Creando una cultura universitaria: How an educational technology non-profit organization engages families of elementary aged future first-generation Latin@ college students

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Creando una cultura universitaria: How an educational technology non-profit organization engages families of elementary aged future first-generation Latin@ college students

by

Joan J. Jaimes

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Leadership)

Program of Study Committee:
Sarah Rodriguez, Co-major Professor
Erin Doran, Co-major Professor
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Anne Foegen
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The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this dissertation. The Graduate College will ensure this dissertation is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2019

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DEDICATION

Con mucho cariño, amor y respeto dedico este trabajo a mis padres, Juan Rodriguez Garza y Aurora Larrasquitu de Rodriguez. Sin ustedes, nada de lo que yo soy o hago sería posible. Gracias por todos sus sacrificios. Gracias por emigrar a este país para buscar mejores oportunidades para sus hijos. Gracias por las enseñanzas y todo su amor. Gracias por siempre inculcarnos el valor de la humildad, la honestidad y la lucha por una mejor vida.

Para mi esposo y mis hijos, los quiero mucho. Gracias por su apoyo incondicional, su ayuda y su comprensión durante este proceso. Estoy muy orgullosa de ustedes por todo lo que hacen y todo lo que son. Sé que ha sido un viaje largo y difícil lleno de desafíos, enfermedades y crecimiento doloroso, pero ahora somos más fuertes y hemos crecido durante esta experiencia.

Cheny, Chachin, y Nito. ¡Los quiero mucho!

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Cheny, Chachin, y Nito. I love you a lot!
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Last, but certainly not least, my most sincere gratitude to my Yes! family. Thank you for everything that you are doing for students and families.
ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of five mothers of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade in a San Antonio area school that participated in the Yes! Our Kids Can® program. The purpose of this study was to learn how the parents or caregivers used technology to engage with the curriculum to help them create a college going culture at home. For this study, only mothers responded to the participant recruitment post with an interest to participate. This study used a qualitative narrative research method, specifically testimonio, and was guided by the learner centric ecology of resources framework along with community cultural wealth to listen to the voces to understand and make sense of the parents’ or caregivers’ experiences about if and how the messages they received from Yes! may influence them in the creation of a college going culture at home. By listening to the voces and testimonios of the caregivers themselves, we will be able to better support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of future first-generation Latin@ college students. Five mothers volunteered to participate and share their testimonio during three individual interviews.

The study uncovered the four temas or themes that follow: mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones, engage with it as an entire family, use it to create hope for a better future and to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture. The findings of this study confirm that a partnership between an elementary school and an EdTech non-profit organization is engaging participating mothers in their children’s education. It is imperative to redefine family engagement in order to create a college going culture in homes with future first-generation Latin@ college students.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The Latin@ population is the second largest racial/ethnic group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The Latin@ population is projected to keep increasing. By 2060, the Latin@ population is projected to represent 31% of the total 129 million in the United States (Excelencia, 2015). The Latin@ population is also significantly younger than the majority. In 2013, 28 years old was the median age for Latin@ people compared to 43 for non-Hispanic Whites (Excelencia, 2015). All of these statistics show the importance of investing attention and research to educating the Latin@ population (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017).

Many Latin@ students in the United States become first-generation college students. In 2012, only 24% of Latin@ children under the age of 18, had a parent with a college degree (Excelencia, 2015). In spite of this statistic, Latin@ parents understand that education is a way for improving their condition of living and their opportunities for continued success (Pew Research Center, 2016). Almost all (91%) of Latin@ parents expect their child to obtain some level of higher education (Excelencia, 2015). Latin@ student high school graduation rates have steadily improved in recent years. In 2010, 71% of Latin@ high school students graduated within four years of enrolling in high school, compared to Asians (94%), Whites (83%), and African Americans (66%) (Excelencia, 2015). In postsecondary education, Latin@ students are also enrolling sooner than other races immediately after graduating high school (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). Though Latin@ parents have high aspirations for their children and more Latin@ students are pursuing a postsecondary education, there is still a gap in academic achievement and more families must be engaged in their children’s education. In 2013, 3% of Latin@s earned a graduate degree and .5% earned a Doctoral degree (Excelencia, 2015). These statistics mean that of 100 Latin@ students that start elementary school, only 3 of these students receive a master’s
degree and only half of one student receive a doctoral degree. The numbers are promising yet still more has to be done to improve success rates for Latin@ students in education and to create a college going culture in Latin@ homes.

Creating awareness about postsecondary opportunities in the early education years may have better results than waiting for students to be in high school (Rippner, 2017). One demonstrated way of doing this is to engage parents and families and show them the many opportunities that come with education while their children are still in elementary school (Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2018). Yes! Our Kids Can® (Yes!), the educational technology (EdTech) non-profit that I work for in San Antonio, is reaching out to families (parents and caregivers) on their mobile devices and talking to them about postsecondary education. Americans are connected to the internet via smartphones and other mobile devices (Pew Research Center, 2018). Engaging families by using technology may be a way to create a college going culture in Latin@ households with no college experience. By taking advantage of the high usage of mobile phones and internet connection, it may be easier to increase family engagement among parents and caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students. My job as Director for Family Engagement at Yes! is to connect with families and assist in creating a college going culture in their homes.

By using technology that is widely found in most Latin@ households, families may become more engaged in their elementary aged child’s education and create a culture of higher education at home (FitzGerald, 2013). Most Americans, about 95% own a cellphone; 77% of those are smartphones. Latin@ households own up to 97% more cellphones than the average American. Reaching families without a college experience is especially important in order to show them the opportunities that come with creating a college going culture and obtaining a
postsecondary education (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). By using technology as a conduit of information we can help engage parents in their children’s education and increase their likelihood of obtaining a postsecondary education (FitzGerald, 2013).

Research shows that families without any college experience need the most support and guidance when navigating the world of opportunities beyond high school. Specifically, research says that first generation college students can benefit from P-20 initiatives (Rippner, 2017). Many states have formed P-20 initiatives to support these families (Rippner, 2017). In Texas, for example, the University of Texas in San Antonio has its own initiative. The Institute for P-20 Initiatives at the University of Texas at San Antonio provides the required leadership necessary to enable pre-K through 20 students to develop and complete their educational goals through collaborative partnerships with K-12 and postsecondary institutions as well as those within the greater San Antonio community (UTSA, 2018). Early awareness of college and career readiness may set a different and promising perspective for students that will be first-generation college students.

Yes! is reaching out to families on their cell phones to try to engage them in their children’s education. The primary goal of Yes! is to help every family, parent or caregiver, and every teacher create an expectation of success and prosperity in the mind of every disadvantaged child in a way that is measurable, scalable and affordable. Yes! Our Kids Can promotes a Success Mindset™ among economically disadvantaged families by bridging the gap between school and home. This includes strategies and tactics for instilling grit, resilience, high expectations and aspirations, self-efficacy, and character building. Yes! is an educational technology company that sells their curriculum to local school districts reaching elementary aged children in the classroom and their families at home, using their mobile phones.
The overall target audience of Yes! are families without a college graduate in the household in Bexar County and South Texas. About 69% of the student population in Bexar County are Latin@ students (Lee & La Sohn, 2016). Yes! supports extensive college and career readiness with family engagement beginning in Pre-Kindergarten. While most pre-college and career outreach programs start in high school, by 7th grade, too many students are lost to low expectations by their own families, society, and even school personnel. By instilling a deep-seated understanding in students and families about why it is important to excel in school early on and create a college-going culture a vital gap in the education ecosystem is filled. It is the goal of Yes! to ensure that participating students and families finish their elementary school years with a Success Mindset™, equipped with self-efficacy, healthy school habits, knowledge about the opportunities made available from higher education, and higher expectations for a prosperous future. Yes! encourages students and families to be receptive to positive messages about college and career readiness that they will hear in higher grades. To better prepare students for college, families must have the know how to guide them and create a college going culture at home.

Yes! starts in PreK classrooms and currently has programming through 2nd grade. It uses an in-classroom curriculum that is installed in the teacher’s computer as a program or application and projected to the students or installed in individual internet connected personal tablets that students use on their own in their classroom. This engaging and fun digital learning system is designed to encourage students to stay in school, work hard, and make good grades. The family engagement part of the program follows this same concept in the child’s home. It incorporates a family engagement component that helps to demystify the process of college preparedness and encourages consistent family participation in the effort. The goal of the family engagement team
at Yes! is to empower caregivers and families to influence their child’s success through regular messages via their smart phone, including tips for discussion and positive reinforcement. This educational technology non-profit is using technology and text messages to create a college going culture and educate families about opportunities that come with postsecondary education.

Research shows that when families are engaged in their children’s education it has a positive impact on their children’s success (Crane, 2012). It has also been proven that Latin@ families draw an immediate connection between education and the ability to improve their children’s life (Crane, 2012). Current trends also show that technology is providing the best tools to increase family engagement. However, literature still does not show the lived experiences of these Latin@ families that are using technology to receive messages to create a college going culture in their homes and what their perceptions are.

This study explored how the families of a San Antonio area school district whose students participate in the Yes! program engage with their child’s curriculum. The study will listen to the parents and caregivers and their testamonio about if and how the messages they received from Yes! may influence them in the creation of a college going culture at home.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to learn how the families (caregivers and parents) of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade in a San Antonio area school district that participated in the Yes! program, used technology, a resource available to them, to help create a college going culture at home. This study uses a qualitative narrative research method, specifically testamonio, to understand and make sense of the caregivers’ experiences. This study explored the testamonios of parents or caregivers that participated in the Yes! program and received the family curriculum via text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture.
By listening to the voces and testimonios of the caregivers themselves, we will be able to better support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of future first-generation Latin@ college students.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization?

2. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture?

This study used the ecology of resources framework along with community cultural wealth to listen to the voces (voices) of the parents or caregivers of Yes! participating students while they share testimonios about how they engage with and use the family curriculum to create a college going culture in their homes. The voices of these caregivers and their stories as to how they used the curriculum will help improve the experience for other families that may participate in the future. The strategies used by these families to engage with curriculum and create a college going culture may be shared with others in order to increase educational college attainment among the Latin@ population.

Relevant Definitions

College Going Culture: a combination of explicit college awareness and academic preparation for students to have the right tools and skill sets to go to college.
**Educational Technology (EdTech):** software designed to enhance teacher-led learning in classrooms and improve students' education outcomes. EdTech is the combination of “education” and “technology”.

**Elementary School:** In the United States, elementary education refers to children's first formal schooling prior to secondary school. The age range of students who attend elementary schools in the United States is from six to twelve, normally from Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade.

**Ethnic:** of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.

**Family:** a unit in society consisting of an adult or adults rearing a child or children or in a household. This may be either parents, grandparents, guardians or other adults caring for a minor child in the same household. Parent, caregiver, and family will be used interchangeably in this paper.

**First-Generation:** A first-generation college student is a student whose parents do not have a bachelor’s degree.

**Higher Education:** education beyond the secondary level, or high school, especially education provided by a college or university.

**Internet:** an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world.

**Latin@s:** Hispanics or Latin@s are those that classify themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latin@ categories as defined on the U. S. Census questionnaire - "Mexican," "Puerto Rican", or "Cuban" as well as those who indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latin@, or Spanish origin." People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latin@, or Spanish origin" are those
whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic.

Parent/Caregiver: (also see Family) a person who brings up and cares for another; in this study an adult caring for their child.

P-20 Initiative: initiatives that support collaboration between academics and workforce training. A P-20 (Pre-school through age 20) initiative is underway in most states. These initiatives connect the various levels of educational systems in the state to work collaboratively around issues of student progress, achievement, and transition. One common feature of the P-20 work in states is to collect, coordinate, and use K-12 and postsecondary data to track and improve the readiness of graduates to succeed in college and the workplace. The alignment of secondary content standards with college and career readiness standards is another major goal of P-20 efforts.

Technology: a manner of accomplishing a task especially using technical processes, methods, or knowledge.

Title 1 School: Title 1 is the largest federally funded educational program. It provides supplemental funds to school districts to help with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals. The purpose of these funds is to assist in meeting student’s educational goals. The number of low-income students is determined by the number of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. Title 1 funds can be used to improve curriculum, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, and increase staff and program improvement.

Organization of the Study

This report is separated into six main sections as chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the research questions, the
significance of the study, and a brief description of the conceptual frameworks and methodology used for this dissertation. All relevant figures and tables are included within the body in the related section of each chapter.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature and of the conceptual frameworks. Also included is information about the current state of the Latin@ population in education in the United States to better understand the latest trends. Recent literature and studies about family and parent engagement in education are also found in chapter two. The origin and basic concepts of the learner centric ecology of resources and community cultural wealth as conceptual frameworks are also included. It is important to have a basic understanding of the frameworks and their origin and also other projects these have been used in. Recent studies on the use of technology to increase family engagement in education were also reviewed.

Chapter three addresses the methodology of this research study, including the design, selection of participants, data collection and analysis methods. The section on participants include the participant mother profile table. This table was created to give a broader understanding of the overall demographics, characteristics and experiences of the study’s participants. It also includes sections for trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations. Chapter three also addresses the reasons for the methodology and the ethical standards used for my study.

Chapter four presents the vignettes which describe the mothers that volunteered as participants and shared their testimonio along with a brief summary of each interview (LiteraryDevices, 2019). The vignettes have the participants’ pseudonym as the heading. The vignettes contain important details about the mothers and what stood out about them in their testimonio. This chapter concludes with a brief profile table for each of the mothers who shared
their *testimonios*. The purpose of the brief mother profile is to provide more detailed information about them.

Chapter five presents the findings; the different *temas* or themes that arose from the individual *testimonios* or testimonies of the mothers that participated in the research. *Testimonio* narrative inquiry is a type of qualitative research methodology that focuses on the lived experiences of the research participants (Beverley, 2013). By using *testimonios* as the methodology, the raw data and the different aspects of the mothers’ experiences was carefully analyzed to find these *temas*.

Chapter six includes a summary of the study as well as a summary of the findings and *temas* uncovered by the *testimonios*. This chapter also has a discussion section as well as a section with implications. Additionally, it includes recommendations for future research, recommendations for policy change and promising practices to engage families of Latin@ students and the conclusion.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand the topic, it was very important to review recent literature about Latin@ students in education, college going culture, family engagement, and about technology. Literature about the learner centric ecology of resources and cultural community wealth conceptual frameworks was also reviewed. The purpose of this study is to learn how parents or guardians of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district that participated in the Yes! program, used technology, a resource available to them, to help create a college going culture at home.

Latin@ Students in Education

This section will cover the current state of education and recent trends among Latin@ students in the United States. Latin@s have lower education attainment levels overall as compared to the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). There is a disparity between the ongoing demographic shift, increase of Latina/o population and the decreasing educational attainment rates (Excelencia, 2015). Research has been done to find the best practices and methods that are working to achieve the goals of the schools and those of the students, according to and in the opinion of professionals. There is no research found on Latin@ parents’ testimonios using technology to receive text messages leveraging cultural community wealth to engage with their children’s education and build a college going culture. By listening to the voces and testimonios of the parents or caregivers, we will be able to better understand how to help more Latin@ families become a motivating factor for their students. This will increase academic preparation, college access, course completion and graduation rates to close the educational achievement gap among Latin@s in the United States.
One explanation of lower educational attainment by Latin@s could be the poor academic preparation at the high schools located in low income communities. In California, for example, there is a large Latina/o population but many of them live in areas with high poverty rates. “A major reason for the lack of successful transfers is the poor quality of high-school resources. Students who attend low performing high schools – one in three Latin@ students and one in five black students, compared with one in 25 white students – are likely to go to low-performing, low transfer community colleges,” (Chau, 2012, para. 5).

Another explanation for the low success rates among Latin@s could be the elimination of policies such as affirmative action and Proposition 209. For example, in 1997, California passed Proposition 209, which outlawed affirmative action in colleges and universities. “The effects of California’s ban, known as Proposition 209, are particularly evident at the world-renowned University of California, Berkeley campus, where the student body is highly diverse but hardly resembles the ethnic and racial fabric of the state” (Associated Press, 2012, para. 8). Affirmative action may or may not be the best solution for all institutions. Having the principles of the legislation and the reasons behind it being implemented is very important in order to be fair and equal. Latin@s do not have to receive “special” treatment in order to reach the same levels of college attainment as White students. However, since the number of Latin@s in the general population is still not equal to that of Caucasians, and the percentage of college completion of both groups is extremely different, it is important to try to level the playing field and equip institutions with the correct information and skills to better serve Latin@s.

Other examples of institutional and structural barriers that impede success for Latin@ students were highlighted in a 2012 article by Valenzuela, Garcia, Romo, Harriett and Perez. This study demonstrated how Latin@ students can be victims to the different barriers that exist
in the form of policies and practices of different institutions. The study reported about a case of an academically outstanding and talented mature Latin@ student in a Texas high school who was not able to enter college. One of the barriers include policies like the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which put into place very strict guidelines for schools which result in very negative impact to Latin@ students (Valenzuela, Garcia, Romo, & Perez, 2012). Parents of Latin@ students may not have the same ability to move their children to another school if their current school fails to make the adequate progress as dictated by NCLB. This leaves Latin@ students in the failing schools with not very good teachers (Valenzuela, Garcia, Romo, & Perez, 2012).

Providing a high-quality education for all children is critical to America’s economic future. The nation’s economic competitiveness and the path to the American Dream depend on providing every child with an education that will enable them to succeed in a global economy that is predicated on knowledge and innovation. President Obama was committed to providing every child access to a complete and competitive education, from cradle through career. On February 13th, 2012, Obama announced the creation of the “$8-billion Community College to Career Fund.” The fund, co-administered by the Department of Labor and the Department of Education, helped “forge new partnerships between community colleges and businesses to train two million workers for good-paying jobs in high-growth and high-demand industries,” (Obama, 2012, para. 2). The President kept his faith in community colleges and, unlike many politicians, deeply understands the importance of their contribution in education and job training.

The Latin@ story in America has always consisted of hard work and ganas determination or grit (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017; Rendón L., 1993). Latin@s are quickly increasing educational attainment rates and have also come a long way to achieve full inclusion in some occupational fields in the United States. (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). Yet there is still a lot of
work to be done. Rates of Latin@ student high school graduation are improving but they are still lagging behind Blacks and Whites (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). For example, in 2016, the high school drop-out rate for Latin@ students was 8.6%, 5.2% for White students and 6.2% for Black students (NCES, 2018). Since Latin@ student high school graduation rates are low, so are enrollment rates for postsecondary education.

The good news is that Latin@ student enrollment in postsecondary education is growing at faster rates than that of Whites (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). In the 21st century, there is a higher demand for postsecondary education in order to secure employment in the United States. This demand has increased rapidly in the last 20 years. In 1992, only 56% of all jobs required some college. By 2020, this number is expected to increase to 65% (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). Latin@ parents and caregivers are beginning to understand these statistics and are more invested in educating their children. Educators, from preschool through college, P-20, should do a better job of preparing students for life after high school, whether it is by graduating from college or obtaining a technical degree (UTSA, 2018). Yes! is doing what no other initiative is doing; reaching parents and caregivers of early elementary students on their mobile phone to provide them a curriculum that talks to them about the opportunities that come with postsecondary education.

From 2004 to 2015, Latin@ students’ high school completion increased from 57% to 65%, and the percentage of Latin@ high school dropouts has cut in half to 13% (Excelencia, 2015). These numbers are very promising and show that the different initiatives and programs are working, but more must be done. In a survey by Pew Research Center in 2016, education was an issue of high importance to the Latin@ population. About 83% said that education was very important to them; equally important to them as the economy and health care (Pew Research
Center, 2016). The college enrollment rate for Latin@ students increased from 54 to 70 percent, resulting in a higher rate of Latin@ students enrolling in college directly after their high school graduation than White or African American students. Latin@ adults who have earned an associate degree or higher has increased from 17 to 22 percent (Excelencia, 2015). Yet the Latin@ population still has lower levels of educational attainment than other groups. In 2013, only 22% of Latin@ adults over age 25 had earned an associate degree or higher, compared to 31% African Americans, 46% Whites, and 60% Asians (Excelencia, 2015). In early childhood education, Latin@ students still have opportunities to improve. Latin@ children are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood programs than other groups. In 2011, only 56% of Latin@ children younger than 5 were enrolled in kindergarten or a similar program, compared to 64% Asian, 65% African American, and 67% White (Excelencia, 2015).

Economic factors are also huge obstacles for Latin@ students. A National Journal poll of 2014, showed that 66% of Latin@ respondents who got a job or entered the military directly after high school, felt it was more important to help support their family than enrolling in college, compared with 39% of whites (Pew Research Center, 2016). According to a report published in 2015, by Excelencia in Education, many schools with high degrees of poverty were attended primarily by Latin@ students. In 2011-12, 37% of Latin@ students were enrolled in elementary schools where the majority of the student body was eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch compared to 9% of White students were in schools where the majority of students were low-income (Excelencia, 2015). This equates to lower tax monies received by these elementary schools, thus not providing the same opportunities as schools located in areas with higher income households (Hill & Torres, 2010).
Poverty faced by Latin@ students clearly shows to be a negative influence in the performance of children in school (Chau, 2012). These students are affected by unstable housing and inadequate funding of public schools. These hardships not only force them into a cycle of moving from school to school, but also causes many emotional challenges for the students (Valenzuela, Garcia, Romo, & Perez, 2012). Moving to different schools also interferes with the ability for students to develop and cultivate nurturing relationships. This makes it harder to concentrate on schoolwork but also hurts the student’s social and emotional development (Valenzuela, Garcia, Romo, & Perez, 2012).

Latin@ families supposedly have lower school-based engagement in comparison with other racial and ethnic groups (Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015). Academic gains increase when families engage with their children’s school for all groups (Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015). Latin@ teachers may be better at engaging Latin@ families than other teachers. Latin@ teachers may also tend to view more activities of Latin@ families as engagement than their non-Latin@ counterparts. Latin@ teachers may better understand that because of scheduling conflicts these families cannot attend activities in school, but they still can be engaged in their children’s education in many ways. These families are engaging in their children’s education by exposing them to their native culture, language, and customs. They may be giving up more and may be crossing more barriers than the traditional family that is able to attend in school activities (Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015).

In general, Latin@ parents have high expectations of academic quality from U.S. schools (Hill & Torres, 2010). They are often surprised at the lack of rigor and standards of the schools their children attend (Hill & Torres, 2010). Studies show that Latin@ families sometimes feel deceived and disappointed by school districts that claim equity across schools, yet they
experience marked inequity in the quality of instruction and offerings of courses to their children. Latin@ parents would value a more personal relationship with teachers and schools, but language and ethnicity become a barrier when parents want to bond with schools. Latin@ parents reportedly perceive that teachers talk down to them and this makes them feel inferior and embarrassed after interactions with some teachers during in school events or activities (Hill & Torres, 2010).

There have been very few studies of family processes and achievement among the Latin@ population that have directly tested the relation between culturally embedded parenting (set cultural values for raising a family) and academic outcomes (Hill & Torres, 2010). This study will help fill the gap in literature on how to create a college going culture in homes of future first-generation Latin@ college students during the early elementary school years. Yes! is redefining family engagement by using an EdTech curriculum to reach parents and caregivers on their mobile phones to engage them in their children’s education.

**Family Engagement**

For decades teachers and administrators have wanted to know how to work with families in positive ways and how to involve the community to increase student success (Excelencia, 2015). Families want to know if their schools are providing high-quality education. They want to know how to help their children do their best and how to communicate with and support teachers in order to accomplish this. Students want to succeed in school and know that they need the support, guidance and encouragement from their family and their communities. Despite strong agreement on the importance of these goals, much help is still needed in developing comprehensive programs for family engagement and school partnerships (Epstein, et al., 2002).

Research shows that parents engaged in their children’s schools have a positive impact and great influence on the quality of education provided (Crane, 2012). Latin@ parents are less
obvious participants in their children’s education since the activities provided are not culturally relevant (Crane, 2012). The lack of their presence is often misinterpreted as lack of interest by educators (Crane, 2012). Parent and caregiver involvement behaviors include many differences and are not one size fits all. The definition of family engagement must be clearly defined and communicated to students’ families. Family or parent engagement has been defined as the partnership between school and family. Some administrators and teachers have taken this to mean that families must come into the school to be perceived as being involved. This means that both the school and the families share the responsibility for the children’s academic and educational goals (Epstein, et al., 2002).

The literature shows that in Latin@ families, mothers are more likely to be engaged in their children’s school than fathers. For example, in a study by Thomas Crane (2012) he specifically focused on interviewing both mothers and fathers about their engagement in their children’s education. This study found, that even though he made it an effort to interview both, the mothers were always the ones who had higher educational aspirations for their children and had a more positive outlook for their children as well. This same study also found that mothers’ schedules, though very busy, were still more flexible to attend in school activities with their children than the fathers’ (Crane, 2012). A study by Marisa Rivera (1997) investigated the effects of Latin@ mothers’ engagement in the life of their children on their academic achievement. The study found that maternal intelligence was the most important predictor of success in school for Latin@ students (Rivera, 1997). Rivera (1997) also found that the microsystem of a students’ homes and its influence on them is a significant predictor for student success. Hoover (1997) found that most literature about family or parent engagement notes that mothers are more closely involved to their children’s education than fathers (Hoover-Dempsey &
Sandler, 1997). It goes on to say that this may be due to our society’s traditional belief in gender roles and patterns of power distribution. This same study explained that mothers often experience that they are expected to be more involved in their children’s daily lives and education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Many times, schools have the perception that families, specifically Latin@ parents that may feel unwelcome, are not engaged in the education of their children because they do not go to school meetings or conferences (Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015). However, these same families may also be the ones that care so much for the well-being and success of their children, that they have to work more than two jobs to provide a better lifestyle than they had growing up. These non-traditional work schedules prohibit traditional school engagement for these families. For many future first-generation college students, educational aspirations come from wanting to break the cycle of generational poverty. These parents, and their parents, are most often from single parent households, may not have completed high school and have lived below the median income level for generations. Often times, these families depend on low-paying jobs and face barriers to a healthy, productive life. Parents and caregivers in these families may not have access to the resources to provide a better life for their children and lack the necessary foundation to set high expectations and long-term goals for themselves and their children. They may not have the know-how to guide their children’s journey to resiliency, character development and success, and may be less likely to become involved in their child's education at their school. Low income Latin@ parents and caregivers draw an immediate connection between education and the ability to improve life circumstances and eliminate poverty (Crane, 2012). In Texas, over 58% of students participate in free or reduced lunch and
attend a Title 1 school. In the United States, over 26 million students received services from Title 1 funds in 2016. (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Epstein (2002) developed an outline for school and family partnership programs with six ways to engage parents. First, help all families establish home environments to support students. Second, design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications. Third, recruit and organize parent help and support. Fourth, provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities. Fifth, include families as participants in school decisions and develop parent leaders and representatives. Finally, collaborate with community: coordinate resources and services from the community for families. Epstein’s plan is very well thought out and may work well with traditional students who are not marginalized, but may not be ideal for working with Latin@ parents that may not feel welcome at school meetings or whose job schedules do not allow them to come in for conferences or events (Flowers, 2015). The study by Toinette Marie Flowers explored the effect of using technology for parent and teacher communication. It found that technology was useful especially among Latin@ families (Flowers, 2015).

Wood and Bauman (2017) found some strategies that have shown to be most effective in increasing positive student outcomes and improving perceptions in school. One strategy is to form social networks to engage families in students’ learning. Another strategy is empowering families with active roles in their children’s schools. A third strategy is to provide learning opportunities and continuing education for parents. The final strategy recommended by the study is to provide opportunities for active participation for families at home (Wood & Bauman, 2017). The report also found studies showing that when families are engaged at home and children feel their parent’s investment and attention, students are less likely to be absent from school and more
likely to have higher grades. Students with engaged families have higher academic achievement and fewer missed days of school (Wood & Bauman, 2017).

Studies reveal a positive link between parental aspirations for their children’s academic outcome even when parents may not be too informed of what it takes to obtain that level of education (Wood & Bauman, 2017). Programs that focus on showing parents all the educational and occupational opportunities for students may have increased student outcomes, since students feel high expectations from their parents. Using several approaches in a program will likely increase family engagement and positively impact student academic performance (Wood & Bauman, 2017). The report also recommends that we not focus too much on hard to reach parents (Wood & Bauman, 2017). This may lead to neglecting those parents and families that are already engaged. They also noted that middle and high schools have less trust and engagement than elementary schools from many parents (Wood & Bauman, 2017). This is another reason why Yes! is a promising practice for schools to engage parents of Latin@ elementary students.

The literature reviewed for this study finds that when given the opportunity, Latin@ parents and families do perceive themselves as being involved in their children’s education (Excelencia, 2015; FitzGerald, 2013; Garcia, 2012; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). However, the definition of engagement is different for schools than it is for Latin@ parents. FitzGerald’s (2013) qualitative study explored the perceptions of Latin@ parents’ educational engagement and found that all Latin@ parents interviewed perceived that they held or shared responsibility with the school for their child’s educational progress and success. Though schools reported perceived low levels of involvement among parents, parents reported being highly involved with their children’s education at home. In their interviews, parents reported much more home-based involvement than school-based involvement (FitzGerald, 2013). All parents said that they talked
to their children about values, goals, expectations and aspirations but only one parent actually planned for postsecondary education for their children. All 15 Latin@ parents said they were “al pendiente” or stayed on top of things at school and described this as being highly important for the academic success of their children. Being “al pendiente” could mean keeping their children safe and knowing where their children are at all times (FitzGerald, 2013).

Another example of different definitions of engagement is pointed out by Benitez (2011). The study found that Latin@ parents are more inclined to get involved in their children’s education at home and do not feel it is necessary to attend school events to be engaged (Benitez, 2011). Benitez (2011) determined that training programs for Latin@ parents encouraged higher levels of participation in their children’s schooling. Andrade (2015) found several ways that Latin@ parents demonstrated their dedication and commitment to their children’s secondary education. All participants in the study expressed the importance of education, but the definition of parental involvement and engagement is different for each person. When asked to define parent involvement, every respondent answered differently. Parents explained that keeping their students motivated was the most important way to be involved and engaged in their child’s education. Parents explained to their children, with their own life experiences, how difficult life can be by performing hard labor (Andrade, 2015). Over half of the parents interviewed mentioned that schools are not doing a good job in communicating with them about their students’ progress. Parents state that teachers do not understand that parents may not always have a flexible schedule to attend activities in school (Andrade, 2015).

The research shows that increasing family engagement may be more a matter of confusion than a real problem. Lawrence (2013) explains how parental involvement has been viewed and defined for decades. However, it may all be a matter of perception and not reality.
Teacher focus groups found that Latin@ parents are timid when engaging in their children’s schools (Lawrence, 2013). Teachers have a perception that parents do not understand what their role is in their children’s education. Some teachers felt that Latin@ parents “clearly just don’t want to be bothered” by their children’s schools (Lawrence, 2013, p. 84). Latin@ parents still face many barriers and challenges that keep them from being traditionally engaged in their children’s education. Teachers and administrators sometimes feel that language and culture are barriers to properly engage Latin@ parents. Teachers and assistants believed that barriers to involvement resulted from parents’ cultural norms (Lawrence, 2013).

Studies show that when parents are engaged in their children’s education and set high expectations for them, students are more motivated to succeed in school (García & Weiss, 2017; Wood & Bauman, 2017). Mobile phones, text messages, and EdTech family and classroom curriculums may be able to redefine parent/family engagement and help create a college going culture in Latin@ homes. We do not yet know how EdTech is interacting with Latin@ families to increase educational engagement. Yes! is using readily available technology to assist families and caregivers to be engaged in their children’s education and help to increase the focus on creating a college going culture. This study listened to the voces (voices) of the parents or caregivers of Yes! participating students while they shared testimonios about their perspectives on how the curriculum of an EdTech non-profit is influencing the creation of a college going culture in their Latin@ home.

