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Latino Immigrant Children's Perspectives on Homesickness
in Bilingual Picture Books

Kelly Beus Thorpe

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

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ABSTRACT

Latino Immigrant Children's Perspectives on Homesickness in Bilingual Picture Books

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When Latino children immigrate to the United States, they encounter challenges and opportunities associated with immigration (Alba & Foner, 2015; Arbona et al., 2010). Although there were nearly 2.5 million foreign-born children living in the United States in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), little is known about these children's perspectives on immigration, particularly their perspectives on homesickness. The current research study investigated Latino immigrant children's perspectives on homesickness and bilingual picture books containing stories of homesick Latino immigrant children. The children's experiences were compared with current theories of acculturative stress.

Through semi-structured interviews using the hermeneutic method, the researchers interviewed 12 Latino children, aged 8-12, who immigrated to the United States within the current school year. Contributions to homesickness included missing family, friends, and the familiarity of their home countries as well as difficulty learning English. The children reported feeling safer in the United States and recognized greater opportunities for their future because of immigration. Subjects identified with the books in which characters' experiences were similar to their own. Like current theories of acculturative stress, the children have found relief in homesickness through social support.

It is recommended that future mental health practitioners and educators working with Latino immigrant children help them recognize and express their feelings about immigration, provide reassurance, and tailor response strategies to the needs of each individual child. Additional research is needed to better understand Latino immigrant children's perspectives on homesickness and other challenges and opportunities that accompany immigration.

Keywords: homesickness, immigration, bibliotherapy, acculturative stress

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

With any relocation, children experience challenges and changes. When moving also involves immigration, moving from one country to another, these challenges and changes are compounded (Alba & Foner, 2015). Many Latino children, defined as children originating from Latin America or Spain, immigrate to the United States every year, but estimates of the exact number entering every year are difficult to gather (Passel & Cohn, 2014). According to the U.S. Census, however, there were nearly 2.5 million foreign-born children living in the United States in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). These children face many challenges and changes before, during, and after immigration into the United States (Arbona et al., 2010).

Immigration Opportunities and Challenges

Along with potential stress, immigration brings possibilities for growth and opportunities. Many immigrants are willing to leave their homes in other countries in hopes of providing a better life for their families. Reasons for immigration into the United States are varied and complex, including seeking better employment, fleeing persecution, reunification with family members who have previously immigrated, seeking better healthcare, or searching for greater educational opportunities (Gupta, 2013).

Although opportunities often accompany immigration, there are also challenges, and immigrant children are not immune to challenges associated with immigration. If Latino immigrant children are not supported in their challenges, they may feel isolated and can suffer both emotionally and academically. Many of these challenges contribute to what is called *acculturative stress*, or psychosocial strain that immigrants experience in response to challenges

and other stressors (Hovey, 2000). Acculturate stress can lead to negative psychological outcomes, suggesting the need for support for these children (Arbona et al., 2010).

Potential challenges for Latino immigrant children can be summarized into five major categories: (a) family difficulties; (b) challenges associated with socioeconomic status and finance; (c) academic challenges and school-related stress; (d) emotional, traumatic, and behavioral challenges; and (e) social challenges (Gomm, 2012). Although these categories are not all encompassing, Latino immigrant children often encounter one or more of these challenges (Gomm, Heath, & Mora, 2017). This study will focus on homesickness, one of the emotional, traumatic, and behavioral challenges Latino immigrant children may experience.

Providing Support for Latino Immigrant Children Through Bibliotherapy

Support for immigrant challenges, including homesickness, can come in many forms. Immigrant children can receive support from peers, home, and school. Bibliotherapy provides a potential support for immigrant children that can be used both at home and in school. Defined as using reading materials to affect a change in behavior (Berns, 2004), bibliotherapy can help Latino immigrant children as they adjust to their new environment. As the children read books about other immigrant children, they can identify with characters in the books, become emotionally involved with the story, experience a sort of catharsis, and gain insight into their own experience (Berns, 2004).

Teachers can use bibliotherapy in classrooms to support Latino immigrant children. Because this type of intervention is cost effective, adapted to the needs of the students, and presented through reading--a familiar context to students--it can easily be incorporated into classroom lessons (Sullivan & Strang, 2002). Additionally, bibliotherapy provides a child-

friendly and non-invasive way for teachers to address some of the social and emotional needs of the students in their classrooms (Sullivan & Strang, 2002), including immigrant challenges.

Homesickness

Homesickness is a common challenge among immigrant children (Leondari, 2001). Immigrant children may suffer from *longing*, defined as a loss of relationship with their home country (Pehler, Sjostrom, & Markwardt, 2014). Even after years of resettlement, an overwhelming sense of longing for one's home country continues to linger (Svenberg, Mattsson, & Skott, 2009). Cultural differences are exacerbated with homesickness (Lee, 2003).

Sometimes homesickness is manifest in the form of social isolation or loneliness. Latinos living in the United States report that they feel socially isolated and lack social support after immigration (Hurtado-de-Mendoza, Gonzales, Serrano, & Kaltman, 2014). This perceived social isolation may lead to negative physical and mental health effects (Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al., 2014).

Several award-winning Latino children's picture books contain stories about immigrant children experiencing homesickness as they adjust to living in a new country (Gomm, 2012). These books potentially offer support for homesick Latino immigrant children, yet their perceptions of these stories as bibliotherapy has not previously been studied. This research project will gather information about Latino immigrant children's experiences with homesickness and their perspectives of selected stories of other Latino immigrants experiencing homesickness.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to gather qualitative data from individual interviews conducted with Latino immigrant children. These interviews will gain insight into Latino

immigrant children's perspectives on homesickness. The interviews will also gather participants' perspectives of five selected bilingual children's picture books that address homesickness. These books are written in Spanish and English and include Latino characters. Specifically, the following research questions will be addressed regarding Latino immigrant children's perspectives of the selected books:

1. How do Latino immigrant children describe their own experiences of homesickness?
2. How do these descriptions align or contrast with existing theories of acculturative stress?
3. In dealing with their own homesickness, what coping strategies do children report as most helpful?
4. In what ways do the children identify with the stories' characters and situations?
5. In what ways have the stories helped the children cope with their feelings of homesickness?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The United States is becoming more ethnically diverse in its population than it has been in the past (Cohn & Caumont, 2016; De Vita & Pollard, 1996). Estimates from the Pew Research Center project that by the year 2055, the United States will not have a single ethnic or racial majority (Cohn & Caumont, 2016).

In particular, the Latino population is on the rise. Latinos accounted for 57.5 million (17.8%) of the U.S. population in 2016, with predictions of the population reaching 119 million by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). The growth of the Latino population in the United States comes from two sources: birth of new citizens within the United States and immigration into the country. Much of this immigration is from Mexico: of the Latino population living in the United States, 63.2% are from Mexico, our nearest Latino neighbor (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Definition of Terms

Some of the terms surrounding immigration and ethnicity can create confusion. The following paragraphs define the terms emigrant, immigrant, Hispanic, Latino, Latin America, and Latino immigrant and how they will be used in this study.

An *emigrant* is someone in the process of leaving his home country. He becomes an *immigrant* when he has resettled into a new country. Therefore, an *immigrant* is someone whose country of origin is different from the country in which they currently reside.

The terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are often used interchangeably. The Pew Research Center acknowledges that both terms are officially used by the U.S. Government to refer to persons tracing their roots to either Latin America or Spain (Lopez, 2013). To avoid confusion in

switching between the two terms, this study will only use the term *Latino* to refer to persons with origins in Spain and/or Latin America.

Latin America comprises the countries or territories in North, Central, South America, and the Caribbean islands whose citizens speak French, Spanish, or Portuguese. Specifically, these countries and territories are: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. For the purpose of this study, a *Latino immigrant* is someone who was born in a Latin American country or territory and has resettled into the United States.

Documentation of Latino Immigrants

Immigration in the United States is not always documented. Passel (2005) identifies *undocumented immigrants* as those who have either entered the country without permission or have stayed beyond the time allotted by their visas. Undocumented immigrants do not have legal documentation of immigrating to the United States. Because of the difficulty in collecting accurate data on undocumented immigrants, estimates include a margin of error (Passel & Cohn, 2014); however, the Office of Immigration Statistics estimates there were 11.4 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States in 2012 (Baker & Rytina, 2013).

Undocumented immigration into the United States can be dangerous. Undocumented immigrants crossing the Mexico/U.S. border may travel in hot, dry conditions, risking dehydration and physical exhaustion. Some parents send their children to cross the border with “coyotes,” guides promising a safe passage into the United States (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2015), these coyotes can be just as dangerous as the physical challenges of crossing the border. The coyotes

sometimes limit food and water and assault the women and children they are helping to cross (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

Despite these dangers, undocumented immigrants continue to cross the border into the United States. While Mexicans make up the largest foreign-born group in the United States, their percentage of citizenship remains low (Padilla, 1997). Studies indicate the reason many Mexicans are willing to enter the United States without documentation is associated with low educational and economic levels upon entrance into the country (Garcia, 2002). Poverty and lack of education drive them to find a better life in the United States regardless of potential dangers.

Children are not immune to stress associated with undocumented immigration. Gulbas et al. (2015) found that children with at least one undocumented parent reported stress in one or more of the following areas: inability to communicate with friends, loss of supportive school networks, financial struggles, stressed relationship with parents, and violence. Additionally, these children are at a greater risk for mental health issues in association with this stress (Gulbas et al., 2015). Because children do not learn well under stress, immigrant children living in fear of being deported or having their parents deported have difficulties learning in school (Dubin, 2017). The next section will address potential challenges of all Latino immigrant children, regardless of documentation status.

Challenges of Latino Immigrant Children in the United States

As mentioned above, many undocumented immigrants experience difficulties while crossing the border into the United States. Upon resettling into the United States, Latino immigrants, both documented and undocumented, continue to encounter obstacles. Included in these challenges are language difficulties, cultural differences, and separation from family (Arbona et al., 2010). The level of psychosocial strain that immigrants experience in response to

these and other stressors has been labeled as *acculturative stress* (Hovey, 2000). Arbona et al. (2010) reported acculturative stress among Latino immigrants to be associated with negative psychological outcomes, suggesting the need to attend to the unique stressors faced by Latino immigrants.

To identify potential challenges facing Latino immigrant children, this study will use the category of immigrant challenges identified in Gomm's (2012) content analysis of children's literature specific to Latino immigrant children. Gomm (2012) identified five major categories of challenges Latino children may experience after immigrating to the United States. Although these five categories are not exhaustive, Latino immigrant children often encounter one or more of these challenges (Gomm et al., 2017) making them an important focus.

The five major challenges Gomm (2012) identified are: (a) family difficulties; (b) challenges associated with socioeconomic status; (c) academic challenges; (d) emotional, traumatic, and behavioral challenges; and (e) social challenges. Gomm further narrows these challenges into categories as seen in Table 1.

Family difficulties. Many Latino immigrant children encounter family stress accompanying immigration including family separation, reunification, and family conflict (Horton, 2008). Children are often separated from both immediate and extended family prior to, during, and/or after the process of immigration (Gomm, 2012). Sometimes in anticipation of economic strain, one or both parents come to the United States first, later sending for their children (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). Likewise, sometimes children are sent unaccompanied into the United States and parents follow after. A third possible scenario is that children follow one parent into the United States, leaving the other parent behind. Regardless of

how children are separated from family, separation can cause uncertainty and a shift in relationships among family members who are separated (Solheim, Zaid, & Ballard, 2016).

Table 1

Potential Challenges Experienced by Latino Immigrant Children

Category	Descriptive sub-categories
Family challenges	1. Family separation and reunification 2. Family conflict
SES challenges	3. Poverty 4. Health problems 5. Transiency
School and academic challenges	6. Language barriers 7. Academic achievement and parental involvement
Emotional, traumatic and behavioral challenges	8. Loss and homesickness 9. Traumatic experiences 10. Fears related to legal status 11. Antisocial behavior and behavioral problems
Social challenges	12. Peer acceptance and socio-cultural adjustment

Table is used by permission of author, Gomm (2012, p. 4).

In addition to the stress inherent with separation from family, reunification brings its own set of problems. Complications in family relations are a frequent outcome of reunification (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). After being apart for a time, children may experience difficulty relating to their parents as parents (Zuniga, 2004). Additionally, as Zuniga (2004) explains, children and parents may adjust to living in the United States in different ways. This difference in acculturation can cause conflict in the family.

Challenges associated with socioeconomic status (SES). As previously stated, many immigrants enter the United States financially unstable, seeking better occupational

opportunities. Economic challenges often continue once immigrants have resettled into the country. The U.S. Population Reference Bureau reported that in 2015 more than three-fifths of Latino youth (62%) were living in low-income families (families with income below 200% of the official poverty line; Mather, 2016). According to the Pew Research Center, several factors contribute to SES status of Latino immigrants including education, labor market, English language-ability, level of skill, and length of time in the United States (Kochhar, 2005).

