

**INTERGROUP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HISPANIC
STUDENTS AND EUROPEAN AMERICAN
TEACHERS IN URBAN SCHOOLS**

A Dissertation

by

ROSE C. NARVAEZ

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2012

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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American Teachers in Urban Schools

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ABSTRACT

Intergroup Differences Between Hispanic Students and European
American Teachers in Urban Schools. (August 2012)

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The purpose of this study was to examine the daily exchanges between Hispanic students of Mexican descent and European American teachers in urban schools and how these exchanges can result in a sense of frustration and powerlessness by Hispanic students affecting their academic success. The day-to-day interactions between teacher and student may be a result of intergroup conflict. As this was an exploratory study to examine the daily exchanges between Hispanic students of Mexican descent and their European American teachers, a qualitative case study methodology was used to collect and report the data for the study. This case study approach was helpful in examining the students' perceptions of intergroup conflict and how these cultural differences affected their exchanges. The data were collected through interviews and through observations made while visiting the urban high schools where the participants of the research study once attended. The study took place in a metropolitan city in South Central Texas. Included in this study were five male and five female Hispanic students of Mexican

descent who were in their first or second year of college and who participated in two focus groups to validate their responses.

The intergroup properties that were identified in this study were areas of conflict between the students and their European American teachers that affected their classroom relationships and their academic success. The properties of intergroup conflict were used to identify causes of conflict between the students and their European American teachers. The properties of intergroup conflict areas revealed in the study were (a) incompatible goals, (b) competitions for resources, (c) cultural and power differences, and (d) group boundaries.

The quick increase in the Hispanic population has almost doubled the number of Hispanic students in public schools. The majority of these students are often clustered in urban schools. A disproportionate number of failing schools, across grade levels, serve predominately poor and minority students. Of equal importance is the statistic that 85% of teachers working in public schools in the United States are White. With the increase in students of color in schools, there is research showing that students are treated differently and that the cultural background of the student is often a reason for this differential treatment. As identified in the study and through the properties of intergroup conflict, cultural differences among various demographically diverse groups, such as the students and teachers studied here, lead to misperceptions that eventually lead to conflicts. Potential conflicts, due to teacher and student diversity and to opposing interests, occurred in the day-to-day exchanges in the classrooms.

DEDICATION

To my parents and Henry.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Introduction

The population of the United States is becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural. In the 2010 Census Bureau results, Hispanics accounted for more than half of the United States population increase over the last decade, exceeding estimates in many states as they crossed a new census milestone: 50 million, or 1 in 6 Americans (Cesar, 2011). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009), a Washington DC-based national policy and advocacy organization, projected that by the year 2050, about 50% of the U.S. population will be African American, Hispanic, or Asian. These relatively youthful minority populations—Hispanics in particular—will drive demographic growth and diversification well into the twenty-first century. The number of Hispanic students in U.S. public schools almost doubled between 1990 and 2006, with the ratio of Hispanic students going from one in eight to one in five (Fry & Gonzales, 2008).

This demographic reality and its impact on the future economic and social well-being of the United States is one of many reasons why it is imperative to educate these students to the highest standards. However, current statistics demonstrate that there is a wide achievement and attainment gap that must be bridged before that goal is met (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). A disproportionate number of failing schools, across grade levels, serve predominantly poor and minority students. These

The style and format for this study follow that of the *American Educational Research Journal*.

segregated schools tend to have fewer financial, human, and material resources than schools in more affluent areas. By the time students who attend these schools reach high school, the academic challenges they face have been compounded by years of substandard education (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). Here are some important facts about Hispanic/Latino education in the United States today from the Pew Hispanic Center (2008):

- Seventy-five percent of Latino students attend segregated schools in which minorities comprise 50% or more of the student population.
- Thirty-five percent of Latino students attend intensely segregated schools where minority students comprise at least 90% of the student population.
- One ninth of Latino students attend schools where 99 to 100% of the student body is composed of minority students.
- Nine percent of White children are enrolled in minority-predominant school districts, in comparison with two thirds of Latino children.
- Latino youth are concentrated in central cities and thus are more likely to attend schools that are overcrowded and underfunded. In California, for example, about 16% of the teachers in schools attended by Hispanic students are not fully credentialed, which is twice the percentage for schools predominantly attended by White students.
- Between 1994 and 2000, there was a 38% increase in the Latino student population, compared to a 13% increase in Black public school enrollment

and a decline of 1.2% in White public school enrollment during the same time period.

- Latinos and African Americans comprise 80% of the student population in extreme-poverty schools where 90 to 100% of the population is considered poor.
- Nationally, almost half of English Language Learner (ELL) students attend schools where 30% or more of their fellow students are also ELL students.
- Nationwide, 31% of ELL high school students had teachers who did not have a major, minor, or certification in the field of bilingual education.

The majority of these students are often clustered in urban schools, come from poor homes and are less likely to have parents who graduated from high school (Fry, 2005). Of equal importance is the statistic from the National Center for Education Information study showing that 85% of the teachers working in U.S. public schools are White (Feistritzer, 2011). With this increase in students of color in schools, there is documentation showing that students are treated differently and that the cultural background of the student is often a reason for this differential treatment (Rios, 1996).

Background

A basic prerequisite to learning in school is openness in the part of the student to accept the teacher as a credible source (Payne, 1994). For this to occur, the student should feel that the teacher is significant to him or her in a positive way. Negative attitudes and stereotypes on the part of the teacher may act to destroy this tenuous crucial bond, or prevent it from ever developing, thereby creating student resistance to the

teacher both personally and educationally. This is particularly true in the relationship between teachers and their low socioeconomic status (LSES) minority students (Payne 1994).

One fear resulting from the disparity of a growing number of Hispanic students and the majority of European American teachers in the public schools workforce is that the European American teachers will not reflectively and critically question the social, political, historical, or cultural tradition of their own educational experience and will thereby replay the “hidden” curriculum taught to them, which might serve to “colonize the mind” of these students of color (Rios, 1996, p. 131). Central to this interpretation is the belief that classrooms are socially and culturally organized environments and that the thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions of the participants in these classrooms and that a critical focus has to be on the specific difficulties encountered by those who are relatively powerless in educational contexts, such as minority students (Erickson, 1986; Shulman, 1987).

Teachers who have little exposure with people from different racial groups and have worked only with their own group may have a greater tendency to hold stereotypes and create a hostile environment (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). If majority groups are uncertain about working with people of color, there is a search for common group norms so they can exchange information and develop a common social identity. Thus, if the majority group stresses their norms and values, interactions among the members will be on cultural values that affect constructive group processes and the well-being of team members (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

Differences in cultural backgrounds, social capital, and socioeconomic status between students of color and their teachers often are displayed in today's classrooms. These differences are seen in classrooms where power differences between teachers and students result in disciplinary actions, minimum expectations in some classrooms, and low scores in state-mandated exams. The intent of this study was to examine intergroup differences that exist between Hispanic students and European American teachers of urban schools and to see how these differences affected the students' academic success.

The teacher's personal experiences and professional education are one dimension affecting their routines and knowledge (Porter & Brophy, 1988). Critical to this dimension as it relates to teaching in cultural contexts is the fact that both personal experiences and professional education are culturally conditioned. Thus, the personal experiences of most teachers (who are typically female, Euro-American, and from middle-class backgrounds) and the professional education they have received (which historically and, in many places, currently focuses on "generic" students with nominal attention to student diversity) may be fundamentally at odds with the experiences their students from diverse backgrounds have had, the context of the urban, multicultural schools in which they might teach (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

In schools that are demographically diverse, intergroup theory may explain the challenges to creating a community of teachers. In their exchanges, teachers have to be more conscious about their beliefs and values when people of color enter the organization (Thomas, 2008). Intergroup theory describes the types of conflict that occurs among demographically diverse teachers (Nkomo & Cox, 1996). The process of

creating a demographically diverse community is difficult for teachers who must come to terms about their beliefs about students of color. This theory contains a complex set of interactions for understanding the effects of diversity in the workplace. An individual's identity in an organization is determined not only by organizational categorization, but identity group membership also (Alderfer, 1977). It also recognizes that individual cultural identities influence how they perceive their work and their relationships with others (Alderfer, 1977). For this study, intergroup theory was used to explore the relations among groups and how this theory determined how groups were formed, the emotional climate of the workplace, the distribution of resources, group reactions to authority, and the effectiveness of the group in achieving its objectives (Alderfer, 1977).

Various researchers have identified multiple sources of conflict and refer to how one condition of discord seems to affect another (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Alderfer, Tucker, & Tucker, 1980; Cox, 1994). These properties of intergroup conflict include: (a) incompatible goals, (b) competition for resources, (c) cultural and power differences, (d) conformity of identity, (e) group boundaries, (f) affective patterns, (g) cognitive formations, and (h) leadership. Sources of intergroup conflict are often viewed as negative effects, as this requires majority workers to establish patterns of adjustment to diversity issues in the workplace (Cox, 1994). These conflicts cannot be ignored and must be recognized as important for creating an environment in the classrooms where academic success is evident for all students. Based on these studies, intergroup theory provided insights on how cultural differences among demographically diverse teachers

and students led to organizational resistance and affected the academic success of students.

Teachers need to become aware of their own attitudes and beliefs and the impact of these on their students. The resulting study builds upon past research on embedded intergroup theory studies to provide a look at Hispanic students of Mexican descent perspective, on their academic success or lack of academic success as a result of being taught by an European American teacher in an urban school. The responsibility of academic success was greater in situations in which the cultural, race, and economic backgrounds of the teachers and students were different. We cannot now or will we in the near future, be able to match students and teachers according to their ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds—there are simply not enough minority teachers in the labor force (Haberman, 1991). In urban schools, these differences between Hispanic students and teachers sometimes lead to conflicts that may disrupt the entire successful functioning of the school organization and, thus, perhaps lead to lack of student success.

Statement of the Problem

An understudied aspect of poor teacher-student relationships is the student's perception that teachers treat some students differently because of the student's ethnicity. Poor teacher-student relationships can be expected to contribute to negative feelings toward school since these relationships are at the very heart of the educational process (Turner, Laria, Shapiro, & Perez, 1993). It has been suggested that the teacher-student bond is particularly important for Latino students (Alva & Padilla, 1995). Education is viewed as an equalizer in the United States, and recognition of bias in an

institution that professes to offer equal opportunity, creates a sense of alienation and distance (Calabrese & Poe, 1990).

In educational settings, intergroup theory applies to school participants because of the nature of the organizational context between identity and organizational groups. In schools, there exists a teaching culture that imposes beliefs about appropriate ways of educating children resulting in norms of actions (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Various researchers have identified multiple sources of conflict and refer to how one condition of discord seems to affect another (Alderfer et al., 1980). Hispanic students' perceptions of their teachers' and the majority teachers' perceptions of their Hispanic students is a study of power relations and the analysis of conflict among groups and how that impacts equal and unequal power groups within the organization of a school (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

In urban school settings, there is little research known about: (a) Hispanic students and their daily interactions with their primarily European American teachers, (b) how Hispanic students react and respond to these daily exchanges, and (c) how these daily interactions and exchanges impact the Hispanic students' academic success in urban schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to conduct qualitative research to examine intergroup differences that exist between Hispanic students and European American teachers in urban schools. With the increasing population of Hispanic students and the fact that 85% of public school teachers working in public schools in the United States

are White, this study shows how very little has been done about these cultural differences in schools. This qualitative study investigated Hispanic students' perceptions of their European American teachers and how these perceptions impacted their academic success.

Significance of the Study

In any organization, schools included, it is certainly true that conditions in which employees or students work have a great impact on their satisfaction and productivity. A key factor in improving education for Hispanic students is to keep teachers from displaying racial or cultural "superiority." Such actions lead to the development of an "us versus them" mentality. If such an attitude exists, it can destroy a student's self-worth subsequently displaying itself as student apathy towards education (Vasquez, 1998). Teachers play a vital role in the success of their students and must get to know their students inside and out. Schools are personnel intensive, particularly since the highly qualified clause in the No Child Left Behind Act.

Why is it that minority students are extraordinarily unlikely to graduate from high school, let alone college? The data on people of color, especially Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans are especially grim. For Hispanics, studies (Cafferty & McCready, 1994; Moore & Pachon, 1985) generally find that 50% of this ethnic group drops out of school.

If we can begin to understand why the social institution of education, touted to be the institution that provides opportunities for ethnic groups, is failing in its mission to the extent that it constitutes neglect of minority students, it will have implications not only

for our educational system but for other social institutions in our society as well. This study provides insight on how students perceive their teachers and how these student-teacher daily exchanges can impact academic success.

America desperately needs to examine first-hand accounts of how well-meaning, hardworking, and professional people can perpetuate inequality through their everyday lives. We need to understand that because of the way the education institutions are organized. They neglect and might even impede assistance to ethnic students.

Districts spend the largest amount of their school budgets on personnel costs. Districts that do that and have a diverse student enrollment will need to include in their strategic plans, a concerted effort through their personnel practices to recruit teachers that display such qualities as openness, willingness to learn, empathy, internal locus of control, concern for other, creativity, motivation, and social awareness. The development and the implementation of a diversity plan in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) would make all stakeholders aware of the many cultural differences that exist in schools and in the community.

Schools are always searching for new ways to address students' needs through professional development based on the needs assessments of students. Classrooms can be a place of hope where students and teachers gain glimpses of the kind of society we could live in and where students could learn academic and critical skills needed to be successful. The staff development projects what a district offers, and it should focus on developing and sustaining open, positive attitudes and behaviors in the teachers they now employ, regardless of their ethnic and racial makeup.

Today's schools consist of administrators, and teachers who, in some instances, do not culturally reflect the student population they serve. Many times, the teachers and the students at a campus also differ between each other with respect to race and culture. The daily exchanges that occur between teachers and students of different ethnicities are critical to their ability to accomplish the goals of the school and ultimately the success of students. Negative beliefs about diversity leave their imprint not only on the entire school, but more importantly, impact students and their ability to succeed (Nieto, 2004).

Because it appears to be humanly impossible for people to get along together, it is almost inevitable for conflict not to exist. Because of this, understanding of conflict is critical. Understanding why intergroup conflict occurs and the ways that members of different groups manage conflict is necessary if conflicts in the classroom occur. Understanding and learning how to deal with these differences is vital in forming a positive school climate that is more conducive to student learning. If schools want to increase learning among children of color, then schools must create a strong foundation for their learning. This foundation includes freedom from slurs and harassment based on ethnicity, language, religion, and other aspects of identity (Henze, 2002).

Teachers across America are predominately European American. National data indicate that European American teachers comprised 84% of the teachers in 2000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Although the proportion of teachers of color has increased slightly in recent years, it does not match the increase in student diversity in inner city urban schools. This study was important because results from this research can serve as guidelines for schools in preparing teachers to meet the challenges

of a growing diverse student population. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how to create better relationships between teacher and students that are needed for academic success, especially if the teacher is of a different race and culture than the majority of their students.

There are limited studies that examined how Mexican American students perceived how their teachers played a role in their academic success. Therefore, this study addressed group identities as critical parts of a working organization. This study addressed the properties of intergroup conflict and the concept of ethnocentrism as a component of some researched conflict examples. This study addressed the importance of creating a diversity plan and its significance and impact to the overall working relationships between Hispanic students and European American teachers.

Schools and the diversity of its workforce are inevitable. This diversity infuses all aspects of organizational life, and it holds enormous potential for creativity and learning in the classrooms. This research study added to the literature by identifying how student and teacher differences played out in classrooms does affect students' commitment to their schooling. Hopefully, this study provided necessary information to help school leaders improve their staff development, develop a diversity plan, and help meet the academic needs of Hispanic students by addressing racial and cultural differences between group boundaries to promote schooling that is fully inclusive and serves all students well (Bell, 2002).

Overview of Methodology

Data Collection

For this study, a qualitative case study approach was employed (Merriam, 1998). A case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources and exploring through a variety of lenses. Data included focus groups, interviews, observations, and field notes. Hispanic college students who graduated from an urban high school and whose teachers were predominately European American were interviewed, using a set of pre-established questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) that centered on intergroup differences between themselves and their European American teachers' attitudes. This was done to determine how these experiences may have affected their academic success in high school. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for reoccurring themes.

Data Sources

A total of 10 Hispanic students in their first or second year of college were interviewed. There were five male and five female students. The researcher identified these students based on their attendance at inner city urban schools in a large metropolitan area in South Texas. All the interviewed Hispanic students were of Mexican descent and were taught mainly by European American teachers in their urban high school.

Data Analysis

A qualitative thematic strategy of data analysis was used to categorize and make judgments about the meaning of the data. This inquiry process led to a single-case level

of analysis where data were aggregated to incorporate a thematic approach (Boyatzis, 1998). The students' interview data were analyzed and coded based on the variables that affect intergroup conflict, such as group boundaries, cognitive formations, and power differences. The data were analyzed using what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called a constant comparative method. This process compared the intergroup theory (Appendix A) with the students' responses. A prior-research-driven approach was used to identify themes and the coding process (Boyatzis, 1998). To ensure the reliability of the study, the data were triangulated using a fellow researcher familiar with the intergroup theory (Merriam, 1998).

Research Questions

The researcher proposed two guiding questions for this qualitative study:

1. How do Hispanic students and their European American teachers perceive their daily interactions and exchanges and their implications?
2. How do these daily interactions and exchanges impact Hispanic students' academic success in an urban school setting?

Limitations of the Study

The study was undertaken as an exploratory investigation to examine how Hispanic students of Mexican descent perceive intergroup conflict, its impact on their exchanges with their European American teachers in urban high schools, and its impact on their academic success. Given the narrowness of the study, the researcher identified several limitations. The limitations for this study were:

1. The participants were from several urban schools whose personal and educational experiences, background, socioeconomic status, cultural identity, and gender differences may or may not impact their understanding of intergroup differences.
2. The number of participants, though small in number, may or may not provide a commonality in terms of findings and themes but not in the richness of their experiences.
3. The size of the urban school may or may not impact the richness of the experiences of their former students.
4. The scope of the study was limited to urban schools in a large metropolitan area of South Texas and not representative of all schools in general.
5. The European American teachers referred to in this study do not reflect the attitudes and practices of all European American teachers.
6. The researcher's personal and professional experiences and background knowledge revealed divergent constructions about the content of the study.

Operational Definitions

The intent of this study was to examine intergroup differences that existed between Hispanic students and European American teachers of urban schools and to see how these differences may have affected the student's academic success. Furthermore, the definitions proposed for this qualitative study were as follows:

Cultural Identity: The individual reflection of culture as it is constructed by society (Cox, 1994). It is one's individual image of the behavior, beliefs, values, and norms that characterizes one's groups' feelings.

Diversity: A mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system (Nkomo & Cox, 1996).

Embedded Intergroup Theory: A theory of embedded intergroup relations specifically for organizations that explicitly integrate identity group membership and group membership resulting from organizational categorization. There are two types of groups within the organization—identity groups and organizational groups.

Identity Group: A group whose members share common biological characteristics, have participated in equivalent historical experiences, at times subjected to certain social forces, and hold similar worldviews (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Nkomo & Cox, 1996).

Organizational Group: Is one whose members share common organizational positions, participate in common work experiences, and have similar organizational views (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Nkomo & Cox, 1996).

