioning that other children learn more quickly: "...she needs more time to learn things, then, for her to learn, is by spending more time to whatever you want her to learn." Participants often referenced a slow pace of learning with reading and reading comprehension. Previous research on immigrant parent's knowledge of their child's disability is scarce, thus slow learning relating to specific learning disabilities is new to the literature.

Physiological. Three interview participants pulled physiological problems from their cultural models as an explanation for specific learning disabilities. One participant shared a personal story about her child. "He was choking and lasted a few minutes without oxygen to his brain." She looked to this incident as reasoning for specific learning disabilities. Differing from

this, a participant from Argentina explained that to have a learning disability was something you could see from an individual's appearance or "something wrong with the body," such as a missing arm. Lastly, a participant looked to neurological problems to explain a specific learning disability. Physiological explanations for disability are reported in past research where Mexican mothers relied upon medical and folkloric reasons for their child's disability (Kummerer, Lopez-Reyna, & Hughes, 2007). All participants that explained specific learning disabilities as something wrong with the body had all of their children enrolled in special education (e.g., they had three children, and all received services), thus it is logical that they would look to physiological problems as an explanation for disability.

Proficient math skills; low reading skills. Six participants described their children's math skills as problem-free or capable. Responses ranged from "...in math he is great" to "really good in mathematics." Other responses included, "...with a calculator, he's a master!" Some parents conveyed information on math skills based on teacher reports, and others from first-hand observations with homework.

Six out of nine participants explained that their children had problems with reading aloud. Of these six, four explained that their children's reading was hard to understand, or that the child reads words incorrectly, "...it makes no sense, for me when I'm hearing them." Other explanations of low reading skills included slow reading and shyness or reluctance to read aloud.

Similarly to responses regarding reading aloud, six participants reported low comprehension skills among their children. Two participants noted that their children require more time, others explained that their children required help with comprehension, poor retention, repeated reading, or simply, "...he doesn't understand what he reads; it is hard for him to understand what he reads. It's hard for him to tell me what he reads." Although the accuracy of

the descriptions of children's present levels of academic performance cannot be substantiated, parents gave instances of when academic skills were demonstrated, varying from the literature that states Latino parents are less likely to possess knowledge about their child's learning (Sontag & Schacht, 1994).

Effective Teaching Methods

This question sought to understand parents' perspectives about how their children learn best. Parents explained classroom practices that enhance learning for their children, yet were reserved in suggesting improvements for the school. Interview questions and responses speak to "What teaching methods do immigrant parents of students with specific learning disabilities believe are effective for helping their children learn?"

Strategies. Four participants relied upon their cultural models to explain varying strategies that help their children learn. One parent shared several methods including, "Set goals to help him learn more. Take him to a different place so that he can learn more, writing sentences, numbers, and asking him to read them." Other participants mentioned coaching, using objects to teach, providing extra time to complete in-class work, teaching specific reading methods, and encouraging or requiring participation. Responses varied just as the academic needs of their children vary. As there is no existing literature in this specific area, this provides new information regarding the cultural models of immigrant parent knowledge about teaching methods that help their children with specific learning disabilities.

Uncertainty. Half of the participants either expressed uncertainty or did not answer the question. One parent explained her experience in this area, "...he doesn't tell me how they teach him; he doesn't tell me specifically what methods they use." The remaining parents simply shrugged their shoulders or expressed "I don't know." Unfamiliarity with teaching methods due

to lack of communication supports existing research that speakers of other languages were more likely to have poor communication with the school, especially parents of children with disabilities (Harry, 1992). Interviews in the school and the position of the interviewer (a graduate student in a local university) may have influenced the responses by making participants less confident in suggesting effective teaching methods.

