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“Somos Las Madres Que Los Empujamos Más”: Latina Immigrant Parent Students and the Community College Familial Gateway

Author

Vasquez, Graciela

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“Somos Las Madres Que Los Empujamos Más”:

Latina Immigrant Parent Students and the Community College Familial Gateway

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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in Education

by

Graciela Vasquez

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Somos Las Madres Que Los Empujamos Más”:

Latina Immigrant Parent Students and the Community College Familial Gateway

by

Graciela Vasquez

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Mark P. Hansen, Co-Chair

Professor Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, Co-Chair

This study explored the experiences of Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit English as a Second Language (ESL) program at a California community college. It sought to uncover how these students navigate the processes and services of community colleges to support their academic success while also examining how they draw upon their cultural wealth to devise college-going strategies for themselves and their families.

Employing a mixed methods approach, I obtained questionnaire responses from 195 ESL students and conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 12 Latina immigrant parent students. These data reveals that these students enroll at community colleges with deliberate intent, seeking to gain essential language and job skills while also nurturing ambitions for further education through certificate or degree programs. The study also describes how Latina immigrant parent students engage with college personnel and peers, access the services and

programs, and share knowledge with their families. In these ways, these students leverage their aspirational, navigational, and familial capital. The findings highlight that Latina immigrant parent students are role models who are navigating their college journey and transforming themselves and their families.

Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit English as a Second Language programs at Eastland Community College represent an underutilized resource and hold the potential to be significant collaborators with community colleges. They navigate college systems skillfully as adult learners, share valuable insights and knowledge with their children, and serve as a familial gateway to educational advancement.

The dissertation of Graciela Vasquez is approved.

Daniel Gilbert Solórzano

Mark P. Hansen, Committee Co-Chair

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2024

DEDICATION

Para mi mamá por tus esfuerzos, sacrificios, valores, y amor. Te dedico mi trabajo de toda la vida.

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VITA

EDUCATION

1989 BA Development Studies	University of Los Angeles, California Los Angeles, California
1993 MA Urban Planning	University of Los Angeles, California Los Angeles, California

WORK EXPERIENCE

2020–2024	Dean, Continuing Education Cerritos College
2014–2020	Associate Dean, Adult Education & Diversity Programs, Cerritos College
2008–2014	Director, Adult Education & Diversity Programs, Cerritos College
2003–2009	Director of Title V, Project HOPE (Health Occupations and Pipeline to Education), Cerritos College

RELATED LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

2018–2021	Association of Community and Continuing Education (ACCE), 2nd Vice President/Membership

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This mixed methods study explored the experience of Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in California community college noncredit (CCNCR) English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and the benefits acquired through their engagement. The study investigated their reasons for enrolling and how these students navigated through the community college processes and services to support their success. Further, I examined how Latina immigrant parents used their cultural wealth to identify college-going strategies and practices for them and their families.

Problem Statement

Numerous studies have focused on the college experiences of Latinx students. Most Latinx students in California access higher education through community colleges, making up 47% of all students in the 2022–2023 academic year (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office [CCCCO], n.d.-d). Similarly, Latinx students comprised 46% of all students in CCNCR programs (CCCCO, n.d.-d). California CCNCR programs serve a total of 274,497 students, of whom 50% or 138,623 are adult education ESL students and include immigrants using these programs as an entryway to continue their education (CCCCO, 2021a; Davaasambuu et al., 2020). Although these noncredit programs at community colleges have significant enrollment numbers, they have remained largely under-researched (Davaasambuu et al., 2019). The "hidden" nature of the CCNCR programs has inadvertently marginalized many Latinx students who access their programs to gain workforce training, improve language skills, and transition to credit programs.

This chapter introduces CCNCR programs, their role within the system, the students they serve, and how a lack of institutional support and practices has contributed to a two-tiered

education system in the California Community Colleges (CCCs). Finally, this introduction centers the Latina immigrant parent student in noncredit ESL programs as an opportunity to support their college knowledge and its impact on their families.

Community College Noncredit Programs

To meet the varied needs of adult community members, CCNCR programs are designed to be more accessible than credit programs. They are intended to educate English language learners, primarily those needing basic skills or high school diplomas and reentering or looking to gain skills for the workplace (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Noncredit programs offered at community colleges provide entry for students re-engaging with higher education (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Students enroll in noncredit courses for multiple purposes. Noncredit programs offer an opportunity to address academic skill gaps or upgrade workplace competency for adult students re-engaging with education after an absence. For example, students enroll in courses to complete their high school equivalency, gain English language literacy, understand and gain citizenship, or for short-term training in highly employable industries (Turner Cortez et al., 2021; Xu & Ran, 2020). In large part, noncredit programs build necessary workforce skills that address the needs of the local, regional, and state economies (D'Amico et al., 2017). Noncredit programs have been recognized for their effectiveness in workforce education and responsiveness to industry training needs (Bishop, 2019; D'Amico et al., 2017; Xu & Ran, 2020). However, the attention to community college credit and transfer programs has overshadowed a significant segment of Latinx immigrant adult learners choosing to access higher education by enrolling in noncredit programs.

The community college system has been described as the primary gateway to higher education, serving students of diverse backgrounds (Foundation for California Community

Colleges [FCCC], 2023). Providing open access to all, community colleges offer a comprehensive menu of programs for a broad range of students with varied objectives. The CCCs represent the largest higher education system in the country, enrolling 25% of the nation's total community college students; over 69% of CCC students are of non-white ethnic backgrounds, 53% are female, and over 40% are age 25 or older working adults (FCCC, 2023).

Among those programs is an overlooked and missed opportunity by educators and policymakers of noncredit programs and the students they serve. Noncredit programs provide low-risk, tuition-free, highly flexible, competency-based courses that draw community members who are seeking to gain necessary life or workplace skills (Turner Cortez et al., 2021; Xu & Ran, 2020). Among those community members are Latinx immigrant students entering CCNCR programs to attain their educational goals.

Latinx immigrants come to this country to improve their lives and the lives of their families (Ceja, 2006; Guzmán et al., 2021; Kiyama, 2010). Latinx community members value and view education as an opportunity for themselves and their families to attain better jobs and careers that will increase their standard of living (Alvarez, 2015; Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2004, 2006; Guzmán et al., 2021; Kiyama, 2010; Matos, 2015). However, systemic and institutional racism and nativism marginalize Latinx immigrant students, affecting their access, retention, and completion rates (Huber, 2009). Latinx immigrant students encounter multiple barriers to accessing higher education, given their tenuous status and categories of legal status that determine their level of access (Lacomba, 2022). As a more accessible option, Latinx immigrant students enroll in CCNCR programs to gain skills and entry into higher education. Despite these challenges, noncredit students represent an important and growing population of students at community colleges (D'Amico et al., 2020; Turner Cortez et al., 2021).

During the 2022–2023 academic year, 1,927,146 million students took courses throughout the 116 CCCs. Of these, 240,724 (12.5%) enrolled in noncredit courses (CCCCO, n.d.-b). Nationwide, community colleges serve 4.1 million noncredit students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2023). Recently, the number of students in noncredit courses was drastically reduced from the previous pre-pandemic 2019–2020 year total of 449,777 (CCCCO, 2021a). Table 1 details CCC demographic data of student headcounts enrolled in noncredit programs compared to students enrolled in credit programs in 2022–2023. CCC students are ethnically diverse, with most being Hispanic. Students who enroll in noncredit programs tend to be older (58% are age 35 or older compared to 16% of credit students) and are less likely to be part time (62% compared to 74% of credit students). Further, a higher percentage of noncredit students are women—60% versus 53% (CCCCO, n.d.-c).

The Marginalization of Noncredit Programs

Although noncredit programs serve a critical economic and societal need, limited information exists about noncredit programs (Voorhees & Milam, 2005). In California, adult education has been offered for over 170 years by K–12 schools and community colleges (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). However, inaccessible reporting systems and isolated data collection mechanisms have inhibited colleges from capturing standardized demographic variables for noncredit students, which is partly due to the incomplete and inconsistent student and program data collected by community colleges at the state levels (D'Amico et al., 2017; Davaasambuu et al., 2019). Davaasambuu et al. (2019) found most data collected were only in three areas: (a) head counts, (b) types of courses offered, and (c) demographic information. Almost 20 years ago, Voorhees and Milam (2005) referred to noncredit programs as the "Hidden College" because of the lack of information, inclusion, and understanding of their importance in higher education.

Table 1

Credit and Noncredit Student Enrollment at California Community Colleges, 2022–2023

	Credit students	Noncredit students
Total # of students:	1,686,422	240,724
Race/ethnicity		
Hispanic	49%	46%
White	24%	20%
Asian	11%	13%
Black/African American	6%	3%
Filipino	2%	1%
Multi-ethnicity	5%	1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	.36%	.25%
Pacific Islander	.41%	.17%
Unknown/nonrespondent	4%	15%
Gender		
Female	53%	60%
Male	45%	36%
Nonbinary	.56%	.76%
Unknown/Nonrespondent	1.5%	3%
Age Group		
19 or Less	38%	16%
20–24	26%	8%
25–29	12%	9%
30–34	8%	10%
35–39	5%	10%
40–49	6%	15%
50+	5%	33%
Part time	*74%*	*62%*

Note. From "Noncredit Course Summary," by CCCCO (n.d.-b). Retrieved April 14, 2024, from https://datamart.cccco.edu/courses/ncredit_course_summary.aspx

In addition, funding and noncredit program attendance accounting are problematic and present challenges for community colleges and their support for noncredit programs (Romano & D'Amico, 2021; Romano et al., 2019). For example, not all noncredit programs are included in statewide community college student data collection nor reimbursed at the same higher student full-time equivalency rate as credit programs (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Over the years, the incomplete data collection and lower reimbursement rate has created a two-tiered system at

community colleges that diminishes noncredit programs and challenges the collection of student demographic information, acquiring full-time faculty, and securing the necessary financial resources to provide student services (D'Amico et al., 2017; Romano et al., 2019).

Without comprehensive student data, colleges are hesitant to invest in hiring full-time faculty to teach in noncredit programs; consequently, noncredit programs are staffed largely by part-time faculty and paid less than credit faculty (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges [ASCCC], 2019). The exclusion of noncredit faculty from the CCCs' faculty obligation number (FON) means these faculty members are not considered when calculating the annual number of full-time faculty hires required by the FON. Consequently, the CCCs are not incentivized to hire full-time faculty dedicated to noncredit programs. The lack of full-time faculty can impact the quality of instruction, course and program development, and availability of faculty for students. Recognizing the importance of noncredit programs, the California Academic Senate adopted resolutions supporting an adjustment of the FON to include noncredit faculty (ASCCC, 2019).

Serving noncredit students is not only impacted by the absence of full-time faculty but also by the services they are denied, which are necessary for student success. ASCCC (2019) reported noncredit students receive fewer college resources and lack adequate counselors. Noncredit students are denied access to full-time faculty and counselors who could be more available to instruct their courses, have regular office hours, or provide other support, such as advising student groups that promote engagement with the institution.

Latinx Immigrant Student Accessing Noncredit ESL Programs

As consumers of community college programs, Latinx immigrants experience the first level of the higher education system that can provide them with meaningful context to support

their goals. CCNCR programs are one pathway for Latinx immigrant students to access services and courses that are flexible and responsive to their workforce and educational skills attainment (Turner Cortez et al., 2021; Voorhees & Milam, 2005; Xu & Ran, 2020). Even with accessible noncredit programs provided at community colleges, Latinx immigrant families are challenged to navigate college. They have limited knowledge about U.S. higher education institutions, are not prepared for college, are unfamiliar with the application process, experience limitations with citizenship issues, and face discrimination and language barriers when communicating and connecting with college personnel (Baum & Flores, 2011; Fann et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Harper et al., 2020). Latinx immigrant families, mainly from Mexico, are more likely to be working-class families, have low levels of education from their country of origin, and are less likely to have a degree (Luthra & Soehl, 2015). Further, their family earnings are likely below average, and career opportunities impact their access, ability, and time to participate fully in higher education (Baum & Flores, 2011).

Due to little or no college experience and resources, immigrants struggle to navigate areas such as the college application processes, financial aid resources, college choice decision making, college housing, and building relationships with college counselors and representatives (Baum & Flores, 2011; Cataldi et al., 2018). Latinx immigrant parents rely on their children, educational counselors, and teachers to inform and interpret these processes (Ceja, 2006; McCoy, 2010). In some instances, due to working long hours or a language barrier, parents are removed from the entire college-going process and decision making, relinquishing the tasks to their children (Auerbach, 2007; Baquedano-López et al., 2013).

This lack of opportunity contributes to the gap in college attainment for Latinx families and first–generation students who need more support to enter and succeed in college (Cataldi et

al., 2018). An essential source of this support is their parents, who cannot fully realize their engagement in education for themselves or their children because of the multiple barriers they experience. Starting behind most immigrant groups, Mexican immigrants tend to enter the United States with lower education levels, experience numerous barriers such as language, and are disproportionately undocumented, experiencing less continued improvement across generations (Baum & Flores, 2011). Even if they get into college successfully, low-income students whose parents have yet to gain college experience are less likely to complete their degrees (Baum & Flores, 2011).

Parent involvement, engagement, and empowerment are important for college success (De Gaetano, 2007; Pstross et al., 2016). Parent involvement in K–12 helps set the stage for school success and acquiring the classes and skills needed for a postsecondary education. Latinx parents are also important in supporting their children when preparing for and applying for college (Fann et al., 2009; Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2018). Research also has indicated Latinx parents are actively involved when given the opportunity (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007; Pstross et al., 2016). Engaging Latinx parents in ways that build on their family and cultural assets is valuable in supporting a college culture (Langenkamp, 2019; Villalba et al., 2014). Efforts to empower families by building an understanding of school curriculum and college information is an effective way to engage Latinx parents (Villalba et al., 2014). Additional studies have demonstrated Latina immigrant mothers thrive with parent engagement that facilitates agency and empowerment (Sáenz et al., 2020; Velazquez, 2017). Schools offering college preparation and application workshops, classes, and parent activities inform and empower Latinx families by involving them to participate in the college-going

process (Harper et al., 2020; Villalba et al., 2014). This type and level of engagement can improve the college going and success of their children.

Latinx immigrant parent students' engagement with CCNCR programs can provide opportunities to gain college knowledge skills, career training for a job or better job, English language attainment, as well as social and cultural capital to navigate the higher education system (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Facilitating success within noncredit programs for Latinx immigrant parents could enhance their ability to excel in the workplace, access institutions, advocate for their children's education, and apply their lens and life experience to the college journey. Support for Latinx students, who comprise a large percentage of our educational systems (K–20), is necessary. Supporting Latinx immigrant parent students and families in noncredit programs can significantly impact the future of higher education and the economy. As a continuum of engagement with education, Latinx parent students enter community colleges to access noncredit programs to gain skills and fulfill personal goals (Turner Cortez et al., 2021).

Noncredit students are rarely studied compared to the general population of community college students. Research about noncredit students has focused predominantly on short-term vocational training or workforce skills, highlighting the importance of the return on investment and economic impact (Bishop, 2019; D'Amico et al., 2017; Xu & Ran, 2020). Students enrolled in noncredit programs are more likely to attend part-time and be from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, older, students of color, and less likely to have a high school diploma (Xu & Ran, 2020). Researchers know less about the specific ethnic groups and immigrant origin of noncredit students and their experiences in their programs of choice.

California's noncredit students are ethnically diverse, with Latinx students representing the largest group at 46% (CCCCO, n.d.-c). Among the numerous noncredit programs offered in

the state, 50% of all noncredit students are enrolled in ESL (CCCCO, 2021b). These high numbers of noncredit Latinx students provide an opportunity to study the college experiences of a unique equity group of Latinx immigrant adult learners. The experiences of Latina immigrant parents should be sought and highlighted as an essential noncredit student group. As mothers, these students impact their families' success, specifically their children (Ballysingh, 2021; Reyes & Duran, 2024; Velazquez, 2017). Studies about mothers and Latina parents have found acquiring education and college engagement can impact their children's college-going (Kiyama et al., 2015; Monaghan, 2017). Furthermore, the Latina noncredit student population has not been explored to the extent of their representation in the community college system.

Purpose of Study

Although Latinx parent engagement is known to impact the college attainment of their children positively, more needs to be known about parent empowerment and how their experience attending a community college impacts them and their child's college attainment and success. Attending college improves economic prospects and social mobility for immigrants, so their children can experience successful college completion (Baum & Flores, 2011). Further, as a form of empowerment and parent engagement, there has been little research on mothers participating in education while raising children and the impact it may have on their child's college attainment (Monaghan, 2017). Beyond moral and emotional support for their children's education, Latinx parents can benefit their entire family by experiencing college themselves.

Research on the benefits of college for students and their families has not included students attending CCNCR programs. First–generation status would not count a parent's participation in CCNCR programs. What remains unexplored is the relationship between Latina immigrant parents who attend CCNCR programs and the experiences impacting their social and

cultural capital. Understanding how these parents navigate and experience college can add to the body of research on Latinx students' college knowledge. Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs may provide insight into their applied community cultural wealth and the impacts of college access and success for themselves and their families.

Parent college-going is an opportunity to improve the lives of the family. Educational institutions, programs, and services can significantly facilitate college-going for Latinx immigrant parents. More research about college programs catering to and inviting Latina immigrant parents to enroll in college may increase knowledge about the college-going process for Latinx families. These opportunities could inform Latinx parent students and their children's college attainment and effectively impact the entire family. Latina immigrant parent students can serve as college-going role models and gain meaningful experience in the educational process. In supporting their children's college achievement and their own, Latinx families are securing the country's future.

Research Questions

This study sought to understand Latina immigrant parent students' experiences in CCNCR ESL programs. I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What do Latina immigrant parent students describe as the reasons for enrolling in a noncredit ESL program at the community college?
2. What strategies have Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL program applied when navigating their community college experience?
3. How do Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL program perceive the benefits they and their families derive following their enrollment?

Study Design

This research study focused on Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs at a CCC. Community college staff with oversight of noncredit programs were contacted and asked to participate in facilitating the recruitment of study participants. Eligible students were invited to complete a short survey. A subgroup of respondents was invited to individual interviews regarding their community college experience and acquired college knowledge. Research that presents the voices of noncredit students is limited. However, these students have important perspectives on access, completion, and success for students of color and first–generation students.

In California, the Latinx community holds considerable importance in education and the workplace (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021; Hamilton et al., 2022). Educators and policymakers must ensure Latinx students enter and succeed in higher education. Conducting research that includes Latina immigrant parents attending community college and how these experiences influence their college knowledge, cultural and social capital, and advocacy for their children's college-going will inform future efforts to engage Latinx families with higher education institutions.

I intentionally sought individuals who identified their gender as female and ethnicity categorized by the term Latina. In addition, study participants were immigrants whose country of origin was a Latin American country. Immigrants include any level of resident status, including naturalized, undocumented, permanent, or other, excluding a native citizen of the United States. Parents are defined as individuals having biological children or caregivers of children in primary, secondary, or postsecondary school age. Finally, I focused on individuals formally enrolled in a noncredit ESL course at the community college. It is important to study the relationship between

Latina immigrant parents and how their experience with CCNCR programs can further support college attainment and success for the Latinx family. Understanding Latina immigrant parents' educational needs and achievements and recognizing how these factors can influence their children's trajectories is crucial in advancing our higher education objectives toward achieving equitable success for all.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature and conceptual framework guiding this study. The literature review synthesizes the challenges and barriers in CCNCR programs and students' aspirations in these courses. Following is an analysis of CCNCR programs and how their lack of program and student data, policies, and practices have contributed to the marginalization of students and the engagement of Latina immigrant parents in noncredit programs. Next, this chapter introduces the literature on Latinx parents' engagement in K–20 to support college-going practices, gain college knowledge, access higher education, and attain success for themselves and their families. The final section of this chapter introduces Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) as a framework for analyzing the community college experiences of Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit programs. As an asset-based framework, this section describes the varied social and cultural capital communities of color use and their application in accessing and completing college programs.

A Vision for a Latinx College Family Affair

Like many immigrants, Latinx immigrants come to California to improve their opportunities and the future of their families. Latinx immigrants hold education in high esteem (Auerbach, 2006; Ceja, 2006; Kiyama, 2010) and engage in community college as one pathway to realizing their goals (D'Amico et al., 2017). As a primary entryway for acquiring education to enhance civic and economic status, CCNCR programs are a starting point for Latinx immigrants enrolling in largely ESL programs (Baum & Flores, 2011; Becker, 2011). Noncredit programs represent an opportunity for Latinx immigrant families to come to the community college to gain college knowledge and skills for themselves and their families (Becker, 2011; Turner Cortez et

al., 2021). Understanding immigrant Latinx students' community college experiences and aspirations for themselves and their families is vital for identifying how to support their success.

