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Promoting Biliteracy and Biculturalism in Bilingual-Maintenance Secondary Classes: A Key Measure in the Creation of a Gateway to Post-Secondary Education for First and 1.5 Generation Latino Students in Northwest Arkansas Public Schools

Jeanette A. Arnhart
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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Promoting Biliteracy and Biculturalism in Bilingual-Maintenance Secondary Classes: A Key Measure in the Creation of a Gateway to Post-Secondary Education for First and 1.5 Generation Latino Students in Northwest Arkansas Public Schools

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies

by

Jeanette Arnhart
University of Central Arkansas
Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, 1981
New Mexico State University
Master of Arts in Spanish Language and Literature, 1988

December 2017
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Juan José Bustamante, PhD
Dissertation Director

Eliás Domínguez, PhD
Luis Fernando Restrepo, PhD
Committee Member
Committee Member
ABSTRACT

In the context of the Northwest Arkansas (NWA) regional setting, this study examines the effects of the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) model from multiple vantage points. Educational capital and biculturation approaches are employed to help theoretically frame post-secondary educational success and ethnic identity, respectively.

Study methods are briefly described and paired with a description of the NWA region as an ideal southern Latino emerging community in which to conduct research on educational outcomes. The manuscript then turns to an ethnographic examination of how and the extent to which curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular aspects of a Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers program in a secondary school setting shape Latino students’ ethnic identity. The ethnographic examination further assesses the extent to which such an SHNS program enables Latino students to envision post-secondary educational success.

The major findings garnered from a triangulation data approach concentrates on answers from a purposive sample of 35 in-depth interviews with Latino young adults who attended either Rogers Public Schools or Springdale Public Schools. At the time of their participation in this study, respondents had taken a combination of Spanish language courses: Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers I, II, III, AP Spanish Language, and AP Spanish Literature, at the high school level and they were either currently enrolled in or had graduated from a post-secondary institution. Information collected from the interviews reveals: (1) the multi-faceted, multi-dimensional aspects of how and to what extent study participants gained educational capital and (2) the effects that a biculturation model gained through Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) classes had on the participants’ identity formation. In regard to these two concerns SHNS classes proved to be seminal classes for involvement in curricular, co-curricular
and extra-curricular activities that enlightened respondents to post-secondary readiness, positive self-schema, self-discovery, and linguistic proficiency and retention.
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To all of you, I thank God for blessing me with your presence educating me and encouraging me!
DEDICATION

Because this dissertation is a testimony of fearless Latino students succeeding against all odds, this dedication is also a testimony of my education against all odds.

Mere words cannot express my respect and gratitude to the 35 Latino students and young professionals that gave their time and thoughtfulness to the interviews for this study. I am assured that the future of the world is better because you will be its leaders. Your kindness, cultural competency, generosity of time and resources, coupled with your heart for your community and language, will assure unity and educational possibility for all children. I hope this gives voice to you and to your experiences. I love you and give you my (Arn)heart!

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Tom eres mi alma…mi corazón! Te agradezo sin fin por ser mi amigo, mi compañero y mi amor. Siempre me has apoyado mis locuras y mi anhelo de hacer una diferencia positiva en este mundo. Eres mi vida… mi mundo… Sin ti no habrá sabor en la vida…no habrá color…no habrá felicidad…¡Bendecido tal día hace casi cuarenta años que te conocí en tal sacapuntas! ¡¡¡Qué vida!!! ¡Mil y Millón de gracias!
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

History of the Area and Relevant Terms

According to the US Census, between 2000 and 2010, the U.S. Latino population growth accounted for 55 percent of the country’s total population (Ennis et al.). This number is significant because Latinos comprised more than half of the population who were born or immigrated to the U.S. during this time period, a growth not only relevant to the traditional immigration gateways such as the West, Southwest, and larger Midwest metropolitan areas. The Latino population expanded in the Mid and Deep South as Latinos favored states that historically did not account for a larger representation (Capps et al.).

Arkansas, in particular, became the hub of Latino newcomers to the Mid-South, with the Northwest Arkansas’ cities of Springdale and Rogers accounting for the majority of that population (Schwab). Prior to the 1990s, Northwest Arkansas (NWA) was predominantly white and monolingual. With the swift demographic shift between 1990 and 2000 that permeated nearly every aspect of life, educational, social, economic, and educational institutions scrambled to adapt and to incorporate its new population (Schwab). From the workforce to culinary and educational realms, the cultural contribution of Latinos and immigrants to the diversification of the American South is remarkable. The role of children of immigrants on this demographic transformation is not the exception. These children’s unique cultural, social, and linguistic necessities became a driving force for change in educational settings across Northwest Arkansas, particularly with regards to curriculum and instructional policy.

Given this demographic transformation, it is critical to examine the ways in which Latino population growth has impacted the educational services available to emerging southern
immigrant communities, and more importantly, what actions educators have taken to adapt to the new demographic context of the region in order to serve these newcomers.

The NWA area—Benton, Washington, and Madison counties—as one of the most Latino concentrated areas in the state of Arkansas, offers a window of opportunity through which to examine the programs local school districts adopted to serve a continuously expanding number of Latino children who speak a language other than English across educational settings. This is particularly important for the cities of Rogers and Springdale since both of them consist of almost one-third of the total Latino population in the state (U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000 and 2010). Consequently, the linguistic impact of this demographic shift is even more substantial in the public school districts of NWA. Springdale and Rogers Public School Districts’ Demographic Data from their websites (2016) indicate that there is a large share of school-aged Latinos attending, at 41 percent and 42 percent respectively. Of this K-12 school population, according to the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation’s study “A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas Executive Summary,” 87 percent speak Spanish at home, and of those, 40 percent are Limited English Proficient (LEP) in grades 6-12. In spite of this, monolingual and monocultural administrators and educators became the link to educational success, charged with quality educational inclusion of children whose language and culture was something other than English. Educators had to accommodate themselves to be culturally and linguistically competent in order to provide a safe and secure space for Latino students to succeed academically and to be able to acquire the socio-cultural and English literacy skills that would allow for full participation in their new homes and schools.

In the context of this regional setting, this study examines the link between the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) curriculum model on proficiency fluency and retention
outcomes from multiple vantage points. First, educational capital perspective and biculturation model on Latino educational outcomes is discussed and how it helps foster the understanding of the way SHNS works is examined. A brief description follows to explain the methods of research along with an account of why NWA, as a southern region with an emerging Latino community, is an ideal place to conduct research on educational outcomes pertaining to native and heritage Spanish speakers. The dissertation then closely examines how local schools have adapted to address the linguistic needs of its newcomers, delving closely into the SHNS model to improve children’s Spanish proficiency and the way Spanish educators implemented the approach in Latino concentrated school districts of NWA. The manuscript shifts into an ethnographic examination of how curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular aspects of the SHNS program in secondary school settings shape Latino students’ Spanish literacy outcomes as well as the extent to which SHNS enables these students to envision positive, post-secondary educational mobility.

Educational capital and a biculturation approach are employed to theoretically frame post-secondary educational mobility and Spanish fluency retention, accordingly. This dissertation is premised on the idea of educational capital as established by Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of multiple forms of capital. In The Forms of Capital, Bourdieu proposes two types of capital: social and cultural. Cultural capital comprises the forms of knowledge, skills, and educational advantages that allow for elevation of societal status or for economic profit. Social capital is the accumulation of resources linked to a network of relationships that lead to recognition, membership that provides group support, and backing which results in success in society.
Biculturation is a linguistic and cultural term coined by Gustavo Pérez-Firmat in his 1994 work, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban American Way*. Pérez-Firmat discusses how language is not just a linguistic concept, but a place marker and identity marker as well. Latino youth’s identity as “translation artists” is one of acculturation, transculturation, and *biculturation*: it is *appositional*, not oppositional. He states that Latino children are “equilibrists” who must find their identities while being translators—from the linguistic standpoint of *traducir* and the topographical *traslación* between sociocultural environments. Being equilibrists, they are free to weave a pastiche of each and are therefore *equi-libre*.

Data for this study were collected between autumn 2015 and spring 2016 in the NWA region. A triangulation data approach included a purposive sample of 35 in-depth interviews with Latino young adults, ethnographic notes and narrative, and document analyses. Participants included former students who previously participated in the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes from the four high schools in the Rogers and Springdale Public School Districts.

Every participant in this study is a first-generation college student currently attending a post-secondary institution or has recently graduated from a post-secondary institution. They previously attended either Springdale or Rogers Public School Districts as well as participated in a combination of courses from among Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers I, I, III, AP Spanish Language and Culture and/or AP Spanish Literature as part of their high school coursework. Participants’ ages range from 19 to 32 years old. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) Project Protocol form was submitted and approved in order to comply with the University of Arkansas standards of interview and data collection.
This study is critical to understanding how students navigate secondary and post-secondary institutions and ultimately find the success for which their parents brought them to Northwest Arkansas. Documenting their lived experiences, light can be shed on how Latino students negotiate Spanish language proficiency and retention and learn how to navigate the educational system affected by the curricular programs made by public school administration and educators.

**Personal Reasoning for this Study**

On a personal note, my perseverance for championing underserved children began early. I was an underserved student who felt doubted by many of my teachers and most of my counselors. They told me that I was not college material, and did not believe that I would complete my undergraduate career. Many obstacles stood in my path to educational mobility: ADHD, dyscalculia, a functionally illiterate father, and low socio-economic status. I lacked the agency and identity to set goals and identify means for achieving them. Although my mother did not understand nor possess the tools to aim me toward college success, her undying belief that I could succeed and her everlasting encouragement led me to achieve my goals.

Later, the opportunities to be involved as a Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) teacher in the Rogers Public School District, an active member of various community groups throughout Northwest Arkansas, and ultimately, a Graduate Assistant with the Office for Latino Academic Advancement and Community Relations allowed me to gain insight into the academic challenges and accomplishments of first-generation and 1.5-generation Latino students in Northwest Arkansas.

After almost 20 years as an SHNS educator in Northwest Arkansas, I have seen that many Latino high school students have had dreams as children of becoming doctors, lawyers,
teachers and engineers, but that they do not attain these dreams due to a lack of agency more so than due to a lack of aptitude. Educational attainment is an abstract idea, much akin to buying an expensive object like a house or car. Students do not seem to embrace the concreteness of post-secondary educational attainment and the importance of secondary education on post-secondary mobility until late in their secondary careers. They are uninformed or lack persistent instruction on the socio-economic impact of these factors, or simply are not focused on them. Because the majority of Latino students are not involved in advanced or Advanced Placement (AP) classes, they do not attend curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular events that promote post-secondary attendance; thus, they are consistently not informed or introduced to dates and times of testing and scholarship information. They simply do not learn about the classes needed to be successful and the steps one must take for admission to post-secondary institutions.

I have come to the realization that most Latino students lack the same tools I lacked for post-secondary success. They struggle to maintain jobs, tend to their families’ needs, and finish homework for classes with which many do not identify. They struggle with canonical and inflexible curricula because they, as I did at one point in my educational trajectory, do not see themselves reflected in the material comprising the curriculum, and therefore, do not envision themselves as protagonists in their educational process.

In my thirty-five-year career as a Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) and Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) educator and curriculum coordinator of underserved children, I have found that my students who are successful in post-secondary education have discovered a sense of self-identity and agency throughout their secondary education. If students cannot identify with the content of the classes they take and cannot garner agency from their curriculum and instructors, post-secondary success is minimal. This first-hand experience has
afforded me a unique vantage point from which to gauge the impact of the implementation of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum in public schools in Northwest Arkansas.

As a SHNS teacher in secondary schools, first in Rogers Public Schools and now in Springdale, I observed, for example, how after taking SHNS classes, previously reluctant or out-of-place Latino students as well as those with difficulty envisioning post-secondary education as an option became more involved and later attended post-secondary institutions. I have noticed that students unknowingly use these classes as a springboard to post-secondary education. Latino students normally take two or three levels of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers to fulfill their high school language requirement. When students finish the first levels, the natural progression is to take Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Language and Culture. After being successful in this first Advanced Placement class and realizing that they earned between three and fifteen hours of university credit, they segue into other Advanced Placement (AP) classes, including Human Geography and Psychology, among others. By this time, Latino students will have achieved university credit and, for many, Honors Graduate accolades. The Spanish language proficiency and retention, agency and identity attained from the seminal SHNS classes are the catalyst for secondary success and the tool builder for post-secondary attendance.

During my time as a doctoral student and Graduate Assistant with the Office for Latino Academic Advancement and Community Relations, and later instructor of advanced Spanish service-learning classes at the University of Arkansas, I became aware of the number of Latino students from Northwest Arkansas who were not only attending the University of Arkansas and other post-secondary institutions, but were thriving through involvement with curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities on and off campus. Such Northwest Arkansas Latino students have created, against the odds, a voice and a space for themselves in a
traditionally monolingual and mono-cultural area. The argument being made here is that the SHNS curriculum was a major factor in promoting the self-agency these students have demonstrated.

It is important to learn from participants’ voices how they view the role of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers in their journey for self-discovery and confidence to succeed as first-generation Arkansans. In the following chapters, I detail how these students found SHNS classes to be part of their academic success and to what extent they were influenced by the class curriculum and activities to become involved in co-curricular and curricular activities, a move which introduced them to a network of associations that eased the difficulties of assimilation and attainment of human capital to open up the threshold to a cycle of success. My hope is that the results of this research will produce a knowledge base that community and academic leaders can use to provide a space that aids a brighter future for the fastest growing population in Arkansas.

**Summary of Chapters**

Chapter 1 is an introduction of this dissertation project and outlines its purpose. It gives a brief overview of the role of recent immigration in the United States, and Northwest Arkansas in particular. This chapter provides a better picture of the changing face of the demographics of the region as well as details theoretical and practical significance for Northwest Arkansas and its school districts. Chapter 1 also includes a definition of terms necessary for conceptual and theoretical understanding. Chapter 2 is a review of literature that is the theoretical base for this study. It gives insight into the various aspects of and effects of home language and a child’s education. Chapter 3 contains the discussion of the fieldwork experience as well as a description of methodological techniques used to gather data for this dissertation. It also includes an explanation of how the results of the fieldwork and interviews were analyzed.
Chapters 4, 5, and 6 maintain a focus on the thoughts and expressions of the 35 interview respondents. The aim of these chapters is to document in detail the respondents’ viewpoints and perspectives on the influence of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes regarding their choice to take Advanced Placement Spanish classes and, in turn, other AP classes, and finally their choice to attend post-secondary institutions. Respondents reveal their experiences with biculturation, living in two worlds and the effects of studying home language on self-schema and self-fulfillment.

Chapter 4 includes a demonstration of how and the extent to which students who are afforded SHNS classes perform better academically, not only in English but in other disciplines as well. It also focuses on how centripetal forces of language and the human capital of biliteracy are central to forging connections between home, school, and community. Such connections build human capital, elevating self- and group-schema. Positive connections and self/group-schema are building blocks for academic success.

Aspects of students’ lives as translation artists through biculturation are the focus of Chapter 5 and 6. The emphasis of Chapter 5 is on the struggle to manage two linguistic and cultural worlds—home and school—while searching for their self-schema and their place of belonging. Chapter 6 delves into the space for freedom of expression of students’ two worlds. The centripetal forces of the edification of home language and culture within the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classroom and the human capital that such classes afford Latino students is what drives this chapter. How and to what extent SHNS classes are central to Latino students’ post-secondary success is the dominant factor in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 7 contains reflections about the findings of this in-depth research and recommendations for possible contributions to the larger literature and to the curriculum in
public schools. More importantly, the respondents’ perspectives and suggestions are summarized in an endeavor to validate their experiences and successes. These recommendations hopefully will be far reaching, at least far reaching throughout the state of Arkansas, inciting change in the curriculum causing a centripetal force toward pride in home, school, and community rather than forcing students to choose one over the other.
CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Review of the Literature

Reviewing the literature about the social capital that leads to educational capital is key to understanding the educational attainment journey of all participants in this study. To explain what educational capital is, various related scholarly perspectives have to be considered. The perspectives of Bourdieu, hooks, Freire, Coleman, and Pérez and Norlander are central to the definition of educational capital.

Bourdieu’s *The Forms of Capital* describes social capital as the resources and social relations that an individual or a group possesses that create long lasting relationships and durable networks. Such networks and relationships determine chances of economic, social, or cultural success. In “Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital,” Coleman clarifies that social capital is not necessarily something owned by a particular individual, but is instead a framework of shared resources, values, and information that can be used to facilitate certain types of actions.

Coleman further offers the idea of another type of capital—human capital. He contends that human capital is the compilation of an individual's skills and expertise acquired throughout a lifetime. Human capital is an individual’s contribution to a certain social network. It refers to the credentials and cultural assets embodied in individuals and their families. For Schuller in “The Complementary Roles of Human and Social Capital”, human capital focuses on the behavior of individuals and their acquisition of knowledge and skills that enables them to increase their earnings. Such skills and productivity increases their wealth and social capital.

Bourdieu in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* stipulates that educational capital comprises potential academic achievement and other academic experiences, as well as their implications, used to gain or change a place in society. Burawoy’s *The Public*
Sociology Wars (2009) indicates that educational capital can be estimated from an individual’s curriculum vitae. His definition is subjective because some academic disciplines and experiences have higher social and economic capital than others. Both indicate that educational capital is a means by which an individual can gain a social advantage which produces a web of essential networks that lead to academic and social success.

One scholarly camp views Bourdieu’s theory less than positively. Haynes perceives social capital as a collection of themes related to trust and group participation. Fischer sees the term social capital as unclear. Viewing Bourdieu’s theory as difficult to quantify, Foley and Edwards contend that attitudes are difficult to mold into norms (164). Putnam suggests that in order to conduct quantifiable studies that establish an empirical norm, the conceptual focus should be on the possibility of negative networks that produce negative social outcomes rather than positive ones depending upon the type of family and community support established.

On the other hand, various scholars who have focused upon the persistence of at-risk students toward educational and social attainment contend that capital gained through connectivity is key to student success. Teachman, Paasch, and Carver point to the consistency of school attendance as important to relationship building, which is itself related to continuance and graduation (775). When a strong emotional support system is in place, Croniger and Lee contend, engagement is heightened and student educational success is attained. Bosanquet, Radford, and Webster highlight how Latino cultures tend to value interpersonal relationships and cooperation over individualism, something that suggests that Latino students may fare better from establishing interpersonal connection and feeling social support from teachers and staff. They assert that schools should mentor and provide opportunities for students to see themselves
in the curriculum, making their personal connection to education something concrete rather than abstract.

Relationally, the idea of human capital evident in Paulo Freire’s “Liberatory Pedagogy” endeavors to move students toward becoming “actors in their own world” (Shore 43) where the classroom is a space for students to be actively involved in their education, language, and community involvement. Much akin to Freire, bell hooks highlights independent thinking, student voice, and contribution to learning. “Engaged Pedagogy” focuses on the interactive relationship between educators and students that causes an optimum learning environment, and hooks emphasizes the educator’s role as a discoverer and engager. Pérez & Norlander’s work with first language acquisition and the importance of accepting first language and culture within the classroom is essential to educational capital and its impact on a student’s academic success (69). Pérez & Norlander say that the classroom is where social networks are found, providing stability for many children; hooks, Freire, and Pérez & Norlander underscore the significance of home language or dialect readings and vocabulary in context in their perspectives which mesh to gain positive educational capital, and therefore, success.

