



# **Transforming Teachers and Families through Collaborative Planning and Implementing Immigrant Family Engagement Activities**

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# Goals and Background of the Study

- This pilot study is a part of a Midwestern National Professional Development (NPD) grant project.
- One of the project goals was **to examine how teachers can plan, implement, and assess immigrant family engagement activities collaborated with immigrant families.**
- **This NPD project works with four partner districts;**
  - Beauton (21% ELs: Bosnian, Vietnamese, Arabic)
  - Crow City (30% ELs: Spanish, Swahili, Somali)
  - Midtown (7% ELs: 61 languages)
  - **Tunis (25% ELs: Spanish, Micronesian).**

## Which activities do you think ELs' Families will volunteer and can do with success? Have you or would you nominate ELs' families as leaders for the following school events?

### Examples of Expectations of Parental Involvement by Teachers, Counselors, and School Administrators

School Leadership	Administrative Support	Parenting	Academic Support
Participation in school committees	Sewing curtains for a classroom	Monitoring attendance	Helping with homework
PTA membership	Hosting luncheons for faculty	"Controlling kids" / behavioral monitoring	Reviewing report cards
Student advocacy	Attending and staffing at school events	Emotional support	Making sure student completed homework
Community activism	Fundraising	Authoritative parenting	Observing class
	Monitoring the gate	Offering entertainment as a reward and incentive	Seeking tutoring for their children
	Preparing food for events		"Staying on top" of academic progress

# Assumptions for Immigrant Family Engagement Activities?

- ❑ Immigrant Families cannot be Leaders
- ❑ Teachers cannot become Active Partners with and Advocates for immigrant families; they have many OTHER parents to take care of.

**Can immigrant families be viewed as Assets, not Deficits?  
How can they contribute to their children's academic learning?**



# Theoretical Background

- ❖ Doucet (2011) argues that traditional parental engagement activities are practices that reify **mainstream cultural ideals** further marginalizing and degrading parental efforts that do not reflect tradition.
- ❖ Doucet (2011) additionally posits that, “**marginalized families become even less likely to engage with or participate in schools,** and mainstream myths of apathy among LCDS [linguistically, culturally, diverse students] parents persist and gain credibility” (p. 405).

# Theoretical Background

- ❖ A growing body of critical research has shown that **traditional family engagement in schools often fails to incorporate culturally sustained activities in meaningful and empowering ways, so ongoing marginalization occurs based on ethnicity, class, language, and immigrant status** (Lowehaupt, 2014).
- ❖ Hurtig and Dyrness' (2011) study shows that **teachers' collaborative work with immigrant families transforms their leadership roles and identities**, so the families can support student learning in their homes as well as at schools (WIDA, 2015, p. 2)

## Traditional

Parents attend teacher-parent conferences.

Parents help children with homework.

Parents volunteer at school or are asked to volunteer

School offers English classes to EL parents and parents communicate the value and utility of education to their children.

## Culturally-Responsive Family Engagement

Parents build leadership and advocacy skills.

Parents build their children's character and moral values.

Parents propose their own activities to the school district based on their needs.

Parents share oral stories and cultural values with the school community.