Properties of Intergroup Conflict: Conditions that influence how the leader and majority and non-majority workers will react to each other (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Cox, 1994). These properties of intergroup conflict include: incompatible goals, competition for resources, cultural and power differences, conformity of identity, group boundaries, affective patterns, cognitive formations, and leadership.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. This first chapter introduced the background and statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, an overview of the methodology, key research questions, study limitations, and definition of key terms. Chapter II reviews literature and research related to intergroup theory. Chapter III presents the methodology for this study, including the research design, the selection of the sample, the data collection procedures, and the analysis of the data. Chapter IV presents the results obtained from this methodology. The final chapter, Chapter V, presents a discussion of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This study examined the perception of Hispanic students of Mexican descent in relation to the differences between them and their teachers in urban schools that resulted in intergroup conflicts such as power differences, incompatible goals, cultural differences, and group boundaries. This was especially true where the faculty in urban schools was comprised mainly of European American teachers. This chapter presents a review of research and literature on how intergroup differences due to cultural, racial, and language differences between a teacher and a student affect a student's academic achievement.

The first review area includes a review of the history of the education of Mexican Americans (which may explain why students of Mexican American descent have unique qualities as a cultural group), facts and figures about the fastest-growing minority group, and how it has been neglected by our educational system. The second area reviewed is the importance of understanding the educational practices of deculturalization and denial of educational opportunities to Mexican Americans. The third section shows how a teacher's perspective reflects his or her own cultural capital and how these perspectives affect a student's pedagogical progress. The fourth area reviewed shows how teachers' efficacy, cultural sensitivity, and beliefs can affect their students in a profound way that research says determines the academic success of many students of Hispanic descent. The fifth area reviewed shows how schools have to navigate racial lines in order to be

successful. The final section explains embedded intergroup theory as the theoretical perspective for this study and why critical race theory does not apply.

Within this framework, there are conditions that influence how majority and minority groups will react to each other (Cox, 1994). Examination of the properties of intergroup conflict and how they affect the academic success of Hispanic students of Mexican descent was reviewed.

The National Center for Education Information study shows that 85% of the teachers working in U.S. public schools are European American (Feistritzer, 2011). While we wait for the demographics of the teaching profession to catch up to the demographics of the classroom, European American teachers say that they are up to the job of working in these mixed environments (Landsman, 2009). Many of these teachers have taught in inner city schools and have become a fixture at the schools and the community.

The instructional practices that European American teachers and all teachers use in their classrooms with students of color should not be different from any other classes. The strategies used, however, should be different (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). All teachers, but especially European American teachers, need to recognize the deep-seated inequality in our school systems and in our economic structure. It is their job to encourage such recognition by their actions, by their instruction, and by their commitment to change it (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Part of this commitment can manifest itself in providing support for students trying to avoid the pressures of failure and in pushing those students who are caught up in this failure, to envision their lives differently. This commitment is

one that anyone in the educational field should aspire (Landsman, 2009). With Hispanics dropping out of schools in great numbers, this commitment is essential in urban schools. A review of the educational history of Hispanics of Mexican descent is important in order to see how these inequalities in educational opportunities began in United States history.

History of the Education of Mexican Americans and Its Effect on These Students' Present Day Schooling

In order to fully understand the culture and background of students, one studies their history. The history of the Mexican American people originates from the valley of the Aztec warriors and the proud heritage of their past. Personal histories vary in the different states where Mexican Americans are found today. Mexican Americans used to be concentrated in the Southwest, but can now be found in both urban and rural communities across the United States.

The history of the Mexican American in Texas begins with the annexation of Texas in 1848 at the end of the Mexican American War: Tejanos—Texans of Mexican descent—lost property rights and political power in a society dominated by European Americans. Through discriminatory practices and violent force, Tejanos were kept at the bottom of the new political and sociocultural order (Preuss, 2009). From 1900-1930, as an influx of immigrants from Mexico came north to meet a growing demand for cheap labor in the developing commercial agriculture industries, Tejanos experienced continued discrimination in employment, housing, public facilities, the judicial system, and educational institutions (Preuss, 2009).

Many school districts segregated Tejano and White children into separate facilities. The Mexican schools were grossly underfunded and often offered only a grade school education (Heber Johnson, 2003). Those Mexican American children attending segregated schools were put through a deculturalization or “Americanization” program. An important element in the “Americanization” of Mexican schoolchildren was eliminating the speaking of their native language (Spring, 2009). Educators argued that learning English was essential to assimilation and the creation of a unified nation. In addition, language was considered related to values and culture. Changing languages, it was assumed, would cause a cultural revolution among Mexican Americans (Spring, 2009).

In 1930, when 90% of the schools in South Texas were segregated, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), a Tejano advocacy group, supported a court challenge to school segregation (Wilson, 2002). The Texas Court of Appeals, however, ruled school districts could use such criteria as language and irregular attendance due to seasonal work to separate students. In 1918, Texas passed legislation with stricter requirements for the use of English in public schools (Wilson, 2002). The legislation made it a criminal offense to use any language but English in the schools. In addition, the legislation required that school personnel, including teachers, principals, custodians, and school board members, use only English when conducting school business (Spring, 2009). This study showed the importance of language to students and how it related to their academic success.

The struggle of Mexican Americans to end discriminatory practices accelerated following World War II. In 1948, LULAC and the newly formed American G.I. Forum, an advocacy group of Mexican American veterans, assisted in a lawsuit that eventuated in a federal district court decision prohibiting school segregation based on Mexican ancestry (Tijerina, 2000). Localities evaded the ruling, however, and de facto segregation continued. In spite of these setbacks, Mexican American groups continued to fight segregation. In 1955, LULAC and the American G.I. Forum initiated a suit protesting the practice of placing Tejano children into separate classes for the first two grades of school and requiring four years to complete these grades (Tijerina, 2000). Idar (2000) of the Forum, in an interview below, discussed this practice, which was finally outlawed in 1957:

That was the years when, in a lot of school districts, when a Mexican child first went to school, he was put in what they called a pre-primer. Spent a whole year there. Second year, he was put in the primer. Third year he would go into the first grade. By this time he was two years older than the average first grader—they were already behind. That's why you had so many kids dropping out of school when they got to be teenagers. Here their European American counterparts were already two, three grades ahead of them. And here they were, so a lot of them dropped out and didn't go to high school. Not only that, but a lot of the facilities in the Mexican barrios, the schools had the textbooks that were handed down from others, maybe didn't have the best teachers, they didn't have the best buildings. And that kind of stuff. (para. 2)

Major changes in the segregation of Mexican American students did not occur until the students themselves were directly involved in the fight for equal justice. In the late 1960s supported and complemented by a new civil rights organization, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), student protests helped end discriminatory practices and also led to the introduction of bilingual and bicultural

programs in public schools. Tijerina (2000), the founder of MALDEF, related a successful student protest against discrimination:

Sometime in [19]70-71, high school Mexican-Americans walked out in protest claiming discrimination by the Abilene High School. The girls were bypassed for cheerleaders and various other school programs. So they walked out and the school expelled them—not suspended them, expelled them. We filed a lawsuit in Abilene in Federal court. There was a firebrand lawyer from Lubbock that came and filed the lawsuit, and we paid him. But instead of helping, he antagonized the whole community. So I went down there, and Judge Brewster from Fort Worth was sitting in Abilene, and I knew the judge, and I had to substitute counsel and remove the guy. We tried the case for a week before a jury. Finally, we reached an agreement whereby the children were reinstated in school. And we waived money damages—we weren't interested. And all of them went back to school, all of them finished school. And the leader, she went on to university, graduated, went to medical school. And now, I understand, that today she is a brain surgeon. (para. 3)

Because of the growing changing demographics of the United States, many schools are rethinking their educational practices. The end of educational segregation of Mexican American students in today's public schools is very important. This study shows how the end of educational segregation has not in fact ended but is seen in an entirely new context in underfunded, poor academic inner city urban schools.

In today's society, Mexican Americans comprise the largest subgroup of Latinos. Mexican Americans number 13.3 million and make up 61% of this country's Latino population (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001). The Mexican American population nearly doubled between 1970 and 1980, and it nearly doubled again by 1990 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993). Today's Mexican American student population varies in diversity. Students may be immigrants themselves or the sons and daughters of immigrants. Those who are native born may be the second, third, or fourth generation born in the United

States. Many trace their ancestry back to historical periods when the land was either an independent republic or under Spanish or Mexican rule (Therrien & Ramirez, 2001).

While researching the reasons for immigrants migrating to the United States, three major reasons were identified. Firstly, some immigrants left Mexico for political reasons during the early 1900s at the time of the Mexican Revolution. Between 1910 and 1930, 10% of the population of Mexico immigrated to the United States; this represented about 685,000 legal immigrants (Gonzalez, 2002). In many cases, these immigrants had been well connected and politically involved. Many left professional careers and high social positions (Gonzalez, 2002). Secondly, other immigrants left Mexico during difficult economic times because they were unable to provide sustenance for their families. Lastly, immigrants left their native Mexico in hopes of coming to the United States and finding better opportunities for themselves and their children (Gonzalez, 2002). The majority of most Mexican American immigrants are not new immigrants, however. During the past several decades, far more Mexican Americans (compared with other Latinos) have been native rather than foreign born. The 1990 census showed that almost seven out of ten Mexican Americans were born in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).

Many of these “native” born immigrants encounter numerous roadblocks they have to face as Latino students. In states with high Latino student enrollment, segregation is the norm. According to Orfield, Montfort, and Aaron (1989), 59% of students in New York and 41% of students in Texas are enrolled in schools where nearly all (90-100%) students are minorities. The fact is that many Latinos across the nation

attend predominantly minority schools. Furthermore, 88% of the Latinos reside in urban areas and attend urban schools where high percentages of minority students run a disproportionately high risk of dropping out (Pallas, 1990). Also, a high poverty rate among Latinos places them at an even greater educational disadvantage. The poverty rate among 6-17 year old Latino children is over 35% compared to a rate of less than 14% among Whites (Pallas, 1990).

Given the history of how Mexican American students were educated, thus, when these students enter schools today, past differences do play a role in how they will be perceived by White teachers. This history also provides a context of why Mexican American students are so aligned in their culture resulting in White teachers being unable to meet their needs. This study indicated these differences as these participants noted obstacles towards their language competencies and experiences as perceived by their teachers. Along with these “obstacles,” Latino students are moving to urban schools that already have “other” roadblocks that will also prevent them from reaching educational equity. These other roadblocks are: low expectations, over-reliance on testing, poorly prepared teachers, a scarcity of minority teachers, tracking, disregard for language and cultural diversity, and inadequate school financing (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990).

Deculturalization and Its Impact on Mexican American Students

Today, dominated groups in the United States have primarily experienced deculturalization and denial of education. Deculturalization is the education process of destroying a people’s culture and replacing it with a new culture. Language is an

important part of culture (Berta-Avila, Revilla, & Figueroa, 2011). This study related the importance of language in schools. Many states have enacted laws where English is the only language used in schools. This study related the importance of language in schools and showed how students are made to feel powerless and frustrated with the language barriers that many Hispanics have decided to drop out of school.

In the case of the United States, schools have used varying forms of this method in attempts to eradicate the cultures of Native Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans. Believing that European American culture was the superior culture and the only culture that would support republican and democratic institutions, educators forbade the speaking of non-English languages, particularly, Spanish and Native American tongues and forced students to learn a European American centered curriculum (Spring, 2001). In general, deculturalization programs have used the following educational methods:

1. Segregation and isolation.
2. Forced change of language.
3. Curriculum content that reflect culture of dominate group.
4. Textbooks that reflect culture of dominate group.
5. Denial of cultural and religious expression by dominated groups.
6. Use of teachers from dominant group.

The first method of deculturalization – segregation and isolation – was used first with Native Americans. Indians sent to Indian Territory, were isolated in the hope that missionary educators would “civilize” them in one generation. Indian children sent to

boarding schools, were isolated from the cultural traditions of their tribe as they were “civilized” (Spring, 2001).

Forcing a dominated group to abandon its own language is an important part of deculturalization. Culture and values are embedded in language. Educational policymakers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that substituting English for Native American languages and for Spanish was the key to deculturalization. But the language issue created the greatest resistance by dominated groups. The attempt to change the languages of the groups under consideration may have been the major cause of the limited effectiveness of deculturalization programs (Spring, 2001).

Using curriculum and textbooks that reflect the culture of the dominating group was a typical practice of state school systems and federal educational programs. The hope was that these groups would emulate the culture reflected in the curriculum and textbooks. In segregated schools for Mexican American children, the cultural bias of the curriculum and textbooks left little room for Hispanic culture. The results might have been to alienate the children from school in the hopes of non-attendance (Spring, 2001).

These methods of deculturalization were accompanied by programs of Americanization designed to create emotional attachments to symbols of the U.S. government. For Mexican American children, these programs were supposed to change the loyalty of the students, and hopefully their parents, from their nationalistic traditions to the U.S. government. The program for creating these emotional attachments included:

1. Flag ceremonies.
2. Replacement of local heroes with U.S. national heroes in school celebrations.

3. Patriotic celebrations.
4. Historical studies focusing on the traditions of the dominant White culture in the United States.

The attempts at deculturalization were eventually discounted in the 1950s and 1960s by the civil rights movement. The strong resistance to deculturalization during the civil rights movement highlights the difficulty, if not impossibility, of deculturalization through educational settings (Spring, 2001). While schools have made attempts to deculturalize their curriculum and encourage teachers to change their instructional practices, this study indicated that it is often difficult to separate the two as noted in several studies study by Bell (2002) and Achinstein (2002).

Teacher Efficacy and Teachers' Ability to Teach Mexican American Students

The term efficacy is one of many terms originating from studies involving self-efficacy and education. Teacher efficacy has been proposed more specifically for the realm of education reflecting teachers' beliefs in their capacities to affect academic achievement for their students (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) have suggested the deletion of the term teacher efficacy and replacing it with teachers' perceptions of efficacy, efficacy judgments, sense of efficacy, perceived efficacy, or efficacy beliefs.

Goddard et al. (2004) further noted that teacher efficacy is specific to a particular task. Strong efficacy beliefs or a higher sense of efficacy leads to resilience in teachers, making them more capable in their choices to tenaciously overcome obstacles and persist in the face of failure (Goddard et al., 2004).

The teacher with a strong sense of efficacy is more likely to look at their teaching practices as the cause of student failure as opposed to the students. This study showed how students perceive those teachers who readily recognize that their teaching practices can be effective and influential on students regardless of influences inside or outside the school (Tucker et al., 2005). In the case for students who are underachieving at school and lacking motivation, the teachers with strong teacher efficacy are confident in their abilities to succeed with such students. Such teachers are more likely to reflect upon and change their instruction when students are not succeeding in their classroom. Tucker et al. (2005) found teacher efficacy to be one of the few teacher characteristics consistently related to student achievement.

The link between teacher efficacy and student achievement is grounded in the teacher's motivations and influences to achieve the desired goal of academic success for the students. Deemer (2004) further stated that personal teaching efficacy is what influences the goals teachers promote in their classrooms. These goals are influenced and driven by the teacher's personal belief that success can be obtained with the students regardless of their diverse background and/or socioeconomic background.

Teacher efficacy is not similar to teacher expectations but may have an influence on them as judgments of personal capabilities influence the work and goals set forth in the classroom. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) referred to social cognitive theory in explaining how low expectations and negative beliefs about certain students are likely to put forth less effort in preparation and delivery of instruction. Good and Brophy (2002) showed the effects of teacher expectations on student achievement and how teachers

demonstrate different behaviors and expectations toward different students. The effects can be detrimental to students who may not achieve to their potential or beyond based on the treatment, behaviors, and expectations of their teachers. Such is why teacher efficacy is seen as such an important belief system affecting student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Collier, 2005).

The high efficacious teacher will seek and engage in teaching strategies and practices that will promote their capacities to affect student outcome and change. Such teachers believe that they can positively impact the students' capacities to learn (Bandura, 1977). These teachers are similar to the teachers in Ladson-Billings' (1994) study of successful teachers of African American students, in particular those who believe that not only their students are capable of excellence, but they assume responsibility for ensuring that their students achieve that excellence. Such teachers have also established, through their efficacy beliefs, a strong rapport with students so they believe that they are working together to explore and understand the learning material (Haberman, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994). The teachers believe in themselves and their students, causing students to have confidence in themselves and the teacher.

The achievements or lack thereof by students are tied to the expectations teachers have for them in the classroom. Irvine (1990) suggested teachers' expectations for students vary by ethnicity. There exists a significant difference in many of the habits and styles that teachers have and those that some of their students bring into the classroom. Pang (2001) noted that teachers vary in their knowledge of children's culture and children who come to school with different levels of cultural knowledge.

The highly efficacious teacher will seek and engage in habits and practices that will promote their capabilities to affect constructive change and overcome obstacles in the classroom. Conversely, teachers with strong self-confidence and a high sense of efficacy in their teaching abilities have high achievement expectations for their students. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy also choose challenging activities and are motivated to try harder when confronted by obstacles. These teachers are not easily diverted; they stay in teaching, they remain in the same school, choosing not to float around but remain dedicated to the students at their campus. This denotes a person's belief in his capacity to affect a course of action (Bandura, 1977).

Some teachers continue to blame the students' parents, environment, and the students themselves for their failures. Gay (2000) saw it as teachers attributing student failure to lack of intellectual ability and poor home environments rather than to the quality of their teaching. These are teachers with low-efficacy and essentially poor-performing educators whose students' academic developments are neglected. Tucker et al. (2005) observed how teachers with low-efficacy tend to look for solutions outside of their own classrooms when students are not achieving academically in the classroom.

Efficacy is different from teacher beliefs in the sense that many beliefs do not necessarily drive the approach a teacher may take to reach his or her capabilities. A strong sense of efficacy leads to an increased attainment in performance and capabilities despite the skills of the individual (Bandura, 1977). Efficacy leads to a heightened level of success and pursuit of success despite the present skills a person may hold. Efficacy represents a willingness, belief, and a seeking of change for the improvement in one's

skills and communication as a teacher. Payne (1994) noted that if a teacher communicates this willingness to students in as many ways possible, this will result in a significant teacher-student relationship that evolves positively and will influence a student's motivation. While teachers may feel efficacious in changing students' academic outcomes, it may be more difficult due to the cultural differences that exist between teachers and Mexican American students.

Teachers' Beliefs and Their Ability to Teach Mexican American Students

Teacher beliefs influence perceptions and judgments (Pajares, 1992). Teacher beliefs are linked to teacher efficacy in the sense of how teachers perceive the causes of teachers' or students' performances (Chester & Beaudin, 1996). Beliefs are also tied to expectations. If teachers believe students of color are prone to discipline problems, then their focus is only on that and not academic achievement for students. They believe students of color are not as intellectual and knowledgeable as their White and Asian counterparts, therefore, they do not expect as much from these students (Pajares, 1992). The expectations are low, represented by the low level quality of instruction received by students of color, who are in fact, capable of high levels of academic work and achievement. The teachers have such low expectations and minimal teaching standards for these students based on their beliefs (Gay, 2000).

Fisher's (2005) study of high-achieving and underachieving students found underachievers referring to the prejudice and stereotypes on the part of their White teachers when asked to explain their lack of academic achievement. Some of the students referenced beliefs and perceptions as factors, which allowed teachers to

prejudge them before getting to know them as students (Fisher, 2005). If teachers believe in their abilities to effectively teach their students, then it reveals something about their beliefs in the students' capabilities to learn. It is these beliefs and, therefore, the teacher's perceptions that students recognize in the classroom.