Children living in families with incomes below the poverty line face potential stresses surrounding low SES. These stresses include, but are not limited to, health problems, transiency, and substandard living conditions (Falicov, 2013; Schencker, 2009).

Academic challenges. In addition to family difficulties and challenges surrounding low SES status and acculturative stressors, immigrant children may encounter academic challenges. Many immigrant children do not speak English when they come to the United States, making it more difficult to succeed in English-speaking schools. These non-English speaking children may develop social English within a couple of years but may take several years to acquire academic English (Gomm, 2012).

Parental support and involvement influence academic success. Jung and Zhang (2016) found both parental involvement in education and parents' English proficiency significantly impacted academic achievement of immigrant children. Parental involvement and English proficiency were positively correlated with child academic achievement (Jung & Zhang, 2016).

Emotional, traumatic, and behavioral challenges. Latino immigrant children may also experience emotional and behavioral challenges. Homesickness can be a significant emotional hurdle. Immigrants can suffer from longing, defined by a loss of relationship with their home country (Pehler et al., 2014). Even after years of resettlement, an overwhelming sense of longing

for the home country is present (Svenberg, Mattsson, & Skott, 2009). Additionally, some immigrants face fears associated with being undocumented and the possibility of deportation of themselves, family members, or friends (Hargrove, 2006).

Social challenges. Other challenges facing Latino immigrant children surround peer relations and socio-cultural adjustment. Acculturation by definition takes time (Doucerain, Deschênes, Gouin, Amiot, & Ryder, 2017). During this time, immigrant children may find difficulty fitting in with peers, especially if they do not speak the same language as their peers.

Despite these potential difficulties, research supports hope of acceptance. Immigrants acculturate more easily when they are immersed into mainstream culture. Doucerain et al. (2017) conducted a longitudinal study of newly arrived immigrants and found “more positive initial mainstream cultural orientations prospectively predict higher social participation, specifically in the mainstream group” (p. 245). Another longitudinal study by Asendorpf and Motti-Stefanidi (2017) found immigrants to be more accepted by peers in classrooms with an immigrant population greater than 66%, suggesting a greater acceptance with a higher chance for intergroup contact.

Theories of Acculturative Stress

The immigrant challenges previously described are just a few potential challenges for Latino immigrants. These challenges, along with other factors, can contribute to what is known as *acculturative stress*. Acculturative stress is a multidimensional, complex, and nuanced process many immigrants experience as they learn to incorporate two cultures: their own native culture with the culture of their new environment (Schwartz & Unger, 2017). The following section will address the current theories of acculturative stress.

The term *acculturative stress* is rooted in the stress and coping theory, a theory which examines various coping strategies people use to navigate through stressful life events (Singh, McBride, & Kak, 2015). Acculturative stress was introduced in 1970 as an alternative to *culture shock*, the term previously used to describe an immigrant's adjustment experience (Berry, 2006). While *shock* denotes a solely negative connotation, the term *stress* can be attributed to both positive aspects (e.g. seeking greater opportunities) and negative aspects (e.g. dealing with discrimination) of the acculturation process, rendering it a more nuanced term (Berry, 2006).

In order to better understand how immigrants experience acculturative stress, it is important to better understand acculturation in general. Acculturation is a multifaceted experience and not all immigrants approach acculturation in the same way. Ward and Geraert (2016) explain:

Shedding one's heritage or home culture and shifting toward the values and behaviors of the settlement or host culture is one form of acculturation (i.e., assimilation), but this uni-dimensional conceptualization is not adequate to capture the richness and variety of acculturative changes, nor to explore the relationship between acculturation and adaptation. Instead, an individual's orientation to both the heritage and settlement cultures needs to be considered. (p. 99)

Expanding beyond simplistic notions of acculturation, Berry (2006) suggests four acculturation strategies: integration, a strong association with both cultures; assimilation, a strong association with the settlement culture; separation, a strong association with the native culture; and marginalization, a weak association with both cultures. Berry (2006) suggests that because individuals vary in their use of acculturation strategies, it is important that researchers do not assume to understand individuals' experience with acculturation.

While orientations to acculturation may vary, research supports some trends in the acculturation process, including the positive aspects of social support. Family, friends, and community support have been shown to significantly reduce negative aspects of acculturative stress (Singh et al., 2015). Longitudinal studies show that while acculturative stress may be detrimental to immigrants' mental health, social support can buffer that effect over time (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). In accordance with what is known as the *social support and network theory*, social support has an effect on immigrants by "enhancing sense of belonging, companionship and reassurance of self-worth regardless of stress levels" (Singh et al., 2015, p. 1598).

Additional research continues to shed light on various aspects of acculturative stress. For example, Rodriguez, Flores, Flores, Myers, and Vriesema (2015) examined variations between the ways adolescents and adults experience acculturative stress. A Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (MASI) was given to 331 adolescents of Mexican origin. Results were compared with previous studies in which the MASI was administered to adults. Both adolescents and adults reported experiencing acculturative stress because of language competency pressures. Regardless of age, individuals felt discriminated against because they had difficulty speaking English. The study also found that adolescent participants differentially experienced challenges related to negotiating their Latino and American practices and identities; however, this difference could also be attributed to identity development in adolescence (Rodriguez et al., 2015).

Current theories of acculturative stress suggest that while immigrants may experience stress during the acculturation process, under the right circumstances, acculturation is mildly stressful and non-traumatic (Berry, 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2015; Schwartz & Unger, 2017; Tartakovsky, 2007). A longitudinal study by Tartakovsky (2007) found adolescent immigrants,

on average, scored low on scales measuring both homesickness and acculturative stress, indicating mild psychosocial strain following immigration. Benign social conditions and high availability of psychological resources were considered factors in adolescents experiencing low acculturative stress (Tartakovsky, 2007). Additionally, as mentioned previously, social support has been shown to significantly reduce acculturative stress (Singh et al., 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Recent research suggests that while immigrants experience acculturative stress, the effects of this stress are not as detrimental as previously assumed. For example, even though adolescent participants in the Rodriguez et al. (2015) study reported experiencing acculturative stress that was significantly and negatively associated with psychological well-being, the magnitude of stress across items on the MASI was small. With family, friend, and community support, acculturative stress is lessened (Singh et al., 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Contrary to mainstream perceptions of immigrants' acculturative experiences being negative, immigrants report positive aspects of acculturative stress, such as increased opportunities to achieve their goals (Berry, 2006).

Latino Immigrant Children and Schools

The prevalence of undocumented immigrants in the United States is reflected in the growing immigrant population in schools. The Pew Research Center reported that almost 3.5 million children in the United States, 7% of K-12 students, have at least one undocumented parent, and about 700,000 K-12 students are undocumented themselves (Passel & Cohn, 2014). Regardless of documentation status, all children have a legal right to an education in the United States under the 1982 Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe* (Olivas, 2012). Additionally, the Family

Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits schools from sharing students' personal information, including documentation status, with anyone (Dubin, 2017).

All immigrant children, whether documented or not, can find support at school. Beyond academic support, it is important for Latino immigrant children to also receive emotional support at school (Brown, 2015). Teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, administrators, school personnel, and other students can all be a part of a support network for immigrant children.

Researchers have found immigrant children succeed in school when they adjust to their new environment without losing their own cultural heritage (Kaplan, Turtier, Piotrowski, & Silber, 2009; Smokowski, Buchanan, & Bacallao, 2009). Immigrant children, therefore, should be encouraged to learn about U.S. culture without deleting their former culture (Abellán-Pagnani & Hébert, 2013). More research shows that in addition to school success, children who maintain respect and high value for their own cultural heritage are less likely to be affected by discrimination in schools (Brown, 2015).

Teachers can play a significant role in helping immigrant children adjust to their new environment. Brown (2015) found that teachers can diminish discrimination in their classrooms by both valuing immigrant children and by providing opportunities for students to learn about diversity. Lee (2003) asserted that immigrant children were more successful in school when teachers were more knowledgeable about the students' culture of origin. In her article, Lee also offered several suggestions for teachers, and although her article was specific to helping Korean immigrants, her suggestions apply to Latino immigrants as well. Suggestions for teachers included the following: encouraging students to continue speaking their native language, encouraging students' biculturality, increasing knowledge about their students' culture, and even

visiting students' homes (Lee, 2003). Educators can also be instrumental in involving Latino immigrant children in extracurricular activities, increasing their interaction with peers, and providing opportunities for academic and social growth (Callahan & Obenchain, 2017).

In addition to teachers, school counselors and school psychologists can provide support for immigrant children. Counselors and psychologists can serve as builders of “cross cultural bridges” (McDonald, Goh, Brissett, Yoon, & Wahl, 2007, p. 66) by using cross-cultural simulations and other activities to connect children to mainstream culture. School psychologists are in a unique position to help immigrant children. Vega, Lasser, and Plotts (2015) reviewed literature about school psychologists and immigration. They suggested that school psychologists increase cultural competency in order to help immigrant children with linguistic concerns, cultural concerns, psychosocial implications, and possible trauma associated with immigration (Vega et al., 2015). Through conducting assessments, offering counseling, and providing consultation with parents, teachers, and others, school psychologists have many tools to support immigrant children (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013).

Bibliotherapy's Potential Support for Latino Immigrant Children

Bibliotherapy is a potential support for Latino immigrant children as they adapt to living in the United States. To understand how bibliotherapy can provide support, it is beneficial to understand more about bibliotherapy.

The term *bibliotherapy* first appeared in print in 1916, coined by Samuel Crothers (Pehrsson, Allen, Folger, McMillen, & Lowe, 2007). Since that time, bibliotherapy has been defined in various ways. Berns (2004) summarized these definitions with a common thread: using reading materials to affect a change in behavior. According to Berns, “the ways in which materials are used in bibliotherapy may include any literacy activity, including reading (fiction,

nonfiction, or poetry), creative writing, or storytelling” (p. 324). Applying this definition of bibliotherapy, it is possible for caretakers of children, though unfamiliar with the term, may be practicing bibliotherapy (Jalongo, 1983). Parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and mental health professionals are some of the caretakers included in this group.

Regardless of who is practicing bibliotherapy, certain elements are identified as critical to the success of bibliotherapy (Berns, 2004; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). Pardeck and Pardeck (1993) described the following elements: identification, selection, presentation, and follow-up. Berns (2004) summarized these aspects of bibliotherapy:

Each aspect must be guided by a skilled adult and is equally important. Identification of the child’s issues and emotions requires a need for particular sensitivity on the part of the bibliotherapist. Selection draws upon a knowledge of the appropriate materials and resources available in order to identify those that will best serve the child’s needs. Presentation calls for skill in timing and in the introduction of the literary materials. Follow-up involves some kind of follow-up activity, conversation, and/or emotional exploration of the materials that have been shared; in many ways, follow-up is the most crucial stage in the process because without such follow-up the process is merely a reading, without preserving any kind of therapeutic validity. (p. 325)

Certain characteristics of bibliotherapy make it a likely support for Latino immigrant children (Gomm et al., 2017). As Berns (2004) suggests, bibliotherapy provides a safe way for children to “explore their inner selves” (pp. 321–336). More specifically, bibliotherapy provides a safe distance, reduces isolation, fosters conversation about challenges, and improves peer relationships (Gomm, 2012). These benefits are described in the following sections.

Provides a safe distance. One of the primary ways that bibliotherapy offers support is by allowing children a safe distance in which to talk about their feelings and experiences by identifying with a book character (Gomm, 2012). Children are able to understand something going on within themselves because they can connect to something similar in the book. Abellán-Pagnani and Hébert (2013) explain this process:

The therapeutic experience begins when children select a book and discover characters very similar to themselves. This interaction is known as identification, and the more the children have in common with the people they meet in books, the stronger the identification becomes. With that identification comes a sense of tension relief, or catharsis, a feeling that lets young children know that they are not alone in facing a challenge in their lives. (p. 50)

Additionally, identification provides a safe way for children to talk about their own feelings. Upon identifying with a character, a child who previously had difficulty sharing experiences, thoughts, and emotions, now feels safe to talk indirectly about his own feelings through the character in the book (Berns, 2004).

Reduces feelings of isolation. If children have not had a safe place to talk about their experiences, they may feel isolated in their sorrow. Bibliotherapy can reduce feelings of isolation as children realize they are not alone in their experiences. Zambelli and DeRosa (1992) further explain, “children’s sense of isolation about their loss may be reduced as they realize other children, even if they are only characters in books, have been through similar situations” (p. 487). This reduction in isolation can provide hope that they, too, can successfully resolve their similar situations (Gomm et al., 2017).

Fosters conversations about challenges. Once children identify with character(s) in a book and reduce their feelings of isolation, they can begin to talk about their own experiences. In this way, bibliotherapy serves as a catalyst for immigrant children to be able to express their feelings (Baghban, 2007). Specifically, Latino immigrant children who read books about other Latino immigrant children can begin to talk about their own experiences. After becoming emotionally involved in a story, they can talk about the emotions they have been holding inside (Berns, 2004). Allowing children to share their stories helps with their healing and improves their academic success (Zehr, 2017).