Challenges Faced by Noncredit Programs

California community colleges have long offered noncredit programs that "fundamentally transform the lives of the hundreds of thousands of California residents served every year" (Turner Cortez et al., 2021, p. 155). Although poorly understood, noncredit adult education programs have existed and expanded over 167 years in California (Voorhees & Milam, 2005). As an important vehicle to educate and assimilate new arrivals to a newly established state, California immigrants were the early beneficiaries of the state's adult education programs. Early adult education programs had the mission of delivering basic education for new citizens. Some of these programs remained vital components of offerings carried over to California's established junior colleges. Adult education was supported to strengthen the economic and civic engagement of the population and was intended to be highly accessible to all adults living in the state. Table 2 synthesizes the emergence of adult education and noncredit programs in California and their response to the needs of the state.

Table 2

Noncredit Adult Education in California

Adult Education Established in California (1850s)	● **1856:** Established the 1st adult school in San Francisco, CA ● Served the educational needs of immigrants ● Offered elementary-level academic subjects (i.e., literacy and numeracy skills, vocational pathways, and ESL) ● Provided zero-cost, tuition-free adult education for the next 150 years
Adult Education Reform Efforts (1900s)	● Expanded throughout the 20th-century programs in response to the state and country's political, economic, and social needs ● **1926:** Established the State Plan for Adult Education & the Division of Adult Education ● Expanded the vocational and technical education, basic skills, and high school diploma and GED test programs ● Introduced citizen and civic engagement programs ● Added short-term vocational and occupational training ● **1954:** Established designated adult education responsibilities and program areas, adding parenting and older adult programs ● Responded to important social changes that solidified for the state the importance of adult education: ○ **1940s–70s:** Offered education and training for veterans with GI Bill ○ **1960s–70s:** Increased delivery of noncredit programs in support of civil rights and antipoverty programs ○ **1970s:** Debated the role of community colleges in the delivery of noncredit adult education programs ○ **1978:** Adapted to a dramatic decrease in funding due to Proposition 13 reducing from 10 to 7 adult ed program areas: elementary basic skills, secondary basic skills, adult substantially handicapped, short-term vocational education, citizenship, apprenticeship programs, and parent education ○ **1980:** Established CASAS (California Adult Student Assessment System), providing a standardized instrument for pre-enrollment diagnostic and post-program assessment ○ **1990s:** Addressed the high rates of Asian and Latinx immigration with industry technology training and adult literacy programs ○ **1992:** Removed adult education programs from categorical status ○ **1998:** Shifted adult education away from K–12 to community college systems in response to the Workforce Investment Act to support its workforce training components ● Recognized as an essential component of the community college system by the governor during his signing of the AB1725 legislation
The Knowledge Age (2000s)	● Ensured a well-educated workforce and economic health by providing lifelong learning ● Responded quickly to the demands of emerging and evolving markets by offering flexible, short-term noncredit programs ● Expanded to back to 10 program areas: ABE, ESL, Citizenship (EL Civics), high school equivalency/diploma, vocational education, adults with disabilities, health and safety, home economics, parent education, and older adults ● Expanded access to adult education programs by increasing distance education offerings ● **2012:** Created the Education Protection Account, providing adult education support for K–12 and community colleges ● **2015–2016:** Increased apportionment funding for noncredit CDCP courses to full credit rate "when funds were available" ● Continued to prioritize adult education, addressing workforce development, basic education, language literacy, and lifelong learning opportunities for all residents. ● **2017 and 2022:** Served as a potential source of co-requisite and academic support for courses impacted by the shift in community colleges from basic skills requirements to transfer-level math and English brought by the enactments of AB705 and 1705. ● **2017–2023:** Vision for Success provided a plan for the Student-Centered Funding Formula to address degrees to completion and equity goals. ● **2023–2030:** Vision 2030 enhanced equity goals to address socioeconomic mobility for the most underserved students in the community college system, emphasizing adult learners.

Note. From "Noncredit Course Summary," by CCCCO, n.d.-b, "Noncredit Education," by C. O. Turner Cortez, M. Fischtal, and J. Luedtke, 2001, and "The Hidden College: Noncredit Education in the United States," by R. A. Voorhees and J. H. Milam (https://vdocuments.net/the-hidden-college-noncredit-education-in-the-united-collegepdf-colleges.html).

The focus of adult education courses and programs has changed with the state's emerging societal, civic, and economic needs. Still, their delivery has remained flexible, tuition free, and distinct in that they do not issue credit units. In community colleges, adult education is delivered via noncredit courses focused on skill attainment rather than credit degree completion (Arena, 2013; D'Amico et al., 2017). California Education Code Section 84757 identifies 10 designated areas of noncredit instruction, including pre-college basic skills, ESL, short-term vocational, workforce preparation, citizenship, health and safety, adults with disabilities, parenting, older adults, and home economics. Funded by state apportionment and supplemented by additional state and federal grants, noncredit programs are designed to be easily accessible and meet immediate skills attainment for the workplace or continuing education (ASCCC, 2019).

In California, community college adult education courses are designated as noncredit and include allowable adult education programs for the state. At the community college, noncredit programs have served an important role in educating local community members who need short-term skills to enhance their employability, civic engagement, and continuing education. Emphasis has been placed on the transition from noncredit to credit programs and the opportunities or supported pathway it provided to degree certificates and transfer (Becker, 2011). However, most noncredit courses and programs serve other groups of students and community members that are not counted, visible, understood, or well supported due to their disconnect with the larger credit program completion agenda of community colleges.

Community colleges ensure a high level of access for students, particularly Students of Color, who attend college locally (CCCCO, 2022). Transfer is an important community college mission in facilitating equitable access for BIPOC[1] students to advanced degree attainment.

[1] BIPOC is an acronym used for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to refer collectively to individuals who are not of white European descent.

Community college policies and funding focus on supporting transfer programs and services, so students can complete their transfer goals. However, not all students' goals are to transfer, and of those whose goal is to transfer, only a small percentage attain their goal. In the 2020–2021 academic year, only 5% of CCC students earned an associate degree for transfer to earn a 2- or 4-year degree among the 1,085,042 students (CCCCO, 2021b). During the same 2020–2021 year, 12% of students enrolled in noncredit courses completed a postsecondary credential, and 5.8% earned a postsecondary noncredit career technical education (CTE) certificate. Success data for students in noncredit programs are listed only for CTE certificates. Noncredit programs fill a community and economic need that strays from the emphasis of the community college transfer agenda.

In California, CCNCR programs held steady enrollment and grew in the years before the pandemic, with a 2.8% growth from 2016–2017 to the 2017–2018 academic years. Significantly, this growth in noncredit enrollments occurred during a decline in credit enrollments. During these same academic years, students enrolled in credit courses declined by 2.4%. However, following the pandemic, noncredit enrollments decreased by 39% during the 2020–2021 academic year, with the lowest student levels in 10 years (CCCCO, 2021a), which is attributed to the multiple barriers faced by students typically enrolled in noncredit programs and the lack of supportive services (ASCCC, 2019; Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Romano et al. (2019) referred to noncredit programs as institutionally lacking support due to policies and practices contributing to a two-tiered education in the CCCs. During the pandemic, this two-tiered system exposed the vulnerability of noncredit programs and their students.

Institutional Support: Noncredit Funding Challenges

Contributing to the challenges for CCNCR programs are the resources and funding practices used to support students. The National Center for Education Statistics collects data on student funding from public colleges and universities. Using the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), annual institutional data are collected and calculated using full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment (Rosinger et al., 2022). According to Romano and D'Amico (2021), IPEDS "is a critical source of national data used by researchers, colleges, and policymakers" (p. 22). For community colleges, IPEDS uses FTEs to measure enrollments for students enrolled in credit programs and excludes noncredit enrollments (Romano & D'Amico, 2021).

The current funding model relies on FTE instead of headcounts to allocate funds that overstate community college resources by not including noncredit (Rosinger et al., 2022). Inconsistency in defining noncredit education across the country is one reason identified for excluding noncredit enrollments in IPEDS (Sykes et al., 2014). This inconsistency is partly due to noncredit enrollment data and programs being varied and differing across states to meet local needs. Community colleges are challenged to capture noncredit data and have limited outcome data, such as earning wages and certifications (Sykes et al., 2014). This calculation has implications for funding community colleges because noncredit students may constitute a significant headcount in a community college. However, because noncredit students typically enroll for short periods of time, they account for only a small amount of FTE enrollment (Xu & Ran, 2020). Consequently, funding needs and allocations to community colleges and their noncredit programs are represented unfairly by the flawed representation and exclusion of noncredit enrollments in the funding model.

In California, various sources fund noncredit programs, the primary source being state apportionment. The state apportionment provided to CCNCR programs is funded at lower rates than for credit programs (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). To partly alleviate this disparity, apportionment funding was increased for courses that are part of an approved career development college preparation (CDCP) certificate. Codified in Education Code §84760.5, enhanced apportionment funding for CDCP noncredit programs includes four approved instruction areas. The areas of noncredit instruction that qualify for CDCP funding are (a) elementary and secondary basic skills and other courses and classes such as remedial academic courses or classes in reading, mathematics, and language arts; (b) ESL; (c) short-term vocational programs with high employment potential; and (d) workforce preparation classes in the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, decision making and problem solving, and other classes required for preparation to participate in job-specific technical training (ASCCC, 2019).

For the remaining programs, California funds non-CDCP courses at one third of the reimbursement rate of credit courses. In addition, FTE reimbursement for noncredit courses is based on positive attendance rather than a census date, which is the case for capturing student accounting of FTE for credit courses (ASCCC, 2019). This skewed funding policy presents a higher burden on noncredit courses to account for students' attendance at every class meeting rather than a snapshot of a census date of total enrollment. As students inevitably drop classes into the semester, the reduced number of students negatively impacts accounting for noncredit funding reimbursement. This policy ensures less funding is allocated for noncredit courses, marginalizing noncredit programs and their students.

Community colleges have used various federal and state funding sources to offset these shortfalls to ensure program delivery and serve noncredit students effectively (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Funded by state apportionment and supplemented by multiple state and federal grants, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the California Adult Education Program (CAEP), CCNCR programs continue to offer relevant education at no cost (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). During the 2022–2023 academic year, CCC apportionment totaled over $3 billion at $3,187,337,000 (CCCCO, 2023a). The apportionment allocated to community colleges combines both credit and noncredit apportionment. The decision to determine the specific allocation for credit or noncredit programs is the purview of individual colleges, their priorities, and the costs associated with the programs they support. The federal WIOA collects data on adult learners in K–12 and community college institutions and provides supplemental performance-based funding for noncredit workforce programs (Turner Cortez et al., 2021). For colleges funded by WIOA, additional data are collected, including skills gains, employment, and education levels, to name a few. However, as a supplemental funding source, WIOA relies on reporting to maintain funding levels, and not all community colleges participate in the program, contributing to the inconsistency in data collection (D'Amico et al., 2017).

Similarly, the newly introduced student centered funding formula (SCFF) does not include noncredit programs in performance metrics that provide additional funding allocations (California Community Colleges, 2020). For example, the SCFF provides additional funding based on the number of students who complete transfer degrees, earn a CTE certificate, and/or are eligible for Pell grants (Williams, 2021). None of these metrics apply to students in noncredit programs. Exasperating this dilemma is the need for instruction in basic skills development. A significant role of CCNCR programs is providing skills gap attainment for students who are re-

engaging with education after many years or have not completed their education. In the past, community college credit and noncredit programs were responsible for offering basic skills courses. With the passing of AB705 and AB1705, effectively eliminating basic English and math credit courses, the responsibility of serving students with basic skills gaps and skills development courses fell to under-resourced noncredit programs (ASCCC, 2019).

The undervaluing of students in noncredit programs is reflected in the funding levels and structure, policies, instructional program restrictions, student access to services, and full-time to part-time faculty ratios (ASCCC, 2019; Turner Cortez et al., 2021). Furthermore, CCNCR programs are economically vulnerable, particularly during fiscal downturns, due to statewide credit priorities, noncredit programs' tenuous funding, and largely noncredit adjunct faculty and staff (ASCCC, 2019; Turner Cortez et al., 2021). The persistent lack of data, institutional support, and visibility of noncredit programs prevents students from fulfilling their potential.

Although noncredit programs have developed pathways to support their students' transition to credit certificates and degrees, other meaningful noncredit program contributions have been overlooked. CCNCR programs strive to empower adult learners to achieve their educational and workforce aspirations, enabling them to reach their full potential (Bishop, 2019; D'Amico et al., 2020). As vital as it is to prioritize community college student transfer goals, equal attention must be given to providing support and instruction for students pursuing nontransfer degrees or intermediate goals such as certificates. Unfortunately, the experiences of these noncredit students and their goals and completion rates remain inadequately documented.

An Inclusive Vision

Acknowledging that achievement gaps persist for students of color and that older and working adults have been left behind systemwide, the CCCCO (n.d.-d) outlined a vision driven

to meet its students' needs and be inclusive of all its constituencies. Beginning with the Vision for Success, the CCCCO (n.d.-d) set explicit goals to increase the number of students completing degrees and certificates and transferring, reduce the number of units required for degree completion, increase the employment of CTE students in their fields, and reduce equity gaps within colleges and across regions. Serious about realizing this vision, CCCCO leadership implemented the SCFF to ensure progress toward goals. In September 2023, the CCCCO released Vision 2030, which created a roadmap for a more inclusive community college system for all Californians. Building on the Vision for Success, the plan "reintroduces the importance of equitable access, support, and success while bringing to the forefront socio-economic mobility for historically underserved communities" (CCCCO, 2023b, p. 1).

The Vision 2030 report called out justice-involved students, foster youth, and low-income adults, outlining three goals: equity in success, access, and support to close equity gaps (CCCCO, 2023b). In alignment with the governor's goal for California to reach 70% of all adults ages 25–64 have a bachelor's degree, associate degree, or certificate, Vision 2030 reiterated the commitment to be more inclusive and expand its priority to provide college attainment for Californians ages 25–54 (CCCCO, 2023b). To realize its vision of inclusivity and address the needs of adult students, 61% of whom are Latinx and have been historically underserved, the community college system should prioritize and acknowledge the potential of Latina immigrant parent students in noncredit programs (CCCCO, 2023b)

Immigrant Parent Engagement

Most Latinx students entering higher education who enroll at community college are first generation, have limited resources, and need more social capital to navigate higher education. In Latinx student success, the family, specifically parents, influences educational outcomes.

Parental involvement in K–12 is a longstanding activity that is a strategy to ensure success in education (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Villalba et al., 2014). Using the resources of community colleges and the involvement of Latinx immigrant parents in these institutions provides an opportunity to further support the success of Latinx students in college. As largely working-class immigrants, Latinx families experience multiple barriers in gaining access to resources and information to navigate college successfully (Luthra & Soehl, 2015). One reason for these barriers is the inability to communicate in English, which can bridge opportunities in education, work, and society.

Latinx parents who attend college in the United States may offer additional support that could impact college access and success for their children. For example, studies could determine whether immigrant Latinx parents attending community colleges allocate more resources to college preparation courses, enrichment programs, or tutoring services. Similarly, these studies could examine whether Latinx parents are more likely to advocate for their children within the school system. Beyond preparation, research could explore parents' involvement in decision making regarding college pathways, college selection, researching college majors and residency options, and providing insights into their discussions with their children about their college experience and potential challenges. Having experienced college themselves, Latinx immigrant parents can develop familiarity and skills in college preparation and curriculum in K–12, better understand college application and financial processes, gain relationships with college counselors and representatives, and obtain other valuable capital they would then impart to their children as college-going support.

Latinx Parent Engagement in Support of Higher Education

The number of Latinx college-going students and the general population of Latinxs has grown significantly in the United States. Latinx student higher education attainment in the United States has increased in recent years, raising the number of individuals with bachelor's degrees or higher to 2.8 times more rapidly for Latinxs than non-Latinxs from 2010–2019 (Hamilton et al., 2022). This growth has been due primarily to the growth in the Latinx population, which increased by 23% from 2010 to 2020, comprising over 62 million of the total U.S. population (USAFacts, 2021). Given their population growth and younger median age than non-Latinxs, Latinxs add large numbers to the working-age adult population. From 2010–2019, Latinxs added an average of more than 660,000 workers annually to the U.S. labor force (Hamilton et al., 2022). U.S. Census Bureau projections documented that, by 2060, Latinxs will have contributed 30 million people to the population of working-age adults. Over the same period, non-Latinx workers will shrink by 1 million (Hamilton et al., 2022). Furthermore, Latinx immigrants make up 50% of the 44.8 million immigrants in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2020).

In California, 40% of the 39.5 million residents are Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Latinx students comprise over 50% of K–12 students and over 40% of college undergraduates (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021). Similar to nationwide trends, 45.3% of the California population is not a citizen, and 49.3% identify Latin America as their birthplace (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). For colleges, this means a growing number of first–generation Latinx students will need support with the college-going process. Given these trends, Latinx families will undoubtedly significantly impact the future of higher education.

Meaningful Parental Support

As a continuum to Latina immigrant parent student experience with postsecondary education, the following literature review is relevant to the engagement of the Latinx community with primary and secondary schools. As parents, Latinx families access college knowledge from primary and secondary schools in support of their children (Fann et al., 2009; Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2018; Kiyama et al., 2015). First, I synthesize the literature about how Latinx families impart their values to their children's educational endeavors. I then examine the challenges for Latinx immigrant parents as well as the institutional white-middle class and deficit perspective school representatives hold. Finally, I review Latinx college students' engagement and its importance in their future success.

The Value of Education

Numerous studies have shown Latinx immigrant parents value education and demonstrate this value to their children in various indirect and direct ways (Alvarez, 2015; Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2004, 2006; Kiyama, 2010; Matos, 2015). Latinx parents largely support their children at home, communicating the value of education and complementing their academic efforts. In less conventional ways, Latinx parents help their children by entrusting them with responsibility, sharing lessons from their lived experiences, and modeling a strong work ethic. In a key qualitative study, Ceja (2006) described the vital role of parents in developing educational aspirations in their Chicana daughters. In the study, Ceja defined Chicana as a female student of Mexican descent living in the United States. For this review of Ceja's study, Latinx is used to represent Chicana/o, Latina/o, or Hispanic. Interviews with Latinx high school seniors in Ceja's study revealed parents directly and indirectly influenced their children's educational goals. Latinx students described direct messages from parents stating education was necessary for

better opportunities and completing their homework was a priority, so they do well in their classes and go to college. Indirectly, Latinx students' awareness of their parents' conditions, struggles, and sacrifices motivated them to achieve in school and attain a college education (Alvarez, 2015; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Matos, 2015).

Parental support was also significant in the elite academic success of first–generation Latinx undergraduates at Yale University (Ceballo, 2004). Ceballo (2004) interviewed 10 high-achieving Latinx students who indicated their parents consistently expressed vocal support and encouraged their academic efforts. Latinx parents complimented their children's accomplishments, bragged to family and friends, and demonstrated their pride for their children excelling in an elite college. Latinx parents also provided nonverbal educational support in their actions, such as excusing children from chores or family events and not wanting them to work while in college. Indirectly, parents gave time for homework, provided dedicated space for study, and purchased school supplies. In Matos's (2015) study of Latinx college students, the impact of parental support was extended to include having the entire family assist with their college student's move-in day, clean their dorm room, and prepare care packages of favorite foods. These gestures gave Latinx college students a sense of home and reinforced parental moral support even when they were away at college. Latinx parents consistently affirmed their belief in the value of education to ensure their child's success.

Even though the value of education is a strong motivation for Latinx students and is expressed positively by parents, Alvarez (2015) illustrated the complexity of Latinx parents' beliefs about the value of education in the college-going process in a qualitative study of high school seniors. Parents' decision making is drawn from their lifelong struggles and ambitions for their children to have a better life. For these parents, sending their children to college is an

extension of their goals and realizing their dreams. Fulfilling their parents' expectations and dreams of attaining a college degree puts pressure on their children to succeed and can be a burden for them. Latinx students are then faced with considering not only their own goals but how their actions in going to college coincide with their parents' visions.

The motivation to achieve academically and succeed in college was further elaborated in Matos's (2015) comparative research of multilevel institutions and identified Latinx students. Matos introduced a new form of cultural capital titled "finishing," which refers to parents' sacrifices to assist their children in aspiring to obtain a formal education. In addition to conveying aspirational support, Latinx parents communicated to students that they had to finish their education no matter what. They also lamented their unrealized dreams of college or having started college but not finishing. Latinx students described plans to complete higher education to repay their parents' sacrifices and contribute to their families' legacy. The value of education was reinforced through personal sacrifices parents were willing to make so their children could succeed.

Demonstrated Lived Experience and a Strong Work Ethic

In addition to direct and indirect signaling of the value of education, Latinx parents provide further nonconventional encouragement through their lived experiences and strong immigrant work ethic (Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006). The power of storytelling is an influential tool in the development of educational aspirations. Latinx parents often use storytelling of their experiences to motivate or teach lessons to their children about the educational opportunities afforded to them. Parents share stories of their limited occupational positions or growing up in countries where education was not available, which impacted their life opportunities (Ceja, 2004; Matos, 2015). Parents encourage their children to study, work

hard, and use education as a vehicle to have better opportunities. Latinx students often reported hearing stories that they needed education to be somebody, get ahead, and secure social mobility (Matos, 2015). These stories motivate Latinx students to avoid the same unfortunate fate as their parents and take advantage of their opportunities. Compared to their parents' hard lives and work, Latinx students are taught that their hard work could be applied to their academic efforts. Being aware of the conditions of their immigrant parents, Latinx students internalized the importance of going to college and the hard work it takes to succeed (Ceja, 2004).