**College Going Culture**

This section will discuss in depth the topic of college going culture and the importance of this subject for the current study. A college going culture can be better understood by imagining that everything and everyone around the environment of a student expresses the importance and expectation of obtaining a postsecondary education (McDonough, McClafferty, & Nunez, 2002).
McDonough, et. al. (2002) explained the importance of the presence of the following conditions to encourage a college going culture, (a) school leadership must be committed to building a college going culture, (b) all school personnel provide messaging of their expectation for all students to prepare for college, (c) all counselors are college counselors, and (d) all counselors, teachers, and parents must collaborate in preparing students for college (McDonough, McClafferty, & Nunez, 2002).

Garcia (2012) discusses the importance of fostering college aspirations as early as possible. Elementary school teachers that participated in her study saw the benefit of teaching college knowledge to their students as opposed to waiting until middle school or high school. This study led to the identification of college knowledge objectives which were developmentally appropriate to begin teaching elementary students about college access (Garcia, 2012). A school-wide college going culture builds the expectation of postsecondary education for all students, including minorities and students from low socio-economic status, not just top students who are college bound regardless of what they learn at their elementary school (McDonough, McClafferty, & Nunez, 2002). College going culture at an elementary school campus and the elements that go with that motivate students to do and be their best. The culture encourages academic aspirations in young students and creates higher expectations for all students. Postsecondary education goals become an expectation for every student.

There are several outreach initiatives in the country to try to increase academic achievement among Latin@ students. Creating pre-college outreach programs is very important and can help students of color succeed and create a college going culture (Sólorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). The main focus of these programs is for students to develop academic skills to help them succeed thus helping close the academic achievement gap.
(Sólorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). These state and national programs focus parent outreach initiatives to bridge the gap between Latin@ parents and their children’s schools (Fernandez, 2010). Fernandez (2010) found that parents are more likely to use aspirational capital as a main source of motivation to participate in educational outreach programs. This means that schools can use cultural capital to help increase family engagement in school activities (Fernandez, 2010). The findings are that parents are proud and able to share and develop social and navigational capital among other parents when given an opportunity and a voice that will be heard. Cultural capital is something they are familiar with and helps to encourage them to speak up and learn more about their role in their children’s education (Fernandez, 2010).

Studies show that it is important to understand, develop and sustain parent outreach initiatives that are culturally and linguistically relevant to the parents (Fernandez, 2010). For example, Fernandez (2010) advises of the importance of developing and adapting a curriculum that is relevant to the needs, goals, and contributions of the students and parents whom each school serves. It is extremely important to develop curriculum that is exclusively for the culture that we are serving; and focus on the specific issues affecting Latin@ children (Fernandez, 2010).

Programs such as Families United in Educational Leadership (FUEL), a college access program, encouraged behavior among participating families to prepare for college and increase educational expectations among parents (Hashmi, 2015). These programs made the process of college preparation more manageable because they offered information about college choice and access to financial aid. The majority of the participants in this study, over 75%, were Latin@
parents (Hashmi, 2015). Parents that participated in the study realized the earning potential that comes with having a college education (Hashmi, 2015).

Pre-college outreach programs and other P-20 initiatives are filling the knowledge gap and providing resources to help families create a college going culture. A college going culture requires clear, constant communication with parents and students about what it takes to get to college in order for them to understand what is required and what is expected of them if they want to stay on the college path (Garcia, 2012). School personnel and administrators share their own experiences and discover their own assumptions about their roles in assisting families in preparing students for college. The environment at home and at school must clearly show that college is expected in the future of the students (Garcia, 2012).

College access initiatives including community organizations that wish to experience successes with parental involvement should consider fostering a community among parents so that they may serve as a strong support system for each other (Hashmi, 2015). A strong parent community could help a program ensure that its messages are being well received by their intended participants and could also help parents support each other after they exit the program. For many families who may face language, financial, and cultural barriers, it may be very useful to have a network of parents to support each other and share resources (Hashmi, 2015).

The initiatives included in the literature review for this study shows that college outreach initiatives are increasing access and engagement among families. The initiatives start in middle school and expand in high school. More information is needed to know if and how initiatives are influencing families of future first-generation Latin@ college students. This study focused on how an EdTech non-profit uses curriculum sent via text messages to engage families in the
education of their elementary aged children will help to increase academic aspirations and develop a culture of higher education in the home.

**Technology for Engagement**

Parental and family involvement may have different meaning based on the source and the setting. There have been several theories developed and much research conducted on parental involvement in recent years. With new technologies emerging every day, it is imperative to stay current and use these to our advantage. A study conducted in 2015 by Ashley Beasley found that the most effective ways of informing families about their child’s classrooms and schools were communication tools already on their mobile phones (Beasley, 2015). The purpose of Beasley’s study was to investigate and evaluate what happens when Title 1 administrators implement emerging technologies to facilitate school-home communications. It explored the pros and cons to using technology tools to promote family engagement, determined which characteristics of the tools allowed parents to feel the most informed, measured how many parents attended school events, and evaluated parents’ perceptions to invitations for involvement when administration used technology tools to communicate. The study found that messages that were scheduled by the schools helped families become more engaged. By using technology and tools on caregivers’ mobile phones, school administrators were able to impact families’ perceptions of being involved. Families can be involved with their children’s education even if they do not attend activities in person (Flowers, 2015). This is especially important with families with only one caregiver or whose parents have more than one job to try and make ends meet. Parents interviewed for the study stated they have their cell phones on them at all times and receiving messages directly to their phone to which they can reply when and wherever they have time, makes it very convenient. School administrators must become more familiar with using technology to reach families. Technology provides the best tools to increase family engagement.
By using the internet, smart phones, text messaging and social media, administrators can be connected with families and keep them engaged.

Snell, Hindman, and Wasik (2018) found that texting was a good way to communicate with families, including sharing home learning activities (Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2018). Families also viewed texting as supporting several elements of being engaged with schools and learning about new skills and resources offered by their children’s schools. Families that participated in this study showed higher interest in classroom curriculum and were excited about continuing these lessons at home. This study reminds us that family may not only consist of parents, but also includes non-parental figures and other family members that are the primary caregivers. This study supports the already suggested idea that texting is a good way to increase parental and family engagement with schools. Texting increases the families’ perception of invitations to be involved in their children’s education and can be a good tool for families in different levels of knowledge, skills, languages, and time availability. The current study will help add to current literature to support using technology to increase family engagement in their children’s education.

Sending cultural relevant messages to parents and in their native language is important to engage families in school activities (Lee & Barron, 2015). Lee and Barron also found that culturally matching teachers and students increases engagement among Latin@ families. Community resources on media channels must be used as these remain an important tool for Spanish only families (Lee & Barron, 2015). It is important to find ways to compile relevant educational media for children and families who only speak Spanish. By creating partnerships with K-12 school districts, colleges, universities and national television networks, it will be
easier to reach those Latin@ families that are using TV as their main source of information (Lee & Barron, 2015).

Parents described television media as being a good learning tool for their children and for themselves (Levinson & Barron, 2018). Spanish speaking parents believed that media contributed to their children learning English faster. Families that used technology were also highly informed and influenced by their network of friends and families. There is an opportunity for more digital resources designed for Latin@ families (Levinson & Barron, 2018). Future research should aim to better understand what and how learning takes place in Latin@ households and what programs are being viewed on demand for what purpose. By knowing what programs are being downloaded and identifying who is downloading or viewing such programming it can help better understand educational trends among Latin@ households (Levinson & Barron, 2018). Parents use all the technology tools they have access to in order to support learning and to access information (Levinson & Barron, 2018).

The literature shows that using technology to reach families is proving to be effective. Olmstead (2013) determined that parent communication could be improved if teachers used technology to reach the families. Olmstead’s study found five major themes from using technology to engage families. The themes were more proactive involvement by the families, students were more motivated, barriers for involvement were identified, purpose of communication was clear, and time and scheduling were non-issues (Olmstead, 2013). Data reveals that both teachers and families perceive technology as an effective tool to promote family engagement. Latino parents that participated in the study felt more included because this communication was culturally relevant (Olmstead, 2013). Text messaging, instant messaging, and social networks such as Twitter and Facebook are technology tools that can be used to keep
parents informed about their child’s education. Exploring technologies and applications such as Remind 101, Class Dojo, Google Voice may be necessary to find the best tool for increasing family engagement (Olmstead, 2013).

Flowers (2015) found that it is important to understand how mobile devices can improve parent teacher communication. The study found that parental use of mobile devices to communicate with teachers can be enhanced by administrators and school personnel by considering the family’s culture and ethnic background and tailor the messaging and communication being sent out (Flowers, 2015). The use of mobile devices as a communication tool between parents and teachers showed increase in parental involvement (Flowers, 2015). The findings suggest that family use of mobile devices to communicate with their school can be improved by considering parents' and the school culture in their messaging. Social implication included sharing the results with district and school administrators who have the authority to implement programs that encourage and support the use of mobile devices as a communication tool between the school and students’ families, therefore increasing family involvement and ultimately student academic success (Flowers, 2015).

A recent article by Ray (2013) explores “millennial parents” and how they use technology to engage in their children’s education. The article explains that schools now understand that millennial parents would prefer emails, texts, and tweets for communication and messages instead of printed papers or hard copies (Ray, 2013). Schools should become familiar with and use social media influencer parents by inviting them to volunteer in leadership roles and parent teacher organizations to engage other parents (Ray, 2013). The study recommends to always include affirmations and positive comments about children and especially parents and other family members, in communication and social media posts. The study also finds that
schools must be purposefully inclusive and deliberate in inviting and welcoming all families; especially single parent families, grandparents, same sex parents, and racially mixed families (Ray, 2013).

Despite decades of research showing the importance of parent engagement only some schools are using innovative technology strategies to achieve this (Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011). Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, and De Pedro advise that it is important to offer wholesome services, incentives, and even as far as contracts to motivate parents and families to get and stay engaged. Schools and community organizations should use technology to advertise parent and family opportunities and school events (Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011). The study cautions on recognizing that there is a difference in the definition of parent involvement and engagement. It is very important to get parents involved but even more important to keep them engaged in their children’s education (Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011). They also state the importance of schools being very informed and educated about their student’s families demographics and be fully aware of their culture and livelihood (Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011).

All of these studies show a movement and increase in keeping up with how the world is learning is progressing with technology (Beasley, 2015; Flowers, 2015; Lee & Barron, 2015; Levinson & Barron, 2018; Olmstead, 2013; Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011; Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2018). By using what most families have readily available in their hands, more people can be reached faster and on their own time. Especially in the early elementary years, younger millennial parents that are being studied use technology for almost everything they do, according to the studies covered above. Technology and mobile phones are now in almost every household of the families being targeted by this study. However, we do not
always know how parents engage and utilize this technology to create a college going culture in their homes. Creating a college going culture is important to enhancing attainment and achieving equity for the Latin@ population.

There exists a need for further research on a larger scale on how EdTech can increase family school engagement. Future research must examine whether EdTech curriculum, learning activities or suggestions for families to continue learning at home actually improve learning behaviors and child learning outcomes. The goal of Yes! is to create a college going culture with a 15 minute a day curriculum in the classroom and a curriculum sent via text messages to the parents or caregivers.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study used the ecology of resources framework along with community cultural wealth to listen to the *voces* (voices) of the parents or caregivers of Yes! participating students while they share *testimonios* about how they engage with and use the family curriculum to create a college going culture in their homes. Maxwell (2005) explains that the conceptual frameworks of studies are a key part of the design. The conceptual framework is a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that support and inform each study (Maxwell, 2005). Choosing the correct theory requires one to examine the research topic and look at the existing literature on the topic and the theories that have been used in those studies.

In every asset that is used to reach the students, schools, and families, Latin@ values are very present and used strategically by Yes! These assets include the classroom curriculum, the software application that is installed on teachers’ tablet or computer, the games, the puzzles, and the family curriculum text messaging. Family messages are sent in English and in Spanish. Characters and stories are Latin@ based and are always culturally relevant. The majority of the students and families that participate in Yes! do not have college experience. Studies show that
students who come from Latin@ backgrounds could use their cultural wealth and experiences to raise themselves out of situations that may otherwise be perceived as barriers (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014).

**The Learner Centric Ecology of Resources Framework**

The Learner Centric Ecology of Resources is a framework that can be used to evaluate, understand and design educational technology (Luckin, 2008). Luckin (2008) describes there are three important aspects to the Ecology of Resources framework: KNOWLEDGE, ENVIRONMENT, AND RESOURCES (Luckin, 2008). In this way, it offers a structured process through which educators and technologists can develop educational technology platforms or software systems to provide technology rich learning activities that take into account a wider context of the learner. This process is repeated in a cycle during the entire learning process (Luckin, Clark, & Underwood, 2013).

The learner centric Ecology of Resources Model was developed from the inspiration of sociocultural philosophy of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (1978). The zone of proximal development refers to the difference or distance between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner. The term “proximal” refers to those skills that the learner is “close” to mastering. (McLeod, 2019, para. 2). This philosophy identifies the relationship between the context of the learner and the learning that happens during their interaction within that context (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). Vygotsky placed an emphasis on the important interaction that occurs between the learner and their environment. The students’ intellectual development or how they learn, is the result of the internalization of these interactions with the environment, including the people and resources. This internalization process is referred to as the “decontextualization of mediational means” (Luckin, 2015, p. 5).
The available resources should promote and support various ways to facilitate learning for the students. When using this framework, the technology builds upon knowledge that the student already has and uses in their life.

Figure 1 below was adapted from Luckin’s (2008) Learner Centric Ecology of Resources.

Figure 1. Learner Centric Ecology of Resources. Adapted from “The learner centric ecology of resources: A framework for using technology to scaffold learning,” by R. Luckin, 2008, Science Direct, 449-462.

Luckin (2008) recommends that the Ecology of Resources model be used to scaffold learning so that there are a wide range of resources available to the learner within their
environment. Scaffolding is a term used within this design of educational technology.

Scaffolding helps connect learners with resources available to them. It requires the assistance from teachers or more knowledgeable other (MKO) to provide challenging activities based on the learner’s abilities along with the right amount and quality of help (Luckin, 2008; McLeod, 2019). In order for scaffolding to work, and for the learner to learn, the teachers or technology designers, need to know a few things when creating or implementing the program. They need to know their current level of understanding of the subject at hand. The Yes! program uses a different curriculum and time allowed, based on the learner’s grade. The curriculum team at Yes! writes the curriculum based on the standards set by state policy and regulation as well as assessment guidelines. By using the learner centric ecology of resources framework and community cultural wealth, Yes! families are using the resources and cultural capital readily available to them to create college going culture.

The EoR model of context provides a model and design framework based upon a learner-centered definition of context. Context is dynamic, and it is associated with connections between people, things, locations and events which all construct a story that is driven by intentionality and motivation by each learner (Luckin, 2015). The definition of context is blended with what Vygotsky (1978) called Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). For the student participating in the Yes! curriculum, ZPD is the distance or difference from what the student knows now to what they have the ability to learn with the assistance of the teachers and the families. ZPD is conceptualized as a context for productive interactivity during the learning process. ZPD emphasizes the important role of the society the learner interacts with, especially with more knowledgeable others (MKO) members of this society: teachers, parents, and trainers (Luckin, 2015). Other theorists created terms to simplify Vygotsky’s ZPD concept, according to Luckin
For example, Luckin (2008) created a reinterpretation of ZPD but uses the Zone of Available Assistance (ZAA) and the Zone of Proximal Adjustment (ZPA). The term ZAA describes the different resources that are within the reach of a learner which may provide different qualities and quantities of assistance at a particular time. The Yes! curriculum along with the families and teachers are part of the ZAA for the students. The term ZPA describes a subset of the ZAA that may be deemed appropriate for an individual learner’s needs, or adjustments to certain tools depending or curriculum.

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model was also guided by the work of Vygotsky. His ecological systems theory studies human development over time. This model suggests that the interactions between the learner and their environment, categorized into several systems, shape their development over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner was the creator of the Head Start system in the United States. Similar to the goal of Yes!, Bronfenbrenner urged lawmakers to assist families in poverty, especially during children’s early years. The ecological systems theory looks at the student’s relationships within their surroundings. The theory is also commonly referred to as the ecological systems framework. It identifies five environmental systems which provide resources to the learner (Luckin, 2015).

By using all of the available resources to them, learners are better supported in their learning needs. In this study, parents and families are using an existing resource, their mobile phone, to receive messages from Yes! to be engaged in their child’s education. This supports integrated learning across home and school for the children. As discussed earlier, scaffolding is used to inform the idea of the design of the program. The purpose is to scaffold learning across multiple environments and technologies that were available to the student. The main goal is to strengthen the links between the child’s home and their school by providing a focus around
which children and parents could explore together, at their own time, in the comfort of their own homes. The parents and their children look at things that the children recently learned in class and discuss in depth, what the learning objective was, in order to provide both, the child and the parents, a greater insight of their current learning (Luckin, 2015). Being involved in the child’s learning engages the families which in turn, motivates the child to keep learning. This is the model that Yes! uses in their daily in class curriculum, along with the family curriculum text messages that go out to parents on their cell phone two to three times per week.

**Community Cultural Wealth**

The community cultural wealth model has six types of capital that administrators may use to frame their interactions with students and develop programs to engage the families (Yosso, 2005). Each form of capital is briefly described in this section. Aspirational capital is defined as the “hopes and dreams” students have (Yosso, 2006, p. 41). Despite noted education inequities, African American and Latin@ students and their families continue to have high educational aspirations (Yosso, 2005). Linguistic capital refers to the various language and communication skills students bring with them to their school or college (Yosso, 2006). Familial capital refers to the social and personal human resources students attain from their home environment including extended family and other networks. Social capital is a form of capital defined as students’ “peers and other social contacts” and emphasizes how students many times use these contacts to gain access to college and other social institutions (Yosso, 2006, p. 45). Navigational capital refers to the skills and abilities that students have to navigate social institutions, including educational spaces (Yosso, 2006). Resistant capital was born from the experiences of communities of color in trying to secure equality and freedom (Yosso, 2005).

By listening to the *voces* and *testimonios* of parents or caregivers, we are able to better understand how to help more Latin@ families become a motivating factor for their children with
the use of technology and other resources in their environment and by leveraging the six types of
capital of community cultural wealth. This will increase academic preparation, college access,
course completion and graduation rates to create a college going culture and close the
educational achievement gap. Latinos are the largest minority population and one of the fastest-
growing ethnic groups in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). By using deficit-based
instruction, the U.S. education system is only further decreasing the advancement of Latinos in
education (Excelencia, 2015). This is why it is imperative that we no longer use a negative lens
but instead start looking at the positives, the assets and the wealth of community cultural capital
that Latin@’s already have.

Yosso’s (2005) model suggests that all forms of capital can be used to empower students.
It was designed in a way to use the experiences, strengths, and talents that students and families
of color bring with them to their learning environment. The community cultural wealth model
represents a framework to understand how students of color access and experience school from a
strengths-based perspective.

Yes! uses community cultural wealth in their apps, curriculums, games, puzzles, videos,
songs, and text messages in order to facilitate the acceptance by the students and families.
Though not all participating students are Latin@’s, it is important to note that when a program or
initiative works for a minority, the entire student population and school district will benefit from
this experience (Excelencia, 2015). Families and teachers that participate in Yes!, even some that
are not Latin@, have repeatedly told us that the characters and language used including
Spanglish and other dialects that they identify with, are very appealing to them. Yosso’s (2006)
community cultural wealth six forms of capital which include navigational, aspirational,
linguistic, resistant, social, and familial capitals are widely used in the program.
These six forms of capital, as shown in Figure 2 below, have shown to be useful to educators committed to increasing the number of students who remain in the P-20 academic pipeline (UTSA, 2018).

Figure 2. Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2006).

Most of the statistics about the condition of Latin@s in education in recent years, deficit-based language is the most commonly used in academic and other official publications. In fact, to explain unequal conditions and discriminatory practices most social science research uses
deficit models (Yosso, 2005). The negativity of how these statistics are explained are passed on to our school systems and administrators continue the use of cultural deficit models when working with Latin@ students (Yosso, 2005). By using community cultural wealth and asset-based views, we can help to instill a success mindset in young Latin@ children. By using strengths and skills developed through lived experiences, cultural traditions, and life challenges of Latin@ students, the U.S. education system can implement student success models and leveraging strategies to increase Latin@ academic success (Rendón, 1993). Rendón reminds us that we should not blame the educational achievement gap on cultural deficit theories. Rather, we should better equip our schools, our teachers and administrators, and our education system and culture to welcome and further develop the assets that Latin@s offer our country by using the tools that these families are already using at home; their values and their cell phones.

**Creating the Conceptual Framework**

It was important to create a model of the resources that are available to the Yes! participating students that can possibly assist the learning process for participating students. This included brainstorming all of the potential resources that they can use. It takes into consideration the focus of attention of the student and puts the elements of each resource into different categories. The resources could be people (teachers and families), technology (mobile phones and the internet), and experiences, which in the case of Yes!, includes the six forms capitals of community cultural wealth as leverage for Latin@ families.

The Learner Centric Ecology of Resources framework and Community Cultural Wealth were used as a guide for this study. Figure 3 below combines the important aspects of both of these frameworks to show how these are used by Yes! The red oval is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This framework was created by Vygotsky (1978). KNOWLEDGE: Yes! provides the knowledge in the form of the 15 minute per day curriculum. The family curriculum
continues the learning at home with the text messages they receive. ENVIRONMENT: The organization or environment is the participating school which sets high expectations and instills a hard work ethic along with the family at home that motivates and supports the students. RESOURCES: The resources are human and technology; the family, parent or caregiver, the teacher, the Yes! app, and the mobile phones and text messages.

Figure 3. Yes! Learner Centric Ecology of Resources and Community Cultural Wealth (Luckin, 2008; Yosso 2006).

The available resources should promote and support various ways to facilitate learning for the students. When using this framework, the technology builds upon knowledge that the
student already has and uses in their life. For the case of this study, the mobile phone is a resource that the parents or family already have and now it is being used to receive messages to create a college going culture at home. The messages use the six forms of capital of the community cultural wealth framework to facilitate the guidance from the parents to the student.

Figure 3, combined EoR with CCW. KNOWLEDGE: Yes! provides the knowledge in the form of the 15 minute per day curriculum. The family curriculum continues the learning at home with the text messages they receive. ENVIRONMENT: The organization or environment is the participating school which sets high expectations and instills a hard work ethic along with the family at home that motivates and supports the students. RESOURCES: The resources are human and technology; the family, parent or caregiver, the teacher, the Yes! app, and the mobile phones and text messages.

This framework takes into consideration the extent to which these relationships meet each student’s needs and how these may be adjusted as needed based on the abilities and needs of each student. A final aspect of EoR was making adjustments to the available resources and scaffolding these in order to make the most of the resources according to the individual needs and abilities of the learner.

However, in Figure 3, the Yes! App is not included within the ZPD, since this is technology, and the ZPD framework was revamped by Luckin to add technology and renamed it as the Learner Centric Ecology of Resources framework. The Yes! App is shown in green and is within the direct ecology of the learner and the ZPA. The blue outlying circle represents the Zone of Available Assistance (ZAA) from the EoR framework. This describes all of the different resources that are within the reach of a Yes! student which may provide different qualities and quantities of assistance at a particular time. The green circle represents the Zone of Proximal
Adjustment (ZPA). In the case of Yes! app, curriculum, parents and teacher, these are all contained inside the ZPA, but would be adjusted to more or less time on the app or content of the curriculum based on the individual needs of each child.

The research topic and the existing literature about the topics were the deciding factors when choosing the frameworks that guided the study. Yosso’s community cultural wealth and the six forms of capital can be used by students and families to use the talents, strengths and experiences that students of color bring with them (Yosso, 2005). The Ecology of Resources model helps to identify all of the elements of help available to a student (Luckin, 2008). It can be used as a guide to create educational technology and designed from roots in the work of Vygotsky (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978; Yosso, 2005).

**Conclusion**

The above literature review covered the different topics and the EoR and CCW framework which are important for this study. The topics included are Latin@ students in education, family engagement, college going culture, and the use of technology for family engagement which are all important for this dissertation. It is important to know that literature exists for these individual topics but there is a gap in the literature looking at all these topics collectively. This study will help to fill the gap in literature and explore these topics together, specifically the use of technology to create a college going culture among Latin@ homes, starting in elementary school. The purpose of this study is to learn how parents or guardians of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district that participated in the Yes! program, used technology, a resource available to them, to help create a college going culture at home.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology for this study. It will explain Yes! in detail including the program information, family curriculum and context. The methods for data
collection, as well as sampling and recruitment of volunteers will also be covered. Data coding and analysis will also be explained in chapter 3. Trustworthiness and the researcher’s positionality are also part of this chapter.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain the methodology used for this study. This qualitative research study was guided by a narrative approach and listened to the testimonios of parents and caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students in elementary school of how they engage with the Yes! curriculum and how they utilize this curriculum to create a college going culture in their homes. It will further explain Yes!, the program information, family curriculum and context. The methods for data collection, as well as sampling and recruitment of the 5 participating mothers will also be explained below. The data coding and analysis methods will also be explained. Trustworthiness and the researcher’s positionality are also covered in this chapter.

Qualitative Approach

Choosing the design for this study was influenced by several things. A major influence was my personal background, education, and life experiences. My parents did not have the opportunity to go to college yet always encouraged and motivated me to obtain a postsecondary education even while being migrant farmworkers. This instilled in me the importance of engaging families and gives me the experience and knowledge I need as Director of Family Engagement at Yes! A sure way to show the true experience of students like me is to use qualitative research in order to be more educated about educating us. Qualitative research is the one way to be able to show the true colors of the feelings endured from a specific event or experience. Stories and experiences are better told when rich and thick descriptions can be provided (Creswell, 2009). The experiences that a person has had, has a big impact on the way they view any phenomenon or experience thereafter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Yosso, 2005). An important benefit of using a qualitative research methodology is the researcher’s willingness to
be transparent about any biases towards the research in addition to seeking a deep understanding of the true lived experiences of a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is the way to explain all of these feelings and meanings given to how a person perceives an experience.

This study used a qualitative narrative research design to explore the testimonios of parents of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade who participated in the Yes! program, used technology, a resource available to them, to help create a college going culture at home. It is appropriate to use qualitative research when an issue needs to be explored or a problem needs to be solved (Creswell, 2013). I was mindful and tried to minimize any biases throughout the data collecting, analyzing, and interpreting process by separating myself from the participants’ testimonios of their experiences. I did not try to put myself in their shoes, but rather I made sure to only collect their feelings and experience throughout the data collection and member checking processes.

Qualitative research is appropriate when an issue or problem must be explored (Creswell, 2013). Yes! has been in existence for three school years; the current one and the two previous years which were pilot versions of the full program. There is a need to study the participating parents or caregivers of the program. It is important to identify the variables that cannot be easily measured (Creswell, 2013). Human beings are complex. Qualitative research is the best approach to study them and gain a detailed understanding of their experience. This detailed understanding can be acquired by interviewing parents and listening to their voces and testimonios and allowing them to tell their stories and share their own point of view.

**Narrative Research and Testimonio**

According to Creswell (2009) narrative research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of the individuals and asks them to provide stories about their lives
and their experiences. Narrative research focuses on plot, setting, activities, climax, and resolution (Creswell, 2009). As Esterberg (2002) suggests, narrative analysis provides techniques for looking at stories as a whole.

According to Esterberg (2002) narrative has been a methodology that has been used in a variety of fields including literary criticism, folklore, nursing, law and business. The intention was to interview families, yet the first five people to contact me and qualify were mothers. Five mothers were interviewed and invited to tell their stories and then answer any follow up questions if more information was needed. By separating the stories into structures, the analyzing of all the parents’ stories it was easier to compare and interpret (Esterberg, 2002).

Testimonio has been used in qualitative research as both a methodology and as narrative development (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). Testimonio has been transformed from its roots in Latin by academic “Chicanas and Latinas” in the United States in recent years. This methodology is used to focus on experiential reflection by participants when conducting educational research (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012).

The mothers’ testimonios – testimonies, were left as spoken by them. The responses were transcribed and left intact, without tarnishing their intended meaning. The grammar might seem incorrect and perhaps inadequate to be included in graduate level research material because it is the direct phrase of the person sharing their experience.

Testimonio as a methodology for qualitative research is a newer methodology. The roots of testimonio as a research methodology can be traced back to the storytelling of the atrocities committed against Latin American indigenous peoples (Beverley, 2013). First, researchers are learning that there is not just one way to conduct research and second, researchers are changing as fast as the world is changing (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Researchers may trust that the
older more widely used methodologies used to work decades ago. Now, they may feel that research methodologies need to be up to date and more current to conduct research on more current issues giving a voice to those that may be oppressed (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012).

Using testimonios as the methodology helped me to carefully analyze different aspects of the mothers’ experience with the Yes! curriculum. This methodology allowed me to carefully examine how being Latin@ may have affected their lived experience while at the same time empowering the families. It also showed me what structures or barriers, if any, are in place that may have affected, positively or negatively, the families’ journey towards creating a college going culture. A central premise of testimonio is that the culture of the speaker is directly related and even the cause of many of the person’s experiences in life. Every word that was spoken by the mothers is “to some degree, imbued with culturally and socially located meanings and refer back to social contexts as well as to the lived experiences of individuals”. Using a narrative approach gave me the opportunity to gain insights into the range of multiple, intersecting forces that order and illuminate relations between self and society (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Me and the parent or caregiver of Yes! students, were both aware of the final goal and purpose of the study, therefore were striving to articulate and better understand the practices in finding the necessary information in the context of studying success among Latin@ students and creating a college going culture (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012).

By allowing the mothers to share their testimonio I helped them relive their experience and learn more about and how this journey has helped them create a college going culture at home. Testimonio can also be a way of constructionism. Crotty defines constructionism as how a person makes meaning of an experience (Crotty, 1998). The parents were able to construct the meaning of receiving the family curriculum through these text messages and express in their own
words how they play a part in creating a college going culture at home. According to Crotty, “constructionism is not subjectivism. It is curiosity, not conceit.” Crotty also thinks that constructionism is the making of meaning.

What constructionism claims is that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Before there were consciousnesses on earth capable of interpreting the world, the world held no meaning at all (Crotty, 1998, p. 43).

Testimonio was used as the methodology in order to make meaning of their lived experiences (Beverley, 1993). By listening to the voces and testimonios of parents, we are able to better understand how parents of future first-generation Latin@ college students used technology to help create a college going culture. This increases academic preparation, college access, course completion and graduation rates to close the educational achievement gap assisting with the national P-20 initiative.

Testimonios has also been used as a tool by researchers to benefit the participants. Testimonios have served as calls for action and also as a healing process when discussing an experience of oppression, discrimination, and torture (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). Testimonio empowers the oppressed to transform an experience of oppression and ignorance to an acknowledgement of their contribution to change (Freire, 2000). A goal of using testimonio when conducting research for equity and social justice is speak up against genocide, classism, xenophobia, racism and all other types of discrimination (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012).

In San Antonio and the rest of the country, Latin@s are facing many types of mistreatment and aggressions solely because of their race or country of origin. In a Pew Research report (2018) Latino@ reportedly say the situation for U.S. Hispanics has worsened under the administration of President Donald Trump (Pew Research Center, 2018). Four out of ten
Latin@s that participated in the study, said they have experienced discrimination in the past year, including being told to be told back to their country and to speak English only (Pew Research Center, 2018). *Testimonios* serve as a way to release the bad feelings and sentiments of oppression while sharing their stories in order to make changes to improve the climate for all minority groups. In spite of facing mistreatment, Latin@s still reported being proud of being Latin@. This may be possible because of the forms of capital of community cultural wealth. Resistant capital and linguistic capital are forms of capital that may increase self-esteem and self-pride.

*Testimonios* also helped to illuminate the stories and experiences of the mothers. This helped them to reflect on their experience with the Yes! curriculum and understand the importance of their experience and their engagement in their children’s education. It is hoped that the mothers that volunteered to share their *testimonios* understand the importance of their input, their involvement and their engagement with their children’s education by continuing to leverage their cultural capital, their *ventajas* and their *conocimientos* (assets and knowledge) to create a college going culture.