Similarly, the concept of *biculturation*, coined by Gustavo Pérez Firmat is used in this dissertation to frame the experience of Latino youth in Northwest Arkansas (5). Pérez-Firmat developed this term as an answer to the young Cuban immigrant struggle to become part of the majority culture. *Biculturation* suggests that immigrant children who grow up and are educated in the United States become “translation artists” (Pérez-Firmat 4) between languages and cultures. He draws on the terms of acculturation and transculturation and formulates *biculturation*,

(T)o designate the type of blending…not only the contact of two cultures; in addition, it describes a situation where two cultures achieve a balance
which makes it difficult to distinguish between the dominant and the subordinate culture.”[...] [It is] ‘appositional’ rather than oppositional, for the relationship between the two is defined more by contiguity rather than by conflict. (Pérez-Firmat 4-5)

Many scholars produced studies about biculturation before Pérez-Firmat coined the term. Szapocznik discusses the intermingling of Latino junior high students between both languages in their aim toward educational success. La Fromboise, Coleman, Hardin, and Gerton assert that there is no linear model of linguist or cultural acquisition. They, like Pérez-Firmat, assert that Latino youths are able to maintain their culture and translate into another without having to choose one over the other.

Although Valis, a noted author and critic from Yale University, takes exception with Pérez-Firmat’s use of a monochromatic image of minority and majority cultures—majority as one that consumes the minority—she agrees that Latino youth live in a hyphenated culture where the hyphen is a form of see-saw on which they must balance. Suárez finds the appositional, not oppositional, aspect of biculturation as a way of continuity of both cultures and languages. It is the manner through which Latino youth escape being caught up in choosing between dominant forces.

An integral aspect of biculturation is Latino youth’s ability to become biliterate. Teaching in Two Languages, by Reyes and Kleyn, advocates for additive programs in which literacy is socially and culturally situated and languages are added rather than subtracted from a child’s repertoire. The New York Department of Education is in agreement;

Native language arts instruction provides the foundation for respect and acceptance of the new culture. It further develops the ability to make connections across the disciplines. Additionally, it cultivates critical thinking, problem solving and higher order skills paramount for academic achievement and growth beyond secondary education. (11)

Subtractive programs superimpose one language over the other. This takes a monolingual and creates a monolingual in a second language, erasing the first. In Arkansas, the standard
educational practice is for first-generation and 1.5-generation students to learn English as quickly as possible in order to be academically successful, but time and time again, data suggests otherwise. It indicates that “there is a positive relationship between the second language learner’s native language reading score and the second language reading score” (Watkins-Mace 97).

Reading fluency scores are a direct indicator of later comprehension of text.

Because reading is key to academic success, it is important for students to sharpen their reading skills in both languages in order to secure such success. According to Monrtul, when children perceive that their language is not as useful or not considered as significant, they tend to develop self-esteem issues and in turn devalue their home language, causing subtraction of their home language and impeding academic success (chapter 2). Second language learners must see themselves as part of their education system, their community, their social groups, and the literature they read. In order for students who speak languages other than English to achieve high levels of literacy in English, they must achieve proficiency in their native language; therefore, a child’s first language must be well developed in order to maximize their proficiency in the second language (Pérez and Norlander 57). This proficiency will transfer to the second language. Two main components of literacy that are directly impacted by transfer are vocabulary and writing system knowledge; the most important factors in achieving these two components are native language vocabulary in context and reading for understanding (Watkins-Mace 77).

When students are able to read and write in one language, they are able to read and write in general (Krashen; Cummins; Valdez; Peyton et al.). Achieving literacy in the native language first, “creates communicative repertoires, linguistic structures of languages and orthographic scripts” (Hornberger and Link 266) that is a force either drawing children toward the family and education (centripetal) or throwing them away from them (centrifugal). It can either draw them
toward education or away from it (González). Schools must construct a literacy culture where a variety of texts are used. In this way, students’ Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) are encouraged and where Cognitive Academic Language Proficiencies (CALP) are modeled and taught (Cummins Language, Power and Pedagogy 58). It is not enough to communicate in familiar situations; it is important to develop academic language for academic success.

In designing curriculum for first and 1.5-generation students, Cummins highlights the importance of biculturation on cultural capital for post-secondary success. Only when the curriculum encompasses socio-economic, cultural educational, political circumstances, and many times cycles, with which first and 1.5-generation learners contend on a daily basis, can it become centripetal and additive. Children will then be able to use both languages effectively and compare and contrast the reality that both afford them.

Students’ oral reading fluency in their first language is an indication of their overall reading competence, therefore processing meaningful connections and encouraging inference of missing information in both languages (Fuchs, Fuchs, and Hosp). This promotes transfer and translanguaging, and success in both languages translates to academic success. Translanguaging is characterized by the unintentional integration of multiple language systems. It leads to transfer of language skills across language systems and develops the adaptability and cooperation of language systems. When students are able to transfer skills across language systems in meaningful ways in not only reading, but in writing, speaking and listening proficiencies, they are able to access learning to its fullest and therefore excel academically.

The findings of a twelve-year longitudinal study of language programs in the San Francisco Unified School District had similar results:
Students in two-language programs benefit academically from content instruction in the home language. Language arts content as well as other academic content, is likely to be more accessible to students when provided in their native language… (Umansky and Reardon 26-30)

A large body of research shows the importance of participating in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities in acquiring the educational capital necessary for post-secondary attainment is far reaching (“Importance of Extracurricular Activities in High School”). Curricular activities are designed with academic objectives for student success within a particular field of study, for example Spanish Club, Multicultural Club, National Spanish Honor Society, folkloric festivals, Latino food festivals and university campus visits (Lewis). Extra-curricular activities, on the other hand, are not explicitly connected to the scope of academic learning. Such ungraded, non-academic activities are designed to take place outside of school or after school hours. Extra-curricular activities consist of sports, clubs, and organizations that do not have connection to the regular curriculum taught in school settings (Brown).

Intertwined with curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular success is ethnic self-discovery that results in educational capital. Judith A. Howard postulates two important schema or basis by which someone relates to events and people that influence a person’s identity: Self-Schema and Group-Schema. Self-Schema answers the question, “Who am I?” It is a person’s characteristics, preferences, behaviors, and attitudes. Group-Schema is the stereotypes, social positions, and statuses that are systems of evaluation and explanation of social relationships. The more positive one’s self- and group-schema are the more positive a social identity a person will have. According to Webster, students must see their Self-Schema and Group-Schema in the literature they read and in the media that surrounds them. Students will assimilate to information that is similar to their cultural schema, misinterpret it, or ignore it totally if it is not consistent
with or goes against it. In order to achieve this, the curriculum must “forge links between literature and their own lives” (Sipe 127).

In this study, the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speaker curriculum must also address bicultural understandings and perspectives. It is framed throughout how the unspoken rules or nomos that give privilege to some and disadvantage others (Scherf and Spector 167). These advantages are what provide students of the majority culture a set of privileges that lead to advanced classes and higher education while for those of minority cultures who do not understand it solely to courses that lead them to graduation (Ladson-Billings and Tate 47-68). Cummins (Bilingual Children’s Mother Tongue) points out that the effectiveness of a program is determined when students are generating new knowledge and creating literature that reflects life’s realities, something that helps students gain the confidence necessary to continue their studies in more advanced classes where their literacy skills will be highly necessary. Because literature and literacy is “associated with the right of self-expression and world expression, of creating and re-creating, of deciding and choosing and ultimately participating in society’s historical process” and are able “to be present in history, not merely represented in it” (Freire 50).

According to Pérez and Norlander, finding identity and reducing the sense of choice; one language and culture over another or school over home is the largest dilemma for bilingual, biliterate students, yet it is the most important key to self-realization and the key to one’s identity and are interrelated (153). When students feel they are not valued and that their cultural identity and language are not valued, they withdraw from education. But when teachers “understand the need for the students to operate in the dual worlds of their home community and the white community,” they are more able to can see the connections and know that they can make the
shifts they become better” [academically] (Ladson-Billings 95). Therefore, those students who do not lose their home culture and maintain their identity are those who are the highest achievers academically (Suárez-Orozco et al.). As Freire and Macedo state, “the students’ language is the only means by which they can develop their own voice; a prerequisite to the development of a positive sense of self-worth” (151). Because language is the carrier of culture (Adleman-Reyes and Kleyt), when students are asked to leave their language and culture, a central part of their identity, outside the academic and social world, the rejection they experience results in less active participation and confidence in that academic world (Cummins, *Language, Power and Pedagogy*).

School is a socio-political network where students bond with their peers and their teachers. For many, this time of socialization is pivotal in creating stability and forming their identity and agency; it is a time when students are consciously or subconsciously internalizing their environment; it is the space where they learn strategies for coping with inadequacy that is established by even the subtlest attitudes toward their language and culture (Pérez and Norlander).

Schools can be alternative, safe spaces for multilingualism and transnational literacies, sites where young people creatively use varieties of language including standard, regional, class and youth oriented varieties as well as parodic language to take up, resist and negotiate multiple academic and identity positions. (Hornberger and Link 272)

Quiroz says that if this inadequacy is not quashed, students will succumb to the pressure and anxiety of managing the disconnect between school language and culture and family/home language and culture; without a supportive environment which forges agency and identity, they will reject education and not be academically successful.
The concepts of biculturation and educational capital are employed to suggest a connection between SHNS and student success. Such concepts are the framework upon which Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers class curriculum are based. SHNS classes are the enclave for peer support which leads to better coping skills, reducing students’ feeling of isolation. Peer support and validating friendships which maintain trust and respect contribute to the formation of an identity based on agency something which continues past secondary education (Pérez and Norlander 19; Sherf and Spector 82).

Post-secondary success understood through educational capital encompasses academic achievement and social/community involvement within and around such institutions. Leading to fulfillment of personal aspirations, economic upward mobility and community outreach, such success, is a change agent for the face of this first-generation immigrant population in Northwest Arkansas. In order to understand the effects of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes on Latino students’ academic success and post-secondary attainment, it is important to place in context the biculturation, educational capital perspectives, and biliteracy development that leads to students’ confidence and self-discovery and, in turn, helps them envision academic achievement. Understanding how social, regional, linguistic, and experiential factors create particular contexts sheds light on the importance of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum as an essential tool to the education of Latino students in Northwest Arkansas and beyond.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Data gathered for this study were collected between autumn 2015 and spring 2016 in the NWA region. The selection of participants was purposive in nature to focus on Latinos who had taken a combination of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers I, II, III and Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture or Advanced Placement Spanish Literature in Springdale and Rogers Public Schools. Purposive selection is appropriate for use within this study because the population had to fit certain communicant criteria (Bernard 145). In addition to achieving the goals of this study, a qualitative triangulation method of data gathering that consisted of fieldwork and in-depth interviews was employed. A qualitative triangulation method has proven to be effective in the collection of data by uncovering different experiential realities. Fieldwork for this study has been of utmost importance because it allows the researcher to establish rapport with the study’s participants, enabling the process of data collection (Neuman 335). As the principal researcher and sole data collector, personal knowledge of the respondents was gleaned through repeated interaction and observation. Detailed interviews are particularly valuable when the research questions are focused on participants’ biographies and narratives. Through this qualitative method, how Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes impacted Latino students’ secondary school achievement and why it is important to their post-secondary attendance and success was discovered. Delving into the importance that participants give to their educational, cultural and social experiences aided in the understanding of their perspectives which is the most important aspect of their interviews.

The choice to interview Latino students who had attended secondary schools in Springdale and Rogers Public School Districts was due to personal teaching experience with Latino students from both districts. Latino students from these sites were interviewed because of
the impact of the large Latino population on not only the community as a whole, but on the educational systems which have been adjusted towards the needs of the Latino student population. Both cities are not common hubs of immigration, but each school districts’ administrations and world language educators opted to intervene with innovations for their new immigrant population. One of those innovations was to create and institute what is now a thriving Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum. First hand observations of the effects of SHNS classes on Latino secondary students were due to the researcher’s long term personal experience as a SHNS teacher in the Rogers School District. Subsequent access to former students from the Rogers and Springdale Public School Districts was through continued contact with SHNS teachers in both districts. The close relationship with former students, many of whom this researcher had the unique opportunity to teach and mentor throughout their secondary and post-secondary careers, made acquiring permission to interview them easier. Maintained relationships with SHNS and AP Spanish colleagues who had connections with their former students became a source for study respondents as well.

The above data collected for this study employed a purposive selection of participants (Denzin 44), with each participant assigned an identification number and pseudonym. When the search for the number of potential participants began consideration of their school and work schedules was necessary. Coordinating schedules to allow for plenty of time for interviewees to fully express themselves and recount their experiences was a difficult yet manageable task.

Each interview was transcribed and/or translated, and all responses were charted. Commonalities in responses to each interview question were codified and similar responses were color coded. Positive and negative responses were identified. Quotes from respondents that
emphasized best the common sentiment to be used as the respondent voice(s) within the text of this study were carefully noted.

Identifying graduates from Rogers Heritage High School was easily accomplished because of this researcher’s previous position as SHNS teacher at that school and because of connections with current Spanish teachers there. Participants were selected on the basis of those who had taken a combination of SHNS I, II, III, Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture and/or Advanced Placement Spanish Literature, and who had attended and/or graduated from—or were still enrolled at institutions of higher learning. A similar number of Latinos from each of the other three high schools in Rogers and Springdale; Rogers High School, Springdale High School, and Springdale Har-Ber High School were interviewed.

The ability to contact former students from Rogers Heritage High School and arrange interviews was enabled due to continued contact with many possible participants through university studies, continued involvement in Latino community events, service projects, and through Facebook. Contacting students from Rogers High, Springdale High, and Springdale Har-Ber High Schools was a bit more difficult. Current and former university students from those institutions were approached. All were excited to share their experiences and opinions, but the number was not comparable to the respondents from Rogers Heritage High School. Relying upon Spanish educator colleagues who continue to teach Spanish in the other Springdale and Rogers high schools to make connections for this research was essential. They were overjoyed to nominate possible interview subjects, but communication and coordination with their nominations many times fell through.

Seven Rogers and eight Springdale Spanish educators were contacted. They nominated a total of forty possible study candidates. Of the forty candidates, twenty-five accepted the
interview invitation. When added to the ten former Rogers Heritage High School students, thirty-five interview participants were obtained. While thirty-four participants are Latinos, one participant who is Anglo but was raised with Spanish as her home language and took Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes before going on to graduate from a post-secondary institution. A study on children such as this student would be incredibly valuable to understanding the effects of a non-English home language on students’ performance in the absence of other ethnic markers. Denial of such enthusiasm was out of question. This interviewee offered impressive and insightful information that was very similar to that of Latino respondents.

Forged intimate and trusted connections with some interviewees who were former and current students was fortunate and significant for the purposes of this study as were trusted relationships with Spanish educators from Northwest Arkansas. Such connections made this study highly recommended to possible interviewees allowing students not to view it with suspicion or distrust. Being of an ethnicity other than Latino was not a difficulty because being considered a trusted member of the Latino community of Northwest Arkansas who endeavors to better the transition of Latinos that come to live and learn in Northwest Arkansas. Fortunately, this study reaped the benefits of such social capital throughout the interview process. It was not necessary to spend time gaining the trust and confidence of respondents. A casual yet professional environment of trust and understanding was created and maintained.

Once a study participant chose to participate in this research, a time to meet was scheduled. Most communication was through email, Facebook messenger, or text. Meetings with study participants were arranged for in sites where they felt comfortable responding to interview questions. The location of the interviews was left up to the respondents. They chose sites that
were most convenient or where they felt most comfortable. Interviewees with whom a previous relationship had not been forged were more apt to meet in restaurants or other public places, such as public libraries.

All participants felt that my study was valuable to their families and communities and received it enthusiastically. Each interview began with introductions and by asking various questions about their families and about their day. Inquiries about respondents’ studies and careers were made as were questions about this study’s goals.

In order to protect respondent information and comply with university policies and practices, before participants were contacted, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Project Protocol form, interview questions, and the objectives of this study were submitted. The IRB Project Protocol was approved by the University of Arkansas Office of Research and Compliance. After receiving project approval, contact with possible participants for this study was made. At the beginning of each interview, each participant was given an informational letter describing this research. It explained how data would be used; each interview would be recorded in order to accurately document the interviews, each interview would be transcribed and translated if needed, all names would remain confidential and pseudonyms would be used instead of names. They were given the dissertation director’s contact information as well as the researcher’s contact information. Interviewees were assured that only their pseudonyms would be used in place of names, however, the majority stated that they would be agreeable to the use of their real name. Institutional Review Board approval was granted through University of Arkansas before any fieldwork began.

Each participant indicated both verbally and through signing the consent page on the informational letter that they understood that answering questions was voluntary and that they
could stop the interview at any time. Once consent was obtained, recording the interviews began. Each respondent was asked the same series of questions in the same order. Although questioning was in English, respondents had the freedom to answer freely and comfortably in English or Spanish. Some responded in only English, some responded in Spanish only and others code-switched by alternating between Spanish and English while responding. Because this researcher is bilingual, answers were understood and responded to with cultural competency. No interviewees were compensated monetarily. As a courtesy, coffee or meals were paid, but otherwise no compensation was offered for their participation. In order to maintain presence of mind and attentiveness while interviewing, no more than three interviews were conducted in a single day.

This dissertation is an attempt to describe an understanding of the educational impact of home language learning on post-secondary attendance and success from the study participants’ perspective. According to Spradley, the objective of ethnography is to understand another’s point of view while in the process of describing their culture (212). The work conducted with Latinos who took a combination of SHNS I, II, III, and/or AP Spanish Language and Culture, AP Spanish Literature in secondary schools and attended post-secondary institutions in Northwest Arkansas is ethnographic in nature.

It is worth noting that, for the most part, this research was fully welcomed in the field. There was little apprehension on the participants’ part and completely voluntary. They received it and hoped that the outcome would be positively received by school administrations and public officials. They wanted to make sure that productive and meaningful usage of the data collected would come about. They want the outcomes to cause change that assist in their siblings’ education, their families as a whole and their community.
Only two difficulties were encountered while conducting this research: finding more Springdale Har-Ber High School participants and transcribing the interviews. While the Spanish educators from Springdale Har-Ber High School were attentive to the need to find former students, many of their nominees were attending post-secondary institutions far from NWA and/or out of state; therefore, arranging face-to-face interview proved to be impractical. Thus, attention was focused on participants who lived within the NWA regional scope. Some prospective participants simply did not answer the invitation to interview.

Transcribing the interviews was a daunting task due to a lack of experience with transcription. It was arduous and time consuming. Although a professional transcriptionist assisted in this endeavor, the majority of the task fell upon this researcher’s unexperienced ear and unexperienced dexterity. The process was enlightening and incredibly rewarding. Actually hearing responses and passion in respondents’ voices immensely impacted the motivation to complete this study and make their voices heard.
CHAPTER IV: CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Introduction to the Chapter

In this chapter, how and the extent to which students who are afforded SHNS classes perform better academically, not only in English, but in other disciplines as well is demonstrated.