The trust and autonomy given to Latinx students also demonstrate parental support for education. Immigrant Latinx parents relied on their children to understand and complete the academic preparation and make decisions about the college-going process (Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004). Latinx parents supported their students in making educational choices. Parents often defer to their children's decisions when completing college applications, submitting financial documents, and selecting colleges. Latinx students were entrusted with choices, even if their decisions meant moving away from home. Auerbach (2006) described Latinx students as cultural brokers for their immigrant parents. They are accustomed to navigating institutional systems and serving as mediators for their parents. Latinx parents assume a "bystander role" (Auerbach, 2006) and depend on their children to navigate institutions such as higher education. It is a role reversal when the parent cannot engage fully in the educational process but relies on their child to investigate and make choices regarding college (Alvarez, 2015; Auerbach, 2006).

The autonomy granted to Latinx students is present, particularly if parents know their children to be responsible, self-motivated, and excellent students. These are signs for immigrant parents that their children are doing well, know what steps to take, and are competent to exercise autonomy. Parents support their children's efforts by signing college applications and financial

aid documents without a complete understanding of the process. Latinx students are highly influenced by the trust their parents give to them, particularly when making serious decisions about their education. They indicate a high responsibility in managing their academic careers (Alvarez, 2015; Ceballo, 2004; Yee, 2016). Although not ideal for some Latinx students who felt left alone with little guidance, they understood that their parents were not able to help.

Challenges to Latinx Parent Support

Latinx parental support is abundant and evident in the resiliency characterizing successful Latinx students in college. However, Latinx parents' actions are limited mainly given their lack of familiarity with education as well as communication barriers, low socioeconomic status, and institutional structural issues (Alvarez, 2015; Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Fann et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Matos, 2015; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

Lack of Familiarity With Educational Institutions

Parental lack of familiarity is a significant barrier for Latinx immigrant parents to support and assist their children with the college-going process (Alvarez, 2015; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2012). Ceja (2006) explored the need for parental familiarity with college choice in a qualitative study of 20 Latinx high school seniors. Almost all participants noted their parents needed the knowledge to help guide them through the process of applying to college. These Latinx parents needed to familiarize themselves with college entrance exams, the application process, and college choice. Latinx students stated their parents needed help understanding the time and effort required to apply to college. Further challenges included parents' need for knowledge about higher education systems and differentiating a community college, state, or university.

Even among high school and middle school Latinx students, parental unfamiliarity with the educational system inhibited the college preparation and college-going knowledge and support for these students. Gonzalez et al. (2012) examined perceived barriers to college-going beliefs and aspirations in Latinx immigrant communities. Gonzalez et al. surveyed 190 seventh, eighth, ninth, and 10th grade Latinx students in schools throughout the southeastern United States. The study identified that building efficacy around college-going tasks is challenging, given immigrant parents' unfamiliarity with the educational system. Access to resources that help build efficacy is not available or presented in ways that engage Latinx parents fully. This challenge inhibits parents' involvement and confidence in communicating with school officials to understand processes such as completing college applications and financial aid documents.

Other research suggested parental involvement is influenced by "contextual conditions" (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). The roles of the school, higher education, and state, economic, and policy contexts and conditions shape parental involvement. A significant finding was that immigrant parents lack knowledge of the state's higher education system. These first-generation immigrant parents needed to learn of the many choices in the educational system. Not having gone to college in their own country, immigrant parents did not perceive distinctions in colleges or their rigor and curricular offerings. Consequently, Latinx parents' direct involvement was limited, and they could not provide specific assistance with the college-going process. Latinx parents' role was reduced to emotional and financial support (Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

Communication Barriers

In addition to needing to become more familiar with the education system, Latinx immigrant parents are challenged by a lack of fluency in the English language. Parents have

limited access to published educational information, school or college workshops, and the ability to ask questions of school personnel in their language (Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Matos, 2015). For Latinx parents, this lack of availability of information and access in their dominant language puts them at a disadvantage in supporting their children and actively participating in the college-going process. Even attempts to become more familiar with education preparation and the college process are hindered for Latinx parents. In a noted study of parental support for Latinx college students, parents experienced major obstacles in becoming more familiar with the college-going process (Ceja, 2006). Latinx parents felt they needed to be equipped to assist with schoolwork and more confident to gain knowledge by attending workshops to support their children. As a result, most Latinx students in this study felt their parents could not provide them with critical information that could have facilitated their thoughts about their college opportunities.

Low Socioeconomic Status

Another significant barrier to Latinx immigrant parents' involvement and support of their children's college attainment is their lower socioeconomic status (SES). Low SES limits the type of support immigrant Latinx parents can provide for education (Auerbach, 2006; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Kiyama, 2010; Monaghan, 2017). Auerbach (2006) documented Latinx immigrant parents' strategies for college-going, noting their support was grounded in socioeconomic realities. Their "social location" as low-income immigrants constrained their actions. In interviews, these parents acknowledged attempts to attend meetings and gain knowledge were unsuccessful, with both parents working, contributing to their unfamiliarity with the college process (Auerbach, 2006).

Further constraints included Latinx parents working many hours or at night, limiting their time to assist with the college process and leaving children with significant responsibilities, such as caring for their academic work and siblings (Ceballo, 2004). In Ceballo's (2004) study, Latinx students were left to make decisions with little guidance or while learning the college-going process themselves, which resulted in Latinx students indicating they felt alone in guidance and decisions about school. The degree of parent involvement and the support Latinx parents provide is overwhelmed by the socioeconomic factors and circumstances of their lived experiences.

Latinx parents' economic factors and circumstances can further magnify disparities in access to resources that support college-going. Anticipated financial barriers were concerns for Latinx parents and their children attending college (Kiyama, 2010). Paying for their child's college education is a financial hurdle for immigrant Latinx parents without experience with the financial aid process. Data collected from another study regarding Latinx college-going noted parents have a wide range of what they believe college costs (Alvarez, 2015). Sending their children to college may seem unrealistic if Latinx parents receive college grant money that is not enough to cover their perceived college costs.

Parents' financial assistance for college and gaps in the availability of resources also varied based on SES. Rowan-Kenyon et al.'s (2008) study described the barriers limiting the involvement of low SES parents. Parents at low-resource schools have fewer available resources, are less knowledgeable about the higher education system, and encounter structural barriers. These parents were uncertain, had not saved money, and worried about how to pay for their child's college. Gaps emerged in the availability of resources such as college financial aid and how to engage parents in the college process effectively. The reality of Latinx parents' low educational and occupational attainment are significant predictors of lower college achievement

for their children; as a result, parents' educational aspirations for their children can conflict with financial limitations and lack of resources (Ceja, 2006; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

Institutional Barriers

The educational system failures similarly overshadow parents' ability to support their children (González et al., 2003; Kiyama, 2010; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). Largely, Latinx immigrant families live in areas with schools that have limited college preparation courses and curriculum, such as honors and Advanced Placement courses. In schools with these resources, these opportunities are often not afforded to Latinx students who are not tracked for college. Further intensifying these failures, school personnel and counselors struggle with stereotypes of Latinx students that dictate their actions (González et al., 2003). González et al. (2003) examined perceptions of barriers to college-going of youth in emerging immigrant communities. Emerging immigrant schools have experienced a surge of recently arrived immigrant families and students entering their schools. School personnel can influence college-going knowledge more so than immigrant parents. However, in González et al.'s study, school counselors and personnel were noted as having biases influencing their decisions. Discrimination in emerging immigrant schools could be very damaging to the self-concept and aspirations of students.

Additional obstacles have implications for educational institutions of limiting college-going for Latinx students, which is compounded if they do not have the cultural competence to work with and assist their immigrant parents. For many Latinx students, their undocumented status deters college-going. Informed school personnel can assist in navigating resources for these students. Often, school personnel may not be equipped to assist Latinx students who have issues with their own or their parents' status (González et al., 2003). Policies and school regulations may further complicate this status issue and discourage Latinx students from

considering college or even being unclear about their eligibility. Parents trust schools to prepare their children for college, but these institutional failures hinder Latinx parents' ability to access and assist their students' college-going.

Empowering the Parent Role in College

Engaging Latinx parents' inequitable educational partnerships requires college support, college knowing, and college-going (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; De Gaetano, 2007; Fann et al., 2009; Huerta et al., 2022; Kiyama et al., 2015; Matos, 2015). The support of schools, higher education institutions, and policies can bridge Latinx parental support for college-going. College knowledge and Latinx parents' understanding, participation, and college engagement also support their children's college-going. Finally, parents' attendance in community college impacts their own economic and educational trajectory and that of their families.

College Supporting

Empowering parents to be involved and ensuring they have the resources to shape their family's educational future depends on the systems largely responsible for educational achievement. Schools, higher education institutions, and public policies contribute to differences in parental involvement. These institutions and policies can be important in providing college-related support in collaboration with Latinx immigrant parents (Auerbach, 2007; De Gaetano, 2007; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

Increasing schools' and universities' role in providing support and resources to Latinx parents includes intentional collaboration. A study designed to help Latinx parents of first–generation students become active in their children's college-going process provided insight into the importance of parental involvement (Fann et al., 2009). Researchers found effective parent programs can eliminate barriers by incorporating spoken language, scheduling services or

workshops when working parents are available, creating a welcoming environment, and offering a series of workshops to provide numerous opportunities to disseminate much needed college information. Education programs can engage Latinx parents as active partners, address their community-specific needs, and sustain parental involvement through ongoing participation. With high-level support from education and directed policies, Latinx student college attainment can move away from heavy reliance on their under-resourced immigrant parents (Fann et al., 2009; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

Effective college support programs at schools and higher education institutions recognize the need to transform their understanding of and interactions with Latinx parents (Auerbach, 2007). Auerbach's (2007) qualitative study described three parent role orientations of low SES Latinx immigrants: (a) moral supporters, (b) struggling advocates, and (c) ambivalent companions. Each category has various implications for how a school or higher education institution approaches parental support programs and services. For example, parents characterized as struggling advocates directly monitor, advocate, seek information, and negotiate for access to support their child's education. Educators and policymakers can better promote partnerships and collaborations that result in equitable outcomes by comprehensively understanding Latinx parents' roles in supporting their children's educational attainment.

Additional reframing of Latinx college parental support introduces an inclusive model for understanding Latinx students and parent negotiation in the college-going process (Alvarez, 2015). Rethinking and understanding college-going as a family process, compared to an individual one, has further implications for institutions and policy. Alvarez (2015) described collaboration models with Latinx parents, including high schools and city officials establishing student–parent symposiums. In partnership with Latinx parents and high school graduates, this

support in providing information about the college-going process facilitates conversations tailored to the family. Alvarez added that policy implications can include creating guidelines at the district level to support these practical strategies. Supporting Latinx college-going parental support engages educational institutions and public policies that are relevant and productive intervention points (Alvarez, 2015; Auerbach, 2006; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

College Knowing

Even with supportive institutions and policy, college experience with Latinx parents is needed for effective collaboration, context, and active participation (Gonzalez et al., 2012; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). Latinx parents struggle with their lack of college experience in the United States. Rowan-Kenyon et al. (2008) revealed that, in a case study of 15 high schools, parents shaped their child's college opportunities, but their involvement varied depending on their college experiences. Parents who went to college sent messages that their child was expected to go to college and often took their children to visit campuses at an early age. Parents who had not attained a college degree could not give these same messages and depended more on the schools to provide college guidance and information (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008).

Another aspect impacting college attainment for Latinx students is the educational transmission process between parent and child. Transmission is the passing along from parent to child (intergenerational) the influence of, for example, values (e.g., educational expectations), behaviors (e.g., work ethic), knowledge, or cultural capital (Scherger & Savage, 2010). Parents who have not attended college are less likely to participate in college planning activities and less effective in their child's college-going process (González et al., 2003; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). The extent to which parents expose their children to college is largely based on parents' educational attainment. In Gonzalez et al.'s (2012) study of middle and

high school Latinx students, Latinx parents' level of education impacted their children's college aspirations and self-efficacy beliefs. Self-efficacy measures an individual's confidence to complete tasks leading to college-going. Latinx parents' highest level of formal education indicated only 5% of mothers and 4% of fathers were college graduates. Absent the college experience, Latinx immigrant parents are unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system and support their children with less goal-directed behavior, leaving Latinx students to navigate the process alone. Consequently, Latinx students are challenged with access to resources that help build efficacy for college-going tasks.

College Going Parents

Beyond parents knowing, collaborating, and participating as supporters, parents who experience or have the opportunity to go to college significantly impact college-related outcomes (Garcia & Mireles-Rios, 2020; Monaghan, 2017; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). Results from key empirical studies suggest parents who attend college, even later in life, make it more likely their children will complete college (Monaghan, 2017). Monaghan (2017) researched the impact of maternal college enrollment and attainment on offspring's likelihood of graduating from high school, enrolling in college, and completing a 4-year degree. Data indicated mothers completing their bachelor's degree increased their children's bachelor's attainment by six percentage points, suggesting a parent's college-going facilitates their children's educational and social mobility.

Latinx parents attending college improve their children's educational performance, attainment, and social mobility. Monaghan (2017) marked these improvements in three pathways: (a) realized monetary returns, (b) altered parenting strategies, and (c) represented effective role models. Realized monetary returns directly influence Latinx student college attainment outcomes by purchasing services such as preparation courses or tutoring. Parental

strategies of college-educated parents benefit childrearing practices by increasing awareness and knowledge about college that is imparted to their children. Added to these benefits is the educational commitment realized and modeled as a parent's priority when a parent is college educated (Monaghan, 2017).

As college-going and accomplished role models, parents underscore spoken messages about college-going and attainment. In Garcia and Mireles-Rios's (2020) study of college-educated fathers, these Latinx parents made important contributions in advocating and navigating the educational system for their daughters. Parents provided direct benefits to their children by sending them to private schools, exposing them to college early, and ensuring some financing for tuition. Beyond providing social capital, these Latinx parents helped their college students navigate predominantly white colleges, demonstrating how to overcome institutional barriers. Garcia and Mireles-Rios's study demonstrated Latinx college-educated parents have added value in contributing their cultural and racial awareness to help navigate institutional racism at these institutions. This consciousness raising played a crucial role in the success of first–generation college students of Latinx parents. Latinx parents' college-going facilitated their children's social mobility by having college experience to leverage in meaningful ways.

Securing Support of a College Going Future

Latinx parents play a significant role in their children's preparation, access, and academic achievement in college, influencing their children through their actions and education support. Strengthening CCNCR programs would further empower Latinx immigrant parents' role in the educational system. In higher education, student parents are 20% of total undergraduates, and 42% of all student parents are enrolled at community colleges (Huerta et al., 2022). In part, student parents look to community colleges to provide a pathway to better jobs and careers to

support their families (Becker, 2011). Studies have shown a parent's socioeconomic status, where they live, and their level of education also impact their children's college attainment (Luthra & Soehl, 2015). Compared to the general population, Latinx immigrant parents tend to have lower levels of education; however, Latinx parents who obtain a college degree significantly change their child's educational trajectory and social mobility (Garcia & Mireles-Rios, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Monaghan, 2017; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). Community colleges attract a majority of BIPOC students in higher education with goals of workforce and transfer certificates and degrees (American Association of Community Colleges, 2023). Less is known about the participation of students enrolled in CCNCR programs and how these programs benefit Latina immigrant parent students (D'Amico et al., 2017; Davaasambuu et al., 2020). Huerta et al. (2022) researched community college student parents of color, their difficulties navigating college life, and the importance of familial and institutional support networks. The study called for identifying and tracking student parents, so colleges can implement programs and practices that support their unique needs. CCNCR programs are uniquely positioned to provide flexibility, support, and short-term, skills-based courses that can meet the needs of Latinx student parents.

Conceptual Framework

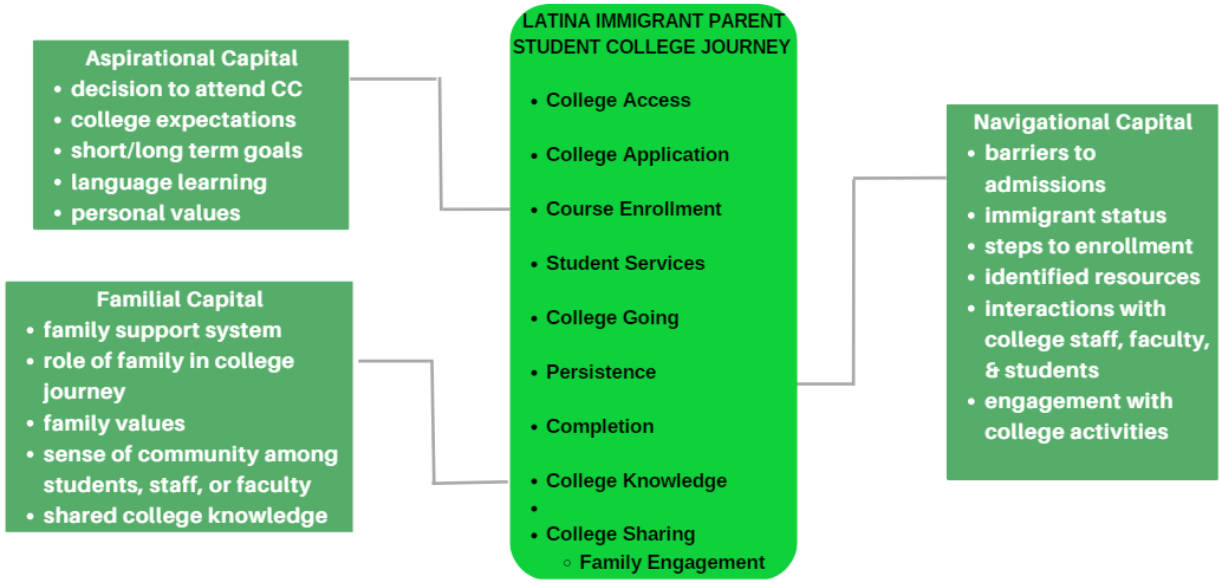
This study aimed to understand the experiences of adult Latina immigrant parent students in CCNCR ESL programs, how they perceive their own social and cultural capital, and their understanding of how their college knowledge impacts their families. Little research has focused on Latina immigrant parent students in CCNCR programs despite their marginalized status. Identifying how Latina immigrant students demonstrate their cultural wealth practices to navigate the community college will raise awareness about their college experiences.

This study was approached from the lens of the innate power of Latina immigrant student parents and their engagement at the community college. I used the asset-based CCW (Yosso, 2005) framework, which challenges the traditional values of capital and captures the strengths and experiences of Latina immigrant parents enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs. These students approach their college experience and navigate the college in ways hidden and unrecognized by the institutions they access.

Guided by Yosso's (2005) CCW framework, the experiences of Latina immigrant parent students are captured in how these students enter, persist, and gain college knowledge. Yosso conceptualized CCW as a challenge to traditional interpretations of cultural capital, first introduced by sociologist Bourdieu. The framework highlights the diverse strengths, knowledge, skills, and assets marginalized communities bring to their educational experiences. CCW encompasses six forms of capital: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. Aspirational, navigational, and familial forms of CCW are particularly relevant to this study. Figure 1 depicts the journey of Latina immigrant parent students in CCNCR ESL programs and the aspirational, navigational, and familial capital they bring and apply to their experiences. The college journey of Latina immigrant parents is depicted in the center and connected with the aspirational, navigational, and familial capital students draw from to enter the college successfully, complete the necessary processes, and gain the knowledge necessary to attain their goals. Latina immigrant parent students will use their aspirational, navigational, and familial capital throughout their college journey. The lines connecting cultural capital to their journey represent the responses, values, and resources they bring to the community college.

Figure 1

Latina Immigrant Parent Students' CCNCR Program Experience



Aspirational capital refers to the future hopes and dreams students draw on despite barriers, demonstrating a resiliency to imagine the possibilities beyond the current circumstances. Navigational capital refers to how students use their agency to maneuver through institutions not designed for them, social capital to the supportive networks of people and community resources, and familial capital to the cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* and a commitment to community well-being (Yosso, 2005). Latinx immigrants often refer to their education as a collective or family experience in that resources, support, and motivation are provided by multiple family members, parents, and siblings so the individual can attend college (Fernández & Rodela, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2012). Using CCW, Latina immigrant parents actively participate and struggle with educational institutions so their children will benefit academically and attain a college degree (Reyes & Duran, 2024; Velazquez, 2017; Vesely et al., 2013). Further, they use their social and linguistic capital to identify bilingual college personnel

who can assist family members in encouraging others to enroll in courses. They use navigational and social capital to prepare their children for college, including familiarizing themselves with financial aid (Villalba et al., 2014).