Payne (1994) told us of the importance of such perceptions on the part of the teachers and students as the basic prerequisite to learning. Negative attitudes and stereotypes on the part of the teacher destroy this tenuous crucial bond hindering the learning environment in the classroom (Payne, 1994). The relationship between efficacy and beliefs is tied to these perceptions that will either bond or alienate students and teachers.

The outcomes can be negative or positive to student learning based in part on whether perceptions are favorable toward the students. Negative outcomes can be attributed to teachers with low teacher efficacy who believe their students of color are incapable of high achievement and therefore have low expectations for those students. A crisis can arise when students internalize their teachers' expectations leading to a deterioration of their academic performances and behaviors (Good & Brophy, 2002).

Teachers with a strong sense of teacher efficacy hold strong beliefs about their students' abilities to succeed but also hold strong beliefs about teaching and what it entails (Foster, 1995; Henry, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994). These teachers see and incorporate the students' race and culture (Love & Kruger, 2005), but do not consider them as obstacles to their teaching and student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Through their beliefs about the students and their culture, they are able to form better

relations with the students and their parents, fostering both an atmosphere of cooperation and involvement. A teacher's belief is an important component of teacher efficacy. It also has implications for the classroom and school climate.

Teacher beliefs not only pertain to how teachers feel about their students, but also how they feel about their roles as educators and in their attitudes about education in general. They believe that teaching is a calling and a service to the community and society in general. These teachers also believed that knowledge was something held by both the teacher and student (Love & Kruger, 2005); therefore, they believed in the necessity of knowing their students and their culture in order to infuse that with the curriculum and classroom teaching practices. These teachers believed in culturally relevant teaching that would impact learning to the degree of being engaging and effective for the students within an ideal school or classroom climate. The students in the study felt that their culture was not affirmed or their teachers' teaching was not relevant to them.

Cultural Awareness and Teaching Demographically Diverse Students

Culture is at the heart of everything we do as learners and educators (Gay, 2000). Culture has an impact and is a significant factor in our thought processes. There is clearly a strong relationship between culture and education (Boykin, 1978; Gay, 2000; Pang, 2001). Gay (2000) further stated that culture determines how we think, believe, and behave and, in turn, how we teach and learn. Culture is a reflection of our thinking. It has an impact on the manner in which students learn best. The thinking of an individual can, in turn, be impacted by any misperceptions, bias, and/or prejudices they

have. The less one knows about another's culture, the greater likelihood that these prejudices can occur. Such is why cultural awareness is important. It is critical to the teaching and learning process because it impacts how teachers teach and not only how students learn but the manner in which they learn best.

Culture is vital in its incorporation into our teaching and the development of student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994). A student's individuality is based upon and influenced by his culture. Gay (2000) noted the difficulty in recognizing and nurturing students if the teacher knows so little about them. The individuality of students is deeply entwined with their ethnic identity and cultural socialization (Gay, 2000). Having cultural awareness helps teachers on the path of becoming what Ladson-Billings (1994) called tutors who believe that students can improve, and they believe it is their responsibility to help them do so. The highly efficacious teacher is cognizant of this vital component of teaching and uses it as an effective tool to learn more about their students with the purpose of establishing meaningful relationships and making learning highly effective and personal to the students.

Culture reflects how we think, learn, and behave (Pang, 2001). The impact of culture on learning is ever present for students and must be ingrained into the learning environment (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2004). Several scholars have defined culture as a vital component and tool for classroom instruction (Gay, 2000; Hilliard, 1992; Nieto, 2004; Pang, 2001). The awareness of a student's culture is then very important by teachers who must use it to assist students in their thinking and learning (Brown, 2003; Katz, 1999; Parsons, 2005). Teachers must not only be aware of their students' culture but that

of their own and how the differences in cultures are an asset to instruction as oppose to a constraint.

Ladson-Billings (1994) noted the importance of teachers understanding their own culture in order to challenge their intrinsic assumptions. Teachers from backgrounds different than their students, tend to bring assumptions and views about the students, their parents, and communities (Knapp & Woolverton, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Such views are often wrong and are based on false perceptions rather than actual knowledge. Teachers can correct these views through communication and relationship building with their students. In the case for students from diverse backgrounds, teachers are unable to deal more effectively with them because of the mismatch in cultural backgrounds (Knapp & Woolverton, 2001). Gay (2000) described cultural blindness when prior experiences, community settings, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities of teachers and students are not implemented in the teaching/learning process. This leads further into what is described as a lack of cultural congruence among students, teachers, parents, and schools (Gay, 2000; Katz, 1999) or what Nieto (2004) described as cultural discontinuities.

Cultural discontinuities according to Nieto (2004), have been described as the lack of congruence between home and school cultures. Several scholars have addressed the issue of cultural discontinuities as an obstacle to teacher and student relations and academic achievement, particularly for students from diverse backgrounds and living in poverty.

Cholewa and West-Olatunji (2008) have specifically noted the adverse effect cultural discontinuity has on these same students whose interaction patterns and culturally based language differences often result in students' subsequent punishment and referral for special education placement. While cultural discontinuities are prevalent and present challenges to the academic achievement of diverse learners, they according to Nieto (2004) develop not solely from differing cultural values among groups but out of the sociopolitical context of schooling. This implies the existence of other factors, besides the teachers' different culture, within the school, which hinders academic achievement (Nieto, 2004). It is in this realm of the school where teachers with strong efficacy beliefs are effective in bridging the achievement gaps between culturally diverse students and schools.

Teachers who acknowledge cultural differences in the classroom as an asset are essentially acknowledging their students and the background knowledge they bring into the classroom. It is as if letting students know not only that they count but that they bring to the table a wealth of knowledge that must be used in the classroom for learning. Highly efficacious teachers make use of culturally responsive teaching in order to make connections between home and school environments. This creates what Jordan (1985) called cultural compatibility whereby the students' culture is used as a guide to promoting academically desired behaviors in the classroom. Once again the bridge between the student culture that they bring into the classroom through their learning and behavioral styles and the school culture is developed (Jordan, 1985). Furthermore, some of the debilitating and negative messages of schools and society are less prevalent when

teachers have accounted for cultural differences by making use of them in the classroom (Nieto, 2004).

Cultural awareness also represents teachers not only knowing their students but in recognizing and discussing social issues, e.g., discrimination, racism, poverty, prejudices, equality, etc., which affect both them and their families. Howard (2002) found issues of race and power important to students who expressed their understanding of more complex factors influencing the learning environment. Developing and maintaining relationships with students, which are central to effective practices, calls for creating classroom discussions on matters important to their lives. This not only gives students a voice but acquires for the teachers' respect and trust from the students.

Teachers must also be aware that as culture is a reflection of the students' learning and behavioral styles, it is also influenced by the environment in which they live. Teachers must be cognizant of that environment to know the variety of social and economic elements their students are faced with daily. These are elements that may or may not affect their learning in the classroom. These are also elements that should affect the role of the teacher with her students. Through the awareness of culture, the teachers believed it was not only their responsibility but also their purpose as the classroom teacher to participate more fully and meaningfully with the students. The teachers are not only aware of the students, their needs, and culture, but they are sensitive to these, particularly culture.

Cultural Sensitivity: Implications for Teachers Changing Their Teaching Practices

Teachers with a sense of efficacy are aware of their students' cultures and developed a respect and sensitivity to those cultures. The manner in which teachers think about curriculum and instruction is based on their environment and educational background. Thus, the methods and instructional practices used are a direct result of their own cultural experiences. These cultural experiences may reflect and influence preconceived notions, biases, and prejudices about other groups of people, other cultures. (Banks, 2001; Gay, 2000). As noted by Gay (2000), they perceive students, all of who are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Teachers must, therefore, be aware of the individual differences of their students especially as they relate to that particular child's culture. Gay (2000) noted that culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these, in turn, affect how we teach and learn.

Haberman (1995) noted in his assessment of effective teachers of urban students that they have to care about the soul of a child. With that said, teachers have to be sensitive to those aspects of a child's family, environment, and culture, which are the attributes of their background. Teachers also carry the responsibilities to build their knowledge base, which includes the students' background. As classrooms become more diverse, teachers must be more cognizant of factors that can enhance or hinder classroom instruction. More importantly, teachers must make a conscious effort to meet the academic, physical, and emotional needs of their students.

Culture is one of those elements and teachers must be sensitive to it if they are to promote not only academic excellence in their classrooms but also a state of caring and trust (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2002; Parsons, 2005). Cultural diversity is even more important for teachers teaching students from cultures different than their own (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006). Teachers who are sensitive to students' culture are essentially acknowledging students' individuality and gaining the important elements of trust and respect from the students. But in order for teachers to acquire cultural sensitivity, they must be knowledgeable about their students' cultures so they can be effective caregivers and advocates of their students.

Being sensitive also calls for teachers to have the courage to speak out as proponents for their students. Carter, Gayles-Felton, Hilliard, and Vold (1999) stressed the need for teachers to be advocates for their students by tackling issues of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Proponents, like most teachers, must see color and be willing and able to discuss the numerous issues concerning diversity and race in our society. They must also see color without misperceptions or concerns on their part of being falsely labeled as having prejudices.

We find teachers with strong efficacy beliefs throughout our nation's schools, among all ethnic groups, and teaching all types of students. These are European American teachers teaching African American students or African American teachers teaching Asian students, or Hispanic teachers teaching African American students. These are effective teachers who believe they can teach all and any students, regardless of that student's previous achievement (or lack of) in schools and regardless of the

student's ethnicity. They see color in the sense of a useful tool (incorporating culture into the curriculum and teaching practices), not as a determinant of the students' learning outcomes in school.

How Teachers and Students View Each Other

Mexican American students face numerous problems or obstacles as they attend today's inner city, urban, and suburban schools. They face different programs, different teaching methodologies, and are taught adapted lessons "designed" to help them. One major aspect of the learning process is openness in the part of the student to accept the teacher as a credible source. For this to occur, students must feel that the teacher is important to them in a positive way (Payne, 1994). Negative attitudes and stereotypes on the part of the teacher may act to destroy this tenuous bond or may even prevent it from ever developing. Sometimes the teachers and students view this as a personality conflict. In reality, it is creating student resistance to the teacher both personally and educationally (Payne, 1994).

Attitudinal or "affective" aspects of human relations and decision-making are not well understood, but cannot be ignored when considering the education of students representing an ethnic minority (Buriel, 1981). Attitudes about school, teachers, parents, and self come through as the most important single element affecting the behavior of Mexican American students. Likewise, the way a teacher feels about Mexican Americans, the Mexican culture, and his own culture may well be the most critical element in an educational program (Buriel, 1981). Differing opinions and attitudes, which are by-products of unique socialization processes, are often an unconscious part of

one's personality. When one is placed in contact with persons of differing values and attitudes, the stage is set for conflict. Educators must become sensitive to the conflicts inherent in the education of Mexican American students. To become sensitive, they must know more about the group itself, but equally important, they must become more conscious of their own values and attitudes as they affect relationships with those who are culturally different (Buriel, 1981).

Because schools reflect the diversity, class, gender, socioeconomic status, and nationality of its students, it results in a complex set of interactions for how demographic diverse groups of people will interact with one another. In schools there exists a dominant culture that imposes beliefs about appropriate ways of educating children. Majority teachers who hold similar beliefs and values towards teaching and the curriculum often reinforce this dominant culture (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Consequently, there exists an organizational culture that is maintained but not responsive to their diverse students. This research study focused on these daily interactions between European American teachers and Hispanic students of Mexican descent and how they affected academic success.

Many patterns of racial and ethnic group relations in our schools are based on the ways that members of a given racial or ethnic group have been included or excluded within American society (Romo, 1997). Schools have historically helped include newcomers into American society and continue to do so. However, previous research about intergroup relations in schools is now over 20 years old, and it focused mostly on improving relations between Whites and African Americans (Schofield, 1995). Research

and studies on the education of Hispanic students seem to be lacking. Today, racial and ethnic relations are more complicated. Factors affecting the outcomes of intergroup contacts can include ethnocentrism (the belief that one's own group is superior), competition for resources and attention, and the relative power and status of the groups involved (Romo, 1997). Stephan (1985) showed that anxiety about dealing with members of other racial or ethnic groups is prevalent among students and can direct behavior in ways that detract from academic achievement. School policies may also contribute to resegregation. When teachers and administrators segregate students into honors, regular, vocational, and remedial classes that create racially or ethnically homogenous groups, the classes often magnify already existing stereotypes and discrimination (Schofield, 1995).

In addition to being segregated by academic courses, Hispanic students also are made to feel separated due to other circumstances that are found in today's public schools, such as social aspects among the students themselves (Waters, 1990). Ethnic group membership may exclude members of certain groups from friendship cliques, social activities, or may limit their status and popularity. This can lead to racial and ethnic conflicts that can help establish an alternative sense of identity within the school.

Often minority students are assigned inferior status in the formal school structure, i.e., they are tracked into lower level courses or groups. They may also experience social segregation that excludes them from meaningful interactions with members of the dominant group or minority groups different from their own. Additionally, ethnic boundaries may be more or less important depending on the school

context, income, and age of the student, and social and economic conditions in the larger society. The divisions between “them” and “us” may change when some group boundaries are more distinct and may increase each group’s unity (Olsen, 1997).

In educational settings, with demographically diverse groups, intergroup theory applies because of the tensions that exist between the dominant culture and the diversity of its students and teachers (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Intergroup conflict is often caused by misunderstandings and misperceptions held by majority groups’ members about minority group members. This result in cultural differences will produce group tensions between majority groups (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). Intergroup differences result in limited exchanges that affect organizational effectiveness and outcomes (Sedikides, Schoper, & Insko, 1998). This can ultimately affect the students’ academic achievement.

Relationships among minority groups are also affected by school structure and policies. For example, Baker (1995) explored how institutionalized racism (in which schools and other basic institutions operate in ways that intentionally or unintentionally deny opportunities to minority students) sustains negative images of particular groups and maintains their subordinate status. Baker (1995) concluded that integrated schools focus more on learning rather than schools in a state of strain and conflict.

Many minority students have a perception that teachers treat some students differently because of the student’s ethnicity. Poor teacher-student relationships can be expected to contribute to negative feelings toward school because these relationships are at the very heart of the educational process (Turner et al., 1993). It has been suggested that the teacher-student bond is particularly important for Hispanic students (Alva &

Padilla, 1995). Education is viewed as an equalizer in the United States, and recognition of bias in an institution that professes to offer equal opportunity creates a sense of alienation and distance (Calabrese & Poe, 1990).

Research has shown that when a person has the perception of being treated differently, his or her view on a certain situation is greatly affected. According to Gudykunst (1998), our perceptions involve our awareness of what is taking place in the environment. Our perceptions of strangers are highly selective. We tend to focus on aspects of strangers who are relevant to us in our interactions with them. Our presuppositions and expectations influence the cues that we select from our environments and what we see in them. The perceptions that each of us experience are unique; these are based on our cultures, ethnicities, sex, background experiences, and our needs.

Minority students tend to see their teachers in a similar manner, as their school counterparts. If students think that the teacher treats them differently, other social group members will agree with them and think the same way (Gay, 2000). Social attributions are concerned with how members of one social group explain the behavior of their own members and members of other cultural groups. We enhance our social identities when we make social attributions. Our social attributions usually are based on the social stereotypes we share with other members of these groups and can also be based on ethnocentrism or other intergroup attitudes. When we perceive ourselves and strangers as members of groups, we tend to make category-based attributions. Category-based attributions then lead us to look for differences between our in-groups and the strangers'

groups (Gudykunst, 1998). The degree to which strangers' behaviors are consistent with our stereotypes affects our attributions. When strangers' behaviors are consistent with our stereotypes, we tend to attribute their behaviors to strangers' internal group-based dispositions (e.g., their cultures, ethnicities) (Gudykunst, 1998).

Probably because of social pressure, students are quick to agree with their friends that certain teachers do not treat all students the same and are unfair. Studies have shown that is not always true, but students tend to make excuses for having this view. The ultimate attribution error is "a systematic patterning of intergroup misattributions shaped in part by prejudice" (Pettigrew, 1979, p. 464). Our tendency to attribute behaviors to dispositional characteristics is enhanced when we perceive strangers to engage in negative behaviors. When we perceive strangers to engage in positive behaviors, in contrast, our tendencies are to treat them as "exceptions to the rule." When our expectations are confirmed by strangers' behaviors, we rely on strangers' dispositions associated with our stereotypes of their groups and do not bother to consider other explanations for their behaviors (Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1981). When strangers do not confirm to our expectations, we tend to attribute their behaviors to external factors.

Navigating Racial Boundaries in Schools

Schools are arguably one of the central institutions involved in the drawing and redrawing of racial lines (Forman, 2001; Hall, 1986; Olsen, 1997; Perry, 2002; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Although they clearly do not teach racial identity in the way they teach multiplication or punctuation, schools are settings where people acquire some version "of the rules of racial classification" and of their own racial identity (Omi &

Winant, 1994, p. 70). Not only does the actual curriculum teach many racial lessons, but also schools (and school personnel) serve as a source of racial information, a location for interracial interaction, and a means of both affirming and challenging previous racial attitudes and understandings. Although clearly not the only social institution concerned, schools are involved in framing ideas about race and are at the center of many struggles around racial equity (Lewis 2003).

Race is at play all the times inside and outside of schools. It is a part of what is happening in our many daily interpersonal interactions. It is one lens through which people read the world around them and make decisions on how to act, react, and interact (Lewis, 2003). The racialization processes work primarily through interpersonal interactions in which we attempt to assess what we know about another person, first through the instantaneous reading or interpreting of available clues (e.g., visible cues such as skin color or facial features, auditory cues such as accent, spatial cues such as neighborhood) and second through rereading or reinterpreting initial assumptions as additional information becomes available (Lewis, 2003). These processes operate in a largely relational manner in which some people are determined to be the same (or “like me”) and others are determined to be different. At all steps, institutional processes and dynamics affect these racial interactions and interpretations. Both racial ascription and racial self-identification are contextual processes influenced by local meaning systems, rules, demographics, relationships, and structures (Lewis, 2003).

Critical Race Theory

The use of critical race as a framework for which to examine legal and policy implications about race in the United States challenges the traditional multicultural paradigms by using the argument that the nation is premised on property rights rather than human rights (Tate, 1997). The intersection of race and property could be a useful tool for explaining social and educational opportunities. Critical race is often perceived as a way to address equal opportunity so that students of color have access to the same school opportunities in areas of curriculum, instruction, funding, and facilities as Whites (Ladson-Billings, 1998). For the purpose of this study, the researcher believed that the critical race theory became more of a legal argument that built a case for inequities in schools. It is important to understand that there are applications of critical race in how schools are structured, but it does provide a legal and theoretical scrutiny to examine the mismatch between mainstream curriculum and culturally relevant practices, the use of instructional patterns based on deficit thinking, and assessment measures that classify students unfairly (Ladson-Billings, 1998). While critical race theory calls for questioning the rules of the present educational system, it does not provide an organizational justification to study how cultural differences affect the relationship between Hispanic students of Mexican descent and European American teachers. Embedded intergroup theory explains and offers an understanding of the sources of conflict that occur in school because of differences in culture.