# Contexts

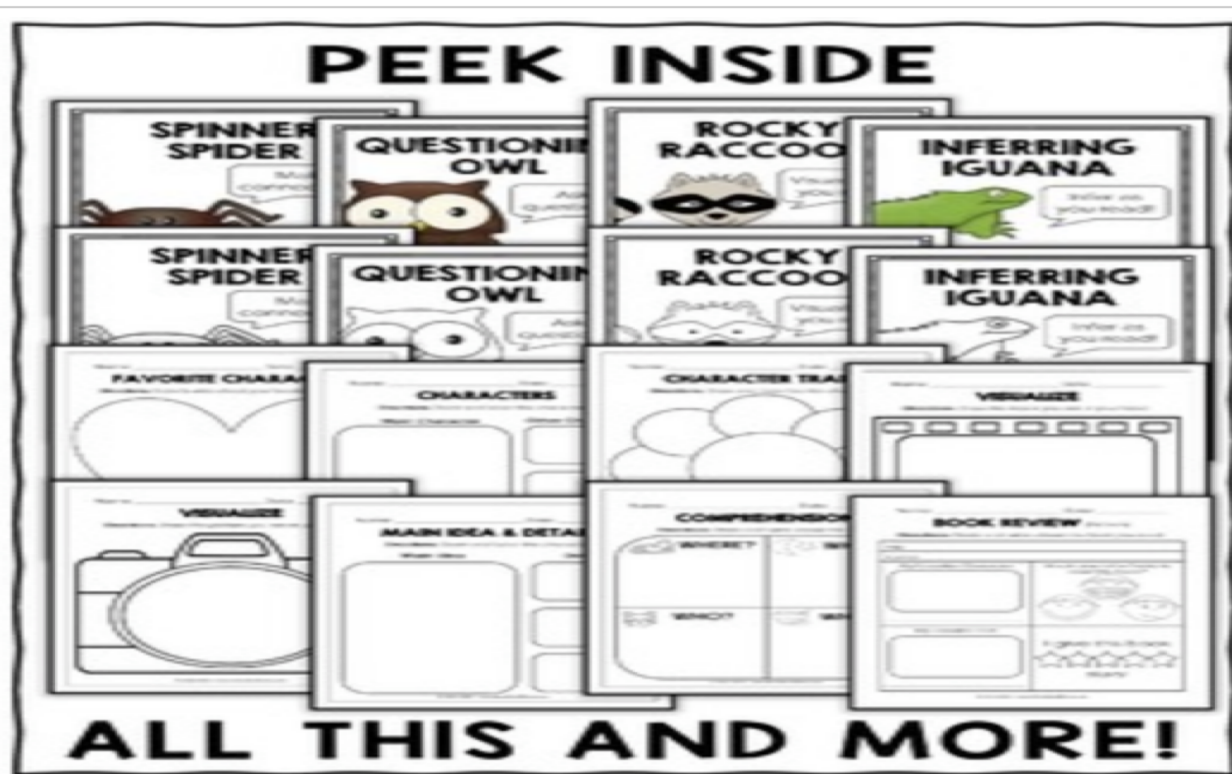
- Research site: Tunis District, a rural area, about 25% ELs, mostly Spanish speaking
- Participants: four teachers, one coach, and three immigrant parent leaders
- Qualitative research design: Used grounded theory (Charmez, 2010) and analyzed teachers' reflections, field notes, and interview data from TESOL courses and a family engagement event in February, 2020.

# Collaborative Planning for a Translanguaging Reading Space for Families and Children

## Stations & Volunteers

ENTRANCE	Contract & Pet Station	English Reading Station	Spanish Reading Station	Kit Making Station	Certificate Station	Book Station	Humane Society	Photo Booth	Survey
Lobby	Cafeteria	Room 118	Room 119	Gym	Cafeteria	Cafeteria	Gym	Gym	Cafeteria
5:30	5:30	5:30	5:30	5:45	6:00	6:00	5:30	5:30	5:30
Here, families will be greeted and each student will get a punchcard	Here, parents will sign the reading contract. Students will select a "pet" and also agree to the contract.	Here, English books will be available for parents and kids to read together. Signs will be out inviting students to try out books.	Here, Spanish books will be available for parents to read with kids. Signs will invite students to try out different books.	Everything for building the kit will be here. Needs to be closely monitored to make sure students are taking only one of everything. Students will also be coloring bookmarks.	Students will receive a certificate of adoption from Mrs. Patterson. Someone will be verifying that the first four stations have been completed and Certificate gets filled out.	Students will receive a book after verifying that they have completed other stations.	Students will listen to presentation, see animal that needs to be rescued, get a coloring page	Is someone needed here?	If you can remember, you can remind families to fill out the survey