**Yes! Our Kids Can Program Curriculum Information and Context**

The mission of Yes! is to disrupt the cycle of generational poverty by creating a Success Mindset™ and an I can attitude in low income families that encourages high educational expectations and career readiness. Yes! was founded in San Antonio and currently works with five school districts in Bexar County and one school district in the Rio Grande Valley. Yes! partners with Title 1 elementary schools with a high percentage of low-income and Latin@ students. Yes! developed a software program that is downloadable from the app store and also accessible via the internet that teachers use in the classroom.
Yes! uses the six forms of capital which are outlined in community cultural wealth to fulfill the mission. Navigational, aspirational, linguistic, resistant, social, and familial capitals are widely used in the program. These are all seen in the games, puzzles, songs and videos of the app as well as in the text messages that are sent to families. All of these are culturally relevant in order to develop connections and engage the students and families we serve. These connections can provide support, both instrumental and emotional to help the students and their families navigate different establishments in their communities. Aspirational capital is the strength to continue to have hope for a successful future despite the many barriers that Latin@s face.

Navigational capital is the ability to navigate establishments and systems that were created for whites in the United States. Social capital is being able to count on the support of other Latin@s as a community and social network. Linguistic capital is the ability to use language and social skills obtained by being born and raised in a bilingual and bicultural community. Familial capital is the cultural knowledge and sense of community developed not only with immediate family but also with other members of the Latin@ community (Yosso, 2005).

By using the qualities and assets of the Latin@ culture we may be able to increase the educational achievement gap among Latin@s (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006). Yes! is using the capital in the Latin@ culture to their advantage or ventaja. Latin@s already have access to these six forms of capital and Yes! is only facilitating their use. It is still important to note that many barriers exist for Latin@ families and thus are trying harder to succeed than families who do not have to face these barriers. Researchers have spent decades trying to solve the Latin@ educational achievement gap and the equity gap but have not been very successful. Some of these barriers are work schedules, transportation issues, language difference and childcare needs (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006). It is time to stop researching the
barriers and to start producing literature that uncovers solutions and promising practices to increase success among Latin@s in education.

In 2001, while a fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University in Cambridge, Lionel Sosa, Yes! founder, was asked to lead a one semester study to uncover the answer to this question: “Why are some Latinos who come from very poor families succeeding at Harvard while many of their siblings, friends and relatives are on welfare or in jail?”

Eighteen first-generation Latin@ Harvard students from poor families were interviewed. By semester’s end they had the answer. In every case, someone had intervened in the child’s life and planted a foreign thought, and thus, a new expectation: “You are going to college.” All the students credited either a teacher or a parent with setting that expectation – one that became real in their minds and real in their life. This became the inspiration for Lionel Sosa to found Yes! to help more students be the first in their family to earn college degrees and break the cycle of generational poverty.

The Yes! in classroom student curriculum helps teachers reach students in a fun and engaging way by delivering motivational songs, videos and games on classroom tablets or computers. The Yes! classroom app encourages every child, no matter their circumstances, to prepare for a better life and a fulfilling career, whether they choose college or a technical degree or credential. Today, well-paying careers require education beyond high school, including most trades (Yes! Our Kids Can, 2018). The curriculum focuses on literacy, social and emotional learning (SEL), social studies, math, College & Career, and Technology, and is aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
Yes! has a team of certified teachers with a background in educational technology. They write the classroom curriculum and align it to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4. Yes! Classroom Curriculum TEKS Alignment From “Teacher Curriculum,” by Yes! Our Kids Can, Copyright [2019] by Yes! Our Kids Can. Reprinted with permission.
There is a 15-minute curriculum that is tied to the app that teachers use in their classroom to create a college going culture (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5. Sample Yes! Classroom Curriculum From “Teacher Curriculum,” by Yes! Our Kids Can, Copyright [2019] by Yes! Our Kids Can. Reprinted with permission.
Yes! also has a family engagement curriculum in the program. Messages are sent out to the families of the participating students two to three times a week in order to communicate with them what is being taught in the classroom (see Figure 6 below).

Yes! delivers engaging messages of encouragement and guidance to teachers, students and parents that are bilingual and culturally relevant. This is an example of Yes! using linguistic capital. Students are reached on computers and tablets in public schools for 15 minutes each day and parents are reached 3 times a week on their smartphones. This is an example of Yes! using navigational capital. The analytics system tracks usage in real-time reporting family engagement, as well as student and teacher activity.

The Yes! family curriculum consists of three types of messages sent to families via their smartphone as text messages.

- **Lesson Preview/Affirmational/Motivational/Attendance**: These messages are normally sent out in the beginning of the week to motivate and inform families about topics that will be learned in class. It creates opportunities for dialogue between the parents and student with Success Mindset™ language as well as thanking families and students for regular school attendance. This type of messaging helps families be more knowledgeable of their child’s education as well as continue the lesson from school to the home. It gives facts and tips on encouraging their child to WANT to go to school and lets families know that their efforts are appreciated and crucial for the success of their child. The messages are examples of social and familial capital. They help family feel knowledgeable and have hope and use their aspirational capital.

- **Chat Topics/Super Skill Review/Vocabulary Review**: These messages are sent midweek to help families have more academic based conversations with their child. Families are able to reinforce the Super Skills the child is learning in class as well as review the Yes! vocabulary. This type of messaging is another chance to initiate meaningful conversation
about school and helps the parents teach the curriculum to bring the learning from school to the home. This is another way that Yes! uses familial capital.

- Fun Friday: These messages are sent on Fridays as an opportunity for families to see and hear the learning songs and videos their child listens to and sees in class. This type of messaging persuades families of the possibility of a successful future for their child by modeling a Success Mindset™. They are a fun and easy and bite-sized way to have quality time with their child. The videos and songs are available in English and Spanish, with both using short phrases in Spanish. This is a form of linguistic and social capital. The career videos contain professionals from diverse backgrounds which makes the families and students feel that they are able to achieve their education and career aspirations.

The purpose of the messages is also to assist families in starting conversations about planning for the child’s future to include career and college as options beyond high school. The majority of the students that are participating in Yes! are Latin@ children and will be the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary education. When exposed to these precisely crafted messages, it is the intention that students and families become motivated to learn. Motivated students are more likely to have better attitudes, higher attendance, and an ability to read at grade level. They get higher grades, test better, stay in school longer, graduate high school and become college and career-ready (Flowers, 2015).

In San Antonio, 63% of the population is Latin@. It is ranked the 7th largest city in the U.S. and it continues to grow (Census Briefs, 2017). Bexar County has a total land area of 1,247 square miles. The annual median household income in San Antonio is under $50,000. In Texas, over 58% of students participate in the free or reduced lunch program, meaning they come from
low to moderate income households (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Only 21% of the people in San Antonio have an undergraduate degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In the U.S., over 55,906 public schools use Title 1 funds to assist low to moderate income students meet state standards in the core academic subjects. The focus of Yes! is Title 1 schools.

San Antonio has several different programs that connect families with resources and information about educational pathways. A few of the most important initiatives are PreK4SA, CaféCollege by San Antonio Education Partnerships, City Education Partners and AlamoPromise. There are 15 colleges and universities in the San Antonio area and over 160,000 students that are continuing to strengthen the workforce (Census Briefs, 2017). In the recommendations section of chapter 6 of this study, I talk more about my recommendations for all of these initiatives to use collaborative impact in order to maximize efforts.

**San Antonio Area School District**

This study drew upon the experiences of Yes! mothers from one of the seventeen public school districts in San Antonio. These 17 school districts serve approximately 340,238 students (Go Public, 2019). Public school districts in San Antonio are rich in diversity. There are a few reasons for the decision on gathering the testimonios of parents or guardians of students at an elementary school from a San Antonio area school district. First, since there was no compensation to the participants, logistics and the geographic location of the district and close proximity to the Yes! headquarters made this district the most accessible. Second, the long-term partnership between the administration and the organization is another good reason for choosing one of these school districts in the case that the data collection would have been on campus. Lastly, the demographics of these districts with high percentage of Latin@s and their location with an urban setting was another reason for deciding on one of these school districts.
Participant Selection

Once the IRB exemption letter was received (see APPENDIX A) recruitment began. I recruited adults that identified as the parent or caregiver of a participating Latin@ student of the Yes! program at a San Antonio area school district, do not have a bachelor’s degree and are signed up to receive the curriculum via text messages from the Family Engagement team of Yes! The family curriculum text messages were sent to the primary phone number that was listed for each student by the parents or guardians in district records. All of the respondents were mothers. In the recommendations section of Chapter 6 of this study, I talk about recommendations for future research to include information on fathers, if present, and if and how they engage in their children’s education.

To gather volunteers to participate in this research I shared a post on the Yes! Facebook page (See APPENDIX B). The post was in English and Spanish. Access to the large and diverse samples available on Facebook helped to quickly gather the participants needed for this study, thus this was the only method required for recruiting participants. Most of the participating families follow the Yes! Facebook page. The parents or caregivers received the information about the purpose of the research and were advised of their rights as a participant. The Facebook post for participant recruitment was posted twice within three weeks. During this time, seven mothers volunteered, but two already had a college degree so were ineligible to participate. Once five volunteers that met all the requirements responded and agreed to participate, the post was hidden from Facebook. The post was only hidden, but not completely deleted yet, in case data saturation would not have been met. Looking at other guidance from qualitative researchers, I decided to recruit at least 5 parents or caregivers and then stop or continue depending on data saturation (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).
Mother Profile

This study explored the testimonios of five mothers of 1st grade Latin@ students participating in the Yes! program and were receiving the Yes! family curriculum via text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture in their homes. The only respondents to the Facebook posts were mothers. These mothers had added only their phone number to the school’s family contact information. There were a couple of respondents who did not qualify because they did have a bachelor’s degree. All mothers that shared their testimonios were between the ages of 28 and 37 years old. Four of them were married and one was single. Four of them were Mexican American, meaning that their parents or grandparents were born in Mexico, but they were born in the United States. One of the mothers was an immigrant from Mexico.

The qualification criteria used when recruiting participants were that they:

- Are the parent or caregiver of a participating student of the Yes! Our Kids Can curriculum in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district
- Do not have a bachelor’s degree
- Identify as the parent of a Latin@ child
- Are signed up to receive the curriculum via text messages from the Family Engagement team of Yes! Our Kids Can

The mother profile table (Table 1) below was created to give a broader understanding of the demographics and experiences of the mothers that participated in the study and shared their testimonio.
Table 1. Mother Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>28 - 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>4 married\n 1 single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Origin</td>
<td>4 Mexican American\n 1 Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>3 graduated\n 1 GED\n 1 did not graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Experience/Credential</td>
<td>3 have no college experience\n 2 have Certified Nursing Assistant/CNA certifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>3 have four children\n 2 have three children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Educational Experience</td>
<td>4 completed middle school\n 1 completed high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Educational Experience</td>
<td>2 completed middle school\n 2 completed elementary school\n 1 attended some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>1 English only\n 3 Bilingual/90% English\n 1 Bilingual/90% Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>5 Low to Moderate Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant to the United States</td>
<td>4 U.S. born\n 1 Immigrant from Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to qualify they must not have had a bachelor’s degree. None of the mothers had a bachelor’s degree, however two of them have postsecondary education experience since they have a CNA (certified nurse assistant) certificate. All five of the mothers stated that their parents do not have a college degree. Only one of the mothers spoke English only, the other four are bilingual and speak English and Spanish at home. All five of the mothers stated their households were at a low to moderate income level. All the mothers appreciate being part of Yes! and are hopeful for their family’s future.
Data Collection

This study listened to the voces and testimonios of 5 parents or caregivers of future first-generation college students that are currently participating in the Yes! program at their elementary school. All of the respondents were mothers. Once the IRB exemption letter was received recruitment began, as explained above, participants were selected, and three semi-structured interviews were used to listen to their voces and testimonios. Rev.com was used to transcribe the interviews. Member checking was used to obtain thick rich description of their experience with Yes! and to ensure trustworthiness of the data collected. Member checking was also a way to check for understand and clarification and to try to let their voces be heard in the most honest and clear way possible. (Creswell, 2009).

Interviews

I contacted the five mothers who responded and who met the criteria and set three formal appointments with them for individual interviewing. Because this is a qualitative study and the main purpose is to explore the testimonios and in-depth experiences of the parents and caregivers it was better to keep the participant number low; quality is more important than quantity (Creswell, 2009). Since most of the decisions about this research are based on my own personal experience, along with knowing that qualitative research is very fluid, the decided number of participants was set to 5 (Patton, 2002). Qualitative researchers suggest that data saturation may be reached in as little as three interviews, depending on the narrative (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). However, I decided to recruit at least 5 parents or caregivers and then evaluate for data saturation (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). As the mothers were sharing their testimonios, I continuously assessed for data saturation. Once I had completed the first two interviews with each of the five mothers the same themes kept coming up during our conversations. At this point, I decided that there was data saturation and enough to complete the vignettes to share with the
mothers during the third and final interview. This was also when I completely removed the hidden Facebook post.

Esterberg suggests preparing a guide for the interview. Selecting the major topics for the interview served primarily to help prepare for the interview and to remember the key topics during the interview (Esterberg, 2002). Three semi-structured interviews were used to collect the testimonios of parents or caregivers whose Latin@ children are participating in the Yes! program at their schools. Semi-structured interviews are sometimes called in-depth interviews. These are much less rigid than structured interviews and the goal is to more deeply explore the topic at hand and give the interviewee the freedom to express their experience in their own words (Esterberg, 2002). The three interviews with the mothers were about 90 to 120 minutes long, depending on the depth of their responses. Interview times and settings were set up individually at the mothers’ and interviewer’s convenience. The site of each of the interviews were at a location central to mothers and the interviewer.

It was important that the interviews with the mothers were held in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). The interviews were done in the families’ homes which helped to make the mothers feel confident and share their entire truth during the interviews as well as aimed to meet the five intellectual goals of qualitative research. These five goals (1) include understanding the meaning of a participant’s experience, (2) understanding the context and the influence the experience had on the participant, (3) identify “unanticipated phenomena” and effects on the participant from that experience, (4) understand the process or what happened during and after the experience, and (5) develop causal explanations (Maxwell, 2005, p. 221). The interviewing skills needed to collect the correct data, according to Rudestam and Newton (2007) need to draw out and listen to the thoughts, feelings, and interpretations of the subject as he or she constructs and
organizes previous life experiences. The purpose for using interviewing in the study was to focus on meaning making and documenting the parents’ or caregivers’ experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

After looking at research and at other studies using testimonios, I decided to schedule three interviews with each of the five mothers. During our first phone call, after responding to the Facebook post, we talked a little bit about the study and what they were volunteering for. I informed them that these three interviews could be re-scheduled if they had anything come up. I chose to do three interviews because the first interview meeting would be solely for introducing myself and my background. I wanted to build rapport with the mothers and make sure that they felt comfortable with me before I went into detailed questions about their own background. I drafted the questions for the interviews based off of the guiding frameworks for this study as well as past research that have used testimonios as a methodology. I asked if I could come to their homes or if they would be comfortable with a public place. All of the mothers invited me into their home. The number of interviews and conducting them in their homes helped the mothers feel at ease when sharing their testimonios with me.

The first interview and meeting with the mothers consisted of me introducing myself, telling them the purpose of the study, and the importance of their testimonio. Each mother agreed to participate and received a copy of the consent form before answering any questions (see APPENDIX C). I told them everything about my educational and family background during this first interview (APPENDIX D). To comply with complete anonymity and protect the mothers’ identities, I used women’s names that started with the first five letters of the alphabet as pseudonyms for the mothers (Kandemir & Budd, 2018). The mothers were informed of their option to withdraw from the interview or study at any time if they chose to do so. The mothers
were informed about the purpose of the interview and formal introductions were made including my position with Yes! I talked to them about my background as a first-generation college student and gave a brief explanation of my life and educational journey that has led me to this point. This helped to build rapport with the mothers and find things that we may have in common (Esterberg, 2002). I asked the mothers to introduce themselves and talk about where they were born and raised. I asked about their marital status and how many children they have. Though I had already pre-screened them when they first responded to my recruiting post, I asked the pre-screening questions first including information about highest education completed and household income information. Though individual title 1 eligibility was not a requirement to participate in this study, it is important information to have since the demographics of Texas show that over 58% of students come from a low to moderate income household (Texas Education Agency, 2018).

A second interview was scheduled as a follow up conversation and mothers shared more about their educational background, as well as their experience with Yes! APPENDIX E shows a sample of questions that were asked in second the interviews. These questions were derived from the conceptual framework. These helped to listen to the voces and testimonios of the mothers and to learn how to support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of first-generation Latin@ college students. During each interview I took notes on my reflective journal and wrote on these during each of the interviews. I talk more about the reflective journal in a later section. This interview was a bit easier since a relationship had been built during the first interview. This interview allowed me to go deeper into the conversations which helped me to collect rich thick descriptions of the mothers’ testimonios, which helped to create a vignette for
each of the mothers. After all these interviews were collected, transcribed, coded and analyzed, I created a vignette for each of the mothers and the third interview was scheduled with them.

The third interview was used as a follow-up to the first two interviews which helped to clarify anything that was not clear from our previous two conversations with each mother (see APPENDIX F). It also allowed mothers to clarify, extend, or modify their responses. All five mothers were contacted to schedule this third interview at their convenience. I also showed them the notes I had written about them and gave them an opportunity to see their vignettes, which can be found in chapter 4. This was an opportunity for them to clarify or add to the information that was given in the original interview, which is a way of member checking (Creswell, 2009).

This allowed mothers the opportunity to give thick rich description of their testimonios. The mothers were reminded of the importance of confidentiality and they were given the option to choose a pseudonym. All of the mothers were ok to share their real name. However, to protect their privacy and keep their participation completely anonymous, I chose women’s names that started with the first five letters of the alphabet and assigned these to each of the mothers.

Data Analysis

By listening to the voces and testimonios of the mothers, I was able to better understand how to help more Latin@ students that will be first-generation college students to have a positive perception of education and be more engaged in order to increase academic achievement and success. This study allowed me to explore the testimonios of mothers of Latin@ students that participated in the Yes! program and received the curriculum via text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture. This will increase academic preparation, college access, course completion and graduation rates to help close the educational achievement gap and give insight to other P-20 initiatives across the country. Using testimonios and conducting these interviews really helped me understand everything that Yes! is doing for
families, from the perspective of the mothers, who are the actual end users of our messages. Though I always believed that we are changing the definition of family engagement by using text messaging to reach them, I never actually knew how they messages in the family curriculum were impacting participating families.

During the first two interviews and collecting the mothers’ testimonios, the data was analyzed. The purpose of analyzing the data was to further make sense of the stories collected from the participating mothers. Transcription was used for all interviews. I created Microsoft Word documents to store these transcriptions. These files are password protected and are only accessible by me. I followed Creswell’s (2009) recommendation for the different steps of data analysis, not in a specific order, but in spiral, for the multiple levels of analyzing data; this procedure was done simultaneously as needed.

To ensure the accuracy of the information, I collected the raw data including transcripts and field notes. The data was read thoroughly several times after being collected and during the entire analyzing process (Creswell, 2009). Per Crotty’s (1998) recommendation, I bracketed my own knowledge and presuppositions so as not to taint the data. To make sure that the data collected was not skewed, I gathered the data using semi-structured interviews and only asked open-ended questions (Crotty, 1998). Merriam and associates (2002) recommend that researchers with similar experiences of those being interviewed analyze the findings and these should resonate with the researcher’s own experience as a way of personal validation.

Narrative analysis allowed me to focus on the stories shared by the mothers and to pay attention to the language and words they used to make meaning of their experiences receiving the text messages. Narrative analysis is the method used for analyzing first person accounts, testimonios (Esterberg, 2002). Because this research focuses on the mothers of Latin@ students,
biographical narrative analysis was used when reviewing the data. The biographical approach to data analysis is one of the three most common in qualitative research. The mothers’ responses were analyzed, and I was careful to pay close attention to the words they used when talking about their life experiences and their educational background, their own parents and their experience with schooling, their children, and their roles as expected in creating a college going culture at home (Merriam, 2002).

**Coding**

A list of a priori codes was developed beforehand using what I gathered from existing literature for ecology of resources framework and community cultural wealth. This helped to structure and categorize the data before and during the analyzing. The Ecology of Resources framework offers a structured process through which educators and technologists can develop educational technology platforms to provide technology rich learning activities that take into account a wider context of the learner. This process is repeated in a cycle during the entire learning process and consists of knowledge, environment, and resources (Luckin, 2015). Yes! uses community cultural wealth and the ecology of resources in their apps, curriculum, games, puzzles, videos, songs, and text messages in order to facilitate the acceptance by the students and families. Community Cultural Wealth consists of six forms of capital including navigational, aspirational, linguistic, resistant, social, and familial capital. I used the a priori list I had created with all these codes, then marked each instance where these codes came up in the transcripts on the excel table.

Subsequent emerging codes were coded with the in vivo method. I began coding by reading the transcripts of each of the mothers’ first two interviews line by line. This helped me find main ideas by numbering sentences, paragraphs, and pages. All the mothers’ names, interview questions with their answers, along with the a priori codes, were added to an excel
table. This helped break down the pieces and find recurring themes from the interview responses. This process helped to not only understand the main story of each family, but also to analyze if their experiences had similarities and find recurring themes (Creswell, 2009). One approach recommended for analyzing data is to look for themes or perspectives and report the top four or five themes that were found in the different student narratives. This approach is considered basic by Creswell (2009). Qualitative coding helps us by (a) noticing relevant phenomena, (b) collecting examples of those phenomena, (c) analyzing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures (Esterberg, 2002).

The list of codes on the excel table was expanded as new codes emerged from analyzing the transcripts. For coding, I also used the notes kept on a reflective journal from each of the interviews. The reflective journals were used at this stage to help with coding. In vivo codes use the direct language of each of the study’s participants (Saldaña, 2009). In vivo coding is a form of qualitative data analysis that places emphasis on the actual spoken words of participants. Although in vivo coding is probably the most common name for this form of coding, it sometimes is also referred to as natural, literal or verbatim coding (Saldaña, 2009). In addition to the a priori codes derived from the EoR and CCW frameworks, the additional codes were ventajas, conocimientos, persistence, ganas and hard work ethic. Uncovering the temas really validated my work and how Yes! is helping transform the culture by using assets and wealth of knowledge that these families already have access to. I know about the tools, curriculum and resources that we are providing. But being able to hear from the mothers how the 160 characters that they receive three times a week is helping them see a better future as a reality for their children, is life changing.
Coding helped me to capture the essence and meaning of the data from the mothers’ testimonios (Saldaña, 2009). A code is a short phrase that stands as a symbol for summarizing parts of the data collected (Saldaña, 2009). According to Saldaña (2009) coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act. Coding helped me find the themes or similar descriptions shared by the mothers. Once coded, I looked for interrelated themes and descriptions that might be common between the mothers when describing their engagement with and use of the Yes! curriculum text messages. The meaning of the themes or descriptions was then interpreted as closely as possible to the original narrative of the mothers. Qualitative researchers code their data during and after collection as an analytic tactic (Saldaña, 2009).

The temas or themes I found during the coding process were not only identified, but also used these to make sense of all the information that was collected. The themes helped me to build a model for systems that work to help influence Latin@ families create a college going culture. The final phase after I analyzed the data was to study and prepare it to present in the findings chapter of the research. To “represent and visualize the data”, Creswell suggests creating a visual image of the information that was found to better illustrate the findings and to clearly communicate what was found with the research (Creswell, 2013). The four main temas or themes that were derived from the mothers’ testimonios are presented in chapter 5 and shown in Figure 7. After the data of the first two interviews had been analyzed, interpreted and understood, I scheduled the third interview and went back to the mothers to communicate with them what I had interpreted and understood from their narratives. I also showed them what I had written about them in their vignettes, which can be found in chapter 4. This was an opportunity for them to clarify or add to the information that was given in the original interview, which is a way of member checking (Creswell, 2009).
Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, I engaged in three strategies while collecting testimonios which included keeping a reflective journal, member checking of the vignettes and rich, thick description. Throughout the entire data collection process, I repeated the mothers’ answers back to them to make sure that I understood everything they said. This was very important because the research is about their own testimonios and how they think of it and not my version of their lived experiences. Being completely immersed during the process of the three interviews with each of the mothers gave me the experience necessary to deal with the issue of trustworthiness (Merriam, 2002).

Reflective Journal

Creswell suggests that analyzing the data is an ongoing process involving continual reflection about it. This leads to asking analytic questions and writing memos or research journals throughout the analysis. Creswell feels that part of the analyzing is “conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretations, and writing reports.” He suggests that in between interviews, as a researcher, I could analyze a previous interview and write my reflections of the interview in a journal (Creswell, 2009). I was very careful about not reacting or imposing my own views on the testimonios the mothers were sharing and about their experiences. Parts of the journal will be included in the vignettes chapter, chapter 4.

Maxwell (2005) recommends that researchers reflect on their relationship with their research (Maxwell, 2005). This exercise consisted of reflecting on my relationships with the mothers before and during their testimonios. I was mindful about my position with Yes! as Director of Family Engagement when I recruited the participants. During the initial screening, once the mothers contacted me to volunteer as participants, I wrote down notes about the call and tried to be as transparent as possible about myself and the study. Jones, et al. (2006) recommends
that researchers ask themselves about their interest in the study (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). Keeping a journal also helped me to reflect on any personal biases and the preconceptions I have about Yes! and made sure that I did not sway the mothers to answer a certain way. The reflective journal was where I was making notes of my observations of each of the mothers’ responses and helped me to develop each of their vignettes.

**Member Checking and Vignettes**

As a check for reliability and trustworthiness of the data, I checked the accuracy of my interpretation of the mothers’ responses by using member checking. Member checking was used to determine the accuracy of the findings by reporting back my findings to the mothers to see if they felt that my interpretation of their testimonio was accurate (Creswell, 2009). Vignettes were created to show the mothers after the second interview. The vignettes were used as member checks as a strategy to ensure trustworthiness. This was also used as a method of closing the interview with each mother. This technique is considered the most critical technique for establishing credibility according to qualitative researchers. This step allowed the mothers to judge the accuracy and credibility of the data, analysis, and my interpretation of these (Creswell, 2013). The mothers were able to review the information they shared as well as my interpretation of their narratives to help improve the accuracy. This review by the mothers is a narrative member check (Merriam, 2002). Maxwell refers to member checks as respondent validation. He describes “respondent validation” as systematically soliciting feedback about the data and conclusions from the people that will be studied. Both the responses and the mothers’ feedbacks were taken as evidence to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Maxwell, 2005). This technique also provided the interviewees the opportunity to react to the findings and elaborate on their responses if needed.
The purpose of creating the vignettes was to contextualize and show the family’s culture and attitude towards postsecondary education, before, during and after their participation in Yes! Each of these vignettes contains a brief introduction to the mothers of the students, including their own childhood and background and their experience with education. The vignettes conclude with brief summaries of the families’ plans of action for postsecondary education for their children. These were used as a closing phase of the interviews with the participants. The vignettes were adjusted in some areas to protect the identities of the participants (Kandemir & Budd, 2018). Vignettes are a way to connect participants with their reality about the current research topic (Hughes & Huby, 2004). These created by the researcher and can be in written or picture form to then share with each participant (Hughes & Huby, 2004). The vignettes for the mothers were a few paragraphs which described in detail how the participants relate to education and college going culture.

**Rich Thick Description**

Another method of trustworthiness that was used in this research was be “rich, thick description.” Collecting “rich” data was not difficult because this study used the *voces* of the mothers directly from their *testimonio*.

Although a *testimonio* is technically an account made by one person, it represents the voice of many whose lives have been affected by particular social events. *Testimonios* often serve as awakenings for tellers and readers alike (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012, p. 165).

Using rich thick description provides data that is detailed and varied enough to provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on with the family curriculum. The validation of data for this research includes direct quotes and all of the work includes sections of verbatim transcripts from the interview (Maxwell, 2005). Parts of the interviews are included in the
findings to ensure that these are reliable. This rich thick description allows the readers of the report to be transported to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences. This process adds to the trustworthiness of the findings by making them more realistic and richer (Creswell, 2009). The importance of using testimonio is to capture the mothers’ views on their lived experiences of receiving the Yes! family curriculum via text messages.

**Positionality**

In this section I will talk about my experience conducting outreach and how this led to my decision on this topic as my dissertation study while pursuing a doctoral degree. Though I am biased on the research, I recognize that this may have been used to my advantage when talking to the mothers and analyzing the data. I tried to ensure that I captured their views and not my interpretation of them or what I think they meant. Being involved and saturated in the data helped me to better understand “the issues around rigor and trustworthiness,” (Merriam, 2002). My positionality and my relationship with the topic and with the mothers were very important factors in my study. Positionality can be described as how the researcher relates to the study and the participants (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). During the interviews, I tried to transmit to the mothers my dedication to my research and communicated with them how much it means to me for more Latin@s to understand all the options that come with postsecondary education. In our conversations I tried to make the mothers feel at ease talking to me about their family and their backgrounds.

I do feel that in more than one way, minorities, and specifically the Latin@ population, are still being discriminated against. The playing field is not level. Yes! provides graphics, terminology, and songs that are culturally relevant. In order to be successful in closing the educational attainment achievement gap that exists in the United States among Latin@ students, colleges, professors, administrators and society as a whole should learn more about our people.
There should be more understanding about who we are, how we live, and what we consider important. There should be less fear and ignorance and more understanding and appreciation. It is embarrassing and sometimes very insulting for me to belong to the world of academia and be part of leadership with so many smart administrators, yet still have the need to teach them things that I feel are common knowledge about Latin@s.

My parents, Juan and Aurora, were both born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. My sister and two brothers and I were all born in Brownsville, Texas after my parents married in 1971. I was raised and attended public schools in Brownsville, Texas. Spanish is our first language. My family and I were migrant farmworkers. We would leave the Rio Grande Valley every summer to travel looking for work in the crop fields. I started working at the age of 11. My parents would withdraw me early from school and we would always register late, yet I always had very good grades. My parents would encourage us to work hard and showed us the value of money as we would help them with the household expenses, yet their purpose was to educate us about the importance of education. If we do not educate ourselves, there are very limited opportunities but with hard work, everyone can make a living. However, if you choose to earn a degree by obtaining an education, with hard work, the opportunities may be endless.

I became involved in working with and for first-generation Latin@ college students and low-income families over 16 years ago. All of my experience led to the interest in helping more Latin@s like me escape poverty. From 2003 through 2007, I was working as a Mortgage Loan Officer for Affordable Housing. As part of that job I was very involved in the community and started volunteering for commissions and boards. During these years of direct outreach, I began to see that there is unfair treatment, many inequities and yet much opportunity to improve our educational system. Between 2003 and 2008 I served as chairperson for the Marshalltown
Human Rights Commission. We conducted educational outreach to the public to inform them about their rights and all the public services available. I served as commissioner for Iowa Latino Affairs for 7 years. During my service I led the education subcommittee and was also on the board of the Iowa Human Rights Commission. As a commissioner, I drafted our 2014 Legislative Priorities which were released in November of 2013. This allowed for more open conversations among state government and constituents and started a working relationship with the State Department of Education. The purpose of this partnership was to assist in leveling the playing field for all students and ensuring that we were not only focusing on equality, but more importantly, on equity in Iowa education.

In 2007, I started my graduate studies in Public Administration, to try to make myself more knowledgeable about people’s needs and their access to basic rights like education as well learning about policy. I worked as Outreach Counselor for Marshalltown Community College (MCC) from November of 2008, through July of 2014. I coordinated the Marshalltown Education Partnership ( MEP). MEP is a collaboration between MCC, the school district and the business community. I worked with first-generation low-income high school students to educate them about the importance of obtaining a college degree. Every month during their four years at MHS, I talked to them about college, dual credit, careers, salary information, internships, resume writing, scholarships, financial aid and ultimately, college admissions. Once they graduate from MHS, if they meet the GPA and attendance requirement, they qualify for a scholarship at MCC that pays 50% of their tuition and fees.