No improvements with the school. Six of the interview participants expressed a shared cultural model of satisfaction with the school and how the school instructs their children. Parents expressed very positive sentiments about the school, for example, "...and the classes, and the care, its 100% perfect." Another parent responded similarly, saying that his child's needs exist beyond the scope of school, "I think that they are doing a good job...I need the police. The police officer would do that." Many parents relayed personal stories and examples of how the school was succeeding in educating their children. The idea that the school and teachers provide an education that does not need improvements adds to existing research that immigrant parents believe teachers deserve ultimate respect and hold indisputable professional knowledge (Auerbach, 2007; Valdes, 1996). Further, as previously discussed, interviews taking place in the school and the unknown interviewer's association with a university may have made parents uncomfortable expressing concerns. Despite this, the interviewer was known and had established rapport with the participants.

Instructional needs. Two participants described that their children would benefit from improvements in teachers. These participants had the higher levels of education (high school or one year of college) when compared with other participants. One parent specifically expressed the importance of increased teacher patience. "She is having a difficult time, the teacher sometimes puts a bit of pressure on her, and that's when she blocks things out." A separate

parent's concern was having more tutors to help teach her child after school or more one-on-one time. Parents suggesting improvements in instruction is new to the literature on cultural models of immigrant parent's perceptions of education; existing literature has found immigrant parents are unlikely to dispute methods of teaching (Auerbach, 2007; Valdes, 1996). A possible explanation of this finding is that these parents had higher levels of education and they may have been more confident in making suggestions in the school setting.

Cross-Thematic Analysis

The research conducted an analysis across the three major themes (education or ways people learn, specific learning disabilities, and effective teaching methods) comparing participants' demographic information to identify commonalities. First, mutually exclusive models were explored, then participants' demographics were investigated. Next, each participant was given a color code, then themes were listed with accompanying participant color codes. Following this, the analyst looked to see if groups of colors were repeated across multiple themes. Groups were initially divided by their responses on education, which were compared to groupings of responses on specific learning disabilities, and finally descriptions of effective teaching methods. Once color pattern groups were identified, demographics of participants were compared to determine how descriptors influenced responses. This cross-thematic analysis also allowed for cultural models to be explored.

Three participants who responded that to be educated means to have respect or to be a moral person also responded that no improvements could be made with the school, stating, "to be educated means respect to other people and to oneself" and "they do everything they can offer so the children are well, and learn." These participants shared a common level of education. To calculate the average of all participant's levels of education, a categorical variable weighted

average produced 2.3 as an average, with 10th grade assigned a value of two and graduating high school assigned to be three; thus the average education is somewhere between 10th and 12th grade. These three participants completed 9th-10th grade and had a below average level of education among the participants. An association could be made between the level of education and the belief that to be educated is to have respect and that the school cannot be improved in their practices. It is possible that those who have less education are less acculturated in mainstream American views of education. Further, those participants with less education may have felt uncomfortable suggesting improvements with a school staff member (interpreter) present. Reasoning for this may be avoidance of negative consequences for them from the school or their children at school. It can be concluded that these three parents held a shared cultural model of education; that to be educated is to be respectful, and that schools hold indisputable knowledge on how to educate children with specific learning disabilities.

Three other participants had commonalities in their responses across the two other major themes: specific learning disabilities and effective teaching methods. These participants described a cultural model describing specific learning disabilities as differences in learning, and identified strategies that help their children learn. Although descriptions of differences in learning varied, examples were, “One has to be on top of him all the time” and “we’ve noticed the girl has an easier way to pick up things than my boy.” Parents expressed a similar cultural model that to have a specific learning disability is to have a difference in learning. Similarly, teaching strategies identified as effective differed from participant to participant, including “Set goals to help him learn more” and “coaching them every day.” Despite this, the two overarching common themes—specific learning disability means to learn in a different way and identifying effective teaching strategies—were expressed by participants who had lived in the United States