Because I wrongly imagined that English was intrinsically a public language and Spanish an intrinsically private one, I easily noted the difference between classroom language and the language of home…One Saturday morning three nuns arrived at the house to talk to our parents… “Is it possible for you and your husband to encourage your children to practice English when they are home?” Of course my parents complied. What would they not do for their children’s well-being? […] they agreed to give up the language (the sounds) that had revealed and accentuated our family’s closeness. (Rodríguez 19-20)

This research echoes the sentiments of Adleman-Reyes and Kleyn as well as Payton et al. that the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) curriculum in Northwest Arkansas (NWA) aims to maintain the family closeness established through home language and often perceived to be lost in the way that Richard Rodríguez describes it in the quotation above. These SHNS programs are additive, secondary, home-language programs in which literacy is socially and culturally situated and languages are added, not subtracted, from a child’s linguistic repertoire. They are a mixture of Heritage Language Program components that promote home language and culture while increasing the four proficiencies—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—as well as Developmental Maintenance Mode which combines literacy and content instruction in the students’ home languages.

The objective of SHNS classes in NWA is to respond to and remedy the following students’ sense of loss of instruction, loss of importance. As Emiliano says,

If it is important for a kid to learn how to read and write in English since the first grade… then it would be just as important for them to learn how to read and write in Spanish since the first grade. So that’s the thing that doesn’t make sense to me… How can we look at somebody in the face and say, “You’re important to our community, but we’re robbing you eight years of your education”?
The findings agree with the body of work by Cummins (“Bilingual education in the United States”), The International Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Watkins-Mace, and Umansky; essentially, the conclusion is that when students are instructed in their home language, they have higher completion rates. The following sections illustrate this idea.

**Centripetal Forces of Language and Culture: Edification of Home Language and Culture**

Use of the student’s home culture and language indicates “respect and legitimation” (Freire and Macedo 88). Respect and legitimation are centripetal forces of language and culture; those that draw children toward education because they incorporate home language and culture within the curriculum. According to González, respect and legitimation do not compete for students’ cultural and linguistic loyalties (131).

Interview respondents indicate validation of home culture and language through SHNS classes. They speak of having a better understanding of what they learned either in their home countries or from family members. They further reveal a new-found ability to open means of communication with their parents that never existed before having taken SHNS classes in secondary school. The following students indicate:

I learned a lot of traditions that I never really paid attention to growing up. I was able to talk to my parents and I was able to ask them ‘Why?’... It helped me get connected and get closer to my parents. (Luisa)

It gives me confidence being able to speak with my parents and people at church. (Santos)

I come home and impress my parents. (Juliana)
Others express validation of their origin:

That’s my roots, my culture and I hold my culture and my roots, kind of close to me. (Juana)
It made it easy to be proud of my culture. (Emiliano).

Some respondents confess that SHNS classes were the beginning of cultural awareness:

I didn’t even know the beginning of my culture. I knew that there were traditions…I didn’t even know where my culture began until I learned it in Spanish. (Marisol)
It taught me parts of my culture I didn’t get to learn while living in Mexico. (Isabel)
I realized that it was okay to celebrate your culture…especially if you’re immersed in a culture that is foreign to what you usually grew up with. (Iris)

Such realizations lighten the burden of loyalty placement and ease cultural conflict between home and school. Such easing of the cultural and linguistic tug-of-war allows participants freedom to be fluid between both. They are then more able to find both personal and academic success.

Learning about home traditions and cultures attracts students toward education and can be a unifying factor between home and school. The ability to communicate that culture in the student’s home language is liberating. Students use their first and second languages in a logical manner for understanding at home, with friends, and at school. According to Delpit, educational institutions should be aware of the type of language students bring to school (161).

Home language is closely connected to family, community, and sense of self; therefore, students gain human capital through learning and improving their linguistic skills. Latino students convey their own sentiments on this idea:

It was okay for me to use it in the way that I speak Spanish at home and with my friends. (Graciela)
That was the first time I actually learned Spanish. I didn’t know anything about reading or writing Spanish. (Emilia)
Some students who had lived in NWA for much of their lives and had been educated in English, like Nicolás, who states that they were forgetting Spanish:

“losing a little of [their] language from the past and it makes sure that [they] keep it with [them].”

Vicente expresses how developing proficiencies in Spanish helped students “break that barrier” between home and school.

For the majority of the respondents, learning about their home culture and language through positive means is a centripetal force that aids in the gravitation toward education. Experiencing validity of home culture and language opens communication between the student and home and the student and school, creating an environment of literacy both cultural and linguistic. Such understandings contribute to deeper relationships, to easier academic navigation, and to strengthened identity.

**Centripetal Forces of Language and Culture: Understanding the Plurality and Multiculturalism of Being Latino**

To obtain a more complete view of individuals within a culture, one must address their complete culture…the “multiplex individual with numerous ‘border zones’” (Webster 23). Manuel reveals his thoughts on this concept:

It doesn’t motivate you to identify yourself as a culture, because each one of us has different perspectives.

The Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum is found by interviewees to be a place where they learn not only about the cultures of their particular home culture, but about the multiple cultures within the Spanish speaking world;

I learned about cultures that I didn’t even know existed. (Isabel)
My parents are Mexican, and just learning about the history, not only Mexican history, but Spanish history and history from all of the Latin American countries; it just made me proud of who I was. (Santos)

It gave me a better understanding of the culture…different cultures, not only the Latin American cultures, but also the Spanish culture. (Aurora)

This knowledge broadens their cultural base and becomes a threshold for communication and an elevated group-schema Acceptation allows for students like Manuel to explain not only their own cultures, but that of their classmates:

What I came to learn was to understand politics/policy. To see another’s perspective and what one lives daily in other countries.

It aids in the navigation of and ability to defend sometimes false perceptions by the majority culture and forges unity amongst Latino students involved in the class:

It betters my communication with other students to communicate and to get along in general life. (Luisa)

SHNS classes are the connection between the world outside and inside the students’ world. Connecting the varied home cultures to school opens communication and becomes a threshold of pride and empowerment, making students’ cultural inside lives mesh with their outside lives, as Manuel explains:

We would make presentations about stuff that our families did…how we celebrate. So, once we bring things like that to the school and then like back home, it made me feel like I could talk to my family! ‘Oh! I learned this and this’ and I could talk about it to my family. It made me feel better about it in a new way…everything I had in my family.

Including all students’ backgrounds within the confines of the SHNS curriculum draws students together through their differences and makes them able to gain acceptance from other Latino students. Assurance that their cultures are perceived as valuable connects them to home and school and others.
Centripetal Forces of Language and Culture: Connecting with Others Who Look like Me through Cultural Connections

Language arts instruction in a student’s home language provides the foundation for respect and acceptance. When students from other Latino cultures are together and allowed to express home language and traditions, students are able to experience the diversity within their own ethnicity. Through such experiences, Latino students, like Isabel, are able to gain better self and group-schema:

When I was in school, there weren’t a lot of Hispanics, so, when I took the Spanish class I was able to communicate with other people who spoke my language and we had similar topics and we would talk about the similar things related to our culture and our traditions. So it made me more open and allowed me to use more of my Spanish, not just in that class, but outside of school as well.

According to New York City Department of Education Spanish Native Language Arts Curriculum Guide 2013 (SNLACG), instruction in a student’s home language cultivates critical thinking and problem solving;

It [SHNS] helps you see how other people look at the world. (Vicente)

When critical thinking and problem-solving skills are developed through cultural and linguistic conversations, students understand their own biases and schema which is key to personal maturity and identity discovery as well as key to understanding the actions and reactions of those who surround you (Helms 188). As Emiliano describes it:

I knew my situation was difficult growing up, but I didn’t think anyone cared about it until I took Spanish. I started to believe I had a special message. Taking those classes made me feel like I had a bigger purpose than myself.

When Latino students are exposed to Latino culture and other Latinos, the likelihood that they identify with each other and their ethnic heritage develops. Graciela articulates this sentiment:

We interact with other cultures; learn about other cultures and appreciate other cultures. By doing that, it revalidates mine.
Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes in Northwest Arkansas have been the means by which Latino students have learned to connect with each other:

    Upon learning about a culture, one learns that not everyone is alike. The reason why people are the way they are. Everyone has their own history. (Manuel)

Similarly, Irma and Vicente discuss how learning about each other affects unity:

    We do come together. It’s what makes us stronger and more united. (Irma)

To have discussions and somebody believed that it was something and then another believed that it was something else. And you will interact with each other to find a deeper meaning…(Vicente)

Many respondents are clear in emphasizing the collaborative aspect of SHNS classes that enrich more than just their learning experiences, enabling Latino students to forge the connections of mutual respect, enhancing foundations for greater positive group schema:

    [SHNS teachers] were about making everything really interactive…always emphasized taking pride in your cultural identity and in trying to emphasize that…included a lot of activities that kind of brought in that culture that you identified with and made you more familiar with it. So through those opportunities and experiences with the activities you were able to really understand what it meant to be Latino. (Carmen)

Students are able to withstand the gravity of English Only laws and forces that pull them away from home culture and language because they maintain deep relationships with their classmates through a curriculum of positive cultural perceptions:

    [U]nderstanding of my culture…just the appreciation. When it came to us talking about culture in school, which I feel didn’t take place very often in my other classes. (Francisco)

Graciela says that it is,

    …like an American mosaic that form a masterpiece… promoting a cultural stronghold; a buffer to external forces that pull students away from academic successes affording them the opportunity…to be individuals that shine.
Human Capital of Biliteracy: Edification of Home Language and Culture through Readings

Outside of the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classroom, Latino students’ cultural literary experiences, much like those of Isabel, are minimal:

Before Spanish class, I didn’t know anything about literature, like even little kids’ songs, cuentos, stories, I didn’t even know until I was in Spanish. And that’s when I got a wide perspective of it.

They are encouraged to read stories almost exclusively in English containing protagonists and scenarios that do not look like them. Graciela expresses her experience:

I was supposed to learn and read English and the culture here, not Spanish. It was very difficult and it was very difficult being ashamed of who you are and who your parents were. I did have an identity crisis.

The opportunity to read literature written about Latino home culture and in Spanish with characters who look like them—“…darker and shorter” (Emiliano)—becomes empowering and builds on Latino students’ human capital;

It made it ok for me to be Latino… [the way] the system is set up… it's not very friendly towards difference. I remember in classes being told I couldn't speak Spanish. When I went to my Spanish class, I was free. (Emiliano)

There are two scopes of literacy. As Freire and Macedo (98) point out, students must become literate about their home histories, experiences and culture and they have to assume the mores and cultures of the dominant group so that they can be successful and surpass their own environments.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers class surrounds students in literature rich in sociocultural contexts inclusive of their worlds both inside and outside of school;

To see almost like a different world, ‘cause like the libros are more relevant to you. It covered topics that make more sense to us. (Marcela).

It made me more comfortable with who I was in my own culture because of the things that appear in the books and literature. (Graciela)
Latino students’ backgrounds are the lens through which they process literary works and thus their worlds (Webster). This literature influences their interpretation of those worlds because literacy is imbedded socially and culturally; therefore, it is imperative that students view their backgrounds, families, school, and contemporaries in the literary aspects of SHNS curriculum:

The stories that my mom used to tell me…small short stories…all these other things that I wasn’t able to understand, I was able to grasp it now…it connects me to my background. (Sergio)

Because home language literacy is a skill that binds students linguistically and culturally closer to their families and communities, students gain educational capital, which translates to enhanced human capital (Zhou Growing Up American). Elizabeth, Juliana, and Iris have parallel thoughts:

It would always kind of bring you back to your roots in a way because of the things you would go over and even some of the stories that you read. (Elizabeth)

From reading those Latino novelists, from researching our flags…subtly but at the same time very loudly and very apparent let us know, like, do not forget your culture, it’s important and it’s who you are. It’s not a bad thing. It’s beautiful! Praise it! Love it! (Juliana)

You are able to embrace your culture. (Iris)

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers literacy curriculum has empowered students through providing literature of likeness: likeness to home, peers and self. It encourages life-long literacy experiences and causes a bond of empowerment for students and their families;

It gave me more options to what I read in Spanish…Once I found out there was all these other different forms of like Spanish authors, Spanish novels, poems; things that were out there, that I was like, “Ok, let me go ahead and read some other stuff”. Now that’s about all I read. (Elena)

**Human Capital of Biliteracy: Connections with Other Educational Disciplines**

Students, who become bilingual, according to Benge, have the tendency to achieve much higher academic success in other academic disciplines (1). Much of this success is due to home
language vocabulary in context and the ability to read with understanding which advances students’ capacity to make connections between study of their home language and other disciplines (Watkins-Mace 97). Interviewees find that not only are they connecting with the language and culture of their parents and families; they were making curricular connections. They find that much of the content acquired in their home language classes have connections to other classes as well. Aurora, Tomás, and Marisol relate similar experiences:

I thought it was really interesting how in one class I was learning the English version of it and then in Spanish the version of it and so I would always make that connection. (Aurora)

I am able to make connections between [SHNS] class and World Literature class. (Tomás)

You kind of make the connection back to your English classes and how it compares and contrasts. (Marisol)

The connections are not just with language arts classes, either; many find links between others. As Marcela expresses, “I know a lot stuff we also covered in history and geography.”

Some students have the eye-opening experience of realizing that historical references in English, here, in the United States do not necessarily concur with those from Spanish speaking countries and learn about “the perspectives of different countries that [they] had never imagined” (Belita). This realization allows Latino students a point of departure for inquiry and investigation not only into their personal realities, but into the varied perspectives of academia.

When students are able to dominate both languages, majority language and home language, they are empowered to “engage in dialogue with the wider society” (Freire and Macedo 152). Pati and Belita confirm that with this empowerment comes confidence to succeed in other academic disciplines:
It's like a rolling effect. You're going to gain confidence in that class and that's going to help you in your other classes to help you succeed. And, if you ever need help with anything, your teachers are always available. (Pati)

It made me want to excel in my other classes. (Belita)

The liberating effects of empowerment are long reaching. Students are able to envision success and become part of inquiry and dialogue in secondary education and beyond. As Ladson-Billings and Tate (1997) found, the desire to excel, is the first step in breaking the chains of under-education and seeking to break the cycle where low socio-economic-ethnic minority students take courses to graduate from high school, not to prepare for college. They have the confidence to seek out more advanced and diverse classes and the possibilities that higher education offers.

**Human Capital of Biliteracy: Understanding the Connections between Biliteracy and Success in Community**

According to Zhou (“Segmented Assimilation”), when students lack opportunities for intellectual advancement and belonging, they have the tendency for downward assimilation, triggering a lack of incorporation in the majority community. When public schools provide Latino students an SHNS curriculum, they are providing those students with necessary tools for literacy skills in their home language coupled with edification of home culture, leading students to feel a sense of belonging and confidence. As Smith learned, “the triggers that often lead to downward assimilation do not exist in Northwest Arkansas arguably because the SHNS curriculum has intervened against it” (47). Respondents, such as Graciela, make reference to such an intervention against downward assimilation when they reveal how they began to understand the importance of maintaining their home language and culture in order to be successful in both Latino and majority communities:
[SHNS] made me realize that I don’t want us to be invisible. I want us to be seen and I want us not to be on the sidelines. We do have history. We are history…surviving in a place where it’s not supposed to be, like here in Arkansas.

Literacy is more than the ability to read and write; it is the ability to use reading and writing skills in socially appropriate circumstances. It is not enough, according to Cummins (Language, Power and Pedagogy 4-5), that Latino students maintain a level of conversational fluency (BICS) comprised of familiar topics, basic grammar, and syntax; it must be expanded to encompass academic language in all four proficiencies (CALP). Confidently armed with biliteracy tools, Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum becomes more than a class; it becomes a means by which students begin crafting and determining their own social truths:

[SHNS] even taught us social skills that I used in business and college group work. (Juliana)

It was more than a Spanish class; it was a life class…like, how to be successful. (Marcela)

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes provide the opportunity for this expansion. Combined with acquired cultural competency, students’ empathy for other community groups advances, making them bridge-builders (Olsen 4-5); this is in the same way of Marisol, Tomás, and Eduardo, who have used their biliteracy abilities to be informative and create transformative connections of involvement between home and community:

It was a platform to meet people and get out there and to become something in the community. (Marisol)

I can help other people who didn’t take this [educational] path. (Tomás)

Helping people…translate for them and saying the right words in the right places. (Eduardo)
When students attain the linguistic and cultural skill set to become catalysts for change, they affect their surroundings and become leaders in the community. They become the example of success to the community. They become successful leaders in the community and beyond;

I wanted to be able to make a difference in the community but not just be the voter but be the person people are voting for. (Elena)

**Human Capital of Biliteracy: Understanding the Connections between Biliteracy and Educational and Economic Success**

Academic achievement is associated with being biliterate. According to Mitchell, biliteracy is an advantage that opens the threshold for scholarships and employment (5). A large part of this achievement, according to respondents who are in agreement with Juana, is due to parental support:

Just being pushed by my parents… You know, education is important and you need to go. (Juana)

Parents who tend to expect the school to provide their children with higher level home language linguistic proficiencies pave the way for success in society as a whole. As Pérez and Norlander discuss, students whose teachers understand and are supportive of parents’ viewpoints on biliteracy are those that are able to transfer academic success into economic success (282).

For students, Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers gives them the foundation for “advanced knowledge and advanced education,” says Eduardo, and Nicolás agrees:

AP classes in Spanish, they helped me a lot to learn more about my Spanish, um, because they kind of push you to…excel yourself.

Through recognizing the benefit advanced biliteracy proficiencies in a professional framework, Heinrich and Smeeding found that students are able to envision it as relevant to their professional futures. Manuel feels that “it can help in when you go out in the world of work.”
Students also learn that there are greater opportunities in the workforce for those who are able to communicate proficiently in two languages. Opportunities are even greater for those who possess high level reading and writing abilities:

[Learn Spanish] the way you are supposed to and then be able to use it later on when you go into a professional field. (Nicolás)

Activities like how to present in Spanish can help you in interviews for work and in the professional world…I saw that the opportunities that were offered to me were taking me to the future. (Tomás)

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers provides instruction that advances the relevance of biliteracy to educational success and later economic success. Because the curriculum encourages students to envision success in professional fields through high level vocabulary and promotes envisioning success in the workplace, students are able to understand its impact on their economic opportunities.

**Human Capital of Biliteracy: Identifying with Readings-Seeing Self in Characters, Plot, Struggle**

Literacy is not free of cultural contexts (Pérez and Norlander). It either serves a certain culture or is filtered through that culture. Because the majority culture normally sets the literary cannon and cultural perspectives, students from the minority culture typically find themselves outside the established readings and withdraw from literature. According to Webster, students are more likely to be drawn to information that they find mirrors their background experiences and therefore will identify with it. Students’ interaction with literature is of utmost importance in their academic success. If students are not able to see themselves either socially or culturally in the literature they read, a disconnect occurs for them on some levels, and they tend to disregard it or absorb the message that they do not belong in academia.
Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers extends literature that endorses students’ home language and culture. Respondents have thoughts paralleling Marcela and Eduardo’s:

…[We] can relate to that. We can even really see ourselves rather than just a pretty little blonde girl going through whatever. (Marcela)

It makes you think, Oh! I am part of that! You know, I am part of that culture! (Eduardo)

Making literary connections inspires students like Fernando to not only read more, but while doing so, learn more about their background and in turn read more.

When I arrived here, I knew many facts and many works. [SHNS] helped me understand better the message…I learned more about my heritage. I was like, cool! Let me go read this one!