As a member of the inaugural steering committee member of the Iowa Latino Education Initiative, I assisted in the development, planning and coordination of the annual statewide conferences. These conferences were open to K12, community colleges, university and
government agencies interested in closing the achievement gaps of Latin@ in higher education. I was also part of *Colegio Cambia Todo*, an initiative by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission that focuses on the advancement of education among all Iowans, with a specific campaign and working unit for Latin@ students and families. This partnership includes people from K12, college, community and university sectors of around the state working with government agencies to discuss the needs and share information on promising practices. In my personal commitment of serving as role model to younger Latin@s, I was a founding member of Latinas Al Éxito, an initiative by the American Association of University Women. This initiative started in Marshalltown, and now exists in twelve cities in Iowa guiding Latin@ middle school students towards postsecondary education.

My parents would tell me, “*A ver como le haces, pero tienes que ir al colegio.*” This translates to, “We’ll see how you’ll do it, but you have to go to college.” Yes! is showing parents like mine, *como hacerle para guiar a sus hijos hacia un mejor futuro*, how to guide their children towards a better future. I received an associate degree from Marshalltown Community College in Marshalltown, Iowa. I then continued on to earn my bachelor’s in Human Services with emphasis in Psychology and Spanish from Buena Vista University in 2003. I received a master’s degree of Public Administration with emphasis in Government Management in 2010.

I started my position in Family Engagement at Yes! in May of 2018. I am the Director of Family Engagement. When I applied for this position, I was so impressed by what this non-profit organization is doing in San Antonio. Immediately I became interested in this topic and decided to conduct my dissertation study on using technology to engage families in their children’s education. If this program would have been around when I was in elementary school, perhaps I would have been done with my doctorate degree more than ten years ago. Yes! is working hard
in the communities of San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley where there are many parents that did not attend college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). My parents did not finish high school. I am a first-generation American and first-generation college student. I have first-hand experience of the resources and tips that my parents needed when I was growing up. In my job every day, and in this study, I would like to explore ways in which I can improve equality in this country while educating myself and making me a better person as well as educating others. Being Latina, first-generation college student and from a low-income background, I know that even though we might have the support needed from our parents, they do not always know how to guide us in our journey. Yes! gives parents and caregivers the tools and tips to start conversations with their children about college in the family curriculum. Technology may be the way to change our schools in order to better engage with our Latin@ children’s families. This will result in more Latin@ students being informed about the opportunities that come with higher education which will also fulfill my mission to help close the educational achievement gap among Latin@s. This is why I decided to make this my dissertation study.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented the study’s methodology, approach, and strategy used to collect the data as well as the reasons for choosing those. I restated the purpose of the study and the research questions. I explained participant selection and talked about the three interviews that allowed the mothers to share their testimonios. I then talked about analyzing and coding the data to find the *temas* or themes. I also talked about respondent validation and the steps I took to ensure trustworthiness, including my reflective journals, the mother vignettes, and rich thick description. Finally, I explained my role as the researcher and how my life and work experiences which led to my decision of conducting this study.
CHAPTER 4. VIGNETTES

Madres

In this chapter, I will present the vignettes with my “impression of the person” describing the mothers that shared their testimonio and a brief summary of each interview (LiteraryDevices, 2019). The vignettes have the participants’ pseudonym as the heading. Pseudonyms were used in order to comply with complete anonymity and protect their identity (Kandemir & Budd, 2018). I chose women’s names that started with the first five letters of the alphabet; Aracely, Belinda, Crystal, Diana and Elizabeth. The vignettes contain what I considered are important details about the mothers and what stood out about them in their testimonio. These do not have a specific structure and are as unique as each of the five mothers. I decided this to better describe and give the reader an introduction to each of the mothers. The section concludes with a brief profile table for each of the mothers who shared their testimonios. The purpose of the brief mother profile is to provide more detailed information about them and to provide context for their voces.

During the third interview meeting with the mothers, they were able to see their vignettes and add or change any information that may have been missing. Vignettes are used in social research as a method of trustworthiness and member checking. It is a way to connect participants with their reality about the current research topic (Hughes & Huby, 2004). A vignette is a short descriptive passage, a short essay, that focuses on one particular moment; “or giving an impression about a person” (LiteraryDevices, 2019). These are not meant to be a full narrative description of a situation, but a “carefully crafted verbal sketch or complete description,” of the interviewees. These were written after the first two interviews with each of the participants. When sharing transcripts and vignettes after the interviews, it was important to give directions to
the participants to avoid falling in to “member checking traps” (Carlson, 2010). The reason for member checking is to ensure trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is gained when the participants can see that their data were “ethically and mindfully collected, analyzed, and reported” (Carlson, 2010). The main idea of each of the responses by the respondent should remain the same. Respondents were given clear instructions when reviewing the vignettes to not worry about grammar or spelling errors, but rather to focus on making sure that they correctly transmitted and relayed the right responses to their questions and that I captured their intended testimonio. Another good idea recommended by Carlson (2010), is to inform the members of how the transcript will be used in the final report, the dissertation. The members were informed that the full transcript would not be used and that only parts of some quotes and major themes would be used.

**Aracely**

The first interview I secured and conducted was with Aracely. She is the mother of a 1st grade boy participating in Yes! Aracely is Mexican American. She was born and raised in San Antonio and is 31 years old. She is married and has 3 kids, one is 14, another 13, and the 5-year-old who is participating in Yes! Table 2 has Aracely’s demographic details.

Aracely got pregnant when she was in high school and could not continue on with her classmates to graduation because at that time, schools did not allow pregnant girls to stay in school. She says they wanted to send her to an alternative center, but she felt embarrassed to go to that school. She had her first child at the young age of 18, as a senior in high school. Her oldest child was born with medical issues and that was a very difficult time in her life. The young mother suffered through an abusive relationship and was able to not only survive but thrive and went back to fulfill all the requirements for her GED. By the time she was 21 she was a single mother when her oldest child was only three years old. These difficult experiences
convincing her that hard work and education are important for success. Aracely has three children, and one of them participates in Yes! Before participating in Yes! Aracely thought that her elementary aged children were too young to talk about college, but now she knows and appreciates that the sooner we start talking to our children, the better.

Before, I thought kinder was too soon to talk about college. I feel that if it wasn’t for the Yes! program, I wouldn’t talk to them (my children) about college.

Aracely’s parents do not have a college degree and neither does she or her current husband. Having two jobs sometimes makes it difficult to find enough time to spend with her children. She and her husband are hard workers and have secure employment but understand that not everyone has the same opportunities. Because of this, they encourage and support their children in their education. The Yes! messages are making her “stop and think” to better start conversations about their day in school and their future. They now not only talk about school, but they also talk about career and life and all the options available for their children.

Aracely was very generous with the personal information she shared during her testimonio. She got emotional and several times said that she never had shared some of this information with anyone else. She was very frank and very sincere each during each of our conversations. Both she and I shared our background and stories about our culture and our background. We are similar because we are both from Texas, born of Mexican immigrant parents. Her parents, like mine, did not have college experience. I also have three children. At times, she got emotional when talking about her childhood and about her experience with education. Her testimonio validated my work and my mission.
Table 2. Aracely Profile Table

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<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>GED</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Experience/Credential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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<td>Father’s Educational Experience</td>
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<td>Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>Bilingual/90% English</td>
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<td>Family Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Low to Moderate Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant to the United States</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Belinda**

Belinda has 4 kids, a 20-year-old son, an 8th grader, one in 2nd grade and her youngest in 1st grade. She was born and raised in San Antonio and is 37 years old. Her family is Mexican, but they never came from the current geographic area known as Mexico. The U.S. border crossed them. They have been living in the same geographic location since before the land that is currently known as Texas became part of the United States. She had a child before graduating high school. She has not gone back to college but did get her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at a community college after she had her second child. She felt it was important for her to get a credential in order to have a better job. Table 3 contains demographic details for Belinda.

She always wanted to go to college but had an abusive relationship with the father of her two oldest children. Belinda had to wait a whole year after her own high school class graduated to walk the stage because she was pregnant with her oldest child. She feels that she may not have given her oldest child the same attention that she has given her younger children. Her oldest child has had a more difficult time finishing school and choosing a career path.

The two oldest children are the kids of one father. The two youngest are children of her
current husband. With her two oldest children, she does not remember even talking about college. Now that the two youngest children have participated in Yes!, college is now a regular topic of discussion anytime they are together. During dinner time and in the car they talk about career options and about their future. It is ok for them to go to a college out of state, even!

Belinda definitely feels that being engaged with her children’s school is very important, because now she knows how to start the conversations about school, college and careers with them. She feels that her oldest child may have had an easier path if she would have been receiving our messages back then, when he was in grade school. Belinda feels that she is engaged with her 1st grade son’s school because of the messages that she receives from Yes! More than anything, she feels it is important that they are accessible for her at her time and schedule. Belinda stated that because of recent school shootings and other threats around the country, now it is not as easy to just go and visit a school. Security is very strict which causes a disconnect with schools. This was something that I had not even considered when I was looking at existing literature. She thinks that getting the curriculum text messages makes it easier and safer for everybody. She also likes that she can watch the videos and listen to the songs on YouTube. In her testimonio she explains that receiving the text messages has really changed the way she engages with her child’s school. She appreciates the accessibility and practicality of receiving the family engagement messages from Yes!

Yes! is helping Belinda feel connected and engaged with her child and his learning. Yes! is connecting her family to their child’s education, even if they may not feel very connected to their school. The messages give them tips on how to start conversations about their life and their future after high school. The videos and images sent by Yes! are enjoyed by their entire family.
Table 3. Belinda Profile Table

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<td>College Experience/Credential</td>
<td>Certified Nursing Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Educational Experience</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Educational Experience</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Spoken at Home</td>
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<td>Low to Moderate Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant to the United States</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crystal

Crystal is married and has 4 children. She is 32 years old and is from San Antonio, born and raised. Her oldest child is in 6th grade and her youngest is in Pre-K. Her mother did take some college courses, but she was always busy working so never really had the opportunity to talk to them about college and how important it is for them. Even though her mother had college experience, Crystal explains that she never made an effort to motivate her own children to pursue an education beyond high school Her father did not go to school and is a mechanic. Table 4 contains demographic details for Crystal.

Her 1st grade son participated in Yes! Crystal talked about how well received our text messages were by all 4 of her children. She explains that she never thought about talking to her elementary aged children about college. She feels that our text messages positively impacted all four of her children, even if only her first-grade child was participating in the program. She feels that her 5th grade son was the one that most benefited because it gave him a more immediate actionable goal and really felt that he could start working towards meeting college requirements.
She now feels that even she can go to college. As soon as her youngest child goes to full day preschool, she will be enrolling in college.

Crystal first learned about Yes! Our Kids Can from a flyer her son brought home from school. The school printed out important information about Yes! and the Family Engagement team as well as what to expect in the next few weeks from Yes! It was a bit surprising to Crystal that we would begin talking to her 1st grade child about college at such a young age, but her 1st grader, and even her younger son, are very engaged and are already planning their postsecondary journey. The text messages and videos are helping her older children as well. Her 6th grader now has decided and started planning his journey to becoming an engineer. He is investigating more about the career and the degree. He has looked into the requirements and plans to take most of the basic classes in high school. The messages helped to make them feel empowered to take charge of their future. He will be attending a science academy next year.

Crystal talked about how the text messages and the Yes! curriculum in the classroom are not only helping to start conversations about college and career but also about life, in general. She is talking more to her children about making smart choices and choosing friends wisely. She uses her own childhood as an example of how friends come and go and sticking with your plans, goals and dreams is more important than going out with friends.

She tells them it is important to do things in order and to try to hold off on getting married or having children until after they have their degree. Before Yes! Crystal would talk about school with her children, but the conversations were not very detailed because she did not have the tools or knowledge to talk to them. Since the children are still in elementary school, she thought they were too young to start talking about college and about their future.
Table 4. Crystal Profile Table

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<td>College Experience/Credential</td>
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<td>Number of Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Low to Moderate Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant to the United States</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diana

My interview with Diana was conducted completely in Spanish. Diana is 33 years old and she is from Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Her daughter is in first grade. Diana only finished one year of high school in Mexico, and her parents did not get a college degree. Her mother finished 4th grade and her father graduated high school and was ready to enter the university but never did. They, Diana’s parents, are both from a ranch in Mexico, where surviving and having manners and respect for others was the biggest priority for them to instill in their children. Table 5 contains demographic details for Diana.

Diana married her husband, who also does not have a college degree, when she was 15 years old. They now have four children, ages 17, 14, 12, 8. Their 8-year-old daughter is in first grade and is currently participating in Yes! Our Kids Can. She feels she is currently engaged with her daughter’s elementary school and she does feel welcome when she visits the school. However, she feels even more connected with her daughter’s education when she receives our text messages. For Diana, it is very important to receive the messages in a language that she understands and feels more appreciated because they are sent in Spanish. Although she knows
that it is important to learn English. Now that she has received our messages, she feels more familiar with the education system in the United States and is learning English. Once she feels that she is more fluent in English, she would then like to continue her education and pursue a medical field; like medical assistant or CNA.

Yes! messages are very helpful to start college conversations with her 1st grade daughter but everyone else is also part of these conversations. In fact, her 11-year-old daughter, is also part of the college conversation and is planning on being a dentist. Her oldest child, the 17-year-old, is now looking into college. Our text messages have given her the confidence to ask questions about the college going and financial aid process for her. Now, when they receive the messages, the entire family reads these, and they are used as a tool to start more important and engaging family conversations at the dinner table. She and her husband are convinced that education is very important, and even before knowing how, they knew that they had to help their children understand the importance of pursuing a postsecondary education. When they receive the messages, it helps to start conversations. The videos, the songs, and the little tips, help their entire family. Now the children cannot say they did not learn anything in school. Parents and families feel they are part of the lesson and curriculum because of the messages we send them 3 times a week. They all feel part of that week’s lesson.

The messages also make their entire family feel motivated to be in school, to learn and to work hard. Life can sometimes be very routine and not have much time to plan activities or conversations. The family engagement team sends ideas about activities that they can do quickly and easily at their own time. There are fun activities that Diana feels are important to do to strengthen the relationship between her and her kids. Even though Diana feels welcome when she does visit the school, her schedule and the distance to the school sometimes make it difficult
to get there. The messages sent by us make her and her husband feel more connected to the school and their children’s education and lives because they are able to connect using their smartphone, in their homes, and on their own schedule.

For me, it was very powerful to listen to her testimonio completely in Spanish. For many years during my childhood, as an elementary school student in Brownsville, Texas, we were strictly prohibited to speak Spanish. When I learned to read, I learned in Spanish first. It is the language that I think, dream and laugh in. Salinas (2017) suggests that it is important to not only give a voice to but keep the voice of Spanish speakers who many not have access to publish in academia. He feels that we should share the lived experiences, and testimonios, in their native language, in order to better capture and learn about the voces perdidas that may have been “erased” from our textbooks (Salinas, Jr., 2017).

Table 5. Diana Profile Table

<table>
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<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>College Experience/Credential</td>
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<td>Number of Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father’s Educational Experience</td>
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<td>Immigrant to the United States</td>
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</table>

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is 28 years old. She is the youngest of the mothers I have interviewed. Her daughter is in 1st grade. She was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. She is 28
years old and is a single mother. She has 3 kids, one is 12, another 9, and the youngest is the 6-year-old, who participated in Yes! She graduated from high school and continued on to get her Certified Nursing Assistant certificate or another type of short career but would like to continue college someday when her 6-year-old is older. Table 6 contains demographic details for Elizabeth.

Her mother and father are both from Mexico and do not have a college degree. Her children will be the first ever, in all of their family to earn a university degree and she is sure of this because she now feels it is a possibility for everyone, thanks to our messages. Her father finished 8th grade and her mother finished 6th grade. During their childhood years, there were financial difficulties and hard times. That is sometimes why going to college was not a possibility for many immigrant families, especially here in Texas. In the United States, now Latino families have more resources, like Yes! Our Kids Can that help to understand how possible it is for everyone to go to college.

Elizabeth says that since she grew up in South Texas, she always heard that everyone should go to college, but she never saw that it was accessible. Though teachers and counselors would tell her about college, she never felt college was for her because she nor her parents ever got clear instructions on how to go to college. Now that she has her own children, she feels that she has the responsibility to send her kids to college. She knows that she may not be able to pay for it, but she also knows that there are many types of scholarships, financial aid and even loans that her kids can apply for in order to get college. She remembers when her parents were raising her, college was not really a topic at the dinner table, so she did not think she could ever start college conversations with her own children. Since her youngest started Yes! she feels a lot better prepared to talk to her children, even her oldest, about college and career paths. They may
not know exactly what they are going to be when they grow up, but at least they talk about it and they know where to start looking for the answers on how to start.

Her family has really have enjoyed the curriculum and the messages. They first learned about Yes! Our Kids Can with the flyer that was sent out by the school a few weeks before the curriculum started. The flyer informed the families that the school was implementing the program. The flyer had all the information that families needed to understand that Yes! was going to send text messages to the families in order to inform them what the curriculum was on that particular week.

Elizabeth feels that she is well engaged with her daughter’s school. Even though she has a flexible schedule because it changes every 3 weeks, she still has a lot of errands to run and also takes care of her elderly parents, so it is not very easy to go visit the school. The times that she does have the opportunity to go to school she sometimes feels that she is talked down to because she did not go to college.

Table 6. Elizabeth Profile Table

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<td>U.S. born</td>
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Conclusion

All mothers that shared their testimonios were between the ages of 28 and 37 years old. Four of them were married and one was single. Four of them were Mexican American, meaning that their parents or grandparents were born in Mexico, but they were born in the United States. One of the mothers was an immigrant from Mexico. None of the mothers had a four-year college degree, however two mothers do have a Certified Nursing Assistant credential (CNA). All five mothers stated that their parents do not have a college degree. Only one of the mothers spoke English only, three are bilingual and speak English and Spanish at home. One of the mothers speaks mostly Spanish and her testimonio was completely in Spanish. Many of the families that are served by Yes! are low-income and underrepresented students. All of the mothers that shared their testimonio stated that they are low-income.

The vignettes in this chapter contextualize and show the family’s culture and attitude towards education, before, during and after their participation in Yes! More importantly, these vignettes contain a brief introduction to the mothers, including their background and experience in education, and conclude with brief summaries of the families’ plans of action for postsecondary education for their children. These were used as a closing phase of the interviews with the participants and are a form of member checking and trustworthiness. In the next chapter, we will discuss the themes that were uncovered from the testimonios that were shared by each of the mothers.
CHAPTER 5. TEMAS

Chapter five presents the findings; the different temas or themes that arose from the individual testimonios or testimonies and voces or voices of the mothers that participated in my research. The two questions that guided this study uncovered the four temas or themes that follow. The first research question was how do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization? This first question led to two findings. The mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones and they engage as an entire family. The second research question was how do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture? This second question uncovered the following findings. Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future and to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture.

Analyzing and coding the data helped to find the four main temas or themes presented in this chapter and shown in Figure 7. Testimonio narrative inquiry is a type of qualitative research methodology that focuses on the lived experiences of the research participants (Beverley, 2013). Testimonio is a unique form of narrative inquiry because it takes into consideration the uniqueness of each of the parents’ or caregivers’ individual experience while making the collective story that emerges across the interviews as one powerful testimony about their experience with Yes! (Beverley, 2013).
Creando Una Cultura Universitaria: How an educational technology non-profit organization engages families of elementary aged future first-generation Latin@ college students

How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization?

How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture?

Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones.
Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum as a family.
Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future.
Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to leverage their cultural wealth to create a college going culture.

*Figure 7. Overview of Temas*
By using testimonios as the methodology, I analyzed the raw data and was able to view
the different aspects of the mothers’ experiences. The characteristics of the Learner Centric
Ecology of Resources and the six forms of capital outlined in community cultural wealth
framework were a priori codes used to analyze the testimonios. This allowed me to carefully
examine if and how their cultural background may affect their experience when receiving the
text messages from Yes! Our Kids Can. In each of the temas presented below, I explain which
form of capital is used by the mothers. An important aspect of testimonio is that the culture of the
speaker is directly related to and may be the cause of many of the person’s experiences in life.
Narratives give researchers the opportunity to gain insights into the rage of multiple, intersecting
forces that order and illuminate relations between self and society (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012).
Both me and the mothers of the Yes! students, were aware of the final goal and purpose
of the study, therefore we were careful in trying to understand their experiences to find the
necessary information in the context of studying success among Latin@ students and creating a
college going culture (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Four main temas or themes emerged after
the raw data was analyzed and are presented below.

The study was guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an
   elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an
   educational technology non-profit community organization?

2. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an
   elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to
   create a college going culture?
This study was guided by the ecology of resources framework along with community cultural wealth to explore the testimonios of mothers whose children participated in the Yes! program and received text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture at home. By listening to their voces and testimonios, we will be able to support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of future first-generation Latin@ college students. In total, I interviewed five mothers of Latin@ students for this research project.

**How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at a San Antonio area elementary school engage with the Yes! family curriculum of an EdTech non-profit community organization?**

**Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones**

Mothers are using technology that is readily available and easy to use to engage with the curriculum of an EdTech non-profit community organization. In their testimonios, mothers say they now know what their child is doing in the classroom and how they are learning about college and careers. Family engagement to these mothers who shared their testimonio means being involved in what their child is doing in the classroom during their Yes! curriculum and having real conversations about their educational and career aspirations. They are using technology that is readily available and easy to use. The technology as well as the family, are resources within the Zone of Available Assistance (ZAA) (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). The Yes! curriculum, the family text messages, along with the school and the teachers, are part of the ZAA for the students. ZAA refers to the different resources that are within the reach of a learner which may provide different types of assistance or learning resource at a particular time (Luckin, 2015).
Mothers found it very easy to engage with their own ZAA because engaging with the curriculum was very easy. Aracely, 31, mother of 3, explained to me that she has two jobs and does not always open the text messages immediately when they are received on her phone. When I asked her about the convenience of using text messaging, the size of the text messages and the time of day she receives these, she was very detailed in her response:

I think that the size of the messages is perfect. I feel the time and the frequency is also perfect. I have two jobs, so really, I open the messages when I have time. Normally, my child asks me about the messages, and we open them right after school after I’m home from work. Then we are talking about it all evening with the rest of the family (3 kids and husband). We take time to talk about our plans and their future like when cooking and at dinner time.

Luckin (2015) explained that only having the resources and technology available, was not sufficient. This means that even though families have access and use their mobile phones, if these are not used to access educational platforms, this will not benefit the children. Some programs mentioned in the literature review section are reaching families using their mobile phone. However, Aracely, and the other mothers who shared their testimonios, explain that they are using the resources within their (ZAA) and (ZPD) to directly engage with the family curriculum. Using the internet, mobile phones, and Yes! family curriculum, is an example of maximizing the ZAA within a learning context and providing a means to enable families that are interacting within that context to target the available forms of assistance to create a ZPA to their child’s ZPD (Luckin, 2015).

Belinda, 37, mother of 4, expresses how she uses readily available technology, the internet on her phone, and her phone applications to navigate and engage with her child’s
education. This shows that the phone, internet access and applications are part of the family’s ZAA.

And then usually your text messages have stuff to discuss with the kids, the question or something, or like a video to watch all together. You click. You follow the link and you watch the video as a family, show it to the kids about what they learned that day in school. Sometimes it's reading. Sometimes it's music and talking about the college and careers and all that. We learn together about what they can become.

For Belinda, it is important that there are several assets included with the family curriculum text messages. It is not only words, but sometimes links to videos and songs that the students are learning in class are also included. This helps to make the learning fun and interactive for her children. In her testimonio, Belinda expressed that she was leveraging some of the forms of capital, part of CCW, while using the curriculum. In the quote above, Belinda talks about aspirational capital and how Yes! gives them motivation for a better future with the text messages (Yosso, 2006).

Crystal explained how as she became more familiar with the format of the messages she began to feel more engaged with what the curriculum was in the classroom. Most families in the program, and all mothers interviewed, had smart phones and knew how to open text messages, so this was an excellent way to feel invited to participate on their own time with easy to use technology. Videos, songs and images were embedded in the text message to help better explain what was being learned in school.

Before, in the beginning, I didn't know that there was a video attached to it. I never really (knew), I didn't open it up that much. I always just read the header part. And it would just give you a question, so I thought it was just like a daily reminder. As I looked further into
the message I thought, okay it's giving you something to talk about, a topic to talk about of what he did in class. That’s the only way I knew [what he is doing in school] and I could be involved at home.

The Yes! messages truly make Crystal feel that she is involved in her child’s schoolwork. The text messages and videos that are sent not only start conversations among the family, but the conversations are engaging and continue the lesson from the school day to the dinner table, all from the convenience of their phone. Mothers feel empowered when they are provided the tools, at their fingertips, to talk to their children about their plans for the future.

Diana, 33, mother of 4, explained that it is a lot more convenient to engage in her daughter’s education by using her phone. She thinks it is very practical to receive these messages in order to start planning her children’s future education and talk about their career plans. When I asked her if she feels engaged when she receives text messages versus going to school in person, she explained her thoughts. Diana’s interview was conducted completely in Spanish and the original text will be included in this chapter with the translation directly following. Diana, the parent, using the phone, a resource, is an example of ZPD as a form of interactivity during the learning process. With ZPD, Luckin (2015) emphasizes the important role of the family, which the student interacts with (Luckin, 2015).

Si, porque muchas de las veces yo no puedo asistir en persona a las juntas o a los eventos que ellos hacen en la escuela, y así con los mensajes es posible estar involucrada en la educación de mi hija. Así me doy cuenta de lo que pasa en la escuela.

Yes, because many times I cannot attend in person to the meetings or the events that they host at school, and with the text messages it is possible to be involved in my daughter’s education. That is how I find out what happens in school.
I then asked Diana if she could give me an example of a time when or a reason why she could not attend school events and she further explained.

Bueno, anteriormente no tenía carro. Y para allá no hay autobús público, entonces esa era una de mis mayores dificultades (la transportación). La otra cosa es que como están los cuatro (hijos) en diferentes escuelas, a veces se me juntaban las actividades o conferencias entonces tenía que decidir a cuál o a donde ir.

Well, in the past, I didn’t have a car. And to that area, there is no public transportation, so it was one of the major difficulties. The other thing is that my children are now in four different schools and sometimes events are scheduled at the same time, so I must decide which of the four I can make it to.

Diana mentioned several barriers in her testimonio. She, like many other families, have transportation and scheduling barriers that keep families from coming to the schools which then may appear that they are not engaged. Diana gives another example of navigational capital in her testimonio. By using the resources that she already has, like her phone, the availability on her schedule, access to the internet, and the ability to read and talk, she can engage with the Yes! curriculum and with her children’s education. The normal barriers of time and transportation, or even language, do not matter anymore for Diana and the other Yes! mothers.

Like all the mothers who shared their testimonio with me, Elizabeth, 28, mother of 3, also agreed that using text messages to engage with their children’s education was very convenient for them. When I asked her about the size, time, and frequency of the text messages, she explained how she felt and why.

I think that the size of the messages is great. I don’t have any problems. I feel the time really doesn’t matter for me. Every three weeks my shift at work changes so my mom
helps me with my kids. It doesn’t matter what time we get the text messages because I only check my phone when I have time, so that’s the best part. It’s on my schedule. And this is the time that I can talk to my kids also. Yes, I think that’s perfect (the frequency). Around 3 to 4 messages per week are fine, in my opinion.

College was not really a topic at the dinner table when Elizabeth was growing up. She thought she would never be able to start college conversations with her own children. It is not very easy to go visit the school because she has a lot of errands to run and also takes care of her elderly parents in addition to a rotating schedule at work. Since her youngest started Yes! and she is receiving the text messages, she feels a lot better prepared to talk to all of her children about college and career paths.

Families can open the text messages and engage on their own time in a safe and welcoming environment. Using smart phones to engage with their children’s curriculum was found to be very effective to all these mothers and a form of navigational capital. Families must be resourceful and navigate their way to access a system that was created for white America. All the mothers interviewed expressed the importance of being engaged and appreciated the use of readily available technology which allows them to look at the messages on their own schedule and in their own unique ways. Mothers are using their navigational skills and using their available resources to navigate the education system and engage with their children’s education.

Aracely talked about the importance of feeling welcome when engaging with her child’s education. She stated that sometimes, she feels embarrassed for not having a college degree especially when she goes to school events.

Yes, it is very different when I go to the school I only have my GED. And, well, sometimes it feels that I don’t really know what the teachers are expecting from us as
parents. Like, I don’t feel pressured or that I have to impress anyone when I’m talking to my kids about the text messages. I feel I can lead the conversation, and this helps me to even learn more about them. Also, when I don’t go to the conferences because of work, it feels as if they don’t understand that I don’t have only a 9 to 5.

Aracely reiterated what was found in several studies about Latin@ parents not always feeling welcomed on campus. For example, a study by Hill and Torres, (2010) found that some Latin@ parents felt that teachers would embarrass them and made them feel inferior during school events and activities (Hill & Torres, 2010). Another study found that Latin@ families felt unwelcome at school meetings and conferences (Mundt, et al., 2015). By engaging with the curriculum on their cell phone, this is no longer an issue for Aracely or any of the mothers or families that are receiving the messages. All of the Yes! family curriculum messages are positive and motivating.

Belinda brought up safety concerns when discussing how going to a school campus is not as easy as it used to be. Many times, schools still may define engagement as families coming into the school building.

There are things that have changed but it's understandable because it protects the kids nowadays, like you have to sign in now with your ID and if it's during school time they won't allow you to go in you know, because of all the shootings. I go to the building as far as I'm allowed because now the rules are very strict. It's not like back then when you could have more freedom to just walk in. Now it's like we drop them off and they go in. The times that I do go to the building is when they have meetings, when they have events, right now for the kids. I do volunteer for the field trips. With the messages, it’s easy to know what my child is working on every day.
Belinda understands that family and parent engagement is sometimes defined as the family actually going into the school for meetings and conferences. However, it is now true that parents’ work schedules and recent changes in school security regulations, may make it difficult to prove that families are engaged. The text messages received by the families helps them to be more engaged in their children’s education on their own time in their own way. By using readily available technology, Belinda feels involved and that she’s an important part of her children’s education.

Crystal, 32, mother of 4, also thinks that using texting technology is important since it allows engagement to happen on her family’s schedule and at their convenience. She explains that it is very convenient to engage with her child’s education by using the curriculum which is sent directly to her cell phone; a resource that is readily available to her. Navigational capital refers to the skills and abilities that Latin@ families have to navigate social institutions (Yosso, 2006). Crystal uses her own skills and navigational capital to use her phone’s messaging platform to open the text messages sent by Yes! to have hearty conversations with her children about school and about their future.

If you’re busy don’t open the message yet. And that's what I would do. I would wait until I was with my kids. I would open it up and we would do it together [as a family]. I think three times a week is good. Even during Spring Break, because a lot of times the kids aren't doing anything because either the parent has to work, or they don't have anything planned. So, they're just at home, and if they can read, they can read it.

Functionality is very important for Crystal. Messages and videos could be opened, read, and played on the family’s own time. This really made it helpful with her schedule. The messages were there waiting until she had time to open them in order for them to read and
discuss as a family. This type of engagement looks very different to what traditional family engagement looks like to schools (Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015). Latin@ mothers and families may not have the time, availability or luxury to attend many of the traditional family events at their child’s school.

Diana also explained how the messages made her feel invited, even though she was engaging from the comfort of the family’s home without having to deal with transportation and scheduling. She talked to me about the last time she actually visited the campus.

Fuimos a una junta en marzo, para ver el progreso de la niña. Porque ella estuvo en un programa para ayudarle con las matemáticas. Y entonces fuimos a una junta porque me mandó llamar la maestra. Nos reunimos con la directora y la maestra y me dijeron que ya la iban a sacar del programa porque me dijeron que ya se había puesto al corriente en matemáticas. Pero a veces no es tan fácil ir a las conferencias o a las juntas de padres.