# Guided Reading Binder Activities





# Implementation: 3 Centers/Spaces for a Collaborative Translanguaging Event

1. Read Children's Literature books in Spanish and English – at a Spanish Dual Language (DL) Classroom and at an English DL English Classroom;
2. Go to Cafeteria to adopt a pet (stuffed one) and a book (in Spanish and English), read a book to the adopted pet and complete the adoption paper;
3. Go to the Gym, and visit the four tables – 1) Coloring the Pet Bookmark, 2) Visiting two dogs brought by Humane Society, 3) Taking a picture with the pet at the Photo Booth, and 4) get the treats and have the pet to her/his house.

Then they go back to the Gym, and complete the questionnaires and do the interviews if they choose to. \*Some children/parents were language brokers when they read the books in two languages and when their families talk to the monolingual adults at the event.

## Implementation: Translanguaging using Language Meshing

- English-dominant children read the Spanish story books to their English-only parents, and some parents pronounced certain words in Spanish with big smiles.
- Spanish-speaking children read the books to and/or with their families in Spanish and English.
- Immigrant parents read the books in Spanish to their YOUNG children:
- One father was reading the books in Spanish and English to the newly arrived YOUNG children. It seemed that the two girls did not develop the Spanish literacy (reading and writing) as well as the English literacy.

# Certification of Pet Adoption

## CERTIFICADO DE ADOPCIÓN



Esto certifica que

Estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_

adoptó a

Nombre de mascota: \_\_\_\_\_



el 13 de febrero de 2020

de la Agencia de Adopción de

Certificado por

directora

# Reflection with Families and Children



## Reflection of Immigrant Family Event with a Research Question

*“How have the teachers, children and family members in a Tunis rural district with 25% ELs demonstrated their transformation while they collaborate for immigrant family engagement activities in planning, implementing, and assessing?”*

# Research Design

- Latino parents and four teachers reconceptualized family engagement practices in schools; this can help to grant agency to families for their children's education (Lopez, 2001; Villenas, 2002).
- Main data sources are family's needs-assessment questionnaires, reflections, and teacher/family interviews.



# **Descriptive Data Analysis from Immigrant Family Needs Assessment**

EL parents and families are likely to attend these events the most:

- **Parent-teacher conferences**
- **Events where they help to make the school a welcoming place for children**
- **Events where they get to learn what their children are learning in school**
- **Visit to museums and other similar places around town**

EL parents and families are likely to attend/participate in these events the least:

- **Join a parent advisory council or other district committee**
- **English classes**
- **Learning about US schools and their practices**
- **Going with their child's class on field trips**

## **Descriptive Data Analysis from Survey : What makes a successful event for EL families?**

EL parents and families rated these factors as most important for family-school events:

- **Their child being involved**
- **Timing of events**
- **Learning or resources offered**

EL parents and families rated these factors as least important for family-school events:

- **Food**
- **Translation/Interpretation**
- **Type of Event**

## Three Emerged Themes

1. Language Ideologies
2. Teachers' intentionality
3. Situated New Identity

# Preliminary Findings: Who am I and Who are you?



## Findings Still in Progress

- Families and children expanded their repertoires by choosing the languages for communication, so they could collectively improve and become resources for other educators and families.
- These untraditional teachers' approaches helped them develop culturally sustained identity with the immigrant family members, which might eventually influence children's active engagement in schoolwork.

## Finding 1: Language Ideologies

- Families used their native language and the named language, English.
- Families felt comfortable using their native languages to the English-only teachers with the translators;
- English-learning children and families used L1 supports and expanded their repertoires, so they could collectively improved and became resources for other educators and families.