Improves peer relationships. Identifying with characters in books can improve peer relations for Latino immigrant children. Zambelli and DeRosa (1992) explain, “through the activities of bibliotherapy, art therapy, and play therapy, children are helped to develop solid peer relationships with others in like circumstances” (p. 488). Furthermore, practicing bibliotherapy in small groups or in a classroom setting can further strengthen peer relations (Gomm et al., 2017).

Bibliotherapy and Social Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL), including bibliotherapy, plays an important role in schools. SEL in a school-based context is defined by Zins (2004) as, “the process for integrating thinking, feeling, and behavior to achieve important social tasks; meet personal and social needs; and develop the skills necessary to become a productive, contributing member of society” (p. 27). SEL programs have proven beneficial to some students. A meta-analysis of 213 SEL programs involving 270,034 K-12 students was conducted by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011). The meta-analysis found students who participated in SEL

school-based programs had increased positive attitudes toward themselves, others, and their school; enhanced prosocial behaviors; and improved academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

Social and emotional problems among students invariably arise in classrooms daily. Teachers can enhance their abilities to address these issues through collaboration with other teachers and mental-health professionals (Maich & Kean, 2004a) and by incorporating SEL programs into their lesson plans. Researchers Maich and Kean (2004a) suggest bibliotherapy as a social emotional intervention that teachers and other school professionals can easily incorporate into their lessons and daily routine.

When discussing bibliotherapy as a support for Latino immigrant children, it is important to address two major types of bibliotherapy: developmental bibliotherapy and clinical bibliotherapy. While clinical bibliotherapy is designed to address more specific emotional and traumatic problems, developmental bibliotherapy deals with typical adjustment problems (Heath, Smith, & Young, 2017). According to Heath et al. (2017) the difference between developmental and clinical bibliotherapy lies with the severity of the mental health issue being addressed. This study will focus on developmental bibliotherapy and the potential ways bibliotherapy may offer support for Latino immigrant children.

Developmental bibliotherapy effectively supports immigrant children because it is easily incorporated into classrooms where children are already present. Because it is cost effective, adapted to the needs of the students, and presented through reading, a familiar context to students, teachers can easily incorporate bibliotherapy into their lessons (Sullivan & Strang, 2002). Although teachers are not normally trained in mental health, “they are an integral part of the therapeutic team as often they are the people students will share their concerns with, and they can observe when something is troubling a student” (Maich & Kean, 2004b, p. 26). This applies

to immigrant children as well. Teachers across the country reported school children showing signs of social and emotional stress related to documentation status of students and other family members (Callahan & Obenchain, 2017). Teachers are among the first to notice mental health issues surrounding immigration and how they impact students, including the negative impact of immigration on students' ability to focus in school (Callahan & Obenchain, 2017). Teachers, taking note of these issues in their classrooms, can employ bibliotherapy as support.

Bibliotherapy empowers children as they identify with book characters experiencing situations similar to their own. As teachers read stories about children navigating a new life, immigrant children learn how to deal with their own acculturation issues (Baghban, 2007). Bibliotherapy, then, provides a child-friendly and non-invasive way for teachers to address the social and emotional needs of students in their classrooms (Sullivan & Strang, 2002), including immigrant challenges.

In addition to teachers practicing bibliotherapy in their classrooms, mental health professionals can be instrumental. An overview of bibliotherapy by Pehrsson et al. (2007) explains that when school counselors and psychologists participate in book selection, the effectiveness of bibliotherapy is enhanced. Both nonfiction and fiction have a significant place in helping students in counseling sessions (Pehrsson et al., 2007). Mental health professionals in collaboration with teachers can strengthen the effectiveness of bibliotherapy.

Because teachers and mental health professionals can practice bibliotherapy with minimal effort, bibliotherapy is an accessible support for immigrant children in schools; however, how can teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, and others practicing bibliotherapy know that it is effective? A meta-analysis of bibliotherapy studies conducted by Marrs in 1995 found mean estimated effect (d) of 70 samples to be +0.565, suggesting its effectiveness. A more recent

systematic review by Montgomery and Maunders (2015) specifically focused on the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in children and youth. They found bibliotherapy to have a small to moderate positive effect on children's behavior (Montgomery & Maunders, 2015). Several other studies support the effectiveness of bibliotherapy (Stice, Burton, Bearman, & Rohde, 2007; Stice, Rohde, Seeley, & Gau, 2008; Theron, Cockcroft, & Wood, 2017). In support of bibliotherapy, Maich and Kean (2004a) assert, "If one child in a classroom is able to face a social emotional problem with new strength and greater skills, the very use of bibliotherapy will have been its own reward" (p. 11).

Despite research supporting its effectiveness, there are some cautions to consider when practicing bibliotherapy. Jack and Ronan (2008) argue while bibliotherapy has promise as a successful therapy, research on its effectiveness would benefit from more stringent methodology. They also suggest that it is best used as a supportive therapeutic intervention in conjunction with other methods (Jack & Ronan, 2008). Other limitations of bibliotherapy include the following: a lack of adequate books addressing students' issues, students' unwillingness to read and engage in the story being used, and the individual's varied reactions to characters in a story (Pehrsson et al., 2007).

Preparation and careful book selection can enhance the effectiveness of bibliotherapy. When practicing bibliotherapy, teachers and mental health professionals need to read books ahead of time and also be familiar with the individual student's issue they hope the book(s) will address (Pehrsson et al., 2007). One of the potential issues for immigrant children is homesickness. The following section will address this issue in more detail.

Homesickness

Immigrants potentially face many issues before, during, and after immigrating to the United States, including homesickness, a primary focus of this study. More than just a physical place, *home* represents an abstract concept connecting one psychologically to one's origins (Thach & Korn-Bursztyn, 2015). This can include family, culture, friends, and a sense of belonging. Immigrating to a new country is especially hard on children and adolescents. Just at the time they are developing their idea of *home*, they must not only go through the loss of home, but learn to create a new sense of the word home (Thach & Korn-Bursztyn, 2015), sometimes without their parents and others that define home for them.

Even with their immediate and extended family around them, Latinos who have immigrated to the United States deal with homesickness. Sometimes this homesickness is manifest in the form of social isolation or loneliness. In a study by Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al. (2014), Latinos living in the United States reported feeling socially isolated and lacking social support after immigration. Perceived social isolation can lead to negative physical and mental health effects (Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al., 2014).

There is hope for immigrants, however, as they gain friendships and establish roots in the United States. A study of adolescent immigrants in Portugal found immigrants reported feeling less lonely the longer they lived in Portugal (Neto, 2002). Implications from this study suggest the need for immigrant support early in the immigration process. This is one of the reasons this study will be selecting participants who have recently immigrated to the United States.

Conclusion

Latino immigrant children encounter both challenges and opportunities with acculturation, including homesickness (Gomm, 2012). Schools can provide support for Latino immigrant children through various means including bibliotherapy.

There is a lack of research on Latino immigrant children's perspectives of homesickness and whether or not children find support in stories about Latino immigrants experiencing homesickness. This study is an exploratory study into these areas. By analyzing students' perceptions of stories about homesickness, this study will provide insight into bibliotherapy as a support for Latino immigrant children.

Statement of the Problem

Latino immigrant children can benefit from receiving support with acculturative stress, including the challenge of homesickness. Homesickness, or a longing for the comforts and familiarity of a former home, is a common emotion after relocation, but may be exacerbated among immigrants with the addition of language and cultural differences. There is a lack of research about how children experience acculturative stress and homesickness.

Teachers and other educational professionals are in a good position to help Latino immigrant children. Teachers have frequent contact with children and often become confidants for the children in their classrooms. School-based mental health professionals are in a position to assist immigrant children in navigating the challenges of acculturation. Additionally, teachers and other educational professionals can use bibliotherapy to help children identify with other immigrants in similar situations. A better understanding of children's perceptions of books about immigrants experiencing homesickness will increase understanding of providing support for Latino immigrant children through bibliotherapy.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to gather qualitative data from individual interviews conducted with Latino immigrant children. These interviews will gather children's experiences with homesickness and compare how their experiences align with current theories of acculturative stress. The interviews will also gather the children's perspectives of five selected bilingual children's picture books that include stories about homesickness. These books are written in Spanish and English and include Latino characters. Specifically, the following research questions will be addressed regarding Latino immigrant children's perspectives of the selected books:

1. How do Latino immigrant children describe their own experiences of homesickness?
2. How do these descriptions align or contrast with existing theories of acculturative stress?
3. In dealing with their own homesickness, what coping strategies do children report as most helpful?
4. In what ways do the children identify with the stories' characters and situations?
5. In what ways have the stories helped the children cope with their feelings of homesickness?

CHAPTER 3

Method

Prior to conducting this study, permission to carry out the study was granted by the participating school district and Brigham Young University's Institutional Review Board. The letter granting approval is included in Appendix A.

The purpose of this study was to explore Latino immigrant children's descriptions of homesickness, compare these descriptions with current theories of acculturative stress, and to draft effectiveness of bilingual award-winning children's picture books as bibliotherapy for homesickness. This study utilized a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological method as it allowed for a description of the participants' common experiences (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). A qualitative design was selected over a quantitative design because it provided means for research participants to construct a reality through their experience as opposed to extracting an objective reality (Ponterotto, 2005). Where quantitative research seeks generalizable laws to apply to a population, qualitative research is more concerned with understanding an individual's experience with a particular phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2005). Qualitative research is less focused on a strict cause-and-effect theory, and more concerned with understanding the human perspective (McLeod, 2011).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology is a "qualitative research methodology used when the research question asks for meanings of a phenomenon with the purpose of understanding the human experience" (Crist & Tanner, 2003, p. 202). Known as the interpretation of "texts" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), hermeneutics can assess a person's experience of being in the world by gathering texts through interviews. As the interviewer and the interviewee participate in

the interview process, they negotiate their shared context of reality and make meaning together as part of the hermeneutic circle (Bailey, Heath, Jackson, Coyne, & Williams, 2018).

A qualitative inquiry method was selected to gather information about participants' experiences with homesickness and their reactions to reading selected books about Latino immigrant children. Interviews are a common qualitative method for gathering phenomenological data (Creswell et al., 2007). Interviews provide in-depth understanding into the perceptions of individuals (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Interviews in this study followed a semi-structured interview method with a list of guiding questions that were structured, and open-ended. A list of guiding questions helped organize the interviews and facilitated researchers in organizing and identifying themes among responses. Open-ended questions allowed participants to contribute additional information, as desired. The interviewer also asked follow-up questions, in order to clarify participants' responses. Both the open-ended and follow-up questions elicited unique interview responses (Turner, 2010). A lack of research about immigrant children and homesickness made it difficult for the researchers to know an appropriate number of subjects to include. Researchers followed the suggestion of obtaining an appropriate sample size of 15, plus or minus 10, for a qualitative interview study (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Researchers Involved in Study

The primary researcher in this study is a current graduate student at Brigham Young University. She is an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). She is studying to become a school psychologist and has an active interest in helping immigrant children adjust to living in the United States. She was a mentor to a Congolese refugee family in 2015 and helped the parents and their four children (ages 8–17) acclimate to their new life in

Utah. Her children are enrolled in a dual-immersion program in school where they are learning to speak Spanish and have many opportunities to interact with Latino immigrant children. All of these factors may contribute to researcher bias in this study.

The research team involved in analyzing the data included three individuals. These individuals included the primary researcher, the interviewer (Spanish-speaking paraprofessional who was enrolled in university classes), and the faculty advisor (university professor with a doctoral degree in school psychology).

The interviewer, a 22-year-old bilingual (fluent in English and Spanish), undergraduate college student lived in Bolivia for 18 months while serving a church mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In addition to attending Brigham Young University, she served as a bilingual paraprofessional in a local school serving a large population of Spanish-speaking students. Her employment included working with Newcomers' Groups that included newly immigrated children. These groups met four times a week, 20–30 minutes per meeting, for approximately seven months prior to the initiation of this research study. These groups assisted the Spanish-speaking students in learning to speak and write in English. Therefore, the interviewer was very familiar with each participating student and the students appeared to be comfortable and familiar with the interviewer. This may have produced some bias because the interviewer had an existing relationship with the children. However, the familiarity of the interviewer with the children also helped to create a less threatening environment in which to conduct the interviews.

Participants

Participants for this study were selected using criterion-based sampling (Turner, 2010). Selection criteria included, students who (a) immigrated to the United States during the 2017–2018 school year; (b) immigrated from a Latin American country; (c) were enrolled in the participating elementary school; and (d) attended grades 3, 4, 5, or 6. Thirteen potential students who met this study’s criteria for inclusion were invited to participate. An informed consent was sent to each of the 13 potential participant’s parent/guardian. Of these students, 12 returned signed parent consent forms (92.31% participation rate). These 12 students were included in the study. Participating children signed an assent form. Copies of the informed consent and assent forms are included in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

This study was conducted during March and April 2018. The participating students were included in a group at their elementary school called the Newcomers’ Group. The Newcomers’ Group was conducted four days a week, during 20–30 minutes of regular classroom instruction time. During this time the students received academic support in small groups. They also received English instruction from a bilingual paraprofessional, a college undergraduate student.