We went to a meeting in March, to see the progress of my daughter. Because she had been participating in a program that helped her with math. So, we went to this meeting because the teacher called us to come in. We met with the principal and the teacher and they told me that she could successfully exit the program since she had already caught up in math. But sometimes it’s not too easy to go to the conferences or parent meetings.

Like all the mothers, Diana wants the best for her children and trusts the guidance of the school. They all want to help their children learn and will agree on academic programs to help develop the skills that the student may be struggling with. Sometimes, the parents’ schedules may not work with the times that schools send out to meet with them about their children’s academic needs. Receiving text messages is a solution for this issue because she does not have to feel unwelcome when she is engaging like she may feel on the school campus.
Elizabeth also talked about the perception that perhaps school personnel may misunderstand her inability to attend events at school. Using her cell phone does not make her feel embarrassed when she engages with her child’s education.

Yes, because of the shift change every three weeks, that teachers may think that I don’t care or not involved. It’s just, that is the job and not much I can do. When I can, I do go in (to the school), but it is now closed campus and my job doesn’t have much flexibility during the day. So, it’s always in a hurry and the teachers are also very busy all the time. So texting is better.

Elizabeth, like the rest of the mothers, is familiar with texting. She feels that this is a comfortable way to engage with her child’s education. Because of her constant schedule change at work, she is not always available to visit the school. The times that she does go to the school, she feels embarrassed and feels that perhaps the teachers judge her for the times that she is not able to go to events.

All of the mothers shared that they are engaging with the children’s education using their smart phone. This is technology that is readily available and easy to use for them. By engaging with the curriculum of an EdTech non-profit community organization using their smart phone, mothers say they now know what their child is doing in the classroom and how they are learning about college and careers. For these mothers, engagement means being involved in what their child is doing in the classroom during their Yes! curriculum and having real conversations about their educational and career aspirations.

**Mothers engage with the Yes! Curriculum as a family**

*Familia* and the commitment of supporting the emotional and the financial and academic aspirations of the family unit is also very important to all of these Latin@ families. Most of the mothers said that they look at the text messages and discuss the Yes! curriculum as a family.
Together they engage and discuss the importance of education and career aspirations of and with the entire family. The text messages are opened by the mother but then again by the Yes! participating student and discussed in a family setting with the other children and fathers, if present. They engage in their own way and at their own time based on their schedule and use the curriculum to encourage family learning and the importance of open communication as a family.

Aracely explains in her quote below how familial capital is prevalent when she opens and engages with the text messages. The text messages not only send information about the child’s curriculum but also send congratulatory and affirmational messages to the families to remind them that their job as a parent and caregiver is important and very much appreciated.

These types of messages encourage me and remind me to slow down. They remind me to show more love to my kids because they remind me that I can be a good mom. Because these messages thank me and show appreciation for what I do as a parent. They help to bring out the motherly part (of me) that my mom never showed. For us, family has always been first. And now I know what my child is doing in school every day. And I use your tips to talk to my other children.

The text messages are starting conversations about how to do things in order before having a family. I’m sorry, I get very emotional sometimes. I try to teach them values, about, you know, going to school and not having children before getting married. They know that family is very important. They also know that they have to work hard. So now, I give them more information about why to do things in order. I didn’t think it was time, but they understand.

The text messages help Aracely feel engaged and involved in her child’s education. She feels that she is doing a good job as a mother because the messages give her reminders of the
importance of being involved with her children’s education. For Aracely, like for many Latin@ families, family is first, and the text messages are helping to foment and strengthen the value of family. However, for some families, like for Aracely’s mother, they may not have any guidance on how to show “motherly love”. Sometimes, mothers and other caregivers may be too busy with work and household duties and may not have the energy to have loving conversations with their children. In the case of Aracely, she specifically stated that her own mother was always too busy and “never showed” her what motherly love is. Though her mother was physically present through her childhood and on to high school, Aracely did not feel that she ever directly gave her words of encouragement or advice to continue her education.

Aracely explains above, how the text messages along with her use of familial capital, are helping her form a bond with her children while discussing education and career goals. She feels that she is being encouraged with our messages and is now a better, and more supportive mother than hers was to her. She feels that being involved and knowing what her children are doing in school is very important in the bond of mother and child.

Belinda also reinforced this point in her own testimonio. She says that it was easy to follow the activities in the text messages together as a family. These activities served as a way of bonding with her children and being involved in their everyday learning and planning.

Usually, your text messages have stuff to discuss with the kids, a question or something, or like a video to watch all together. You click. You follow the link and you watch the video as a family [with all kids and parents], show it to the kids. Sometimes it's reading. Sometimes it's music and talking about the college and all that. There are a few songs that they like. We'll just go back. We can go back any time on YouTube. That's the good part
is that they're on YouTube and you can go back and click on those and re-watch them anytime.

Yes, they're younger but they have that understanding that they should go to college, that college is a good thing. On Fridays, with the videos when you send the careers with each school to go for science or math we watch with all of them (the kids) and we talk about those programs. It’s about different colleges not just locally, from different states also It's really nice to see that the kids learn about that all together. It is helping us to be closer.

Belinda and her children enjoy the videos and links that are received on her phone. These activities along with the conversations are easy to follow and entertaining for the entire family. Their new topics of conversation are about college and careers and these are reinforced with games and songs they receive with the Yes! messages.

Crystal also feels that the text messages are good for all of her children and husband. They are good conversation starters for her child that participates in Yes! but also for the entire family. She wants to help them learn about college and likes that she is able to use the messages she receives to start conversations with them. Her husband works all the time and does not always have time to see the messages. But she sometimes shows him the messages and they talk about them again with the children. The Yes! text messages cause excitement for all of her children. She honestly thinks that Yes! is doing great things at school and in her home. Before receiving our messages, she had no real knowledge of what college was.

I have a computer like right there on the end of my island over here at home that I liked to get recipes off of, but that's what we would watch the videos on. And so, it was really interesting. It was really nice. I would use the link from the text message and put it on, there's some on the website that I would put on the computer or if I got the thing on my
phone I would just put my phone, I would stand up my phone on the island because that's where we would sit around and talk. I would just put it there on the island and we would watch. And we would just talk about the topic for that day. And it even got my kids to actually talk to each other, and I guess get to know each other. They're brothers and sisters, they fight, they play, they fight, they play. But they never talked to each other about things like that. And so, it was a really good experience. I really enjoyed that. That was my favorite part.

Yes! is helping to unite her children and get them to talk to each other about each of their goals and dreams. Crystal feels that her children are now more united because of the text messages. The messages are like a bonding activity for them that helps them communicate better with each other. The curriculum helps to strengthen her children’s familial capital.

Diana also feels that the messages are helping to create a stronger bond among her family. She feels that they are talking to each other more often and their conversations include every member of her family, not only her child participating in Yes! She explained that her daughter is always excited to look at her phone to see the Yes! messages she receives.

Nos sentamos todos juntos y ella nos empieza a platicar lo que va aprendiendo cada día. Por lo regular los leo yo, y después, como la mayoría traen canciones o videos, y así, nos ponemos a cantar o a ver los videos que vienen en el enlace. Así ella me platica más de lo que hacen, porque a veces no quiere. Y sigue la conversación con mis otros hijos. Todos platicamos sobre las carreras de los videos y lo que quieren ser.

We all sit down together, and she tells us what she is learning each day. Normally, I read the messages as soon as I receive them, and then, since most of the messages contain songs or video links, we all sing together or watch the videos. That is how she tells me
what they’re doing, because sometimes she doesn’t want to tell me. And the conversation continues with the rest of my children. We all talk about the careers and videos and what they want to be.

Diana, continued to describe that her entire family, including other siblings, are involved in the conversations about the curriculum and also about their future goals. The conversation starts with the child that currently participates in Yes! but continues with her other children. This helps to open communication lines and to further develop family bonding, as is customary for Latin@ families.

Elizabeth has a job where her schedule changes every three weeks. Sometimes it is difficult to find a time that she can talk to her children about their hopes and dreams. It is very convenient that she receives these messages on her phone and that she has the ability to read them and start the conversations in her own time with all of her kids. She explained how she does not have much energy left because of her job, so she really appreciates that she gets ideas of what to talk to her children about which really helps to form a bond with them. The little time that she does have to talk to them is quality time and a time for bonding.

It doesn’t matter what time we get the text messages because I only check my phone when I have time, so that’s the best part. It’s on my schedule. And this is the time that I can talk to all my kids together. We have really grown closer together even though we don’t have a lot of time together. I now have ideas of starting to talk to my children about other jobs and how to reach their dreams.

She explains that being a single mom and having a job in addition to caring for her parents and for her children, sometimes makes it difficult to find time to attend any of her children’s events at their schools. She definitely appreciates that she is able to receive the
messages and talk to all of her children at once about school and about planning for a successful future.

Having the flexibility of being engaged with each and every one of their children during the times that they spend together is important for the mothers I interviewed. All of the mothers who shared their testimonio agreed on this. Perhaps they may not have the time to attend in person events at the school, especially if their children attend different schools because they are different ages.

Diana explains how the messages help her start family conversations and how her to bring out her own ventajas y conocimientos. She is aware of her lack of formal education. Yet she is also well aware of her intelligence and know how to connect with her children. Latin@s have a strong family bond and connection. She explains how the text messages help her use her experience to connect and encourage her children about their future. She also reminds them of the importance of being proud of all of their skills.

Y nos ayuda a saber lo que hizo en la escuela. Así aprovechamos. Si, de hecho, si hablamos sobre la escuela de nuestros hijos y la importancia de esta. Les vamos a dar el máximo estudio que se pueda. Que lleguen a tener alguna carrera, y pues que lleguen a ser alguien en la vida. Porque pues si es importante hablar inglés y Español y saber manejar. También hablamos sobre como ayudar en la casa. Platicamos sobre todos los trabajos que tuvimos y lo importante que es estudiar para poder tener mejores trabajos. Hablamos de cuando yo vivía en León y como fue mi vida y fui aprendiendo cosas nuevas sobre un nuevo país y nuevas costumbres cuando llegamos aquí.

And they help me know what she did in school. But then we take advantage of the time. Yes, in fact, we do talk about our children's school and the importance of it. We are going
to give you as much study as possible. That they come to have a career, and then that they become someone in life. Well because it is important to speak English and Spanish and know how to drive, like me, but it’s important to have a degree. We talk about the importance of helping around the house. We talk about the jobs that we have had and how important it is to go to college to have better jobs. We talk about when I lived in León and how my life was, and I was learning new things about a new country and new traditions when we got here.

For Diana, the messages give her advice on how to start talking about her children’s futures. She says that normally, when she asks her children what they did in school, they respond with no answer or a very short answer basically saying they did not learn anything. With the messages by Yes! Diana already received information about the curriculum and also a way to start talking about this, so the child can actually share what she learned or did in school. The messages give her a line to read to ask the children about what they learned in school. She uses the natural sense of family connection and the messages Yes! sends and takes advantage of this time to start other important conversations about learning other things in life.

Aracely also feels the same. When she receives the text messages, she knows exactly what the curriculum covered in class. The text messages are a continuation of the learning from the classroom that is done at home as a family. These activities help to increase communication and strengthen the bond among her family. Even though she did not go to college, she feels she has some knowledge and the messages remind her about the importance of using the skills she has.

The text messages are starting conversations about how to do things after high school. These messages are making me stop and think so that we can actually talk to them and
use the conversations from the messages we receive. We don’t only talk about school thanks to these messages. We also talk about career and life and all the options available after high school. The career videos give us the information about how much school, and what they do, and even how much they can make.

Aracely, like the rest of the mothers now has a feeling of hope and positive outlook for her children’s futures. Aracely says that the messages help her to discuss and plan the future of her children in a way that is easy and non-threatening. Aracely explains how the family curriculum taps on familial capital. Yes! uses familial capital as a way to engage the families to a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family (Yosso, 2005).

Elizabeth specifically states that the messages help her with the words to talk about important topics with her family. The messages use words that families use every day and periodically introduce new vocabulary about college and careers. This is an example of leveraging linguistic capital. Linguistic capital are the skills that many Latin@ families who are bilingual gain by speaking two languages. This includes the tradition of cuentos, Latin@ “storytelling” which is when adults talk about their childhood to the children of the family. This helps to teach children new words but also to teach about what life used to be when they were young (Yosso, 2005).

The messages really help me to find the words that I need to start talking to them about college. I know that college is important but sometimes I don’t know how to start talking to them about college. The messages have helped our conversations change. They can’t say they didn’t learn anything in school, because, well for my child in the program, I know exactly what is going on in class.
Elizabeth now feels prepared to start conversations about her children’s future because she knows what is happening in class. Now, with the messages, she knows what lessons were covered and what was heard and seen in class. These text messages teach the parents how to start conversations about what is being learned. By using the EoR model along with Community Cultural Wealth, Yes! is able to provide the resources, and add to their available knowledge, so that students are learning in each of the environments they spend their time in; home and school.

The five Latina mothers who shared their testimonio for this study, all are engaging with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phone. They are using technology that is readily available and easy for them to use. This means that they can open the text messages and engage on their own time in a safe and welcoming environment without having to wait to be cleared to enter the school. Mothers engage with the Yes! Curriculum as a family. Their spouses and other children, not only the Yes! participants, are benefiting and are joining the conversations. Opening the messages together helps to bond and unify them while instilling the importance of making decisions as a family. The affirmations and conversation starters help to improve communications while increasing college and career awareness at home.

How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at a San Antonio area elementary school use the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture?

Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future

Esperanzas mean hopes. Hopes for a better life and for better opportunities with postsecondary education is what all mothers shared is their want for their children’s future. Every mother that I spoke to expressed that they would like a better future for their child than what they had growing up. Sometimes the mothers got very emotional when I asked them about the future for their children and their family’s past. Clearly, it is very important for them to make
sure that their children have better opportunities than they had growing up. Every parent wants a better world for their children, regardless of the parents’ educational or socioeconomic level. Unfortunately, not everyone has the skills or even the circumstances to make those opportunities possible for their children.

Aracely appreciates that the messages are easy to access and understand. It is important for her that she now has an idea of how to talk to her children about the importance of planning for their future and not face the same hardships that she and her family had when she was growing up. She lived a difficult childhood, but the adversities helped to form her and make her a stronger person. These adversities gave her the resistant capital necessary to motivate her to plan a better future for her children.

I was born and raised in San Antonio. I’m 31. I am married and have 3 kids, one is 14, another 13, and my 5-year-old, who is in the program. I have two jobs. I work at HEB and also at a cash place. I got pregnant when I was in high school. I had my first child when I was 18 years old as a senior in high school. I remember that was a very hard time. It was very hard for me to continue with school. My oldest child was born with health issues and that was very difficult. But he is strong and is recovering. I liked the fact that the 1st message was a video and you all explained exactly what the program was and what our role (as parents) was. The messages help me to set a better example for all my children, not only for Steve (Yes! participant). I was very young as a single mom to my first child. Now that I have more experience, I feel more present in their lives, if that makes any sense. Everything that we have gone through has helped to bring us closer and make us stronger. Now it’s like we are all recovering, not only my son. And we all feel hope that we can have better lives and careers.
Aracely feels that as a young mother, she was not setting great examples for her oldest children. She felt embarrassed for not going to college, and had a difficult time sharing with me that she went back to get her GED out of guilt, because she knows that education is the way to a better future. She and her family are happy to be receiving text messages from Yes! Our Kids Can to know about their child’s classroom activity for the Yes! curriculum. Aracely states that her family is able to fully and graciously engage with her child’s school thanks to the family curriculum text messages she is receiving on her mobile phone. She says that due to her work schedule and her duties as mother, caretaker, and wife, she does not always have the flexibility needed to attend school events and therefore is not “engaged” in the same way that other parents may be. However, she also feels more connected and in tune with her child and the school because she is able to check these text messages on her own time. Aracely shows a strong form of aspirational capital in her testimonio.

Belinda shed a few tears when she began to talk about her oldest son and his problems with drugs and depression. She was young and did not have a lot of good role models to follow. She did not have anyone giving her advice or affirmations to help her be a mother. She appreciates our messages and the Yes! curriculum. Belinda explains how she and her oldest son have faced many difficult barriers. She has a strong sense of resistant capital and hopes that nobody ever has to deal with mental illness and drugs, like she has. This experience has made her stronger.

Well, it's kind of difficult to talk to the kids but they know like my older son with drug problems and they've asked the question like, ‘Why isn't he going to school, like why isn't he going to college’ It's a little bit difficult to answer that one with them but they understand. They know it's kind of more... To me I feel like they understand more (at a
younger age). I know that things would have been completely different with my older son, if I would have been receiving your messages back then. I would have had hope like I do now for the rest of my kids. I now feel that we can achieve our dreams. Even though we go to therapy, the messages we receive about the curriculum really help us plan the jobs and even the school they can go to.

Belinda got very personal in her *testimonio*. She got emotional as she was sharing with me very personal details on the life of her oldest, 20 year old son. He is not doing well health wise. He does not have a stable job or an education and living in poverty, she has no financial means to help him out. He has had to go into drug rehabilitation now. As a mother, she feels that she was young and let him down because she was not able to guide him to a better future. Belinda had two children with a man that was abusive towards her and their two children. Later on, she was able to leave him but still feels that she let her oldest son down, because of her inexperience. She expresses how much hope she feels now for her younger kids that she did not necessarily feel for her older son. Now, she is going to therapy and also feels that the Yes! messages are helping to ground her and think about the possibilities of success for her family.

Crystal is proud of being a stay at home mom and appreciates that she can help her children with homework and have the time to be engaged with their education. However, she does wish that she had a career so that she could better financially support her family. She hopes, like the other four mothers, that education will help them escape from generational poverty. Though she does not have any college experience, she has seen many positive role models and believes that her children can also have a successful career and a successful future. She has been a full time stay at home mom for the last 10 years and would like to go back for a medical office management certificate in the future. This is an example of aspirational capital.
I went to school for a little while and then I got pregnant. And then I went to school again, but I went to one of those vocational schools. It's just the certificate I guess, for the medical office specialist. But then I didn't work because I got pregnant and then my husband is like, "No. No daycare." I stay at home with the kids. We don't believe in daycare. Too much stuff happens in daycares and it is very expensive, and money is always tight, you know? So, I haven't worked in 10 years, and my youngest is gonna go to Pre-K so I do plan on going back to school so that way I could refresh myself and get a career so that we can live better. The messages even work for me and help me think about my own career when I’m ready. I know that all of the bad times, make us stronger.

For Crystal, like the other mothers, it was difficult to admit that they have difficulties making ends meet at home financially. Her testimonio was paused a few times when her voice broke as she was telling me about the poverty situation in her home. The barriers that Crystal has lived gave her resistant capital which she now uses to face social and academic obstacles (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Diana talked about how her own parents faced financial barriers which prevented them to pursue an education. She and her husband immigrated from Mexico. Like many Mexican families, Diana’s family faced many obstacles while still living in Mexico. Immigrants face many forms of oppression and discrimination, even today. These experiences serve to make people more resistant.

Si, pero ellos desgraciadamente no tuvieron educación. Mi mama fue hasta 4to de primaria y mi papa si este estuvo a punto de entrar a la Universidad, pero no logro entrar porque era su deber encargarse de su nueva familia. Pues mi mama, más que nada fue la ayuda económica que la detuvo de estudiar. Ellos nacieron en un rancho donde no había
escuela entonces tenían que caminar bastante para llegar a una escuela. Pero ahora yo siento que si hay esperanzas para un mejor futuro. Aquí, además de los mensajes y del programa, estamos aprendiendo que pueden tener una mejor vida con una carrera.

Yes, but they unfortunately did not have an education. My mother went until 4th grade and my father, he was about to enter the University but couldn’t enroll because he needed to take care of his new family. Well my mom, more than anything was the financial help which stopped her from going to school. They were born in a ranch where there was no school, so they had to walk a lot to get to a school. But now I feel that there is hope for a better future. Here, because the messages and the program, we are learning that they can have a better life with a career.

Diana seemed embarrassed to explain that respect and good manners were more important for her as for many Latin@ families than academic preparation. She explained that academic education was “en segundo plano,” which literally translates to “second priority.” Yet Diana is well aware of her possession of resistant and aspirational capital. In spite of having those barriers growing up and her own parents not motivating her to earn a degree, she still understands the importance of an education. She knows that her family bond is strong. She knows that they hold navigational capital to find a way to succeed. She is using these types of capital as ventajas to help increase the chance of success for her children’s future.

Elizabeth’s parents, like Diana’s, also were born and raised in Mexico. She explained to me that both the maternal and paternal families were not educated but rather focused more on working physical labor jobs and on the traditional duties for each of their genders. Elizabeth’s testimonio shows that in spite of not having a formal education, her parents had a strong sense of aspirational capital.
Both my mom and dad are from a rancho in Mexico and education wasn’t really important to them. My dad’s family had some money, but it was all in land and animals, they really didn’t have professions. My grandfather sold crops and animals so that’s how they had money and land. When my dad and his siblings grew up, they all helped in the farm and in the farming and ranching business. Well, my aunts all got married young, because their job was to get married and be mothers. My mother and her family also lived in a village. Her father was in sales, but they didn’t have any formal education. My mother’s family also had the same idea about women and the importance of them getting married and having children. So, my mother and father got married young and they never really had the opportunity of continuing their education. My father had to work to buy food and pay for all the living expenses when they got married. My parents would tell me about how important it was to get educated. So I feel I pass that on to my kids and now with the program, I know what to tell them about college.

Elizabeth explained that for all of the women in her family, both from her maternal and paternal families, their “job” was to find a husband, get married, have children and raise them. This shows that her family also has a strong sense of familial capital. Familial capital is very important especially when combined with aspirational capital.

All of the mothers that volunteered to share their testimonios are currently living at or below the set poverty level. None of them have a bachelor’s degree and neither do any of their parents. Their children are set to be the first generation to have a college degree. Family is very important to Latin@s and these testimonios support that. By showing them the importance of being engaged with education as a family with the text messages they receive, they are learning that education is something they can access and that in fact, it is the key to success for
generations to come. Regardless of their income, all of these families have high hopes for each of
their children to pursue a postsecondary education and earn a degree. They are well aware of the
barriers, but they know that this makes them stronger.

Aracely talked about how she feels hopeful and aspires to a better future for her children.
With the text messages, now she feels that she has more knowledge to instill hope in her family.
She teaches them about how important it is to work hard and want to be a better person. Even
though in her own life, they do not have many positive role models, Yes! is sending her
messages which include Latin@ role models and assets to help encourage her family to work
hard in school.

We want for them to always want to do better. Normally my child asks me about the
messages, and we open them right after school. Then we are talking about it all evening
with the rest of the family [other children and father]. We take time to talk about our
plans and their [the children’s education and career aspirations and] futures. We talk
about the super skills and working hard. Now I feel that college is important in order to
have more opportunities in life. Also, the messages have helped me to even start the
conversations about college with my two older kids. We talk about working hard and to
keep trying even though we sometimes don’t get things right the first time. Like the song.

Aracely, like the rest of the mothers that shared their testimonio, told me that the text
messages start conversations with the entire family. They are all involved and engaged with what
is going on in school, with the Yes! curriculum. The conversations start with the student that
participates in the program and continues with the rest of the siblings and builds up as a
wholesome topic of conversation as a family. Now they talk about trying new things even if they
make mistakes. They talk about always working hard and never giving up. She explains that they
see the possibilities of college and great careers for her children. Now, she has clear and concrete steps for her children to follow in order to have a successful future by working hard.

Belinda, whose oldest son has been in legal and drug problems, explains the excitement in the conversations her children have since participating in Yes! Resistant capital is very apparent in her testimonio. She and her oldest son went through many very difficult times in their young lives. This has helped to make her stronger and to know that she does not want to make the same mistakes again.

You know my aunts, they’d talk when I was younger and I was pregnant and I was still in high school, I guess they all assumed that I wouldn't make it, that I would drop out, but I kept going. I worked, and I went to school, and I took care of my son and tried to do my best. I did graduate. It took me a little bit longer, but I made it, and I did graduate. I tell them they have to keep going even if it is difficult, to keep trying. Matthew is my 13, almost 14-year-old. He says, "I want to do something with computers. I want to learn cyber security." I don't know if he wants to learn programming and apps. We kind of joke about it but we're like, "Matthew is going to create an app and make millions of dollars, and you're going to buy us a big house," you know? It’s like, we never had these conversations before. Like, we have more information, and these are the steps to follow. If something breaks, now he tries hard to fix it until he gets it right. He knows that mistakes are just part of life and he works hard to get better.

The ideas are clearer, and their path is now filled with hope since participating in Yes! Belinda’s family has learned that it is ok to make mistakes, but they have to work hard every day and try to always be better. She now feels equipped to start revealing the hidden path of success with the bits of texts she receives from Yes! Her children hear hope around them when they have
real conversations about the steps to success and a great career by going to school every day and working hard. They know the importance of trying and why they have to work hard every day in everything they do. She is using the Yes! curriculum to engage and motivate her children. She explains how now her family has hopes for a better future.

Being young does not stop Crystal’s children from dreaming big. Yes! has given them hopes for success. They already understand that going to school is the first step to being prepared adults. She wants for them to plan for their future and have an education before having a family. Crystal and her family have a strong sense of perseverance and grit to work hard. They are fully engaging with the curriculum and leveraging the ventajas of their culture to be successful in school. Crystal understands why it is important to work hard every day.

Me and my kids would sit around and talk about it and it's things that I would ... It's things I would never think about talking to them about because they were so young. They're young and I just never .... I didn't do it as a child. I didn't talk to my parents about it as a child, so I wasn't really experienced in that, in having hopes for my own future, so I didn't talk to them about it, so this gives me a lot of hope. It really actually made me feel happy that I actually listened to my 1st grader about the program because all my kids benefited from it. They talk about how working hard is a skill. You have to think about what you're gonna do now when you graduate high school but use the skills you gain every day. Stay out of trouble, focus on your work, because the people around you are not gonna be there when you get older. You have to be prepared for your own future. You can aim for the stars and keep trying to get there. Of course, I'd be like "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Those things I would ask him, but as far as education and stuff I never did. And the fact they even knew about it because the fact that they hear
about it at school, they talk to them about it at school. And my son he was already
watching the videos and stuff at school. So, he told me, "Mom, there's a video. Where's
the video?" And I was like, a video? And then I went to one of the meetings over there.
They had a little thing over there, and they showed us, and they had talked about the
video and I was like, wow I didn't even, now. They have the I Will Go to College and the
I Try Hard and those are the ones we play in the kitchen all the time.

Crystal never thought, before her child participated in Yes!, that it was time to talk to her
children about the goals for their future and why it is important to always work hard. The
messages have given her hope and clear information on how to start the conversations in order to
prepare. Now she is happy and hopeful to know that she will have tips and solid advice on how
to help her family plan their future.

Diana said it best when she explained that her wish is for her children to always have
enough. She thinks that Yes! has helped her family think more about the future and has given
them hope for a better life by working hard every day in school. Aspirational capital is evident in
all of the mothers interviewed. Diana has high aspirations and educational expectations for her
children to have a better life than she and her husband had.

Yo si quisiera que tuvieran una buena vida y que no carecieran de cosas y que viviera
bien. Y que viviera bien y su casa establecida. Y que tenga mejores oportunidades que las
que nosotros tuvimos. Creo que el programa nos ha ayudado a pensar más en el futuro y
nos da más esperanzas de que tengan mejor vida. Y si lo pueden lograr siempre
trabajando duro.

I do want them to have a good life and not to lack things and to live well. And that they
live well and establish a home. And have better opportunities than we had. Now the
program has actually given me hopes and we think it’s possible for them to have a better life. They can achieve it by always working hard.

Diana, like every parent, wants a better future for her children. She shares in her testimonio that she wishes that her children will never lack the basics like she and her husband did. She is hopeful that her children have an established life and home and that they have better opportunities than she has had. She is using the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future and successful careers for her children. They talk to each other about working hard to be better in school. They know they can all reach their goals and the children can have a better life than her and her husband.

Elizabeth, 28, talked about how the Yes! messages start some conversations that then lead to bigger conversations. She was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley and is a single mother. She has 3 kids, one is 12, another 9, and the youngest is the 6-year-old, who participated in Yes! As a young girl she never felt she could go to college because her family never got clear instructions on how to go to college. Her parents taught her to work hard, but she never knew that college was at her reach. Now that she has her own children, she feels it is her responsibility to be informed and send her kids to college. She knows that she may not be able to pay for it, but she also knows that there are many types of scholarships, financial aid and even loans that her kids can apply for in order to go to college. She remembers when her parents were raising her, college was not really a topic at the dinner table, so she didn’t think she could ever start college conversations with her own children. She now feels hope and has high aspirations for her own children.

The text messages are starting conversations about how to do things after high school and why it is important to go to school and try very hard right now in elementary. These
messages are making me stop and think so that we can actually talk to them and use the conversations from the messages we receive. We don’t only talk about school thanks to these messages. We also talk about career and life and all the options available after high school. We have a more positive outlook for their future.

Elizabeth is now more optimistic that her children will have a better future. They are talking about education and also planning for careers after high school. She feels hopeful for her children’s future and now she is thinking more about how to talk about what to do after high school. She has the resistant and aspirational capital to guide her children through graduation and on to college.

The mothers that shared their testimonios all have esperanzas for a better life and future for their children. Some got very emotional during our interviews when sharing their hopes and dreams for their children. Every parent wants a better world for their children, regardless of the parents’ educational background. Esperanzas mean hopes. The mothers are now aware of the opportunities that come with postsecondary education. Yes! is helping families learn about college and career and is sending text messages to help create a college going culture in their homes to give them real hope for better futures.

Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture

Cultura and having characters, songs, and images that show appreciation of the Latin@ culture was very important to all the mothers interviewed. Linguistic capital refers to the various language and communication skills students bring with them from home to their school or college. Linguistic capital in Latin@ children includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in both English and Spanish (Yosso, 2005). Many times, parents do not speak English, so children must translate for their parents.
Aracely talks about the first few messages she received from Yes! She talks about how linguistic capital is being used in the family engagement messages. She feels it is important and welcoming to include English and Spanish texts as well as songs and videos to motivate families. She really thinks it helps that her children now have role models that they can identify with and follow their footsteps to be successful.

I remember that the school sent out a flyer about Yes! Our Kids Can before starting. The very first message that I remember receiving was the videos of you and Sofia, the Success Coach. These were in English and Spanish. I feel it’s cool that my children can see and listen to characters that are Mexican like us. They do have some teachers that are Hispanic, but not a lot of good role models out there to look up to.

Aracely shared the importance of having bilingual messaging in the introductory flyers and in the text messages and materials sent home by us. This caught her attention immediately. She continued to expect and welcome our bilingual messages because she felt we gave her “easy instructions” on how to be a better mother. This is important because everyone, especially young children, can easily relate to people that share similar characteristics. Having characters with dark skin, brown eyes, and dark hair and Spanish names, like Paco, Sofia, Señor Lionel, and Luz, really helps to instill pride in their Latin@ culture while motivating them to go to school and get good grades.

Belinda feels it is important to make everyone feel welcome and appreciated by providing bilingual information. She feels that it is important to have connections with their ancestry and culture. She talks about how speaking Spanish is important for her children to communicate with older family members.
It's important to have both languages. I mean we're a Hispanic family. My parents are not from Mexico, but we don't speak Spanish. Our last names, and I don't know somewhere along the line. We currently, we have no (family). I've never even been across; I mean I've been to Eagle Pass, but I've never been across the border to Mexico because we have no relatives. Still we think it is cool for my kids to know more Spanish than me. Because then they can communicate better in two languages. My mother says that she wishes that I spoke more Spanish, but it was different before, and she was embarrassed to let me learn Spanish when I was young.

Though Belinda speaks fluent English, she believes that parents will feel more welcome in general when the messages are sent in English and Spanish. She understands the importance of culture and feels that schools want to engage every parent when they take the time to send information out in both languages. Her mother grew up in a time in Texas that Spanish was not allowed to be spoken in schools, so Belinda was prohibited from speaking Spanish. She really feels embarrassed sometimes that she can’t speak the language of her people.