for 12 to 15 years, below the average for the study. This differs from existing literature on Latino immigrant parents' views on education in that those participants who had lived in the United States for longer (16–24 years), and had varying levels of education, did not identify effective teaching strategies or make meaning from their models that to have a specific learning disability means to learn in a different way. Those participants who had lived in the United States for less time than other participants held a more Americanized cultural model. Two of these three participants also said that to be educated is to have a promising future or career, “To be someone that, to study is a career.” This indicates that participants who had lived in the United States for fewer years possessed shared cultural models of what it means to be educated.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine Latino immigrant parents' cultural models about their children's specific learning disabilities in three areas: how the parents characterize education and the ways people learn, how they characterize learning disabilities, and the teaching methods they believe are effective for helping their children learn. Although it is clear that Latino immigrant parents possess cultural models about their children's disabilities, the research in this area is minimal and dated, thus this study contributes understanding about the respondents' cultural models for interpreting their children's education (Johnson, Duffett, & Public, 2002). Just as cultural models develop and shift over time (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001), this study's participants' responses varied depending on how long they had lived in the United States, their highest level of education, and the number of children they had enrolled in special education. Respondents drew from shared cultural models to answer the questions and find meaning. As a result, three cultural models emerged from the data (see Table 2).

The first model held by parents with relatively below average levels of education (9th or 10th grade) consisted of the belief that to be educated was to embody respect or to possess morals. These parents also believed that schools hold indisputable knowledge about how to educate their children.

A second model held by parents who had lived in the United States for relatively shorter periods of time (12-15 years) than other participants described specific learning disabilities as differences in learning. They acknowledged the effective teaching strategies that aided their children's learning experiences.

The third model, held by parents who were high school graduates or who had some college experience, included the belief that parents have a responsibility to teach academic skills within the home. They also expressed that schools could make instructional improvements to aid their students—who have specific learning disabilities—in reaching academic success.

Table 2

Parent's Demographics and Cultural Models

Country of origin	Years in U.S.	Level of education	Number of children	Children in special education	Cultural model
Mexico	24	10th grade	2	2	Respect, no suggested improvements
Argentina	15	Jr. high	5	1	
Mexico	18	Jr. high	2	1	
Mexico	15	High school	2	1	Differences in learning, strategies
Argentina	12	1 yr. college	1	1	
Mexico	15	Jr. high	4	3	
Mexico	10	High school	2	1	Parents teach, differences in learning, strategies
Argentina	12	1 yr. college	1	1	
Guatemala	20	High school	2	1	Parents teach, differences in learning

Limitations

This study is limited in its capacity due to the number of participants and the varying length of time they had lived in the United States. The sample produced eight interviews from a very small population of Latino immigrants, meaning that conclusions from this study cannot be generalized to all Latino immigrant parents of children with specific learning disabilities. Likewise, it is unknown if the results would be replicated in a large-scale study. Despite this, many themes from interviews match those found in existing literature.

In examining cultural models the variance in the number of years participants had lived in the United States, ranging from 10 to 24 years constitutes a demographic limitation. As cultural models shift over time (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001), so do parent's cultural models of education, and specific learning disabilities. As a result, generalization to other Latino immigrant parents of children with specific learning disabilities is not possible.

All interviews had an interpreter present to assist with communication. The interpreter was proficient in Spanish and was experienced in the field of special education. The interviewer was a native English speaker with no facility in Spanish, which may have imposed some cultural distance, as language is a vital medium of culture. The interview interpreter was an employee of the school where parents sent their children. Therefore, parents may have felt uncomfortable openly expressing concerns or needed improvements. The interviewer explained confidentiality and provided a written Spanish-language copy of consent to participants prior to each interview, and in some cases during the interview to promote open and honest communication, yet there is no way to know if participants were as forthright as desired.

Implications for Future Research

This study should be replicated with a larger sample and in different regions of the U.S. to increase the scope and generalizability of the findings. Further research should be particular about the demographics of participants, such as the number of years in the United States. Doing so would refine cultural models.

Future research could develop interview questions that address disabilities other than specific learning disabilities. Further, the interview protocol contained a question that asked parents to compare the learning of their child who had a specific learning disability with the learning of another child of a similar age. Although this question sought to gain insight into differences in learning, the majority of interview participants said they were unable to make comparisons as they did not know how other children of the same age learned. Thus, in future research, this question should be revised. Additionally, more follow-up questions on how the child learns in the home with chores, cooking, or other household tasks would have given insight to acquisition of non-academic skills. Finally, questions about how the child with a specific learning disability interacts with others and parent perceptions about their child's social skills would be useful to uncovering other Latino immigrant models on disability.