The current research study was included as part of the Newcomers’ Group activities. All Newcomers’ Group members read the selected books in their assigned groups, in place of language instruction. No data were collected on the one non-participating student. In this study, participants’ names were changed to pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Regardless of participation, all 13 students in the Newcomers’ Group received one copy of each of the five books used in the study. These books were provided to the children and families for their enjoyment.

The 12 students were divided into groups by grade, with the exception of one student in the fifth grade who was grouped with fourth-grade students. There were three Newcomer Groups involved in the study: (a) three 3rd grade students, (b) four 4th grade students (with the addition of one 5th grader), and (c) four 6th grade students.

Design

Books were read during the time scheduled for the Newcomers' Group. Therefore, students continued to participate in their regularly scheduled activities. Books were read aloud to students in the same room in which the students had been meeting (a familiar place) by the same paraprofessional who led the newcomer groups (a familiar person). Across a three-week period, the paraprofessional read the five books (approximately two books each week). Students missed two to three 30-minute sessions of their Newcomer's group each week while the study was taking place, a maximum of 90 minutes. The books, although bilingual (written in both English and Spanish), were read in Spanish, since students were most comfortable communicating in Spanish.

After all five books were read to the children, each of the 12 participating students were individually interviewed by the Spanish-speaking paraprofessional. The average interview time was 9 minutes and 31 seconds in length. Interviews ranged from 5 minutes and 41 seconds to 12 minutes and 4 seconds. Each interview was conducted in Spanish and was audio recorded for the purpose of later translation and transcription. Interviews followed a semi-structured interview approach. Participants were shown copies of the books they read during the interview to trigger their memories of the stories.

The following questions were included in the interview:

1. What does it mean when a person feels homesick?
2. Now you are living in the United States. What things are most different here as compared to your family's previous home in another country?
3. If you have felt homesick for your previous home in [name country], think of that feeling. What you have missed the most?
4. In coming to live here, what changes have been most difficult for you?
5. When you feel homesick, what do you do to feel better?
6. How have others helped you feel less homesick?
7. [Refer to the five books on the table, all lined up with covers showing.] What about these stories is similar to your feelings of homesickness?
8. [Present each story one at a time. Have the child select the stories in the order they prefer and ask the following two questions.] What—if anything—in this story helped you feel less homesick?
9. What—if anything—in this story helped you feel better about living in a new place?

The immigrant issue of homesickness was selected by the researchers from the identified immigrant challenges list used in this study. The principal of the school, the paraprofessional working with the students, and the students were all asked about the most challenging immigrant issue at this school at the beginning of the study. Homesickness was considered the most challenging issue. It is important to note that there is no direct Spanish translation of the English word, *homesick*. For the purpose of the interview, the English term, *homesick*, was described to the children using Spanish terminology. The interviewer asked, “What does it mean to you to

miss your home country and everything that is there?” The basis for the wording of this question is from Pehler et al.’s (2014) review of research on longing and homesickness.

Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed by a bilingual undergraduate student and the bilingual paraprofessional interviewer. Each transcription was checked for accuracy by the other transcriber. The transcribed interviews were then translated into English by the same student and paraprofessional and also cross-checked for accuracy.

Book Selection

Books selected for this study were based on Gomm’s (2012) content analysis. All the books were awarded special recognition in one or both of the following Latino children’s literature awards: (a) *Américas Book Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature* and (b) the *Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award*.

The following five picture books were selected: (a) *My Very Own Room* by Amada Irma Perez, (b) *My Diary from Here to There* by Amada Irma Perez, (c) *A Movie in My Pillow* by Jorge Argueta, (d) *Xochitl and the Flowers* by Jorge Argueta, and (e) *The Storyteller’s Candle* by Lucia Gonzalez. These five books were coded as stories about homesickness among Latino immigrants (Gomm, 2012). A brief summary of the books is included in Table 2.

Data Analysis

Following the methods of the hermeneutic approach, data analysis began during, not after, the interview process (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interviewer took notes during interviews about nonverbal behavior and about her impressions of each interview.

Table 2

Description of Children's Picture Books Used in This Study

Book	Description
<p><i>A Movie in My Pillow / Una Película en mi Almohada</i> by Jorge Argueta</p>	<p>The book, <i>A Movie in My Pillow/Una Película en mi Almohada</i> was published in 2001 by Children's Book Press. It is a collection of poems reflecting the experiences of Argueta's childhood after he and his father fled war-torn El Salvador. Leaving several family members behind, including his grandmother, he and his father make a new home in San Francisco where the family is eventually reunited.</p> <p>Immigrant challenges addressed in this book include family change, poverty, transiency, language barriers, loss, trauma, and peers and adjustment. The book also addresses the experience of having to leave without saying goodbye.</p> <p>The book has several themes of strength. Family bonds, togetherness, work, imagination, friendship, and ancestral pride are among these themes.</p>
<p><i>Xochitl and the Flowers / Xóchitl, la Niña de las Flores</i> by Jorge Argueta</p>	<p>The book, <i>Xochitl and the Flowers/Xóchitl, la Niña de las Flores</i> was published in 2003 by Children's Book Press. Its story is about flowers and a young girl named Xochitl living in San Francisco. After immigrating to California, Xochitl and her parents move into an apartment complex where they convert a trash-heap behind the building into a nursery. They sell flowers and plants to the surrounding community.</p> <p><i>Xochitl and the Flowers</i> addresses several immigrant challenges: family change, poverty, transiency, language barriers, school and learning, loss, trauma, behavior, and peers and adjustment. Additionally, the story discusses hard work and other obstacles.</p> <p>There are several positive themes addressed in the story. A sense of community, fond memories of El Salvador, flowers, beauty, and optimism are just a few of these themes.</p>
<p><i>My Very Own Room / Mi propio cuartito</i> by Amada Irma Perez</p>	<p><i>My Very Own Room/Mi propio cuartito</i> was published in 2000 by Children's Book Press. Based on the author's own experiences, it is a story about a nine-year old girl who moves to the U.S. and has to share a room with her five brothers. Tired of sharing, she works with other family members to convert a storage room in the home into a space of her own.</p> <p>Both poverty and transiency are immigrant challenges the book addresses. Also addressed is a lack of privacy.</p> <p>The book is a family-focused story about working together and the importance of family.</p>
<p><i>My Diary from Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá</i> by Amada Irma Perez</p>	<p><i>My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá</i> is a story about Amada's immigration to the United States. After learning that her family is leaving Juarez, Mexico, Amada records her emotions about leaving friends, family, and familiarity in her diary. After enduring a temporary separation from her father, multiple moves, and trying to establish a home in a new community, Amada learns she is stronger than she imaged.</p> <p>The specific immigrant challenges addressed in this book include family change, family conflict, poverty, health problems, transiency language barriers, loss, legal status, behavior, and peers and adjustment. Additionally, the book discusses the importance of hard work and the challenges of border crossing.</p> <p>The story of Amada also contains several pieces of potential strength for immigrant children. Inner strength, family support and the importance of family, hope, patience, humor, and journal-writing are positively modeled in the book.</p>

Table 2 (continued)

Description of Children's Picture Books Used in This Study

Book	Description
<i>The Storyteller's Candle / La velita de los cuentos</i> by Lucía González	<p><i>The Storyteller's Candle/La velita de los cuentos</i> was published by Children's Book Press in 2008. In the book, a neighborhood public library in New York City gets a new librarian and storyteller from Puerto Rico. Cousins Hildamar and Santiago, recent immigrants from Puerto Rico, and other members of the El Barrio help transform a section of the library into a tropical island and also bring Three Kings' Day to New York City.</p> <p>The book addresses the following immigrant challenges: health problems, language barriers, school and learning, loss, and peers and adjustment. The book also addresses the differences in climates between Puerto Rico and New York.</p> <p>Community contribution to a cause, preserving one's culture, celebration, and literature are all positive themes in the book.</p>

The interviewer recorded her thoughts and feelings directly after each interview. Her notes were considered when interpreting the data.

A hermeneutic approach to interpreting the interview transcripts was based on Crist and Tanner's (2003) recommendations. These guidelines are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Phases in the Interpretive Process of Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Phases	Description of activity
Phase 1: Early focus and lines of inquiry	Initial interpretations and impressions of interviews
Phase 2: Identifying important themes and concerns	Identifying important meanings for individuals
Phase 3: Shared meanings	Identifying important meanings across participants; connections between meanings
Phase 4: Final interpretations	In-depth interpretations and summaries
Phase 5: Dissemination of the interpretation	Interpretation continues as text is refined

Note. This table is based on information shared in Crist and Tanner's (2003) article.

Researchers followed these guidelines in the analysis process. The process can be thought of as a "spiral of deepening meaning" (Jackson & Patton, 1992, p. 202) similar to reading and

pondering literature. Each reading delved deeper into the text and into the understanding of the human experience. The researchers began with an unfocused overview reading with minimal a priori assumptions and then continued with several more readings to enrich interpretation (Jackson & Patton, 1992).

Each researcher worked individually, making notes of themes, commonalities between interviews, as well as unique responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Working in the hermeneutic circle, researchers then circled back and reread the transcripts in context looking for statements that could either confirm or contradict themes. Researchers met together to discuss their findings and further refine their interpretations.

Interpretations from this circling or spiraling process needed to be discussed and summarized in words, using specific child-participant comments as evidence to anchor researchers' claims. To summarize and explain this study's findings, researchers attempted to communicate their interpretations in the context of qualitative descriptions, rather than quantifiable numbers (Jackson & Patton, 1992).

Researchers took precautions to protect participants when reporting research findings. Pseudonyms were used in the study in order to protect the identity of the students. The identities of individual students are only known by the researchers. Transcriptions, audio recordings, and consent forms were stored electronically in password-protected files. These materials will be kept until three years after the study's conclusion, at which point they will be electronically deleted. All consent forms and paper materials related to the data will be shredded.

Students and parents were notified about potential participation risks: the books had potential to trigger sadness in the students as they connected with characters and reflected on

their own experiences with homesickness. Both students and parents were given contact information of the school social worker should they have any concerns during or after the study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Across the 2017–2018 school year, 12 Latino immigrant children aged 8–12 participated in Newcomers' Groups. Groups were led by a bilingual paraprofessional and met for 20–30 minutes, four days each week. During this time, the paraprofessional read aloud five selected stories (in Spanish) about Latino immigrant children to the 12 children. After listening to the stories, each child was individually interviewed by the paraprofessional. Guiding questions from these interviews are included in Appendix D. Children were asked about the meaning of homesickness, their experiences with homesickness, and how they coped with these feelings of homesickness.

Participating children were recent immigrants from Latin America, all arriving to Utah within the 2017–2018 school year. Although each child was a Latino immigrant, the children's situations surrounding immigration varied (See Appendix E for a description of each participating student). Ten of the children were from Mexico, one from Peru, and one from Venezuela. Some children left behind immediate family members (father, mother, siblings); others came with their entire immediate family. However, all left close family members behind (grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc.). One child reported that his family escaped a dangerous situation and that he did not want to return to his home country. Most children reported coming to the United States in search of better opportunities.

Each child's interview was unique. Some gave more detailed responses, while others had less to say. Some were reluctant to talk about their feelings of homesickness. One boy had his head down on the desk during the interview, avoiding eye contact with the interviewer. On several occasions, one student said he did not want to answer a question because it was too

difficult to talk about the subject. The average interview was 9 minutes and 31 seconds in length, with interviews ranging from 5 minutes and 41 seconds to 12 minutes and 4 seconds.

The research team—consisting of the primary researcher, the interviewer (paraprofessional), and the faculty advisor—analyzed the transcripts. Each researcher read through the transcripts both individually and together, identifying common and unique themes. The primary researcher's evaluation of the transcripts and the children's responsiveness was that the children were overall very responsive to the interviewer, primarily because of their familiarity with her. The interviewer was a paraprofessional with whom they had been working for eight months prior to the study. The children were used to speaking in Spanish with the interviewer and the interviews were conducted in Spanish. A couple of the students seemed to be less responsive than others. The interviews of these students who were less responsive were somewhat shorter, due to their brief answers and limited engagement in discussion. It is unclear whether these students were uncomfortable with the questions being asked, the one-on-one interview format, or something else. It is also important to note that some of the children may have been apprehensive about talking about their home country. It is also the researcher's interpretation that, overall, the students understood the questions being asked. Their answers are appropriate to the questions of the interviewer. When it was apparent that the children did not understand the question because of hesitation or when they stated they were unclear of a meaning, the interviewer explained the meaning for them.

Using the hermeneutic method, the researchers analyzed the data. While each child's experience is unique, some common themes were identified with regard to the research questions. The remainder of the results section will identify these themes and include information about participants' unique responses. Additionally, the results section contains data

that are associated with the specific five research questions. After describing the themes, information is summarized in the following sections: Perceptions of Homesickness, Contributions to Acculturative Stress, Coping Strategies, Identification with Characters, and Perceptions of Stories Being Helpful.