Crystal, 32, mother of 4 children, thinks it is important that her children have characters to look up to. She thinks that having characters and songs that encourage and motivate her children is important. Her children will be the first in all of her generations and before, to attend college. Yes! is using the wealth that Latin@s have gained with their experiences to motivate families to engage in their children’s education. When the Yes! cartoons look like her children and are teaching them about the importance of college and careers, it is her opinion that they are more engaged in the messages. This gives her more evidence to believe that there is hope for a better future for her children.
The reading videos and stories of other kids and characters that look like my kids, keep them entertained. The Spanish songs and games and puzzles help to see the different careers and real people share. We don’t have a lot of people in our family that have good careers. Nobody has a college degree, but I know it is important. You know, to have role models for them.

Yes! also designs characters that are culturally relevant to Latin@ students and families. This includes having brown skin tones and Spanish names. This helps to connect with the students. It is important to provide positive role models to foster aspirations and hope for the future (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Crystal explains it well in her testimonio. Yes! also designs characters that are culturally relevant to Latin@ students and families. This includes having brown skin tones and Spanish names. This helps to connect with the students. It is important to provide positive role models to foster aspirations and hope for the future (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Crystal explains it well in her testimonio.

My kids, they actually enjoyed it. And it's something that maybe other kids actually enjoy it and it's something they look forward to. The reading videos and stories of other kids and characters that look like them, keep them entertained.

Having videos with characters that look Latin@ is important for Crystal and her family. She feels that using the smart phone to send videos to keep children engaged and “entertained” is very smart. Having fun material sent out that engages children by way of video and music is something they look forward to. Crystal, like many Latin@ mothers stay home full time to provide care for their children.

My interview with Diana was completely conducted in Spanish. Diana is 33 years old and she is from Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Her daughter is in first grade. Diana only finished one year of high school in Mexico, and her parents do not have a college degree. Diana’s parents are both from a ranch in Mexico; surviving, having manners and respect for others was the main priority for them when she was growing up. For her, especially, having our text messages delivered in Spanish is very important. Diana also feels that having bilingual games and Latin@
career videos and characters is important, since Spanish is the main language they speak at home. Yes! understands the importance of family curriculum where Latin@ parents can use the wealth of knowledge, skills, and resources available to them, to engage in their children’s education and create a college going culture. For Diana, all of the forms of capital are important and being used in raising her family.

Si, al resto de mis hijos y a mi marido, mi hija y yo le platicamos sobre los mensajes y lo que ella hizo y aprendió en clase. Es bien interesante ver que las caricaturas y las canciones usan palabras que nosotros usamos. Todos pueden tener una buena carrera aunque seamos hijos de inmigrantes.

Yes, to the rest of my children and my husband, my daughter and I talked about the messages and what she did and learned in class. It is very interesting to see that the cartoons and the songs that are used are words that we use. Everyone can have a good career even if we are children of immigrants.

Diana, like the other moms, feels that bilingual messages and Latin@ kids in our videos and pictures are very important. However, for Diana, the important part of the curriculum was showing Latin@s share information about their career and their job; this was something she feels very happy and hopeful about. She feels that the message being communicated is that everyone can have a good career, even first-generation Americans. Because Spanish is the language that is spoken in their home, Diana appreciates that her children have role models that help to instill the important of the Latin@ culture and learning at the same time. Language helps to connect her family and Yes! is well aware of this. Rendón (2014) found that though some Spanish speakers have strong noticeable accents when speaking English and are sometimes even discriminated
against because of this, they also recognized that being bilingual in Spanish and English helps them to communicate and to form relationships with others (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014).

Even though Elizabeth is fluent in English, because that is all she learned in school, she still feels that not everyone in the schools is well-educated in the Mexican culture. This is another reason that she appreciates our messages being bilingual and culturally relevant. The messages make her feel engaged and that she is connected with the activities her child is doing in school. She knows what her daughter is learning each week and she knows how to ask her child, all of her children, about what they are learning in school, what their plans are after high school, and how to help them succeed.

My parents only speak Spanish, so to me, keeping the Spanish language alive in our home is super important. I know that the schools are trying their best, but it feels good to know that they care about our cultura and language and have the Yes! program available for us to use. I like that the videos and the games also have some Spanish in it so that they learn to write it; you know the captions under the videos. So they can better communicate with their welitos (grandparents).

In the ecology of the Yes! students the resources in the ZPD are the teachers, the families, and the app. The Yes! app contains all of these bilingual resources ready for students to use. Elizabeth talks about the importance of having these resources available for her children to learn more about their language and culture. Some of the students’ grandparents only speak Spanish so this is how the children must communicate with them. The grandparents are also part of the zone and available resources.

Elizabeth explained this same effect on her children in her own words. She very much enjoys that her children can see the characters as a role model in the videos and games. She is
aware of the advantages that her own children will have because they are bilingual and speak fluent Spanish.

These messages are very well designed and thought out. I love that the videos look like us, if you know what I mean. I like that the accents and the color of the skin of the cartoons are like us. It really helps for my kids to see that they are represented well and that they also can be all of these careers that we know about. I want for them to continue speaking Spanish so that they have better opportunities when they grow up.

Elizabeth noted how important it is that the Yes! messages have characters and language that matches what her family uses at home. She uses the messages along with the songs and videos to start conversations with her entire family about their futures. She feels that it is important to have her families’ culture represented in the Yes! messages and the classroom curriculum to keep the families engaged. She adds that it is very important that Latin@s are well represented in the careers featured in the videos. She is using social, linguistic and cultural capital as ventajas to help better educate her children. Though she does not have a college degree, she is using the wealth of knowledge and cultural capital that comes naturally to Latin@s.

Children learn racial and gendered structures of the Latin@ culture by observing the race and gender of adults in different professional positions. If there are no people that look like them in the careers they look up to, this sends them the message that people of their culture, race or gender, may not fit well in that career (Zirkel, 2002). Yes! Our Kids Can is very mindful about the importance of showing positive role models to the students with characters and cartoons that are also part of the Latin@ community. The career videos that are shown to the students are also
very culturally relevant. By connecting with the families, using linguistic and social capital, Yes! is using the values that these families have known their whole lives.

**Summary of Findings**

Using readily available technology, smart phones, to engage in their child’s education has been a welcome change for the mothers that shared their *testimonios*. *Familia* and the commitment of supporting the emotional but more than that, the financial well-being of the family showed through in the *testimonios* shared about these Latin@ families. Creating a college going culture is now a mission of all of the mothers. The text messages helped to demystify the college going process by helping families start their conversations. All of the mothers expressed the importance of being engaged and appreciated the use of technology which allows them to engage on their own schedule and in their own unique ways. *Esperanzas* for better opportunities and postsecondary education is something that all mothers shared is the hope for their children. *Cultura* and having characters, songs, and images that show appreciation of the Latin@ culture was very important to all the mothers interviewed.

**Conclusion**

By inviting the mothers to share their *testimonio*, I helped them to relive their experiences while participating in the Yes! Our Kids Can program. They shared about receiving text messages from Yes! and how this journey has helped them create a college going culture at home. Helping these mothers talk about their experiences with Yes! uncovered that they are using all six forms of capital of community cultural wealth to talk to their children about college. This type of uncovering supports Yosso’s (2005) theory of the importance of drawing upon these forms of capital to be successful in environments that were not created with people of color in mind (Yosso, 2005). The mothers are now able to construct the meaning of receiving these text messages and can express in their own words how these now play a part in creating a college
going culture at home. The above temas or themes show that the text messages are effective and are helping families start their conversations about their postsecondary and college options. These temas are also shown in Figure 7. Latin@ families feel hope and are learning how to start the journey to college and career training by planning and being prepared. Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum by opening the messages and following their child’s weekly school and classroom activities as a family. Though the Yes! program is currently only in early elementary grades, the family curriculum is helping every member of the family at homes, including the other children and the parents. Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to start conversations that create a feeling for hope of a better life for their children and to emphasize the importance of knowing one’s ethnic culture.

The next chapter presents a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings. It provides a description of the significance of the temas or themes found from this study and how they contribute to the current literature. I also include recommendations for future research, for policy and practice. These recommendations are meant to provide a working model for schools and community partners that are working to create a college going culture in Latin@ homes by increasing family engagement in order to increase educational college attainment and help close the educational achievement gap. I include a section about what I have learned in my dissertation journey. Finally, it includes the conclusion for the study.
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings as well as a description of the temas or themes and their significance to the current literature. It will also include recommendations for future research, policy and practice and the conclusion. These recommendations are meant to provide a working model for schools and community partners to increase family engagement by creating a college going culture in Latin@ homes and help close the educational achievement gap. Chapter 5 included themes that were uncovered from the mothers’ testimonios and how they are using all six forms of capital of community cultural wealth to create a college going culture at their homes. The discussion section below explains how the mothers are drawing upon each of these six forms of capital to be successful in environments that were not created with people of color in mind (Yosso, 2005).

Latin@’s are one of the fastest growing racial ethnic groups in postsecondary education. In fact, Latin@ student enrollment in postsecondary education is growing at faster rates than that of Whites (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). Over 75% of Latin@ students in the United States are first-generation college students. In 2012, 76% of Latin@ children under the age of 18, would be the first in their families to graduate college (Excelencia, 2015). Even without having college degrees Latin@ families understand the importance of education to escape generational poverty (Pew Research Center, 2016). Creating awareness about postsecondary options and opportunities during early elementary grades have better results than waiting for students to be in high school (Rippner, 2017). Research has demonstrated the importance of engaging families as early in elementary school as possible (Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2018).

Studies show that Americans are increasingly connected to the internet via smartphones and other mobile devices (Pew Research Center, 2018). Over 97% of Latin@ own cellphones,
about 86% of them are smart phones. Engaging families by using smartphones and other mobile devices may be a way to create a college going culture in Latin@ households with no college experience. Taking advantage of the high usage of mobile phones and internet connection among Latin@s, may help increase family engagement among parents and caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students. It is imperative, now more than ever, to learn how to remind Latin@s to access their tools to motivate to have a success mindset. These tools are the capital that come with being from a community of color (Yosso, 2005). Latin@ parents must feel empowered with the ventajas and conocimientos that they have acquired from their own lived experiences (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Yes! Our Kids Can® (Yes!), an educational technology (ed tech) non-profit organization in San Antonio, is reaching out to families (parents and caregivers) with a family curriculum via text messages to share the opportunities that come with postsecondary education and how to prepare for and access these opportunities.

Summary of the Study

This qualitative study with a narrative approach, listened to the testimonios of five mothers to learn about their engagement with and use of family curriculum text messages to help create a college going culture in their home. They are the mothers of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade in a San Antonio school that participated in the YES! program. The study was guided by the learner centric ecology of resources and cultural community wealth conceptual frameworks (Luckin, 2015; Yosso, 2005). Participants met the following criteria: (a) is the parent or caregiver of a participating student of the Yes! Our Kids Can curriculum in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district, (b) does not have a bachelor’s degree, (c) identify as the parent of a Latin@ child, (d) is signed up to receive the curriculum via text messages from the Family Engagement team of Yes! Our Kids Can.
The mission of Yes! is to disrupt the cycle of generational poverty by creating a Success Mindset™ in low income families that encourages high educational expectations and career readiness. Yes! was founded in San Antonio and is currently partnered with five school districts in Bexar County and one school district in the Rio Grande Valley.

This study was guided by two research questions:

1. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization?

2. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the YES! curriculum to create a college going culture?

In order to better understand the issues in creating a college going culture in Latin@ homes, recent literature was reviewed about pertinent topics including studies about Latin@ students in education, college going culture, family engagement and using technology for family engagement. Literature about the guiding frameworks, methodology, data collection methods and analysis were also reviewed. Existing literature shows that families engaged in their children’s education beginning in early grades, has a positive impact on their academic performance (Crane, 2012; Dearing, Simpkins, Kreider, & Weiss, 2006; Wilson, 2018). However, literature still does not show the testimonios of the lived experiences of Latin@ families that are using technology to receive a family curriculum via text messages to create a college going culture in their homes and what their perceptions are about these experiences.

**Discussion of Findings**

Through very thorough and sometimes emotional testimonios, five mothers described their detailed experiences about their participation in Yes! and how they engaged with and used
the family curriculum text messages. During three individually scheduled interviews, each of the mothers shared details about their own childhood and talked about their families’ educational culture and background. The individually scheduled interviews used testimonio as a way to encourage a type of storytelling from the mothers. Recent studies show that using testimonio type narratives has been useful to argue against deficit based stereotypes (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). This study was focused on the strengths and assets of participating families as well as the promising practices of Yes! when partnering with elementary schools. By focusing on the ventajas and conocimientos of and by giving voz to Latin@ families, who have been traditionally oppressed in education and other institutions, this study looks to challenge these deficit based perspectives and highlight the importance of using community cultural wealth as leverage to increase educational attainment rates among Latinos in the United States. Like much of the literature shows, most parents want the best for their children, and these five mothers were definitely not the exception (Benitez, 2011; Crane, 2012; Excelencia, 2015; Fernandez, 2010; Garcia, 2012). Yes! is sending text messages to participating families to help create a college going culture in their homes.

During the first interview with the mothers they were informed of the purpose of the interview and formal introductions were made. The mothers learned about my background as a first-generation college student and I gave a brief explanation of my life and educational journey that has led me to this point as well as my personal interest and position with Yes! During the second interview the mothers were invited to share more about themselves, their family, their educational background, as well as their experience with Yes! After the first two interviews with each of the mothers, I created vignettes about each one of them. During the third interview, mothers had the opportunity to look at the vignette that had been created for each of them as a
way of member checking. This interview was also used to elaborate anything that may not have been clear during the first two interviews. It also allowed mothers to clarify, extend, or modify their responses. This allowed mothers the opportunity to give thick rich description of their testimonios (Creswell, 2009).

The two questions that guided this study uncovered the four temas or themes that were presented in the findings in chapter 4. The first research question was: how do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization? This first question led to the following findings: mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones. Mothers open the text messages and engage with the curriculum as a family. The second research question was how do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture? This second question uncovered the following findings: mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future. Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture. The testimonios of the mothers in this study uncovered several temas or themes. Discussion below goes further into details of how and why it is wise to engage families using their smart phones.

Tema #1 Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones

This tema uncovered that mothers are using their smart phones to engage with the Yes! curriculum and be more involved with their child’s education. All five of the mothers that shared their testimonio about how they engage with the curriculum answered that they engage on their smart phone and they do this at least three times per week. Smart phones are resources that
families have access to and are proving to be always in the ecology of students. Luckin (2008, 2013, 2015) created the Learner Centric Ecology of Resources model grounded off an interpretation of Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development framework. For decades school administrators have been seeking ways to positively engage students’ families in their education (Excelencia, 2015). Family engagement has a strong positive impact on student academic performance and overall motivation in schools (Crane, 2012). This study builds on prior research that states that even parents without a college degree understand that the education aspirations they have for their own children have a positive link with their success in school (Wood & Bauman, 2017). Yet when Latin@ parents and families are not able to attend school events in person, their absence is often misinterpreted as lack of interest to their children by educators (Crane, 2012; Flowers, 2015; Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015). This theme from this study contrasts prior literature and illustrates that for these five mothers, the assumptions are incorrect and that they are very engaged in the education of their children at all times since they always have access to their mobile phone.

Yes! Our Kids Can is a joyful, engaging and fun digital learning tool designed to encourage students and their parents, especially those living in poverty, to stay in school, work hard and make good grades. It also helps families envision a brighter, more successful future and career and starts them on a college track. This study builds on existing literature that shows that Latin@ families can leverage their forms of cultural capital to succeed. Participating mothers are using navigational capital when they use technology to engage with the curriculum. Since they engage on their cell phone and open these messages to complete the activities together as a family, familial capital is also used widely by all the interviewed mothers. Navigational capital is the way that Latin@s and other communities of color learn to navigate a new environment by
using skills and abilities gained when maneuvering through unsupportive and sometimes even hostile environments because of their cultural background (Yosso, 2005). Most of the families served by Yes! do not have college experience. Yes! is guiding their pathway to success and showing them the opportunities available by obtaining an education and how to access it. By using a smart phone, families are able to engage with schools and their children’s learning in the welcoming environment of their own home. They can open the text messages and engage on their own time.

Mothers are using technology that is readily available and easy to use. In their testimonios, mothers say they now know what their child is doing in the classroom and how they are learning about college and careers. Family engagement to these mothers who shared their testimonio, means being involved in what their child is doing in the classroom during their Yes! curriculum and having real conversations about their educational and career aspirations with them. The technology as well as the family, are resources within their Zone of Available Assistance (ZAA) (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). The Yes! curriculum, the family text messages, the school, the app and the teachers, are part of the ZAA for the students. ZAA refers to the different resources that are within the reach of a learner which may provide different types of assistance or learning resource at a particular time (Luckin, 2015).

Though some schools covered in recent studies have found promising practices on engaging families by using Epstein’s (2002) family partnership framework, these practices do not work well with every Latin@ family (Epstein, et al., 2002; Flowers, 2015). This study builds on current literature and shows that when given the opportunity, Latin@ families perceive themselves as being involved in their children’s education (Excelencia, 2015; FitzGerald, 2013; Garcia, 2012; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). By using a smartphone, the mothers in this study are
engaged with their children’s education. This is another reason why it is important to have a more current and relevant definition of family engagement. This study builds on prior research that explains that family engagement needs to be redefined (Lawrence, 2013). Family engagement cannot only be defined as parents going to the schools for events or meetings.

The five mothers that shared their testimonio engage with the curriculum on their smartphone which is readily available and easy to use. This shows that by sending the family curriculum to the families on their cell phones parents will be able to access the curriculum easily. This study builds on prior research that shows that Latin@ families use all the technology tools they have access to in order to support learning for their children (Levinson & Barron, 2018). Another study by Olmstead (2013) also showed that using technology to reach families is proving to be effective (Olmstead, 2013). However, that same study found that teachers and administrators were not using technology effectively to reach families and engage them with their children’s education. The studies reviewed show the importance of including culturally relevant content when Latin@ families are involved (Benitez, 2011; Garcia, 2012). This means that it is important to understand that Latin@ families’ needs are complex, and that engagement needs to be culturally sensitive and scaffolded rather than focusing solely on the delivery platform technology and the size and time of the messages. Lewin (2010) argues that participatory design offers an effective means of addressing this and should be the starting point for any ed tech curriculum (Lewin & Luckin, 2010). This study adds new and important information to the literature because it goes further than connecting with Latin@ families using technology but highlights the importance of leveraging the forms of capital, engaging early in elementary school, and sending messages about the positive impact that a higher education can have on their children and their family. Though most of the Yes! participating families are
Latin@, it is safe to say that this will translate well to other groups of people of color since these forms of capital draw on the knowledges that they bring with them from their everyday life to schools.

This study shows that the mothers interviewed all had easy access to their phone and already are familiar with the technology within. The study by Olmstead (2013) also showed that Latin@ parents felt included when the messages showed appreciation to diverse cultures (Olmstead, 2013). Findings from the literature reviewed suggest that easily accessible technologies with interactive apps can help increase family engagement (Beasley, 2015; Flowers, 2015; Hashmi, 2015). Yes! is using technology with interactive assets like songs, messages, and videos to increase family engagement. The family engagement curriculum and the text messages sent to the families facilitate independence but also provide access to what the students are learning in the classroom allowing for collaborative activity. The Yes! family curriculum is purposeful and relevant to the in-classroom curriculum.

The five mothers that were interviewed for this study were between the ages 28 and 37. Which means that all of these mothers are considered millennials. A study by Ray (2013) explored the use of technology among millennial parents to engage in their children’s education. It showed, like my study does, that parents between the ages of 23 and 38, prefer emails, texts, and tweets for communication and messages from school than printed papers or hard copies (Ray, 2013). Yet despite many years and much research showing the importance of using technology to engage families, only a few schools are using innovative technology to reach them (Smith et al., 2011). This study adds to the literature about the importance of using technology to increase college culture in Latin@ homes. The literature did not show any study with schools or school partners using mobile phones to text culturally relevant curriculum to Latin@ families to
create a college going culture in their homes. All five of the mothers are proof that the statistic by Pew Research Center (2018) was right; 97% of Latin@ households have cellphones. Schools and other organizations or institutions that are in the work of pre-college outreach, should use technology that is easy to use and readily available, like cellphones, to reach families and make them aware of the many opportunities that come with a postsecondary education. Families without much knowledge about how to access college and families who live in poverty may not have the resources available within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), their ecology, or their mesosystem as a tool to talk to their children about escaping poverty (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Luckin, 2015; Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner & Souberman, 1978).

This study adds to the existing literature and shows an innovative way to reach Latin@ families of elementary aged students on their cell phone to create a college going culture. Yes! Our Kids Can uses regular text messages to the family’s mobile phone to empower caregivers and help them be the main influence for their child’s success. The family engagement component helps demystify the process of college preparedness and encourages consistent family participation in the effort. The text messages include tips for discussion and positive reinforcement as well as parent affirmations. Schools can take advantage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, and its focus on family engagement to close the educational achievement gaps. The law is a commitment from the U.S. Department of Education on making family engagement a priority for schools. Each district is required to invest at least 1% of their Title 1 funds for family engagement activities. The law goes on to say, that families of low-income students must be included in the decision making of the investment of these funds (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This law also recommends opportunities for using innovative methods to engage families which includes having materials in languages that families can
understand, supporting migrant families, and even provides subgrants to school district forming important collaborations with community-based organizations (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

The mothers, though unaware, are proving Vygotsky’s (1978) point about the importance of verbal interactions with children to help create a college going culture in their homes. Yes! students’ ZPD includes the mothers, siblings, if any, and the parents’ mobile phone. Vygotsky wrote about the importance of using educational technology, psychology, thought and language, thought and speech, and the use of other tools and cognitive development to teach each learner at their own level and speed (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). This study adds to existing literature by proving that Yes! is successfully using all of these resources along with the six forms of capital of CCW to reach families with a curriculum that helps to create a college going culture at home.

One of the mothers who shared their testimonio for this study specifically stated that because of school violence, her child’s school, like most other schools in the country, takes security very seriously and going to the school for meetings or events is now more difficult than ever because of those measures. Recent school shootings in the United States have brought about extreme security measures in many school campuses. An article from 2018, talked about several violent events after Columbine in 1999 (Keierleber, 2018). The article pointed out how much money has been spent on technology to try to make school campuses safer. It explains how surveillance cameras with facial recognition and automated door locks are put in place to try to keep violent intruders out (Keierleber, 2018). However, as one of the mothers pointed out, these security measures also make it difficult for families to enter the building and engage with the schools in person.
The families must first ring the doorbell at the locked front doors. There is a camera and microphone for the school personnel to see the visitor and ask what their business is. The families must identify themselves and may then be allowed to enter the office area only. Once in the office, the parent or guardian must present a government issued identification card and that information must be cleared by a background checking system. Then, if everything is clear, the parent is allowed in the meeting room only. This is the process for each time somebody wants to visit a school and is in place in many schools around the nation. This is a good safety measure to keep children safe, but it does take a lot of time from parents and families that wish to engage in the events or meetings on campus. This study adds new data to the literature about family engagement because it brought the issue of recent school shootings to light and this was not found in any of the studies that were reviewed.

Education experts may be using an antiquated definition of parent or family engagement (Epstein, et al., 2002). Family or parent engagement has been defined as the partnership between school and family. Some administrators and teachers have taken this to mean that families must come to the school to be perceived as being involved (Epstein, et al., 2002). The old definition no longer fits the lives of many Americans. With the recent terrorist attacks and violence occurring in the schools, protective measures must be taken to protect students and school personnel (Keierleber, 2018). Latin@ families are resourceful and use other ways to navigate the systems in place to obtain what is necessary to succeed. Text messages are effective in engaging families despite the recent safety measures of closed campuses. This is also a way of using navigational capital to still be engaged with their children’s education.

Another issue that was brought up by all the mothers was the importance of feeling welcome when engaging with their children’s education. None of the mothers that were
interviewed have a college degree. Not speaking perfect English and not having a college degree may make them feel disconnected as shown by some of the recent studies reviewed (Hill & Torres, 2010; Lawrence, 2013; Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015; Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Another study found that making families feel welcomed and respected helps to keep them engaged and involved in their children’s education (Garcia, 2012). My study adds to existing literature and shows that by sending family affirmations with motivational messages and positive connections to their culture, more Latin@ families will be engaged with their children’s education. Vygotsky (1978) explains that the zone of proximal development, refers to the encouragement of educators to focus on three important components which aid the learning process. These three are: first, the presence of someone with knowledge and skills beyond that of the student, this refers to the daily in classroom curriculum and text messages provided by Yes! to the families, teachers and students. Second, social interactions with a skillful teacher that allow the learner to observe and practice what they are learning. Finally, scaffolding, or activities provided by the educator, or another source of knowledge, to support the student as they navigate through the ZPD (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). Yes! Our Kids Can uses a combination of Community Cultural Wealth and the Ecology of Resources to assist its students and families in planning for postsecondary options and uses parents, teachers, and the app with fun activities.

**Tema #2 Mothers open the text messages and engage with them as a family**

The literature shows that students learn more when their families are engaged with their education. Those families that are engaged in education have children that have higher achievement in school (Epstein, et al., 2002; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Yes! is sending messages directly to the parents’ cell phone and writes them in a way that encourages every
member of the family to participate in the conversation or activity sent in each message. Opening the messages together helps to bond and unify while instilling the importance of making decisions as a family. Familial capital is a form of cultural capital from Yosso’s community cultural wealth framework (Yosso, 2005). This study builds on the literature on the fact that Latin@s understand and pass down the sense responsibility of caring, coping, and providing for others (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Familial capital refers to the lessons and skills acquired from social interactions and life experiences. These are funds of knowledge that students and families bring from their home and cultural networks which they can later use when they are in new environments, like school and college. This study builds on existing literature that states that Latin@ families can leverage their skills to have more positive experiences and help them navigate their new experiences (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital goes beyond next of kin. Familial capital appreciates the traditional understandings of family but also embraces extended family and others from the same community. This helps Latin@s maintain a connection to extended resources and knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Yes! is providing a direct benefit to all members of the participating families not just the participating students.

Vygotsky’s ZPD emphasizes the important role that family plays during their interaction with the learner, especially when the family is a more knowledgeable others (MKO) members of this society (Vygotsky, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). In Luckin’s reinterpretation of Vygotsky’s ZPD (2008) she reworded this to the Zone of Available Assistance (ZAA). ZAA refers to the different resources that are within the reach of a learner which give access to qualities and quantities of assistance to the learner at a particular time (Luckin, 2008). The students’ families and the family curriculum, the Yes! curriculum in the classroom, the teachers and the app are all part of the ZAA for the students. Participating students are using all of the
resources within their ZPD or their ZAA to learn about their college and career options after high school.

According to American psychologist, Urie Bronfenbrenner, parents and siblings are family and are considered the immediate environment, or microsystem, for each child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Their classroom peers, teachers, and community environment are also within this ecology. The daily interactions with this level of a child’s ecology affects how children grow and what they learn. Bronfenbrenner emphasized in his research the importance of positive nurturing and supportive interactions to the intellectual development of the child. These resources within the ecology are combined with the child’s personality traits and their unique genetic and biological factors. Bronfenbrenner believed that positive interaction and spending quality time with family is crucial to healthy development of children. However, some families may not be aware or have the time or words to talk to or interact positively with their children.

Yes! is sending families conversation starters to use with their children in order to have harmonious and healthy conversation about their options after high school. Having multiple jobs and single parent homes may clash with the culturally embedded parenting values among Latin@s (Hill & Torres, 2010). Yes! is sending a scripted curriculum to families to help them make time to spend with their children like the studies recommend. Though only one child in each family was participating in a Yes! classroom, all of the children and even the parents were benefitting from the family curriculum that was received. The families are having valuable, caring and genuine conversations and are planning their children’s postsecondary education; their way out of poverty. This study builds on existing literature that shows that by having parents that are involved and show interest in education, children are motivated to learn and have higher aspirations (Crane, 2012). Familial capital is one of the six forms of capital outlined in
community cultural wealth framework (Yosso, 2005). This study adds to the literature and found that Yes! is helping families use their familial capital by giving them a culturally relevant script that allows them to talk about a successful future. The family curriculum has a valuable effect on all the members of the family, not only the child that is participating in Yes!

The value and tradition of the importance of familia is passed on by parents to their children. Conversations in the homes of these families are now different than when the parents were growing up. These conversations are positive and set higher expectations for the children with a guide and a goal in mind. They now see a way out of generational poverty by obtaining a postsecondary education. They are doing this as a family. The brothers and sisters of the participating student are also greatly benefiting from receiving the family curriculum. They are talking to each other and bonding while they are talking about their goals and their dreams beyond high school. Though the mothers do not have college experience, they feel prepared to start the conversations and navigate the way to college and career.

This study builds on existing literature by showing the family curriculum reinforces ventajas y conocimientos, advantages and knowledge, according to the mothers’ testimonios. The affirmations and conversation starters help to improve communications while increasing college and career awareness. Literature reviewed on P-20 education found that Latin@ possess many strengths and assets that are many times ignored in our current education system (Andrade, 2015; Carnevale & Fasules, 2017; Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). “Armed with their own toolbox of ventajas y conocimientos and assisted with high-quality academics and student support services, Latin@ can definitely complete a college education” (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). This study builds on existing literature about the importance of using forms of cultural capital and asset-based language to
create a college going culture among Latin@s. Yes! is helping families tap on these assets and ventajas (advantages) by reminding Latin@s about their conocimientos (bases of knowledge) in the family curriculum even at the elementary level.

The family curriculum messages sent to the mobile phones use cultural capital to motivate families and encourage them to be engaged with their children’s education. Some of the messages sent to families are meant to be conversation starters. Families receive scripted tips and advice on how to start conversations about a child’s and the family’s future. Yes! lines up the messages and assets sent to families with their strengths. The mothers that shared their testimonios all want a better life for their children. All of them have faced many adversities that come with poverty and low educational attainment when they were growing up. To this day, all of the families are living in poverty. Most Latin@ families, and all of the mothers I spoke to, have a sense of perseverance and positive outlook for their children. They use their own experience as a way to motivate their family to a better life. Yes! encourages them with messages that acknowledge their hard work, life experience and dedication as a way of affirmation for the parents.

Instead of using deficit-based language to discuss the experience, these five mothers talked about ventajas and conocimientos throughout their testimonios. They spoke about advantages and knowledge carried in their Latin@ culture. In the recent decades most of the research and statistics about the progress of Latin@s in education uses deficit-based language. This is a misunderstanding by school administrators and researchers that are using a grading and schooling system that was not created for or by people of color. This study builds on existing P-20 literature and shows that the people that are now being served by those schools are different, and so are the values and qualities of these people. Latin@s have knowledge beyond academic
education that can be used to their advantage in order to succeed (Andrade, 2015; Carnevale & Fasules, 2017; Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). The testimonios given by the mothers shared how important it is for parents to feel valued.

Yes! sends affirmations to the parents to help motivate and empower them to start conversations with their children about school. All of the mothers interviewed want a better life and more opportunities for their children. The characters and games used in the curriculum are bilingual and by seeing and listening to them speak Spanish, it gives Latin@ families a sense of pride. The mothers shared in their testimonios that they no longer feel embarrassed or unprepared to talk about college with their children. The findings of my study confirm that Latin@ families have extraordinary strengths even without having attended college. These findings support the findings of other studies in the social and education fields that show that deficit-based assumptions about Latin@ families are misguided (Andrade, 2015; Benitez, 2011; Beverley, 1993; Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006; Crane, 2012; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Excelencia, 2015; Fernandez, 2010; Garcia, 2012; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Rendón L. , 1993; Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). The findings of this study support the fact that is time to start using another lens when assessing performance of Latin@s in education and leverage their ventajas and conocimientos as to engage families and increase success.