Embedded Intergroup Theory

As a way to understand group and cultural identities with both Hispanic students of Mexican descent and the European American teachers in urban schools, the researcher employed embedded intergroup theory as the theoretical framework. This theoretical framework was useful in describing the types of intergroup conflict that occurs among Hispanic students and European American teachers in urban schools. Review of the data indicated that the Mexican American students were often unable to identify with their teachers' instructional practice. Students stated that when they did not agree with their teachers' perceptions about them it was often directly or indirectly related to cultural group identifies. Therefore, the theoretical framework of embedded intergroup theory offered an understanding of the sources of conflict that occurred between the White teachers and Mexican American students (Nkomo & Cox, 1996).

There is a great need to try and establish a diverse faculty in public school campuses. As more and more minorities enter today's schools, the need becomes more apparent. Increasing diversity among teachers and students is one of the most critical challenges that schools face. As educators, it is important to understand the meaning and implications of teaching ethnically diverse students in response to their learning needs (Delpit, 1988). Intergroup theory applies to school participants because of the nature of the organizational context between identify and organizational groups. In schools, a teaching culture exists that imposes beliefs about appropriate ways of educating children and results in norms of actions. Critical to this dimension are the personal and

professional experiences of most teachers that focus on European American students with little attention to students of color (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002).

Embedded intergroup theory contains a complex set of interactions for understanding the effects of diversity in the workplace. An individual's identity in an organization is determined not only by organizational categorization, but identity group membership also. Embedded intergroup theory recognizes that individual cultural identities influence, how they perceive their work, and their relationships with others (Alderfer, 1994). According to embedded intergroup theory, leaders and followers are constantly attempting to manage potential conflicts that arise from the interactions between identity groups and organizational group membership (Nkomo & Cox, 1996).

The theoretical framework of embedded intergroup and properties of intergroup conflict theories are useful in describing the problems that may occur between Hispanic students and European American teachers and how they respond to their cultural differences. When both Hispanic students and European American teachers interact, there are conditions that will influence how they work collaboratively in the classroom. Intergroup theory may provide more insights on the cultural incongruities that may occur between these two groups of ethnically diverse groups that may be displayed either consciously or unconsciously in the classroom, which impacts academic achievement.

Properties of Intergroup Conflict

In educational settings, intergroup theory applies to school participants because of the nature of the organizational context between identity and organizational groups. In schools, there exists a teaching culture that imposes beliefs about appropriate ways of

educating children resulting in norms of actions. Various researchers have identified multiple sources of conflict and refer to how one condition of discord seems to affect another (Alderfer et al., 1980; Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Cox, 1994). Hispanic students' perceptions of their teachers' and the majority teachers' perceptions of their Hispanic students is a study of power relations and the analysis of conflict among groups and how that impacts equal and unequal power groups within the organization of a school.

The presence of cultural diversity offers a number of potential benefits for organizations. Such diversity also presents certain difficulties that must be given attention in the management of diverse workgroups (Cox, 1994). Rummel (1976) stated that intergroup conflict has two distinguishing features: (a) group boundaries and group differences that contribute to differences and (b) how conflict is directly or indirectly related to cultural group identities. Cultural group identities are an integral part of the individual personality. Working with different ethnic groups one must understand how group boundaries and cultural differences impact one's cultural group identity. Group identities are an integral part of the individual personality (Cox, 1994). What may be commonly referred, as a "teacher-student" personality clash may in actuality be a manifestation of group identity-related conflict. Since all groups are made up of many individuals, conflict behavior is frequently seen in schools.

Intergroup conflict occurs in culturally diverse organizations between the majority group and the various minority groups represented in the organization as well as the minority groups. The nine properties of intergroup conflict are (a) competing goals, (b) competition for resources, (c) cultural differences, (d) power differences, (e)

conformity versus identity affirmation, (f) group boundaries, (g) affective patterns, (h) cognitive formations, and (i) leadership behavior (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Properties of Intergroup Conflict

Property	Description
Incompatible Goals	Differences among majority and non-majority workers in competing goals that are influenced by norms, goal priorities, work styles among and between these groups (Cox, 1994).
Competition for Resources	Allocation of resources that are influenced by embedded organizational issues such as acknowledgement of group identities in regulating jobs, training priorities, and expansion of resources (Cox, 1994).
Cultural Differences	Cultural differences between group members of different groups occur due to misunderstanding and misperceptions (Cox, 1994).
Power Differences	Majority groups hold advantages over minority groups in the power structure of the organization. Intergroup hostility between groups results in a disagreement over the redistribution of power. Minority group density in organizations poses a threat to the existing power structure and provides an opportunity for those who are powerless. The types of resources that can be obtained and used differ among groups. Power differences among groups influences the group's boundaries between the majority and non-majority workers (Cox, 1994; Alderfer, 1982).
Conformity versus Identity Affirmation	The tension between majority and minority group members over the preservation of minority group identity (Cox, 1994).
Group Boundaries	Both physical and psychological group boundaries determine group membership. Transactions among groups are regulated by variations in the permeability of the boundaries (Alderfer, 1982).
Affective Patterns	The severity of intergroup conflict relates to the polarized feelings among the groups. Group members split their feeling so that positive feelings are associated with their group and negative feelings are associated with other groups (Alderfer, 1982).
Cognitive Formations	Due to group boundaries, power differences and affective patterns, group members develop their own language, influence members' perceptions of subjective and objective criteria of other groups and work efforts, and transmit propositions about other groups in relation to their own group members (Alderfer, 1982).
Leadership Behavior	The group leader and other group representatives reflect the boundaries of groups and how they will interact. Members of a similar group reflect power differences, affective patterns and cognitive formations of their group. The role of the leader in a network of intergroup relations determines the intensification of intergroup conflict (Alderfer, 1977, 1982).

Relations among groups may determine how groups are formed. These may be the emotional climate of the organization, the distribution of resources, group reactions

to authority, and the effectiveness of the group in achieving its objectives (Alderfer, 1977). Sources of intergroup conflict are often viewed as negative effects, as this requires majority workers to establish patterns of adjustment to diversity issues in the workplace. These conflicts cannot be ignored and must be recognized as important in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce (Cox, 1994). Problems of intergroup conflict are not dependent on particular groups or the specific setting where the relationships occur (Alderfer & Smith, 1982). The analysis of intergroup relations is, in part, the study of power relations and the analysis of conflict among groups and how that impacts equal and unequal power groups within the organization.

Summary

Most teachers enter the profession because of a profound belief in young people and an eagerness to help them learn whether they are European American or a teacher of color. However, many obstacles, including a lack of respect and power for teachers and the challenges of reaching students from a dizzying variety of backgrounds and cultures make teaching a very difficult job. In spite of these challenges teachers must meet these challenges because of the demographic changes that are occurring all around the nation.

The history of the education of Hispanic students of Mexican descent is a study of injustices and neglect for many generations. It manifests itself even in today's urban schools with so many Hispanic students dropping out of school and failing to go on to post-secondary education. Urban schools do not reflect the face of the communities surrounding these schools (Neito, 2004). It is important to understand how the group dynamics between Hispanic students and their European American teachers influenced

both their societal beliefs and attitudes. Their cultural differences resulted in problems of them working together. Due to these cultural differences, group boundaries are manifested that may result in tensions and problems in the classroom. Embedded intergroup relations theory was chosen as the theoretical perspective for this study because it offered a way of understanding groups and organizations (Alderfer, 1987). Teachers, researchers, and educational leaders who strive to educate all students regardless of ethnic background or social economic status should be commended, but they should also be better prepared to deal with all the intricacies that are needed in today's multicultural classroom. For researchers and educational leaders who are interested in the education and development of all children, an understanding of the properties of embedded intergroup theory provides a roadmap to the realities in our urban schools today (Madsen & Mabokela, 2005a).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Much research has been done on schooling in the United States; yet, so little of it is based on studies involving the perspective of students, teachers, administrators, counselors, cafeteria workers, janitors, bus drivers, parents, and community members whose individual and collective experience constitutes schooling (Siedman, 2006). The intent of this qualitative study was to: (a) examine intergroup differences that exist between Hispanic students and European American teachers of urban schools, (b) examine how students perceive their differences with respect to their working relationship with their teachers, and (c) determine how these intergroup differences affect the Hispanic students' academic success. The perceptions that the students' described in the interviews and delineated in intergroup conflict properties were analyzed based on the researcher's observations and the participants' responses to interview questions.

The researcher, having been also a Hispanic student of Mexican descent, at one time experienced similar intergroup conflict when attending schools such as those in the study. One major similarity that the researcher experienced as conflict was the lack of teachers of color in the schools that the researcher attended. The researcher was mentored and influenced positively by many of her European American teachers. As a result of these relationships, the researcher continued on to college, majored in the sciences, and became a teacher. At the time, however, the information regarding

intergroup conflict was not readily available or accessible as it is now, but the need to address it and expose it was and still remains. It is perhaps more significant now that the demographics of Hispanics in schools are changing rapidly each year.

Apart from the reasons stated in the Purpose of the Study in Chapter I, this study was important because the success of all students, regardless of color, and, in turn, the entire school, is greatly influenced by the possible existence of an environment of conflict at these campuses. It is because of this that the impact of such conflict on student learning and the creation of possible solution(s) to this conflict were also studied.

Overview of Methods

For this study, a qualitative case study research approach was used to examine the perception of intergroup differences that exist in urban schools between Hispanic students and their European American teachers, which make up the majority of the teaching workforce. The intent of this qualitative study was to: (a) examine intergroup differences that exist between Hispanic students and European American teachers of urban schools, (b) examine how students perceive their differences with respect to their working relationship with their teachers, and (c) determine how these intergroup differences affect the Hispanic students' academic success. Very few studies have examined Hispanic student-European American teacher conflicts and the students' perceptions of such conflicts on their academic success. The study took place in a large metropolitan city located in central Texas where first or second year Hispanic college students of Mexican descent graduated from urban inner city high schools and whose teachers were predominately European American.

The researcher, being a Hispanic of Mexican descent, at one time experienced very similar intergroup conflicts while attending an urban high school such as those in the study. One major similarity that the researcher experienced as conflict while a high school student, was the power and cultural differences exhibited by some teachers in the school. At the time, the information available regarding intergroup conflict was not as readily available or accessible as it is now, but the need to address it and expose it was and still remains, perhaps especially more so now that demographics in schools are changing so rapidly each year. Apart from reasons stated in the Purpose of the Study in Chapter I, this study was important because attending school in an environment of conflict, leads to other events that in turn affects not only the employees of the schools through degradation of school climate, but affects much worse, the students and their successes. It is because of this, that the impact of such conflict on student learning and the creation of possible solution(s) to this conflict were also studied.

Case Study

A qualitative case study was used for this particular research. Merriam (1988) defined the case study as “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). “The case then, could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group such as a class, a school, a community” (Nieto, 2004, p. 112). This approach, based on the principles of ethnographic research, was selected to capture the richness of the experiences of the participants in the study (Erlandson et al., 1993; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). The purpose of any qualitative case study is not to generalize to all students within U.S. schools. Qualitative approaches render very

distinct but equally crucial data to influence educational practice, but no case study of a single individual can adequately or legitimately portray the complexity of an entire group. The very purpose of case studies is to challenge stereotypes (Nieto, 2004).

Case studies are detailed investigations of individuals, groups, institutions, or other social units. The researcher conducting a case study attempts to analyze the variables relevant to the subject under study (Polit & Hungler, 1983). The principal difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the individual case and not the whole population of cases. Most studies search for what is common and pervasive. However, in the case study, the focus may not be on generalization but on understanding the particulars of that case in its complexity. A case study focuses on a bounded system, usually under natural conditions, so that the system can be understood in its own habitat (Stake, 1988).

This qualitative study used a number of strategies for data collection, including focus groups, interviews, observations, and field notes (Merriam, 1988). The case study approach should be understood within the framework of qualitative research. It is defined by Merriam (1988) as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p. 27). She further described the four essential characteristics of a qualitative case study as *particularistic* (focusing on one person or social unit); *descriptive* (because the result is a rich, thick description); *heuristic* (because it illuminates the reader’s understanding and brings about the discovery of new meanings); and *inductive* (because generalizations and hypotheses emerge from examination of the data) (Nieto, 1996).

This study was particularistic because it explored Hispanic students' perceptions of their European American teachers, while searching for understanding regarding their exchanges and ways to help students of any color reach academic success. While searching for themes as data were analyzed, the case study was inductive in nature because generalizations emerged from it. This chapter will include the methodology data collection process, an explanation of the data sources and the subjects involved, and the methodology employed for data analysis. This chapter includes the methodology data collection process, an explanation of the data sources and the subjects involved, and the methodology employed for data analysis.

Data Collection

This was a case study to examine the Hispanic students' perception of their European American teachers. A case study approach (Merriam, 1998) was used helpful to examine the Hispanic students' perceptions of how their academic success in their urban high school was affected by their European American teachers' attitudes and display of the properties of intergroup conflict. At the junior colleges, universities, and community colleges, the researcher planned to recruit participants in a metropolitan area in South Texas, a phone call was placed to the Office or Dean of Student Affairs for each campus and the researcher followed the guidelines outlined. As a way of making contact, a flyer delineating the details of the research (Appendix A) was placed at student career centers, student lounges, cafeterias, libraries, and in several areas where students congregate during normal college hours at four community colleges, a private university, and a state-funded university in a large metropolitan area in South Texas. The

researcher also contacted several colleagues who taught in the community colleges and asked to present the information about the qualitative study to their classes. The interested students were asked to call or email the researcher. For the initial contact, the researcher wrote contact information for 34 students who showed interest in the study after the presentation of the research in the class presentations. A phone call was placed and an initial meeting was set to focus the inquiry at the single-case level of analysis (Merriam, 1998). The initial meeting with the students provided an avenue for not only explaining the rationale for the study but also provided an opportunity for them to assist in selecting participants for the study based on the criteria for participants. A similar meeting was set for three participants who contacted the researcher after seeing the posted flyer about the research study.

Purposeful Sample Selection of Student Participants

When dealing with selecting people for a case study, it can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. Purposeful sampling is a non-random method of sampling where the researcher selects “information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Using one of 16 types of purposeful sampling that Patton (1990) described as criterion sampling, Hispanic students from Mexican descent were selected for the study. Student participants were selected from three inner city high schools during the initial meeting when the purpose of the study and the criteria for the participants were explained. The

criteria of the student participation were based on their gender, ethnicity, the year in college, and the high school from which they graduated. The students were selected based on their beliefs toward culturally diverse educational issues, willingness to share their ideas, and their feelings regarding their high school academic success and preparation for college success.

After the flyers were posted, only three male Hispanic students contacted the researcher. Thirty-four students, however, contacted the researcher after colleagues at the community colleges and the public universities presented the study to their students. The students were asked to meet with the researcher at a local public library. The students were interviewed initially for about two to three hours in focus groups. Interview questions used in these focus groups were used to determine a contextual description of the individual under study: a sketch of the student's family, school, community, language, and ethnic as well as information pertinent only for identification purposes (Nieto, 2004). Three focus groups were set up to accommodate all interested participants and to determine if the interested students met the criteria. The focus groups also served as informal discussions about their high schools, their teachers and mentors, academics, and their preparedness for post-secondary education. Five male and five female Hispanic students of Mexican descent were selected for the study.

After establishing who the participants would be, the researcher visited the schools from which the participants graduated. Intensive structured interviews for data collection, which asked respondents a series of pre-established questions, were used (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Interviews were used because at the most basic level,

interviews are conversations (Kvale, 1996). Kvale defined qualitative research interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 1). Interviews for research or evaluation purposes differ in some important ways from other familiar kinds of interviews or conversations. A great deal of qualitative material comes from talking with people, whether it is through formal interviews or casual conversation (Siedman, 2006). Unlike conversations in daily life, which are usually reciprocal exchanges, professional interviews involve an interviewer who is in charge of structuring and directing the questioning. While interviews for research or evaluation purposes may also promote understanding and change, the emphasis is on intellectual understanding rather than on producing personal change (Kvale, 1996).

Times and locations for interviewing the participants were established to accommodate the participants and also so that they would feel at ease in responding to the interviewer. Patton (1987) pointed out that any face-to-face interview is also an observation. The skilled interviewer is sensitive to nonverbal messages, effects of the setting on the interview, and nuances of the relationship. While these subjective factors are sometimes considered threats to validity, they can also be strengths because the skilled interviewer can use flexibility and insight to ensure an in-depth, detailed understanding of the participant’s experience. Patton (1987) noted that quotations

reveal the respondents’ levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions. The task for the qualitative evaluator is to provide a

framework within which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their point of view about the program. (p. 279)

The questions for the interviews were developed based on the properties of intergroup conflict, the linkage to professional relationships. Questions asked of the participants were directly related to the purpose of the study and they were developed having a good probability of yielding the kind of data desired. Participants in the study were asked a total of 18 questions during face-to-face interviews, and any doubt by the interviewer in any of the participants' responses, was followed with additional questions. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The researcher did the transcriptions of the interviews. Lapadat (2000) argued that the process of transcription promotes intense familiarity with the data, which leads to the methodological and theoretical reasoning that is essential to interpretation.

After the interview tapes were transcribed, the tapes were analyzed for recurring themes, similar themes, or codes. Coding served to summarize, synthesize, and sort many observations made of the data. Researchers use codes to pull together and categorize a series of otherwise discrete events, statements, and observations, which they identify in the data (Charmaz, 1983). The interview questions allowed for a coding scheme used for data analysis (Creswell, 1998).

Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry. Recounting narratives of experience has been the major way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience. In-depth interviewing is important in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Siedman, 2006).

Interviewing is a tool to find out about people and their attitudes about other people and

their attitudes toward specific occurrences in their lives. When relying on interviews as the primary data collection method, the issue of building trust between the researcher and interviewees becomes very important. Given the culturally diverse and heterogeneous population, problems and biases are more apparent. Variables in the interview process may include: race, gender, age, educational level, and social status. Because of cultural and linguistic variables, different people attach different degrees of importance to the value, worth, or intent of certain questions and answers.

In this research study, guided questions were used for the interviews centered on the properties of intergroup theory to determine how they might have affected the students' schooling. The interviews conducted were informal and the questions used were primarily a guide and springboard for further dialogue. The researcher then individually interviewed each student who was selected from the focus groups. At these individual interviews, the questions centered on the properties of intergroup theory to determine how these nine properties might have affected the students' schooling. Some students had concerns regarding intergroup theory so their interview sessions were a little longer. Other follow-up interviews were conducted but were shorter in duration than the initial ones. These interviews were conducted under the same circumstances as the initial interviews. The follow-up interviews were primarily of a reflective nature to address issues that were raised or needed clarification in the initial interviews. These reflective interviews occurred if the researcher needed to explore what it was about these specific students' experiences that helped them learn. To explore what it was about these experiences that helped them or heeded them to learn, the students were asked to answer

questions on issues such as home, school, community and school resources, attitudes, and activities (Nieto, 2004).

In addition, the researcher visited the urban schools the students attended several times and kept a journal making observations of the interactions of students and teachers, as well as the ethnic make-up of the students and teachers that made up their individual campuses. The sequence for the data collections was (a) focus groups (b) interviews (c) school observations, and (d) the keeping of a journal by the researcher.