When students read experiences of others who look and speak like them, they realize that they are not alone:

It helped…to make sense of where we came from. (Francisco)

Recognizing shared experiences through literature, they are encouraged toward dreaming and becoming “actors in their own world” (Shor 43). As Luisa shares,

It helped me…better understand that I am not the only one that has suffered through the same things growing up as a child…because being…just different and not being an English speaker and being a Spanish speaker.

Due to a course of study rich in literature that echoes students’ cultural heritage while enriching contextual vocabulary, students are better able to identify with characters and plot.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers is one of the few classes where Latino students can truly recognize themselves and their home in a school setting. It is then that students realize that they are not alone in the cultural and linguistic struggle as Latinos;

Márquez, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, helped me understand all the struggles they had to go through. (Nilda)

They instead learn to become protagonists in their own stories (histories) of struggle and triumph as Latino pioneers in Northwest Arkansas.
Human Capital of Biliteracy: Identifying with Readings-Seeing Self in Authors’ Success

According to Freire and Macedo, biliteracy is a meshing of the answer to two imperative questions: How do second language learners see themselves as part of their educational system, their community, their social groups, and in literature? And what is their reaction to what they see? (7) When the majority segments of society do not include the minority in education, disallowing them the ability to express their interests and their way of living, the minority are then excluded from the conversation; therefore, without being provided a pathway by which to encounter the answer to those two questions, it is difficult for Latino students to become part of the educational and social conversations. They will not be fully represented nor appropriately react to perceived exclusion.

The act of being biliterate enables Spanish speaking students an outlet for self-expression and encountering self and group-schema. Students find that they can associate authors’ journeys toward success with their own and use it as a springboard for shaping their own journeys;

I felt at home knowing that someone like that did something like that…you know, I am part of that culture and it’s great that someone from my culture did that up here [the United States] in a place where it isn’t part. (Eduardo).

Although they realize that place and time constraints are different, they understand the struggle involved in educational and social self-realization. Luisa gives her perspective:

Francisco Jiménez…I really relate to him a lot. Learning about how he lived and how he suffered and learning about other kids like me and how….different generations go through that.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers class is where Latino students are able to witness, through literature, praise of their parents’ hard labor and see the value in their intelligences even when lack of opportunity leaves many of their parents marginal literates. This
research concurs also with findings summarized in a 2014 interview in *Scholastic Magazine* with author Francisco Jiménez, which show that US Latino authors endeavor to depict parental courage, struggles, hopes, and dreams as part of the American Dream in order for children to understand their own worth, as well as that of their parents.

    Relating to authors and their works allows students to share through self-expression. The SHNS curriculum encourages students to become authors writing about their experiences, answering the questions of belonging. They feel that they are encouraged to react to their environment through conveying their personal journeys;

    I relate to those authors. They were poor and they knew how to write and they were self-taught on how to write and how to like do everything and they ended up being in college and I was like, “I could be one of those, too! I could be someone in life!” (Nilda)

The class then becomes a forum for students to read other students’ literary works and identify with each other, gaining camaraderie;

    Their [the students’] poems would be kind of like their parent’s stories, like how they came over here or their struggle living in this country or adapting here. So, I think that helped me with that, too. (Elizabeth)

Students then understand that they are not alone and are becoming actors in their own history and their own realities by contributing to their own literary cannon of their family beginnings in Northwest Arkansas.

    Through Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes, through finding commonalities with authors and becoming authors themselves, students are given an example of triumph over adversity. They are given the opportunity to take part in the literary cannon, which, for the majority of respondents, is the first time being exposed to literature that mirrors their experiences; it is the first time they are invited to express themselves in their home language about their life experiences;
I learned so much and I really fell in love with Gabriel García Márquez…The guy was like wings. (Alejandra)

Centripetal forces of home language and culture are the connecting forces that pull students toward school. They become the pathway between home and school that garners academic success. Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers in Northwest Arkansas affords students the understandings that are not offered within other curricula. Much of the curricula in other disciplines are commonly forces that pull students away from home language, culture, and, inevitably, away from educational success. Students are able to not only learn about their own home cultures and languages, but are able to understand the plurality within the Latino cultures. They realize that being Latino is much more than their own particular world, but a multicultural myriad. Students’ eyes are opened and their self and group schema is broadened allowing for better understanding of self and home. In turn, students are more able to become an integral part of not only their home community, but of the school and majority language community as well. Through Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers, Latino students are more likely to edify their home language and culture and attain academic accomplishment.

Within the confines of SHNS curriculum, Latino students are given the unique opportunity to study literature written by Latino authors. They are able to see themselves and their family members as protagonists in their community through reading Latino protagonists’ and authors’ life struggles and victories. Students are able to visualize themselves as successful through literary examples. Through reading about the accomplishments of other Latinos, students are able to overcome barriers. They are more apt to understand the connections between bi-literacy and social and academic success, ultimately translating into economic success.
CHAPTER V: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRANSLATIONS

Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter demonstrates how Latino students struggle to manage two worlds: home and school. Latino students, as in the following poetry selections, “Legal Alien” and “University Avenue,” are constantly juggling their multi-faceted lives, all the while negotiating a personal identity that harmoniously brings together the cultural influences of home with those of the dominant society. They endeavor to determine their own self-schema while finding a place for belonging within the varied group-schema of home, school, friends, and community. They want to belong but do not want to lose any essential elements of their lives. This dilemma is exacerbated while fending off feelings of discrimination, scorn, and disregard not only by those of the majority culture, but also many times by those who have the same origins; their own family members. This section portrays how students strive for an approach to literacy much akin to that of Freire and Macedo; a “dialectical relationship between human beings and the world… not merely a technical skill to be acquired, but as a necessary foundation for cultural action for freedom, a central aspect of what it means to be a self and socially constituted agent” (7). They pursue and navigate the precarious and newly forged academic paths on which the majority of Latino students’ family members have not trod.
“Legal Alien”

Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural,
able to slip from "How's life?"
to "Me'stan volviendo loca,"
able to sit in a paneled office
drafting memos in smooth English,
able to order in fluent Spanish
at a Mexican restaurant,
American but hyphenated,
viewed by Anglos as perhaps exotic,
perhaps inferior, definitely different,
viewed by Mexicans as alien,

(their eyes say, "You may speak
Spanish but you're not like me")
an American to Mexicans
a Mexican to Americans
a handy
token
sliding back and forth
between the fringes of both worlds
by smiling
by masking the discomfort
of being pre-judged
Bi-laterally.

(Pat Mora, Chants 60)

“University Avenue”

We are the first
Of our people to walk this path.
We move cautiously
Unfamiliar with the sounds,
Guides for those who follow.
Our people prepared us
With gifts from the land
fire

herbs and song
hierbabuena soothes us into morning
rhythms hum in our blood
abrazos linger round our bodies
cuentos whisper lessons en español.
We do not travel alone.
Our people burn deep within us.

(Pat Mora, Borders 19)

According to Suárez-Orozco et al., students who resist the pressures of cultural and
linguistic submersion into the majority culture and language, without losing home culture and
language, are frequently those considered to be high achievers (2). Students who continuously
resist cultural assimilation become “translation artists,” a term coined by Perez-Firmat for the
identity of first and 1.5 generation Cuban youth (4). This term is one of the most appropriate to
refer to Latino students in Northwest Arkansas. The term “translation artists” is one of
acculturation, transculturation, and biculturation. Students must find their identities while
managing the “transition from one sociocultural environment to another” (Perez-Firmat 4). They
are translators from the linguistic standpoint of *traducir* (translating from one language to another, explaining or clarifying) and pioneers from the topographical standpoint of movement or passage; *traslación*.

**Living in Two Worlds: Biculturation Doesn’t have to be a Bad Thing: Centripetal Forces of Bilingualism and Biculturalism**

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers is a large part of the reason students in Northwest Arkansas do not have to choose between their home and school. It is the catalyst for the dialectical exchange between the cultures and languages through which students navigate daily, and students learn that they are able to maintain a balance between home and majority cultures. It is a sometimes daunting task for many Latino students in Northwest Arkansas. As Juliana expresses:

> [We] young Latinos who grew up in an environment of “Don’t speak Spanish” [at school] but “Don’t forget your Spanish” [at home], it’s like super conflicting…it almost makes me feel, like, incompetent in both languages. You just don’t have confidence to speak either.

Similarly, Graciela says some succumb to the pressures of the majority culture and language, giving up home language and culture in the process:

> It was a love-hate relationship with English and Spanish. I was not being an active participant in my own language and in my own culture…I felt like I had to play that game and be good in English…I really wasn’t being me. It was so tiring and I had the “India María Syndrome”; Ni de aquí, ni de allá (*neither from here nor there*). (Graciela).

Others, like Carla, feel that they should reject the majority culture and language and are confused:

> I was lost between continuing how I came from Mexico or wanting to change according to the culture here.

Students who take Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers and AP Spanish use the best of both cultures and search for an equilibrium, rather than being marginalized by either
They live in “apposition and not opposition” and are able to use all available resources; linguistic, artistic, commercial” (Perez-Firmat 4). They find pride in their ability to balance both worlds. Some respondents, much the same as Ulises, Luisa, and Nicolás, encounter that apposition rather than opposition was the better choice:

When I came here, my dream was to learn English, that is, I could be American. [By] doing this class one is able to continue being Mexican, or wherever you are from, and speak English. (Ulises)

If you identify yourself to be from two places, it’s okay. (Luisa)

Now that I am bicultural, I like to know both cultures both American and Mexican …trying to embrace other peoples’ cultures. (Nicolás)

Along these lines, Adelman-Reyes points to biliteracy and biculturalism as a “dynamic process…a two-way transfer of knowledge” (8) Students, like Juliana, say that it blurs the boundaries between the cultures in which students live:

You want to fit in, wanting to know your culture and wanting to keep with Spanish doesn’t mean you’re not fitting in. It doesn’t mean you’re trying to alienate the American side…there’s not a side, really. It’s all a blur, it’s a blur. It’s not a bad thing.

García claims that when those borders are less divisive, students are able to cross between them more fluidly because the emotional costs aren’t as great, and the lack of fixed cultural borders therefore becomes, as Shor states, a liberating factor in students’ ability to have a successful dialectical relationship with both worlds (183). SHNS class encourages students to enter into and continually strive for that dialectical relationship by, as Marcela explains,

…making us proud, making us feel comfortable and fall in love with our culture…. how do we balance that weird spot trying to be American and trying to be Hispanic…to coexist.

Similarly, Vicente and Tomás agree that SHNS allows for students to search these borders within their home culture and language and the Spanish speaking world while becoming adept in that of the majority:
It allowed me to have that kind of hybrid culture. Those classes helped me to be okay to have a mixture of both. (Vicente)

…[B]ecause if I am learning about my culture, I also wanted to learn about the [other] culture that I am learning. (Tomás)

Latino students in Northwest Arkansas SHNS classes become proficient in both their home language and the majority language and are more apt to excel academically than those who are not.

Zhou’s (“Growing Up American”) research on the role of Vietnamese communities in promoting the adaptation of Vietnamese American young people, shows that when children are bilingual, they have access to support systems in both at school and at home. Because they are able to express themselves fully and are able to understand fully in both languages, they are able to receive, and understand, the appropriate emotional feedback; their support systems are thus stronger, allowing for students to be more resilient and successful both at home and at school. For example, Fernando says,

It helped me be more confident of being able to read better, to write better and to even speak it and learn different words in Spanish that I may not know when I’m talking to my parents… It helps.

Belita and Irma express like opinions:

You are able to interact in two languages…helps you to feel more confident in what you are saying and you don’t have to be afraid of making mistakes…They’ll understand me in English or Spanish. (Belita)

It makes me feel good. I can actually say that I am bilingual; have a good conversation…in both English and Spanish. (Irma)

Cummins (“Bilingual Children’s Mother Tongue”) contends that developing students’ home language along with the majority language allows for students to compare and contrast language and culture. Because of such development, students are then able to capitalize on their
understanding for better performance in all aspects of their lives, maintaining their family ties while valuing academic success. Many respondents’ comments resemble Fernando’s sentiment:

I’m a very well rounded American and being a Latino, it kind of combined them together; It just kind of made me be more proud of being able to do the same two different things at the same time.

Living in Two Worlds: Biculturation Doesn’t have to be a Bad Thing: Navigating Education for 1st Generation Post-Secondary Attendance

Adult immigrants, according to Zhou, view their level of adaptation through employment successes and income growth, while young immigrants view their level of adaptation through academic success and performance. The likelihood of student success in secondary school and attending post-secondary school are directly affected by the knowledge and orientations of all that is required of them to achieve such goals.

Most Latino Northwest Arkansans do not have a history of post-secondary attendance; therefore, the expectation for attendance is low and not customary; consequently, parents and students alike need to be informed about attending college. Luisa expresses,

In my family none of them went to college before me, and so I just figured I wouldn’t go either.

Similarly, Fernando says:

…[C]oming to the U.S., most people come here to work, but then you don’t follow that line, you take your separate path and go to college.

Parents must be able to visualize their student attending a post-secondary institution. Their cooperation and support is essential, as Mario states,

I didn’t really have confidence. I didn’t have anyone in my family in college. I ran into some really great people that believed in me when I really didn’t know what I was doing.

Latino students and their parents alike, in NWA are aware that post-secondary education is available, but feel that there are little efforts by the community to help them be made aware of
the available educational opportunities or how to maneuver the educational system. As Vicente and Fernando both express:

I was the first one to graduate from high school, here in the U.S., so I didn’t know what steps need to be followed. (Vicente)

Being a first-generation college…going to be a college student…my parents didn’t know what went into going. (Fernando)

According to Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) (2014), a national program overseen by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to diminish racial and ethnic health discrepancies and issues among African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders, without this knowledge, parents are unable to help their students navigate the educational system and attain success. Clarisa puts it this way:

…[M]y parents would never be like, “Are you taking AP? Are you taking college [courses]?” Because they are uninformed, and they are not sure what the school has to offer us.

Although parents are willing to help students succeed within the educational system; many schools misjudge and do not understand parents’ interest, motivation, and potential contributions. This quandary demonstrates how a view of education as an abstraction--rather than something concrete and reachable—is constructed. The lack of knowledge of how parents and teachers can communicate to clear a practical path toward higher education excludes Northwest Arkansas students and their parents from acquiring the necessary behaviors and attitudes that make post-secondary attendance achievable.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers, as well as Advanced Placement Spanish classes, in NWA are the means by which students like Manuel, Juliana, and Marisol receive information vital for understanding and plotting a course of study:
I didn’t know how to prepare myself…I didn’t know how to express myself or how to enroll myself or how to get documentation…then those classes help you. (Manuel)

[Teachers] walked us through it, like, saying, “Okay, look, if you want to do this, you have to do x, y and z. If you want to do this, then be sure to do this.” (Juliana)

They get you prepared for the real world and what it’s supposed to be like. (Marisol)

Students rely on SHNS educators for guidance and direction. As Mario states,

I didn’t really have confidence. I didn’t have anyone in my family in college. I ran into some really great people that believed in me when I really didn’t know what I was doing.

A few respondents, like Emiliano, express that post-secondary attendance was not part of the conversation in other classes they attended during secondary education:

I think Spanish class was actually the only time I heard about going to college. Like, in any other class…no one taught you, like, what it took, what classes you needed to take. You had to go find out by yourself…I wasn’t as scared at approaching college.

At times, it was a lack of support from educators in other disciplines, and other times it was a lack of linguistic means for explanation to parents. Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes are the response to both linguistic means of explanation and support.

Playing the role as communicational link between home and school, Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes forge common ground for understanding between parents and educational pathways. As Isabel describes,

Well, I knew that there were people out there that were able to talk to my parents about the information that they needed to know for me to go to college.

Bilingual teachers are also able to improve parental involvement in their student's educational environment. SHNS classes have become a mode of communication between home and school, not only of school sponsored events, but of information concerning post-secondary education as well;
They helped me to be more…knowledgeable of what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go…They helped me get a better idea of what I needed to do and what I needed to get done to pursue university study and if I didn’t have that, I’d just kind of be in the dark, going blind, of what I needed to do…trial and error pretty much to go to the university. (Fernando)

Many times, this communication constructs a bonding measure for trust and collaboration which, in turn enhances communication of student goals and vision and connects them to curricular offerings and post-secondary attendance;

Most [SHNS] teachers or advisors would put themselves, like, on the line and go talk to the parents and try to convince to let the kids go to school and I think I’m very grateful for that. (Elena)

As part of the Arkansas Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers Curriculum Frameworks, SHNS students research occupations and the post-secondary educational requirements necessary to fulfill them. For Latino students, this is the beginning of visualizing their future academic career; thus, SHNS classes are the foundation for Advanced Placement Spanish classes. They become the vehicle by which NWA Latino students first become conscious of the classes available that aid in their secondary success and, subsequently, the steps for post-secondary attendance;

This type of class is a preparation for what is coming…in case you want to continue studying your bachelor’s, your master’s or maybe your doctorate. (Manuel)

Following such processes unlocks mindset barriers and becomes part of students’ self-schema and determination. Clarisa expresses such determination:

I’m Latina, I’m Latino but we’re first generation. We can do this! I’m Latina going to college!

As does Sergio,

“Wow! College is actually something I could do”…one little spark to make a kid realize…it becomes his vocabulary…
Students attend post-secondary institutions because they and their parents have had the opportunity to learn and understand. Much like Juliana’s determination led her to seek more understanding:

“Okay, I really want to go to college and I need to go to college” [changed] to “I am going to college…Now which one am I going to?”

Because of the efforts of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers teachers and curriculum, Northwest Arkansas Latino respondents are assured that they “are not alone,” as the poem University Avenue by Pat Mora concludes, “Our people burn deep within us” and most go with familial blessings (19).

**Human Capital of Involvement: Connections between Clubs and Community Activities and Home Language and Culture**

Linking home and school is one of the more difficult tasks in the education of Northwest Arkansas Latino students. Ramos and Kasper point out Latinos’ value of family plays a significant role in determining models of volunteerism (4). When home and school are not connected, students tend to reject education. A cycle then begins of lack of social capital causing lack of self-development and therefore a lack of visualizing future achievements. According to Freire and Macedo, when students feel that their home and educational environments are pieced together, they are more likely to become part of supportive activities, become more reflective, and think more critically;

It was a good way for different cultures within the Hispanic community to speak about their cultures… It helped me to relate. (Francisco)

Latinos, Hispanics is such a growing population at our school, and you’re trying to reach the community to tell them that there is a way for you to succeed. And knowing that you are able to communicate with them is such a great opportunity for you to grow as a leader and try to teach other people about it. (Nicolás)
Sipe states that reinforcing community involvement enhances students’ positive view of cultural diversity (86). As Nicolás discloses,

> When you try to be part of cultural activities around school that are part of your culture, it helps you to learn more about other people and then trying to share that kind of culture with other students that are not part of your culture.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes strive to engage students into creating connections with their own culture. When this occurs, students tend to become involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, as well as community service, allowing students to become leaders within their community and make the connections with their families and community both linguistically and culturally. Marisol offers,

> When you’re in Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers, you feel at home, you feel comfortable to bringing out the leader inside of you, saying, “If I can do this kind of things and these actions, then maybe I can actually go out there and help on another bigger scale”.