In addition, Latina immigrants' successful educational experience as a group draws on their navigational and familial capital to influence generations of family members going to college and to enhance their economic participation, citizenship or civic engagement, and community support (Baum & Flores, 2011; Langenkamp, 2019). As primary caretakers, Latina mothers support their children's progress through school and preparation for college (Huerta et al., 2022; Reyes & Duran, 2024). Community college students gain knowledge and skills to share with family and friends (Alvarez, 2015; Huerta et al., 2022). As they succeed in completing courses and programs, they model practices and behaviors internally (at home) and externally (in their communities). In essence, the college experience of these Latina mothers is a transformation of intellectual and personal growth that may enhance their leadership as educational role models at home, at their community college, and in the community.

This study incorporated the CCW framework (Yosso, 2005) to acknowledge the asset-based capital used by Latina immigrant students that often are a response to nativist practices experienced at educational institutions, their workplace, or the cities in which they reside. Community colleges have layers of status designation that determine student access to college programs, financial aid, and academic resources (Lacomba, 2022; Millan, 2021). Even when faced with challenges given their citizenship status, Latina immigrant parents are strong advocates and proactive in ensuring benefits for themselves and their children (Yrigollen-Robbins, 2023).

Latina immigrant parents also enter community colleges to enroll in noncredit programs. As experienced adults raising families while managing as an "outsider" or "newcomer" to the country, deciding to attend college and acquire skills in a noncredit educational program is challenging and liberating. Latina immigrant students' decision to enroll at a community college, compared to other public or private institutions delivering adult education, provides access to higher education practices and processes that build their college knowledge (Becker, 2011; Grubb et al., 2003). In gaining access, Latina immigrant students apply their CCW to enter, persist, and succeed in their educational programs. Instead of adhering to deficit-minded perspectives traditionally assigned to Latina immigrant parent students, CCW draws on the knowledge these students bring to the community college.

Conclusion

Latina immigrant students face educational barriers, but they exercise their CCW in responding to their challenges and aspiring for more with their participation in education. Understanding the challenges and resiliency of Latinx immigrant parents and how they have participated in educational institutions is vital to supporting strong partnerships (Albrecht, 2021; Huerta et al., 2022). The growing number of Latinx students in education focuses attention on their success to ensure the economic prosperity of our country. Primarily enrolled in community colleges, Latinx students represent the future of higher education. Research has demonstrated that Latinx immigrant parent engagement in the K–12 system and higher education directly influences the successful attainment and completion of Latinx students (Auerbach, 2006; Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2018).

Furthermore, CCNCR programs are an unknown and untapped resource for Latinx students aspiring to gain English language skills, high school diplomas or equivalency,

workplace and career skills, and certificates and degrees. Latina immigrant student parents enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs demonstrate how their cultural wealth can "transform education and empower POC to utilize assets already abundant in their communities" (Yosso, 2005, p. 82). This research study examined the experiences of Latinx immigrant parents enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs and how they exercise their cultural wealth to persist and succeed. In addition, the study explored the engagement of Latinx immigrant parents as a successful strategy for imparting college knowledge to their families. Using quantitative and qualitative phenomenological research methodologies, surveys and interviews were conducted to document and elevate the voices of Latina immigrant parent students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of adult Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs. It sought to uncover their motivations for enrolling, how they navigate the college, and the effects of their college knowledge on their families. Grounded in an asset-based CCW framework (Yosso, 2005), the research strived to understand how Latina immigrant parent students perceive and respond to their community college experiences. It addressed the prevalent lack of recognition and marginalization faced by Latina immigrant students within noncredit programs at community colleges. Such insights can raise awareness about their college journeys, identify strategies they use in these academic spaces, and demonstrate their cultural wealth practices. This study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to explore the following questions.

Research Questions

1. What do Latina immigrant parent students describe as the reasons for enrolling in a noncredit ESL program at the community college?
2. What strategies have Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL program applied when navigating their community college experience?
3. How do Latina immigrant parent students in a noncredit ESL program perceive the benefits they and their families derive following their enrollment?

Research Design and Rationale

Adopting a mixed methods study design allowed for a comprehensive analysis of Latina immigrant parent students' community college experiences. Integrating quantitative and qualitative methods facilitated examining the relationship among analyzed variables and

elaborated on the meaning behind the responses provided by study participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

By incorporating surveys, a broader comprehension of college involvement and experiences was gathered from all participants in noncredit ESL programs, ensuring a uniform data set for student characteristics and college interactions, which was particularly crucial as data on noncredit programs at community colleges are limited and inconsistent (D'Amico et al., 2017; Romano & D'Amico, 2021). The survey was a pivotal tool, initially aiding in gathering demographic information to identify the participant group for interviews. Moreover, the survey facilitated comparisons between all students and the participant population while identifying willing participants for interviews among Latina immigrant parent students. This holistic approach enhanced data collection and allowed for nuanced analyses of experiences within this population.

The qualitative study component provided a deeper understanding of student experiences, offering detailed insights into their perceptions and lived experiences regarding the factors influencing how these students navigate the college. Given the invisibility and inattention to the community college experience of students enrolled in noncredit programs, a qualitative study drew out students' college experiences. It allowed them to elaborate on their perceptions, strategies, and obstacles. The qualitative study captured the explanations, details, and stories about the challenges and strengths acquired during Latina immigrant parent students' college journey. Participants were engaged and prompted by interview questions and dialogue, including the self-determined decisions, strategies, and resources they used in their college journeys. The qualitative study facilitated the prompting of themes along social and cultural capital as Latinas define it.

I used a qualitative phenomenological research design with semistructured interviews to elevate the voices of Latina immigrant parent students. I used interviews (*testimonio/*testimonial) to uncover rich information about Latina immigrant parent students' interpretations of agency, transformation, and self-determination in navigating CCNCR programs. *Testimonios* are a qualitative technique in which the individual testifying uses their own lived experience as evidence. It is a pedagogical approach intended to heal and liberate as a knowledge tradition (Huber, 2009).

This study sought to understand and explore the assets Latina immigrant students bring upon entering the community college and how this can impact their and their families' college knowledge. A phenomenological approach allowed adult Latina immigrant parent students to interpret their community college experiences and how their choices impact their families' lives.

What researchers learn from this study can inform studies at other community colleges or higher education sites to provide nuance to the data and their implications for Latina immigrant parents. For example, 60% of students enrolled in noncredit adult education programs statewide are female, and 46% are Latinx (CCCCO, n.d.-b). Understanding their decisions to enter the community college can present an opportunity to support their success better. This mixed method study and its implications may draw parallels with other student populations, such as non-Latinx immigrant groups and Latinxs enrolled in community college credit programs or universities. It also presents an opportunity to explore the impact of their college journey on families, the cultural capital they exhibit, and how these sets of capital support Latinx students. Furthermore, due to the incomplete data within CCNCR programs, student data do not consistently capture completion or success metrics (Xu & Ran, 2020). Even in colleges that independently gather noncredit program and student data, it is mainly in areas that policymakers look to fund, such as

workforce and career technical training, with an immediate economic return on investment (Bishop, 2019). These programs are not representative of Latina immigrant parent learners, nor do they include programs such as ESL, which in California is one of the most extensive instructional noncredit programs. This study captured the experiences of these noncredit students and identified themes that may enhance what is known about noncredit students and how to support them.

Population and Sample

The population of interest for this study was Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a CCNCR ESL program. All students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs were invited to participate in the quantitative portion of the study. Latina immigrant parent students participating in the qualitative study had at least one primary, secondary, or postsecondary school-age child living in their household at the time of this study.

Site Selection

For this study, I selected a community college in an urban area with a community demographic that reflects a significant number of Latinx (66%) and first–generation (40%) students. The community college site is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with a track record serving the Latinx student population. An HSI is an institution of higher education with an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students, at least 25% Latinx students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Although not required for its HSI designation, the selected college site intentionally serves Latinx students and ranks in the country's top 10 Latinx degree-awarding institutions. This tradition of serving Latinx students ensured the community college serves this demographic of noncredit students, which was the focus of this study: Latina immigrant parents enrolled in ESL programs.

In California, the six noncredit program areas from which data were collected are ethnically diverse, with Latinas/os comprising the largest group, accounting for 58%. Among these program areas for which statewide data were collected, 40% of all noncredit students are enrolled in ESL (CCCCO, 2022). At the selected site, 34% of noncredit students are enrolled in the noncredit ESL program. However, a significantly larger percentage (70%) of the ESL student population is Latina/o. During the 2021–2022 academic year, the site served a majority of 58% female students and enrolled 825 ESL students. Of the students served by all six program areas, 1,369 (22%) were ages 19–24, and 2,319 (37%) were ages 25–44. This group provided a pool of Latina immigrant parent students to invite to participate in the interviews. At the selected site, on average, 26 sections of ESL courses are offered every semester and represent low to advanced levels. Given 26 sections, the college semester allows up to 650 students to enroll in ESL classes.

The selected college site is also in a region that shares the delivery of adult education programs with other area providers, such as K–12 districts, which is important because noncredit student participants in this study, having other choices for their programs, may reflect an intentional decision to enroll at a CCNCR program to fulfill their educational goals and objectives. This choice provided an especially useful opportunity to explore with participants the college knowledge, agency, and empowerment constructs proposed in this study.

Furthermore, the community college selected has noncredit programs that exist within the college campus. A community college with a sizeable noncredit program in a separate location or outside the community college would limit the student's physical interaction with the general credit community college programs and services. Noncredit programs onsite at the community college would provide the setting for noncredit students to engage with the traditional community college experience. This site provides the setting for Latina immigrant parent

students to engage with the college's general processes, student services, and noncredit programs within the larger campus.

Selection of Sample

All students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs were invited to complete a survey. I sent the survey via email and included a purposeful sample of set criteria to identify participants for an interview. Survey data captured demographic information, such as ethnicity, age, gender, number of children and ages, country of origin, duration at the college, resources and services sought on campus, and school and college family engagement. From the survey data collected, I sorted demographics to identify mothers with children of primary, secondary, and postsecondary school age. I also sorted the immigrant origin of potential participants, and I selected various countries to represent the survey respondents. Finally, I selected Latina immigrant parents who expressed an interest in being interviewed and reflected the demographic of the larger group.

I interviewed 12 study participants who met all criteria. To ensure a representative pool of Latina immigrant parent students, I selected potential interviewees from the total number of ESL students served by the course offerings at the chosen site, totaling 587 individuals who had received an email inviting them to complete the survey. The interview sample of 12 participants reflected various experiences with the college (e.g., counseling, faculty office hours, events), representative of Latin American countries, various ages, number of children, and level of ESL (beginning to advanced levels). The survey return rate was 33%, making 195 participant surveys available to sort for potential interviews. Ninety-five study participants (48.7%) met the criteria of Latina immigrant parents enrolled in an ESL course. Of those students, 66 (69%) expressed an interest in being interviewed, and 12 were chosen.

Access and Participant Recruitment

I conducted my research at the site where I have been a manager for over 20 years. I have developed relationships with various administrators, faculty, and students, and I leveraged these relationships to facilitate the research surveys and interviews. Even though I am a college employee, my access was provided through the site's official channels. I requested my access be granted through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, which required a formal committee to scrutinize my research study.

As a division manager overseeing noncredit programs at the selected site, I oversee staff and faculty. However, as an upper-level manager, I do not directly supervise or work with students in the classroom. As the division manager, ESL faculty report to me. To recruit students for interviews, I introduced an initial survey via email to students and included a facilitated introduction to the survey in the classroom. Before the in-person interviews, in the fall of 2023, I distributed a short Qualtrics questionnaire to all ESL classes to gather data and screen for potential interviewees.

To distribute the survey, I requested a list of student emails enrolled in noncredit ESL programs from the site, and the surveys were sent directly to students. I designed the survey to last 15–20 minutes and disseminated it to potential interview participants in ESL courses 6 to 8 weeks before interviews were scheduled. To facilitate students navigating an online survey, I used the classroom setting to support students who decided to participate. I acquired an email list of students enrolled in noncredit ESL courses from the college research staff. In addition, I introduced and distributed surveys in classroom settings, so students could determine if they wished to complete the survey or participate in an interview. Students could complete the survey

by scanning a QR code in various ways, including during classes on available computers, via phone, or later at home.

The survey gathered general demographic and descriptive information about the noncredit students and included Likert scale questions evaluating student college experiences and familiarity with the college process. A frequency scale was used to answer questions regarding attending college events and experiences with college personnel and classmates. Similarly, additional questions included family educational engagement that addressed the students' sharing of college experiences, college decisions, assisting children with homework, and attending school activities or events.

I developed the survey in English but translated it into Spanish using the Qualtrics Google translator tool. Students had the option to complete the survey in English or Spanish. All communications, surveys, and interviews were provided in English and Spanish, enhancing the ease of understanding and access for all participants. Instructions in English and Spanish were provided to students on navigating the survey tool and shared with program faculty to assist with survey participation. Upon completing the survey distribution and receiving potential interested students for interviews, I made direct contact with student participants. I then scheduled interviews in a private room at the site location.

Data Collection

This study focused on understanding the community college experiences of Latina immigrant parent noncredit students. I collected data through a survey and semistructured interviews to facilitate noncredit student participation and responses. Survey data provided responses from 195 participants representative of various demographic characteristics and experiences. Interviews allowed participants to recall their college journeys and describe their

experiences with college processes and strategies they have applied to address RQ2 and RQ3. In addition, interviews invited conversations about family and connections between their college experiences and their actions' impact on their children's educational success (RQ1 and RQ3).

I disseminated the questionnaire to noncredit ESL students, including Latina immigrant parents and all other students. Subsequently, I used the survey data to purposefully select a sample of 12 Latina immigrant parent students for in-depth interviews. Responses from the remaining students served as a basis for comparison, highlighting any significant variation between Latina immigrant parents and other students.

During the survey, I asked students if they would participate in a 60- to 90-minute interview. At this stage, the student entered their contact information (i.e., name, telephone, email). I sent follow-up emails to interested students requesting interview preference day and time, preferred mode of contact, and dates available. I selected students for interviews based on the following criteria: Latina, a parent of school or college-age children, of immigrant origin, and enrolled in a noncredit ESL course. The information I gathered from the survey assisted me in identifying students with these criteria and in gathering contact information from participants interested in being interviewed. I sent confirmations for selected participants to interview within 2 weeks of survey responses, and I scheduled interviews over 2 months.

Twelve Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in all levels of ESL program courses were included and invited to participate in individual interview sessions regarding their community college experience and acquired college knowledge. Participants were allowed to select an in-person or online interview and to confirm that the interview would be conducted in Spanish. Interviews held in their native language allowed participants to express themselves fully and comfortably, using sayings that have cultural meaning and context. The interviews included

open-ended questions to invite full and nuanced responses from participants. I held interviews in a private room at the community college. The interviews were recorded and included an additional backup recording device with transcription.

Data Analysis

Initially, the collected survey data underwent a thorough review to gain insights into respondents' demographic profiles, descriptive details, and course-related information. I used this information to identify representative characteristics among the Latina immigrant parents participating in the survey.

When selecting participants to interview, the compiled survey information ensured students who met the profile of Latina immigrant parents enrolled in an ESL course were invited to be interviewed. Additional questions measured the frequency participants used aspirational, navigational, and familial cultural capital. These responses were grouped, and I searched for trends or themes that were most or least in agreement. This analysis provided content areas to explore further during the interview.

Individual interviews were transcribed, and I conducted an initial review for established categories. I took notes to identify themes related to categories of their reasons for enrolling at the college (RQ1), strategies for navigating college (RQ2), and perceived benefits from their college experience for themselves and their families (RQ3). I analyzed the data and sorted them by the identified coding categories and subcategories I generated from the interviews. A developed rubric representative of the CCW framework guided the categories and ideas presented in the interviews. This rubric informed the identification and analysis of themes found in the interviews, such as asset-based and cultural wealth practices and strategies to navigate challenges confronted during their college experience. Examples of themes would include:

- Aspirational – improve economic well-being, inspire individuals or family members, educational goals, personal goals, and educational values.
- Navigational – overcome college barriers, identify college or community resources, engage with college personnel and peers, and connect with issues of immigrant status.
- Familial – role modeling, family values, sense of community, and sharing college knowledge.

The deductive coding method was guided by CCW aspirational, familial, and navigational themes. Initially, I formulated a list of predetermined codes drawn from the research questions, literature review, and CCW conceptual framework. Beyond the CCW categories listed previously, examples included educational engagement, feelings of invisibility, and language barriers. In addition, using an inductive coding approach, I searched for other unexpected themes and codes to include in the analysis. This method minimized preconceived notions and allowed the emergence of codes and themes that extended beyond the predetermined codes and framework. Additionally, I integrated informal data gathering strategies, such as engaging in casual conversations and incidental observations during interviews, that provided valuable contextual information to the overall analysis (Maxwell, 2013).

Research as a Relational Process: *Juntos Se Puede*

In preparation for the data gathering and to gain insight into my research interview protocol and questionnaire, I conducted practice student interviews and sessions with faculty experienced in teaching noncredit programs.

I pilot tested survey and interview questions with individuals with backgrounds and experiences similar to those of the intended population. Possible pilot interviewees were other students with similar backgrounds and adults representative of having past educational

experience sought by the study (i.e., inclusive of noncredit ESL). I sought to capture and understand potential problems with questions, tone, biases, cultural norms, and responses from the identified adult student interviewees. Also, this pilot determined if survey and interview questions elicited the information the study research questions sought.

In addition, I solicited ESL faculty volunteers to review the survey and interview questions, so they could provide feedback and identify any areas that may be misinterpreted or misunderstood to minimize bias and harm to students. ESL faculty have established relationships with their students and know how they engage and understand college language and practices. I met with faculty beforehand to explain the study, the intended benefit to students, and my intention to distribute surveys to identify interviewees enrolled in ESL classes. I explained the reasoning behind having a trusted environment like their classrooms and faculty facilitators to introduce the students' opportunity to participate in the survey.

I contacted 15 ESL faculty 4 months before distributing student surveys. Nine faculty responded that they were interested in participating in a meeting to learn about the study and provide feedback. After confirming a date to meet with all interested faculty, six faculty confirmed and attended the meeting, and three others responded that they would be interested in participating but could not attend the initial meeting.

Participant Questionnaire and Interview Input

Six faculty members attended a session to discuss and provide input to the study.

Faculty Member 1: Felipe is an immigrant from Mexico who has had a similar experience as his students in this country, learning a new language and attaining an education. He has taught ESL to adult learners since 2004 and at Eastland Community College (ECC) since 2015. He holds a bachelor's degree in linguistics, a multisubject teaching credential from California State

University, Dominguez Hills, and an adult education teaching credential from the University of Phoenix.

Faculty Member 2: Miguel has taught noncredit courses since 1999 at ECC and other colleges for 24 years since 2000. He has specialized in teaching ESL courses since 2010, teaching in various adult school settings and at various community colleges. Miguel is a Mexican immigrant who previously attended U.S. public schools, starting in third grade as an ESL student. Miguel has a bachelor's degree in kinesiology and a teaching credential in adult education (multiple subjects).

Faculty Member 3: Camila came to the United States from Mexico at age 4. She has 15 years of teaching experience. She first taught for a nonprofit organization serving migrant and seasonal agricultural workers and is an adjunct faculty member at ECC. She teaches vocational ESL, Spanish literacy, and general education development (GED) in Spanish. Camila has a certification in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), a bachelor's degree in Spanish, and a master's degree in Spanish literature, linguistics, and civilization.

Faculty Member 4: Mary has 18 years of teaching Spanish GED and vocational ESL in adult education and has been an ECC faculty member since 2010. She is an immigrant from Chihuahua, Mexico, and a former noncredit ESL community college student. She continued her journey in credit ESL, transferred to California State University, Long Beach as a Spanish major, and received her master's degree. Mary has three children, two daughters, and one son, and is a resident of Norwalk, CA.

Faculty Member 5: Laura is from Colombia and emigrated to the United States in 1994. She has taught citizenship and occupational preparation at ECC for 7 years. Like the adult students interviewed, she first came to ECC as an ESL student and continued her education by

completing an associate degree. She has a bachelor's degree in communications and received her teaching credentials in adult education from the University of San Diego.

Faculty Member 6: Rose is the daughter of immigrant Mexican parents. She was raised and educated in the United States. She has taught adult education ESL courses since 2006, including 6 years of teaching at ECC. She received her associate degree from a community college and transferred to California State University, Los Angeles.

The faculty met with me for 4.5 hours to discuss the study and provide feedback on the participant questionnaire and interview questions. They offered suggestions for wording, phrasing, and the order of questions. After presenting the study, the faculty members supported its purpose. They discussed how to convey the intent of the questions and went through every question on the survey and interview questionnaire to ensure the proper phrasing was captured. The faculty session focused on reviewing the Spanish versions of the study tools, which resulted in an improved participant survey and interview questions. After this session, some faculty members shared experiences similar to those of ESL students in the United States. Other faculty members shared their relevant student experiences in their ESL courses and the impressions that resulted in reframing their andragogy and approach to teaching.