**Tema #3 Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future**

This study builds on existing literature and shows that families are teaching their children the importance of being resilient in life. At times, some of these mothers cried when they were sharing their testimonios with me. Their own childhood was full of struggles with poverty and lack of academic education because the opportunity may not have been presented to them. This
study is consistent with Yosso’s (2005) notion of resistant and of aspirational capitals among Latin@ families. Resistant capital is developed by Latin@s in the United States, while facing many microaggressions and oppressions from institutions or members of other communities (Delgado Bernal, 2002). As a type of capital possessed by Latin@s, Yosso (2006) explains aspirational capital as the ability to hold on to hopes, esperanzas for a better future (Yosso, 2006). This study builds on the literature and shows that Yes! is helping families use aspirational capital, in spite of the barriers faced by many Latin@s, by teaching them to switch to a Success Mindset™ and use a positive outlook in order to push forward and have esperanzas for success in school and in life. Education will be their way to escape generational poverty.

Pre-college outreach initiatives that provides clear and easy to follow advice will help families escape generational poverty by planning for postsecondary goals (Kiyama, 2011). Kiyama’s (2011) study asks how to build personalized information for families to have a clear path to college (Kiyama, 2011). This study is answering questions from existing literature showing how Yes! is creating a clear path for Latin@ families by using their forms of capital to create hope for a better future. Resistant capital is another form of capital from the community cultural wealth framework and used by the Yes! family curriculum. This form of capital refers to the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Being young mothers and having a child involved in drugs were some of the challenges that these mothers had to endure. They grew and learned from these experiences and now use the strength and resilience gained to look for ways to access a better life for their families. Aspirational capital is one of the key assets that Latin@ families and students are demonstrating in the studies reviewed for higher education and this elementary school study supports that (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014; Yosso,
2005). This study builds on existing literature since it shows that the Yes! family curriculum is leveraging resistant and aspirational capital and helping the families learn about a successful future together starting in elementary school.

This study builds on the literature that shows that in general, Latin@ parents have high expectations for their children in schools (Hill & Torres, 2010). Some of the mothers cried while they were sharing their testimonios. They talked about difficulties and many barriers in their lives when they were growing up which prevented them from pursuing postsecondary education. One mother talked about her oldest son being involved in drugs and crime. She felt guilty for not having the knowledge to guide her oldest son to pursue postsecondary education. With Yes! she feels hope for a better future for her son that is in the program, but also for the rest of her children. The mothers shared that they are talking about the importance of working hard in order to be successful. This study builds on the literature that has shown that Latin@s and other underrepresented groups face many barriers and oppression when trying to navigate a space that is not theirs, like school and politics (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Rendón L. , 1993). Latin@s are made to feel like outsiders in school and our contributions have been “erased” from textbooks (Salinas, Jr., 2017, p. 747). These mothers have hope for their children to belong again and want them to contribute to society. Yes! is showing them the possibilities that can become reality with an education.

All of the mothers affirmed in their testimonios that they have high aspirational goals for their children which builds on the existing literature. These families all want for them to escape poverty and they know that education is the way out. This confirms findings of recent studies showing that today’s Latin@ families have higher educational aspirations than ever (Garcia, 2012; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Lawrence, 2013). In spite of many barriers, or perhaps
because of those barriers and microaggressions, Latin@s develop resistant capital and become stronger and more resilient. This study adds to existing literature and finds that Yes! is successfully using text messages to show families how to use their resistant capital to increase their aspirations and *esperanzas* or hopes for success in education. Yosso (2005) found that resistance takes on the form of motivation when facing inequality and other obstacles and the mothers in this study illustrate this. Though the mothers have all lived in poverty and do not have a degree, they are strong and decided to escape poverty by helping their children succeed. Some of the mothers also shared in their *testimonio* that they will pursue a degree or credential as soon as their schedule allows. Yes! is sending them positive role models and showing them that success is within their reach. Sometimes when they go to schools, the mothers may not feel like they belong, but they are resilient and understand that education is their right. They know they belong and have a right to aspire to get out of poverty.

None of the mothers who shared their testimonio for this study have a college degree. All of the mothers stated they live at or below poverty level. This builds on existing literature which shows that Latin@s are hard workers, yet most hold jobs that require no college degree and earn low wages. This divide in income from Latin@s to their white counterparts is mainly due to not having postsecondary education and not knowing the real earnings potential that come with a college degree (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017). The mothers in this study understand this fact and are working hard following the family curriculum in order to create a college going culture for their children and help them have a better shot of earning better wages when they enter the workforce. One mother shared her view of how important it is to learn to speak English in order to have a better future. This builds on the study by Carnevale and Fasules, (2017) that shows that
English speaking Latin@s earn higher wages than non-English speaking Latin@s (Carnevale & Fasules, 2017).

A report written by Horace Mann in 1848, to the Massachusetts State Board of Education states the importance of public education to balance and equalize treatment and status among all groups of people (Mann, 1848).

"Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of the conditions of men -- the balance wheel of the social machinery." (Mann, 1848, para. 9)

That quote was from a speech delivered by Mann in 1848. In 2011, an article by Katy Swalwell talked about the need to educate our students on ‘Equity Literacy.’ She explained a visit to the National Museum of Natural History in D.C. where several towers of fake dollar bills represented the net worth of people by race. The stack for white and Asian people were the tallest. The stack for black and Latin@ people were the shortest (Swalwell, 2011). Today, this is still the case and this wealth gap still exists. The mothers understand the direct relation that exists between education or lack thereof and its impact on future earnings and livelihood for their children. Mothers know that by obtaining a higher education, their children will have more opportunities for a successful career and for better earnings in the future. They are learning that a college education is possible and Yes! is teaching them ways of creating a college going culture in their homes. This study found that Latin@ families can leverage their resistant capital in order to build pride and increase their aspirational capital to obtain a higher education to break the chains of generational poverty. Mothers are using their own knowledge and adding the knowledge that Yes! is sending them to start planning their children’s path after high school A path that will give them options for college or other training that will lead to opportunities for a good paying career. This builds on existing literature that families from lower socio-economic
status have recently been engaging more in their children’s education because they understand that being engaged has a direct impact on their success in school and beyond (García & Weiss, 2017; Wood & Bauman, 2017).

The family curriculum messages instill the Latin@ tradition of hard work and resistant capital on the families to help them have higher educational aspirations and create a Success Mindset™ in their families. Families use the sentiments and feelings from the aggressions they have faced to obtain strength and learn how to navigate new environments and aspire for a better life (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Aspirational capital is another form of capital from Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth framework. Aspirational capital is the “hopes and dreams” that Latin@ students have (Yosso, 2006, p. 41). Rendón (2014) explains that ganas comes from a sense of determination, self-reliance and inner confidence (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Ganas means perseverance. This study builds on existing literature about the importance to develop a trusting relationship with Latin@ families and use technology to engage them in their children’s education (Flowers, 2015). This study adds to the literature because it goes further than connecting with Latin@ families using technology but highlights the importance of leveraging their forms of capital, engaging early in elementary school, and sending messages about the positive impact that a higher education can have on their children and their family.

Despite the inequities and many socially constructed barriers, Latin@ students and families continue to have high educational aspirations. One example of inequity in education is that many schools rely on standardized tests which have a long history of racial trends and bias that cause a disadvantage to students of color (Excelencia, 2015). One example of a barrier is how less money is allocated for public school systems because of the property values around these schools. For example, in 38 out of 48 states in which school districts have a high racial and
ethnic minority student enrollment, fewer state and local dollars are allocated per student (Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006). Latin@ families are still hopeful about their futures, in spite of the inequities, and are still working hard to have a better life. They may not have any college experience but still aspire to obtain a good education for themselves and for their children. Many see their children as licenciados, or bachelor’s degree holders in spite of them not having many role models to follow. Navigational capital is what creates this resilience in Latin@s. Even with all these barriers, Latin@s have the grit and coraje to keep going. In fact, resilience has been recognized as a set of resources and learned mechanisms of defense for people that have lived through stressful situations (Yosso, 2005). The mothers that I interviewed share about the hopes and aspirations they have for their children.

Mothers shared that they are passing on the value of hard work to their children. In order to succeed in life, it is important to work hard and go to school. Latin@ families use the feelings of being discriminated or oppressed and turn it into a determination and grit to persevere (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). The five Latin@ mothers are aware that their children going to college will take sacrifice and determination by the entire family. Studies show that Latin@s are resilient, refuse to quit and will embrace the sacrifice in order to succeed (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014).

Studies from college students also show Latin@ students are able to overcome different challenges related to poverty and lack of access to an education (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). This study builds on the literature as these same barriers are faced by the five mothers in this study whose children will be the first generation to attend college. Some of the challenges are poverty, lack of knowledge in accessing an education, lack of knowledge of the opportunities and careers available with an education, lack of Latin@ role models and language and cultural
The study builds on existing literature and found that navigational capital is helping these mothers to be resilient and instill *ganas* and hard work ethic to their children. Yes! is providing the knowledge and motivation to help them persevere in their goal to break the chains of poverty.

The *testimonios* of these mothers tell us that there is hope for Latin@ students to increase access and success in education. Yes! is helping mothers have hopes and dreams to escape generational poverty. By listening to the *voces* and *testimonios* of the caregivers themselves, we will be able to better support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of future first-generation Latin@ college students. This study found that the mothers are using the Yes! curriculum to provide their children with *ganas* to succeed and to work hard in school. The mothers are using the forms of capital of community cultural wealth and the conversations and resources provided by the Yes! curriculum to pass on their Latin@ values to their children. Existing research shows that family support in K-12 education serves as a source of aspirational capital and is a positive factor for Latin@ in their academic journey (Kiyama, 2011). This study builds on literature from the higher education field and shows that support and motivation from Latin@ families provides students with *ganas* and desire to succeed academically (Sáenz, García-Louis, Peterson Drake, & Guida, 2017). Though the mothers shared in their *testimonio* many barriers that may prevent *ganas* from developing in their children, they also have *esperanzas* and feel they now are equipped with the tools to help their children develop the *ganas* to obtain an education and to be successful. A study by Cabrera et al. (2012) found that institutional oppression and discrimination may sometimes impede *ganas* from forming in students, but it also explains how some of the most successful Latin@ students in the study use their own forms of capital to develop the *ganas* to continue and succeed in school with the
support and motivation of their parents (Cabrera, López, & Sáenz, 2012). This study, though based on elementary education, adds to that literature and shows the importance of using working solutions throughout P-20 levels.

_Tema #4 Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture_

During the current presidential administration, there have been many instances and examples of institutionalized oppression and racism. This has gone on for many years but has worsened since this recent presidential administration (Pew Research Center, 2018). An example of institutional oppression is cited in a recent report by The Education Trust (2019) which points out the importance of public colleges and universities to provide equal opportunity for all U.S. residents regardless of race or ethnicity (Schak, Bentley, Nichols, & Del Pilar, 2019). Public colleges and universities are funded by the public, including Latin@s and other ethnic minorities. However, according to this report, Latin@s are not being admitted or graduating from public higher education institutions when compared to state demographics at the same rate as their white peers. The reason is not a lack of talent or aspirations among Latin@s, but a result of “structural racism and injustices throughout the education pipeline” which makes it harder for Latin@s to compete, according to the report (Schak, Bentley, Nichols, & Del Pilar, 2019, p. 20).

The key findings from the report explain that Latin@ students are underrepresented at two-year institutions in 40 of the 44 states that were examined. In four-year public universities, 33 of the 44 states examined, had underrepresentation for Latin@s. The report also uncovered that four of the eight states with over 10% Latin@ enrollment gap among their white peers, are states with over 61% Latin@ population. The representation in every institution must be reflective of the overall community or state, but in education, this isn’t the case (Schak, Bentley,
 Nichols, & Del Pilar, 2019). Structural racism is holding back Latin@s. The report pointed out several examples of how Latin@s are being held back. One example is the fact that white students have the advantage of attending K-12 schools with experienced and better qualified teachers, better access to quality and advanced coursework and opportunities in comparison to the schools that Latin@s students attend. Another example is that white students are more likely to get direct guidance and direction from their college educated parents, as opposed to Latin@ students, who are far less likely to have parents with a college degree. A third example is that once Latin@s are finally admitted into a higher education institution, the institution they are attending is more likely to receive less funding from their state than predominantly white institutions (Schak, Bentley, Nichols, & Del Pilar, 2019).

Wealth is also a big influencer in the quality of education a child receives even before they apply to college. A report from EdBuild published in 2019, found that non-white school districts get $23 billion less than white districts despite them serving the same number of students (EdBuild, 2019). The wealth gap affects several generations of families. Studies show that students who attend financially stable schools are more likely to have access to college prep courses and other opportunities like dual credit and Advanced Placement courses (Lowrey, 2019).

Higher education is lagging behind when it comes to serving, supporting, and advocating for Latin@ and other communities of color (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Despite the many efforts shown in the literature about designing programs and initiatives that increase access, retention, graduation rates, and meant to improve opportunities and climate of underrepresented student populations, the educational achievement gap among Latin@s still exists (Salinas, Jr., 2017). The mothers shared that they obtain a sense of pride when they receive the Yes! family
test messages. They talked about how the games, songs and videos are culturally relevant and include language and characters increase motivation in the children and the entire family. The mothers talked about the introductory videos they received in the beginning of the communication with families. Yes! sent out these messages to welcome them and inform them about the program. To the mothers, it was important that these messages, like all the material for families, are in English and Spanish. The students also see bilingual content and enjoy English and Spanish songs, games and videos in the classroom. Yes! uses the principles of community cultural wealth including the knowledge and experiences of Latin@s to build on the “knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized,” to help them create a college going culture (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). This builds on the current literature as mothers are leveraging their forms of capital to create a college going culture.

This study builds on existing literature that recommends the use of asset-based curriculum in order transform the lives of oppressed people. Yes! uses culturally relevant characters, language, and ideas when designing the in classroom and family curriculum. Freire (2000) strongly promoted the importance of using education as a way to transform a student’s life (Freire, 2000). Freire stated that the traditional education system is not working for traditionally oppressed students. He described the system as using students as containers to fill up. He strongly advocated for a change to the model in which students are assessed based on “how well they fit into the world that the oppressors have created and how little they question it” (Freire, 2000, p. 57). It is important for the parents to feel appreciated, understood and respected in order for them to feel welcomed enough to engage with their children’s school.

Many of the families that are served by Yes! are low-income and underrepresented. All of the mothers that shared their testimonio stated that they are low-income and Latin@ and do
not have a college degree. This study builds on existing literature that indicates that low-income and minorities may not know how to access college in order to escape poverty (McDonough, McClafferty, & Nunez, 2002). Research also shows that families may feel unwelcome and uninvited to partake in educational activities at schools (Mundt, Gregory, Melzi, & McWayne, 2015). Yet these same parents are doing everything at their reach to provide a better life and better opportunities for their children. The mothers in this study stated that since they see role models that look like them and culturally relevant messages, they now feel it is possible for their children to attend college. Their testimonios support what has been shown in previous research. Low income Latin@ families understand the direct relationship between education and having a better quality of life with more opportunities for higher earnings (Crane, 2012).

The findings from this study substantiate the importance of the Yes! curriculum being culturally relevant as recommended by previous studies. For example, Fernandez (2010) found that schools should use cultural capital in their messaging in order to increase family engagement among Latin@ families (Fernandez, 2010). Sending messages to families with language, characters, ideas and customs that they are familiar with, helps to encourage them and invite them to play a greater role in their children’s education (Fernandez, 2010). One suggestion from Fernandez is to adapt the curriculum so that it is relevant to the needs, goals, and contributions of the students and families that the school serves (Fernandez, 2010). Yes! is following the advice of the existing literature and providing the families with a bilingual, English and Spanish curriculum. The games and puzzles use Latin@ characters to lead and teach the children. Luz, Paco, and Señor Leonel reach out to the children in the classroom every week on the app as well as on the messages that are sent out for the family curriculum. The career videos include Latin@ professionals that talk about their jobs, how to prepare for that specific career in school and what
to expect in earnings. This follows the recommendations of previous studies which called for cultural relevance as well as income potential for each degree and career (Fernandez, 2010; Garcia, 2012; Hashmi, 2015).

Cultural capital is defined as the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors and skills that students can use to learn more about themselves in the context of society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997). Fernandez (2010) found that it is important to develop outreach initiatives that are culturally and linguistically responsive that keep the needs, goals, and contributions of Latin@s in mind (Fernandez, 2010). The mothers that shared their testimonios for this study do not have a college degree, but they do have cultural wealth and they are aware and leveraging the six types of community cultural wealth. They are using the different sources and forms of knowledge, skills and abilities inherited to them in order to educate their children (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997). Research shows that students of color can draw from their cultural capital and funds of knowledge to empower themselves (Delgado Bernal, 2002). In schools and other institutions including the Yes! curriculum, it is important that Latin@s discover that they are not alone in their oppression and can become empowered and educated participants (Yosso, 2005).

Yes! families feel identified to the characters on the app and the curriculum. Mothers leverage their social capital to combat oppression and support their children’s education. The relatable characters help the mothers feel that their culture is appreciated, increase self-esteem and motivate them to make success seem reachable for their family. Social capital is defined as having the support of fellow Latin@s as a social network (Yosso, 2005). Having role models that look like the students makes them feel that they, too, can be successful. One 2002 study of students who reported having at least one race and gender matched role model, found they performed better academically, had achieved more goals, and enjoyed more positive activities
When students have positive role models of the same race with successful lives, they also tend to think more about their own future in a positive light, according to Zirkel (2002).

This study builds on existing literature that shows the importance of including culturally relevant messaging to engage Latin@ families. Yes! uses community cultural wealth in their apps, curriculums, games, puzzles, videos, songs, and text messages in order to increase acceptance and participation by the students and families. Linguistic capital refers to the various language and communication skills students bring with them to their school or college (Yosso, Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline, 2006). The learner centric ecology of resources has three important aspects to help learners. These are knowledge, environment, and resources (Luckin, 2008). The resources can be human and technology: parents/family, teachers, the Yes! app, mobile phones and the text messages. By including the six forms of capital of community cultural wealth, families and students will be more engaged and felt included in the learning (Yosso, Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline, 2006). Since early studies in social and educational research, studies show the importance of including linguistic capital in curriculum intended to reach oppressed families (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Freire, 2000). Yes! uses the linguistic capital of Latin@ families when sending them conversation starters to help them leverage their knowledge of cuentos or storytelling (Yosso, 2005).

Mothers expressed the importance of the curriculum containing words that families use every day and including these when introducing college and careers in the messages. For these mothers it was important to include intellectual and social skills attained through their daily communication at home in English and Spanish (Yosso, 2005). This is especially important currently not only for Latin@s but for the entire U.S. population in general. With the current
political and xenophobic climate, it is important for Americans to realize that Latin@s are a very important and essential part of society (Pew Research Center, 2016). The brown skin tones, accent and Spanish speaking Yes! characters increase a sense of pride in the families and students. Research shows that this is important as they provide positive role models that foster aspirations and hope for a successful future (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Yosso (2005) also believes that it is important for Latin@s to feel identified to others in the journey of equality and empowered with their cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). This study builds on the existing literature by showing that mothers understand the importance of having characters and messages that relate to their language and culture in order to feel that their children can also access higher education.

The mothers shared the importance of feeling identified to the characters they see in the family messages. This is important because Yes! makes them feel appreciated and respected which makes success seem reachable. Yosso (2005) defines social capital as having a support network available to support and encourage each other (Yosso, 2005). By building on social capital and having a strong support network, studies show that this increases academic performance and achievements (Zirkel, 2002). Garcia (2012) found that teachers and families have a very powerful role, especially during elementary school, in providing minority and low socioeconomic students with important college-knowledge information. Studies show that some families do not feel they have the knowledge or authorization to talk to their children about college (Hill & Torres, 2010). The mothers in this study expressed the importance of learning that in fact they do have the social navigational capital necessary to talk to their children about the importance of working hard and going good in school. The mothers made it clear that they have a strong sense of familismo when they share about how they engage with the family
curriculum. *Familismo*, which is a form of social capital, refers to the influence of family and the role family plays when encouraging and motivating each other (Yosso, 2006).

This study builds on existing P-20 literature which shows that Latin@s are experts in leveraging their social and linguistic capital. Specifically, by speaking Spanish and using terms and slang normally used in their homes, Latin@s use their gift of bilingualism to better express themselves (Cabrera, López, & Sáenz, 2012; Delgado Bernal, 2002). Social capital not only helps Latin@s, it helps people of other cultures. Latin@s, specifically low-income, first-generation students, need a high degree of social and emotional intelligence to deal with new experiences. When students live “entre mundos,” between worlds, they learn how to navigate with the tensions and complexities that are associated with the transition of changing environments (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014). Yes! is giving families the tools they need to leverage navigational capital in order to plan for a better future by preparing for college.

The *temas* or themes that came out of this study showed that Yes! is helping the mothers leverage the forms of capital of community cultural wealth to help them create a college going culture in their homes. Identifying the assets that Latin@s use to engage with their children’s elementary education is important in order to transform the current state of education. As stated by Yosso, (2005) “the main goals of identifying and documenting cultural wealth are to transform education and empower People of Color to utilize assets already abundant in their communities,” (Yosso, 2005, p. 82). The mothers that I interviewed did not have the opportunity to attend college. They all want the best for their children, but before participating in Yes!, they did not fully understand how to start planning for college. Previous conversations about school with their children were normally about what their school day was like. Mothers were not fully aware or engaged in what the child did in the classroom each day. Now, with the Yes! text
messages, the mothers understand exactly what the children are doing in class and feel fully engaged in their daily education and lives. They are doing all of this while using the forms of capital they already possess.

During their testimonios, the mothers shared that they always thought it was too soon to start talking to their first-grade children about college. In fact, one of the mothers thought that when her child talked to her about Yes!, she did not think it was for his classroom. Though mothers want the best for their children, they were not informed on how to start planning for college. Since they did not attend college themselves, they were not familiar with all the opportunities of better earnings that come with a technical or college degree. They also were not fully convinced that everyone could have access to a college education. Several studies found that it is very important to inform families about college as early as possible (Garcia, 2012; McDonough, McClafferty, & Nunez, 2002). These mothers and other participating families are creating a college going culture in their homes.

Studies show the importance of providing greater resources and structured curriculums to provide all students with the information on how to access college and the opportunities that come with postsecondary education especially to students with the least knowledge about college (Garcia, 2012; Kiyama, 2011). Latin@ mothers and families can use community cultural wealth as included in the Yes! curriculum to defy the stereotypes and deficit-based language that society uses to describe the current state of Latin@s in education. By using the ecology of resources framework and community cultural wealth, Yes! is helping families access the resources readily available to them in order to create a college going culture at home.

Many studies in the literature show how technology is becoming very important to reach families about their children’s education (Beasley, 2015; Flowers, 2015; Lee & Barron, 2015;
Levinson & Barron, 2018; Olmstead, 2013; Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011; Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2018). Most families in those studies, as well as the mothers that shared their testimonio for this study, said they use technology often in their daily lives. Technology and mobile phones are now readily available in almost every household in the United States. This study adds to the literature about the effectiveness of using technology to engage families in their elementary aged children’s education and create a college going culture in their homes.

This study reinforces other studies in the literature that show positive outcomes and effectiveness of existing community partnerships with schools (Epstein, et al., 2002; Flowers, 2015; Lee & Barron, 2015; Rippner, 2017; UTSA, 2018). The literature shows that families want their children do their best and want to work with and support teachers in order to accomplish this. Students want to succeed in school and know that they need the support, guidance and encouragement from their family and their communities. Flowers (2015) noted how schools are using technology successfully to reach Latin@ families. This study extends the current literature by proving the effectiveness of a partnership between an EdTech non-profit organization and elementary schools to help Latin@ families create a college going culture and start planning their way out of poverty. The Yes! participating families and students are learning about the many opportunities that await them. If they work hard and continue to leverage the knowledge and experience that is being shared with them by the teachers, technology, curriculum, and parents, they will thrive and be on their way to a successful future. Latin@s are taking advantage of their community cultural wealth, sometimes without even knowing it, to be successful and engage in their children’s education. All of the mothers that were interviewed and shared their testimonios, do not have a college degree. This is the case for many of the Yes! participating families. Most
of the schools that participate in Yes! have a high percentage of families with low to moderate income households and no college degree. Yosso (2006) explains that Latin@s and other people of color have the extraordinary ability to hope and persevere in the realization of credentials and educational degrees (Yosso, 2006). She also explains that these various forms of capital are “dynamic processes,” that grow together as the person lives different experiences. (Yosso, 2005, p. 77)

Yes! is helping Latin@ families use the wealth of knowledge within them and is giving them valuable advice to help them successfully navigate this new environment of higher education. They are also learning all of the possibilities and opportunities that come with a higher education and about means and resources that can make a college education a possibility for their children.

**Recommendations**

This study explored the **testimonios** of five mothers of Latin@ students that received the YES! family curriculum via text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture. The findings of the study contributed to existing literature in the areas of Latin@ students in education, family engagement, college going culture, and on using technology for family engagement. As previous research has already found, the main finding from this study makes it clear that it is imperative to redefine family engagement in order to create a college going culture in homes with future first-generation Latin@ college students (Beasley, 2015; Benitez, 2011; Crane, 2012; Epstein, et al., 2002; Excelencia, 2015; FitzGerald, 2013; Garcia, 2012; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Smith, Wohlstetter, Ally Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011; Snell, Hindman, & Wasik, 2018).

The exclusivity of the purpose, population, geographic location, and methods used may be seen as a delimitation for this study. The purpose of this study was to learn how the families
(caregivers and parents) of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade in a San Antonio area school that participated in the Yes! program, used technology, a resource available to them, to help create a college going culture at home. This study uses a qualitative narrative research method, specifically testimonio, to understand and make sense of the caregivers’ experiences. This study explored the testimonios of five mothers that participated in the Yes! program and received the family curriculum via text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture in their homes.

**Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The small number of participants may be seen as a limitation of this study in other contexts, regions, or other populations. However, the specific purpose of this study was not generalizability but rather was focused only on Latin@ families in San Antonio. This study explored the testimonios of five mothers of Latin@ students that received the YES! family curriculum via text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture. The small sample size was deliberate because the testimonios were rich and thick in order to better understand the mothers’ previous experience with education. All of the mothers are Mexican American or Mexican; four were born in Texas from Mexican families and one mother was born in Mexico. This study only included mothers of 1st grade participants. The findings are specific to an elementary school in San Antonio in partnership with Yes! However, these findings can be used to generate assumptions about the importance of redefining family engagement. The findings also show the importance of using technology to increase family engagement with their children’s education. Though not all participating students are Latin@s, it is important to note that when a program or initiative works for a minority, the entire student population and school district will benefit from this (Excelencia, 2015). Recommendations for future research include to interview a greater number of participants and perhaps invite parents
that may have origins from other Latin American countries as well as expand the geographic location of the study to include other cultural groups and races participating in Ye! This may add new information to the literature since people with different backgrounds may have different needs or different motivators than Latin@s in a predominantly Latin@ community. For example, this study may have different findings when interviewing affluent White parents in Vermont. The demographics are completely different than that of San Antonio which may give more information on that specific population.

A second limitation is that only mothers volunteered to share their testimonio. Perhaps only the mothers were looking at Facebook when I posted the recruiting post. Or it could be that only the mothers’ contact information is given to school districts when they share family contact information with their children’s school. If this is the case, only the mothers’ phones were receiving the family curriculum text messages. It would be interesting for future research to explore the view of fathers and other adult guardians, including grandparents, about their engagement and usage of the Yes! family curriculum on their phones. The findings from interviewing fathers may lead to more information that will help schools and partners better engage them in their children’s education. The findings from interviewing fathers could also call for more flexible work schedules or a change for gender roles. It would be yet more interesting to find out why the fathers did not respond to my call for participants. It would also be interesting to research the difference in engagement of married mothers vs. single mothers. The findings may result in having better tools and curriculum prepared for single mothers that may not have any flexibility to engage with their children’s education. Another recommendation for future research could be to study which phone number the family is listing in the school for contact and why.
A third limitation can be the short period of the Yes! experience for the student. Longitudinal data is needed in order to analyze the effectiveness of Yes! in trying to create a college going culture in the homes of the participating students. A recommendation for future research would be to find out if the Success Mindset™ and an “I Can attitude” follow students for years after their participation in Yes! and to know what their concept of postsecondary education is during the late elementary, middle school and high school careers. A longitudinal study in 12 to 15 years, may show real results, and if and how Yes! created an impact on the decision of students to pursue postsecondary education. The school districts would track the students’ progress each year through graduation and will be able to show if they graduate with their cohort and if they enroll and graduate from college or technical school. This longitudinal study may also remove the potential limitation that comes with my positionality as an employee of the organization. Another recommendation for future research could be to find out how the elements of community cultural wealth in the curriculum impact the students’ and teachers’ mindset and the students’ performance in school.

**Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

This section contains recommendations for policy and practice that are derived from the findings of my study. It will be organized in different sections by groups of people including (1) Latin@ families, (2) public schools, (3) higher education institutions, (4) community organizations and (5) policymakers. Below on Table 7, the columns show the four *temas* found with specific recommendations below each *tema* to the right of the corresponding row for groups responsible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart phones.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum as a family.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin@ Families</strong></td>
<td>• Use all resources within their ecology</td>
<td>• Instill familial capital while creating a college going culture at home</td>
<td>• Leverage linguistic capital to increase pride in students, advocate for bilingual education, and encourage persistence in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acquire a Success Mindset™</td>
<td>• Continue having career and college planning conversations as a family</td>
<td>• Use all forms of knowledge to help create a college going culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use technology and smart phone to engage with children’s education</td>
<td>• Engage and inform their children’s public school</td>
<td>• Look for positive role models/mentors with similar values to help plan for college</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reply and continue engaging with learning opportunities that promote a college going culture</td>
<td>• Schedule flexible times for family curriculum and career exploration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Schools</strong></td>
<td>• Use technology culturally relevant messages to engage with families</td>
<td>• Diversify meaning of parent to include materials that engage the entire family</td>
<td>• Use asset-based language and I Can and I Will in family curriculum</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use technology as two-way communication tool with families</td>
<td>• Use innovation and curriculum that encourages family participation</td>
<td>• Schools are responsible for becoming familiar with the use of technology to create a college going culture in every student’s home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use federal funding recommended for innovative engagement using technology</td>
<td>• Increase Success Mindset™ in students and families</td>
<td>• Promote equity literacy and culturally relevant pedagogy in school and family curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to advocate for fair funding</td>
<td>• Create college going culture curriculum starting in elementary</td>
<td>• Use EoR framework and CCW to create a college going culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutions of Higher Education</strong></td>
<td>• Create virtual college tours</td>
<td>• Start family college marketing in early elementary school years</td>
<td>• Instill a Success Mindset™ on campus and encourage families to leverage cultural capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partner with elementary schools</td>
<td>• Use technology for family outreach and education</td>
<td>• Learn about barriers faced by students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide resources to partners to encourage families to engage in their children’s education</td>
<td>• Provide scholarships to first-generation and low-income students</td>
<td>• Listen to the voces of the students and families and share about important contributions by minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Organizations</strong></td>
<td>• Form partnerships with schools, colleges, businesses, local, state, and federal government agencies</td>
<td>• Include families in partnerships to assist in creating a college going culture curriculum</td>
<td>• Develop grow your own programs or partner with organizations familiar with cultural values</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engage families via smart phone and text</td>
<td>• Create partnerships with local service agencies in order to focus on families from Latin@ first-generation college student households</td>
<td>• Learn more about the ventajas and conocimientos that the students bring with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop funding sources to increase internet access in the community</td>
<td>• Include families in partnerships with others and leverage cultural capital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policymakers</strong></td>
<td>• Adopt policy to improve technology infrastructure in schools and in families’ homes</td>
<td>• Include families in partnerships to assist in creating a college going culture curriculum</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for guest speakers sharing their testimonio in the community about their experience using their forms of capital to overcome barriers and oppression and create a college going culture among families</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use ESSA funds innovatively to engage families on their phones</td>
<td>• Create partnerships with local service agencies in order to focus on families from Latin@ first-generation college student households</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide clear guidance to school districts on transparent financial management and proper use of funds</td>
<td>• Include families in partnerships to assist in creating a college going culture curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Adopt policy that will allow for school partnerships that will actively engage families using technology</td>
<td>• Be mindful of the importance of family for college outreach initiatives focused on Latin@s</td>
<td>• Learn from constituents about hardships in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be mindful of the importance of family for college outreach initiatives focused on Latin@s</td>
<td>• Continue to advocate for fair funding</td>
<td>• Use asset-based language when sharing statistics or writing legislation to increase college going and success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to advocate for fair funding</td>
<td>• Include more asset based language when proposing legislation to support or develop programs to increase Latin@s degree attainment</td>
<td>• Improve access and availability of financial aid and make education accessible to all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Latin@ Families Latin@ families are engaging now more than ever in the education of their children. I recommend that families continue to do this as early as possible in their children’s education and always have a Success Mindset™ when imagining the endless opportunities for their family.