The questions for the interviews were developed based on the properties of intergroup theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The interview questions allowed for a coding scheme used for data analysis (Creswell, 1998). All of the students' interviews were taped and later transcribed for recurring themes. The questions asked during the interviews were the following:

1. Tell me about yourself. Explain how your high school experience prepared you for your current college experience.
2. Tell me about your experiences while you attended your diverse urban high school.
3. How would you describe the organizational and social structure of your school? Explain.
4. How did your White or Anglo teachers use this organizational structure to address conflict between teachers and students of color? Explain.
5. Describe your relationship with your White or Anglo teachers. Explain.
6. Describe your relationship with your Hispanic teachers. Explain.

7. How did your White or Anglo teachers build consensus between you and themselves?
8. How did your White or Anglo teachers' goals differ from your personal goals at this school? Explain.
9. Describe any differences between the goals of Hispanic teachers and White or Anglo teachers for you. Explain.
10. How did White or Anglo teachers at this school distribute resources among their students of color? Explain.
11. Do you feel that the White or Anglo teachers empowered all groups of students equally? Explain.
12. Describe how your White or Anglo teachers' promoted the celebrations of cultural differences in your school. Explain.
13. What were your perceptions of work effort of various teachers on your campus? Explain.
14. Were there pressures for you to conform to your group or any other groups on this campus? Explain.
15. How did you retain your ethnic identity? Explain.
16. How did students of color retain their group identity? Explain.
17. Describe how you saw teachers interact with different groups. Explain.

Data Sources

Informant interviews, participant observations, and archival analyses are the primary sources of data in qualitative research (Maanen, 1983). While performing a qualitative case study, observations and data collection settings may range from natural to artificial, with relatively unstructured to highly structured elicitation tasks and category systems, depending on the purpose of the study and the disciplinary traditions associated with it (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The following section describes the schools from where the participants of the study went to high school and the participants themselves.

The students invited to participate in the study were in their 1st or 2nd year of college and were Hispanic of Mexican descent. Anonymity was established by using an ID number for each participant. The researcher analyzed the data collectively.

Urban High Schools

The participants selected for the study graduated from three urban high schools in a metropolitan city in South Texas. The three identified high schools and their demographics are as follows:

High School A is an inner city high school with a population of 1500 students. The majority of the school's student population is Hispanic (99.7%). The school is located in a district where the property value of an average home is \$28,600 and the entire school district is identified as Title 1. The faculty of the school is comprised mainly of European American teachers with 15-20 years' experience. The school's turnover rate was at least at 23%.

High School B is an urban high school with a population of 2500 students. The school's student population is comprised of 47% White, 33% Hispanic, 10% African American, and 10% Asian American. The school is located in a middle-class neighborhood where the majority of the parents work in an air force base. The faculty of the school is evenly split between European American and Hispanic teachers with three teachers of African American descent.

High School C is an inner city school located near the downtown area of a large metropolitan city. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the students are of Hispanic descent and 8% are African American. The school has been identified as a low-performing school for several years and the principals have been replaced every two to three years. The faculty is comprised of 23% European American teachers, 47% Hispanic teachers, and 30% African American teachers. The teacher turnover rate at this high school is at 16% with an average experience of 5-10 years. The turnover rate is critical because teachers who remain in schools for more than five years stabilize the school because they establish relationships with the students, their families, and the community around the school.

Selection of Participants

The criteria for selecting the student participants for this study was their graduation from urban high schools in a large metropolitan area in South Texas, their year in college, their gender, and their ethnicity. A total of 10 Hispanic students who were in their first or second year of college were selected and interviewed. In spite of the differences in their experiences and backgrounds, most of the students interviewed shared one characteristic: They viewed themselves as having been successful in school

in spite of who they had as teachers. College attendance was not considered the primary criterion for being successful. Attending college was one indication by the students that they all believed they were capable and worthy of the very best education. It was clear that all the students believed that they were entitled to a good education and they were eager to talk about problems with their schools (Nieto, 2004).

One of the students described the interviews as “empowering.” “I feel as I have finally spoke about how I really felt about my high school education and how unprepared I was for college even though I was in honor classes.” For many of the students who were interviewed, it was the first time anyone had bothered to ask them questions about their high school education and experiences. The questions became sources of dialogue and awareness for them. Some of the students had not thought deeply about some of the issues that emerged through the interviews.

All Hispanic students interviewed graduated from urban schools where their school district’s website identified the majority of the teachers’ ethnicity as European Americans. Measures were taken to identify both Hispanic males and females from the identified urban high schools ranging in age from 18 to 21 years. There were five male and five female students who were identified as meeting the criteria. Three of the students selected were born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States. One immigrated as a child and entered the United States in the elementary grades and the other two students immigrated to the United States during their high school careers. All of the students interviewed were the first in their families to graduate from high school and attend college (see Table 3.1). Six of the students attended junior colleges and had to

work full time and attend school part-time in order to pay for their post-secondary education. Three of the students (one male and two females) attended private catholic universities full time. Only one male student attended a tier one research state university. This diversity allowed the researcher to receive a cross-section of perception and increased the likelihood of the relevance of what could be learned from them (Guba, 1993).

Table 3.1. Data Source of Participants

ID Number	Gender	Age	First language	Generation in U.S.	Student at ¹
NW21	M	19	Spanish	1 st	CC
OLLU4	M	19	Spanish	4 th	PU
SAC13	M	20	Spanish	2 nd	CC
TU24	M	20	Spanish	1 st	SU
SAC9	M	20	English	3 rd	CC
PAC11	F	19	English	4 th	CC
NW2	F	18	Spanish	3 rd	CC
UIW7	F	19	Spanish	3 rd	PU
UIW17	F	21	Spanish	1 st	PU
PAC5	F	19	Spanish	2 nd	CC

¹CC=Community College; PU=Private University; SU=State University

Male Students

The male students ranged in age from 18-20 years of age. They were all Hispanic students of Mexican descent. Student A was enrolled at a tier one university and was in his second year of study. He is the eldest of three children and the only son. “Being the first born is important in the Hispanic culture, especially if you are the one and only son. My father takes pride in the fact that I am the first one to attend college and the only one to carry on the family name.” Education is important to his family considering that both

of his parents are school dropouts. His father is a truck driver and his mother has not worked for several years because of health issues.

Student B was in his first year at a junior college. He wanted to transfer to a university but has to work to help pay his education and also help his parents make ends meet. "I have to work in order to have money to help with expenses at school and at home. My parents work hard and I try to stay out of trouble in the neighborhood and just do good at school, but it is hard." He also is the first one to attend college.

Student C is also the eldest son in a family of three sisters and four brothers. His father works for the phone company but feeding a family of nine is still hard. His mother does not work. "I was the Senior Class President of my graduating class, and I had a opportunity to go to UT, but I just didn't have the money." He is in his first year at a junior college.

Student D also attended a junior college and was in his second year but has only nine hours completed. He had to take remedial courses, and they do not count towards his degree. "Man, I had to take these remedial courses in math and I couldn't even pass them. Did high school prepare me? Hell no!" His parents come from Mexico and are in the process of getting permanent status as immigrants.

Student E was attending a private catholic university. Even though it is expensive to attend, he has good financial aid and it has helped him attend a university that his parents wanted him to attend. He is enjoying being active in sports (he plays soccer), but is having a hard time with his freshmen English Composition course. He is a student who was born in Mexico and came over when he was in middle school. " I forced myself

to learn English quickly, but it is still hard to think in Spanish and then write your thoughts in English. Very hard, very hard. But I will try my best and always have.”

Female Students

The female students ranged in age from 19-21 years of age. Student A is a female honor student who was attending a private religious university. She says it is hard for her to be away from home even though it is only a four-hour trip from her home. Her parents were born in the United States, but her grandparents were born in Mexico. Her first language was Spanish, but considers herself fluent in both languages. She liked all of her teachers but wished that “they paid more attention to her so that she could have had more AP (advanced placement) classes.

Student B is a student who was also attending a private religious university in the city. She is attending because, “ I got real good financial aid, or else I could not afford to go.” Her parents were born in Mexico like she was. She came into the United States as an infant and so she is also fluent in both languages.

Student C attended a community college and was also born in Mexico and immigrated into the United States at four years of age. Her parents do not speak English so she is the translator for all of their important papers. She and her parents became naturalized citizens about 10 years ago and her father constantly reminds her that he does not want her to work for others but for herself. That is the main reason why she goes to school. She loves school now but remembers the days that it “was a waste of time in high school. The teachers did not care and why they came to teach at our school I always wondered.”

Student D works at a home improvement store to help pay for her school. She is an eighteen-year-old female who lives with her brother- and sister-in-law because her father wanted her out of the house as soon as she turned 18. She works long hours but wants to be a teacher back in the district where she graduated. “I don’t want to be the kind of teacher that some of my teachers were. I want to help all students, regardless.”

Student E is a 19 year old who had a baby in high school right before graduation. Her mother takes care of the baby during the day so that she can attend a junior college. She comes home from school and her mother goes to work. She graduated number seven in her graduating class and wants to succeed. “I want to have a better life for me and my baby. I want to be the first one that graduates from college and make a better life for me and my baby.”

Data Analysis

A qualitative thematic strategy of data analysis was employed to categorize and make judgments about the interpretation of the data. This methodological process led to a single level of analysis where data were aggregated to incorporate a thematic approach. This analytical procedure allowed important themes and categories to emerge inductively from the data across cases (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researcher used the prior-research-driven approach to identify themes and to develop a coding process (Boyatzis, 1998).

In establishing the reliability for this study, the data from the interviews that were conducted with each participant were analyzed using what Conrad (1982) called a constant comparative method. The term “reliability” is used to indicate that observations

can be made in similar fashion in different observation instances (Slater, 1998). Among the ways that Merriam (1998) identifies for analyzing data is the constant comparative method or to just “do what the name implies – constantly compare.” Bits of data are compared across interviews, documents, or observations. The comparisons that emerge are used to develop categories that are compared with each other (Merriam, 1998).

Merriam (1998) also mentioned that in using a constant comparative method of analysis of data, as the interviews are conducted, it is important to look for trends and patterns in the responses from the participants.

The process of constant comparative method created a match between the interview data and the existing theory. This process compared the intergroup theory (properties of intergroup conflict) with the Hispanic students’ responses. Sensitivity to contamination of the data was important so the researcher (a) developed an explicit code and set up a consistency of judgment to establish reliability, (b) used multiple diverse perspectives to examine the students’ comments, and (c) was sensitive to the themes when interpreting the data (Boyatzis, 1998). The research was able to generate a data analysis code, of various themes, that was applied to the participants’ interview data (Boyatzis, 1998). This process created a match between the interview data and the existing theory and allowed the interplay between the data analysis and coding process. A thick description was developed through the use of a reflective journal, taped interviews, observations and visits to the three identified high schools using all of the senses.

Hakim (1987) stated that the great strength of qualitative research is the validity of data obtained because individuals are interviewed in sufficient detail for the results to be taken as true, correct, and believable reports of their views and experiences. In the social sciences, triangulation is often used to indicate that more than two methods are used in a study with a view to double (or triple) checking results. This is also called “cross examination” (Cheng, 2005). The idea is that one can be more confident with a result if different methods lead to the same results. If an investigator uses only one method, the temptation is strong to believe in the findings. If an investigator uses two methods, only the results may clash. But by using three methods to get at the answer to one question, the hope is that two of the three methods will produce similar answers, or if three clashing answers are produced, the researcher knows that the question needs to be reframed, methods reconsidered, or both.

As a way to bring about a collective interpretation in the data analysis, the researcher believed it was important to understand the complexities in collecting and analyzing cross-cultural research. Stanfield and Rutledge (1993) asserted that in race and ethnicity research, comparative analysis can be interpreted in a number of ways. They contend that researchers in mainstream disciplines rarely reflect on the effects of their own racial identities and how that influences their interpretations. Stanfield (1993) further argued that there are ethical considerations in researching people of color because of cultural, and/or class and/or gender differences and requires a special sensitivity about these discrepancies.

The researcher established triangulation, member checking, and thick descriptions. This allowed the researcher to conduct follow-up interviews to assist with any clarification. Triangulation assisted the researcher in examining the data repeatedly to search for overlooked or missed information from the interviews. Triangulated data resources provided justification for themes.

Limitations

The purpose of this case study was not to generalize all European American teachers and Hispanic students of Mexican descent within the United States. Practitioners can learn from a case study “even if the circumstances of the case do not match those of their own situation” (Erickson, 1986, p. 144). The case study presented and analyzed and helped illustrate some general problems in education.

The study was undertaken as an exploratory investigation to examine how Hispanic students of Mexican descent perceive intergroup conflict, its impact on their exchanges with their European American teachers in urban high schools, and its impact on their academic success. It was done as an investigation as a way of capturing the richness of the unique interactions and experiences of the participants in the study. The purpose of this study was to examine: (a) Hispanic students and their daily interactions with their primarily European American teachers, (b) how Hispanics students react and respond to these daily exchanges, and (c) how these daily interactions and exchanges impact the Hispanic students’ academic success in urban schools.

Given the narrowness of the study, the researcher identified several limitations. One of the limitations to consider is due in part because the participants were from

several urban schools whose personal and educational experiences, background, socioeconomic status, cultural identity, and gender differences may or may not impact their understanding of intergroup differences. The number of participants, though small in number, may or may not provide a commonality in terms of findings and themes but not in the richness of their experiences. Another possible limitation is the size of the urban school may or may not impact the richness of the experiences of their former students. The scope of the study was limited to urban schools in a large metropolitan area of South Texas and not representative of all schools in general.

Also considered a limitation to this case study was the European American teachers referred to in this study do not reflect the attitudes and practices of all European American teachers. More importantly, the researcher's personal and professional experiences and background knowledge revealed divergent constructions of reality about the content of the study.

Summary

A qualitative case study was used as the framework for this study discussing intergroup differences and the daily exchanges that occurred between European American teachers in urban schools and their Hispanic students. Participating students in the study were selected based on set criteria. Part of the data collection included focus groups, face-to-face interviews with participants, visiting the urban high schools the participants attended, and doing follow-up interviews. Constant comparative methods were used in analysis of the transcribed data with full maintenance of anonymity of the participants through the use of coding methods, as themes and sub-themes were

discovered. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness and for justification of the emergent themes, triangulation of the data was done. Chapter IV discusses the results of this study. These results reflect the data collected through individual and focus group interviews, transcriptions, and descriptions of observations at the urban high schools in journal entries.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The intent of this qualitative case study was to: (a) examine intergroup differences that exist between Hispanic students and European American teachers of urban schools; (b) examine how the students perceive their differences with respect to their working relationship with their teachers; and (c) determine how these intergroup differences affected the Hispanic students' academic success. The chapter begins with a description of the properties of intergroup conflict, followed by results presented in four major sections. Each major section identifies an emergent theme and subthemes from the participants' interviews. The subthemes detail how properties of intergroup conflict emerged in the classroom and impacted their students' classroom participation and academic success. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings as they answer the two guiding questions in the study:

1. How do Hispanic students and their European American teachers perceive their daily interactions and exchanges and their implications?
2. How do these daily interactions and exchanges impact Hispanic students' academic success in an urban setting?

The findings in this study were demonstrated in some areas of intergroup conflict. Once again, the aspects of intergroup conflict:

Intergroup conflict is, by definition, a collective phenomenon, and requires a suitable collective "model of [humanity]." It is an important task...to examine the relationship between individual drives and cognition and those associated with the groups to which they belong. (Condor & Brown, 1988, p. 19)

In Bell's (2002) study of intergroup differences between teachers of color and majority teachers, conflicts occurred due to differences in instructional practices, discipline, and multicultural emphasis. These were evident in the emergent themes in this case study. These intergroup differences prevented in some cases a creation of classrooms that were not a community of learners. In Bell's study as in this one, the students felt that even the most dedicated and friendly teachers were not aware of the perpetuated inequities that the students felt were occurring. Awareness of teacher practices that impact student achievement is critical to teachers, educational leaders, and students.

Shifting racial, ethnic, and demographic patterns in the United States has made it almost cliché to point out that improving learning outcomes for children from less advantaged backgrounds is critically important to the nation's future. The teaching experiences by all teachers (regardless of their ethnicity) know that children can perform at high levels when presented with high quality instruction (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011). A large number of educators enter the field with a passion to teach and desire to work with children – not to deal with conflict and controversial issues (Dass & Parker, 1996). Teachers need to learn how to approach conversations skillfully, without being defensive and without letting the student take the subject personally. This is true for all teachers.

After using the comparative data analysis method, the data analysis determined that the properties of intergroup conflict identified by Hispanic students of Mexican descent by this study to be common in meaningful learning experiences. These were (a) incompatible goals, (b) cultural differences, (c) group boundaries, and (d) power differences. Results from this study revealed intergroup conflict occurred between Hispanic students of Mexican descent and their European American teachers. The properties and their respective themes are substantiated by the comments from this study's participants.

Of the nine properties of intergroup conflict, Table 4.1 is a brief description of the six properties of intergroup conflict, which were identified in the study's findings by the researcher from the responses given by both male and female Hispanic students.

As part of the analysis of the findings of the study, the findings were coded and analyzed using the nine properties of intergroup conflict (Alderfer, 1982; Cox, 1994), of which only a total of four were found to be most evident to varying degrees among the students. The responses of the students, observations done at the schools, and notes from journal entries were coded and separated according to their correlation to the properties of intergroup conflict. The findings are presented initially with an overview of findings and then specifics are divided into the male and female Hispanic students.

Table 4.1. Overview of Findings

#	Properties of Intergroup Conflict	Description	Found in responses of Male Hispanic Students	Found in responses of Female Hispanic Students
1	Incompatible Goals	Differences among majority and non-majority workers in compatible that are influenced by norms, goal priorities, and work styles, among and between these groups (Cox, 1994).	X	X
2	Cultural Differences	Cultural differences between group members of different groups occur due to misunderstanding and misperceptions (Cox, 1994).	X	X
3	Group Boundaries	Both physical and psychological group boundaries determine group membership. Transactions among groups are regulated by variations in the permeability of the boundaries (Alderfer, 1982).	X	X
4	Power Differences	Majority groups hold advantages over minority groups in the power structure of the organization. Intergroup hostility between groups results in a disagreement over the redistribution of power. Minority group density in organizations poses a threat to the existing power structure and provides an opportunity for those who are powerless. These types of resources that can be obtained and used differ among group boundaries between majority and non-majority workers (Cox, 1994).	X	X
5	Competition for Resources	Allocation of resources that are influenced by embedded organization issues such as acknowledgement of group identities in regulating jobs, training priorities, and expansion of resources (Cox, 1994).	X	
6.	Cognitive Formations	Due to group boundaries, power differences and affective patterns, group members develop their own language, influence members' perceptions of subjective and objective criteria of other groups and work efforts, and transmit propositions about other groups in relation to their own group members (Alderfer, 1982).		X

This chapter began with a brief description of the properties of intergroup conflict, followed by the emergent themes. An analysis of the students' perceptions of their European American teachers and the students' perceptions of their daily interactions and exchanges, revealed four themes that were recognized as properties of intergroup conflict. These thematic interpretations included: (a) incompatible goals among students and teachers in relation to language barriers and stereotypical practices, (b) cultural differences, (c) group boundaries and their impact on instructional practices and cultural and ethnic experiences, and (d) power differences and how they relate to lack of mutual respect and how it can influence classroom behavior and academic success (see Figure 4.1).