Overall Themes of Children's Experiences

The following section discusses some of the overarching themes of the interview data as identified by the researchers. Subsequent sections will address each research question. To protect confidentiality, students names were changed to pseudonyms.

The most common theme throughout the interviews was missing family. Regardless of which family members remained in the home country, participants expressed sadness about no longer seeing these family members. Although students are able to talk with family on the phone or text them, students admit being sad because they no longer see or interact with family face-to-face.

Some students were separated from a mother or father when they immigrated. Dulce, separated from her mother and other family members, said the most difficult thing about living in the United States is, "adapting to not living with all of my family members." She feels sad she has not seen them for a long time and is worried they might forget her. Another student, José, talks about his father who remains in Peru. Jose said thinking about Peru "makes me feel sad because my Dad is there and I don't know when he will come here to the states." Jose later communicated concern about his father's safety in Peru.

Children also expressed difficulties learning English. This was a recurring theme across participants' interviews. Research identifies language difficulties as a major contributor to acculturative stress among immigrants (Rodriguez et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2015). Children in

this study agreed that learning English was stressful and difficult. Before coming to the United States, they were fearful that no one here would speak Spanish. They were relieved to discover that many others spoke Spanish, including teachers at their school and people in their community.

While the students reported being frightened when they first came to the United States, they were relieved to have so many opportunities to communicate in Spanish. In addition to speaking with family and friends outside of school, they often speak Spanish in their school. The children's school participates in a dual immersion program in which Spanish is spoken half of the day. All participants were enrolled in this program and received 50% of their academic instruction in Spanish. Many faculty members at their school, including the principal, speak Spanish. Additionally, over half of students attending this school are Latino (based on National Center for Educational Statistics Common Core Data 2015-2016, 2017-2018 school years) and speak Spanish in their homes.

Another theme identified from the interviews was an overall feeling of increased safety in the United States. The students reported feeling safer here than they did in their home countries. When asked about differences between Mexico and the United States, Fabiana, a third-grade student, remarked, "Here it is a lot better and calmer. Here there aren't a ton of bad people and they respect what you do." Another boy, José, commented that he and his mother were surprised they could leave possessions outside and no one would steal them. Other students reported less fighting in the United States. Additionally, they perceived American schools as safer than schools they attended in their home country.

Children's Perceptions of Homesickness

The first research question is addressed in this section: How do Latino immigrant children describe their own experiences of homesickness? Participants were interviewed in an attempt to answer this research question.

Clarifying the meaning of homesickness. As mentioned in the method section, the English term *homesickness* has no direct translation into Spanish. Therefore, the term homesickness was described to the students as missing one's country and all that was left behind. A few participants gave vague and seemingly contradictory answers to the question, "What does it mean to miss your country and all that was left behind?" This left researchers to wonder if the children really understood the question. When asked about how he felt about missing his country and all that he left there, one subject said he felt both "good" and "sad." Another said he felt both "normal" and "weird."

These answers could be an indication that these particular children were unsure about how to respond to the questions being posed or their responses could reflect the complicated emotions surrounding homesickness. Because children may have had a variety of experiences in their home countries, their travels to the United States, and their acculturation into the new school and community, their responses regarding homesickness reflect these varied experiences—both the good and the bad, the normal and the weird.

When the interviewer was unsure if the children understood what it meant to be homesick, she defined homesickness in greater depth. Furthermore, as she checked for comprehension, if needed, she added additional explanations to ensure participants understood what was being asked of them. With additional explanation, the few subjects who may have been confused about the idea of being homesick appeared to understand the question. All of the

children had experienced leaving behind family members and all acknowledged differences between their old life and new life.

Effects of being interviewed. The children's apparent confusion could also be interpreted as nervousness. The interviewer remarked that several children were nervous about the interview. A few were quieter during the interview than was typical. One student was hesitant to come into the room and another admitted that she was nervous to answer questions about her home country. Although the students were familiar with the interviewer and the environment, some were still nervous. The children were not clear about why they were nervous, but we will consider a couple of possibilities. The interview was recorded on the interviewer's cell phone which could have contributed to the nerves of some subjects. Students were informed that they were going to be recorded and they could see the phone during the interview.

It is also possible children of undocumented parents may have been more nervous to talk about their home country and their experiences with immigration. In this study, the parents' immigrant status was unknown. Additionally, this was most likely the first time many of these children talked about their feelings of homesickness. Talking about emotions appeared to be an unfamiliar experience.

Children's mixed responses. Children's responses were mixed and did not clearly delineate a definitive answer to the first research question. Additionally, most of the participants' responses were brief. In general, from the researcher's point of view, these children were either hesitant to talk about homesickness or may have perceived that their experiences were not something remarkable because they were experiences over which they had no control. Rather, they appeared to be accepting of their new life in the United States. This was their *new normal*. Their old life was now behind them.

It is also important to note that, according to the interviewer, one boy may have responded in a manner that she considered less involved. Rather than describing what he was actually feeling, he appeared to disengage from the interview. Prior to the interviews when the children listened to the books being read to them, this same boy, at times, appeared to emotionally distance himself. From the interviewer's point of view, this boy said what he thought adults wanted to hear when he may have been confused or did not fully understand the group's conversation. At times, he appeared to avoid discussion and talking about his feelings.

Despite nerves and some confusion about homesickness, the students' interviews reflect their experiences with homesickness. One boy said he feels "worried" when he thinks about Mexico, uncertain about being here in the United States. Little explanation was given to support his feelings of worry and uncertainty. Two children said they felt "weird" about being in the United States. When asked how she felt about being homesick, Dulce, a sixth-grade girl from Mexico, said, "You remember the people there [in Mexico] but sometimes they don't remember you. You feel very weird." Roman, a fourth-grade boy from Venezuela, said he feels weird about being here. It is possible that these children use the term "weird" because they do not have the emotional vocabulary to express their complex feelings.

Children's expressions of longing. In addition to missing family, participants commented about missing friends, possessions, and cultural comforts of home; the following section discusses some of their longings. When asked about what it means to be homesick, Julias, a sixth grader, said, "I miss my family, my friends, my house, and my things." He had to leave his guitar in Mexico, and while a neighbor is taking care of it for him, he misses it very much. Julieta, another sixth grader, was asked what it means to miss Mexico and all that she left there. She said, "It means a lot to me because they are people and things that used to always be a

part of my life. It's sad that those things that were always there in my life aren't there anymore. It was only one day before when they said to me, 'Let's go' and everything was left there." A few of the participants mentioned missing food, including Juan, a fourth grader from Mexico, who said he missed tacos.

Several participants miss the familiarity of their home country. Specifically, they miss the ability to communicate comfortably with everyone around them because they are not comfortable with speaking English. One participant explained that she misses Mexico because it was "her country" and she was used to living there.

Children's positivity about the future. Although students expressed sadness about leaving people and things behind, several students additionally expressed positive emotions about living in the United States. Roman, a fourth-grade boy from Venezuela, said the only thing he missed about Venezuela was his family. He thinks life is better in the United States and he does not want to go back to Venezuela. Julius said he doesn't always feel bad about being here in the United States, just sometimes. During his interview, Juan expressed while he feels sad about missing Mexico, he also feels happy because he has more opportunities here.

Children's Experiences in Terms of Acculturative Stress

The second research question is addressed in this section: How do these descriptions of homesickness align or contrast with existing theories of acculturative stress? Participants were not asked specifically about their experiences with acculturative stress; however, they were asked questions about their adjustment to living in the United States. Relocating to the United States required the children to adjust to living in a new culture. Participants were asked about any perceived differences between their home country and the United States. They were also asked to identify the adjustments that were the most difficult for them. Their responses to these

questions give insight into their experiences with acculturative stress which can then be compared to current theory. The main components of current acculturative stress theory are that acculturation, under the right circumstances, is only mildly stressful or traumatic (Berry, 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2015; Schwartz & Unger, 2017; Tartakovsky, 2007), language competency pressures increase acculturative stress (Rodriguez et al., 2015), social support reduces acculturative stress (Singh et al., 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), acculturative stress has several positive aspects, including the increase of opportunities for immigrants (Berry, 2006), and that individual differences in perceptions between one's former and settlement cultures influence acculturative stress (Berry, 2006; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Children's experiences of stress and trauma in connection with acculturation.

Current theory purports the process of acculturation is not as stressful and traumatic as previously assumed (Berry, 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2015; Schwartz & Unger, 2017; Tartakovsky, 2007). This study's findings appear to align with current theories of acculturation. Although students expressed some sadness about leaving their old lives behind—in particular the students were sad about leaving family members—the students' perceptions also indicated hope for their new life in the United States. However, the level of children's stress was difficult to ascertain. Participants in this study reported experiencing both positive and negative stress from immigration. Additionally, several children appeared to have difficulty expressing complex emotions, even though the interviews were conducted in Spanish. One boy in particular appeared hesitant to answer questions. These factors should be considered when interpreting the results of this study.

Children's experiences with language competency pressure. When asked about the most difficult adjustment after immigrating to the United States, the most common response was

related to the language barrier. Communicating in English was challenging and stressful for students and their families. In the United States, the children were required to learn English and to speak English in the school and community. However, in their homes, students most likely communicated freely with Spanish-speaking relatives. Students did not talk about this, most likely because this was expected and considered typical. Students noted that stress diminished when adults in the library and in the school spoke Spanish. Because of their limited English abilities, students were not able to communicate freely with everyone around them. This limitation in communication was mentioned by several students, including Dulce, Roman, and Alejandro. Dulce, a sixth grader from Mexico, said that English has been difficult to learn. This difficulty could possibly add to her acculturative stress.

In a recent study (Rodriguez et al., 2015), Latino adolescents reported feeling pressure due to limited language competency. Likewise, in the current study, children expressed difficulties in learning English. As a result, communicating with others in English felt uncomfortable. However, unlike the adolescents in the Rodriguez et al. (2015) study, the young participants in this study did not mention any stress when negotiating between their Latino and American identities. Part of these differences could be age-related, as exploring one's identity is more common in adolescence (Rodriguez et al., 2015).

Children's experiences with social support. Current theory of acculturative stress places a significant importance on the support systems available to immigrants (Singh et al., 2015; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). When immigrants are supported by family, friends, and their community, acculturative stress is lessened. When interviewed about coping strategies for homesickness, participants in this study mentioned their social supports as important strengths to

them. The next section, Children's Coping Strategies, discusses more about their specific responses.

It is important to note that the children's high contact with other immigrants and high opportunity for speaking Spanish likely affect their levels of acculturative stress. The children have opportunities in school and at home to speak Spanish. They are in class with several other Latino children, increasing contact with other children with whom they share cultural identities. Asendorpf and Motti-Stefanidi (2017) found greater peer acceptance with a higher immigrant population. The school's high Latino population likely provides social support for the children, reducing negative effects of acculturative stress.

Children's positive experiences with acculturation. Several of the students mentioned improvements in their lives in the United States. A few students said the United States is cleaner than their home countries, that there is less garbage on the streets. Many students said they feel safer in the United States. Julieta thinks that American people are, in general, friendlier than people in Mexico.

The children's perceptions of the differences between the United States and their native countries give insight into acculturative stress they may be experiencing. Their experiences are similar to current acculturative stress theory. Just as Berry (2006) outlined, participants are experiencing both positive and negative stress as a result of immigration. They see an increase in opportunity in the United States and are hopeful about the future in the United States. However, they also feel nervous about speaking English and adjusting to their new culture.

Individual differences in children's perceptions of living in the United States.

Several of the children's perceived differences of life in the United States were related to living conditions. Antonio, a fourth grader from Mexico, said he has had to adjust to apartment living

in the United States and not stepping loudly on the floors of his apartment because of people living below him. A couple of students mentioned they had to share a room here in the United States and did not in their home country. Julieta remarked that the houses were bigger in Mexico and Roman said he has had to adjust to living in an apartment instead of a house.

Participants in the study live in a Utah city with a population of over 100,000 people (U.S. Census, 2010), an environment very different than their home countries. Javier noted there are more mountains and “nature” here. A couple of students said there are more traffic lights and paved streets here. Some students mentioned differences in climates--it is much colder in Utah with snow in the winter.

The students have had to adjust to differences in schools. Julieta said schools are less crowded here and the students are divided into smaller class sizes. Javier also mentioned students being spread out into more classes in the United States. He also said schools in the United States have less dirt and more grass. Not all of the differences were about the physical set-up of the schools. Juan commented on the differences in curriculum. He said, “Here they teach you more things. Well, when we were doing math [in Mexico] we were doing division, but here they were still doing addition. But I realized that it wasn’t because [the students] were behind, but because they teach you more of everything, everything for more time.”

Children’s Coping Strategies

The third research question is addressed in the following section: In dealing with their own homesickness, what coping strategies do children report as most helpful? After participants were asked about their experiences with homesickness, they were asked about actions they take to feel less homesick. Answers represent various coping strategies participants have found to be most helpful in dealing with homesickness.