Field Testing

Another preparation I took was to run two practice in-person interviews with individuals demographically representative of the study participants with similar educational experiences. Initially, I conducted outreach to four individuals recommended by college staff and other college colleagues. I held two mock interviews with those who fit the profile and were available to meet. Islandra was the first practice interviewee. She is a Latina immigrant parent and former ESL student. She is from Colombia and has a university degree in education and psychology

from her country of origin. Juliana was the second practice interviewee and a single mother of two adult children. She took ESL noncredit and credit classes in the United States. She has a degree in administration and finance from Mexico but could not get her degree evaluated in the United States.

During this experience, I practiced listening to responses, organizing keywords in my notetaking, using recording and video tools, and considered improving the room set-up. For example, after the first practice interview, I rearranged the location of the recording device and adjusted the timing for when to turn it on. I then set up Zoom as a second recording device to keep as a backup. I also realized I should have a small clock on the table to reference, and I modified the room configuration. Most significantly, these interviews revealed the high level of trauma in these women's educational experiences. Even after many years had passed, the profound feelings of discrimination and pain persisted as the test participants described their initial experiences in ESL classes and their struggles to make a living so their children could have an education and attain a better future.

As a result, I rearranged my interview questions to ease into accounts about their first experiences in ESL classes. These questions referencing initial experiences were rearranged so those conjuring up painful memories about their journeys could be asked later in the interview rather than in the beginning. Although initially it seemed logical to ask about their first experience in ESL at a community college early in the interview, the question was triggering. Based on these reactions, I decided to move this question about their first experiences later in the sequence of questions.

Survey Implementation: *Dando la Cara* – If You Want Results, Show Up

For this study population, which is frequently undervalued, overlooked, and labeled as enrolled in "noncredit" courses, which, in both literal and figurative terms, implies no recognition or acknowledgment, it was imperative for me to carefully consider my research methods and how to incorporate their participation. I realized the need to approach their engagement differently, viewing them as active participants in a reciprocal process.

Latina immigrant parent students should not be merely expected to complete surveys or participate in interviews simply because they are invited or selected. Instead, I adopted a proactive and inclusive approach by personally visiting classes and involving them in my research's data collection and findings. This approach shaped my purpose, perspective on data collection, and methodology, challenging my assumptions and reasoning.

It is crucial for researchers to "put a face to the study" to be present and engaged with the community being studied. Establishing relationships with our students goes beyond sending out flyers, email invitations, or social media posts. I deliberately fostered a reciprocal relationship with respondents, recognizing their pivotal role as collaborators of the research data. These students seek engagement in a meaningful way that necessitates our presence and active involvement as researchers, educators, and advocates.

This approach extended a warm invitation to students and actively sought to engage them. By personally visiting the classes and explaining the purpose of the study, I addressed the "why" for students. This strategy of showing up in person and putting a face to the survey went beyond merely treating students as passive responders to a survey or interview participation. It emphasized the significance of their participation and provided the context and underlying

reasons for the study. The outreach effort aimed to incorporate the survey participants as valued co-partners and collaborators in the study.

Selection and Scheduling of Interview Participants

At the start of the college semester, a contact list for all 587 students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs was provided to invite students to participate in the study survey. After emailing invitations and visiting all 26 college ESL classes, I emailed survey links and QR codes to 587 students, one class at a time.

Upon closing the survey, I conducted an initial review and cleaned up the data. During the survey process, I discovered a discrepancy in the data collection. As is the case with providing an anonymous link, there was some duplication in responses. I screened out what I could identify and deleted 14 duplicate responses of those that provided contact information. Among the duplicated responses, I selected the more complete version. I eliminated those incomplete versions, understanding that respondents may have submitted the survey initially and then gone back to complete the survey questions fully.

Of the total student respondents, 195 students completed the survey, and 95 students met the criteria of Latina immigrant parents enrolled in noncredit ESL programs. Of these, 66 agreed to be interviewed for the 12 available slots. I selected the 12 interviewees using randomization to ensure that the sample reflected the demographic diversity of the pool. Specifically, this interview candidates were chosen to ensure broad representation in terms of the countries of origin, participant ages, and number and ages of children among Latina immigrant parent students who participated in the survey.

Credibility, Validity, and Trustworthiness

At the start of the participant interviews, I introduced myself as a college graduate and a daughter of Mexican immigrant parents. I clarified that the interview was designed to learn from the experiences, assets, and strategies they employ to navigate the college and was not necessarily related to their individual course experience. I disclosed my position at the college as a dean of the division that oversees noncredit ESL programs. However, I emphasized my role as a university student and my intent to understand their decisions to enter the community college space and its impact on their children.

To ensure study participants were comfortable, I provided a friendly and private space, so they felt safe expressing their honest opinions and experiences. To put interviewees at ease about their responses, I held interviews in private rooms away from the classroom. I selected interview participants who had enrolled in an ESL course or program. I also ensured they represented students enrolled in various ESL levels from beginning to advanced, as well as participants having just arrived at the college, enrolled in their first semester, or having continued status in their 2nd semester, 3rd semester, or longer. Data collected also were representative of both positive and negative experiences to ensure the inclusion of varied learning opportunities.

I made available written interview invitations that reviewed the protocols, read written descriptions of protocols with interview participants, and clarified any questions to maximize participants' understanding before proceeding. It was vital that I reassured them of the anonymity of their interview responses and how the information would be used to assist community college administrators, faculty, and staff in learning about their experiences to serve Latina/o students better.

Ethical Issues

As a community college employee of the selected site, I was aware of having colleagues and relationships with managers who may have given me access or may not have been as stringent as they would toward an outsider. Before the study, and separate from the UCLA IRB process, I requested approval from the IRB at the selected community college site. I asked IRB committee members for recommendations to address ethical issues.

Throughout the study, I was mindful of my status. During recruitment, I explicitly communicated verbally and in writing that students were not required to participate in the survey or interview. In addition, I clarified that their decision to be interviewed or to decline to be interviewed would not impact their class or access to programs at the college. However, I added that their participation allowed them to provide input to better serve students like them. I reiterated to participants that I was conducting interviews and research as a student at UCLA, rather than as a manager at the college.

Before the interviews, I reviewed the agreement, read the research's purpose, and provided participants the opportunity to clarify or answer any questions. I also clarified that this study, survey, and interviews would not reflect their specific classes or instruction. Further, to ensure confidentiality, I communicated to all participants who completed surveys and interviews that their responses and data would be stored and secured in a dual-locked area, and any video or audio recordings would be password protected.

My first responsibility was to respect all individuals participating in the study. I took steps to protect the privacy of study participants. As such, I changed the names of any persons arising from participants' information sharing during the survey or interview process to general terms (e.g., teacher, counselor, and parents), and I gave study participants' names pseudonyms.

Interviews may have revealed sensitive information (i.e., legal status), so I cleaned dataof any personally identifiable information (e.g., student identification numbers, actual names, emails, and phone numbers) immediately following the data collection phase and before entering and coding for common themes. Furthermore, I assured the interviewed students that their comments and the information provided would not be revealed. For example, any comments regarding their status (e.g., citizenship) or family situations (e.g., women in harm with a partner, social crisis) would remain confidential. Given the possibility that painful comments or issues could surface during interviews, I had available a list of on- and off-campus resources participants could access in both Spanish and English.

As a college dean, I am removed from the faculty and classroom environment. I do not work with students; however, I have administrative oversight of noncredit programs. Because the study focused on students' college experiences, individual harm to faculty and students was minimal. As the dean of noncredit competency-based programs that do not issue transcripted grades, there is no impact on course or program oversight, reducing the potential for any harm to students due to their participation in the study. Furthermore, I implemented protocols to secure student privacy and generalize findings for any controversial or negative opinions participants expressed during the interview.

I took steps to protect the privacy of all study participants. I identified potential participants via email from site course records. I sent emails to potential participants, so they could self-select for possible study participation, and I invited them to complete a questionnaire. As the principal investigator, I individually contacted via email participants who indicated interest in being interviewed. Separate invitations for in-person interviews were sent to each participant. Demographic data from the questionnaire and interviews were linked only to the

individuals interviewed. Access to code keys and individual data information was locked, secured, and held only by the principal investigator.

During the interviews, I notified participants that information from the interviews would be compiled and general themes would be shared with ECC to learn about their experiences and how to best support students like them. The survey instrument contained language about the optional questionnaire, and participants could opt out at any time. Any data collected from questionnaires or interviews were protected, so individual participants would not be identified. Pseudonyms were used in all recordings, and notes were taken by the principal investigator.

Role and Positionality

My interest in researching the experiences of Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs stemmed from my more than 20 years of experience working with the Latinx community. My lived experience as a first–generation college student was shaped by having been raised by immigrant parents and their influences on my educational journey. I am also a mother of four children, and I have had my own experiences guiding them through their struggles of college preparation, access, and successful completion.

As the dean of continuing education at the selected site, I have inherent biases that have shaped my perspective of student experiences. Furthermore, my position as an administrator in the same district as participants may have impacted students' rapport and trust, given the association with negative and punitive experiences, particularly with immigrant language learners. I used multiple measures to demonstrate confidentiality with survey protocols to encourage a safe environment during interview sessions. In addition, I conducted classroom visits to explain the study's purpose, answer questions, emphasize my role as a researcher, and administer the survey and interviews with utmost confidentiality and care. During these

interactions, I openly shared my background as the daughter of Mexican immigrant parents and a first–generation college student, revealing the potential biases my personal experiences might introduce to the study.

My study aimed to examine Latina immigrant parents' college experiences and if their motivations are to help their families. The site was the community college where I worked as the dean of continuing education at the time of this study. My experiences directly managing and developing programs for community college adult students may have influenced my interpretations of the interview responses and hypotheses. For example, I was interested in knowing how Latina immigrant mothers enrolled in noncredit programs affect their children's college knowledge and college-going. During my tenure at the community college, I observed many Latina mothers accessing college programs and services who were interested in helping their children. Often, these parents requested appointments with and for their secondary school children to learn about and plan for college opportunities.

Limited by my biases, I approached this work with a predetermined asset-based CCW framework (Yosso, 2005). This approach led me to interpret data primarily through a favorable lens, potentially causing me to overlook areas of deficiency to incorporate. As a first–generation college student with Latinx immigrant parents, I was deeply moved by the narratives shared by our community college students in noncredit. These personal accounts resonated with me on a profound level. Although these connections enriched my understanding of the data, it is important to acknowledge the possibility that they may have influenced my interpretation as well. To counteract this bias, I diligently maintained journals throughout the study and after each participant interview to monitor and address my potential biases. Moreover, I conducted several cycles of coding reviews to ensure impartiality in my interpretations of the excerpts.

Furthermore, I presented my study protocols and initial coding themes to community members, community college peers, and noncredit faculty, actively seeking their feedback and insights to refine the process.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of a mixed methods study that delved into the experiences of a unique and significant group of adult learners, Latina immigrant parent students. These students were enrolled in noncredit ESL programs at ECC, a single community college district in Los Angeles County, California. The study aimed to understand how these Latina immigrant parent students' experiences in CCNCR programs influence their enrollment decisions, how they navigate through their programs, and the impact it may have on them and their families, specifically focusing on their children. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What do Latina immigrant parent students describe as the reasons for enrolling in a noncredit ESL program at the community college?
2. What strategies have Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL applied when navigating their community college experience?
3. How do Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL program perceive the benefits they and their families derive following their enrollment?

To answer these questions, I administered a survey to all students enrolled in ESL noncredit courses and conducted 12 interviews with a subset of Latina immigrant parent student respondents. In the following section, I outline key characteristics of study participants, extracted from both survey responses and interview data. Then, I summarize the findings, integrating survey data and excerpts from qualitative interviews to support the overarching themes.

Characteristics of Study Participants

This section provides a descriptive overview of the study conducted, describing its two distinct phases: first, administering a survey to all students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs at ECC, and second, conducting interviews with a subset of survey respondents. Results of the quantitative data are presented along with descriptive tables, comparing characteristics among students identifying as non-Latina immigrant parents (n = 100), survey respondents identifying as Latina immigrant parents (n = 95), and the selected interviewees for interviews (n = 12). Then, I introduce the 12 interview participants, including a demographic overview.

The initial phase of the study involved a quantitative descriptive analysis of student survey data distributed in October 2023 to 587 students enrolled in noncredit ESL courses at ECC. The survey consisted of 21 questions, including 19 fill-in and two open-ended questions, and was accessible for 3.5 weeks. The survey facilitated purposeful sampling for selecting interview participants who met specific criteria—Latina immigrant parents. Of the 587 enrolled ESL students, 195 responded to the survey, and 95 met the predetermined interview criteria. Of the 95 Latina immigrant parent students, 65 indicated their willingness to participate in interviews, and I selected and interviewed 12 students.

Table 3 presents a comparative overview of the demographic profiles of student participants, differentiating between the Latina immigrant parent students, students who were interviewed, and all other survey respondents. Of the 195 survey participants, 75.4% identified as female and 86.2% as Latina/o. Notably, Latina immigrant parent students are older compared to the broader respondent group, with 80% age 41 years or older. Similarly, the students interviewed were also skewed toward older ages, with 75% falling within the same age range. Conversely, all other students trended younger, with 35% age 30 or below. Notably, a significant

proportion (43%) of the noninterviewed students had lived in the United States for 5 years or less, whereas 50% of the students interviewed had lived in the United States between 21 and 25 years. Additionally, most students (63.5%) surveyed but not interviewed were parents, among whom 54.2% have two or more children.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

	Latina immigrant parents				All other students	
	Questionnaire (n = 95)		Interview (n = 12)		(n = 100)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Gender						
Female	95	100.0	12	100.0	52	52.0
Male	0	0.0	0	0.0	48	48.0
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Decline to respond	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Age						
18–20	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	17.0
21–30	4	4.2	1	8.3	18	18.0
31–40	13	13.7	2	16.7	27	27.0
41–50	33	34.7	4	33.3	17	17.0
51–60	34	35.8	4	33.3	13	13.0
61+	9	9.5	1	8.3	7	7.0
Decline to respond	2	2.1	0	0.0	1	1.0
Ethnic background						
Asian	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	12.0
Black or African American	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
White	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	8.0
Latina/o	95	100.0	12	100.0	73	73.0
Native American or Indigenous	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Decline to respond	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	6.0

Table 3 (continued)

	Latina immigrant parents				All other students	
	Questionnaire (n = 95)		Interview (n = 12)		(n = 100)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Primary language						
Arabic	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	6.0
Chinese/Mandarin/Cantonese	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.0
Korean	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.0
Spanish	95	100.0	12	100.0	78	78.0
English	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pashto	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Tagalog/Filipino	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Vietnamese	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.0
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	8.0
Decline to respond	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Time in the United States						
Less than 1 year	5	5.3	1	8.3	20	20.0
1–5 years	15	15.8	3	25.0	43	42.0
6–10 years	7	7.4	0	0.0	9	9.0
11–15 years	6	6.3	0	0.0	3	3.0
16–20 years	9	9.5	2	16.7	7	7.0
21–25 years	26	27.4	6	50.0	5	5.0
26–30 years	9	9.5	0	0.0	6	6.0
31 or more years	17	17.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Decline to respond	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Missing	1	1.1	0	0.0	6	6.0
Number of Children						
0	0	0.0	0	0.0	66	66.0
1	16	16.8	3	25.0	4	4.0
2	38	40.0	4	33.3	19	19.0
3	27	28.4	4	33.3	8	8.0
4	7	7.4	0	0.0	3	3.0
5	4	4.2	1	8.3	0	0.0
6	2	2.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Decline to respond	1	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. n = 195.

Regarding educational background (see Table 4), 50% of interviewed students were high school graduates or had obtained their high school equivalency, whereas all other students accounted for 30% at the same level. Latina immigrant parent students similarly had this level of education at 29.5%. When asked about their initial enrollment at ECC, most Latina immigrant parents and all other students indicated they enrolled within 2 years or less, 73.7% and 87%, respectively. Most non-Latina immigrant parent students (70%) had been enrolled for less than a year. For both groups of students, Latina immigrant parents and all others, the distribution of course levels included a range of low beginning (8.4% and 6%), high beginning (3.2% and 5%), low intermediate (11.6% and 15%), and high intermediate (23.2% and 20%). Notably, 58.3% of interviewed students were enrolled in ESL conversation courses.

Introduction of Interview Participants

The study's second phase was a qualitative analysis of student interviews with Latina immigrant parent students. I conducted 12 interviews in November and December 2023 (i.e., seven in-person and four online synchronous interviews) with students who met the following criteria: (a) ECC students enrolled in adult education noncredit ESL programs, (b) Latinas, (c) immigrants, and (d) having children. I purposefully selected the 12 interview participants from the 195 completed surveys. The survey responses represented a 33% response rate (195/587). Ninety-five survey respondents met the criteria of Latina immigrant parent students, and 65 indicated their willingness to participate in an interview. Using skip logic, the sample of 12 interview participants was randomly selected from the survey data. Selection criteria included a weighted representation of the 65 Latina immigrant parent students, considering the following characteristics: age, number of children, ages of children, and country of origin. Table 5 displays the characteristics of the 12 selected Latina immigrant parent students interviewed.

Table 4

Educational Background of Study Participants

	Latina immigrant parents				All other students (n = 100)	
	Questionnaire (n = 95)		Interview (n = 12)			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Highest level of education completed						
Elementary school, up to junior high	8	8.4	0	0.0	4	4.0
Some high school, no diploma	11	11.6	2	16.7	10	10.0
High school graduate or equivalency	28	29.5	6	50.0	30	30.0
Some college, no degree	12	12.6	2	16.7	10	10.0
Trade/technical/vocational training	11	11.6	0	0.0	2	2.0
Associate degree	2	2.1	0	0.0	8	8.0
Bachelor's degree	16	16.8	2	16.7	18	18.0
Graduate/professional	6	6.3	0	0.0	14	14.0
Decline to respond	1	1.1	0	0.0	4	4.0
When first enrolled at ECC						
Less than a year ago	45	47.4	3	25.0	70	70.0
1–2 years ago	25	26.3	7	58.3	17	17.0
3–4 years ago	10	10.5	1	8.3	4	4.0
5 or more years ago	13	13.7	1	8.3	2	2.0
Decline to respond	2	2.1	0	0.0	7	7.0
ESL Course						
ESL Conversation	30	31.6	7	58.3	23	23.0
ESL Low Beginning	8	8.4	1	8.3	6	6.0
ESL High Beginning	3	3.2	1	8.3	5	5.0
ESL Low Intermediate	11	11.6	1	8.3	15	15.0
ESL High Intermediate	22	23.2	2	16.7	20	20.0
ESL Low Advanced	10	10.5	0	0.0	26	26.0
Vocational ESL	7	7.4	0	0.0	3	3.0
Decline to respond	4	4.2	0	0.0	2	2.0

Note. n = 195.

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics of Interviewed Participants

#	Pseudonym	Age	Country of origin	# of children	Ages of children
1	Alicia	41	Mexico	3	11, 15, 18
2	Ana	52	Venezuela	2	16, 21
3	Anita	58	Ecuador	2	15, 23
4	Betty	38	Mexico	3	4, 16, 18
5	Ester	63	Mexico	5	24, 27, 32, 35, 39
6	Jared	32	El Salvador	1	7
7	Marla	52	Peru	2	19, 21
8	Rocio	50	Mexico	3	20, 24, 26
9	Rosie	27	El Salvador	1	7
10	Saira	45	Mexico	3	3, 5, 21
11	Sally	46	Mexico	2	12, 23
12	Sonia	55	Mexico	1	27

Note. $n = 12$.

The 12 women interviewed at ECC spoke confidently about their educational journey, embodying strength and a deep commitment to their families. Juggling work, household responsibilities, and family obligations, they navigated the delicate balance of these multiple roles. Despite the challenges, they willingly sacrificed their time to learn English, recognizing its potential to enhance their circumstances at home and in the workplace.

These women arrived at ECC with diverse educational backgrounds. Some had limited education or had not completed high school, and others hold university degrees. Language proficiency was a challenge, with participants spanning a spectrum from having minimal to high levels of English competency. Regardless of their course level, all 12 participants expressed a lack of confidence in speaking English. Despite this hurdle, they approached the challenge with determination, viewing a college education as a pathway to better job opportunities, fulfilling careers, and, ultimately, a university degree.

From these Latinas' perspective, education represented a pathway to a brighter future for them and their families. They aimed to overcome language barriers and pursue higher education to realize their aspirations. I classified the 12 interviewees into the following three categories: (a) Latinas With Higher Education Backgrounds: Anita, Ester, and Marla; (b) Balancing Work and Education: Alicia, Rocio, Sonia, Ana, and Sally; and (c) Prioritizing Young Families With Time for Education: Betty, Rosie, Jared, and Saira.