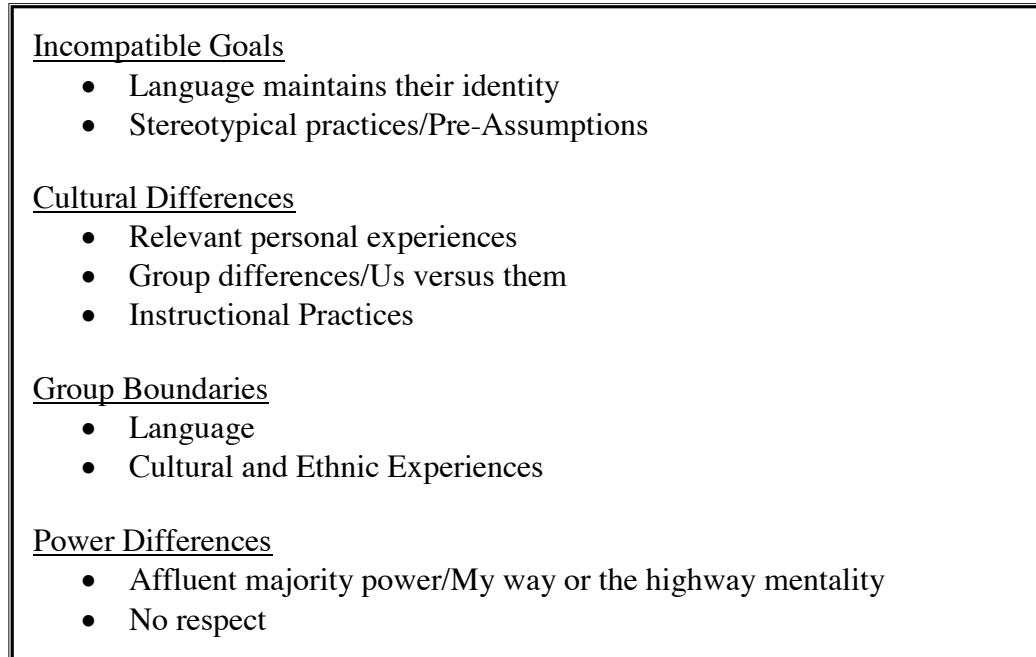


Figure 4.1. Emerging Themes From Students' Responses

The properties of intergroup conflict identified by Cox (1994) and Alderfer (1982) were used to describe the intergroup interactions in the school organization in urban schools and Hispanic students of Mexican descent. An in-depth analysis of the properties of intergroup conflict provides a framework for understanding the students' responses of their perceptions of their European American teachers. Not all the properties of intergroup conflict were apparent as outlined in Figure 4.1. The following are brief descriptions of four properties of intergroup conflict that were identified in the study's findings by the researcher:

1. Competing Goals – Differences among majority and non-majority workers in competing goals influenced by norms, goal priorities, and work styles among and between these groups (Cox, 1994).
2. Cultural Differences – Cultural differences between group members of different groups occur due to misunderstanding and misperceptions (Cox, 1994).
3. Group Boundaries – Both physical and psychological group boundaries determine group membership. Transactions among groups are regulated by variations in the permeability of the boundaries (Alderfer, 1982)
4. Power Differences – Majority groups hold advantages over minority groups in the power structure of the organization. Intergroup hostility between groups results in a disagreement over the redistribution of power. Minority group density in organizations poses a threat to the existing power structure and provides an opportunity for those who are powerless. The types of

resources that can be obtained and used differ among group's boundaries between the majority and non-majority coworkers (Cox, 1994).

Children must feel connected to their teachers in order to learn from them. It is important for educational leaders to know that the teachers they hire need to understand the importance of these relationships. Students, from any culture or ethnicity, will not learn from someone they do not like. Some students will learn from any teacher, but the students we are more concerned about – students who enter behind and need to catch up – are the most vulnerable. To do the hard work needed, they are going to need to have a friend in their intellectual corner, urging them to ignore past failures and convincing them that they are capable of doing the work necessary to succeed (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011).

Schools are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The diversity brings substantial benefits such as better instructional practices, greater creativity, and innovation in the classroom. But increased cultural differences bring potential costs in higher dropout rates, interpersonal conflict, and academic declines. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 include quick overviews of the properties of intergroup conflict and subthemes found based on the students' responses to questions.

This study addressed issues of diversity in schools and the need to examine how people interact with others who are different from them and how these day-to-day interactions affect them when creating classrooms that are inclusive, positive, and that create a friendly atmosphere for learning.

Overview of the Findings

In order to complete the study, the data findings were coded using the nine properties of intergroup conflict (Alderfer, 1982; Cox, 1994). The data collected from the participants was coded and separated according to their descriptive nature and suitability to the explored properties of intergroup conflict. The data collection sources included participants' interviews, urban schools observations, the researcher's reflective notes, and written artifacts. The researcher's findings on the properties and their respective themes are substantiated by the comments from this study's participants. All nine properties of intergroup conflict (Figure 4.2) were found but the four identified properties emerged from the thickness and richness of the transcriptions of the interviews (Figure 4.1).

Incompatible Goals

One area of intergroup conflict is competing goals between minority and majority workers. In dealing with issues of diversity, various groups within a given organization may develop competing goals, which result in intergroup tensions. That is, how people interact and respond to others who may be different from them are influenced by norms, goal priorities, and work styles among and between these goals (Cox, 1994).

Competing Goals	Differences among majority and non-majority workers in competing goals that are influenced by norms, goal priorities, work styles among and between these groups (Cox, 1994).
Competition for Resources	Allocation of resources that are influenced by embedded organizational issues such as acknowledgement of group identities in regulating jobs, training priorities, and expansion of resources (Cox, 1994).
Cultural Differences	Cultural differences between group members of different groups occur due to misunderstanding and misperceptions (Cox, 1994).
Power Differences	Majority groups hold advantages over minority groups in the power structure of the organization. Intergroup hostility between groups results in a disagreement over the redistribution of power. Minority group density in organizations poses a threat to the existing power structure and provides an opportunity for those who are powerless. The types of resources that can be obtained and used differ among groups. Power differences among groups influences the group's boundaries between the majority and non-majority workers (Alderfer, 1982; Cox, 1994).
Conformity versus Identity Affirmation	The tension between majority and minority group members over the preservation of minority group identity (Cox, 1994).
Group Boundaries	Both physical and psychological group boundaries determine group membership. Transactions among groups are regulated by variations in the permeability of the boundaries (Alderfer, 1982).
Affective Patterns	The severity of intergroup conflict relates to the polarized feelings among the groups. Group members split their feeling so that positive feelings are associated with their group and negative feelings are associated with other groups (Alderfer, 1982).
Cognitive Formations	Due to group boundaries, power differences, and affective patterns, group members develop their own language, influence members' perceptions of subjective and objective criteria of other groups and work efforts, and transmit propositions about other groups in relation to their own group members (Alderfer, 1982).
Leadership Behavior	The group leader and other group representatives reflect the boundaries of groups and how they will interact. Members of a similar group reflect power differences, affective patterns, and cognitive formations of their group. The role of the leader in a network of intergroup relations determines the intensification of intergroup conflict (Alderfer, 1977, 1982).

Hi wtg"640Rtqr gt vku"qh"Kvgti tqwr "Eqphlev"

Incompatible goals was one of the properties of intergroup conflict identified in responses given by the students. In reviewing the property of incompatible goals, it is important to recall that perceived goal incompatibility appears in a couple of forms.

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First, the parties in conflict may want the same thing, such as a good grade, a promotion, attention, or pass a course. The students struggle and jockey for position in order to attain the desired goal. They perceive the situation as one in which “she never looks to me to give her the answer.” Thus, they see their goal as incompatible with the teacher because they both want the same thing. Sometimes the goals are different (Wilmot & Hocker, 1998).

In an organization, one person may want to see his or her work rewarded, whereas another may want to see work production rewarded. Parties in the organization struggle over which goal should be rewarded. Of course, many times the content goals seem to be different; but beneath them is a relational struggle over who gets to decide. Regardless of whether the participants see the goals as similar or different, perceived incompatible goals are central to all conflict struggles. In the case of the students’ perceptions of their European American teachers, the property of intergroup conflict of incompatible goals was their common language. Spanish helped maintain their identity and because of this identity, their teachers had pre-assumptions of them in their classrooms. In turn, the students believed this caused stereotypical practices of low expectations from the teacher.

The first theme that emerged from this study was competing goals, which occurred between the Hispanic students of Mexican descent and their high school European American teachers. For example, one student expressed his concern about college readiness while he felt that the teacher was only driving to success on the state-mandated exams. The findings showed that mastery of the English language was a goal

for the students; however, some students felt that in mastering English they lost part of their cultural identity. Two subthemes emerged from under the property of intergroup theory identified as “Competing Goals.” These were: (a) language and cultural identity and (b) stereotypical practices and pre-assumptions displayed by the European American teachers.

Language and cultural identity. In the findings, many students felt that their culture was not validated when a few of their teachers demanded they speak English only in their classroom. All of the students, however, felt that their use of Spanish in classes was a barrier to their learning. The students knew that when their teachers asked them to speak English only, it was as if the teachers felt that only when they learned English, no matter the age, their learning could proceed unhampered. The students interviewed stated that their European American teachers encouraged them to learn English as quickly as possible because this would not only help on state-mandated exams, but also on college entrance exams. However, the majority of the students felt that speaking two languages fluently was not a hindrance to their learning but in actually enriched their learning. One male student was told, “Once you get rid of your accent, you will be able to learn better. It will be so much easier for you.” “The sad thing was, it really wasn’t. In the real world, if you speak two languages fluently it makes your resume more marketable.”

The students knew that English was necessary if you wanted to succeed in this country, but it should not be at the expense of their own language. This was especially true of students who identified themselves as 1st generation or 2nd generation citizens of

the United States. One's native language is a foundation for future learning. If we think of language development as the concrete foundation of a building, it makes sense that it needs to be strong to sustain the stress of many tons of building materials that will be placed on top of it. The students felt that the teachers should realize that they already had established a strong foundation from their own culture and language. Teachers should utilize this established foundation to make connections to new concepts that must be taught in order to become more academically successful.

This is analogous to what takes place when students who speak English as a native language enter school (Nieto, 2004). For English language learners, however, not knowing English is a tremendous disadvantage because it is not viewed by their teachers and schools as a resource for learning.

I didn't like to speak English. Some of the teachers would call my parents to school to tell them that I didn't want to speak English. They wanted me to speak English even at lunch! We hung around together and felt really comfortable being with Spanish speakers only.

Young people whose languages and cultures differ from the dominant group often struggle to form and sustain a clear image of themselves. They struggle also to have teachers understand who they really are. In spite of being very proud of themselves, all of these young people felt the need to hide or deemphasize their identity, culture, or language in schools (Nieto, 2004).

Schools are agents of socialization in which formal pedagogy as well as the informal hidden curriculum reflect the beliefs of the dominant society (Giroux, 1983). Throughout the interview process, many students maintained a firm belief that their language was not part of the school curriculum.

They entered their schools with a richness of cultural and linguistic competencies. Their bicultural homes were sources of cultural and cognitive resources (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Students felt that teachers knew the importance of mastering the English language and that it was very important in order to be successful academically. Learning the academic English quickly would only improve their chances of graduating from high school. “The teachers wanted me to speak English at home. How could I speak English with people that spoke only Spanish? Watch TV in English and learn they would reply.”

Language diversity needs to be placed within a sociopolitical context to understand why speaking a language other than English is not a handicap. On the contrary, it can be a great asset to learning. How a language and its use is perceived by the schools and teachers and whether modifications to the curriculum are made as a result of the language, are crucial issues to keep in mind. Students who enter classrooms speaking a language other than English have to be seen as an asset to add richness to the curriculum. Teachers can make connections to real world experiences by bringing culture and language into the classroom, which in turn, makes students feel that their language and culture are important and relevant.

In the United States, the prevailing view about knowing languages other than English is that, among culturally dominated groups, bilingualism is a burden; yet, among middle-class and wealthy students, it is usually seen as an asset. It is not unusual to find in the same high school the seemingly incongruous situation of one group of students having their native language wiped out, while another group of students struggle to learn

a foreign language, a language they will never be able to use with any real fluency (Nieto, 2004). Many schools and states have outlawed every language except English in classrooms. Assumptions and stereotypes of some cultures have driven many legislatures across the United States to have English-only schools.

Implications for the education of language minority students are dependent on the degree to which these children have access to instruction that is challenging yet comprehensible. Teachers in urban schools that service minority students must teach at the highest expectations at all times. Some students felt that the teachers at times felt sorry for them and lowered their expectations. Students need an accepting school and social environment, which promotes academic achievement and values cultural and language diversity.

One way that students can learn is by the development of student-centered programs that are integrated with whole-school efforts to improve and enrich instruction for all students. This type of instruction requires that teachers combine a profound knowledge of the subject matter with a wide repertoire of teaching strategies. Teachers need to know learning theories of minority students, cognition, pedagogy, curriculum, technology, and assessment with an ample knowledge of the students' language, socio-cultural, and developmental background (Calderón, 1999).

Some implications for instructing students and improving their chances of academic success are instruction in the history and cultural heritage of the student's home language and that of the U.S. This would instill confidence as well as a positive self-identity and promote multicultural understanding. Collaborative and cooperative

learning experiences facilitate these processes, especially in a classroom with students who have different levels of language proficiency.

Stereotypical practices and pre-assumptions. Because many parents of Hispanic students do not have a working knowledge or experience of the educational system, Hispanic students relied heavily on teachers to help them choose their career pathways or paths for school success. Parents of Hispanic students cannot fill out forms and find them intimidating. Two of the students interviewed said that they made connections with a few European American teachers for help. Those students who did reach out, found a European American teacher who took an interest in them and found the time to counsel them throughout school. They became a mentor or role model. All teachers can become role models for all students as long as they are caring and knowledgeable about their students. One way in which teachers can build substantial relationships with students is by offering help to those who do not seek their aid. This is especially true for students who are the first of their family to attend college. Positive relations with teachers reduce the odds of dropping out (Nieto, 2004).

Many students in our findings found it difficult to believe in their own possibilities for success when their teachers in a stereotypical practice psychologically attacked them with words and sometimes with actions without realizing what they were doing.

Many teachers said that Mexican American parents do not value education because they never come to parent-teacher conferences or even open house. If you fail, it's your own fault. You have to want to learn. If you are getting poor grades, it is your own fault. You are just plain lazy and it is no surprise to me.

Several students' worst moments in high school came when they encountered European American teachers who stereotyped students or were overly hostile toward recent immigrants. They expressed that they were deeply affected and hurt. It is vital to examine how culture may influence learning and achievement in school, but the danger lies in overgeneralizing its effects. Overgeneralizations can lead to gross stereotypes, which in turn, may lead to erroneous conclusions about individual students' abilities and intelligence (Nieto, 2004).

From the students' statements, it is obvious they were clearly aware of the teacher's preconceived assumptions of them. Comments from the students explained that many of them were denied entrance to Advanced Placement or honors courses with comments like: "You would be better off in body shop because you are so artistic with your hands." Other students were compared to their brothers or sisters and felt they had been pegged for certain classes or even certain teachers. Some students struggled to maintain their identity and at the same time succeed academically. The constant stereotyping and the teacher's perceptions about their capabilities negatively influenced student motivation to persevere and succeed academically. Again, in the students' percepts, they believed that some of these teachers were probably not aware that they were doing this.

College is a different world. I don't think I learned anything in high school that is helping me now. In high school they picked our classes for us. I had classes like art, cooking, sewing, and those kinds of classes. Many times even the computer classes were full or maybe they didn't even want to let us in. In some classes all we did was do worksheets, copy from one another, and the teacher was asleep, pretending to be working on the computer.

The Hispanic students' comments on competing goals show that within the school culture, it was apparent that various groups were formed both in the school and in the classrooms and, this in turn, resulted in-group tensions between the students and their European American teachers.

Trying to maintain their racial identity within the dominant culture in their schools only resulted in intergroup conflict. Students felt that their teachers had different goals in mind for them and felt that this was, in part, due to the dominant culture's attitude about their cultural group. Language also played a very important part of the students' culture and identity, and the findings showed that the students' felt that their language was not part of the curriculum. The findings showed that teachers' perceptions of the student's poor language often produced negative expectations about their academic capabilities.

Many of the students said in their interviews that classroom instruction in their schools was mainly whole-class instruction with students working in teacher-assigned and teacher-generated activities. Even though they were ritualistic in their compliance of doing these activities, they generally did it in a passive manner (i.e., watching or listening). In these types of classrooms, the researcher has observed that teachers spend more time explaining things to students than questioning, cueing, or prompting them to respond. Research has suggested that inappropriate instructional practices or pedagogically induced learning problems may account for the poor academic performance and low motivation of many Hispanic students (Fletcher & Cardona-Morales, 1990).

Cultural Differences

One of the primary themes that was evident in these students was the cultural differences that existed between teachers and students. Reasons for these differences included the nature or make up of the group, the background of the teacher, and the number of years the teacher had been at the school. Other reasons may be work interdependence, goal variances, and differences in perceptions. Individual members of a group often play a role in the initiation of group conflict. Any given group embodies various qualities, values, or unique traits that are created, followed, and even defended. These characteristics can then distinguish “us” from “them.” Teachers sometimes do not understand that not everyone comes from their world. As noted by this student quote:

The teachers are astounded when we all look at her weird. She yells “Why don’t you all get the extra books to help you with the reading of classics?” She was talking about “spark notes.” Spark notes are you kidding me. The closest book store was at least two bus transfers away. She didn’t even have a clue about how tight money was in my neighborhood.

In a study by Delpit (2006), in African American communities, teachers were expected to show that they cared about their students by controlling the class, exhibiting personal power, establishing meaningful interpersonal relationships, displaying emotion to garner student respect, demonstrating the belief that all students can learn, establishing a standard of achievement and “pushing” students to achieve the standard (high expectations), and holding the attention of their students by incorporating African American interactional styles in their teaching. Teachers who do not exhibit these behaviors were viewed by community members as ineffective, boring, or uncaring.

Even though many students expressed that their White teachers were highly effective in their instructional practices, many said their parents did not think they were because they were not strict enough. In the Hispanic culture, the teacher is viewed as a person of respect and their word is authority. Hispanic parents know the teacher knows best, and they simply believed that it was best not to interfere in the daily routines of teaching. Many students felt that the teachers did not understand their culture because they expected their parents at every event, conference, or meeting.

Members who violate important aspects of the group, and especially outsiders, who offend these ideals in some way, normally receive some type of corrective or defensive response. Relationships between groups often reflect the opinions they hold of each other's characteristics. When groups share some interests and their directions seem parallel, each group may view the other positively; however, if the activities and goals of the groups differ, they may view each other in a negative manner. Three subthemes emerged from the data analysis: (a) relevant personal experiences, (b) group differences, and (c) instructional practices.

Relevant personal experiences and group differences. The students demonstrated in their interviews that their identities were shaped by the unique contexts in which they lived. They spoke about being part of two social worlds: school-based identity and family-based identity. The family-based identity was the grounding force in their lives. Family was often in the language of the interviews and without the presence of family in their lives, they could not find comfort and/or solace.

Whenever I brought bad grades home, my mother and grandmother would both say next time you should do better. My father would come home tired, calluses

on his hands and his skin baked by the sun and he would tell me daily to work as hard as he does at school so that I wouldn't be stuck with a job like his. Sometimes school was very hard, but it was harder to see him come home like that every day.