Implications for Practice

Latino immigrant parents of children with specific learning disabilities may gain insight about the shared cultural models of other parents in similar situations. Insights may result in empowerment as they recognize they have shared beliefs with parents in their community. Parents may also learn that their children with learning disabilities struggle with similar academic skills as other children with the same disability, which may both provide consolation and resources for collaboration.

The implications for teachers of Latino students with learning disabilities are key as teachers consider parents' cultural models. Teachers can be more informed of parents' central beliefs on disability and education as they work closely throughout IEP development and other school meetings. It is likely that Latino immigrant parents' cultural beliefs can inform IEP content, curriculum scope and sequence, as well as culturally sensitive instruction during special education service time. Further, teachers can show respect and understanding towards parents' cultural models while also explaining how their school interprets the disability condition. The results of this study should encourage open communication between schools and homes as teachers learn from the advanced knowledge parents hold about their children and parents learn from teachers' professional knowledge of disability.

Teachers in IEP meetings can be aware that Latino immigrant parents are unlikely to suggest improvements with the school or teaching. For example, teachers can create a team-like atmosphere and encourage parents' opinions on how a child learns at home or other valuable areas of learning with which the parent feels comfortable. Further, ensuring that parents truly understand aspects of the IEP such as goals or rights by encouraging conversation and input is imperative for culturally conscientious teaching. Importantly, communication between parent and child about the child's disability is vital for self-advocacy (Eisenman & Tascione, 2002) and the data should promote open familial communication.

Latino students with learning disabilities can benefit from this research as they learn to self-advocate. Students will be aware of the cultural models their parents possess about education and disability, and compare them to the school's culture. From here, students can help communication between school and home while advocating for themselves within the school setting. Indirectly, as teachers become aware of cultural models incorporate them into their

teaching, and improve collaboration with Latino parents, students will benefit educationally through culturally informed school settings.

Conclusion

In this study, immigrant parents of children with specific learning disabilities used cultural models to describe their interpretations of education and disability. Three cultural models emerged from the data and were greatly influenced by participants' level of education, time in the United States, and the number of children they have enrolled in special education. This research provides new data on cultural models possessed by Latino immigrant parents. The cultural models identified in this study may inform education practitioners of the vital knowledge Latino immigrant parents have about their children with learning disabilities and aid in fostering improved communication between school and home.

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APPENDIX A: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Families who speak Spanish in the home account for an ever-expanding population in elementary and secondary schools within the U.S. The term English Language Learners (ELL) includes students enrolled in public education who are served in programs for language assistance (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010a). Looking at the whole of the U.S., the western states have the highest percentages of ELL students, which for Utah specifically means 6 - 9.9% of students are ELL (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010b). Furthermore, Utah schools serve 88, 285 total students who are Latino (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010b) accounting for over 15% of all students in Utah enrolled in public schooling at the elementary or secondary level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010b). In 2011, the United States Census Bureau reported 12.8% of homes use Spanish as their primary language (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). In Utah, 14.4% of all homes speak a language other than English at home, with 6.7% using the Spanish language (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b). This research will use the term “Latino” to refer to Spanish speakers from various countries in Hispaniola, Central America, and South America.

Prevalence of Specific Learning Disability

The U.S. Department of Education defines an individual with a specific learning disability as not achieving sufficiently for the child’s age or to meet approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading fluency skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics problem solving (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Moreover, deficits in the previously listed areas are not primarily the result of a visual, hearing or motor disability, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, cultural factors, environment or

economic disadvantage, or limited English proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Of all disability areas covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the category of specific learning disability represents 37.5% of all individuals served under IDEA or 4.9% of the entire public school population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Of all Latino students enrolled in public schools, 6.5% are classified as having a specific learning disability (Donovan & Cross, 2002). Of those individuals classified with a specific learning disability, 43.6% are Latino (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Latino students are disproportionately represented in special education (McAdoo, Young, Hughes, Hanshaw, & Murray, 2003). In comparison to Caucasian and Asian Americans, Latino students are less likely to attend college, complete high school, and more likely to repeat grades in public school (Garcia, Perez, & Ortiz, 2001; Valdes, 2001; Valenzuela, 2005). Moreover, Latino students as a whole are less likely to educationally benefit from being placed in special education in comparison to Caucasian students (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2004).