Home language growth is encouraged along with educational language growth (Lutz), strengthening the community voice and inspiring students and their families toward involvement. Graciela and Elena share their experiences:

> I had a greater understanding because of those cultural events. We got to do a lot more in the community. (Graciela)

> I dragged my dad all the way to Springdale to pass out flyers for a rally. I felt like, “Okay, I am not alone, we’re good”. Teaming up together and going through the crowd passing out these flyers was awesome. (Elena)

A culmination of shared resources creates greater emphasis on mutual respect and learning, which in turn creates acceptance of the common culture of learning that students then accept;

> I was able to feel confident enough to go ahead and be really involved. (Iris)

> I think that a lot of the people that were in these Spanish classes began branching out and seeking other clubs. (Francisco)
We actually assisted/organized leadership summits. (Belita)

**Human Capital of Involvement: Giving Back to Community**

Much like Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, for respondents, giving back to the community is a visible motivation for deriving importance from education and experience and to be active in what we find significant (73); therefore, as Delpit found, parents of immigrant children want their children to become formally educated to become proud and caring participants in their communities. As Mario describes,

It goes back to valuing that and taking it back into the community and being able to communicate it with my relatives.

Latinos tend to focus on family and community first and seek to resolve challenges within their immediate community circles (Pardoe; Ramos 147); in this way, Latino volunteerism is not as recognizable as conventional giving because it tends to be more personalized and less formal. Francisco states,

It helped me to want to get into a career that possibly helping people within my community or culture…getting a career would help them out, too.

Latinos in Northwest Arkansas have a strong will to succeed, and are very aware of the barriers that confront them in order to be successful. For young Latinos, success means having a college degree, a career and a family, and a way of impacting their community. Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes afford Latino students opportunities, such as “the platform to meet people and get out there and to become something for the community” (Marisol).

Students are encouraged to learn about not only their home language and cultures, but are challenged to learn about the cultures within the community in which they live. Through learning the importance of language and culture within the confines of the SHNS curriculum, students become,
Encouraged… to always tell others how important we are and how important we are to the community and in the growth of NWA. (Isabel)

More empowered…proactive…being like that spokesperson through my actions and a spokesperson for my culture. (Graciela)

One of the main avenues to get people to hear my story…I had a bigger purpose in myself…I stopped feeling like I was doing this whole thing by myself. (Emiliano)

Twenty-two respondents, after taking Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes and being involved in school and community activities, felt a great pull to give back to their families and their community by various means and in various ways. The majority, twenty-six respondents, similar to Nicolás, chose to attend post-secondary institutions in order to become role models of success,

[To] be a part of the community by…showing them that you attend college…have a better life and try to…show what you have done in your life and tell that there’s a way that you can do it.

In agreement with Nicolás, others want to give back:

In order to give back, I decided to go on into education, to be a role model for these kids that are gonna be coming in the future and hopefully open up their eyes and say, “If he can do it, then so can I”. (Sergio)

I wanted to go to school, because in a way I wanted to be able to make a difference in the community. Not just be the voter, but be the person people are voting for. (Elena)

Seeing that I could achieve more in life…that I could be someone and make a change in my community that has such a big Hispanic population…If I grow, then maybe they will grow and help each other. (Eduardo)

**Visualizing Success: Discovering Successful Self in Life Stories and Success of Guest Speakers and Mentors**

According to mentoring.org, a website that charts the academic gains of mentoring on youth, young adults who were at risk for failing but had a mentor were more likely to enroll in college, volunteer, and maintain leadership positions.
It is important for Latino students in Northwest Arkansas to envision their group-schema as positive. As the first in most of their families in the United States to attain high school graduation and go on to post-secondary education, it is of utmost importance to view themselves, and their community, in a positive light;

I was able to be proud of myself and learn English at the same time. At first I thought I had to do one or the other. I would hear successful people come in with an accent and I was like, “Oh, well, that doesn’t keep you from getting a job”. (Sergio)

Along these lines, Howard points to the conclusion that, the more affirmative the status and the social situation, the more important students feel about themselves (368). Iris confirms,

Being able to see individuals that you know are from some country in Latin America, I think that helps a lot being able to see people that you can identify with and aspire to be.

The implementation of guest speakers and mentors permits immigrant students to see themselves in the successful lives of other Latinos. Eduardo articulates his perspective:

You know what they went through; all of that to achieve their goals and that you can have that experience, it just…becomes self-motivating to do more things and to volunteer as well…to be a guest speaker and just to pass it on.

For Marisol,

They planted the seed.

Since the vast majority of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers and AP Spanish teachers are not Latinos, the role of successful Latino guest speakers is paramount to Latino students’ discovery of self-success. Irma relates,

I remember Rafael Arciga coming over every few months to talk about the University of Arkansas. Here’s a guy who’s bilingual and he’s at the top and I’m like, “Okay, if he can do it, then I can do it, or anybody can do it.” So it was a little inspirational knowing him and seeing him and a few others getting to where a lot of us don’t get.
Mentoring allows for endless perspectives on the opportunities afforded them following school. Mentors and guest speakers, through their advocacy aid in navigating academia and professionality. They offer confidence and encouragement to undertake new challenges:

Seeing role models, being able to know that there is people that are able to understand you in the system or in the schools to create that ladder. (Iris)

To meet Rafael Arciga; to see what he is doing in the position that he is in now, inspired me to come to college…to better myself and one day perhaps to be like him. (Tomás)

Providing mentors and guest speakers is a means by which Latinos and Non-Latinos (i.e. bilingual Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers) alike pave the way for trusted and meaningful relationships, which in turn develops into a two-way transfer of experience and perspective. Mentors and guest speakers give representative information and viewpoints that are not available in the SHNS curriculum. Carla offers,

Guest speakers that had to do with the history of Latinos in the United States…that interested me and I wanted to know more.

**Visualizing Success: Connecting Campus Visits to Success of Self and Community**

Latino parents in Northwest Arkansas lack the experience necessary to guide students toward post-secondary education. In order for children of immigrants to understand the opportunities to generate paths for post-secondary education, it is essential to provide Latino students with a better understanding of the post-secondary system and how to finance their education. Elena shares her own revelation:

Our visit to the U of A many of us had never gone, we have most… Latinos whenever I was growing up hadn’t gone past the Fayetteville mall. That was your endpoint into Fayetteville. You did not go past that point because there’s nothing to see after that. That’s what we were told or understood, and so the fact that we went to the U of A and I was likes “This exists? Where are we?” I did not even know where we were… and I just had never seen that side of town and now after that I knew where it was and I knew that it was so close.
Along these lines, availing students with faculty members, staff, and students from similar backgrounds who share their experiences, as well as financial aid opportunities, allows for clear expectations of post-secondary attendance (Adams 18-19). Additionally, they can be provided with some direction as to which courses should be taken during high school, allowing for easier transitions for both the students and their families. Fernando shares,

Being a first generation college student…I didn’t, my parents didn’t know what went into going, so doing campus visits helped me to get a better perspective.

The National Conference of State Legislatures in 2012 found that effective outreach, which provides information to parents in the home language as to how to prepare for college and financial aid options, help parents and students alike understand how to afford education and lays out the support roles for families of students attending college. Isabel discloses,

They always had speakers that were from the colleges and they gave us information about how we get started, how to take the ACT and what all we needed to do. There was information in Spanish for our parents…so our parents could be informed. I wasn’t afraid of going there…someone could help my parents.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes are the catalysts for the development of connections between families and educational systems. In Northwest Arkansas, SHNS classes disseminate information and develop support systems between school and home. For many students, their only campus visit is arranged through Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers. It is also the only opportunity to get a firsthand perspective of college life and have important questions answered. Iris explains it this way:

They helped me to be more knowledgeable of what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go. They helped me get a better idea of what I needed to do and what I needed to get done to pursue university study. And if I didn’t have that, I’d just kind of be in the dark, going blind, of what I needed to do…trial and error…to go to the university.

Integral to maintaining a bond between academics and home is the easement of pressure on the students to choose between the two. Latino students in Northwest Arkansas are able to
navigate bilingualism and biculturalism easier with the aid of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes. They learn that it is advantageous to preserve both languages. They learn that it is acceptable to maintain an equilibrium between the two languages and cultures, so much so that they are encouraged to become fluid in their translation between home language and cultures and the majority language and cultures at home as at school. Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes include room for guest speakers and college campus visits with Latino students and community members who have successfully overcome barriers and obstacles, achieving social, educational, and economic success. Training and encouraging such fluidity and equilibrium through involvement in community, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities enhances self-discovery and establishes a network of like-minded cohorts who embolden Latino students toward higher education and career orientation.

For most Latino students, a by-product of involvement and success is the ability to give back to their community and to reach out to others to help them become leaders through volunteerism and service. Although Latino students had the desire to lend their talents and time to their community and help others attain success, before acquiring their biliteracy skills and the confidence procured from positive experiences and role-models, students did not feel equipped or empowered to do so.
CHAPTER VI: A SPACE FOR FREEDOM

Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter discusses how classroom culture incorporates positive use of space and time to develop constructive relationships that reflect and value diversity, culture, and language. Positive relationships are the springboard for collaboration and cooperation.

“Mi Problema”

| My sincerity isn’t good enough.  | make me look bad,       |
| Eyebrows raise                  | dumb.                  |
| when I request:                 | “Maybe she wanted to be white |
| “Hable más despacio, por favor.” | like THEM.”            |
| My skin is brown                | white like them and that is bad. |
| just like theirs,               | I keep my flash card hidden |
| but now I’m unworthy of the color| a practice cassette tape  |
| ‘cause I don’t speak Spanish    | not labeled            |
| the way I should.               | ‘cause I am ashamed.  |
| Then they laugh and talk about  | I “should know better” |
| Mi problema                      | They tell me           |
| in the language I stumble over… | “Spanish is in your blood.” |

(My sincere attempts)

Through an uplifting classroom culture where communication is respected and open, students are able to learn nomos. According to Scherff and Spector, nomos are the implicit socio-cultural-economic based rules that are enforced in the classroom that give advantage to some who understand those rules and a disadvantage to others that do not have like backgrounds. Lack of awareness of unspoken classroom rules cause some students to be constantly reprimanded and punished if they do not understand such rules.

Providing and maintaining a space for freedom of thought, expression and reflection creates, in turn, a space where students feel free to question and internalize knowledge that their social, economic or cultural backgrounds might not supply. Creating a space for freedom for Latinos in Northwest
Arkansas within the public school systems allows for Latino students to make mistakes while speaking Spanish and not feel “ashamed” and as if they had “mi problema,” as in the introductory poem. When students are offered a space for comprehension of likeness and differences between Latino cultures, students are more apt to learn the unspoken rules and question them, to question and understand the majority culture while honing leadership capabilities and receiving encouragement to practice them in a safe environment of co-curricular and extracurricular activities all while making connections with home, community, and school.

**Centripetal Forces of Classroom Culture and Community: Edification of Home Language and Culture**

“If you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity. I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself” (Anzaldúa 81). The classroom setting is a space that either promotes home language and culture or hinders them. When home language is not endorsed by the school district and within the classroom, Latino students are refused mechanisms of reflection, critical thinking, and interaction with peer and family structures, making it difficult to construct and reconstruct their own culture and history within that of the majority language and cultures;

I was taking a lot of English classes, so, you know, you feel like you lose a little of your language from the past and it [SHNS] makes sure you kind of keep it with you. (Nicolás)

In school, usually when you are in ESL (English as a Second Language), they tell you, “Don’t be speaking Spanish. You need to be practicing your English” and stuff like that… But, um, when you’re in Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers, you feel at home. (Marisol)

When it came to us talking about culture in school, I feel didn’t take place very often in my other classes… the culture piece, it made me appreciate what I had back home. (Mario)

I had never taken a class that presents this type of information… It has helped me reflect on my culture. (Tomás)
Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes in Northwest Arkansas forge such mechanisms for Latino students. Modes of communication stressed in the curriculum—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational—encourage students to express themselves in a way that make personal connections with their language and history. Manuel expresses,

It [SHNS] helped me better understand my parents’ generation before; “Why did you have this fear?” I realized things that were never even mentioned in my country. …understanding why my parents’ culture and their family acted like that. It is for the simple reason…it’s from history’s side and from a cultural side and it is all connected with language.

And Juana has a similar sentiment:

I found that I was kind of forgetting my Spanish. And to me that is really important because that's my roots. So I didn't want to forget, so you know, I kind of took my initiative to take Spanish classes in hopes to not only better my Spanish but maybe, you know, learn new things, um, new words or vocabulary that I haven't heard at home. Um and just, it just, to better remember and be able to communicate with, you know, still my, my culture and hold my culture and my roots, kind of, close to me.

Building bridges for students through language and cultural expressions is the means by which they are able to maintain familial connections and a base of communication with both nuclear and extended family. It is a sentiment shared amongst many of the respondents:

It brought to light things I never noticed. It’s so easy for us to lose ourselves in the American culture and for us to shy away from speaking Spanish. (Marisol)

It [SHNS] gave you ample opportunity for experience with reading, writing, speaking, and listening. (Carmen)

It [SHNS] made me want to ask more questions from my family; our family lines and background and stuff like literature…I got more answers. (Francisco)

Such connections foster intellectual realization as well as visualization of future careers that will affect the welfare of not only students’ families, but that of their community;

The fact that many of us don’t have, um, the motivation to go on further beyond that just high school…it gave us that confidence to go on and know that we can reach out with the possibilities that are out there and we can connect to ourselves…which helped me develop my language, speak it better, and then, not only that, but motivate me to go on
further beyond and keep learning my language…to be a role model for these kids that are gonna be coming in and the future. (Sergio)

Centripetal Forces of Classroom Culture and Community: Finding Voice through Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Student voice is fundamental in developing affirmation of self-worth. Strengthening students’ home language is the first step to the legitimization and development of that voice. Juliana states,

The more confident you are in it, the more you’re willing to use it; speaking, writing, reading, singing…It gave me the ability to advocate for myself.

According to Hornberger and Link, educational institutions can be the place that provides safe environments where students are free to use language creatively and negotiate varied positions in an academic way (85). When this space is provided, students are able to process language in all registers: standard, regional and slang. Isabel offers,

I picked up a lot of stuff from my Spanish classes that I didn’t know how to do properly…enunciate and how to do grammar. I learned how to spell better put things in sentences better and put sentences in a better way [and] feel more comfortable in my language.

Through such building blocks, students learn to use their voice in a multitude of situations. They then are capable contributors in their home, in their schools, and in their communities. Educators who design curriculum and conditions for emergent student voices are creating student realization;

I think it also made it easier in English to speak up, and, you know, if you’re working for something to let them know what your purpose is. It made it easier for me to go out into the public, in this case, being the Hispanic community, and speaking to them in Spanish letting them know how important it is to register to vote and stuff like that. (Francisco)

In Northwest Arkansas’ educational institutions, such is not always the case outside of the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers’ classroom. Many times, students are encouraged
to speak only English and are seldom asked about their home cultures and traditions. Graciela expresses,

It was okay for me to use it [Spanish] in the way that I speak Spanish at home and with my friends…it made me more comfortable with who I was in my own culture…We are history and we’re creating it and sometimes it’s only being seen by us as individuals rather than appreciated by everyone else.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers provides room for linguistic and cultural growth. Students learn standard Spanish while maintaining regionalisms and slang; therefore, students are free to practice and make mistakes in their home language while honing skills that pave the way for positive self-schema and self-realization. Various respondents feel similarly:

I’ll switch back and forth between English and Spanish, and its okay! (Benita)

It has helped me find myself. [It] helped me find my own identity. (Luisa)

It made me proud of who I am with that class; it reaffirmed me. (Fernando)

It was okay for you to have an accent on your last name. (Iris)

It encouraged you to show your identity…not to be afraid of who you are and to speak for yourself and not to hide. (Nilda)

Students’ success in home language pervades all aspects of their academic, social and home lives. Students feel the credibility to share their language and culture with others within and outside of their immediate surroundings, culture, and even their social register. Students are then able to join in on social debates and aid others in finding their voice through involvement and linguistic maintenance. The way Iris views it,

It gives credibility to your language, language like institutionalized wise. Like Spanish Honor Society. It gave prestige to my language that sometimes, whenever you’re growing up are like, “Oh, don’t use that language because it’s the one that is not used here. It’s not the appropriate one”. It showed me that Spanish is something that you can have. It can have prestige. It can have academic value. And that is something I haven’t seen before.
Centripetal Forces of Classroom Culture and Community: Links between School, Home and Community

Family lifestyles and the social atmosphere in which children are raised determine their exposure to acculturation and enculturation (Quintana and Scull 85). These are influences that directly determine a child’s educational and social success within the majority culture. Language, for immigrant children is tied more intimately to home traditions, families, and communities, rather, the ties that reinforce values of academic achievement; therefore, advancement of home language skills and academic achievement are related. Santos says,

I think it gives me confidence being able to speak to my parents and people at church. Parents want their children to know their home language and cultural values as well as those of the majority culture. Luisa indicates,

I learned a lot of traditions that I never really paid attention to growing up. I was able to talk to my parents and I was able to ask them “Why?” I didn’t have the heart to do it until I started taking Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers.

Children, when forced to choose between home language and majority language, and are not encouraged to resolve the two, feel a tug-of-war between school and home and either choose the majority language, breaking ties with family traditions and culture, or resist it and establish a cycle of at-risk academic achievement;

There was a lot of emphasis on our cultural traditions; “Tell someone what your mom does” made it more valuable. We didn’t just learn about ourselves, we learned about our families. (Elena)

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers is a neutral ground where students are not forced to choose, or feel forced to choose, between home and school. It is praises home culture while initiating students into the majority culture. Luisa comments,

It helped me get connected and get closer to my parents. I really didn’t know where they were coming from and it was really hard to connect with them. It helped with my foundation in Spanish and it helped me get closer to my parents.
Teaching students that all cultures matter is primary in reinforcing the link between home, school, and community;

My teachers always told me, “We need more Latino teachers, because they see you and you will be as a role model for others”, encouraged us to always tell others how important we are and how important we are to the community and in the growth of Northwest Arkansas…not to be just another Latino. (Isabel)

SHNS creates a comfortable link between family and school where students are encouraged to thrive and to be successful in both English and Spanish and in all cultures, as these respondents share of their experiences: Emilia and Juliana reveal;

Latinos/Hispanics is such a growing population at our school and you’re trying to reach the community to tell them that there is a way for you to succeed. And knowing that you were able to communicate with them is such a great opportunity for you to grow… (Emilia)

Subtly, but at the same time, very loudly and apparent [SHNS] let us know, like do not forget your culture. It’s important. It’s who you are. It’s nothing bad. It’s beautiful! Praise it and love it! (Juliana)

**Human Capital of Likeness: Empowerment through Commonalities**

According to Umaña adolescents who identify ethnically but are provided necessary means to detach themselves from the impact of negative information they receive are less likely to succumb to pressures-- implicit or explicit--that make them feel they have to choose the majority culture and language and more likely to adjust and accept their biculturalism (73);

It was very hard for me to say that I was Hispanic or say I was Mexican because I didn’t know anyone from there. Spanish class helped me find myself; helped me find my own identity. (Luisa)

Peer groups and friendships are psychologically significant during adolescence because, as García found, students must navigate through the varied cultures of heritage, educational institutions, and social groups (89). As Marisol observes,
I have learned that you can make connections through anyone or anything you talk about…your culture might be the only thing you have in common with someone to communicate with them.