One way that families indicate their support for academic success is through high expectations. Education is highly valued by Hispanic families regardless of their economic background. In some instances, working-class and poor parents had even more hope in education than middle-class families. They could not always help their children with homework because they had not learned English. Because they often lacked the "cultural capital" valued in society, these families could not pass it down to their children.

All of the students interviewed had a strong ethnic identity, while most of their teachers and the schools operated under the dominant White culture. These scenarios had an inevitable clash of cultures, and they believed it was one of the major reasons for their academic failure. One student remarked, "Some of the White teachers and students did not like us. They would call us wetbacks. We always felt it was us versus them." The discounting of the Hispanic culture in some school's curriculum and pedagogical practices, as well as the denial of Hispanic students' ethnicity, creates an environment where it is most likely that only the much-assimilated students would achieve success.

We were in the auditorium and the Mariachi and folkloric dancers were going to perform. Everyone was excited and began to scream, "Viva Mexico!" The White teachers would scream at us to stop yelling that phrase. We were celebrating an important Mexican holiday. There was nothing wrong with what we were saying. The vice principals removed four students that kept screaming the phrase anyway. Because we did not behave like the other "students," in their eyes, they were misbehaving.

Culture is integral to the learning process, but it may affect each individual student differently. Students share a rich heritage that includes a strong sense of identity, but the culture may not have the same effect on every child. Culture is not destiny. Culture is neither static nor deterministic; it gives us just one way in which to understand differences among students. Teachers who simply celebrate Mexican holidays and then forget to accept the cultural differences between them and their students are forgetting that everyone has culture. Many times, members of the culturally dominant group of a society may not even think of themselves as cultural beings. Culture is something that other people have, especially people who differ from the mainstream in race or ethnicity (Nieto, 2004).

Instructional practices. Another area in which the dominant culture was visible in the respondents' lives was in the teacher-prepared lessons and teaching style. According to McLaren (1989), the hidden curriculum deals with the tacit ways in which knowledge is constructed. It is the way by which students are induced to comply with the dominant ideologies. Two students stated that for the most part, their teachers enjoyed lecturing from books and "talking to themselves since no one was really paying attention."

The findings revealed that some of their classes provided them opportunities to connect with the subject matter and discuss or bring up problems that affected them and their community. Other students felt some of their teachers basically chose to ignore basic teaching methods that would make connections with the students. In other words, the curriculum was not relevant to the students.

Classes that taught me and I learned were those classes that allowed me to make things or present things that mattered to me. I always found that the teachers that made learning fun, related learning to real life. Not just things found in books but to real life. Teachers do not know the reality in our neighborhoods that surround the school they work in. It's like they simply stick their head in the dirt and drive like hell to get out of dodge.

Prior research and the analysis of the data in this study showed that most Hispanic students work best in groups or in cooperative learning (Nieto, 2004). The students expressed their preference in a team effort approach to problem solving or in the acquisition of knowledge where each member of the group contributed in his or own way. Such opportunities were few and far between, and they also stated that most of their teachers preferred the lecture style and they felt that authentic learning was taking place.

History was a big waste of time. All the teacher did was lecture, lecture, lecture. If not that, he would show videos of people so old that they were wearing odd looking clothes and haircuts. Did I learn? No! I would just sleep and it wasn't only me. This person was really my worst teacher. The others were very caring and helped me a lot.

The cultural differences that occur in the workplace may result in tensions among and between groups. Cultural differences result in intergroup conflict because the majority of cultural norms prevail within the organization (Ferdman, 1992). The teaching and learning process of Hispanic students must go beyond the frameworks established by mainstream society for academic achievement. Treating all students equally does not provide equal access to education. A teacher cannot teach the same way to every single class. Teaching practices depend on who the majority of the students are in their classrooms during specific periods.

Hispanic students bring with them a multitude of experiences that are different from the experiences of the dominant culture. Therefore, we cannot expect that the same instructional practices are going to produce the same results in a culturally and linguistically different group. We must meet these students where they are at and we cannot ignore the past in our children. We must acknowledge it, be sensitive to it, and appreciate it (Macias, 1993).

Group Boundaries

A property of intergroup conflict that emerged during the analysis was the issue of group boundaries. Group boundaries are manifested where the majority group makes decisions on what is acceptable and establishes the norms and expectations that are due to cultural differences. In any workplace where cultural differences exist, ignorance towards these differences can lead to conflict (Ferdman, 1992). In reviewing the intergroup property of group boundaries, it is important to understand that the boundaries around a group determine membership within that group and can be physical or psychological. In the case of this study, membership in a group was both physical and psychological for groups formed in the schools that consisted of students of common ethnicities and sometimes, not always, teachers. Group boundaries that result in the workplace may result in tensions among and between groups. We create boundaries, whether we are aware of them or not, whenever we begin a new group or meet with an already existing one. The most elementary boundaries relate to time, space, task, and role. How we understand these boundaries may inform us about more complicated ones,

such as how we deal with contact among members, or between members and us, outside of the group.

Group boundaries between diverse groups occur because of misunderstandings and misperceptions that are related to the different worldviews of culture groups. Alderfer and Smith (1982) believed that cultural differences and group boundaries may manifest when majority group members make decisions on what is acceptable and establishes the norms and expectations for all the groups. Due to the cultural differences between the Hispanic students and their European American teachers, group boundaries were evident in the findings. The group boundaries were embedded in the language of the students. In maintaining their language, the students maintained their identity based on their history, culture, and ethnicity. The students expressed in the interviews that some of their European American teachers perceived the language as a threat to their status and power, which in turn, created an intergroup conflict. Language emerged as a subtheme of the group boundaries property of intergroup theory. The students' sense of being relates to the language with which they grew up. In essence, when you remove their native language, the students see this as questioning who they are or their identity.

Language. There has always been a strong attachment to the language of their original homeland by Hispanics. The Spanish language unites all Hispanics no matter where their ancestors originated. It is then undeniable that the linguistic handicap form, which so many Hispanic students suffer, has devastating consequences for their educational achievement.

Longstreet (1978) said,

Learning to be a student has many of the characteristics of learning to be a member of an ethnic group. A whole way of living is assimilated both from one's family life and from one's school life. The family way may not be at all the scholastic way or there may be many points of similarity and compatibility. In any case, youngsters are unaware of what is happening to them. By the age of ten or eleven, American students have at least two ethnicities: that of their heritage and that of their school. (p. 106)

Longstreet's findings apply not only to students but also to the teachers teaching in a school where they are the minority and their students are the majority. Because of this, the formation of group boundaries among students of color and their European American teacher exists.

The findings show that even native born Hispanics that are third or fourth generation still have academic problems in part due to their language skills. Data from the Public Policy Institute of California show that Hispanics of Mexican descent have made more impressive educational progress from the first to the second generation than from the second to the third or higher generations. The most likely explanation is that Hispanics are less likely than other group not to have made the transition to speaking English in the home.

All teachers need to understand how language is learned, both native and subsequent languages. This knowledge is often reserved for specialists in bilingual and ESL education, but it should become standard knowledge for all teachers. Teachers, even though they do not speak the native languages of their students, can demonstrate an appreciation and support for those languages in many ways. They can attend conferences in literacy, bilingual education, and ESL (English as a Second Language) education, subscribe to journals or participate in staff development (Nieto, 2004).

Cultural and ethnic experiences. The findings highlight the importance that language plays in the school culture and revealed multiple sources of intergroup conflict that resulted in creating a negative climate for Hispanic students in European American teachers' classrooms. The transition from speaking Spanish to becoming proficient in English was a difficult and at times abrupt experience for the students interviewed. Students felt that they were not only leaving a culture but also a language. Language and English were the most frequently used words in all of the interviews. The language was a marker to their identity, which they did not want to give up easily. Some of this resistance was viewed by the teacher and administrators as rebelling, and consequently, many were labeled discipline problems.

I was sent to the office for any little thing. We'd talk in Spanish and she would flip out. The teachers thought we were talking about them, or laughing about them, and they'd write referrals and send you to the office.

Schools are political domains that are linked to power and control within the dominant society. Students enter schools with a richness of cultural and linguistic competencies. Their bicultural homes are abundant sources of "knowledge....A language is not only a means of communications but it is also a very personal symbol for the individual" (Fishman, 1995, p. 445). As Fishman (1995) noted, "A language is a precious marker of cultural belonging, behavior, and identity" (p. 445).

Power Differences

Another intergroup conflict that was suggested by the Hispanic students' data analysis was that of power differences. Power comes in many forms. Some people have power due to their resources, personality, social skills, connections, etc. Power shifts

back and forth between individuals depending on the situation at hand. These power differences are important to recognize because they influence our day-to-day performance. Power differences between groups usually involve the varying availability of resources to different groups (Alderfer, 1982). Majority groups hold advantages over minority groups in the power structure of the organization. Intergroup hostility between groups results in a disagreement over the distribution of power. Minority group density in organizations poses a threat to the existing power structure and provides an opportunity for those who are powerless. The types of resources that can be obtained and used differ among groups. Power differences among groups influence the group's boundaries between the majority and non-majority workers (Alderfer, 1982; Cox 1994).

Power differences between majority and minority members of an organization are the most problematic intergroup conflict condition. Individuals with power define the organization's culture, determine which groups get power, and define the very nature of power (Madsen & Mabokela, 2002). In classrooms, the teacher holds the power and can dictate the flow of information to the students. Sometimes, when students have conflicts with the teachers, they are labeled as -personality conflicts. In reality, they are not personality conflicts but are power struggles. The types of resources that can be obtained and used differ among groups. The findings showed two subthemes that emerged from the property of power differences: (a) affluent majority power and (b) showing no respect.

Affluent majority power and lack of respect. According to this study one of the factors that many students expressed in their interviews that had a direct impact on

their success was their interaction with the power structure in some of their teachers' classrooms. As a direct result of some of these negative encounters, two students dropped out of school for a period of time.

According to the students, some teachers simply came in to earn a paycheck and never once got out of their chairs to actually teach. This lack of teacher preparedness or even interest in positively interacting with their diverse students causes failure to create classrooms conducive to learning, failure to involve students in their learning, and failure to create dialogue caused conditions for student alienation and discipline problems.

Findings to the study suggest that teachers direct attention on students' weaknesses instead of on their cultural and linguistic strengths and knowledge.

When I first went into middle school is when I started noticing everyone around me. I started finding out who my friends were and started hanging around with them. When I went to high school, I began to see White, Brown, and Black and started to notice our race and our culture. I really started to change and hang around gangbangers.

Lack of respect. Many teachers and schools want to be color-blind, and in reality, do not want to acknowledge cultural or racial differences. To be colorblind assumes that the individual is fair, impartial, and objective because to see differences, in this line of reasoning, is to see defects and inferiority (Nieto, 1996). The rationale is that if you do not notice a difference, it will no longer be viewed as negative. Color blindness may result in refusing to accept differences and, therefore, accepting the dominant culture as the norm. It may result in denying the very identity of our students, thereby making them invisible (Nieto, 1996). A student stated,

I wanted all of my teachers to see that I am Brown and not White. I love Mexican music and do not like to play soccer. They just assumed that if you are from Mexico you would be great in soccer. They pushed me to take Spanish AP 4 and Spanish AP 5 not because I was wanted to, but because they knew that I would make them look good. I just wanted them to see me.

Color blindness also involves the assertion that color is noticed, but is not “seen” or given meaning (Crenshaw, 1997).

Teachers were taught to be color-blind, as evidenced by the researcher, during observations done at the various high schools. It was evident that many teachers in today’s schools do not meet the needs of students through the use of relevancy in their instructional methodologies. As the students come to understand these things, then they will also recognize their abilities to reconstruct their identities, with mentors providing them with models for doing that.

Individuals with power define the organization’s culture, determine which groups get power, and define the very nature of power. Ethnic differences between leader and follower may result in exchanges that may be detrimental to the organization’s goals (Chemers & Murphy, 1995). Helping students find their own identity is essential in their educational empowerment.

The students need to understand how their school lives are shaped by their identities and how these identities are shaped by a power structure that attaches messages of intellectual ability and potential to specific identities based on little more than appearance. They will see how power itself hides the inequities involved in this process and constructs these inequities as if they were natural, silencing the voices of the students who become victims of this reality. It is important to understand that the

majority of the students spoke about their European American teachers affectionately and always with respect.

The power struggles expressed by the students were about those teachers who they felt did not meet their academic needs. Their academic success was hindered because the teachers had low expectations for them and this in turn fed their lack of motivation. The students never saw that teaching at the highest rigor would allow them to have better chances to be academically success both in high school but more importantly in college.

Summary

The researcher in this study concluded that Hispanic students of Mexican descent and European American teachers did have intergroup differences in their day-to-day exchanges. This resulted in intergroup conflict and was a major catalyst in failing these students academically. The Hispanic students and their European American teachers interactions demonstrated a clear relationship of conflicts as identified through the properties of intergroup conflict. The four properties of intergroup conflict in the study findings concluded that the European American teachers and the Hispanic students of Mexican descent that interact in urban high schools on an individual and group basis are elements that may be used to minimize conflicts within the school organization. These four properties of intergroup conflict between the Hispanic students of Mexican descent and European American teachers in this study were: (a) competing goals, (b) cultural differences, (c) power differences, and (d) group boundaries.

This study addressed issues of diversity in schools and the need to examine how people interact with others who are different from them and how these day-to-day interactions affect them when creating classrooms that are inclusive, positive, and that create a friendly atmosphere for learning. Sometimes teachers are not aware that they are contributing to intergroup conflicts. Educational leaders need to make sure that the teachers hired are aware of what may cause these intergroup conflicts through professors and staff development training. This, in turn, will lead to an inclusive school culture. In order to improve the organizational culture of the school, it is necessary to reduce intergroup conflict.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to conduct qualitative research in urban school settings to explore: (a) Hispanic students and their daily interactions with their primarily European American teachers, (b) how Hispanic students react and respond to these daily exchanges, and (c) how these daily interactions and exchanges impact the Hispanic students' academic success in urban schools. The researcher proposed two guiding questions for this qualitative study:

1. How do Hispanic students and their European American teachers perceive their daily interactions and exchanges and their implications?
2. How do these daily interactions and exchanges impact Hispanic students' academic success in an urban school setting?

The study took place in a metropolitan city in central Texas where Hispanic students of Mexican descent in their first or second year of college, who met the criteria explained in Chapter III, were selected to participate. A total of 10 students participated in the study. A qualitative case study was used as the framework for this study discussing intergroup differences and the daily interactions and exchanges that occurred between European American teachers and Hispanic students. Participating students in the study were selected based on set criteria. Part of the data collection included face-to-face interviews with participants, observations of the high schools the participants graduated from in a journal to thicken the description, and follow-up interviews. Constant comparative methods were used in analysis of the transcribed data with full

maintenance of anonymity of the participants through the use of a coding method, as themes and sub-themes emerged. To ensure that information was not overlooked, to establish validity and trustworthiness, and for justifications of the themes, triangulation of the data was done.

The study did not proceed without limitations to consider. Given the narrowness of the study, the researcher identified several limitations. One of the limitations was that the participants were from several urban schools whose personal and educational experiences, background, socioeconomic status, cultural identity, and gender differences may or may not impact their understanding of intergroup differences. Another limitation was the number of participants, though small in number, may or may not provide a commonality in terms of findings and themes but not in the richness of their experiences. Additional limitations of the study are: the size of the urban school may or may not impact the richness of the experiences of their former students, the scope of the study was limited to urban schools in a large metropolitan area of South Texas and not representative of all schools in general, the European American teachers referred to in this study do not reflect the attitudes and practices of all European American teachers, and finally, the researcher's personal and professional experiences and background knowledge revealed divergent constructions of reality about the context of the study.

This study made reference to two cultures that exist in any school setting: identity groups and organizational groups. The students' perceptions of their teachers showed that both their European American teachers and the students exhibited assumptions that the processes operating when they communicate with people from

other groups are the same processes operating when they communicate with people from their own groups. This was the case with identity groups and/or organizations' groups found in each of the high schools that the students attended. The fact that these two types of groups and the interactions between the teachers and the students formed conflicts, and these conflicts, in turn, appeared to hinder the academic success of the students. It was evident from the students' comments that many European American teachers displayed a genuine concern in meeting their students' needs and helping their students achieve academic success. This was evident especially in one student's comment about one of his European American teachers.

Mr. W_ was the most challenging of all my teachers. He really made me work and gave us challenging topics we had to discuss in government class. I hated him at times. He was just so hard-nosed about everything. But now in college, I realized that he cared about my success in college. I went back to see him during winter break and said, "Thank you." I actually thought I saw a tear in him. Nah...but I still am grateful to him.

Attitudes about school, teachers, and themselves are the single most important factors affecting the behavior of Hispanic students. Likewise, how a teacher feels about students from an identity or cultural group different than their own can be a critical factor in any educational program. Students and teachers make assumptions about identity and organizational groups that are displayed in the processes of communicating within the classroom. When a student is placed in contact with persons of differing values and attitudes, the stage is set for conflict. These conflicts, in turn, appeared to hinder the productivity and academic success of Hispanic students.

Individual members of a group often play a role in the initiation of group conflict. Any given group embodies various qualities, values, and traits that are unique.

These traits or characteristics are often created, followed, and even defended. These characteristics lead many students to perceive an “us” versus “them” attitude about their teachers. One student expressed it best when he stated, “Spark Notes, are you kidding me! The closest bookstore was at least two bus transfers away. She didn’t even have a clue about how tight money was in my neighborhood.” Teachers sometimes do not understand that not everyone comes from their world.

Theories of intergroup relations are concerned with the interactions, attitudes, feelings, and behavior that are embedded in an intergroup context. Taylor and Moghaddam (1987) defined intergroup relations as “any aspect of human interaction that involves individuals perceiving themselves as members of a social group, or being perceived by others as belong to a social category” (p. 6). One of the most influential explanations for intergroup conflict, realistic conflict theory, suggested that intergroup hostilities stem from incompatible interest and goals between groups, with the incompatibility fostered by scarcity of resources (Levine & Campbell, 1972).

All of the students interviewed had a strong ethnic identity, while most of their teachers and schools they attended while in high school operated under the dominant White culture. This lead to an inevitable clash of cultures, and many of the students believed it was one of the major reasons of their academic failure. The discounting of the Hispanic culture in many curriculums and pedagogical practices creates an environment where it is most likely that only the much assimilated Hispanic students would achieve success.

The theoretical framework of this study, embedded intergroup theory, recognizes that individual cultural identities influence how participants perceive their work and their relationships with others (Alderfer, 1982). According to embedded theory, types of intergroup conflict that occurs among Hispanic students and European American teachers in urban schools occur is related to, directly or indirectly, cultural group differences. The embedded intergroup theory offers an understanding of the sources of conflict that occur in schools due to issues of diversity (Nkomo & Cox, 1996). In schools, a teaching culture exists that imposes beliefs about appropriate ways of educating children and results in norms of actions. Intergroup theory provides insights on the cultural incongruities that occur among teachers and students of ethnically diverse groups that may be displayed either consciously or unconsciously in the classroom, which impacts academic achievement.