Connecting with family and friends left behind was the most common coping strategy mentioned by participants. According to participants, communication with loved ones still in their home country is the best way the children have found to ease their feelings of homesickness. Participants text or call those still in their home country. Although not mentioned specifically in the interviews, the interviewer is aware the children often use the app, WhatsApp [<https://www.whatsapp.com/>], to connect with family and friends in their home country. This free app allows the children to message and call anyone who also has the app, anywhere in the world.

Participants also found comfort in connecting with family and friends nearby. Students reported spending time with family here in the United States. They also reported talking to their friends and seeking reassurance from loved ones. One participant said his parents reassure him that although there are challenges in moving to a new place, things will get better for him.

The children found comfort in activities that distracted them from being homesick. These activities included going outside, playing video games, or going for a walk. Two students said they try not to be bored because that is when they feel worse. They reported that close family and friends help distract them from their feelings of homesickness.

One boy, Alejandro, shared a unique coping strategy. He said “My parents took me to a psychologist and he told me that when I am mad or sad to grab a notebook and to write down how I feel. So, whenever I am angry or sad, I do that. I write what I feel in the notebook.”

Not all participants have experienced homesickness. One of the students said he does not miss Mexico because he has more fun living here. Others had positive things to say about living in the United States that overshadowed being homesick.

Identification with Characters

The fourth research question will be addressed in this section: In what ways do the children identify with the stories' characters and situations? Participants were asked questions about five bilingual children's picture books read during the study. They were asked to identify which parts of the stories were similar to their experiences with homesickness. Interviews revealed if and how subjects identified with characters from the books and their circumstances.

Many participants identified with the children in the story *The Storyteller's Candle*. Several children said learning English was the most difficult adjustment for them. Just like the children in the story, they were fearful they would not be able to communicate with anyone because they did not speak English. They did not think others would speak Spanish. Julieta, a sixth grader from Mexico, admitted the story was similar to her experience, explaining, "I didn't want to go anywhere because I thought that they didn't speak Spanish. I didn't know very much English—I knew the basics—but it embarrassed me to speak because I thought I would say something wrong," Alejandro, a fifth grader from Mexico, also identified with characters in *The Storyteller's Candle*, although he described the connection as small. He said, "...it [the story] is only a little, little, little bit similar because my aunt took us to the library and we said, 'what if they don't speak Spanish? What if they don't speak Spanish?' We were very nervous, but then we saw that there were some people that spoke Spanish."

Other participants identified with the character in the book *Movie in My Pillow*. This book is a collection of poems describing one boy's experience immigrating to the United States from El Salvador. In the story, the boy leaves his mother behind in El Salvador. A few of the students connected with his experience, because they, too, were not able to immigrate with their entire immediate family. Antonio said it "was a nice story and had similar things to my life."

Antonio did not say more about what was similar or why he connected with the story, but Antonio had to leave behind his mother in Mexico, similar to the character in the book. Julieta, a 6th grader from Mexico, also identified with the main character. When asked how she identified with the story, she said, "...not everyone came here with him—only his dad. Not everyone came with me. Only my mom came with me."

The main character in the story *My Very Own Room* must share a room with her brothers after moving to the United States because her new home is too small to have her own room. Difficulties adjusting to apartment living and to a smaller home were pieces of acculturative stress that surfaced throughout the interviews. A couple of students identified with the character's specific experience and mentioned that they, too, want to have their own room. While it is unclear whether or not all of the children had their own room before immigrating, at least one said he would like to have his own room again, as he did in Mexico. Julius, however, did not identify with this story. He said, "I like to share my room with my brothers and sisters. I have my bed, my brother has his, and then my little sister has hers. We painted the room three different colors and we have it divided into different parts." Julius' unique response highlights the individual differences among the children. Experiencing similar situations does not always yield the same response.

Several of the children identified with the main character's experiences in the story *My Diary from Here to There*. Fabiana could relate to the main character because she also had to leave friends and family to come to the United States and was not happy about it. Javier, a fourth-grade boy from Mexico, said he writes down his feelings in a diary he has kept for over four years. This helped him to relate to the main character, who also keeps a diary in which she writes about her experiences, including immigration. Juan says he was able to identify with the

main character because he had a similar experience to hers. He said, “Her friend gave her a little rock so she could remember her, right? With me, I didn’t give them anything, but they gave me something to remember them by, and I still have it!”

A few participants said the story *Xochitl and the Flowers* helped them to feel better; however, they did not identify with any of the characters in the story. The children were not clear about how the story helped them except that they liked the flowers in the story. The flowers seemed to remind them of a memory they had that was positive. Although the story was designed to relate to Latino children’s experiences with immigration, the powerful imagery of the flowers was more dominant to the children than was the meaning of the story.

A couple of participants needed help remembering the stories. The interviewer would give a brief summary of each book if the student could not remember it. Although the interviews took place only a few days after the books were read, not all of the content stayed with the children. This sometimes affected the children’s responses. When first asked if the stories were similar to his experiences, Alejandro said, “Well, none of these books have things to do with what I had to do or with what happened to me.” However, after the interviewer gave a brief recap of the stories, he changed his mind and told which experiences were similar to his own.

The children were able to identify with characters whose situations were similar to their own. However, much of the children’s identifications with characters was concrete. The children did not offer responses that went beyond concrete connections with what was happening with the characters.

Perceptions of Stories Being Helpful

The final research question is addressed in this section: In what ways have the stories helped the children cope with their feelings of homesickness? After identifying which of the

stories were similar to their own experiences with homesickness, participants were asked if they perceived the stories as helpful. Specifically, they were asked if there was anything in the stories that helped them feel better about living in a new place or less homesick. While none of the participants spontaneously mentioned the books as being helpful to reducing their feelings of homesickness, when asked directly if the books were helpful, most of the students said they were.

In particular, students found stories most similar to their circumstances to be the most helpful. Julius said, “in *My Diary from Here to There*, I learned how to have patience. I had patience when coming from Mexico to the United States. I waited one month after applying for my visa to get it and I had patience.” Another boy said his experience was similar to the children’s experience in *The Storyteller’s Candle*. Through identification, the book helped him. He said, “it taught me that when you think people don't speak Spanish, you will end up finding people that do speak Spanish.” Julieta also found this book helpful for similar reasons. One student, Javier, has a diary. Similar to the character in the book *My Diary from Here to There*, he uses the diary to release emotions. He indicated the diary means a lot to him. Overall, the children were better able to relate to stories with characters facing situations similar to their own. These were the books they indicated as most helpful to reducing homesickness.

Additionally, some students learned lessons from the books that helped them. Dulce, a sixth grader, expressed a lot of sadness about leaving friends and family in Mexico to immigrate to the United States. She said *My Diary from Here to There*, “helped me to see that you can't have everything in life and that some people in Mexico can't come here.” When reflecting on how *My Diary from Here to There* helped him, Juan said he learned “there is no reason to be

sad.” Another student said the books helped him learn that not everything is good in life and that’s okay.

Fabiana, a third grader from Mexico, did not select a specific story she identified as helpful; however, she said hearing all the stories helped her to feel better about living in a new place. When asked how, she responded that the stories helped her to “feel less alone.” As participants like Fabiana were able to relate to situations in the stories, they felt less isolated in their experiences.

Several participants expressed a fear of forgetting their home country and were comforted by reading the books. The stories they read in this study helped them to remember their home countries, keep their memories alive, and feel less homesick.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study examined Latino immigrant children's experiences with homesickness and their perceptions of five bilingual children's books containing stories about immigrant children. Participants' experiences with homesickness were compared with current acculturative stress theory. Previous research on homesickness and acculturative stress among immigrants has not included school-aged children (Tartakovsky, 2007). For this study, a qualitative interview approach was considered the most appropriate method to gather data. This study utilized semi-structured interviews with immigrant children in their native language, Spanish. Interview transcripts were analyzed using the hermeneutic method. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do Latino immigrant children describe their own experiences of homesickness?
2. How do these descriptions align or contrast with existing theories of acculturative stress?
3. In dealing with their own homesickness, what coping strategies do children report as most helpful?
4. In what ways do the children identify with the stories' characters and situations?
5. In what ways have the stories helped the children cope with their feelings of homesickness?

Implications for Practitioners

The children's interview responses imply the need for practitioners working with immigrant children to improve their practices. Some of these improvements are discussed in the following sections.

Children need help expressing their feelings. Participants expressed their feelings about immigration and homesickness using broad terms. Words like “weird,” “bad,” and “different” were used by the children to describe homesickness. The meanings of these descriptions were sometimes unclear because the children were not able to identify their feelings in specific terms. Children will benefit from working with practitioners who support children in identifying their specific worries, anxieties, and feelings of sadness.

Additionally, practitioners can help children identify the roots of their feelings. Once children understand what is causing their sadness, anxiety, etc., they will better understand how to manage their feelings and others will better understand their situations.

Children need help understanding their feelings. Emotions surrounding immigration can be complicated. Immigrants often come to the United States for better education, employment, health care, and more (Gupta, 2013). They are hopeful. However, leaving one’s home country and adjusting to a new culture can be difficult. Potential immigration challenges include difficulties related to family life, socioeconomic status, academics, emotions, trauma, behavior, and social situations (Gomm, 2012).

Participants’ experiences with homesickness reflected complicated emotions. Children expressed feelings of sadness, hope, longings for home, and satisfaction with their new lives.

Immigrant children will benefit from understanding their complicated emotions. Practitioners working with immigrant children can help children realize that their emotions might not fit together nicely and uniformly. Additionally, immigrant children may have feelings that occur within a range of intensity. It may take time to understand the complexity of leaving their home country, leaving family and friends, and adjusting to any challenges associated with acculturation.

Children need reassurance. By acknowledging each child's individual perceptions of differences between life in their home country and the United States, practitioners can help children to feel reassurance. Children can understand that even though things may be different in their new environment, there is much that is similar. Practitioners can also reassure children that communicating in English will improve over time. Children need to have patience with themselves and others as they acculturate to their new environment.

Children will best respond to strategies that fit their individual needs. Practitioners working with immigrant children, including school psychologists, need to be aware of each child's individual circumstances. School psychologists meeting with immigrant children in group counseling or in classroom settings should acknowledge each student's unique array of challenges. Additionally, recognizing the various coping strategies used to navigate those challenges will help school psychologists tailor counselling and other support.

Consideration of each child's unique circumstances is also important when selecting books for bibliotherapy. Participants in this study best responded to stories about characters with which they could identify. School psychologists, parents, teachers, and others involved in developmental bibliotherapy should consider the individual's past experiences and specific nature of their homesickness. Do they miss family? Friends? Cultural comforts? What are their specific concerns? What were the circumstances surrounding their immigration? By selecting stories with similar experiences to each child, practitioners can help children to engage in the bibliotherapeutic experience. Children can identify with characters and feel a catharsis as they realize they are not alone in their challenges.

In addition to selecting books that fit an individual's needs, practitioners and educators need to be cautious of the books selected to help students. For example, the book, *Xochitl and the*

Flowers was selected for this study because it tells a story about an immigrant child and her family's experience with immigration and dealing with homesickness. However, the children did not make connections to the family's experiences. Instead, when asked about the story, they recalled the imagery of the flowers and nothing more. The purpose of the book was overshadowed by the imagery of the flowers.

Implications for Bibliotherapy

Although results from this study have implications for bibliotherapy, it is important to note the methodology in this particular study did not include all elements that are typically incorporated into the process of bibliotherapy with children. Although some state that the story itself is sufficient for bibliotherapy (Sullivan & Strang, 2002) others state that when working with children, bibliotherapy should draw children into identifying with the story and the story's character, gaining insight into the character's challenge, experiencing the character's emotions—catharsis, and generalizing the insights into their life experiences (Berns, 2004; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1993). In this study, after reading the five books with the children, the group leader did not include post-reading activities or discussions. As recommended by Heath et al. (2017), those who read stories with children should encourage children to participate in purposeful activities and conversations about the story. Extending beyond the story, helps children apply the story's teaching into their daily life. Therefore, implications for bibliotherapy from this study are limited.

While the majority of the children in the study agreed the stories were helpful, none of the participants spontaneously listed books as a coping strategy to address their feelings of homesickness. The children's failure to independently identify the stories' examples as potential coping strategies to address homesickness supports Jack and Ronan's (2008) research that

bibliotherapy should not be used in isolation, in and of itself, but should be considered a supportive adjunct to therapy. Essentially, solely reading books and *not* including associated therapeutic activities and discussion, may not be powerful enough on its own to effectively address immigrant children's challenges in coping with their homesickness.

Additionally, the children's concrete identifications with characters has implications for bibliotherapy. If children primarily identify with the concrete experiences of characters, they will need to sort through many books to find specific concrete experiences that are similar to their own experience. Additionally, they will need adult support in order to explicitly guide them to make emotional, mental, or other non-concrete connections with characters.