Latinas With Higher Education Backgrounds: Anita, Ester, and Marla

Ana and Ester hold university degrees from their respective countries, and Marla completed her bachelor's degree in California. As parents of children either reaching college age or working young adults, they actively support their children's educational efforts. With five adult children, Ester studies alongside her granddaughter and acknowledges the significant impact her role modeling has on her family. With their children grown, these Latinas seize the opportunity to pursue their educational aspirations, dedicating their time to furthering their knowledge and educational goals.

Anita has an economics degree from her country of origin, Ecuador. She has two children: a daughter studying medicine in Ecuador and a 15-year-old son. She has decided to start her education here in California because her status and circumstances do not facilitate the validation of her degree in economics. In addition to ESL, she is taking GED and business classes. She is enrolled in both online and in-person courses.

Ester studied at a university in Mexico to be a veterinarian. She has five adult children and a granddaughter. She is taking an ESL class online and struggles with health issues.

Marla completed high school in Peru and came to the United States with her aunt. She is a single mother of two college-age children, 19 and 21. She is taking ESL conversation classes to

improve her English. Previously, she took noncredit ESL classes, continued with transfer credit classes, and completed her bachelor's degree in psychology at California State University.

Balancing Work and Education: Alicia, Rocio, Sonia, Ana, and Sally

Dedicated to enhancing their job skills and earning college certificates, these Latinas balance their academic pursuits with the demands of raising both pre-college and college-age children. They face the challenge of coordinating schedules to accommodate their work commitments and individual academic responsibilities. In addition to learning English, these women are enrolled in other noncredit certificate programs, including high school equivalency and short-term careers. Driven by a strong determination to pursue their education, they understand their experiences will equip them to support their children's college journey.

Alicia completed high school in Mexico. She has three children and works while going to school. She is taking ESL, wants to complete her GED, and is interested in taking credit child development courses.

Rocio did not finish high school in her country of origin but did complete a technical career in secretarial skills. She is a single mother with three children all in their 20s who are attending or graduated from college. She is enrolled in ESL and GED programs at the community college and has completed a credit English class as an adult dual-enrolled student.

Sonia came to the United States with her mother when she was 22 years of age and stayed to work. She completed a short-term career in accounting in her country of origin but only recently pursued her education here at ECC. She is a mother to a 27-year-old son with whom she shares her college experiences and encourages him to attend college. She has enrolled in multiple ESL classes and completed an OSHA class, obtaining her certification.

Ana has a university degree from Venezuela and a daughter in high school and a son in middle school. She is motivated to learn English and continue studying to complete a career.

Sally completed her high school diploma and came with her husband to the United States in 1998. She is the mother to a 10-year-old son and a 24-year-old daughter. She raised her daughter until she attended university and completed her master's degree. She now feels it is time to focus on herself and is dedicated to taking online ESL classes to improve her proficiency in English.

Prioritizing Young Families With Time for Education: Betty, Rosie, Jared, and Saira

Dedicated to their young children, Betty, Rosie, Jared, and Saira are primary caregivers to preschool through elementary-age children. They leverage the option to enroll in online ESL courses and employ multiple strategies to maintain consistency and attend their college courses. Jared is enrolled in both online and in-person courses, so she can benefit from a range of instructional resources. Motivated by their college experiences, these students recognize the knowledge they acquire empowers them to support their children's educational development better.

Betty grew up in a small rural town in Mexico and did not finish high school due to the cost. She has a son who is preschool age and two older children, one in high school and one who graduated high school. She has been in the United States for 20 years and wants to improve her English and pursue a career at ECC. She is currently enrolled in ESL and entrepreneurship classes in the noncredit program.

Rosie has been in the United States for approximately 4 years and completed high school in her country of origin. She has a 7-year-old son and works while taking her online ESL class.

Jared completed 11th grade in El Salvador but could not continue her education due to the expense. She works and is currently taking ESL and GED classes. She is the mother of a 7-year-old son and is taking in-person and online classes. She has challenges with childcare but is determined to accomplish her goal.

Saira completed high school and studied a career as an executive secretary before coming to the United States. She has three children, two daughters of preschool age, and an older son age 21. She arrived in California and began working. Currently, she is taking ESL classes and plans to complete her GED and take credit classes leading to a short-term career.

Description of Interview Coding Process

This section examines the four main findings drawn from 12 interviews conducted with Latina immigrant parents enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs. First, I introduce the excerpt codes and descriptive themes used to obtain these findings. Next, I provide a detailed summary of findings with excerpts about the reasons for their enrollment, their strategies for navigating college, and the perceived benefits for them and their families following their enrollment.

I derived findings from 12 in-depth interviews with Latina immigrant parents enrolled in a noncredit ESL program and their responses to 21 questions. I methodically assigned 32 codes to excerpts through rigorous analysis, extracting key elements from conversations with Latina immigrant parent students. These codes correspond to overarching themes aligned with the three study research questions. Additionally, codes were rooted in the conceptual framework of Yosso's (2005) CCW, particularly emphasizing aspirational, navigational, and familial capital.

To arrive at my findings, I followed the process of "moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 202). I assigned short phrases or

words as codes, potentially aligning them with larger themes that addressed my research questions. Coding involved identifying content from interview data relevant to answering my research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Then, I consolidated and interpreted the interview responses, comparing them with existing literature. Through this iterative process, I identified themes from the CCW model that explained the data. These themes provided answers to my research questions in the form of categories or findings.

Overall, study findings encapsulate the intertwined narratives of struggles, challenges, strategies, and successes encountered by Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in CCNCR ESL programs. These narratives are intricately woven into their identities as women and mothers. The enrollment of Latina immigrant parent students in ECC's CCNCR ESL programs influences their families and decision-making processes, seamlessly incorporating their pivotal role as mothers. Tables 6, 7, and 8 list the frequency of codes categorized by aspirational, navigational, and familial capital.

Table 6

Aspirational Capital Code Frequency

Code	Definition	# of occurrences	# of students	Sample excerpts (Translated)
College Goal	Express educational goals upon entering Eastland College. Comment on the immediacy of gaining English language fluency	28	11	I feel like I need to focus on learning English, and then the next step will come from there (Sally) My number one goal is precisely that, to be able to speak English and start developing myself in the job market (Ana) I am trying to progress in English (Ester)
Program Success	Aspire or enroll in additional college programs and/or short term vocational careers	31	12	Later on, I realized I could continue studying to reassess my education here with a GED. So, I started taking classes. (Jared)

Table 6 (continued)

Code	Definition	# of occurrences	# of students	Sample excerpts (Translated)
Degree Attainment	Aspire or enroll in college credit programs and/or advanced degrees	15	8	I became interested in college classes because of the program called dual enrollment. So, I'm interested in earning college credit. (Rocio)
Intentional College Going	Deliberate actions to identify and select a college. Describe referrals from trusted family and friends about college choice.	34	12	At Eastland, I am considered a college student (Anita) Whenever I moved to a new area, I always looked for colleges to enroll in. (Betty)
Intrinsic Value of Education	Express intrinsic values of education such as respect, knowledge of broad subjects, quality person and social group, enhanced communication, and professionalism	35	11	Education is very important, whatever you study. It's crucial because it opens your mind. You gain more knowledge and also expand your vocabulary (Rosie) I consider that everything depends on education. Almost everything in our lives starts from it. A better quality of life, better education, better social opportunities, meeting new people, and perhaps helping others (Alicia)
Education Interrupted	Experiences at Eastland College or in one's country of origin involving interruptions in education and subsequent reengagement following an absence	44	11	But I felt like something was missing. I went a long time without being able to because of my job, my children, and many things I had to stop studying. (Rocio)

Table 7

Navigational Capital Code Frequency

Code	Definition	# of occurrences	# of students	Sample excerpts (translated)
Incremental strategies – Paso a Paso	Adapting to college using a gradual process to meet goals. Adjust time, work, and class schedules. Describe slow or steady progress.	51	12	I don't want to pressure myself. Focusing on step-by-step, but I know very well where I am going (Sally)

Table 7 (continued)

Adult learner strategies	Drawing from lived experiences, learning environment challenges, multiple responsibilities, overcoming obstacles, and using student resources	49	12	In the case of adults, we are different from young people. We already have our schedules, our responsibilities, plus school. One leaves quickly because they have to be at home. (Ester) As an adult, I wasn't going to make friends. I was going to focus on class and try to pass because when you're an adult, it's different. You are going to work. (Marla)
Experiences of marginalization	Feelings of invisibility, abandonment, lack of belonging, and alienation due to language barrier	52	11	Here one is nothing (Sonia) I arrived and started, I said, well, I have a career from there, but I don't have documents. I don't know the language and doors were closing on me. (Saira)

Table 8

Familial Capital Code Frequency

Code	Definition	# of occurrences	# of students	Sample excerpts (Translated)
Role modeling	Role modeling to reinforce persistence and inspiration for children to succeed	43	12	I believe the parents are also the key (Marla) If I want my son to study and become a professional, I have to start preparing for that when the time comes (Jared)
Knowledge transfer	Information exchange mom to child and vice versa regarding college strategies, academic guidance, and homework help	52	12	I will still be in school when he is in the process, so then I will know how to provide guidance as well (Sally)
Generational impact	Value of education instilled by family. Student influence and awareness of the impact their college education and efforts have on their children	41	12	Since we were young, my husband and I were always taught that we had to study because education was what would help us get ahead. (Anita) But they have education because the family provided it. (Sonia)
Personal growth	Self-improvement, emotional well-being, confidence, and feelings of accomplishment (i.e., at work, home, or college)	43	12	But emotionally, I feel good. I feel useful. I feel like I am learning. (Betty)

The following section presents findings supported by survey results and interview excerpts aligned with my stated research questions, identified themes, and the CCW framework.

Findings Related to Research Question 1: Aspirational Goals—Latina Immigrant Parent Students Come to Learn English, Stay for Career Development, and Dream of a University Degree

This section describes the reasons Latina immigrant parent students expressed for their decision to enroll at ECC. Both survey and interview respondents emphasized the immediate need for language acquisition and skill development. However, their aspirations extended beyond proficiency, encompassing a desire to pursue certificate programs and advanced degrees. Survey responses reflected a high agreement with pursuing college certificates and degrees. In addition, the interviewed students elaborated on their plans to enroll in certificate programs before transitioning to credit courses. Latina immigrant parent students at the community college build confidence and feel inclined to enroll in additional educational opportunities, such as high school equivalency courses, that may get them to their goal of degree attainment for themselves and their children.

Initial College Goal: To Learn English

Among the 195 student survey respondents, 95 identified as Latina immigrant parents. The survey included Likert questions to understand the motivations behind students' enrollment at ECC. Student responses were measured on a Likert scale ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree." Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with a range of provided reasons. Survey respondents could indicate their level of agreement with each of the eight listed reasons.

Table 9 illustrates the responses from the subgroup of 95 respondents, Latina immigrant parent students, regarding their stated reasons for enrolling. In complete agreement, 66.3% of Latina immigrant parent students stated their reason for enrolling is to improve their English,

followed by 57.9% selecting to obtain job skills. Students also indicated they mostly agreed (12.6%) and completely agreed (53.7%) with their motivation for enrolling as being able to assist their children with college preparation. Regarding their reasons for enrolling to pursue college certificates and degrees, 40% completely agreed with obtaining both noncredit and credit certificates, 33.7% completely agreed with obtaining an associate degree, and 35.8% completely agreed regarding obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Table 9

Reasons for Enrolling Among Latina Immigrant Parents

	Completely disagree		Mostly disagree		Mostly agree		Completely agree	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Obtain job skills	5	5.3	0	0	12	12.6	55	57.9
Gain general self-improvement	9	9.5	4	4.2	16	16.8	47	49.5
Improve my English	8	8.4	1	1.1	6	6.3	63	66.3
Assist my children with college preparation	6	6.3	4	4.2	12	12.6	51	53.7
Obtain a noncredit certificate	7	7.4	9	9.5	14	14.7	38	40.0
Transition to a credit college program to obtain a certificate	9	9.5	2	2.1	18	18.9	38	40.0
Transition to a credit college program to obtain an associate degree	10	10.5	7	7.4	13	13.7	32	33.7
Transition to a credit college program to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher	11	11.6	6	6.3	11	11.6	34	35.8

Note. $n = 95$.

Table 10 compares Latina immigrant parent students and Latina immigrants who are not parents, showcasing their agreement with the eight reasons for enrolling. Both cohorts of respondents, whether parent or nonparents, exhibited the highest levels of agreement toward three primary factors: (a) obtaining job skills, (b) gaining general self-improvement, and (c) improving their English. Among the reasons for enrolling, self-improvement ($p = .012$) and improving English ($p = .049$) were statistically significant, implying there may be a difference in

motivation related to self-improvement and improving English for Latina immigrant parents and nonparents. Notably, Latina immigrants who are not parents exhibited a considerably higher agreement toward transitioning to credit college programs to obtain their associate and bachelor's degrees, surpassing Latina immigrant parents by 29.3 and 26 percentage points, respectively. Moreover, Latina immigrant parent students were less inclined to transition to credit college programs for various degrees compared to nonparents, which is consistent across obtaining noncredit certificates, transitioning to certificate programs, associate degree programs, and bachelor's degree programs or higher.

Table 10

Comparisons of Reasons for Enrolling Among Nonparent and Parent Latina Immigrant Students Reporting "Mostly" and "Completely" Agree

	Nonparent (n = 30)		Parent (n = 95)		Parent vs. nonparent		
	n	%	n	%	Δ%	χ_1^2	p
Obtain job skills	25	83.3	67	70.5	-12.8	1.93	.165
Gain general self-improvement	27	90.0	63	66.3	-23.7	6.34	.012
Improve my English	27	90.0	69	72.6	-17.4	3.86	.049
Assist my children with college preparation	18	60.0	63	66.3	+6.3	0.40	.528
Obtain a noncredit certificate	21	70.0	52	54.7	-15.3	2.19	.139
Transition to a credit college program to obtain a certificate	23	76.7	56	58.9	-17.7	3.08	.079
Transition to a credit college program to obtain an associate degree	23	76.7	45	47.4	-29.3	7.89	.005
Transition to a credit college program to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher	22	73.3	45	47.4	-26.0	6.18	.013

Note. Percentages include responses of "Mostly Agree" and "Completely Agree."

In summary, results in Table 10 suggest that although nonparent and parent Latina immigrant students enroll in education programs for reasons like job skills and English proficiency, their levels of agreement show notable differences. Nonparents strongly endorsed

self-improvement and English proficiency, with 90% mostly and completely in agreement. Compared to nonparents, Latina immigrant parents were less likely to pursue higher education programs beyond job skill acquisition, and their levels of agreement for transitioning to credit programs ranged from 47.4% to 58.9%. Understanding these differences can help tailor educational programs and support services to meet noncredit students' needs.

Further elaborating on the reasons Latina immigrant parents attend ECC, interviews with the subgroup of 12 respondents provided a deeper understanding of these students' aspirations. Most students interviewed, 11 of the 12 participants, expressed an immediate goal to master the English language. This shared goal represents their recognition of the expanded opportunities proficiency in English can unlock in areas such as better paying jobs and career advancement, further education, familial interactions, and community engagement. They emphasized the indispensable role of English fluency in propelling their educational pursuits and enhancing various facets of their lives. Ana shared the importance of gaining English language fluency:

> *Mi objetivo número uno es precisamente eso lograr hablar inglés y empezar a desarrollarme en el campo laboral.* [My number one goal is precisely to achieve speaking English and start developing myself in the professional field.]

Sally elaborated:

> *Si lo aprendo, el idioma me va a abrir muchas puertas. Voy a hacer lo que quiera hacer, no va a haber límites para mi.* [If I learn it, the language will open many doors for me. I will be able to do whatever I want, there will be no limits for me.]

As Latina immigrant parent students embarked on their journey into ESL noncredit programs, they expressed a critical need to acquire English proficiency to excel in the workplace and secure higher paying jobs. In addition, they emphasized the necessity of English language

fluency to engage effectively with their community, highlighting specific desires to communicate with other parents or school staff regarding their children's education.

Acquiring Skills and Certificates for Career Development

Latinas enrolled in noncredit ESL programs recognized the importance of taking advantage of educational opportunities beyond English proficiency. Alongside their ESL courses or with intentions to expand their educational pursuits, they actively sought programs to earn their high school equivalency or enroll in career skills courses. Sally described her educational goals:

> *Me gustaría aprender bien el idioma. Me gustaría estudiar el GED y de allí enfocarme en algo, la manera de hacer una carrera corta.* [I would like to learn the language well. I would like to study for the GED and then focus on something, like pursuing a short career.]

Sonia discovered the potential to benefit from courses beyond ESL and stated:

> *Yo ahorita fui porque vine aquí a estudiar inglés. Pero veo que tienen muchas clases, igual las carreras cortas.* [Right now, I came because I came here to study English. But I see that they have many classes, like short term careers.]

Upon realizing the opportunities available, Jared enrolled in additional courses. Jared shared:

> *Y ya luego después me di cuenta que podía seguir estudiando para reevaluar mis estudios acá con GED. Y pues, comencé a tomar clases y las estoy tomando.* [And then later on, I realized that I could continue studying to reassess my studies here with the GED. So, I started taking classes, and I'm currently taking them.]

Upon entering their ESL programs, students realized more than the initial goal of language development. Having gained some English language fluency, students identified other

courses and programs that benefitted them. They sought to enroll in GED/high school equivalency as an important milestone in their educational journey at the college. Obtaining their high school equivalency, these students could then advance to college programs and access noncredit and credit short career skills courses and programs.

College Degree Attainment Extends Goals for Latinas and Their Children

The college experience for Latina immigrant parents was meaningful for them and their children. An important step for these women was their educational journey, which led to advanced college programs and the transition to credit programs. They expanded their ambitions, achieved personal goals, and nurtured their children's ambitions and aspirations. Rosie shared:

> *Y antes de llegar al colegio, no tenía eso como que quería estudiar algo más, nomás, voy a ir a estudiar inglés para subir algo más en el trabajo, pero está hasta ahí. Ahora no. Ahora quiero estudiar algo más. Quisiera ser una profesión.* [And before coming to college, I didn't really have a clear idea of wanting to study something else, just like, I'll go study English to move up a bit at work, but that was it. Not anymore. Now, I want to study something more. I would like to have a profession.]

Saira commented on her education and the impact on her daughters:

> *Sí, pues aprender el idioma y agarrar como le digo agarrar clases más de crédito, como más avanzadas y hacer alguna carrera . . . que me pueda ayudar con un mejor estilo de vida y ayudar a mis hijas.* [Yes, well, to learn the language and take, as I say, more advanced classes for more credits and pursue a career . . . that can help me with a better lifestyle and to support my daughters.]

Beyond short-term certificates that provide Latina adult students with career skills, they aspired to education beyond the entry level they initially began. After proving their abilities to

succeed in college, they gained confidence to seek more for themselves, such as potential university degrees. Alicia commented:

> *Quiero agarrar mis clases de crédito para que me orientara un poco en lo que yo iba a estudiar en las universidades. También aplique para un programa de FAFSA, entonces, pues si esas han sido las veces que yo he pedido asesoría para ver cuáles son las ventajas y los beneficios que yo pudiera tener para continuar*. [I want to take credit classes so that they guide me a bit in what I was going to study at the universities. I also applied for a FAFSA program, so those have been the times when I have sought advice to see what advantages and benefits I could have to continue.]

Latinas sought opportunities to enter college programs that facilitated dual enrollment in credit-bearing programs while in their noncredit programs. They looked to continue their education in credit programs in the hopes of transferring to complete advanced degrees. Moreover, they gained confidence in pursuing higher levels of education, expressing a sense of possibility and access to educational opportunities. Motivated by their educational aspirations, Latina immigrant parent students gravitated toward ECC as an institution equipped to facilitate their linguistic development and future endeavors.

Findings Related to Research Question 1: Latina Immigrant Parent Students Place Intentional, Persistent, and Intrinsic Value on Their College Enrollment

The decision of Latina immigrant parent students to enroll in ECC included their confidence in the college's reputation and the recommendations they received from family and friends. They intentionally sought out institutions where they wanted to be students. Moreover, they harbored a strong desire to continue or to fulfill a college experience that was interrupted or inaccessible. For Latina immigrant parent students, educational paths often were fragmented or

unattainable owing to circumstances in their country of origin or upon arrival in their new home country. Balancing familial responsibilities, work, and household obligations posed challenges for these students. Yet, their aspiration for college degrees persisted, with the expectation that the college could serve as a vehicle for achieving their academic goals. Finally, they appreciated the college's educational environment, which was perceived as prioritizing values beyond skills, such as respect for others, critical thinking, personal development, and an expanded worldview.

Intentional College Going – El Renombre

Study participants emphasized their intentional decision to enroll in a college. In search of a place to pursue their education in California, these women searched for colleges to attend. They indicated their reasons for attending a college included greater opportunity, high quality programs, resources, and facilitating the pathway to higher educational degrees. Latina immigrant parents described their search for a reputable college and highlighted the benefits they obtained from attending. Ana shared her reason for coming to Eastland Community College:

> *En búsqueda de mi oportunidad para aprender el segundo idioma, entonces, fui a varios colegios y bueno, uno de los colegios con renombre y, bueno vamos a decir, buen prestigio a nivel educativo estaba Eastland Community College entonces fui hasta allá.* [In search of my opportunity to learn a second language, I went to several schools, and well, one of the renowned schools with good, let's say, educational prestige was Eastland Community College, so I went there.]