Encouraging students to find similarities and commonalities amongst students and peer groups is important for teacher-student collaboration and encourages peer bonding which is crucial to adjustment and achievement. Belita offers the following on this idea:

I saw all my classmates and I could see myself closer to them because we were similar and we had a lot in common and many goals in common.

Friendships are particularly important for students who come from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds because they act as counselors and promote language growth and validation. Belita says,

[O]ther kids, just like me, spoke Spanish at home, but they didn’t practice it in school…[this] helped me to identify with them and be able to continue on and want to learn.

When students facilitate each other in the realization of their potential, group-schema grows.

Such educational support for students’ home language skills conveys appreciation of their linguistic capital and develops a foundation for educational success;

Us young Latinos who grew up in an environment of “Don’t speak Spanish”, or in a household of “You need to learn English. You need to learn English…but don’t forget your Spanish…Talk to me in Spanish.” It is super conflicting dealing with parents and school. It makes me feel incompetent in both languages and you just don’t have the confidence to speak either. [Being] surrounded by people in similar situations is encouraging. Knowing that somebody really believes in us, somebody who really cares about you. It was just a big push to, again, fill that gap of “I have to do this. Because I can…There’s people around me, my friends, my awesome teacher”…and I feel like most of us went to college. (Juliana)

Latino students in Northwest Arkansas find that peer relationships that are founded in similarities and acceptance of differences through Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes are the foundation for trust and for academic attainment;
They are motivating you. You are surrounded by positive people; people with a vision. (Manuel)

We do come together. It’s what makes us stronger and more united. (Irma)

Because a family atmosphere is encouraged and camaraderie is extended, students’ respect for others and their self is heightened. The coalescence of students from diverse Latino cultures and languages throughout Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers and Advanced Placement Spanish classes founded cooperation, collaboration, and a reinforcement of enthusiasm for maintaining home culture and language. Elena experiences,

It [SHNS] made it easier for us not to be so nervous with each other. It’s the same people. Since it was a very small class most of the time you got close with those people.

Students also propel each other toward educational advancement and later success;

In the group one feels like, how are you going to sit there in the group and say that you are not going to continue [education]? If you are part of a group in which everyone is pushing themselves and one another. (Manuel)

Students, much like Alejandra, do not fear linguistic humiliation or cultural berating which consequently engenders self-worth and confidence.

It would allow you to embrace who you are and make you more confident enough to not be ashamed of who you are just based on your skin color.

Students are therefore more adept at evaluating and creating success from a myriad of vantage points. As Francisco shares

Activities involved the whole class and in that class we were almost like family, so it was just a matter of everybody bringing in what they knew; their different ideas.

**Human Capital of Likeness: Impact of Support System in the Classroom**

A curriculum that endorses appreciation of differences amongst students causes critical negotiation, and community based on trust and collaboration to thrive, improving the quality of education and student life (Freire and Macedo 59). The classroom, for many language minority
students, is their social network and provides stability and strategies for coping with negative attitudes that show preference to English over other languages;

In your normal classes, that didn’t really give you an opportunity to really speak about or relate and converse with people that shared the same or similar cultures. When you live and grow up here you don’t know how to share…being in those classes [SHNS] over time made you comfortable to speak about it and relate with your classmates. (Francisco)

Managing the pressures to leave home language behind and establishing confidence in first language literacy in a monolingual environment is a key role for the classroom setting. In Marisol’s experience,

Feeling comfortable in that environment where people were more open to share their ideas gives you the sense of comfort…confidence in yourself and then wanting to try new things.

The classroom should be expressly arranged so that students may become actively engaged in learning. When this type of learning occurs, the classroom becomes a catalyst for interpretive alliances amongst students. Through constructive relationships, students learn the valuable potential of literacy skills as a weapon for academic success;

Being with other their kids, just like me, spoke Spanish at home, but they didn’t practice it in school helped me to identify with them and to be able to continue on and want to learn more. (Belita)

When educators create mechanisms of academic success for Spanish speaking students with experiences resembling that of Francisco, they reinforce a culture of peers who honor home language and will support each other throughout their school years;

I think it was a combination of different motivational factors, that, even if we didn’t directly tell each other, we were motivating each other. I think the fact of just wanting to seek higher education and coming from the same classes, really getting to know each other, building a rapport, I think that was also a combination of motivation to want to seek higher education. (Francisco)

Spanish speaking students have been afforded a unique and profound support system through the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum in Northwest Arkansas.
Teachers endeavor to create a space of camaraderie and sharing for their students. An environment where students feel comfortable to speak their home language and practice their home cultures highlights strengths that Latino students bring to school. Emiliano gives his views:

I remember in classes being told I couldn’t speak Spanish. When I went to my Spanish class, there was a lot of freedom in those classes to be yourself. I was free. I could use the mannerisms that I wanted to use. I would talk to my friends however without feeling odd. And so it just allowed me to be myself and be, feel unique.

Connecting Latino students with SHNS faculty who appreciate the knowledge gleaned from home life and cultural education as well as students’ intelligences and capacity for learning forges connections and mutually respectful alliances which carry them throughout their lives. Springing out of mutually respectful friendships are comfortable conversations and questions about post-secondary education, career possibilities, and understanding of social mores that are not broached at home or in mainstream classes. The impact on students is invaluable erasing feelings of social and educational alienation;

It was not the material itself. It was making the connections with the right people and having the right friends and meeting wonderful people that really persuaded me to go to college. It made a difference. (Alejandra)

We were always together. We all took SHNS and AP Spanish the next year then our senior year, we took AP Spanish Lit. So, we felt like we had a place somewhere…It also gave us a support group. Knowing that you belong somewhere and know that people you know, people that care for you throughout all of those classes. We all stayed together and we all had each other as a support system that really pushed us to go to college. “What college are you applying to?”, “What class are you going to take?”, and “What are you going to get your degree in?” We helped each other out. (Clarisa)

**Identifying Success: Motivational Forces toward Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities**

Involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities strengthens the link between students and school and helps them refrain from negative behaviors while promoting individuality and belonging, resulting in positive choices in and outside of the classroom
(Brown; Lewis). Much like Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH), schools where students are encouraged to participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, develop deeper peer affiliations and relationships and, in turn, less absenteeism, higher grades, and are more apt to attend college.

According to Peguero in the United States, Latino students and those who struggle with English proficiency participate less often in extra-curricular activities (68). Their apprehension about understanding proceedings and lack of translators deters their confidence in participation;

I had a teacher that told me to join clubs, but I didn’t. I didn’t feel that I fit in that kind of club. I was learning English and the majority was in English. I didn’t feel that I had the ability to belong because I didn’t understand a lot. (Carla)

Along these lines, Pequero (69) and Cummins (“Bilingual Children’s Mother Tongue”) indicate that students who are not provided or invited to participate in activities miss out on an important resource for social interaction with peers and academic realization. Lack of classroom involvement is a result of lack of participation in students who are left out of activities.

Encouraging Latino students toward involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, although not part of the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum is widely practiced by Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers educators in Northwest Arkansas. Belita and Carmen share similar experiences:

My Spanish classes actually helped me to become more involved in my extra-curricular activities. (Belita)

She [the teacher] was really awesome as far as encouraging to participate in extra-curricular activities. She offered a lot of different opportunities for people to be a part of something that identified with their culture. (Carmen)

Teachers advocate and promote participation in activities that are extensions of Spanish classes as well as participation in activities that are of interest to students or will help students in their future academic endeavors and later careers. Clarisa explains,
We got informed through this class how to get involved in our community.

Emiliano feels likewise,

I was encouraged to be in the Spanish Honor Society, but it required me to do community service. I didn’t really have a lot of transportation. The easiest thing I could do was stay involved in soccer.

Isabel concurs,

[One teacher] encouraged me to try out for cheer and pom. Her daughter helped me learn dances and techniques. [Another teacher] encouraged me to be part of Student Council, so I ran for secretary. I didn’t get in, but it allowed me to help other people involved because I knew how to do it; the process.

Latino students reap the benefits of educators’ efforts through gaining confidence to branch out into the community. They use the experience garnered through extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in a school or after school setting to reach out to their families and fellow community members as part of an effort to improve their surroundings and to better the lives of their younger family and community members.

We were encouraged to grow even more as a native speaker and keep learning in clubs and be active and learn about culture; they [teachers] teach us, and then we teach them [youth] and so it’s like a never-ending circle. (Marisol)

Identifying Success: Motivational forces toward Advanced Placement (AP) and other Advanced Classes

Advanced Placement classes inspire Latino students, like Emiliano, toward cohesive classmate relationships. They afford students an intellectual environment of collaboration and forward thought;

It [AP Spanish] just took away the fear that I had. I used to think of AP as being something that only smart kids took.

Participants are careful to maintain above average grades and higher academic ambitions and mutually encourage one another toward realization of goals;
It [college] became part of my conversation from being in AP Spanish classes. They [other students] started asking me, “What school do you want to go to?” and then eventually I started looking at colleges. I believe it was how it became part of my vocabulary. (Emiliano)

According to Shiu, Kettler, and Johnsen higher level literacy and vocabulary skills are acquired that lead to success in other Advanced Placement classes as well as post-secondary education attendance and graduation (71). Latino students who are successful in Advanced Placement Spanish classes are more apt to choose to enroll in Advanced Placement classes in other disciplines.

In public high schools in Northwest Arkansas, there is a natural progression within the Spanish curriculum for Latino students. Although students may enter at their specific proficiency level, Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture and Advanced Placement Spanish Literature are the most advanced classes in the Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers curriculum.

Because Spanish Departments in secondary schools in Northwest Arkansas are relatively small compared to core curricular disciplines, and the number of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers teachers is few, students are able to develop relationships with their teachers throughout their literacy experience. Teachers become motivators for enrollment in advanced Spanish classes, and later in Advanced Placement Spanish classes, and motivators for enrollment in Advanced Placement classes in disciplines other than Spanish. Eduardo and Juliana express like sentiments:

It’s about building confidence. It gives you an extra push to take other AP classes. Figuring out those AP classes was not easy, but at the same time you have to motivate yourself to take them and go on through it. (Eduardo)

My [SHNS] teachers would say, “Did you guys know that there’s AP classes and you get this and this out of them?” and “These are the differences between a regular class and an
AP class.” And “Hey guess what? You’re already doing a kind of advanced Spanish so why not do Advanced Placement World History or Psychology or whatever?” (Juliana)

For many Latino students, advanced and Advanced Placement class attendance was not part of their educational conversation. As both Sergio and Isabel share,

Being in ESL, you know that’s not really a conversation you have. My Native Spanish teacher recommended me for AP Spanish. (Sergio)

Because I was an ESL student, I was always having modifications. My work was always shortened. But when I took the AP Spanish class, I was able to write more; challenge myself and I felt like I could do even more. (Isabel)

Students similar to Clarissa, who heed their teachers’ motivations and discover successful outcomes in Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Literature classes, find the confidence to undertake other Advanced Placement classes in disciplines other than Spanish;

Once I took AP Spanish, I thought, “You know, that I can do it!” It was hard, but I did it. It pushed me ahead to take other AP classwork.

Students embrace their new found academic accomplishment and find success in a myriad of subjects. Sergio explains,

I was like, “English is my base here. How can I go into AP Spanish?” But taking those and scoring high on the AP exams...“Okay, then, I can go on ahead and take more AP courses!” Just taking those two AP Spanish classes my junior year pushed me to take on three more AP classes my senior year.

The majority of these same students have similar experiences to those of Alejandra, Irma, Emilia, and Elizabeth, and go on to enroll in post-secondary educational institutions;

Once you have taken AP Spanish, you, as a Latina, you feel like you’re already in college. It motivates you to take more classes, like get a step ahead and they’re free! I think if I would have taken AP Spanish earlier instead of my senior year, I could have taken more classes in my senior year of other AP courses. (Alejandra)

Since I did very good in AP classes throughout high school, I figured then that college won’t be so hard, so I might as well go to college. I feel great and I thank God and everybody who persuaded me to go and take AP classes because I feel that if I didn’t I’d be struggling a bit more in college. (Irma)
After taking AP classes, I thought, “Okay, I can do this! College will be way better!” and when I was in college it was nothing compared to my AP classes in high school. (Emilia)

AP classes are way harder than college. (Elizabeth)

**Identifying Success: Motivational Forces toward Post-Secondary Education**

Young members of the minority culture and language differ from their adult counterparts. Adults tend to show adaptation to the majority culture through work-related accomplishment whereas youth demonstrate theirs through educational performance and achievement. Twenty respondents express that their parents wish for them to attain academic success while retaining home language and culture. They express that their parents simply did not possess the tools necessary to guide them through the process. Sergio expresses:

“[M]y parents would never be like, ‘are you taking AP are you taking in college are you taking that?’ Because they are uninformed and they're not sure what the school has to offer us. I was uneducated of what I really could take or what I should take I wasn't advised by a counselor. I felt like it was the teacher that really pushed us to take AP. To always be better, yeah… Better ourselves.”

Although Latino undergraduate degree conferment has more than doubled nationally, Latinos are still not reaching the graduation levels of that of other groups (Santiago et al.). Latino students confront hurdles in accomplishing their academic goals. Many are the first generation to attend post-secondary institutions; moreover, their parents lack the experience to afford them the information necessary to pave the road for enrollment. Santos shares,

We had activities that I had never heard of outside of school. Once I started doing that, it kind of pushed me toward college.

Latino students who are among the first generation in their families to attend post-secondary institutions face difficulties in making the transitions between secondary school and post-secondary school. At each transition, students falter because of barriers that confront them. According to Camacho-Liu, barriers such as financial aid, college entrance forms, and familiarity
with expectations of post-secondary attendance can be overcome through information and
counsel given by educators and administrators. Iris shares her experiences:

    It is the financial [aspect]. You have college credit because of AP...if you pass you get
those credits. And its money that you are saving. It is especially for students who have to
pay out-of-state tuition or don’t have access to federal funding.

Calderón-Galdeano also found hopeful gains in college graduation rates in Arkansas—a 91%
change between 2008 and 2013 is cause for celebration. Latino students in Northwest Arkansas
understand the barriers that confront them, yet have deep aspirations to attend and graduate from
post-secondary institutions. They strive to not become a statistic of minority underachievement;

    Latinos can also go to college. It’s not just for one specific group. It [AP Spanish] gave
me more confidence that I could do it. (Fernando)

    Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classes are a key component to the enrollment
and attainment of post-secondary education. Curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular
activities provide space for questioning and research into careers and guide students, such as
Belita and Elena, toward their educational goals;

    We were encouraged to increase your involvement in the community...Do, being
involved in clubs not only allowed for you to be involved, it just makes you feel more at
home when you are in a university. (Belita)

    I think that was always the end goal for most [SHNS] staff was to encourage us to go to
post-secondary schools. They were willing to look out for us and look for scholarships
and promote we join clubs or things like that. I think it actually convinced a lot of people
that were on the borderline of “Maybe I should go to school”. They talked to the parents
to convince them to let the kids go to school and I think I’m very grateful for that. (Elena)

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers educators promote college nights and Free Application
for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) informational evenings where parents and students are helped
to fill out the difficult paperwork. They encourage parental attendance and make them feel
comfortable in a world that is outside their experiential background. Ulises expresses,
We received help that was critical for some that needed that extra support, because at home their parents didn’t know. Their parents had no idea they could go to college and had no idea to get money to go to college.

Guest speakers are invited to class and college visits are promoted where students are able to ask questions and receive guidance toward enrollment. As Eduardo states,

[Teachers] were more about helping people. Making a better quality of life for the Hispanic population. Supporting them and struggling to find them resources or help or translators to make the difference in going to school.

Latino students receive unique guidance and support from their Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers and Advanced Placement teachers throughout the course of their post-secondary enrollment, attendance, transitions, and attainment. Juliana and Benita offer their sentiments:

It was confidence. I went from, “Okay, I really want to go to college” to “I need to go to college” to “I am going to college, now which one am I going to?”(Juliana)

I knew that I could because of all of my hard work was not going to stop in high school. I had to continue and so now I am here in the university. (Belita)

**Impact of Educators: Centripetal Forces of Language Acquisition and Academic Success**

Socio-political status conveyed upon language has a noticeable effect on the self-schema of young people. When children feel that their home language and culture are considered inferior, they have low self-esteem. They believe that neither are useful within the confines of the majority society; that maintaining their home language will become a barrier to their social and economic progress nor cause them to fail educationally as well.

When there is a conflict between home and school literacy experiences, the home language usually suffers. Students who are encouraged to reject choosing between home language and majority language maintain a better sense of self-identification; educators are the buffer for Latino students. They can provide a variety of readings that can involve students in both school and home languages making a valued place for both languages within the education
of their students and lessening the pressure to choose one over the other. Elizabeth and Carmen offer their insights:

We would read a story or go over a piece of literature. She would refer back to the traditions. (Elizabeth)

With the literature we read or the poems that we read, she always tied it back to our traditions in the culture. (Carmen)

The teacher’s role in creating inclusive curriculum in students’ first language is imperative. It not only produces more proficient literacy skills, but it affects the acquisition of other disciplines. Activities constructed carefully toward inclusion as well as students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds make way for less stress and higher educational yield. Ladson-Billings points to minority students going to school only to graduate while students of the majority group go school to go to college. It is of utmost importance that educators take on an active role as advocates of their students and families and the maintenance of their language and culture (105). As Sergio explains,

Having someone that speaks the same language as you do is like another bonding and helps you feel more connected to an adult at your school.

When educators are committed to the academic achievement of their students, they place high importance on communication between school and home.

As advocates for Latino students who are amongst the first in their families to graduate high school in the United States and go on to post-secondary educational institutions, secondary Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers teachers in Northwest Arkansas address the multiple aspects of their students’ needs in order to establish and maintain relationships with students and families that extend far beyond the confines of the classroom. Marcela offers her perception:

[Teacher] had a vision for us and helped us feel so sure of ourselves and appreciate each other to the point where we tried to lift each other up, too. We need to show Latinos to make sure we come up and become successful as a whole.
In agreement, Marisol says,

My Spanish teachers really made class a place where we could be ourselves and they helped us know about opportunities that we never heard of in other classes, sometimes because we were in ESL, or just because sometimes we were in just regular classes. Our relationship with Spanish is the most important.

Luisa has like opinions:

There are people out there that really do care about you and really do care about you keeping your culture and keeping your Spanish language…and given that one opportunity to be in Spanish class made my bubble bigger.