Limitations

This study had several limitations including selection bias. Participants in the study were selected out of a convenience sample. The students attended an elementary school in a location proximal to the researchers, chosen because of a relationship between the researchers and the principal. The children were recruited based on their circumstances (all children were recent Latino immigrants).

Geographic constraints pose another limitation to the study. The selection of participants was from a school within a suburban Utah city, a small geographic sample for the United States. However, although the geographic location was small, participants' situations varied.

Additionally, the school's dual immersion program is a limitation. Students in the study were instructed in Spanish for 50% of their daily academics. They had ample opportunity to communicate in Spanish throughout the school day and at home. This is not the situation for all Latino immigrant children in the United States. The children's unique circumstances may have

had an effect on their experiences with homesickness, acculturative stress, and their interview responses.

An additional limitation is book selection. Books were selected according to content. They all contained stories about Latino children experiencing homesickness; however, they are not comprehensive of all experiences of immigrant children. Children indicated that they found the stories that were closest to their situations to be the most helpful. Because every child's immigration experience is unique, there are natural limitations in selecting stories for this type of study. Not all participants are going to identify with the stories selected. Additionally, out of the five books selected, only two had male children as main characters. Because this study was mostly comprised of male participants (eight were male, four were female), this may have affected how the participants were able to identify with characters from the books.

Having the same person (the bilingual paraprofessional) read the books with the children and interview them creates limitations for the data collected. The bilingual paraprofessional was selected to perform both the readings and the interviews because of her established relationship with the children. The researchers thought the established relationship would help the children feel comfortable and talk about their feelings and emotions. However, this poses some limitations to the data collected.

Conducting the study in a school created challenge. Participants read books during group time with the paraprofessional. Sometimes group time was cut short or even cancelled because of testing, additional school activities, or schedule changes. Occasionally participants were absent and subsequently missed portions of the readings, perhaps contributing to some of the students not recalling the books in the interviews. Additionally, some of the interviews were cut short because the children needed to return to class.

While the brevity of some interviews was due to limited time, other interviews were short because some students were reluctant to answer questions or gave brief and perhaps incomplete responses. There are several possible reasons for their limited participation or brevity. The students could have been nervous about being recorded. They could have been worried about answering questions about their home country. The brief and perhaps incomplete interviews with some participants is another limitation to the study.

The lack of a Spanish equivalent for the term *homesickness* was a major limitation to the study. Although the interviewer translated the idea of homesickness into Spanish words that the children could understand, they may not have fully grasped the meaning of the word.

Implications for Future Research

Research exists on homesickness and acculturative stress among immigrant adults (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Singh et al., 2015) and adolescents (Tartakovsky, 2007). However, there is a lack of research among immigrant children. How immigrant children experience homesickness and acculturative stress is therefore unclear. This study is an exploratory study into understanding immigrant children's perceptions of homesickness and acculturative stress. However, the current study is only a glimpse into understanding the immigrant child's experience. It is limited in both geography and uniqueness of participants. Additional research is needed to gather information from immigrant children living in various parts of the United States who immigrated under various circumstances.

There are several potential challenges for Latino immigrant children. There are also many opportunities. Further research is needed to examine how various challenges and opportunities affect Latino immigrant children. The current study focused on Latino immigrant children's perceptions of homesickness and acculturative stress. Additional research could focus on other

areas like family relations, peer acceptance, immigration status, or educational opportunities. While not comprehensive, this list includes several of the challenges and opportunities of immigrants. Further research into the experiences of Latino immigrant children will help practitioners and others to better understand immigrant children's experiences.

This study gathered Latino immigrant children's perspectives on selected picture books about Latino immigrants and homesickness. Participants' perspectives were considered as indicative of whether or not bibliotherapy would be helpful in the acculturation process. Additional research about bibliotherapy for Latino immigrant children will help children adjust to living in the United States. Participants in this study connected to characters in stories with whom they could identify. The stories in this study were centered around immigrants' experiences with homesickness. Further studies are needed to understand the benefit of bibliotherapy concerning other experiences. Do children identify with other stories about different immigrant challenges?

Conclusions

This qualitative research study examined the experiences of 12 Latino immigrant children regarding homesickness. Their experiences were compared to current theories of acculturative stress. Additionally, researchers read selected picture books about Latino immigrant children feeling homesick. Participants were asked whether the books were perceived as helpful in managing their own homesickness. Common to each participant's experiences, the process of immigration brought many challenges, including homesickness, but also offered hope. Participants perceived the stories most closely aligned with their own situations to be the most helpful.

In particular this study's findings inform recommendations for practitioners who work with immigrant children. Children need help identifying, understanding, and expressing their feelings, particularly complex emotions. Practitioners should help children in taking time to understand and adjust to their new home. Children need reassurance, particularly in knowing that their English will improve over time. Children need strategies that fit their individual needs. Practitioners need to be aware of each child's individual circumstances and select books that fit the child's unique needs, what they miss most and their fears about adjusting to their new home. Also, beyond merely reading the book, practitioners should carefully consider how to engage children in the full bibliotherapeutic experience. By identifying with the book's characters, children are reassured that they are not alone in their struggles.

Research about immigrant children is limited. This study's findings inform the research of Latino immigrant children's experiences and perspectives on homesickness. Immigration and acculturation are complex processes. Further research of Latino immigrant children's experiences will increase understanding of these processes and help practitioners working with immigrant children enhance the quality of support services.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval**Memorandum**

To: Kelly Thorpe
Department: CP&SE
College: EDUC
From: Sandee Aina, MPA, IRB Administrator
Bob Ridge, PhD, IRB Chair
Date: March 21, 2018
IRB#: X18066

Title: *“Latino Immigrant Children’s Perspectives on Award-Winning Latino Children’s Books as Bibliotherapy for Homesickness”*

Brigham Young University’s IRB has approved the research study referenced in the subject heading as expedited level, categories 6-7. The approval period is from **March 21, 2018 to March 20, 2019**. Please reference your assigned IRB identification number in any correspondence with the IRB. Continued approval is conditional upon your compliance with the following requirements:

1. CONTINGENCY: XXXX School District approval letter
2. A copy of the informed consent statement is attached. No other consent statement should be used. Each research subject must be provided with a copy or a way to access the consent statement.
3. Any modifications to the approved protocol must be submitted, reviewed, and approved by the IRB before modifications are incorporated in the study.
4. All recruiting tools must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to use.
5. In addition, serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately, with a written report by the PI within 24 hours of the PI's becoming aware of the event. Serious adverse events are (1) death of a research participant; or (2) serious injury to a research participant.
6. All other non-serious unanticipated problems should be reported to the IRB within 2 weeks of the first awareness of the problem by the PI. Prompt reporting is important, as unanticipated problems often require some modification of study procedures, protocols, and/or informed consent processes. Such modifications require the review and approval of the IRB.
7. A few months before the expiration date, you will receive a continuing review form. There will be two reminders. Please complete the form in a timely manner to ensure that there is no lapse in the study approval.

IRB Secretary
A 285 ASB
Brigham Young University
(801)422-3606

APPENDIX B

Parental Permission Forms (English and Spanish)

NOTE: *Names were changed to protect confidentiality*

.....
Parental Permission for a Minor

Introduction

My name is Kelly Thorpe. I am a graduate student from Brigham Young University working with Melissa Heath, PhD, NCSP. I am conducting a research study about how reading certain picture books can help children deal with homesickness after moving to a new country. I am inviting your child to take part in the research because (he/she) is from Latin America and is new to living in the United States.

Procedures

If you agree to let your child participate in this research study, this is what will happen:

- Your child will have 5 children's picture books read to them in Spanish in their Newcomers group with Mrs. XXXXX. All 5 books relate to homesickness.
- The books will be read by Mrs. XXXXX during the regular time your child is taken out of class for his/her group. Your child will not miss additional classroom time for the readings.
- Your child will read 5 books over the course of about 3-5 weeks, each book taking no more than 30 minutes to read.
- After reading the books, your child will be interviewed about his/her thoughts about the books. Your child will be asked questions like, "Which books did you like? Why? Which books did you not like? Why?"
- The interviews will be one-on-one interviews with Mrs. XXXXX, will be in Spanish, and will be no more than 20 minutes long.

Risks

Some of the books read may make the kids feel sad as they think about their own experiences with homesickness. If Mrs. XXXX notices that your child is upset after reading the books, she will notify the child's teacher who will notify you that day. Your child's teacher will know about the study. If your child's teacher notices that your child is upset in class after the reading, he or she will notify you about their behavior that day. If your child has concerns come up during the study that you would like addressed, you can contact XXXXX XXXX, M.S., CMHC. He is a social worker at the school who can help with any concerns. Mr. XXXX will know which students are in the study. Teachers who have concerns about students in their classrooms can also contact Mr. XXXX if they would like assistance with how to address concerns in the classroom.

When Mrs. XXXXX is reading the books with the children, they will be talking about the experiences of the characters in the book. If the students begin to talk about their own personal experiences with immigration, Mrs. XXXXX will ask them to wait until later to talk about personal experiences. The students can talk about these experiences in their individual interviews if they choose.

There is a risk of loss of privacy, which the researcher will reduce by not using any real names in the written report. The researcher will also keep all data in a locked office in a secure location. Only the researcher will have access to the data. At the end of the study, data will be deleted after three years.

If your child indicates in any way that he/she does not want to participate by crying or other behavior, Mrs. XXXXX will stop immediately.

Confidentiality

Your child's name will not be used in any part of this research. The information gathered from his/her interview will not be identified as belonging to him/her.

Paper data and audio files from the interviews will be stored in a locked office in a secure location until it is transferred to an electronic file. After it is transferred, it will be destroyed. Electronic data will be stored on a password protected Google Drive only accessible to the researchers involved with this study. The electronic data will be stored until three years after the completion of the study. It will then be deleted.

Benefits

Participants will receive no direct benefits for participating in this study.

Compensation

Participants will receive a copy of all 5 award-winning picture books to keep. The books will either be written in Spanish or bilingual (Spanish and English).

Questions about the Research

Please direct any further questions about the study to either XXXXX XXXXXX at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or XXXXX XXXXX at XXXXXXXXX. You may also contact Melissa Allen Heath at (801) 422-1235 or melissa_allen@byu.edu or Kelly Thorpe at 801-735-1696 or kellthorpe@gmail.com.

Questions about your child's rights as a study participant or to submit comment or complaints about the study should be directed to the IRB Administrator, Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB, Provo, UT 84602. Call (801) 422-1461 or send emails to irb@byu.edu.

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free to decline to have your child participate in this research study. You may withdraw your child's participation at any point without affecting your child's grade or standing in school.

Child's Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Autorización del padre

Introducción

Me llamo Kelly Thorpe y soy un estudiante de posgrado trabajando con Melissa Heath, PhD, NCSP de Brigham Young University. Estoy llevando a cabo un estudio de cómo ciertos libros de foto pueden ayudar a los niños enfrentarse con la nostalgia de casa después de mudarse a un nuevo país. Yo invito a su hijo participar en el estudio porque es Latino/a y recién vino a los Estados Unidos.

Procedimientos

Si usted autoriza la participación de su hijo en el estudio seguirá los pasos a continuación:

- A su hijo se le leerá cinco libros de foto para niños en Español en su grupo Newcomer con la Señora XXXXXX. Todos los libros se tratan de la nostalgia de casa.
- Los libros serán leídos por la Señora XXXXX durante sus grupos normales y su hijo no perderá tiempo adicional de instrucción en la clase.
- Su hijo leerá cinco libros en aproximadamente cinco semanas. No requiere más que 30 minutos para leer cada libro.
- Después de leer los libros su hijo será entrevistado para recordar sus pensamientos sobre los libros. La entrevista incluye preguntas como ¿Cuáles libros te gustaron? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles libros no te gustaron? ¿Por qué?
- La Señora XXXXX va a entrevistar a su hijo en Español, uno a uno, por no más que 20 minutos.

Riesgos

Es posible que su hijo sienta tristeza cuando piensa en las experiencias de las personas en los libros. La Señora XXXXX notificará al maestro de su hijo, quien le notificará a usted, si ella cree que su hijo está preocupado después de leer los libros. El maestro de su hijo estará al tanto del estudio y le notificará a usted el mismo día si cree que su hijo esté preocupado. Si es que su hijo tenga preocupaciones durante el estudio usted puede ponerse en contacto con XXXX XXXX, M.S., CMHC, un trabajador social en la escuela quien les atenderá. El Señor XXXX estará al tanto de los estudiantes que están participando en el estudio. Los maestros que tienen preocupaciones sobre estudiantes en sus clases también pueden contactarle al Señor XXXX para soluciones.

Cuando la Señora XXXXX está leyendo los libros con los estudiantes, hablarán de las experiencias de las personas en los libros. Si los estudiantes empiezan a hablar sobre sus propias experiencias personales en cuanto a la inmigración, la Señora XXXXX pedirá que esperen a hablar sobre sus propias experiencias hasta más tarde. Si desean, los estudiantes pueden hablar sobre estas experiencias en sus entrevistas individuales.