Anita commented:

> *En Eastland Community College es donde me he tenido más beneficios donde estoy y me mantengo.* [At Eastland Community College is where I have had more benefits, where I am and will remain.]

In some instances, Latina immigrant parent students relied on recommendations from family and friends to validate the quality of the college they selected. As recent immigrants, they leveraged their social connections to introduce them to the reputable colleges they aspired to attend. Marla and Jared recounted their initial introduction to ECC through familial and social networks. Marla shared:

> *Yo fui a Eastland por una tía que ella estaba tomando clases de ESL y ella me llevó a Eastland. Es el primer colegio que conocí y como vivía en XX entonces era el más cerca.* [I went to Eastland because of an aunt who was taking ESL classes there, and she took me to Eastland. It's the first college I knew of, and since I lived in XX, it was the closest.]

Similarly, Jared reflected on how a friend had guided her to the college:

> *Ella me motivó prácticamente pues yo no conocía nada, acá. Ella me dijo que viniera para acá que pues había escuchado muy buena referencia. . . . pero sí me habló muy bien del colegio para acá que me quedaba cerca, accesible*. [She practically motivated me because I didn't know anything here. She told me to come here because she had heard very good references. . . . but she did speak very well of the college here, which was close to me, accessible.]

Latinas cited examples of referrals to ECC by a trusted family member or friend as the reason they first considered coming to the college. In addition, these women also mentioned the college's known reputation and the quality associated with its educational programs and services. For one third of the Latinas interviewed, the college's proximity played a role in their decision to attend. However, the college's reputation and recommendations from friends or family primarily

influenced their choice to enroll at ECC. Despite the availability of nearby adult schools, these women chose to attend the community college, driven by their desire to pursue higher education.

Persistence Despite an Education Interrupted

The women interviewed described their educational journeys in their country of origin and after arriving in California. All 12 interview participants encountered disruptions in their education. They could not acquire education in their country of origin due to the expense, limited accessibility or availability, or circumstances in the rural areas in which they lived. This interruption in their educational progress inspired them to attain the education that was interrupted in their country of origin. Ester discussed the impact of not having completed her advanced education in her country of origin:

> *Llevaba muchos años fuera de las aulas, y es algo que bueno en mis proyectos de joven era tener mi doctorado en el área veterinaria. Así que hoy volver a la escuela fue muy bueno para mí.* [I had been out of the classrooms for many years, and it's something that, well, in my plans when I was young, I aimed to have my doctorate in the veterinary field. So, now returning to school was very good for me.]

Similarly, their experiences upon arriving in California interrupted their education because of obstacles in the workplace, household obligations, and family responsibilities. For these women, the value of college remained high but an unattainable dream. Their conviction to return, even with difficult circumstances, served as a source of motivation to pursue their goals of continuing their education. Saira described her challenges:

> *A veces dejaba las clases para atender mi trabajo y no avanzaba. Me dediqué a trabajar, a trabajar, a ayudar a mis papas y se me pasó el tiempo. Se me pasó el tiempo y después tuve familia, tuve un hijo y el trabajo. Y el esposo que tenía nunca me apoyó para yo*

seguir estudiando. [Sometimes I would skip classes to go to work, and I didn't make progress. I dedicated myself to work, to help my parents, and time passed. Time passed, and then I started a family, had a child, and work. My husband at the time never supported me in continuing my studies.]

Similarly, Betty shared her struggles:

Dejé los estudios porque el trabajo, por los hijos, por la familia . . . y pasaron 20 años que . . . ahorita yo me arrepiento de no haber seguido por el trabajo. Por lo que sea, digo, no, y es mejor persistir. [I left my studies because of work, because of the children, because of the family . . . and 20 years passed. Right now, I regret not having continued due to work. Whatever the reason, I say no, it's better to persist.]

Being in a college setting was a deliberate and highly valued choice for Latina immigrant parent students. This intentional pursuit of education held greater significance due to their challenges, including interruptions in their educational journey. These students expressed a longing to complete their education, whether it was disrupted or not initially afforded them. The interruptions in their educational paths strengthened their conviction and resilience in pursuing higher education.

The Intrinsic Value of Education – Ser Educado

The phrase *ser educado* (translated as "well mannered") describes the inherent worth of education. As a guiding principle in their lives, Latina immigrant parent students deeply respected education's intrinsic value. Latina immigrant parent students described what it means to be well educated. They talked about their intellectual growth, personal development, and deeper understanding of the world. Specifically, they spoke to the analysis or critical thinking they have gained and hope for their children. Jared described her appreciation of others:

Para mí es importante la educación porque aprendes a expresarte, a respetar a las personas en diferentes áreas, porque pues, ante todo somos iguales y a veces como nosotros no sabemos a respetar las personas a veces le podemos sentir nada. [For me, education is important because you learn to express yourself, to respect people in different areas because, well, in the end, we are all equal, and sometimes, if we don't know how to respect people, we may not appreciate them.]

Marla elaborated about her critical thinking skills:

Y entonces, como que te da un análisis, y no crees muchas cosas tan fácil. La escuela te enseña cómo analizar un tema. [And so, it gives you an analysis, and you don't believe many things so easily. School teaches you how to analyze a topic.]

Latina immigrant parents also highly valued education for its emphasis on community service and well-being. For these students, a significant aspect of education was sharing and collaborating with others. They expressed that education should extend beyond individual gain in language proficiency or skill acquisition and serve a greater purpose of assisting others. These women recognized that by serving others, the community is enriched. Ester shared her perspective of education being in service to others:

El prepararte es para servir, porque cuando tú aprendes algo y te lo quedas tú, no tiene sentido. Tienes que compartir, y puedes ayudar a lo que se necesite . . . porque es una manera de uno salir adelante, de prepararte, de servir. [Preparing yourself is to serve because when you learn something and keep it to yourself, it doesn't make sense. You have to share, and you can help with whatever is needed . . . because it's a way for one to move forward, to prepare yourself, to serve.]

Beyond skills and career benefits, Latina students described the value of education as promoting good habits (e.g., reading) and responsibility that promote better life skills. These intrinsic educational values included growth in their cultural understanding, community service, and fulfillment from the knowledge and skills gained. Rocio described the importance of fostering reading habits for herself and her children:

> *Que crezcan en otro tipo la educación que reciben en el hecho de leer el hábito de leer. El hábito de la responsabilidad de sus carreras que les conlleva a llevar una vida más responsable. Sí, porque parece que no. Pero el leer y todas esas cosas, aunque lo vea un poquito más de como obligación, parte de ellos por la escuela. Es un hábito que se les pega. Entonces, es que me programa hacer esto, o voy a leer un libro aunque ya no esté en la escuela o son hábitos que se quedan para toda la vida.* [They grow in a different type of education through the habit of reading. The habit of responsibility in their careers leads them to lead a more responsible life. Yes, because it might not seem like it, but reading and all those things, even if they see it a bit more as an obligation, become a part of them because of school. It's a habit that sticks with them. So, whether I plan to do this or I'm going to read a book, even though I am no longer in school, these are habits that stay for a lifetime.]

Conclusion: Aspirational Capital

For Latina immigrant parent students, their college goals were nuanced, beginning with their immediate objectives of learning English to advance in their workplace, personal life, and education. They then looked to enhance their skills and opportunities by seeking short-term courses and career programs that built job skills and bridged credit-bearing programs leading to advanced degrees. Acknowledging the quality of higher education institutions, Latina students

enrolling in noncredit ESL programs intentionally accessed education at ECC. As a referral from family or friends, they selected the community college, referencing the reputation and standard of education it provides.

Their aspirational capital included their resilience to not lose sight of their educational goals despite interruptions over their lifetimes. Most significant was the challenge Latinas faced in maintaining a continuous college journey as they encountered pressing circumstances related to family, work, and health issues that disrupted their education. Moreover, they referenced instances of being unable to continue from their country of origin or validate their degrees upon arriving in the United States. However, this challenge of returning to their aspirational goals fueled their determination to go to college.

Latina immigrant parent students also drew upon deeply rooted intrinsic educational values instilled within their families. They recognized a college education transcends mere language acquisition or skill attainment. Education embodies a commitment to social development, civic engagement, and lifelong learning. Emphasizing the richness found in learning environments that embrace diverse cultures and languages, Latina immigrant parent students underscored the transformative power of education, not solely for personal enrichment but as a vehicle for serving others. Moreover, they articulated the importance of critical thinking skills and cultivating habits such as reading, which contribute to lifelong learning. Their aspirational capital formed the foundation for the strategies that drove these students toward success at ECC.

Findings Related to Research Question 2: Navigational Capital—Latina Immigrant Parent Students Use Strategies Guided by Their Lived Experiences

This section describes the nuanced strategies Latina immigrant parent students employed as they navigated their community college experience. Their identities as adults, immigrants, Latinas, and mothers influenced their strategies. Adopting an incremental approach, these students handled their college programs at the pace they needed, often taking one class at a time, recognizing the constraints imposed by their busy lives with work, family, and school commitments. Managing their time, they prioritized tasks, often making sacrifices to accommodate their immediate needs. Lastly, they creatively collaborated with their peers and faculty to secure needed support, showcasing their resourcefulness and resilience.

Incremental Strategies—*Paso a Paso*

Integral in navigating their college experiences, Latina immigrant parents recognized the constraints posed by their responsibilities and time availability for dedicating to their education. These women described their strategy of taking classes in manageable chunks, allowing them to persist steadily toward their goals. Marla outlined her strategy for determining the number of classes she could manage:

> *Tengo como diez años o más, porque era una clasecita o tomaba después en el verano otra clase más y me iba muy bien, o si no dos tres, nunca era de tomar cuatro clases o más porque nunca pensé que yo podría hacer más.* [I have about 10 years or more, because it was one small class, or I would take another class in the summer, and I did very well, or if not, two or three. I never took four or more classes because I never thought I could do more.]

Saira emphasized the importance of consistency as a strategy to maintain focus on her educational goals:

> *Ser constante, como nunca quitar, como decimos, el dedo del renglón . . . En este semestre sí avancé, y estoy constante, constante y pienso que eso ayuda mucho en estar constante y siempre estar ahí.* [Being consistent, like never giving up, as we say, keeping one's focus on the task at hand . . . in this semester, I did progress, and I am consistent, consistent, and I think that helps a lot in staying consistent and always being there.]

Betty and Alicia also described how they adapted to their circumstances to take advantage of their time and progress in their classes. Betty explained her time management approach:

> *Trato de acoplarme a las cosas. Más que nada, siempre que vengo a clase, no pongo citas. No pongo nada, de las nueve de la mañana hasta la una o dos. Después de las dos, pongo las cosas que tengo que hacer porque a las dos recojo a mi niño.* [I try to adapt to things. Most of all, whenever I come to class, I don't schedule appointments. I don't schedule anything, from 9 in the morning until 1 or 2. After 2, I put down the things I have to do because I pick up my child at 2.]

Viewing her work layoff as an opportunity to enroll in a GED class, Alicia described:

> *Porque ahora sí dije, no, yo tengo que terminar el certificado, ahorita que no estoy trabajando y que tengo el tiempo y este las energías. Entonces eso fue principalmente el impedimento. Era el tiempo como estos que están ocupado, la casa, la responsabilidad.* [Because now, I said, no, I have to finish the certificate, now that I'm not working and I have the time and the energy. So that was mainly the obstacle. It was the time, like these busy times, the house, the responsibilities.]

Childcare arrangements were also addressed and described as multiple plans and strategies ensuring students could attend class. Jared managed her arrival to class while employing a strategy to overcome her immediate childcare needs:

> *Las barreras, por ejemplo, cuando para cuidar a mi niño, . . . entonces para poderlo dejar y pues yo lo que hacía era pues venirme . . . y pues a lo mejor por si llegaba cinco minutos después pero no era tan tarde. Esa no pienso yo que es una barrera, porque, sin embargo, a lo mejor me hubiera quedado muchas veces en la casa y no lo hice. O también como cuando me lo traje para parking. Mientras llega mi compañero de vida, para que él lo recogiera y se lo llevara.* [The barriers, for example, when taking care of my child, so in order to leave him and what I used to do was, well, come here. Maybe I'd arrive 5 minutes later, but it wasn't too late. I don't think that's a barrier because, otherwise, I might have stayed at home many times and I didn't. Also, like when I brought him to the parking lot. While my life partner arrives, so he could pick him up and take him.]

In the face of challenges, Latinas remained focused on attending class and on seeking immediate and short-term solutions. To ensure regular attendance, they strategically rearranged their schedules, navigated childcare responsibilities, and reminded themselves of their educational aspirations. Additionally, they transformed setbacks, such as unexpected job loss, into opportunities to return to college, using the time to advance their academic goals. These adaptive strategies were implemented incrementally, allowing them the flexibility to pause and resume their educational journey as needed.

Adult College Success Strategies of Time Management, Collaboration, and Resilience

Latina immigrant parent students were surveyed about their participation in ECC activities within the past year. Table 11 overviews the extent to which Latina immigrant parent students engaged with college services and activities. A significant majority of these students indicated "never" attending college events or meetings (50.5%), meeting with faculty outside of class (55.8%), visiting faculty about homework (55.8%), or discussing college or career plans with faculty (56.8). A notable percentage of respondents reported sometimes engaging in discussions with other college students about their class experiences (29.5%) and continuing their education (30.5%). Overall, the data suggest there was generally low engagement among Latina immigrant parents in college-related activities at ECC, with most reporting rarely or never participating in various forms of engagement, which could indicate a need for targeted outreach and support initiatives to improve the involvement of this demographic in college experiences and academic support services.

Table 11

Percentages of Latina Immigrant Parents Engaging in College Experiences

Within the past year at Eastland College, how often have you…	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Total *n* for item
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	
Attended events or meetings hosted by the college	48	50.5	12	12.6	20	21.1	5	5.3	85
Talked to a counselor about courses and/or educational plans	35	36.8	22	23.2	25	26.3	4	4.2	86
Met with faculty outside of class	53	55.8	17	17.9	10	10.5	2	2.1	82
Visited faculty for advice and clarification on homework	53	55.8	13	13.7	17	17.9	3	3.2	86
Discussed career or college plans with faculty	54	56.8	13	13.7	12	12.6	5	5.3	84
Talked to other college students about their class experiences	39	41.1	12	12.6	28	29.5	5	5.3	84
Talked to other college students about continuing their education	37	38.9	13	13.7	29	30.5	5	5.3	84

Note. $n = 95$.

Table 12 compares percentages of Latina immigrant students selecting "never" engaging with various college activities. I conducted a chi-square test to determine a significant association between parent status and engagement in these college activities. The results showed no significant association between parent status and their lack of engagement with college activities. However, the engagement activity of talking to other college students about their experiences taking classes had a *p* value of 0.079, slightly above the significance level of 0.05. Although not strongly significant, there was a trend suggesting a potential association between parent status and talking to other college students about their experiences taking classes.

Table 12

Percentages of Nonparent and Parent Latina Immigrant Students Reporting They "Never" Engage in Selected College Activities

Within the past year at Eastland College, how often have you . . .	Nonparent (n = 30)		Parent (n = 95)		Parent vs. nonparent		
	n	%	n	%	Δ%	χ_1^2	p
Attended events or meetings hosted by the college	19	63.3	48	50.5	-12.8	1.50	.220
Talked to a counselor about courses to take and/or educational plans	10	33.3	35	36.8	+3.5	0.12	.727
Met with faculty outside of class	20	66.7	53	55.8	-10.9	1.11	.292
Visited faculty for advice and clarification on homework assignments	13	43.3	53	55.8	12.5	1.42	.233
Discussed career or college plans with faculty	18	60.0	54	56.8	-3.2	0.09	.760
Talked to other college students about their experiences taking classes	7	23.3	39	41.1	+17.7	3.08	.079
Talked to other college students about their plans to continue their education	9	30.0	37	38.9	+8.9	0.79	.376

Latina immigrant parent students were significantly higher, with 18 percentage points higher selecting "never" engaging in the activity of talking to other college students about their experiences taking classes. Except for discussing experiences taking classes with other students,

there was no significant association between parent status and lack of engagement in various college activities among Latina students.

As adult learners, Latina immigrant parent students navigated the college while balancing their numerous responsibilities. They managed their time effectively to access college services, developed job skills, and enhanced their language proficiency. Although they highly valued their classes, these women adeptly compartmentalized and prioritized tasks to ensure their persistence in college, often circumventing traditional college support services. Collaboration was key to their perseverance, as they actively sought support from faculty and peers during their classes. Recognizing their status as nontraditional students, they understood being adult learners demands numerous sacrifices. Marla described her daily household activities that require attention before she can dedicate time to her studies:

> *Tomarle el tiempo de estar envuelta estudiando es darte un extra para ti, ¿no? O sea tienes que hacer dormir a tus hijos, tienes que cocinar, hacer todo para luego sentarte dos o tres horas y ponerte a estudiar y a veces si no entiendes, tienes que seguir estudiando. Y luego pues es sacrificio, ¿no? Porque es hora de dormir pero pues no puedes dormir porque tienes que estudiar. Entonces creo que cuando eres adulta, es un poco más el sacrificio.* [Taking the time to be immersed in studying is giving yourself an extra, right? I mean, you have to put your kids to sleep, you have to cook, do everything, and then sit down for 2 or 3 hours and start studying. And sometimes, if you don't understand, you have to keep studying. And then, well, it's a sacrifice, right? Because it's bedtime, but you can't sleep because you have to study. So, I think when you're an adult, the sacrifice is a bit more.]

Sonia conveyed a frustration stemming from the inability to dedicate time to her studies due to time pressures:

> *Me da mucho coraje de no poder contar con decir "dejó todo y me voy a poner en mi clase enfocarme y ya." Esa es una de mis mayores frustraciones. No poder también, pues más que nada es el tiempo.* [It makes me very angry that I can't just say "I'll leave everything and focus on my class and that's all." That's one of my biggest frustrations. Not being able to, well, mainly it's the time.]

Further, maximizing time by efficiently engaging faculty and classmates was crucial for getting the guidance and support they needed given their limited time and numerous responsibilities. Rosie described her interaction with her instructor: shared:

> *He encontrado apoyo en mis maestros. En mi maestra más que todo que tengo ahorita. Ella me ha ayudado mucho. Me he orientado, incluso ella en horas no de escuela, preguntas, asesoría, o quieres ver una consejera, contáctame, yo te lo puedo dar, o te doy alguna ayuda, o el correo de alguien, y tú puedes. Ella me ha ayudado mucho.*
> [I have found support in my instructors. Especially my current instructor. She has helped me a lot. I have been guided, even outside of school hours. If you have questions, need advice, or want to see a counselor, contact me. I can provide it, or I can give you some assistance, or the email of someone, and you can. She has helped me a lot.]

Sally depicted her interactions with faculty, expressing confidence in the communication, support, and assistance she received about her class readiness:

> *Si hablo con el teacher, pero por supuesto, por mensajes. Le dije, es lo que me ha pasado, mando el mensaje que me mandaron a su clase a la clase que tengo en persona, pero no sé si yo estoy lista para tomar esta clase. Necesito que usted me aconseje que*

hago si la tomo. No y sí de hecho si me contestó mi dijo, trata y si sientes que no es para ti, pues ya pides que te cambien. Pero sólo por mensajes privados. [I do speak with the teacher, but of course, through messages. I told him, this is what has happened to me, I forwarded the message that they sent me to his class to the class I have in person, but I don't know if I am ready to take this class. I need you to advise me on what to do if I take it. No and yes, indeed he replied, he told me, try it and if you feel it's not for you, then ask to be transferred. But only through private messages.]

Another noted instance of faculty support was exemplified through Jared's experience, highlighting the valuable role of faculty using their linguistic capital to effectively communicate with their students in the classroom. Jared reflected:

El maestro que tengo ahora es muy positivo. Él siempre se enfoca dice que, pues la verdad, si nos vemos en todo lo que sí nos entiende y a lo mejor es, porque pues él a lo mejor también tuvo que haber aprendido, no sé si aprendió, grande, también. Pero él es bien comprensivo, y pues para mí, es si él nos inspira a poder seguir a la clase. Y pues a mí, si la verdad sí, sí, me gusta como él da la clase. Porque sí te explica cuando no entiendes. Por ejemplo, si te explica en español. [The teacher I have now is very positive. He always focuses, he says that, well, the truth is, if we look at everything, he does understand us and maybe it's because he might have had to learn, I don't know if he learned, older, as well. But he is very understanding, and for me, it is with him that inspires us to be able to continue in class. And for me, honestly, yes, I do like how he teaches. Because he does explain when you don't understand. For example, he explains in Spanish.]