I recommend that families continue to use every resource in their ecology that is at their reach to achieve their hope for a better life. These resources can be within any zone of development and may include teachers, other parents, counselors, college advisors, libraries, the internet and any form of media, their phone, text messages and anybody else showing them the importance of having a Success Mindset™ and reminding them that ‘they can and they will’. Latin@ parents can also continue to use their navigational capital in order to navigate the new experiences that come with the journey towards postsecondary education. Another recommendation is that parents learn about different ways to use technology and smart phones as tools to use on their journey to success. Parents can talk to their children’s public school about ways to increase family engagement by using technology and tools that have been successful and used by other families to learn ways of motivating their children to learn. I recommend that families continue to open the text messages as often as possible and follow the recommended activities and conversation starters with the rest of the family members.

My recommendation to Latin@ families, including parents and caregivers, is for them to continue to be engaged in their children’s education and instill the value of familial capital by doing this as a family. I recommend that mothers continue to make education and planning for success, a family affair. This will continue to fortify the bond that exists among families and help the children feel valued and motivated to continue learning. Families must remember that public schools exist to serve the people, and that their engagement will ensure that schools pay attention to the needs of those that keep them in existence. Continue to spend valuable time at least three
times a week with real conversations about the importance of post-secondary education and how to prepare for it. I recommend that families continue to ask the important questions and find all the resources available to help their children plan and prepare for college. I recommend that parents and caregivers take the time to learn from their children about their own career aspirations and continue to be their biggest motivators and supporters.

Latin@ families can be proud and empowered to reply to all messages from their children’s schools and take lead on educating educators about their needs and their experiences when engaging with the schools. Families can leverage aspirational capital and encourage a Success Mindset™ for their children to teach them to use a positive, I can, and I will attitude, in order to push forward increase the esperanzas for success in school and in life. Education is the way to escape generational poverty. Families, including grandparents can leverage their knowledge of cuentos to continue to share their memories and history to teach their children the importance of being strong and of taking advantage of every possible opportunity to plan for a successful future. It is important that they talk to their children about the importance of resistant capital and teach younger generations how to defeat oppression and share the important history of all the positive contributions of our people. I recommend that families continue to partner with their children’s public schools and engage in every way possible. Families can schedule times, at their convenience, to talk about planning for a successful future with their younger children with engaging and motivating activities, such as the Yes! games, and participate in college and career planning with these activities.

This study shows that all mothers want the best for their children and continue to use aspirational and resistant capital to encourage their children to work hard, persist, and hope for a better future. Families should continue to use linguistic capital as a form of increasing pride and sense of belonging to their children as well as educate their schools about the importance of
having Spanish language in all parent communication and student curriculum. Mothers can proudly leverage all their forms of wealth and cultural capital and talk about the importance of family engagement to other families to educate them about the importance of education. I highly recommend that families look for technology and role models that value and appreciate the ventajas and conocimientos of Latin@s to learn about preparing, planning, and accessing postsecondary education.

**Public Schools** School districts and schools have the responsibility and the opportunity to be more innovative but also logical when trying to increase family engagement specifically with Latin@s and other underrepresented minorities.

It is my recommendation that public schools research the best way to use technology and text messages to engage families and talk to them about college. Schools and community partners need to redefine family engagement and use text messages to engage with families and provide them with a culturally relevant family curriculum that uses community cultural wealth in their messaging. Family engagement no longer means in person meetings, school conferences or mandatory campus visits. Many times, schools already use technology to reach families but only use it as a one-way relationship. Technology can be used to establish real connections and relationships in order to gain trust from the families being served. Districts can find ways to be scientific and use data and technology to develop trust and relationships in the communities they are in and for the families they serve. I recommend that districts take a closer look at legislation in order to make sure to use more of their resources, both human capital and financial, to comply with policy but also to increase academic achievement and college access and completion. Federal legislation includes budget lines for family engagement, technology, pre-college awareness, bilingual education, and migrant student outreach. It is important that these budget lines are spent wisely and innovatively in order to increase family engagement and comply with
the main goal of providing a quality education to all, not only to students with good test scores. School districts can comply with ESSA of 2015, and use technology as a way to engage families with fun learning games, videos, songs and puzzles that teach families everything about success, from the importance of going to school every day and making friends, to what different colleges and careers exist and how to prepare for them. ESSA specifically recommends the use of funds to schools that use innovative ways to disseminate information, especially for increasing the engagement of economically disadvantaged families (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). School finance personnel and practitioners can find ways to consider all elements of school finance.

I recommend that schools continue to follow the guidance of ESSA and diversify the meaning of family engagement to be more inclusive in their messaging and their methods to increase engagement and include all family members and not only parents. ESSA also includes the need of a comprehensive family curriculum with a focus on the importance of making the communication two-way between families and schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). All PreK and early childhood initiatives can share the good news with families about the importance of postsecondary education and the endless possibilities that come with a success mindset education, especially in the early elementary years, is key for a whole child development. This may be the one factor that decides the fate of families living in generational family. Without the proper mindset, schools and other initiatives may be offering a product that not every family may benefit from. Families in early elementary grades believe that their children have endless potential and with hard work, everything is possible, and schools can use this inspiration to teach families about the importance of having a success mindset. Districts can be better informed about the correct way of spending and investing federal monies for family outreach or liaison positions in order to create a culturally relevant family curriculum. This
curriculum must be implemented as soon as students enroll in the Pre-K and continued through middle school in order to prevent loss of interest and engagement from the students, lack of hope from the parents, and the need for remedial courses in high school or college for students. If students and families are continually talking and planning for a successful future while also receiving tips and resources on how to prepare for a successful future, it will lead to higher completion rates.

School administrators and teachers can include asset-based language along with an I Can and I Will attitude in their curriculum everyday starting in PreK. All school personnel, including the custodians, principals, teachers, counselors, to food service staff are responsible and must be educated about the endless opportunities that come with postsecondary education and be carriers of a college going culture for everyone all year long. I recommend that teachers and school counselors continually promote a college going culture for their students and their families. This may be difficult due to time efforts and legislative decisions (e.g. standardized testing, counselor certification, and the college counselor role). Unfortunately, college is only a topic until students reach their senior year or only during college signing week the rest of the years for many students. The purpose of attending school is to prepare students for college and career, and students must learn and understand this early on. It is important that educators be critically aware about the many inequities that exist and be educated on culturally relevant pedagogies that will encourage students and families to participate in debates about wealth and education inequalities. Swalwell (2011) calls this equity literacy, and suggests that knowing the reality about the wealth distribution is as important to children as simple addition. Being informed about equity literacy is not only important to teachers and students, but now more than ever, it is important to school administrators. They must be informed about the many ways to take advantage of the latest reauthorization of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. Among other things, the intent
of this law is to provide all children the opportunity to receive a fair, equitable and high-quality education in order to close the educational achievement gaps.

Another important recommendation is that districts and schools take a closer look at the learner centric ecology of resources framework to instill a Success Mindset™ in every one of their students while educating them about the opportunities that come with postsecondary education and do this with fun games, puzzles and videos that are engaging and culturally relevant. Technology and student apps should be treated as importantly as when districts select textbooks especially after the implementation of ESSA in 2015. Using smart phone and texting technology would help schools comply with the act that states, “regular two-way, meaningful communication between family members and school staff, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that family members can understand,” (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, p. 71).

Too many school districts treat family engagement as second thought, when in fact, it needs to be more strategic and be a higher priority for districts. It is also my recommendation that districts be innovative when creating grow your own teacher training initiatives. Administrators and teachers would benefit from learning about the barriers that families are facing when trying to attend school events and activities. When teachers are not informed about the barriers that may exist for underrepresented studies, they may be unaware of discriminatory practices. It is important that these initiatives be exclusive when recruiting students of color to train and educate them to come back and teach in the same district. Another very important recommendation is teachers and administrators must be representative of the students and families they serve. Districts should also adopt textbooks that include the many positive contributions of Latin@s in the United States. We must stop erasing our voces and our contributions. Community and business leaders must form partnerships and collaborate with the experts, teachers and administrators, in order to work for the same goal in mind.
**Institutions of Higher Education** Colleges and universities, both public and private, have the responsibility to work in closer collaboration with school districts, community organizations, policymakers, and business and industry leaders to learn about the students and the families they will be serving and how to best prepare them for the workforce. Colleges and universities can also learn but how to be better prepared to welcome and serve the students and their families.

Colleges and universities can partner with schools and community organizations to develop technology that will teach elementary aged children about the programming, degrees, and credentials offered in each school. They can invest in more pre-college outreach initiatives that include virtual family college living experiences, and share these with area schools and community organizations to allow families to see the inside of the buildings directly from their cell phone from the comfort of their home surrounded by every member of their family who has never had the opportunity to be on a college campus.

The outreach and marketing cannot wait until students are in high school. These pre-college outreach initiatives and investing would have a greater impact if they start as early as possible. This will help families that have never been on a college campus, feel like they belong. If students see the possibilities that come with postsecondary education, they will have something to aim for and remain hopeful. Colleges can provide scholarships and career training opportunities to parents of elementary aged children.

In reference to federal pre-college outreach programs that are managed by the colleges and have initiatives in the middle and high schools, I recommend that these initiatives start in PreK. The return of investment would be greater with less wasting, if the efforts start in elementary school instead of waiting until 7th or 8th grade. This would decrease the need for spending money and time on remedial courses. Very young students and parents still believe that
they can achieve anything they set their mind to if they work hard, have a success mindset and go to school every day. Colleges and universities can partner with schools and community organizations to provide information on college access and careers offered to be included in the family curriculum.

Postsecondary institutions can also look at developing grow your own programs and make their degree programs work for the students that are coming up in the pipeline and prepare them to be educators and administrators. The ivory towers were established by and for an elite group. They were not created by or for the students that are being served today. Students, administrators and scholars must be better represented in academia. Colleges and universities must continue investing in the efforts of equity and access, but be more intentional in the efforts of retention, and graduation by providing scholarships to underrepresented educators and administrators. Colleges and universities can make it a higher priority to learn more from their students and pay special attention to welcoming students of colors. They can provide opportunities to learn about all students’ ventajas and conocimientos. Unfortunately, because of some barriers faced by people from lower socioeconomic status, the thought of success is blurred when they face oppression, discrimination or hardships. It is important to have more resources and outreach initiatives to keep them hopeful and positive from their early grades.

**Community Organizations** I recommend, specifically in San Antonio, that all the existing education initiatives and partnerships use collaborative impact to create equity and a college going culture among every San Antonio household and pay particular attention to Latin@ families without college experience. In San Antonio there are many organizations that care about education, yet there are so many disjointed interventions and misspent funds. The passing of ESSA in 2015, expanded the role of community partners and high-quality collaborative initiatives. San Antonio would greatly benefit from having stronger collaborations
and partnerships. Public school districts need the support, guidance and resources that community partners can provide especially for the non-academic needs of some students. Community partnerships can bring different experiences and resources that some schools or districts would not have access on their own. Effective partnerships can help with increasing awareness of the occupations and industries in the area and direct access for internships once students are in high school. Collaborations between community organizations, business leaders, schools and colleges can give adults the opportunity to act as mentors and role models for elementary aged students. Local education agencies can work as consultants for schools, colleges, and community leaders to implement programs to promote a college going culture. The law also allows for additional funding for Title 1 schools which may help those without any college experience learn about the opportunities that come with earning a degree or credential (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Community partnerships can help public schools and city agencies develop funding sources to provide better technology and internet access to low income Latin@ first-generation college student households. This will help families that may not have internet access or the ability to have a smart phone which will increase family engagement. Partnerships with federal agencies can also greatly benefit schools and community organizations to close the digital divide in San Antonio.

I recommend that community partners follow national recommendations on the importance of forming collaborations that are educational for the entire family. In fact, it takes a village and it is important to be inclusive to all families and be intentional when engaging with families from underrepresented groups. Partnerships would benefit from using a culturally relevant family curriculum that can be sent to families’ homes via text message. The curriculum can include topics such as mindset, success skills, college, careers, and the importance of regular
school attendance. These partnerships would work if implemented with families who receive certain community benefits like housing assistance, food assistance and adult education classes.

In San Antonio there are numerous organizations and initiatives that care about education, yet many of these are disjointed which cause misspent funds. These programs are working for community uplift and would have a greater impact if they worked in greater collaboration with each other. Interventions to prepare families for the first-generation of college graduates have better results when they begin as early as possible in a child’s life. Community partnerships and initiatives would benefit by having Latin@ members that were first-generation college students. Speaking events or campaigns that share the knowledge and journey of a first-generation college graduate would benefits families that do not have a college experience.

Community partners would benefit from the expertise of speakers from diverse backgrounds that can share real life experiences of how they used their experience and forms of capital to overcome barriers and oppression. These experts can also help with public service announcements about the importance of creating a college going culture in the community.

**Policymakers** There is a big opportunity for legislators today to support the technology of schools and understand that campuses rely on public funding and of proper management of funds being collected from public taxes. It is important that there is clear guidance provided to those in charge managing public school funds to ensure transparency and better fiscal management in order to properly allocate what each fund is meant to be used for including capital infrastructure, family engagement and outreach, and access to better technology.

I recommend that legislators and lobbyists advocate for and adopt legislation that improves technology in schools. Public school campuses rely on public funding and on the proper management of funds being collected from public taxes. It is important that the management of this funding be transparent and equitable when distributing these funds as
directed, especially for Title 1 schools. Lobbyists and policy makers can recommend legislation that will provide internet connection and accessible smart phones to families in need in order to engage with their children’s education. The schools in a city may be the greatest amenity to new businesses and industries. For example, better infrastructure, hardware and internet technology, especially Title 1 schools would be a great incentive to new investors in the community. The 5G technology that will be available very soon, may make a huge difference for many families. The business community could invest in these capital improvements and receive incentives for these investments which will in turn benefit them by having more highly qualified employees in the future.

To increase a college going culture among all families it is important to adopt policy that increases school partnerships to promote better access to technology to all families and public schools. Legislators have the opportunity to participate in public service announcements while being mindful of the importance of family for college outreach initiatives focused on Latin@s. I recommend that policymakers continue to advocate for fair funding and better formulas to fund public schools. Another recommendation is the importance of including asset-based language when proposing legislation to support or develop programs to increase college and career training among Latin@s. Policymakers can learn a lot about Latin@ cultural capital which will help adopt policies that include these as assets and not deficits in order to create hope for families living in poverty.

Policymakers can benefit from receiving expert advice from those they are serving, especially educators, teachers, and low-income families. Many legislators do not have college experience or even represent the demographic of people they are representing. Legislators should make it their job to know the people they are serving and representing. Latin@ families can share their testimonios to policymakers to help them advocate for legislation that will improve
education and college access for all Americans. It is time to stop using a deficit lens and focus on asset-based language to create initiatives that will improve college access for Latin@s and other underrepresented groups. Not every legislator knows the hardships or barriers that underrepresented students are facing every day to survive. They may not see the ventajas and conocimientos of these students. They may only be informed about the negative statistics, the gap, and the deficit-based language that many studies have used for decades when talking about these students. In addition to more education from educators to legislators, there must be a big shift on the availability of federal financial aid programs and accessibility to higher education.

Lo Que Aprendí en el Camino: What I Learned in this Journey

Being of Latin@ descent and a first-generation college student were the main reasons that I was interested in doing this study. Both of my parents are originally from Matamoros, Mexico, just over the border from Texas. They moved to Brownsville before I was born. As a family, we were migrant farmers who worked the fields together, helping out with bills willingly. We loved having our own spending money too. The crop season extended into the school year, so my brothers and I had to withdraw from school early in April and register late in the fall. We would leave the valley where we lived and travel to Florida, Michigan, Illinois, and South Dakota to work on tomato, cucumber, corn and strawberry farms.

My parents never pushed my brothers and me into making decisions; they just told us we had options. One option was working in the fields and the other was an education. If we do not educate ourselves, there are very limited opportunities but with hard work, everyone can make a living. However, if you choose to earn a degree by obtaining an education, with hard work, the opportunities may be endless. My parents would tell me, “A ver como le haces, pero tienes que ir al colegio.” This translates to, “We’ll see how you’ll do it, but you have to go to college.”
The driving force for success in my life came from my migrant educational counselor, Mrs. Sanchez, and the leadership qualities she saw in me. Mrs. Fameliza Sanchez was my migrant counselor who was so kind to help my brothers and me keep up with our schoolwork. We would take our books with us to the farming area, do our work, and mail it back to her. Through all of the years I have never forgotten how supportive she was and how she wanted us to succeed in life. Like the research conducted by Lionel Sosa at Harvard, Mrs. Sanchez was that one person that instilled a success mindset in me and told me I could go to college.

Before choosing this dissertation topic, my focus was on Latin@ success at a Midwest community college. When I chose that topic, and during most of my professional career, I lived in Iowa and dedicated over 16 years conducting outreach to Latin@s. I provided pre-college outreach to first-generation college students and their families for six years. That is when I decided to pursue a doctoral degree and help more Latin@ student access and succeed in higher education. I had the opportunity to work at the U.S. Department of Education and moved to Washington D.C. to work as Awareness and Outreach Specialist for Federal Student Aid. I finished my capstone during my time in D.C. Almost three years later I learned about Yes! Our Kids Can while exploring opportunities in Texas. I immediately knew that this program was doing great things for all children with a special focus on Latin@ children. The family curriculum that Yes! provides to participating families is what my own parents were missing when they told me, “A ver como le haces, pero tienes que ir al colegio.” Yes! is showing parents like mine, como hacerle para guiar a sus hijos hacia un mejor futuro, how to guide their children towards a better future. I feel privileged to have had the experience of being a migrant farmworker. I am grateful to my parents for always instilling in me ganas, “grit” and a positive attitude to conquer any obstacle that got in my way.
I took a leap and moved my family from D.C. to the San Antonio area and took a job as Manager for Family Curriculum. One month later, I was promoted to Director of my department. When negotiating my move, I proposed my new research topic to my major professor, and with her guidance, I received approval from Yes! management with full cooperation and support for me to conduct my research during my day to day tasks. The entire journey has been fulfilling, eye-opening, and somewhat painful.

The most fulfilling part of this journey is helping people and giving them hope. Every job, commission, board or volunteer position I have held in my adult life, has been working with underrepresented people and conducting outreach to Latin@s. This position at Yes! along with my study, has given me the opportunity to help more families learn about the importance of creating a college going culture in the early elementary grades of their children. Yes! provides a family curriculum with advice and resources to help families plan and prepare for higher education.

The eye-opening part has been learning about the many practices and policies that still exist and are newly put in place that oppress people of color. In Texas, there continues to be a lot of racism even within the same race. This is a trend everywhere in the nation and unfortunately, even our own people do not always see it. This was also the case in Iowa, but mostly by people of different races. Now that I have returned to Texas, after over 23 years, I realize there is not much difference. I feel oppressed when people who look and speak like me are mistreated and undervalued. I know that education is the equalizer and am doing everything in my power to help more people go to college.

The painful part was seeing how difficult it is for some families to actually believe the opportunities that exist by obtaining a college degree. In focus groups at the office, some parents laughed at the idea that their children may earn around $50 per hour upon completion of their
college degree. It was heartbreaking for me that this information of wealth and how to access it, is being hidden from underrepresented groups in order to keep them oppressed. Families can break the cycle of generational poverty by planning for a better future. There are resources available, and we must use everything within our reach to access those resources.

**Conclusion**

There is plenty of literature about successful practices to help Latin@s access higher education. There are even some studies about pre-college outreach programs and initiatives for middle school and high school students. There are some pre-college outreach initiatives for parents of Latino@ middle and high school students. There were no studies in the literature I reviewed that included testimonios of parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students in elementary school engaging with their children’s education using their mobile phone.

There is no research, or none that I have found, about a non-profit EdTech organization working with parents or caregivers of future first generation Latin@ students to explore their experiences in engaging with curriculum and using their cell phones to create a college going culture for their children. This study explored the testimonios of mothers that participated in the Yes! program and received family curriculum text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture in their homes. Yes! is showing parents like mine, *como hacerle para guiar a sus hijos hacia un mejor futuro*, how to guide their children towards a better future.

The first research question was: how do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization? This first question led to the following findings: mothers engage with the Yes! curriculum on their smart
phones. Mothers open the text messages and engage with the curriculum as a family. The second research question was how do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture? This second question uncovered the following findings: mothers use the Yes! curriculum to create hope for a better future. Mothers use the Yes! curriculum to leverage their cultural capital to create a college going culture.

The findings of this study recommend connecting with Latin@ families using technology to deliver a family curriculum leveraging their forms of capital early in elementary school with messages about the positive impact that a higher education can have on their children and their family. The findings of this study make it clear that it is imperative to redefine family engagement in order to create a college going culture in homes with future first-generation Latin@ college students. It is very important to stop using deficit based language when explaining the results from policies that are not yielding positive results and instead start using asset based language including ventajas, conocimientos and the six forms of capital of community cultural wealth when developing programs and initiatives to close the educational achievement gap among Latin@s starting in PreK.
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APPENDIX A.  IRB EXEMPTION LETTER

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
2420 Lincoln Way, Suite 202
Ames, Iowa 50014
515 294-4566

Date: 07/01/2019
To: Joan Jaime
From: Office for Responsible Research
Title: Creando Una Cultura Universitaria: How an educational technology non-profit organization engages parents of elementary aged future first-generation Latin@ college students
IRB ID: 19-135
Submission Type: Modification  Exemption Date: 07/01/2019

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from most requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.104 or 21 CFR 56.104 because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

2018 - 2 (iii): Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) when the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a LIMITED IRB REVIEW to [determine there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain confidentiality of the data].

The determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for continuing review. Instead, you will receive a request for a brief status update every three years. The status update is intended to verify that the study is still ongoing.

- You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application. Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, nature or duration of behavioral interventions, use of deception, etc.), any change in privacy or confidentiality protections, modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, removing plans for informing participants about the study, any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants, and/or any change such that the revised procedures do not fall into one or more of the regulatory exemption categories. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.

- All changes to key personnel must receive prior approval.

IRB 01/2019
• **Promptly inform the IRB of any addition of or change in federal funding for this study.** Approval of the protocol referenced above applies only to funding sources that are specifically identified in the corresponding IRB application.

**Detailed information about requirements for submitting modifications for exempt research can be found on our website.** For modifications that require prior approval, an amendment to the most recent IRB application must be submitted in IRBManager. A determination of exemption or approval from the IRB must be granted before implementing the proposed changes.

Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.

Additionally:

• **All research involving human participants must be submitted for IRB review. Only the IRB or its designees may make the determination of exemption,** even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

• **Please inform the IRB if the Principal Investigator and/or Supervising Investigator end their role or involvement with the project** with sufficient time to allow an alternate PI/Supervising Investigator to assume oversight responsibility. Projects must have an eligible PI to remain open.

• **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.

• **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g., student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

• Your research study may be subject to **post-approval monitoring by Iowa State University’s Office for Responsible Research.** In some cases, it may also be subject to formal audit or inspection by federal agencies and study sponsors.

• **Upon completion of the project, transfer of IRB oversight to another IRB, or departure of the PI and/or Supervising Investigator,** please initiate a Project Closure in IRBManager to officially close the project. For information on instances when a study may be closed, please refer to the [IRB Study Closure Policy](#).

Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.
APPENDIX B. FACEBOOK EMAIL/POST TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

Hello parents and caregivers of Yes! Our Kids Can® participating students. I need your help. I am the Director of Family Engagement at Yes! Our Kids Can.

I am currently a doctoral candidate pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Leadership. I am looking for 5 volunteers to participate in my dissertation research study. This study will consist of three interviews of 60 – 90 minutes each during the spring of 2019.

If you are interested in helping me by volunteering one to two hours of your time, please look at the requirements below, and let me know if you meet the qualification.

* Are the parent or caregiver of a participating student of the Yes! Our Kids Can curriculum in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district
* Does not have a bachelor’s degree
* Identify as Latin@ family
* Are signed up to receive text messages from the Family Engagement team of Yes! Our Kids Can

You can choose not to participate. If you decide not to participate, or to leave the study at any point, there will not be a penalty to you or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw from this study at any time.

You may reach me at:

Joan J. Jaimes
https://www.facebook.com
email
phone
APPENDIX C. IRB INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Creando Una Cultura Universitaria: How an educational technology non-profit organization engages families of elementary aged future first-generation Latin@ college students

Investigators: Joan J. Jaimes

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. This form has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate—please review it carefully. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time.

Please discuss any questions you have about the study or about this form with me before deciding to participate.

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to learn how parents or guardians of future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district that participated in the Yes! Our Kids Can program, used technology, a resource available to them, to help create a college going culture at home.

Eligibility to Participate

You are being invited to participate in this study because you identify as a parent or guardian of a future first-generation Latin@ college students in the first grade at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district that participated in the Yes! Our Kids Can program. You said you do not have a college degree and are signed up to receive text messages from the Family Engagement Team of Yes! Our Kids Can.

Description of Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to explain your experience of receiving text messages from Yes! Our Kids Can during three interviews. You will be asked some questions and can answer in your own words.

Expected Time or Duration of Participation

Your participation will last for 60 to 90 minutes per interview for three interviews that will be scheduled to fit your schedule during March or April of 2019.
Risks or Discomforts

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks or discomforts: Participants may experience stress and anxiety from remembering their life experiences and disclosing these during the interviews. They will be notified of this possibility before the interview.

Your choice of whether or not to participate, or to leave the study at any point, will have no impact on your access to Yes! Our Kids Can services or relationship with the program.

Benefits to you or others:

It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by being able to support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of future first-generation Latin@ college students.

You are not expected to directly benefit from the participation of the study.

We may learn information about your health as part of the research. We will not share this information with anyone.

Your rights as research participant:

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Confidentiality:

Research records identifying participants will not be collected and will not be made publicly available. All records will be kept password protected on Box. This includes federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) which may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information but will be protected with a password.

To protect confidentiality of the study records and data, the following measures will be taken: Parents or caregivers can use pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

To protect your confidentiality when results of the study are reported, the following measures will be taken: Parents or caregivers will use pseudonyms to protect their privacy. We will not identify the name of your child nor your school nor school district.

In cases where you report either abuse/neglect of a minor or dependent adult, or the imminent threat of harm to yourself or others, we may have to break confidentiality by notifying the appropriate authorities to assure the safety of you and others.
Future Use of Your Information:

Information collected about you as part of this study will be used or distributed for future research studies. However, none of your identifying information will be used. Data will be used only by the current research team for the project described in this document.

Questions:

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, contact Joan Jaimes, Principal Investigator (641) 750-1686 or Dr. Sarah Rodriguez, Program of Study Committee Chair (515) 294-8391.

Your consent:

By continuing with this interview, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Make sure you understand what the study involves. If you have any questions about the study after you agree to participate, you can contact the research team using the information provided above.

I agree to take part in this study.

NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED PER IRB 4/20/2019
APPENDIX D. 1st INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for taking the time and interest to share your testimonio with me. My name is Joan Jaimes. I am the Director of Family Engagement at Yes! Our Kids Can. I’m a doctoral candidate pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership at Iowa State University. I am a first-generation college student. My parents are both from Mexico and never had the opportunity to attend college.

This study explored the testimonios of parents that participated in the Yes! program and received text messages on their mobile phone with the goal of creating a college going culture. By listening to your voces and testimonios, we will be able to support and increase the engagement, achievement rates, and success of future first-generation Latin@ college students.

Testimonio is generally defined as a first-person narration of socially significant experiences. The narrative voice is that of a typical or extraordinary witness or protagonist who metonymically represents others who have lived through similar situations and who have rarely given written expression to them.

Before we proceed, do you have any questions or need any clarifications about this interview?

INTERVIEW #1 PROTOCOL:

I’m here with (parent or caregiver name) on (date) to talk about their experiences as parents of children participating with Yes! Our Kids Can®.
My own testimonio. I will share everything about me, my family and education background as well as why this topic is of interest to me.

1. Can you introduce yourself? What is your name, your child’s name and age, and the school they attend?

2. Tell me about your educational experience? Level? Family educational background?

3. How many children do you have that participate in Yes!?

4. Do you have any questions about my own experience, my position at Yes!, or the process for the next two interviews?
APPENDIX E.  2nd INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Follow-up questions from previous interview (if any):
   a. FOLLOW-UP
   b. FOLLOW-UP
   c. FOLLOW-UP

2. Tell me about your experience during your child’s participation in Yes! Our Kids Can.

3. How did you first learn about Yes! Our Kids Can?

4. How long have you been participating in the program and receiving the text messages?

5. Tell me about the text messages you received from the Family Engagement team during your
   child’s participation with Yes! Our Kids Can. Tell me everything you can think of about the
   messages. How did you receive these text messages? Remind App, text, or email

1. Tell us if any conversations about college/education were started, and how these
   conversations went, from the text messages received.

2. What decisions or plans were made, if any?

3. How did the text messages influence your family’s, your child’s (children) and your own
   ideas about postsecondary education for your child?

4. What advice do you have for us to improve the program overall, the messages, and the
   platform used to send parent messages?

5. Is there anything else that you would like to add to your testimonio? Is there anything else
   that you feel may be important for me to know about yourself, your child, the school, or
   Yes!?
APPENDIX F.  3rd INTERVIEW PROTOCOL/MEMBER CHECKING

1. These are the vignettes that I created after our 1st and 2nd interviews. How do these look to you?

2. Follow-up questions from previous interview (if any):
   a. FOLLOW-UP
   b. FOLLOW-UP

3. Have the educational aspirations for your child changed because of your participation in Yes! Our Kids Can? If so, how?
   a. How have the text messages, videos, songs, and tips received from Yes! impacted your concept of the importance of education in life?
   b. Would you recommend Yes! to other elementary schools? Why or Why not?

4. Is there anything more that you would like to share about your experience during your child’s participation in Yes! Our Kids Can?

The study is guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district engage with the curriculum of an educational technology non-profit community organization?

2. How do parents or caregivers of future first-generation Latin@ college students at an elementary school of a San Antonio area school district utilize the Yes! curriculum to create a college going culture?

5. Does all the information transcribed from our first two interviews seem precise and accurate?

6. If not, what should be added, changed or removed?
APPENDIX G. COPYRIGHT PERMISSION FROM YES! OUR KIDS CAN

Joan J. Jaimes

October 23, 2019

John Andrade, President
Yes! Our Kids Can

San Antonio TX 78203

Hi John:

I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Iowa State University entitled “Creando Una Cultura
Universitaria: How an educational technology non-profit organization engages families of elementary
aged future first-generation Latin@ college students.”

I would like your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the following:


Images from 1st Grade Teacher Curriculum:
   Yes! Classroom Curriculum TEKS Alignment
   Sample Yes! Classroom Curriculum
   Sample Family Curriculum Text Message

The excerpts to be reproduced include information about the mission and work of Yes! Our Kids Can.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including
nonexclusive world rights in all languages, and to the prospective publication of my dissertation by
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of my dissertation on demand and may make my dissertation available for free internet download at my
request. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by
others authorized by you.

Your signing of this letter will also confirm that Yes! Our Kids Can owns the copyright to the above-
described material. If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where
indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

signed

Joan J. Jaimes, MPA

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

signed

John Andrade, President
Yes! Our Kids Can

San Antonio TX 78203

Date: 10/24/19