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a vital part of the original mandated IDEA law. Schools are required to involve parents in their child's special education, specifically the decision processes. Although parental involvement in school meetings for their children is important (Goldstein & Turnbull, 1982), parents of those who have disabilities often struggle to comprehend the special education system. With its many intricacies including paperwork, legalities, and meetings, it is not surprising that many parents are intimidated by the task of understanding special education services and regulations (Stoner, Bock, Thompson, Angell, Heyl, & Crowley, 2005). Despite this, it is vital that parents advocate for the rights of their children with disabilities (Field, Sarver, & Shaw, 2003). Low levels of parental involvement are more common in special education than

other school programs such as Head Start (Harry, 1992). Sadly, without the advocacy of their parents, student with disabilities are susceptible to receiving inadequate services (Fish, 2008). Furthermore, higher rates of parental involvement with schools increase the likelihood that the legal requirements of IDEA will be provided (Worley, 1989).

A shift in the perception of the characteristics of parental involvement has occurred in the 20th Century (Epstein, 2001). A dated view of parental involvement expects parents to be involved solely in the administration aspect, such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) (Epstein, 2001). More recently, school participation from parents has been described as ideally including the following; (a) parental support of student participation and attendance at school, (b) parental communication with teachers (c) volunteering at school events and in the classroom (d) helping children with required homework, and (e) participating in administration committees (Epstein, 2001). Parental involvement is also necessary for other important school factors such as a decrease in school dropout percentages (Barnard, 2004), higher school attendance rates (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002), and higher educational goals (Jeynes, 2007). As a result, parental involvement has been repeatedly correlated with academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1995).

Immigrant Parents' Involvement in Their Child's Education

Ideally, the families of those with disabilities and the professionals from the school work in an equal partnership to identify and prescribe the correct educational services for the student. The family provides insight to the strengths and weaknesses of their child for the needs in their own home (Harry, 2008). Parental involvement of Latino families has been identified as one of the main factors explaining why Latino students gain less educational benefit from special education than Caucasian students (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2004). Thus,

parental involvement is central to understanding a child with a disability especially among families from different cultures (Kummerer, Lopez-Reyna, & Hughes, 2007). Although parental involvement is seen as wholly beneficial, its benefits are even greater for families who are linguistically and ethnically diverse (Behnke, Piercy, & Diversi, 2004). Moreover, parental participation for Latino students has been described as a critical component for academic success, more influential than English language proficiency and parent's education (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004).

Nevertheless, aggressive advocacy and providing input to the education of their own child is sometimes contrary to the cultural beliefs of immigrant families who believe teachers deserve ultimate respect and hold indisputable, professional knowledge (Auerbach, 2007; Valdes, 1996). However, immigrant parents stress importance on their child's academics and want their children to be educated (Behnke et al., 2004). Latino students need parental support at home to coincide with the belief that they should have strong family bonds and reinforcement (Comas-Diaz, 2006). Their involvement in education has been described as 'informal', taking roles such as encouraging academic goals, giving advice, and helping with homework (Auerbach, 2007). However, both formal and informal methods of parental involvement are projections of academic success (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Knowledge of the special education system has been identified as a key component that leads to parental involvement (Gregoire, 2010). Although schools and immigrant families may have differing beliefs and cultures, there are also shared belief areas in which the two groups can and must collaborate (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001).