SHNS educators learn linguistic and cultural background information and create classroom activities that incorporate real life and culturally competent experiences accordingly. Their Latino students become more confident in language and culture, finding voice and purpose through heightened group and self-schema. Much the same as Nilda, Latino students become able to advocate for themselves, their families and community;

[Teachers] were like, “You can do it!” My sister graduated first. She’s the first generation for high school, but I’m first generation in college. I made a difference in my house because I am first generation and my sister is six years older than I am and she’s barely in NWACC (Northwest Arkansas Community College), but I got her to go to college. I got my brother who graduated from NTI (Northwest Arkansas Technical Institute) to go back into school. (Nilda)

Through creating opportunities for linguistic and cultural pride and identification, Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers educators are a direct influence in post-secondary and career choices for many Latino students, encouraging students to fulfill potential through maintaining profound linguistic and cultural connections between home, school life, and academic choices and to establish and realize future goals;

I had really great teachers who really take time to show us the expectations and pushed us to the limit and set the bar extremely high and they were always there to guide us. (Graciela)

It just motivated me to go further on to do what I wanted to do. It showed me the fact that you don’t have to go to college to succeed, but it gave me the opportunity to say if I wanted to change…If it wasn’t for the teachers, if it wasn’t for the native Spanish speaker
classes that I took, if it wasn’t for the National Spanish Honor Society or the sports that I did, I wouldn’t be here. (Sergio)

I’m not sure I would have made it as easy for me to want to seek higher education had I not been involved in these types of classes. Most of the people that I grew up with in these classes are doing something now. I probably can’t think of many that are not seeking higher education and not being stuck in a mediocre mentality that we are not good enough to go ahead and do something; to seek higher education. These classes really do have an impact. (Francisco)

Impact of Educators: Navigating Human Capital

Latino students who continue to succeed academically while walking a tightrope between the demands of the school and their own cultural needs strongly identify with their culture because of strong interaction with family school and peer groups in their home language. When students experience positive use of Spanish and guidance by biliterate adults and peers, they see it as meaningful and important within the community;

Before, [in high school] I thought speaking in Spanish was not something that you see a lot with your friends. It’s not cool. But later on, you realize that there’s a high demand for people that speak Spanish and if you speak it well and if you try to educate yourself by learning proper Spanish, it can open so many doors for you… it gives you more advantage. (Nicolás)

It appears that students who are able to cultivate a quality appreciation of their home language and culture within that of the majority culture are less apt to fail academically (Reynor). As Isabel says,

It allowed me to understand who I was as a Latino and it allowed me to see what I could do as a Latino in the community.

Similarly, Francisco expresses,

Whenever you’re dealing with two cultures at the same time, obviously you can’t really relate to a lot of your Anglo classmates because they probably can’t relate to your culture, so you kind of don’t know where your identity stands. But having those backgrounds and roots explained and established within your classes, that definitely helps you to identify an accumulation of different experiences that you learn where it is you came from and ultimately establish your identity.
The most significant motivator to keep students in school and to aid them toward success is developing relationships. Because emotional relationships are tremendously important, once a relationship is forged with an educator or mentor, the student is much more likely to find success (Payne). In agreement, Mario and Pati indicate,

It made me feel close with an educator that was actually interested in my background and in my culture to make me value it. (Mario)

Our teacher definitely helped. She helped me realize that I could do anything that I wanted to and her class made me realize that if I put my mind to it and put the time in and effort and work into studying and doing well in the classes I could do anything that I put my mind to. (Pati)

A network of familial peer groups and community members aids in the ability to cross cultural boundaries to overcome established barriers and offers a conversation of hope and transformation for those who are working for a better future. As Emiliano relates,

You could tell a kid a million times, but until he believes you, you know has a relationship with you and it becomes his vocabulary, it doesn’t matter what you say, it’s just noise.

Crucial in the navigation through academic institutions in Northwest Arkansas is the relationship between Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers educators and not only their students, but their families and community as well. Educators wear a multitude of hats in the pursuit of Latino student success in secondary school, post-secondary school and careers. They serve as interpreters of language and culture for those students and their parents who are new to the area. They are translators of school and social mores and are counselors for emotional, academic, and even career needs;

When you’re the kid that’s darker than everybody else, when you’re the kid that’s shorter than everybody else and you’re told every single day how different you are, and you find that one teacher that is all about difference, it just makes your experience a lot better. I stopped feeling like I was doing this whole thing by myself. And it was just awesome to be put in a situation where I was just being myself. After that, I just didn’t have a choice to give up; I just couldn’t. (Emiliano)
Teachers are students’ cheerleaders and dance instructors and cultural liaisons. Juliana says,

My teacher supported us to every extent; not allowing people to give the stereotypical label to Latinos: “Don’t listen to the assumptions they’re making! Don’t let them win! Let your voice be heard. You can make a difference! Go and do it!”.

Likewise, Mario discloses,

I didn’t have confidence, but I did have the support from my teachers. I felt that if I didn’t do it, I was going to let them down. I ran cross country in high school, and I remember my Spanish teacher always asking how my meets went. They would always, always be there during good times and during bad times, checking up on me as a person, not necessarily as a Spanish student.

Latino students are not only encouraged to succeed in Spanish, but are encouraged to serve their community and be leaders within their family. They are taught to be conveyers of biliteracy and biculturalism and pioneers in education to help forge a path for future generations.

Manuel explains,

I had the opportunity to meet people that, later, became models to follow. Opportunities that exist can only help you to meet more people that go on helping you, go on helping you, go on helping you during your whole path of preparation. They continue motivating you to continue motivating others.

In Northwest Arkansas, Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers classrooms are a space for culture and community. Because majority language and culture is highly encouraged, it is a space where Latino students are able to find their voice which many times is lost in other aspects of learning in other disciplines.
CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (hooks 13)

This dissertation presents data collected from interviews with Latino students in Northwest Arkansas (NWA). Interviews in the field were conducted to fill a void left in the current collection of research by other scholars who have thus far overlooked the experience of Latino students in the NWA region. The findings presented in this study are analytical insights as conveyed through interviews of Latino students who had taken a combination of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers (SHNS) I, II, III, and AP Spanish Language or AP Spanish Literature classes in secondary schools. Giving the respondents a voice in the conversation and gathering information on the effects of SHNS on attendance and success in both secondary and post-secondary education comprise the purpose of this study.

While previous research has shown the effects of first language teaching and dual language teaching in urban areas as well as in traditional Latino settlements (Krashen; Cummins; August; Beaudrie; Camacho-Liu; National Council of State Legislatures; Umansky and Reardon), this is the first study to address the issue in NWA and the American Mid and Deep South at large.

This research addresses the impact of SHNS classes on the educational achievement of Latino students and makes note of how the classes have contributed in aiding Latinos shape their identity through biculturation and curriculum. Combining interviews with Latino students as well as insights from personal experiences and observations while teaching and working with students
for 35 years, provides evidence for establishing SHNS classes as an integral aspect of a curriculum designed to respond to the educational needs of Latinos in this region, a curriculum that promotes biliteracy and biculturation as primary concerns for this particular student population.

According to Bourdieu, the basis of one’s success is defined by the extent to which human capital is provided or gained by each person (241). Through this study, it is found that each of the interviewees are in one way or another afforded various aspects of educational capital through an SHNS classes that contributed to their success in secondary education and opened doors for them to pursue post-secondary education. Individuals express that they took SHNS at a time when they were searching for personal identity; their biculturation trajectory was precarious as was their relationship with their home language and culture.

This research reveals 6 major components of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers that spur respondents toward success in secondary education and post-secondary attendance: (1) positive influence of educators, (2) connections to and appreciation for home culture, (3) knowledge of their heritage language and history, (4) positive influence from the support system within the classroom, (5) confidence in bilingualism and biculturalism (biculturation), and (6) the importance of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The positive influence of educators is critical to the educational achievement attained by Latino students in secondary schools. This positive influence is largely attributed to opportunities such as campus visits, honor societies, guest speakers, and mentors afforded to them by their SHNS teachers. Respondents indicate that teachers should construct a space for student learning and involvement in their own education; the SHNS classroom has thus become a space for peer support and encouragement where students not only learn about themselves and their home languages, but
learn about other students’ home cultures as well. Teachers maintain both educational and personal interactive relationships with students and play the role of engager, assisting students in discovering themselves and their potential through encouraging advanced and Advanced Placement classes while being civically involved.

Twenty-three respondents feel a lack of a sense of belonging in classes from other disciplines. The participants reveal that other classes lacked conversations that included students’ home language and cultures. Latino students feel left out of the classroom community and understand, either explicitly or implicitly, that their home language and culture are less important. They feel pressured to give up home language and culture for the majority language and culture. Conversations about post-secondary education are also lacking in classes other than SHNS classes, leaving students feeling alienated from the educational process and involvement in other disciplines.

Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers educators are the centripetal forces that deter students straying from educational goals. These teachers bridge connections between education and home through both language and culture, as well as through committed actions of encouragement and communication. They guide students through educational achievement and social networking. They encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities, such as clubs pertaining to the SHNS classes, and to maintain grade points that are worthy of Spanish honor societies; they bring awareness to the benefits of not only joining such clubs and participating in activities that deal with Spanish, but of becoming leaders and directors. SHNS teachers introduce their students to other extra-curricular activities and encourage their continued participation through their presence at activities and events, many times being present when students’ parents are unable to attend because of work commitments.
As an integral part of SHNS curriculum, teachers coordinate visits by guest speakers from educational institutions and careers. Respondents reveal that such visits attached meaning beyond that of guest speakers. The presences of guest speakers who share their social background and ethnicity, who experience similar societal obstacles, and who emerge successfully without losing touch with their heritage, afford students the opportunity to visualize their future selves as successful, both, educationally and economically.

SHNS teachers thus become a bridge between school and home and community. Thirty report that parents are unable to share in either linguistic or cultural aspects of their lives and backgrounds because of astringent working conditions and/or extensive work schedules. Through a carefully constructed curriculum, teachers introduce their Latino students to literature whose protagonists’ appearance and experiences are much like that of their students’ families, garnering among students a newfound appreciation of home and community.

As part of cultural activities, students—for thirty participants the first time—are given first-hand insight into their own traditions, inspiring pride and understanding. SHNS educators continuously endeavor to include students’ home cultures at school through encouraging them to share home activities and experiences within the SHNS classroom. Twenty participants also convey gratitude for SHNS educators who reach out to parents to personally invite them to attend events within the community and within the school.

Latino students’ SHNS teachers are the catalyst for change, identity, and inclusion when other disciplines fail. Successes are attributed to the encouragement and involvement of their SHNS teachers. Twenty respondents have become teachers and public servants because of the model given them by their SHNS educators.
The role played by SHNS classes in the newfound appreciation and communication with home language and culture is a crucial element to Latino secondary students’ later success. SHNS classes along with AP Spanish classes, for twenty-two participants, are a linguistic and cultural call to action. They speak of deepened relationships with parents through newfound appreciation of home culture and strengthening of language abilities. Eighteen cite instances of cultural discussion with parents that earlier could not be experienced due to an inability to fully communicate. The ability to fully express themselves culturally and linguistically with their family members results in deeper awareness of family actions and reactions within home and majority cultures.

Connecting with family and community through language and culture becomes a centripetal force for Latino student success in secondary school and their continuance into post-secondary institutions. Because students are not asked to leave their home culture and language outside of the school environment, they become active participants in the majority culture educationally as well as civically. They are allowed to develop their own voice through their learning self-expression in home language and learning to appreciate home cultures. The attained self-awareness and self-esteem transforms (for the majority) into better grades and leadership roles in clubs, sports, and their communities. Accumulation of social and economic capital achieved through self-awareness, self-esteem, and newfound voices translates into a strong desire to give back to their community by using their biliteracy skills and cultural understanding in service roles. Thirty-two wish to become a voice for the voiceless and a firebrand of change through sharing their stories with younger members of the Latino community, stressing the importance of not losing their heritage and language.
Solid social networks are formed through peer advocacy which lead to educational achievement and, in turn, economic opportunities. Study results shed light on the importance of group support and how each classmate’s successes and pursuit of goals and dreams propel others toward pursuing theirs. Because the classroom is a place for social networking and development of positive group schema, the SHNS classes are the catalyst for extending leadership and educational possibilities to members of the class. For twenty-two respondents, the positive group schema combined with shared information amongst classmates about Advanced Placement classes, post-secondary entrance requirements, scholarships, entrance exams, class offerings, and financial aid results in successful post-secondary attendance and eventual graduation.

The importance of accepting each other’s home culture, linguistic, and traditional differences is key to forging cohesive relationships amongst Latino students. Twenty respondents were unaware, until identifying themselves within texts and literature offered to them, of the many cultural nuances found in their own home culture and those found in other Latino cultures represented by their classmates and in the curriculum.

As part of acceptance of others’ home cultures and language, participants learn to accept their own language usage. While formally learning Spanish grammar, respondents’ vernacular and code switching is considered as acceptable, rather than as an abomination. It is considered a freeing element by relieving societal shame placed upon both; this allows for freedom of expression amongst classmates and, in turn, newfound confidence to express themselves in both languages as advocates for home language and culture. Twenty-seven of the Latinos who participated in this study report no longer feeling tongue-tied after completing SHNS courses—instead, they feel strength in community to become architects of their own bilingual and bicultural reality.
The construction of a community of biculturation where linguistic and cultural equilibrium are found diminishes the pressure to choose between home language and culture and the majority language and culture; Latino students become more successful in home, school, and community relations. They become adept in navigating through both communities and are able to become effective guides for their family members, church members, and younger siblings through cultural and linguistic constraints.

Once participants realize that it is acceptable to maintain their home language while acquiring English they capably begin leading the way toward educational success and being models of accomplishment in both cultures and languages. Discovering that blending and balancing cultures is the calming corridor that leads to cultural and linguistic justification, participants are free to explore them both without the stress of feeling that they were betraying their heritage in order to achieve success in the majority culture. They are free to more completely examine their options in all facets of their lives and to invent and reinvent their reality to take advantage of all available options for their and their families’ futures.

Twenty of the respondents that took various SHNS classes express that they gain skills in leadership and teamwork through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, whether in Spanish clubs, other clubs or in sports. Thirty-three respondents state that their first introduction to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is through their SHNS classes. SHNS classes, for them, are where information about activities and deadlines for entering clubs and sports is disseminated. Unlike classes in other disciplines, SHNS classes are the first place interviewees learn about their options to become involved in school and community activities.

Deeper peer relationships and support systems are a byproduct of participation, and higher academic achievement and attendance are positive consequences to their involvement.
SHNS students receive valuable information about careers and post-secondary education through activities beyond the confines of the regular school day. All participants recount the positive effects of developing networks of social, educational, and career contacts that aid them in their quest for self-realization.

Additionally, this research study explains that through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities respondents are able to travel to competitions and performances in places that they would not have been able to visit. Twenty-seven respondents feel that without such experiences, they would not have conceived of travelling to the various towns, cities, countries, campuses, and enterprises they had been able to visit. Their horizons are broadened and their talents and perspectives extended far beyond what they could have imagined. Twenty-five respondents reveal that, before being introduced to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities through their SHNS classes, they never believed they would attend post-secondary education much less take advanced classes or use their home language and culture as a link toward gratifying academic and social success.

In this study, Latino students compare their successes to those who did not participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities either by choice or through lack of transportation or parental support. They realize that those peers who were not permitted or who chose not to participate lacked the resources and networking for success in school and beyond. They convey concern for those who were not afforded such guidance and networking, recalling how many of their peers who did not receive information were late to take entrance examinations, had fewer scholarships, and were at an overall disadvantage academically.

It is important to mention that for twenty-one participants, SHNS classes are the first classes where Latino students heard Advanced Placement (AP) mentioned. They are encouraged
to push themselves, first by taking Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture, then on to Advanced Placement Spanish Literature. At the same time, they are encouraged to take AP classes in other disciplines; thirty-four took multiple AP classes by their senior year, accumulating several college credits. Sixteen participants reaped the benefits of becoming honor graduates and receiving various scholarships. Ten respondents express that they find secondary AP classes much more rigorous and extensive than classes they later took in post-secondary institutions.

Not only is academic success applauded within the confines of the SHNS class, but self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-realization are applauded. All participants see themselves as Latino leaders in and outside the school setting. They realize that they are role models and examples of academic success; that they have broken through barriers-perceived or imposed. Students amass enough self-schema to become confident in their abilities and become resolute in their future academic, social, and later economic success. This study shows a strong awareness of hurdles and barriers already encountered and those that are yet to be encountered on SHNS students’ road to becoming successful. They have a strong desire to succeed. They wish to have families of their own and successful careers while being positive role models and positively impacting their community.

Those who have graduated from post-secondary institutions are pursuing careers in enterprises in and outside of Arkansas and giving back to their communities. Thirteen respondents are pursuing and completing Master’s degrees and other higher professional degrees. Only two interviewed have started families, although many are engaged and planning on marriage. Those who have yet to graduate from post-secondary institutions will follow in the footsteps of those who have finished due to their determination and strong support networks.
They endeavor to strengthen family and community ties and be a positive face for the Latino community.

Although Latino students had not been exposed to educational opportunities in other disciplines, they find them in Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers. They are guided and celebrated and encouraged by their teachers and peers who motivate them on to success. Their potential to be successful academically is recognized in SHNS classes and their propensity to graduate is increased. Their connections to parents are promoted and their bond reinforced causing respondents to feel more grounded in their culture and supported in their academic endeavors. Parents understand the trajectory to post-secondary success and are more able to understand their student’s obstacles and attainments. SHNS class is fundamental and essential to the connection between respondents, parents, and education.

The link between SHNS classes in Northwest Arkansas and Latino students’ academic success is significantly relevant. Although students demonstrate a strong desire to achieve academically in spite of disadvantages and barriers, the majority, twenty-five respondents, attribute their achievements to the guidance and assistance received in their SHNS classes. Thirty-two respondents propose that school districts in NWA offer SHNS classes earlier than secondary school in order for students in elementary school should learn about their home language and culture. Their achievement indicates that self-schema would be established earlier as would peer support groups causing less confusion or feelings of being torn between cultures and languages. With the belief that young Latino students would become integral to the school society is the evident increased attendance due to a sense of belonging. Students believe that the positive repercussions would resonate far beyond the confines of the classroom.
It is overwhelmingly conveyed by twenty-seven respondents that the most vital element in Latino students’ academic success is their relationship to their SHNS teachers. These teachers give them a space for freedom to celebrate home culture and language. Parents and families are uplifted and given a sense of belonging through outreach and understanding. Educators guide both interviewees and their parents through cultural and social aspects of academia while being their counselors and cheerleaders. Respondents state that without the profound influence of their SHNS teachers they might not have achieved success.

SHNS classes provide this study’s respondents with the educational and social networking to become effective members of the NWA community and beyond. SHNS classes provide the space necessary for positive group and self-schema, freedom of expression—both culturally and linguistically—and educational freedom, which has translated to academic and economic attainment. There is a sound degree of certainty that respondents in this study will continue to give back to their community through their time talents and financial support. They will become leaders in their careers and in their community through their service and through continuing the cycle of educational fulfillment, cultural awareness, and acceptance. Study respondents find SHNS classes to be the catalyst for personal growth and change toward academic and civic success.

Policy Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to give voice to examine experiences through SHNS classes and their educational journey toward success in post-secondary institutions. Determination of how to best showcase participant voice was made before the interview process began. It was determined that the most important methods to highlight respondent voices are through direct interview quotations rather than numerical quantification. There is, however, a record of
numerical notations of (1) respondents mentions of major themes within interview responses and (2) specific responses to interview questions in order to quantify for policy change.

The clear and most obvious recommendation is to incorporate home language literacy classes and/or dual language class within the elementary and middle school curriculum. Study participants express that they feel that they would have excelled even more had they had the opportunity to learn about their home language and culture at an earlier age. Creating that driving force at an earlier age will draw students towards academics and prevent the divide between home and school.

School districts should take notice of successful biliteracy and SHNS programs for elementary and middle school Latino students already established in NWA such as the Sin Límites program at Lowell Elementary in Rogers and at JO Kelley Middle School in Springdale. Math and literacy gleaned from these elementary and middle school programs showing thus a successful and impressive educational achievement record.