As a way of diminishing existing intergroup conflict in schools, the researcher offers the following recommendations for each school to consider. These recommendations are in no way conclusive of what needs to be done but offers an opportunity to initiate a direction in which conflict issues can be diminished and the schools may, therefore, invest more time in improving these daily exchanges between teachers and students of color. School leaders both at central office and in respective schools where the demographics of their students is changing the researcher suggests the development of a diversity plan as part of their District Improvement Plan or Campus Improvement Plan as a way of working together toward academic achievement for all students.

According to Madsen and Mabokela (2005b), “When leading a diverse group of teachers and students, knowledge about the school participants’ ethnic and cultural differences, becomes imperative” (p. 103). Madsen and Mabokela suggested a strategy for dealing with intergroup conflicts in a school organization: the implementation of a diversity plan. Madsen and Mabokela (2005b) mentioned several criteria or phases needed in order for schools to develop a diversity plan. The researcher concentrated on the development of a diversity plan in the hopes educational leaders would reflect on the findings of the study and in the hopes the diversity plan would play an integral part in changing the organizational structures and policies that have led to disempowerment of students of color in urban city schools (Nieto, 2004). Addressing organizational school structures is important and crucial to the development of a comprehensive diversity plan that will improve outcomes and teacher effectiveness. The diversity plan needs to examine data analysis, specifically data collection and community statistics. The beginning point would be to conduct a needs assessment to all the stakeholders of the district.

Madsen and Mabokela (2005b) mentioned the following criteria needed in order for schools to develop the diversity plan:

Leaders and teachers must understand their own cultural identity and its relationship to others who are racially or ethnically different from them. This phase of the diversity plan explains how the leadership of districts and schools must commit to developing a strategic process that assists people in seeing the critical link between meeting the academic needs of students of color and diversity goals. This diversity plan

would help people see the need for the school/district to expand its outreach to students of color given their changing demographics and Hispanic students. Just like some of the teachers in the study projected their views on their students, the same can be said about school leaders. They lead based on who they are regardless of their students' and community cultural backgrounds. Leaders should encourage their teachers and staff to become as Madsen and Mabokela (2005b) stated "color conscious" rather than "color-blind" in order to prevent intergroup conflict. Administrators and teachers must lead based on who they are, expecting students to be like them, have the same expectations as they had when they were going to school, regardless of their students' cultural backgrounds.

Schools must have a clear rationale for why the plan is important and how the process will improve organizational outcomes and effectiveness. Research on diversity plans emphasizes that organizations need to have a clear rationale for why the plan is important and how the process will improve organizational outcomes and effectiveness (Cox, 1994; Dass & Parker, 1996). This strategy is by no means the only way to improve academic achievement, but it is a beginning to understand that "conflict" issues do exist in schools where the dominant culture is different from the majority of the students attending schools in the district. Many of the organizational structures in the schools, policies, expected and traditional practices of instructions that have been utilized for years at school, can lead to disempowerment. Many times you hear, "this is the way we have always done things around here" no longer suffices if schools are to improve. These include (a) the overall control orientation of policy, (b) the general similarity of

curriculum and schedules, (c) particular patterns of resource allocation, and (d) an unswerving faith in test scores as measures of ability of success (Nieto, 2004). Tye (2000) suggested that many of these structures represent “powerful patterns of schooling that are held in place by society’s assumptions about what schooling should be” (p. 117). Addressing organizational school structures is central to the development of a comprehensive multicultural/diversity plan that will improve outcomes and effectiveness.

School participants must be conscious of the importance of effective management of intergroup conflict. Affirmation, solidarity, and critique, the highest level of support for diversity, is based on the premise that the most powerful learning results when people work and struggle with one another, even if it is sometimes difficult and challenging (Nieto, 2004). Madsen and Mabokela (2005b) noted that intergroup conflict, if not managed, may compromise efforts to create inclusive schools. Because multicultural education is concerned with equity and social justice for all people and because basic values of different groups are often diametrically opposed, conflict is inevitable. School districts must perceive the problem of intergroup conflict and must have the insight into the culture and its dysfunctional elements. The most successful architects of change are those who have a high degree of objectivity about themselves and their organizations (Schein, 1985).

Schools must be aware of diversity and thus engage all members in culturally relevant practices to enhance the educational outcomes of all students. The mere fact that a diversity plan is created and implemented in no way guarantees its

implementation, positive effects on changing the school, or acceptance of groups or individual differences. Simply instituting a plan that addresses cultural awareness, without fully engaging all members into practices may prove to be ineffective. The actual participation in active engagement, that does more than assimilate but instead acculturates participants, is critical to the acceptance and “buy in” of the plan.

There must be ongoing professional development addressing the cultural concerns. Staff development is focused on instructional practices and in teaching teachers methodologies and strategies for addressing state assessments. Until professional development that addresses the cultural concerns is required with emphasis on systemic changes, the group boundaries that exist between the diverse groups and the established norms, expectations, and values set by the majority groups will continue to prevail. Administrators should choose a professional development model that promotes relationship building. Peer coaching, mentoring, teach teaching, professional learning communities, and networking are all models that can be used to strengthen teacher/student relationships by bringing individuals together around issues of mutual interest and/or concern. Whichever model the school chooses, it is important that it not be linked to formal performance evaluation (da Costa & Riordan, 1996; Israel, 2003).

A strong staff development plan must be initiated that addresses the cultural concerns and emphasizes a systemic change instead of staff development that emphasizes instructional practices and teaching methodologies that address state-mandated exams. The lack of understanding of cultural differences and how they project into their teaching could be a staff development on cultural/multicultural education

methodologies. Leaders, according to Madsen and Mabokela (2005b), should become aware of the benefit of becoming cultural awareness of the diversity in their schools, especially between the students of colors, and their staff would help with the paradigm shift that needs to take place to help launch schools into a new era of academic success of all students.

Schools should have expert individuals available to assist with emotionally laden concerns to smooth out dialogue across differences. The lack of empathy that some of the European American teachers exhibited towards their students is grounds for a staff development opportunity in cultural awareness training. If educational leaders became aware of the benefit of becoming culturally aware of the diversity that exists among all the stakeholders of a district, as well as the diversity that exists among the teachers and students, proper planning on their part could help launch the schools into a new dimension of cohesiveness and success for all students.

Schools should foster diversity through targeting qualified people from underrepresented groups. By fostering diversity, Cox (2001) asserted that the school environment will demonstrate a value for such existing diversity. The expectation of always searching out a particular individual when it is convenient, such as to address language issues because that person fits the role and exhibits cultural commonality, may lead to implications, when, in turn, all personnel should be educated to address such issues.

Finally, schools should have a method of evaluating the diversity competency. As with any plans that are implemented, the need for a method of evaluating them is

indispensable. The evaluation should include all persons affected by the plan so that a true understanding of its effectiveness or ineffectiveness can be assessed. Also, evaluating a diversity plan should lead to improving the plan and personalizing it to meet the needs of the diverse individuals who collaborate on a daily basis for the time in which the plan is implemented. A plan that works well in a particular year may not be as effective in a following year due to the personnel dynamics that may exist at a school. Therefore, continuous evaluation will lead to continuous improvement.

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), “trust within a school is grounded in common understanding about what students should learn, how instruction should be conducted, and how teachers and students should behave with one another” (p. 12). Educational leaders and teachers in diverse context must become cultural integrators and consensus builders who acquire understanding of their constituents’ backgrounds and perspectives, and establish leader-member trust (Dovido, Gaertner, & Bachman, 2001). Part of working with others, especially diverse groups of people, involves the concept of trust. This is especially true with Hispanic students.

Building new relationships, whatever their circumstances, takes time; rebuilding relationships in which trust has been damaged can take far longer (Young, 1998). If we hope to make meaningful, lasting change within school communities, however, identifying increased teacher and student trust as priority and taking the time to develop it looks to be well worth the investment. “Without trust a school cannot improve and grow into the rich nurturing micro-society needed by children and adults alike” (Blasé & Blasé, 2001, p. 23).

Students are unlikely to focus on academic learning if they feel threatened. Maslow (1968) theorized in the 1950s that a sense of safety and security are a prerequisite for higher levels of human development. If we want to increase learning among European American students and children of color, then schools must create a strong foundation for their learning. This foundation includes freedom from slurs and harassment based on ethnicity, language, religion, and other aspects of identity (Henze, 2002). If European American teachers do not exhibit positive relationships with their students, they can feel a sense of threat and a feeling of insecurity.

In today's increasingly multicultural schools and work environments, students and adults need, more than ever, to learn how to get along and work productively with those who are different from themselves. Relations across lines of difference are always in need of preventive attention so that they do not escalate to violence (Henze, 2002).

Communication is important to all organizations. Administrators should help identify ways to increase and/or improve faculty and student communication. One possibility that requires little additional time for schools is to set up a Website for each teacher so that students and parents may go online to communicate with their teachers. Depending on teachers' interests, the site could be used to host a discussion board about areas of common interest or concern, to report on student work, to post parent communication, to finish homework, to post articles and Web links that may be of interest to students, or simply to exchange information about upcoming activities at school. Providing teachers and students an effective communication may lead to better

relationships and communication. There are other topics to consider when developing a diversity plan.

Personnel practices are one area to consider. Hiring of teachers and leaders of color to reflect the changing demographics of the district is important in the development of a diversity plan. A review of recruitment practices and hiring procedures should be examined. In order for teachers to respond to students of color and implement instructional practices in their classrooms to meet the needs of their students, a strong staff development plan needs to be in place. There must be ongoing professional development addressing the culture of the students.

Multicultural awareness through a thorough analysis of curriculum, textbooks, cultural traditions and course offerings can only enhance both the teacher and the student's view of their cultural identity. Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month or making piñatas in art class does not represent a multicultural curriculum. Curriculums must be relevant to the students who are being taught and make cross-cultural connections for all students. The teacher must be educated in customs and traditions that are found in the community where she teaches, and students must be made aware of other cultures found in the world. The staffing of committees that write or revise curriculum must be representative of all the stakeholders of the community, and their input must be considered valuable to the leadership of the school or district. Schools should foster diversity through targeting qualified people from underrepresented groups (Madsen & Mabokela, 2005b). By fostering diversity, Cox (2001) asserted that the school

environment will demonstrate a value for such existing diversity. Parents are an integral part of any school organization.

Parents and community involvement is extremely important in the implementation of a diversity plan. Parents must feel welcome even though they may not speak English. The public's perception or impression of how a school meets the needs of its diverse population makes organizational image an important consideration. A community or parents' perception of a school is a transient impression, a collective judgment based on the actions the school takes and its achievements. Thus, a school's reputation can be distinguished from other schools by how equitably it treats the students and parents. In order to be responsive to our changing students demographics, the leadership needs to understand how a school's image determines the degree of parent and community involvement (Madsen & Mabokela, 2005b).

The implementation of a diversity plan into a district's or school's campus/district improvement plan is central to the development of a comprehensive plan that will improve outcomes and effectiveness. Many educational leaders believe that there is no intergroup conflict manifested in their schools. The results of their students of color offer evidence that there is an underlying factor that needs to be addressed. The development of a diversity plan involves an environmental scanning process to assess various perspectives so as to understand how people within the organization reflect areas of diversity and to evaluate aspects of diversity (Cox, 2001; Dass & Parker, 1996). By examining data, schools will better understand how students of color are portrayed. A strategic process implementation through Phase I and Phase II should reflect what the

schools define as diversity and how those areas can be measured, collected, and embedded in the school/district improvement plan (Madsen & Mabokela, 2005b).

An in depth analysis of the properties of intergroup conflict provides a framework for understanding the students' responses of their perceptions of their European American teachers. The lack of teachers being prepared or interested in interacting positively with their Hispanic students, their lack of personal relationships, their failure to establish classroom conditions conducive to learning, and the lack of creating a dialogue, create conditions for student opposition and alienation. The stereotypes, assumptions, and perceptions about the capabilities of Hispanic students negatively influenced student motivation to academic success.

Teachers direct their attention on the weaknesses of their students, whether it is linguistic or cognitive, rather than on their linguistic strengths and cognitive abilities. As students experience failure and face repeated "personality clashes" with teachers, they develop power struggles to protect their group identity. Students are unlikely to focus on academic learning if they feel threatened. Maslow (1968) theorized in the 1950s that a sense of safety and security are a prerequisite for higher levels of human development. If we want to increase learning among children of color, then schools must create a strong foundation for their learning. This foundation includes freedom from slurs and harassment based on ethnicity, language, religion, and other aspects of identity (Henze, 2002). If Hispanic students feel a sense of threat towards them, they will either misbehave in the classroom or completely shut down academically.

Hispanic students are in a precarious situation when they attend schools in which the educators and administrators have a predominantly monocultural worldview. They represent the dominant culture and students view them as insensitive to their needs. The only people of color they see are janitors, cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, or bus drivers. Negative interactions between European American teachers and Hispanic students affect students' performance in school and their desire to learn and achieve.

District personnel need to take responsibility to help students of color maneuver through the school organization to investigate intergroup differences that students perceive as uncaring attitudes. Teachers need additional preparations to understand their students, their cultures, and the very communities they serve. In order to initiate change, school districts must make serious efforts to develop a diversity plan in order to integrate and familiarize their faculty to the diverse communities in order to reduce stereotypical images of minority students.

First, central office staff must develop a diversity plan that seriously commits the school district to a plan where the cultural distance between educators and students of color is examined in order to promote mutual respect and trust. School district personnel must make a paradigm shift from continuing to amass resources and spend money on developing alternative school programs and classroom management techniques and develop a plan to build capacity in teachers about the underlying intergroup conflicts that results in lack of academic achievement to a significant portion of the Hispanic student population.

Secondly, European American teachers who work where the majority of their students are from a culture different from their own need to communicate honestly and openly with their Hispanic students. This will involve teaching strategies and methodologies that promote inclusive teaching and learning. In other words, teachers must develop and adapt their instructional strategies to become more culturally relevant. All teachers must commit to support diversity and inclusion as positive role models to all the students they serve.

Summary

The goal for this chapter was not only to summarize the findings of the study but to also provide some possible solutions to the day-to-day exchanges that result in intergroup conflicts that may arise between European American teachers and Hispanic students. In this chapter, conclusions, study limitations, recommendations, and implications for further study are also provided. Based on the properties of Cox's (1994) and Alderfer's (1982) Nine Properties of Intergroup Conflict, four major themes emerged from the data. These were (a) competing goals, (b) cultural differences, (c) group boundaries, and (d) power differences. The implementation of Phase I and Phase II of a diversity plan in the school/district's improvement plan is explained along with recommendations on how to improve relationship building between European American teachers and Hispanic students.

Recommendations for Further Studies

As populations begin to change dramatically across America, and the minority population is now the majority in many areas of the nation, the need for additional

research has never been greater. Further qualitative research regarding Hispanic students and their teachers from diverse groups is warranted. Future studies should pay attention to the acquisition of language, specifically Spanish, and how important it is in maintaining Hispanic students' identity and its importance in the learning process. Interviewing students of Mexican American descent is a method that has not been utilized widely in qualitative research. Using some of the procedures and techniques similar to those used in this study would allow others to perform analyses of other schools in cities where the influx of immigrant children, has in some cases, tripled. Such implication could lead to either similar findings or to different findings that could identify new ways of addressing intergroup conflicts that impede student achievement. Much research exists between teachers and students and the diversity between them and the pedagogies that are implemented to teach students, but research specifically to the daily exchanges and interactions that occur is still at a minimum, especially exchanges on student learning. Some areas to consider further research may be:

1. How are colleges and university teacher preparation programs addressing the demographic shifts in schools and the implication involved in new teaching strategies?
2. How do students of color in urban schools and students of color in suburban schools differ in addressing the needs of the influx of immigrant children?
3. How does the implementation of a diversity plan promote effective teaching practices for students of color?

4. How does the use of a leadership evaluation tool that includes the topic of intergroup conflict and how the leader of a school is dealing with diversity issues that involves student-to-student intergroup conflicts, teacher-to-teacher intergroup conflicts, and teacher-to-student intergroup conflicts help address issues that impact the school's academic success.

Madsen and Mabokela (2005a) addressed the topics of diversity similar to the topic of this study, and there is great need for studies to be done especially with the data patterns being released by Census 2010. As Rios (1996) so eloquently stated, "It is pivotal that educators and researchers begin to illuminate the ways in which teachers make sense of their increasingly diverse students" (p. 22). The traditional methods of teaching and managing students are not relevant when addressing the needs of Hispanic students. Understanding Hispanic students requires accepting their cultural and linguistic backgrounds to ensure that academic success is attainable.

Although the number of Hispanic students attending public schools has increased dramatically in recent decades, Hispanic students, as a group, have the lowest level of education and the highest dropout rate of any group of students. Conditions of poverty and health, as well as other social problems, have made it difficult for Hispanics living in the United States to improve their educational status. The researcher believes further studies must examine these critical areas: (a) lack of qualified teachers and (b) inappropriate teaching methods.

One of the most serious problems associated with the educational failure of Hispanic students results from a shortage of adequately qualified teachers. This is a

major concern, especially with students whose first language is not English. In urban areas where most English language learners (ELL) attend school, the number of teachers prepared to teach Hispanic ELL students falls far short of the need. Participants in this study felt that their teachers were not adequately prepared to teach ELL students. They relied on other Hispanic students to translate the instructions and actually teach them in some cases. Research studies on the impact of this unpreparedness on the effect of drop-out rates or completion rates would be beneficial as we strive to improve the number of Hispanics attending higher education institutions. Another urgent problem related to the underachievement of Hispanic students has to do with current teaching practices.

The most common instructional approach found in schools that serve Hispanic students is the direct instructional model. In this approach, teachers typically teach to the whole class at the same time and control all of the classroom discussion and decision-making (Haberman, 1991; Padrón & Waxman, 1993). This teacher-directed instructional model emphasizes lecture, drill and practice, remediation, and student seatwork, consisting mainly of worksheets (Stephen, Varble, & Taitt, 1993). Some researchers have argued that these instructional practices create “pedagogy of poverty” (Haberman, 1991; Waxman, Huang, & Padrón, 1995), because they focus on low-level skills and passive instruction. Teachers need to have staff development or teacher prep courses that would focus on effective teaching practices for Hispanic students. This would increase teacher efficacy. A teacher with high efficacy believes in her teaching strategy and would have confidence to be able to teach all students. Most teacher professional development in schools lasts a day or less. Many teachers need long-term professional

development to be able to use new methods of classroom instruction (e.g., cooperative grouping), integrate educational technology in the subjects they teach, and address the needs of ELL students and other students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lewis et al., 1999).

The plight of Hispanic students from disadvantaged backgrounds underscores the need of further research studies on effective teaching, learning, leadership, and policy that focuses on improving the academic achievement of Hispanic students. The difficulties encountered by Hispanic students in their quest for educational success point to the need to expand on existing research on Hispanic students and advocating ways to improve their academic achievement. There is a great need to disseminate this type of knowledge directly to schools and school districts. As populations begin to shift in America where minorities are now majorities (not only in student populations as seen in many schools but also in teacher and administrative populations working in schools), the need for additional research has never been greater.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMATIONAL FLYER

Educational Research Study

Be a part of an important Qualitative Research Study

- Are you in your 1st or 2nd year of college?
- Are you a Hispanic of Mexican descent?
- Did you graduate from a high school where the majority of your teachers were European American?

If you answered YES to these questions, you may be eligible to participate in an educational research study!



Please call Rose Narvaez for more information or email at rcnarvz@hotmail.com.

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