Immigrant Parent's Perceptions of Disability

A common theme within Latino families is the momentous stress placed on the family and strong familial responsibilities (Cortes, 1995). While this is a generalization, many Latino families share similar cultural values, yet there are vast variances in practices among individual families depending upon their community contexts (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Past research has shown immigrant families are generally supportive of special education programs (Hughes, Valle-Riestra & Arguelles, 2002). Others have found immigrant parents are often left feeling trivialized, or that their opinions are unwelcome despite their desire to be involved in the many decision processes that special education requires (Salas, 2004). Despite this, immigrant families describe having a child with a disability as a positive experience whereby they can provide an opportunity to raise a contributing member of society (Skinner, Bailey, Correa, & Rodriguez, 1999). Although immigrant parents may acknowledge their child has a disability, many parents agree that this does not alter the way they intend to treat their child as they strive to avoid placing limits on them (Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2008).

More specifically, Haitian parents have been found to provide their own separate explanations of disabilities and their effects on their children (Gregoire, 2010). That same study found that Haitian parents did not correlate medical or educational factors as reasons for disability, but rather provided their own rationales, regarding their children to be “normal” if they were independent in the home (Gregoire, 2010). Differing from this research, recently Mexican mothers have relied upon medical and folkloric explanations of their child's disability (Kummerer et al., 2007). There is also general belief that their children will “catch up” academically when they move into older secondary schooling (Garcia et al., 2000). Moreover, immigrant families hold independence to be highly important and see independence as a goal for

their child with a disability (Gregoire, 2010; Hughes et al., 2008; Valdes, 1996). Care must be taken when interpreting research concerning immigrant parent's beliefs about disabilities as it has substantial variability from family to family and community to community (Bailey, Skinner, Correa, Arcia, Reyes-Blanes, Rodriguez, & Skinner, 1999).

Cultural Models of Immigrant Parents about Educación

Culture is fluid; it adapts and evolves in order to survive (Erickson, 2001). However, culture is taught and adopted from generation to generation (Erickson, 2001). Thus, learning cultural practices is a process that lasts a lifetime as culture is constantly changing (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992). A cultural model is a common way of thinking in interpreting the world and society (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Cultural models develop over time and establish thoughts on the way society should operate (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Understanding the cultural models of immigrant families is crucial to understanding their perceptions and knowledge of disability (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). Cultural models are embedded in the educational system and its policies (Artiles, 2003). The American classroom encourages individualism and fosters competitiveness (Apple, 1996).

Specific to special education, IDEA has adapted to meet the culture of competitiveness by requiring participation in state or district assessments and access to the core curriculum (McLaughlin & Tilstone, 2002). Cultural models are not synonymous with declarative knowledge, instead they are a form of implicit knowledge which comes from schemas (D'Andrade, 1995). Each individual possesses models or schema, when these models are found to be in common with others (due to socially mediated experiences), they become cultural models (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Cultural models influence the knowledge individuals possess and how individuals make meaning of the world (Gallimore &

Goldenberg, 2001). As a result of some families being recent immigrants, and others who are second-generation (or older), cultural models embody different viewpoints and beliefs surrounding education depending on previous experience (Suárez-Orozco, 1995). Despite this, social stigma in many immigrant communities is attached to the label of disability (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Students often struggle to choose between having high academic success and their family's cultural identity (Gay, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). Immigrant parents place significant emphasis upon their child's moral development, viewing this as a responsibility of parents and public schooling (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Reese, 2001). The Spanish interpretation for the word "educated" (*educación*) means a child who is moral, responsible, and a "persona de bien", a good person (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Reese, 2001).

Further interpretations of *educación* held by immigrant families suggest, "respect for authority, group solidarity, family loyalty, good manners, and self-dignity" (Jensen & Sawyer, 2013, p. 1). Immigrant parents seek to teach their children similar values they were taught in their home countries, such as respect for parents, respect for older siblings, and gratitude for a "bonita herencia", (beautiful inheritance) given from each generation (Reese, 2001). The interpretation of *educación* does not solely rely on a moral state, but rather complements academic achievement, being well-educated (to be a good person) is a base on which school success can be built upon (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995). Understanding and working within cultural models may be integral to enhancing parent knowledge of disability, promoting informed parent participation, and helping students to advocate for themselves.