Research and collaboration with the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) into the success and feasibility of their successful dual language program would be an aid in instituting such programs in areas with large Latino populations in Arkansas. The establishment of dual language programs could be a socio-cultural and linguistic bridge between schools and community due to the accessibility of heritage and non-heritage language learners to the program.

A pilot program based on either the Sin Límites program or based on the DSID dual language program could be easily established and incorporated into the school curriculum. Programs similar to SHNS and pull-out programs in elementary and middle schools could also be the catalyst for literacy gains among Latino students.
Arkansas universities and colleges that offer teacher licensure in Spanish should mandate the incorporation of classes specific to the teaching of Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers. SHNS class curriculum concentrates heavily on literacy skills as well as content skills gleaned from regular post-secondary Spanish curriculum. Special emphasis should be given to SHNS instruction in order to better prepare new Spanish educators to meet SHNS students’ needs.

SHNS student growth on the Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) test and the ACT ASPIRE—standardized tests in English and Math given in NWA—should be compared to that of the general population of students. Teachers need to check educational progress in order to better formulate curriculum in order to meet the needs of Latino students.

Many educators in NWA prod Latino parents to speak English with their children and allow their children to speak English at home when many times parents are not linguistically capable. This practice must be rethought in a more linguistically and culturally sensitive and competent manner. Data and interview responses reveal that this practice causes a lack of positive self-schema and leads to a stunting of full linguistic growth. Lack of full expression in their home language causes a profound rift in family communication and understanding. Parents and children alike are unable to fully express themselves to one another in almost all aspects of their lives causing confusion and a blurring of familial roles. Twenty respondents reported such confusion and lack of communication as well as feelings of linguistic and cultural insufficiency.

Encouraging Latino parents to speak and read in Spanish at home foster literacy and is of utmost importance in their children’s language development—both Spanish and English. Those respondents whose parents were resolute in speaking Spanish to their children and expecting their children to speak Spanish with them convey more linguistic and cultural security.
They reveal that they were more aptly prepared to take advanced classes in other disciplines and stated that English came more easily than those whose parents enforced English at home.

Parental involvement is essential to Latino student success, but the present approach by which Latino parents are informed about school events and meetings is ineffective. Latino parents must feel welcomed into the academic environment through personal invitation. Students and teachers can write personal invitations to suit this purpose. Teachers need to motivate them to participate in children’s educational activities. Such a task is time consuming, but I have seen firsthand how it works. Parents are appreciative of the attention and are more willing to become involved. Communication barriers are challenged through such community actions. One example is Lowell Elementary Sin Límites parents. Because of personalized invitations, parents became involved in more than just PADRES meetings. They became involved in other school sponsored activities. When parents are involved, student success is heightened.

At the secondary level, parental involvement is of more importance. Teachers and school administrations should send personalized invitations to parents to college guidance nights. In these nights instructions about filling out FAFSA forms, taking college entrance exams and how to receive scholarships are discussed. It is of utmost importance for parents to attend these meetings because when they understand the process, students are more likely to attend post-secondary institutions and be successful. Taking such informational meetings to parents’ workplaces or closer to where students live and providing childcare will likely elicit higher attendance. Furthermore, parental involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is impactful, as well. Yet, it is very difficult because many Latino parents have employment obligations and child care difficulties. Providing child care at school activities relieves this pressure as would lowering the cost of entrance to sporting events.
Providing an extensive bibliography of books to be read as part of the media center and required core class (English, Science, Math and Social Studies) curriculum where Latino students are able to see themselves is critical. Respondents communicated that they did not see themselves in literature and texts until they attended their first SHNS class. Thus, it is critical that elementary, middle, and secondary schools incorporate more literature written by Latino authors, with Latino protagonists and Latino themes in disciplines other than Spanish.

Incorporating home traditions (as a manifestation of culture) and literature based on hero characters to the curriculum of all disciplines connects school with home. Moreover, inviting students to recount family traditions and fosters cultural conversation as well as increases students’ vocabulary beyond the academic realm. Respondents indicate that activities that link home with school are most meaningful and infused confidence into their self-schema.

Inviting Latino guest speakers from all types of careers and post-secondary institutions is equally important. Interviewees voice the importance of guest speakers as a way for them to see their own future academic and social success. Guest speakers give insights into careers that educators may not be equipped to give, and these speakers can be impactful at all educational levels.

In addition, meaningful field trips to post-secondary institutions of all types are proven to be beneficial. The more Latino students visualize themselves as part of the post-secondary institutions, the more likely they are to attend. When students see Spanish speakers attending post-secondary institutions, they believe that they, too, have a place on that campus. For many respondents, the first time they visited a post-secondary campus was late in their secondary career; during their junior and even their senior years. They feel that they were late in beginning preparations for post-secondary education and wished that they would have had the opportunity
to visit campuses earlier. Scheduling campus visits where students are allowed hands-on experiences has innumerable positive outcomes, especially for children who will be first-generation post-secondary attendees.

Future research needs to focus on ESOL programs which can evaluate English and Math growth of students on the Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) and ACT ASPIRE tests and compare them to that of the general population. ESOL is the traditional English learning approach by which Latino students are instructed. It would be interesting to see if ESOL students make equal or greater gains as those of students taking SHNS.

A study could be made comparing those who take SHNS in secondary school and those who wait to take SHNS classes at the post-secondary level, with special attention to how they navigate all of the tasks of enrollment and attendance in post-secondary institutions, their involvement in school and community, and election to take advanced and Advanced Placement classes.

The sooner, and more prevalent, discussions about post-secondary education become part of Latino students’ vocabulary, the more likely such an education will become a reality for them. As more Latinos advance academically, the more apparent it will be for future generations of Latino students see academic success as something attainable instead of an abstraction that sounds appealing but remains out of reach. An SHNS class—especially when taught by teachers who recognize that they must serve a variety of roles for the benefit of their students—is a pedagogical effort that promotes positive change in education for Latinos. I argue that a strong, institutionalized SHNS curriculum designed on the basis of the ideas, responses, and experiences documented here will also benefit other Latino students. I suggest that because those young adults who participated in this study believe that higher education can be an attainable reality.
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APPENDICES

PROMOTING BILITERACY AND BICULTURALISM IN BILINGUAL-MAINTENANCE SECONDARY CLASSES:
A Key Measure in the Creation of a Gateway to Post-Secondary Education for First and 1.5 Generation Latino Students in Northwest Arkansas Public Schools

Consent to Participate in a Research Study:
Principal Researcher: Jeanette Arnhart, Doctoral Candidate
Faculty Advisor: Juan José Bustamante, Ph.D.

Invitation to Participate:
You are invited to participate in a research study regarding the effects of Spanish for Native Speakers classes on Latino students’ academic success and post-secondary attainment. You are being asked to participate in this study because you identify as a Latino/a individual who has taken Spanish for Native Speakers classes in secondary school in Northwest Arkansas and who is either attending or has attended postsecondary institutions.

What You Should Know About the Research Study
Who is the Principal Researcher?
Jeanette Arnhart, Doctoral Candidate. Instructor, Spanish Initiatives, Department of World Languages, Kimpel 425, University Of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 72701, jarnhart@uark.edu, 479-575-2951

Who is the Faculty Advisor?
Juan José Bustamante, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin American and Latino Studies, 221 Old Main, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 72701, jjbustam@uark.edu, 479-575-3810

What is the purpose of this study?
To examine how and the extent of how Latino/a students from Northwest Arkansas discovered their own identity and confidence through the curricular and extra-curricular aspects of maintenance Spanish classes (Spanish for Native Speakers) in secondary school setting that enabling them to envision and attain success in post-secondary education.

Who will participate in this study?
Our target participants include Latinos/as who have taken Spanish for Native Speakers classes in secondary school in Northwest Arkansas and who are either attending or have attended post-secondary institutions.

What I am being asked to do?
Your participation requires the following:
If you agree to be in this study, we will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions regarding how and the extent of curricular and extra-curricular components of Spanish for Native Speakers classes helped you to become biliterate. How they helped you discover ethnic identity and academic success and seek post-secondary education.
The interview will last between 30-60 minutes. With your permission we would like to tape-record your interview. After the review of the initial interview transcript, additional interviews with you may be requested.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?
There are no anticipated risks or discomforts to you if you participate in this study. If you perceive any risks or discomforts, you are welcome to discontinue the interview and withdraw from this study.
What are the possible benefits of this study?
For you as a participant, there are no anticipated benefits. Although this study is not designed to inform direct policy changes, public school districts in Arkansas may benefit from finding regarding the need to incorporate Spanish for Native Speakers in their curriculum.

How long will the study last?
The overall time frame for the study will be from November 2015 to May 2016.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?
No, there will be no compensation provided to you for your participation.

Will I have to pay for anything?
No, there will be no costs associated with your participation.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?
Participation in the study is voluntary and you have no obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time during the study. Your relationship with the university will not be affected in any way by your refusal to participate or decision to withdraw.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Interviews with participants will utilize pseudonyms and begin with informed consent language. Interviews will be recorded then transcribed.

Transcriptions of the interviews will be kept on a password-protected personal computer to which only the principal researcher and faculty advisor have access. Any report that is made available to the public will not include participants’ names or information nor will it include information about educational institutions. All other documents, correspondence, and/or any other materials, paper or electronic will be modified to exclude any identifiable information and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet to which only the principal researcher has access.

You are presented with a second elective option. There is the possibility to preserve the original tape-recordings and the transcriptions to the Southern Latino/a and Migrant Voices Project Life History Archive. Southern Latino/a and Migrant Voices Project (SLMVP) strives to “Study, document and preserve the significant life events of Latin/os and migrants as social actors relatively new to southern communities”(www.slmvp.uark.edu). All interviews collected are organized and maintained “in a Life History format to document the racially and community structured components of migration beyond the physical limits of traditional places of settlement” (www.slmvp.uark.edu). The permanent storage of your interview in this Life History study is totally optional. If you agree to know more about this option a second Informed Consent Form will be presented and read to you for further details. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

Will I know the results of the study?
At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the Principal Researcher, Jeanette Arnhart, by email, jarnhart@uark.edu or by telephone: 479-575-2951. You may also contact the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Juan José Bustamante, by email, jibustam@uark.edu or by telephone: 479-575-3810.
You will receive a copy of this form for your files.
What do I do if I have questions about the research study?
You have the right to contact the Principal Researchers or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Jeanette Arnhart, Doctoral Candidate
Instructor, Spanish Initiatives, Department of World Languages
Kimpel 425, University Of Arkansas, Fayetteville Arkansas 72701
jarnhart@uark.edu
479-575-2951

Juan José Bustamante, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin American and Latino Studies
221 Old Main, University of Arkansas Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
E-mail: jjbustam@uark.edu
479-575-3810

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance Office listed below if you have any questions about your rights as a participant or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.
Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
109 MLKG Building
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

By participating in today’s interview, and unless otherwise expressly stated, you agree to participate in this study and agree to the following: 1) I have read the above statements and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. 2) I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. 3) I understand that participation is voluntary. 4) I understand that any significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. 5) I understand that no rights have been waived. 6) I have been given a copy of the consent form.

Informed Consent: I, ____________________________________________, have read the description, including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks and benefits, the confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Each of these items has been explained to me by the Principal Researcher. The Principal Researcher has answered all of my questions regarding the study and I believe I understand what this study entails. My signature below indicates that I freely agree to participate in this study and that I have received a copy of this agreement from the Principal Researcher.

_________________________________________                     _______________________
Signature                  Date
INFORMED CONSENT:
PROMOTING BILITERACY AND BICULTURALISM IN BILINGUAL-MAINTENANCE SECONDARY CLASSES:
A Key Measure in the Creation of a Gateway to Post-Secondary Education for First and 1.5 Generation Latino Students in Northwest Arkansas Public Schools

Principal Researcher: Jeanette Arnhart,
Department of World Languages Literatures and Cultures, Kimpel 425, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701
Email: jarnhart@uark.edu
479-575-2951

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Juan José Bustamante, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Latin American and Latino Studies Program, University of Arkansas 221 Old Main Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
E-mail: jjbustam@uark.edu
479-575-3810

Description: The purpose of this study is to examine how and to what extent Latino/a students from Northwest Arkansas discovered their own ethnic identity and confidence through the curricular and extra-curricular aspects of maintenance Spanish classes (Spanish for Native Speakers) in secondary school setting enabling them to envision and attain success in post-secondary education.

Risks and benefits: There will be neither perceived risks nor benefits.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the research is completely voluntary. You will receive no compensation.

Confidentiality: All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Any report that is made available to the public will not include participants' names or information nor will it include information about educational institutions.

The results from this research will be published as part of a dissertation and possibly scholarly articles and presentations.

Right to Withdraw: You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty to you.
PROMOTING BILITERACY AND BICULTURALISM IN BILINGUAL-MAINTENANCE SECONDARY CLASSES:
A Key Measure in the Creation of a Gateway to Post-Secondary Education for First and 1.5 Generation Latino Students in Northwest Arkansas Public Schools

Research Instrument

Date: ___________ Identification Number: _______

Field Interviewer: _____________________________________________

Demographic and Educational Profile

Name: __________________________
Age: _______________
Gender: _______________
With what ethnic origin do you identify? ____________
Where were you born? ____________________________
Where were your parents born? __________________
What language do you speak with your parents? ______________
What language and in what situations do you feel most comfortable speaking with your friends? _______________

What type of post-secondary institution do/ did you attend? ______________
Community College major: ____________________________
University major: ____________________________
Other career path: ____________________________

Have you graduated from a post-secondary institution?
When do you anticipate graduating from a post-secondary institution? ______________

Which Public school district did you attend? ____________________________
Did you take Spanish for Native Speakers class? ______________
How many years of Spanish for Native Speakers did you take? ______________
Did you take AP Spanish Language? ______________
Did you take AP Spanish Literature? ______________
Did you take other AP classes? How Many? ______________
Which other AP classes did you take? ______________
Did you become an honors graduate? ______________
OPEN-ENDED IN-DEPTH QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How and in what ways, by taking Spanish for Native Speakers classes, you gained a better understanding of your language?
2. How and in what ways, by taking Spanish for Native Speakers classes, you gained a better understanding of your own literary traditions?
3. How and in what ways, taking Spanish for Native Speakers classes, you gained a better understanding of your culture?
4. How and in what ways did taking Spanish for Native Speakers encourage Latino identity?
5. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers classes help you to understand the concept of AP curriculum?
6. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers classes encourage you to take AP Spanish classes?
7. How and in what ways did taking AP Spanish give you confidence to take other AP classes?
8. How and in what ways did taking AP classes give you the confidence to go to college?
9. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers class activities encourage you to feel confident in your language?
10. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers class activities encourage you to attend a post-secondary institution?
11. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers class activities encourage you to feel confident in your cultural traditions?
12. How and to what extent were you encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities through your Spanish for Native Speakers class?
13. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers extra-curricular activities, such as campus visits, guest speakers, cultural events, encouraged you to feel confident in your language?
14. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers extra-curricular activities, such as campus visits, guest speakers, cultural events, encouraged you to feel confident in your cultural traditions?
15. How and in what ways did Spanish for Native Speakers extra-curricular activities, such as campus visits, clubs, guest speakers, cultural events, encourage you to attend a post-secondary institution?
16. How and to what extent were you encouraged to be involved in clubs or activities connected with your Spanish for Native Speakers class such as honor societies, Spanish club, Latino club, multi-cultural clubs?
17. How and to what extent did these clubs or activities encourage confidence in your language ability?
18. How and to what extent did these clubs or activities encourage Latino identity?
19. How and to what extent did these clubs or activities encourage confidence in your cultural traditions?
20. How and to what extent did these clubs or activities encourage your decision to pursue post-secondary education?
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE
You are invited to participate in a research study about Latinos living in the Northwest Arkansas (NWA) area. You are being asked to participate in this study because other individual or organization referred you to us. Researchers hope to learn more about your personal experience with educational, health, housing, labor, and public safety organizations of the region.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Who is the Principal Researcher?
Juan José Bustamante, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice/Latin American and Latino Studies Program, University of Arkansas, 211 Old Main, Fayetteville, AR 72701, jjbustam@uark.edu, 479. 575.3810

What is the purpose of this research study?
The purpose of this study is to document the actions policy makers and institutions take to adapt to the new demographic context of the region, in regards to educational, health, housing, labor, and public safety services. It also aims to create a collection of fieldnotes and interviews – entitled The Southern Latinos Voices. An oral history archive based from fieldwork research and student exploration data, specifically, to document how and to what extent these institutions have served Latinos in NWA.

Who will participate in this study?
I expect 35 young adults to participate for the topics of this specific study.

What am I being asked to do?
Your participation will require the following:
(1) As a member of a NWA educational, health, housing, labor, and public safety institution, you will be asked to share your experiences on how your specific institution serve Latinos.
(2) As a member of the NWA Latino community, you will be asked to share your experiences with the above-mentioned NWA institutions.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?
Being confidentiality the primary risk, it will be addressed properly by not disclosing any names and specific locations where participants reside. These same procedures apply to provide confidentiality protection to participants responses to questions that touch socially sensitive issues to other participants.

What are the possible benefits of this study?
Your participation in this study, first, will add significantly to public policy debates on educational, health, housing, labor, and public safety issues related to the immigrant community. Second, it will prompt a discussion and provide documentation – evidence—for a state civil rights commission initiative.
**How long will the study last?**
This is a yearlong project. Yet, your participation in this study will include between one and two hours interview with Juan José Bustamante or a research assistant. If you are under 18, you cannot be in this study without parental permission.

**Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?**
You will neither receive monetary nor non-monetary compensations in this study. Your participation is strictly voluntarily.

**Will I have to pay for anything?**
No, there will be not cost associated with your participation.

**What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?**
If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate at any time during the study. Your job, your grade, and your relationship with the University and the principal investigator – Juan José Bustamante – will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

**How will my confidentiality be protected?**
All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. Data being collected and any research findings in this study will be maintained separately from any information associated to your name. To maintain your privacy throughout the project, I will use a number or pseudonym for identification and organizational purposes. Your information will be audiotaped and kept electronically stored in an external hard drive under Juan José Bustamante responsibility. No data will be erased or destroyed.

**Will I know the results of the study?**
At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results. You may contact the Principal Researcher, Juan José Bustamante, Ph.D., jjbustam@uark.edu; 479. 575.3810. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

**What do I do if I have questions about the research study?**
You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher listed below for any concerns you may have. Juan José Bustamante, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice/Latin American and Latino Studies Program, University of Arkansas, 211 Old Main, Fayetteville, AR 72701, jjbustam@uark.edu, 479. 575.3810

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Iroshi (Ro) Windwalker
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
109 MLKG Building
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu
I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

Signature:                      Date:

_________________________________________________________________________________________
MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeanette Arnhart
Juan José Bustamante

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 15-10-245

Protocol Title: Biliteracy and Identity in Maintenance Bilingual Secondary Classes as a Threshold to Post-Secondary Education for First and 1.5 Generation Latino Students in Northwest Arkansas Public Schools

Review Type: ☒ EXEMPT ☐ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 11/20/2015 Expiration Date: 11/19/2016

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 35 participants. If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Buildin 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.