Hay un riesgo de la pérdida de privacidad que el investigador minimizará por mantener los registros escritos sin nombres reales u otra información identificativa.

Si es que su hijo indica que no quiere participar por llorar u otro comportamiento, la Señora XXXXX cesará el estudio inmediatamente.

Confidencialidad

No se usará el nombre de su hijo en ninguna parte de este estudio. La información colectada por entrevista no se identificará como perteneciendo a su hijo.

Registros escritos y archivos de audio se archivarán en una oficina cerrada con llave en un lugar seguro hasta que se transfieran a un archivo electrónico. Después de que se transfiera, será destruido. Registros electrónicos serán archivados en Google Drive, protegidos por contraseña y accesible solamente por los investigadores que están incluidos en el estudio. Los registros electrónicos se archivarán por tres años después de la terminación del estudio, entonces se destruirán.

Beneficios

Los estudiantes que participan en el estudio no recibirán ningunos beneficios directos por participar en el estudio.

Compensacion

Los estudiantes que participan en el estudio recibirán una copia de todos los cinco libros galardonados para tener. Los libros se escribirán en Español o serán libros bilingües (en Inglés y Español).

Preguntas sobre el estudio

Favor de hacer mas preguntas sobre el estudio a XXXX XXXXX (XXX-XXXX-XXXX) or XXXXX XXXXXX (XXXXXXXXXXXX). También puede ponerse en contacto con Melissa Allen Heath por teléfono (801-422-1235) o correo electrónico (melissa_allen@byu.edu) o Kelly Thorpe por teléfono (801-735-1696) o correo electrónico (kellthorpe@gmail.com).

Preguntas sobre los derechos de su hijo como participante en el estudio tanto como comentarios o quejas sobre el estudio se deben dirigir al administrador del IRB, A-285 ASB, Provo, UT 84602. Puede hacer contacto por teléfono (801-422-1461) o correo electrónico (irb@byu.edu).

Se le ha dado a usted una copia de esta forma de consentimiento para tener.

Participación

La participación en el estudio es voluntario. Estás libre de negarse la participación de su hijo en el estudio. Puede retirar la participación de su hijo en cualquier paso del estudio sin afectar los grados o el buen estado de su hijo en cuanto a la escuela.

Nombre del hijo: _____

Nombre del padre: _____ Firma: _____ Fecha: _____

APPENDIX C

Child Assent Forms (English and Spanish)**Child Assent (7–14 years old)****What is this research about?**

My name is Kelly Thorpe and I am a student at Brigham Young University (BYU). I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. A research study is a special way to find the answers to questions. We are trying to learn more about how reading books can help children. You are being asked to join the study because you are new to living in the United States and because you are Latino/Latina.

If you decide you want to be in this study, this is what will happen.

1. Mrs. XXXXX will read 5 picture books in Spanish to you in your Newcomers group. These books will be about Latino children and some of the hard things they go through when they move to the United States.
2. After you have read the books, Mrs. XXXXX will ask you some questions about what you thought about the books.

Can anything bad happen to me?

Some of the books may make you feel sad. You also may not want to answer some of Mrs. XXXXX's questions.

Can anything good happen to me?

We don't know if being in this study will help you. But we hope to learn something that will help other people some day.

Do I have other choices?

You can choose not to be in this study.

Will anyone know I am in the study?

We won't tell anyone you took part in this study. When we are done with the study, we will write a report about what we learned. We won't use your name in the report.

What happens if I get hurt?

Your parents have been given information on what to do if you get hurt during this study. You can also talk with Mrs. XXXXX or your teacher if you feel upset or sad at any time during the study.

What if I do not want to do this?

You don't have to be in this study. It's up to you. If you say yes now, but change your mind later, that's okay too. All you have to do is tell us.

You will receive a copy of all 5 books to keep if you choose to be in this research study. Before you say yes to be in this study, be sure to ask Mrs. XXXXX to tell you more about anything that you don't understand.

If you want to be in this study, please sign and print your name.

Name (Printed): _____ Signature _____ Date: _____

Asentimiento del hijo (7-14 años de edad)

De qué trata este estudio?

Me llamo Kelly Thorpe y soy un estudiante de Brigham Young University (BYU). Quiero decirte acerca de un estudio que estoy haciendo. Un estudio es una manera especial de contestar preguntas. Estamos tratando de aprender más en cuanto a cómo los libros pueden ayudar a los niños. Yo te invito a participar en el estudio porque eres Latino/a y recién viniste a los Estados Unidos.

Si quieres estar en el estudio vamos a hacer algunas cosas:

1. La Señora XXXXX te va a leer cinco libros en Español en tu grupo Newcomer. Estos son libros sobre niños Latinos y algunas cosas difíciles que les pasaron cuando vinieron a los Estados Unidos.
2. Después de leer los libros la Señora XXXXX te va a hacer algunas preguntas sobre lo que piensas de los libros.

¿Me puede pasar algo mal?

Es posible que te sientas triste cuando lees algunos de los libros. También es posible que no quieras contestar algunas de las preguntas de la Señora XXXXX.

¿Me puede pasar algo bueno?

No sabemos si estar en el estudio te va a ayudar a ti pero esperamos aprender algo que va a ayudar a otras personas en el futuro.

¿Voy a tener otras opciones?

No tienes que estar en el estudio si no quieres.

¿Quien va a saber que estoy en el estudio?

No le vamos a decir a nadie que estás en el estudio. Cuando terminamos el estudio vamos a escribir un reporte sobre lo que aprendimos pero no vamos a usar tu nombre en el reporte.

¿Que va a pasar si me lastimo?

Les dijimos a tus padres qué hacer si te lastimes durante el estudio. Tú puedes hablar con la Señora XXXXX o con tu maestra también si te sientes triste o mal en cualquier momento durante el estudio.

¿Y si no quiero hacer esto?

Te vamos a regalar una copia de todos los cinco libros si quiere estar en el estudio. Antes de escoger que quieres estar en el estudio hay que hablar con la Señora XXXXX de las cosas que no entiendes.

Si quieres estar en el estudio escribe y firma tu nombre abajo.

Nombre (escrito): _____

Firma: _____

Fecha: _____

APPENDIX D

Guiding Interview Questions

What does it mean when a person feels homesick? [Checking for knowledge and perception of homesickness; confirm that they understand the emotion before proceeding]

Now you are living in the United States. What things are most different here as compared to your family's previous home in another country?

If you have felt homesick for your previous home in [name country], think of that feeling. What you have missed the most?

In coming to live here, what changes have been most difficult for you?

When you feel homesick, what do you do to feel better?

How have others helped you feel less homesick?

[Refer to the five books on the table, all lined up with covers showing.]

What about these stories is similar to your feelings of homesickness?

[Present each story one at a time. Have the child select the stories in the order they prefer and ask the following two questions.]

What—if anything—in this story helped you feel less homesick?

What—if anything—in this story helped you feel better about living in a new place?

APPENDIX E

Description of 12 Participating Children

Note: Pseudonyms are used to protect children's confidentiality.

Alejandro

Alejandro is a 5th grade boy from Mexico. In Mexico, he lived next door to his aunt and uncle and several cousins with whom he frequently played. In addition to his aunt, uncle, and cousins, Alejandro left behind his grandmother and great-grandmother in Mexico when he moved to the United States. He misses his family in Mexico and wishes he could see them again. Alejandro immigrated with his mother, father, older brother, and younger sister. Per report of Alejandro and through observations of XXXX, Alejandro is not close with his sister, but enjoys spending time with his older brother, playing video games together. Alejandro says his father is often occupied on his phone, but his mother is helpful at making him laugh and feel better when he is feeling sad. Alejandro and his sister Fabiana have been in the United States the longest of any of the participants and are both very skilled in English. He was the only 5th grader in the study, and the oldest in his reading group. He often tried to be the "cool kid" in the group, perhaps feeling pressure as the oldest.

Antonio

Antonio is a 4th grade boy from Mexico who immigrated with his father and grandmother. His father works long hours and is not able to spend much time with him; his grandmother primarily takes care of him. Antonio left behind his mother, sister, and grandparents in Mexico, but remains in contact with them over the phone. He was often very quiet in his reading group, not commenting without being asked, and even requiring some prompting after being addressed individually. This behavior continued during the individual interview, with frequent pauses and XXXX having to prompt him to speak. Because of this, it is unclear how much he understood what was being asked.

Daniela

Daniela is a 3rd grade girl who immigrated from Mexico with her immediate family. She left behind aunts and cousins in Mexico and misses them a lot. She was not always vocal during the group time. If she was uncertain how to respond to a question during the readings and group time, she would smile and wait, hoping that the teacher would help her with the answer. She was not very engaged during the interview and her answers and attitude made it seem that immigrating to the United States was not a big deal to her. Most of her responses were brief and sometimes confusing because they were contradictory.

Dulce

Dulce is a 6th grade female from Mexico. She immigrated with her dad and brothers, leaving behind a lot of family, including her mom. She expressed a lot of sadness over leaving friends in Mexico when she had to move here. She was much more somber in the interview than she typically is in the group setting. Mostly a happy, jovial girl, she was a lot more serious and quiet during the interview. She expressed that the interview seemed intense to her and was nervous at first. After a few minutes, she seemed to be more comfortable. XXXX was surprised about

Dulce's memories of the stories in the books and with how much she seemed to connect with the characters. During group reading, Dulce was often the volunteer to summarize the book after it was completed.

Emmanuel

Emmanuel is a 3rd grade male from Mexico who left his father behind when he immigrated. He admits that learning English, both speaking and writing, has been very difficult for him. He missed a few of the days during the readings, so he missed some parts of the stories. During the interview, Emmanuel seemed to have a difficult time understanding the concept of "homesickness." He was also fidgety in his chair, but seemed interested enough in the questions and remained engaged. Similar to Daniella, he would sometimes smile and wait for help when he didn't know how to respond.

Juan

Juan is a 4th grade boy from Mexico. His sister is Dulce, also a participant in the study. They immigrated to Utah and left behind their mother along with other family. He says that he keeps in contact with them on the phone. XXXX observed a close relationship between Juan and Dulce. Juan was generally quiet in his reading group, preferring not to read aloud or answer questions. When asked a question he did not know, he would look at XXXX sadly. He loves drawing and even started selling some of his work to his friends. Before the interview, he was hesitant to come into the room, but was fine once the interview began. He was excited to connect with the character in *My Diary From Here to There*. His friends in Mexico gave him something to remember them by and he connected to the girl in the story who had the same experience.

Fabiana

Fabiana is a 3rd grade girl from Mexico. Her brother, Alejandro, is also in the study. XXXX observed that they do not have a close relationship. Fabiana immigrated from Mexico, leaving behind extended family including aunts, uncles, and cousins. Her English skills were better than most of the other children because she and her brother have been in the United States the longest. She was generally happy in the group reading sessions, but was somber during the interview. XXXX was concerned that she might cry while discussing her experiences about coming to the United States, but she did not.

José

José is a 6th grade boy from Peru who was the most recent immigrant in the study. He immigrated with his mom and siblings, leaving his dad, grandparents, aunts and uncles in Peru. Learning English has been difficult for him. José was quiet during the reading groups, not speaking unless prompted. Sometimes the other children in the group would laugh at him when he did not understand what was going on. He was also quiet during the interview and kept his head down on the table, not making eye contact with XXXX.

Javier

Javier is a 4th grade boy from Mexico. He lives with his aunt and uncle here in Utah while his mom, sisters, and grandma still live in Mexico. During the reading group time, he liked to be the center of attention and would try to get the other students to laugh. He was not always serious about the readings, however, he was serious in the interview. When asked about what he missed

the most, he was stiff and serious and said that he did not want to talk about it. He seemed sad and was more closed off than the other participants.

Roman

Roman is a 4th grade boy from Venezuela. He lives here with his immediate family, but misses his family still in Venezuela, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. He was an active participant during the reading group. He was very focused on correcting others' mistakes, excited about having the chance to read and would often volunteer to summarize the story. Typically a pretty happy kid, he was unusually quiet and somber in the interview. He stood the whole time, rocking back and forth, and looked down at the ground when he was answering questions about Venezuela.

Julius

Julius is a 6th grade boy from Mexico. He lives with his mom, dad, brother and sister in Utah, but left his grandma in Mexico. He is very close to his grandma as he used to live with her. He was not excited about reading the books during the group readings and would sometimes put his head down during the stories. In general, he was more reluctant to work than the other students. During the interview, he seemed a little nervous. It was unclear whether or not he comprehended all of the interview questions.

Julieta

Julieta is a 6th grade girl from Mexico. She is an only child living with her mom; her dad and grandparents are still in Mexico. She also has extended family living nearby and in Arizona, California, and Oregon. She has a strong will and would often bring up difficulties with friends during the reading group time. While reading the first book, *My Diary from Here to There*, she started to cry a little and was more somber. She was nervous at the beginning of the interview, but eventually relaxed more.