Immigrant Parent's Knowledge of Disability

The literature on immigrant parents' knowledge of their child's disability is scarce. Research suggests that parents often misunderstand educational terms and processes that hold direct ties to educational achievement (Johnson, Duffett, & Public, 2002). Generally, parents of children in special education have been found to have holes in their knowledge of special education issues (Nutting, 2006). In addition, half of a sample of 258 parents of children with disabilities did not know if their child was learning the same content as general education students and 42% of all respondents were unsure if students with disabilities could receive accommodations in testing (Nutting, 2006). In regards to learning disabilities, findings suggest that parents of both general and special education students are uninformed in the area of limitations that comprise a specific learning disability (Nutting, 2006).

In the area of a different ethnic minority, Native American parent knowledge, research has found statistically significant low levels of understanding surrounding special education procedures and laws when compared with Caucasian parents and evidence of Native American parents being poorly informed on the special education process in general (Connery, 1987). A dated study found Latino parents are less likely than Caucasian parents to possess knowledge about their child's disability, and less likely to be involved in the decision process of which special education services their child receives (Sontag & Schacht, 1994). Moreover, in the nineties, speakers of other languages were more likely to have poor communications between themselves and the school, especially those who have children in special education (Harry, 1992). That same study found as a result of different cultural interpretations of disabilities, the information of immigrant parents is often overlooked and concerns are dismissed (Harry, 1992). Further, in 1994 many immigrant parents report that they had received confusing information

regarding their child's disability from different school sources, or information was withheld concerning the full-scope of special education and related services available to their child (Sontag & Schacht, 1994). It is notable that the research in the area of immigrant parent's knowledge of disability is both dated and minimal. Despite this, IDEA requires parental participation while assuming parents have vast knowledge of the special education system and methods of advocacy (Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000).

Thus, further research in this area is vital to understanding the knowledge of these families possess of special education (Johnson, Duffett, & Public, 2002). The researcher searched the following terms; specific learning disability, Latino parents, parents, immigrant parents, disability, knowledge, perceptions, understanding, English Language Learners, and Culturally Linguistically Diverse in the following databases; EBSCO, PschyInfo, ProQuest, and ISI.

Knowledge and Advocacy

Parents are often viewed as secondary to their own children's education, and sometimes even as barriers or obstructions (Hardman & Others, 1995). Self-determination (a counterpart of self-advocacy) allows students to increase their independence and is critical for those with classified with having a specific learning disability in order for a smooth transition into post-education life (Field et al., 2003). Self-determination has been defined in the literature as an individual who is goal-orientated, self-disciplined, and independent while having an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses paired with self-confidence (Field et al., 2003). Self-advocacy for students with a specific learning disability differs from self-determination; it is composed of legal rights, knowledge of applicable accommodations, and an in-depth comprehension of academic strengths and weaknesses and is a type of parental

participation (Merchant, 1997; Trainor, 2010). The difference in definition between advocacy and participation is partly unclear, however a noteworthy distinction between the two is IDEA uses the term “participation,” the term “advocacy” is not found in the act (Trainor, 2010).

Encouragement for students with specific learning disabilities to design academic goals can contribute to school achievement (Trainor, 2002). Parents play a crucial role in self-advocacy as participating in communication with their child about their disability is vital for self-advocacy (Eisenman & Tascione, 2002), however knowledge about disability is a critical prerequisite to this form of communication. Further, implicit knowledge about disability stems from an individual models or schema (D’Andrade, 1995) thus shared or cultural models influence the knowledge parents possess and how parents make meaning of disability (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001). A barrier identified as hindering advocacy and involvement in immigrant parents’ children’s education is lack of knowledge of resources for them or their children (Gregoire, 2010). Past research has documented that “intuitive advocacy” or advocacy that focuses on parental insights as crucial to understanding children’s needs is often disregarded by professionals and less effective than knowledge-led advocacy (Trainor, 2010).

Parents who have access to knowledge on disability, education documents, parental rights, special education procedures are more successful at advocating and participating in their child’s education (Trainor, 2010). However, if schools are not conducting culturally aware communication, parents who have different cultural models may not gain this access. Parental groups who access and use knowledge have been termed as “change agents,” “strategists,” and “disability experts”, these groups invest time into becoming well versed with special education knowledge (Trainor, 2010). This study will use the following definition for advocacy; knowledge of resources, services, support, and accommodations, knowledge of ability to succeed, and

knowledge of learning style including strengths and weaknesses (Mishna, Muskat, Farnia, & Wiener, 2011).