## Finding 2 : Teachers' Intentionality

- One teacher approached an immigrant parent to be her "Room Mom" and this MOM recruited immigrant and White families.
- Another teacher recruited an old EL family intentionally
- Another teacher forced herself to go beyond her 'comfort' zone and follow the family's planning and implementation

## Sample Excerpt from Interviews

DRChi: Y para ustedes ¿es importante que los padres están involucrados en evento así?

Juan: Por supuesto, es importante, muy importante porque estamos unidos, estamos juntos y ella (*su hija*) va a aprender mucho de los padres y de los maestros.

DRChi: Is it important to you that parents are involved in events like this one?

Juan: Of course, it is important, very important because we are united, we are together and she (*his daughter*) can learn a lot from parents and teachers.

## Sample Excerpts from Interviews

DRChi: ¿Sería mejor que las personas encargadas, que ellas dijeran estos son los días posibles, podemos escoger cual día sería mejor? Hablar con los padres y escoger un día de acuerdo con lo que digan los padres.

María: Yo digo que si, porque hay muchos padres que tiene la oportunidad de poder venir (*a eventos de la escuela*) y no asisten. Y a uno a veces quisiera esa oportunidad y no puede, no es que uno no quiera sino que a veces por el trabajo uno no puede venir.

DRChi: Would it be better if the people in charge said these are the possible days, [and] we can choose which day would be best? Speak with parents and choose a day based on what they say.

María: I say yes, because there are many parents that have the opportunity to come (*to school events*) and they don't attend. Sometimes a parent wants the opportunity to come, but they cannot. It is not that they do not want to be here, but because of work sometimes they cannot come here.

## Finding 3: Situated ‘New’ Identities

- One Mother said, “I’d like the school to show the parents how they teach. I want to be able to help them more.”
- Teachers developed culturally sustained identity with the immigrant family members.
  - Better relationship with the ELs helps improve children’s academic achievement.
- The teachers ‘new’ identity interrupted the view of immigrant families as having deficits, but as being assets.

## Sample Excerpts for Situated ‘New’ Identities as a Community Member

DRChi: ¿Por qué vinieron hoy al evento?

Juan: Porque a ella, de la parte de la escuela repartieron una hoja, de que era para los papa de venir acá a leer.

DRChi: Why did you come to the event today?

Juan: Because the school gave her a paper that said that parents were going to come here to read.

# Situated ‘New’ Identities: Bilingual as a norm – It is OK to be a bilingual!

- Señor Rodríguez: Es bastante bueno que uno, con confianza de que le van a traducir a uno en su propio idioma cuando no entiende, porque uno no habla muy bien en inglés, no hablo bien inglés, lo hablo un poco, entonces es más fácil cada uno que le traduzca, que alguien hable su propio idioma, si uno puede. Que hayan personas bilingües es muy bueno.
- Señor Rodríguez: It is wonderful that one can, with confidence know that someone is going to translate for you in your own language, because, if someone does not speak English very well, I don't speak English well, I speak a little, but it is easier for someone to translate, someone who knows your own language if they can. There needs to be bilingual individuals, it is very good.

# Implications

- Immigrant parent repertoires became the languages used at the School's family engagement event;
  - They could possibly apply to different situations – confidence and situated identities!!
- The educators were aware of types and forms of texts exchanged between home and school, the content of the texts, and the register of the texts.
- Using both 'printed' and 'online' (DOJO) communication system (translation app), using 'translanguaging' and multimodal tools in communications.

## Overarching Question

- Changing what outreach looks like - Go beyond seeking feedback  
**Then is it possible for schools to empower immigrant families and their children to transform their relationship with schools when having teachers as mediators and coplanners (Lowehaupt, 2014)?**



*Flores and Rosa (2015) acknowledges  
[heteroglossic] “linguistic practices and linguistic  
identities as dynamic phenomenon.”*

**WHY?**

**Q & A!**

Gracias!

감사합니다 (Gham-sah-ham-nyi-dha)



Thank you!

Send questions to [songk@umsl.edu](mailto:songk@umsl.edu)