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APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Consentimiento para ser un sujeto de investigación

Introducción

Este estudio de investigación es llevado a cabo por la señorita Harriet Welling, el Dr. Gordon S. Gibb, la Dra. Betty Y. Ashbaker, y el Dr. Bryant Jensen de la Universidad de Brigham Young para determinar el conocimiento de los padres de inmigrantes latinos sobre los problemas específicos de aprendizaje de sus hijos. Usted ha sido invitado a participar, ya que cumple con el criterio de los participantes de esta investigación el cual es tener un hijo en educación especial.

Procedimientos

Si usted acepta participar en este estudio de investigación, lo siguiente ocurrirá:

- Usted será entrevistado por aproximadamente treinta (30) minutos sobre sus percepciones de la educación especial y la discapacidad de aprendizaje de su hijo.
- La entrevista será grabada para asegurar la precisión de sus declaraciones.
- La entrevista se realizará en un lugar de su preferencia.
- Habrá un traductor y el investigador presente durante la entrevista.
- El tiempo total será aproximadamente treinta (30) minutos.

Riesgos

Existe el riesgo de la pérdida de privacidad. El investigador va a reducir el riesgo al no utilizar su nombre u otra información que lo identifique en el informe escrito. Puede haber alguna incomodidad al responder a algunas de las preguntas. Puede elegir responder sólo aquellas preguntas que desee.

Beneficios

No habrá beneficios directos para usted. Sin embargo, se espera, a través de su participación, los investigadores puedan aprender sobre la cultura de los padres latinos y su comprensión de la discapacidad, la cual informará a los profesores e investigadores sobre cómo involucrar a los padres latinos en el proceso de la educación especial.

Confidencialidad

Los datos de la investigación serán guardados en un archivador bajo llave. Este estará dentro de una oficina de la facultad en el campus de BYU y sólo el investigador tendrá acceso a los datos. Al final del estudio, los datos serán guardado por dos años en un archivador bajo llave en una oficina cerrada con llave, después de lo cual serán destruidos.

Compensación

Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo Visa de diez dólares (\$10) por haber participado en la entrevista.

Participación

La participación en este estudio de investigación es voluntaria. Usted tiene el derecho de retirarse en cualquier momento o negarse a participar completamente y sin poner en riesgo su relación con la escuela de su hijo.

Preguntas acerca de la Investigación

Si usted tiene preguntas con respecto a este estudio, puede comunicarse con Harriet Welling (614-753-6338). También puede comunicarse con el Dr. Gordon Gibb (801-422-4915) para obtener más información. Las preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en el estudio o para enviar comentarios o quejas sobre el estudio deberán ser dirigidas al Administrador del IRB, Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB, Provo, UT 84602. Puede llamar 801-422-1461 o enviar correos electrónicos a irb@byu.edu. Usted tiene una copia de esta forma de consentimiento.

Declaración de Consentimiento

Yo he leído, comprendo y he recibido una copia de este consentimiento y deseo de mi propia voluntad participar en este estudio.

Nombre

Firma

Fecha

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What does it mean to be educated?
2. How does a person learn?
3. What can you tell me about how _____ learns?
4. How does _____ learn compared with other children?
5. What does it mean to have a learning disability?
6. How would you describe _____'s learning disability?

Follow-up question:

- a) What are _____'s abilities in reading aloud?
 - b) What are _____'s abilities in understanding what they read?
 - c) What are _____'s abilities in math?
 - d) How do these academic abilities compare with other children's abilities?
7. What teaching methods help _____ the most?
 8. What could the school do to better help _____?
 9. What country are you from?

Follow-up question:

- a) How long have you lived in the United States?
10. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 11. How many children do you have attending school in the United States?

Follow-up question:

- a) How many children do you have enrolled in special education?