Referring to her classmates, Rosie described their sharing of resources and the support provided:

Compartimos conocimiento, por ejemplo, sitios web o algo para ampliar el vocabulario. Otros vídeos en YouTube o cosas que recursos que nos puedan ayudar con la clase. [We share knowledge, for example, websites or something to expand vocabulary. Other videos on YouTube or resources that can help us with the class.]

Students' collaboration outside of class extended beyond traditional boundaries, cooperating by ride sharing. Students were resilient in seeking resources among their peers, and collectively, they were willing to support one another to overcome obstacles (e.g., transportation limitations). Sonia shared:

Así como una persona tu le ayudas, otra persona te puede dar de otra forma. O inclusive muchas veces. Yo me ha tocado la suerte . . . no tengo carro, pero pues, vámonos. Yo tengo. Yo te ayudo. Se hace como una ayuda mutua. Sí, entonces es bueno para salir adelante juntos. Por qué no ayudarnos. [Just as you help someone, another person can help you in a different way. Or even many times. I've been lucky . . . I don't have a car, but well, let's go. I have it. I'll help you. It becomes like mutual assistance. Yes, so it's good to move forward together. Why not help each other.]

Students' perspectives on using resources or attending events at ECC revealed a potential missed opportunity. These women articulated that their level of engagement differed from that of younger students due to their numerous responsibilities. Sonia further elaborated on the challenges preventing her from participating in college events:

Uno ya tiene otro tipo de responsabilidades. Lamentablemente por esta razón no puede venir uno para acá. Aquí sí hay muy buenas oportunidades para venir también. [One already has a different set of responsibilities. Unfortunately, for this reason, one cannot come here. There are indeed very good opportunities to come here as well.]

As adults, Latina immigrant parent students brought a lifetime of experiences overcoming barriers that had built their resiliency. These lived experiences had equipped them with effective strategies, providing them with an advantage in navigating challenges at the college. Recognizing that obstacles would be inherent in their educational journey, they viewed them as integral to achieving their goals. By prioritizing responsibilities and adapting to their college experiences, they maintained focus on their objectives.

Describing their sacrifices as necessary for attending college, they adjusted work hours, reduced housework, sought childcare, and prioritized responsibilities to ensure class attendance. Employing multiple strategies, they cultivated relationships with faculty, counselors, and peers to access needed information, resources, and services. Actively engaging during class, they not only inquired about class material but also sought study tools, information about services, and details on other programs of interest. Using texting and other channels, communication with instructors extended beyond class time. Instructors become facilitators not only of class content but also of college resources and services. This approach acknowledges the constraints of faculty office hours, allowing for a more efficient exchange of information given adult students' numerous responsibilities at home and work. Leveraging information from college personnel and peers was particularly beneficial for Latinas who faced constraints on time, reducing additional appointments or trips to the college for needed assistance.

Conclusion: Navigational Capital

Latina immigrant parents brought valuable experiences to ECC, which they leveraged to navigate the institution and persevere toward their educational goals. They employed strategies that kept them focused, which helped them persist by taking initial small steps toward their goal, and they sought support in the ways they needed it. As adults with work, family, and household

responsibilities, they found collaborative strategies with colleagues and college personnel to access education and use the resources needed. They adapted to these circumstances by rearranging and sacrificing their responsibilities to prioritize their education.

Finding Related to Research Question 3: Latina Immigrant Parent Students Benefit From Their Status as College Role Models, Knowledge Gained, and Personal Growth, Adding to Their Familial Capital *al Estilo de Madre* (Mother Style)

RQ3 sought to understand the perceived benefits Latina immigrant parent students derived from their college enrollment. Survey responses from these students reflected significant engagement with family in school and college experiences. Table 13 illustrates responses of Latina immigrant parent students (n = 95) engaging their families in school and college experiences, categorized by frequency of involvement of *never, rarely, sometimes,* and *often*. Most students report engaging "sometimes" (32.9%) or "often" (28%) in helping their children with homework. Similar trends were noted for studying with their children, with a notable percentage engaging "sometimes" (29.1%) and "often" (27.8%). Reading books with children also showed frequent engagement, particularly "sometimes" (35.4%) and "often" (25.6%).

Latina immigrant parent students frequently shared their learning experiences with their families, with the highest percentage reporting "sometimes" (45.8%) or "often" (34.9%). A significant majority "often" (59%) shared positive class experiences with their families. Conversely, fewer students shared negative class experiences, with most reporting "rarely" (23.2%) or "sometimes" (34.1%). Many parents participated in their children's school-related activities, particularly "sometimes" (35.4%) and "often" (41.8%). They frequently discussed college-related topics with their children, especially attending a college (53.8%) and selecting a college (42.3%). However, a significant proportion "never" (41.8%) brought their children to

college events. Overall, Latina immigrant parent students were actively involved in various aspects of their children's education, including assisting with homework, sharing learning experiences, and discussing college plans. However, there was less involvement when it came to attending college events.

Table 13

Percentages of Latina Immigrant Parents Reporting They Engage Family in Selected School and College Experiences

With your family, how often have you . . .	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Total *n* for item
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	
Help your children with their homework	16	19.5	16	19.5	27	32.9	23	28.0	82
Study with your children	16	20.3	18	22.8	23	29.1	22	27.8	79
Read books with your children	15	18.3	17	20.7	29	35.4	21	25.6	82
Share with your family what you are learning in class	3	3.6	13	15.7	38	45.8	29	34.9	83
Share with your family any positive experiences taking classes	3	3.6	4	4.8	27	32.5	49	59.0	83
Share with your family any negative experiences taking classes	20	24.4	19	23.2	28	34.1	15	18.3	82
Participate in your children's school-related activities	11	13.9	7	8.9	28	35.4	33	41.8	79
Talk to your children about attending college	9	11.3	1	1.3	27	33.8	43	53.8	80
Talk to your children about college preparation classes	8	9.9	9	11.1	32	39.5	32	39.5	81
Talk to your children about selecting a college	12	15.4	10	12.8	23	29.5	33	42.3	78
Bring your children to college events	33	41.8	16	20.3	20	25.3	10	12.7	79

Note. $n = 95$.

Table 14 compares the percentages of Latina immigrant parents compared to all other parents surveyed regarding their reported frequency of engaging their family in school and college experiences. Latina immigrant parents reported a higher percentage of "never" (16.8%) helping their children with homework compared to all other parents (5.9%), but the difference was not statistically significant. Similar trends were observed for other activities like studying with children, reading books with children, sharing positive and negative experiences,

participating in school-related activities, and talking to children about college preparation. When responding to bringing their children to college events, Latina immigrant parents reported a slightly higher percentage of "never" (34.7%) compared to all other parents (29.4%).

Table 14

Percentages of Latina Immigrant Parents and All Other Parents Reporting They "Never" Engage Family in Selected School and College Experiences

With your family, how often do you . . .	All other parents (n = 34)		Latina immigrant parents (n = 95)		Latina immigrant parents vs. all other parents		
	n	%	n	%	Δ%	χ_1^2	p
Help your children with their homework	2	5.9	16	16.8	11.0	2.51	.113
Study with your children	4	11.8	16	16.8	5.1	0.49	.483
Read books with your children	3	8.8	15	15.8	7.0	1.01	.314
Share with your family what you are learning in class	1	2.9	3	3.2	0.2	0.00	.950
Share with your family any positive experiences	0	0.0	3	3.2	3.2	1.10	.294
Share with your family any negative experiences	6	17.6	20	21.1	3.4	0.18	.671
Participate in your children's school-related activities	1	2.9	11	11.6	8.6	2.21	.137
Talk to your children about attending college	3	8.8	9	9.5	0.7	0.01	.911
Talk to your children about college preparation	6	17.6	8	8.4	-9.2	2.20	.138
Talk to your children about selecting a college	5	14.7	12	12.6	-2.1	0.09	.759
Bring your children to college events	10	29.4	33	34.7	5.3	0.32	.572

Although there were differences in the reporting of "Never" engaging in certain school and college experiences between Latina immigrant parents and all other parents, these differences were not statistically significant. Although the survey data in Table 14 may not indicate substantial disparities in family school and college engagement between the two groups, the interviews provided deeper insights into students' experiences.

Interviews revealed Latina immigrant parent students at ECC shared their college experiences through the lens of motherhood. Serving as powerful role models, these women leveraged the knowledge gained from their enrollment at ECC to benefit their families. They conveyed the advantages derived from their college experiences within the context of their cultural and maternal values. Recognizing their role as mothers, they understood the significance of guiding and supporting their children's academic pursuits by demonstrating behaviors, values, and skills worth emulating. Their actions underscored the importance of familial support and positive role modeling in nurturing success in higher education.

Role Modeling as a Means of Persistence

Latina immigrant parents acknowledged that pursuing higher education sets a powerful example for their families. By going to college and persisting, they demonstrated the importance of perseverance. Latina immigrant parents attending college validated the value of their college education. They recognized the positive impact of their pursuit of higher education on their children and used it as a source of motivation for them to succeed in their educational endeavors. Furthermore, their role modeling strengthened their resolve and motivated them to overcome obstacles and continue their college journey. Betty shared:

> *Yo siento que estoy sirviendo de ejemplo para ellos de la manera que yo me quiero superar para que ellos también se puedan superar.* [I feel that I am setting an example for them in the way I want to improve myself so that they can also improve themselves.]

Sally reflected on the example she set for her children:

> *Para mí cuando recién entré pensé esto no es para mí. No estoy lista para estar. Ya empecé, no puedo como echarme para atrás. Como tengo un hijo de 10 y una hija de 24*

no puedo estar el mal ejemplo de ir para atrás. [For me, when I first entered, I thought this is not for me. I am not ready for this. But I've already started, so I can't go back. Since I have a 10-year-old son and a 24-year-old daughter, I can't set a bad example of going backward.]

Latina immigrant parent students served as positive role models for their children, a characteristic they recognized as a driving force behind their persistence in college. As college students, these women emphasized their impact on shaping their children's perceptions of higher education. Their children were proud of them and were motivated to do well in school and pursue higher education. Latina parents understood they set an impactful example for their children by pursuing their college education.

Role Modeling for Inspiration

Latina immigrant parent students used strategies to inspire others, especially their children. Recognizing the challenges and sacrifices throughout their family journeys, whether in their home countries or California, these women persisted in pursuing higher education. Rosie elaborated:

La educación es para todo el mundo. No importa la edad que tú tengas, pero es un conocimiento, algo que nadie te lo va a quitar, y un logro personal no es para las demás personas. Es algo para ti y no importa tu edad, tu origen, tu religión, no importa de dónde vengas. Eso es un logro personal que te sientes muy feliz cuando logras algo muy orgulloso, y cuando tus hijos te ven lograr eso, los motivas a que ellos también lo pueden hacer. Si tú eres alguien mayor y lo lograste, ¿qué no pueden hacer ellos. Ellos pueden lograr lo que quieran. [Education is for everyone. It doesn't matter how old you are, but it's knowledge, something that no one can take away from you, and a personal

achievement is not for others. It's something for you, and it doesn't matter your age, your background, your religion, it doesn't matter where you come from. That's a personal achievement that makes you very happy when you achieve something, very proud. And when your children see you achieve that, you motivate them that they can do it too. If you are someone older and you achieved it, what can't they do? They can achieve whatever they want.]

Marla referred to her sacrifices and the impact her education can make on her children:

Si yo vine a este país y hice esto, ¿cómo no vas a poder tu hacer eso? [If I came to this country and did this, how can you not do that?]

Rocio also commented on the motivation of her son to achieve further success beyond a job:

No terminaron más por tener un título. Si no que realmente estén haciendo lo que quieren. Para mí, pues, a mí es satisfactorio. Y como dice usted, para todos los padres, a lo mejor, es decir, mi hijo también fue a la universidad. Pero el caso no es que se queden ahí, sino que logran tener el éxito que quieran, independientemente de que tengan un título y no más, se pongan a trabajar. Que tengan sus sueños. [They didn't just finish to have a degree. It's about them really doing what they want. For me, well, it's satisfying. And as you said, for all parents, perhaps, my son also went to university. But the point is not for them to just stay there but to achieve the success they want, whether they have a degree or not, and pursue their dreams, not just to get a job.]

Latina immigrant parent students took pride in their accomplishments and acknowledged their decision to enroll in college to achieve their personal goals. In pursuit of their educational objectives, they emphasized overcoming challenges they encountered in college validated their capabilities and set a precedent for their children's success with an added advantage. Sharing

their stories of immigrant journeys and adapting to their varied status in this new country, these women served as powerful examples. By leaving their countries and attending college, they hoped to provide better opportunities for their children to succeed.

Role Modeling for Their Children

> *Somos las madres que los empujamos más.* [We are the mothers who push them the most.] – Marla

Inspired to persist and succeed in college, Latinas embraced their role in setting an example for their children. They were mindful of their impact on shaping their children's perceptions of college and its importance for their families. Their experience of being college students served as a reaffirmation of the importance of education and encouraged their children to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits.

As Latina immigrant parent students, they understood their influential role and strived to serve as compelling examples of what could be accomplished. They encouraged their children to strive for similar or greater achievements, which served as a form of support and inspiration for their children, empowering them as these women navigated through college and achieved the milestones they set out to accomplish. Betty described her role modeling as influencing her son to reconsider going to college:

> *Como al más grande, al principio no lo quiso aprovechar pero ahora ya está como queriéndose registrar. Pienso que en algo le he sembrado la semilla de querer superarse . . . Ahora él dice, "si me voy a meter al colegio."* [Like the eldest, initially, he didn't want to take advantage of it, but now he's considering registering. I think I've planted the seed of wanting to improve himself . . . Now he says, "I'm going to enroll in college."]

Rocio commented about her college-age children's motivations to pursue higher degrees because of their mother's example:

> *Por eso, ahora que es tan grande, siempre me dicen que están orgullosos de que estoy empezando. Y si, eso también nos alienta, aunque ya vamos a una universidad, no dejarla. En seguir y no dejar los masters y todo eso porque vemos que tú estás a cierta edad, pudiste hacerlo, y nosotros tenemos la oportunidad de hacerlo.* [That's why, now that they are grown, they always tell me that they are proud that I am starting. [comment by children] And yes, that also encourages us, even though we are already at the university, not to give up. To continue and not abandon the master's and all that because we see that at your age, you could do it, and we have the opportunity to do it.]

Furthermore, Rocio was emotional as she further recounted her daughter's graduation from college and giving tribute to her mother's inspiring example of pursuing higher education:

> *Mi hija, la que acaba de graduarse del Cal Poly Pomona me dijo, "estamos tan orgullosos de ti ma, pero estamos más orgullosos, porque eres el ejemplo para nosotros con el estudio."* [My daughter, the one who just graduated from Cal Poly Pomona, told me, "We are so proud of you, Mom, but we are even prouder because you are the example for us with your studies."]

The impact of these women's role modeling extended to their children, who expressed admiration for their mothers' commitment to higher education. Latina immigrant parent students served as powerful role models, inspiring their children to succeed in their academic pursuits and aspire to attain higher education beyond entry level, including advanced degrees such as a master's degree or beyond.

Knowledge Transfer

In addition to serving as role models, Latinas actively shared knowledge and practices that strengthened their own and their children's academic achievement. Students interviewed shared narratives of how their college experiences had improved their capacity to assist their children with their homework and prepare them for college. Rosie, Ester, and Sally exemplified this by offering homework assistance and guidance. Rosiedescribed assisting her son with homework: :

> *Yo le ayudo con las tareas. No sé, a veces lo que él trae de tarea, yo ya lo he visto en la clase un día antes, y digo, lo vi un día antes, y ahora yo . . . tengo la oportunidad de ayudarle.* [I help him with his homework. I don't know, sometimes what he brings for homework, I have already seen in the class a day before, and I say, I saw it a day before, and now I . . . have the opportunity to help him.]

Ester stated:

> *A mi nieta le gusta que hagamos la tarea . . . Y me está preguntando. Si me equivoco, no me contesta, nomás me las pone a un lado. Ya después, cuando las veo, me dice, "Esas las tienes que estudiar bien porque no te la supiste."* [My granddaughter likes it when we do homework together. . . . And she asks me questions. If I make a mistake, she doesn't answer, she just puts them aside. Later, when I see them, she says, "You have to study these well because you didn't know them."]

Finally, Sally offered the following perspective:

> *Ahora en el tiempo que me va a tocar cuando él esté en la universidad, voy a estar lista para yo guiarlo y saber los pasos.* [Now, in the time it's going to be my turn when he's in college, I'll be ready to guide him and know the steps.]

Drawing from their college experiences, Latina immigrant parent students can effectively support their children in navigating the college process and making informed decisions. With their direct experience in college, they offered program information and shared resources to guide their children. Alicia explained:

> *Y a pesar de que mi hijo está aquí estudiando en Eastland Community College en welding, hay cosas que él no sabía y que yo le vine a decir. Mira esto, mira el otro, mira, y mira. Entonces si me he desenvuelto un poco más, porque, sí hay cosas que ellos no se dan cuenta.* [And despite the fact that my son is here studying welding at Eastland Community College, there are things he didn't know, and I came to tell him. Look at this, look at that, and look. So, I have become a bit more involved because there are things they don't realize.]

Marla described her ability to explain an associate degree to her children:

> *Sé qué materias pueden tener para que terminen un asociado. Ya tengo más conocimiento, no? O sea el estar envuelta en eso yo ya tengo más conocimiento de eso.* [I know what subjects they can take to complete an associate degree. I already have more knowledge, right? I mean, being involved in that, I already have more knowledge about it.]

The college experience offered Latina immigrant parent students valuable opportunities to exchange advice, resources, and program information through their collective wisdom known as "consejos." They shared stories about their involvement in supporting their children's college-going and homework assistance, both from parent to child and vice versa. Additionally, they articulated a deepened understanding of college processes and express confidence in preparing and guiding their children through their higher education journey. Finally, they were steadfast

and unapologetic in their desire for their children to pursue higher education. They openly recognized their pivotal role as the driving force and unwavering support of their children toward success in higher education.

Personal Growth – Education Changed Me/*La Educación Me Cambió*

The interviewed students revealed how their college education had nurtured their personal development. Students reflected on how their educational experiences influenced their personal growth, fostering increased confidence in their learning, improving student relationships, and building resiliency. Betty and Saira described fulfillment in achieving educational goals, pride in demonstrating their language ability, and assurance in knowing their children are well-cared for while they attend classes. Betty discussed her emotional well-being:

> *Pero emocionalmente, me siento bien. Me siento útil. Siento que estoy aprendiendo. Incluso vamos a citas de mi suegro, me defiendo ya en el inglés. Él me escucha y me dice, "si estás aprendiendo." Y mi hija, incluso a veces hay cartas que llegan en inglés y las leo en voz alta y me dice "oh, si sabes leerlo." Le digo, "pues, claro, pues estoy yendo a la escuela." Entonces emocionalmente, me hace feliz.* [But emotionally, I feel good. I feel useful. I feel like I'm learning. We even go to appointments with my father-in-law, I defend myself in English now. He listens to me and says, "You're learning." And my daughter, sometimes there are letters that come in English, and I read them aloud, and she says, "Oh, you can read it." I tell her, "Well, of course, I'm going to school." So emotionally, it makes me happy.]

Saira recounted her experience using the college daycare center and the sense of relief it brought her:

No hay otra cosa mejor que me pudo haber pasado, que me tengan a mis niñas ahí en el Colegio. Es como preschool, o sea, porque no es daycare, es preschool y pues ellas aprenden, y yo también aprendo. Y siempre que yo estoy más tranquila, más enfocada. Y pues, estoy contenta, estoy agusto con ellas allá y yo con el tiempo acá en mis estudios. [There is nothing better that could have happened to me than having my girls there at the college. It's like preschool, I mean, because it's not daycare; it's preschool, and well, they learn, and I learn too. And, well, I am calmer, more focused. And well, I am happy, I am comfortable with them there, and me with time in my studies.]

Sally expanded on her sense of community with her classmates:

Entonces siempre he sido una persona como muy de adentro, y él estár en la escuela me abierto a mi amigas, de otras cosas que antes no veía. No sé. Mi mundo cambió. Es otro mundo . . . Siempre fui una persona que llevé a mis hijos a la escuela, regresé, o sea, nunca salía de mi casa. No fui a ninguna parte. Ahora ya tengo amigas y vamos al café y vamos aquí vamos allá. Trato de ayudar. [So, I have always been a very introverted person, and being in school has opened me up to friends, to other things that I didn't see before. I don't know. My world changed. It's another world . . . I was always a person who took my children to school, came back, I mean, never left my house. I didn't go anywhere. Now, I have friends, and we go to cafes, we go here, we go there. I try to help.]

Sonia described how prioritizing her needs and persisting has empowered her:

Aproveché el tiempo, aun sin el transporte, aún sin nada que es lo que yo pensé que no iba a ser que no seguirá adelante. Salí el semestre. Entonces eso fue lo que yo ahí sí yo me sorprendí. ¡Guau! Si la hice. [I took advantage of the time, even without

transportation, even without anything, which is what I thought would happen that wouldn't have me continue. I finished the semester. So, that was what surprised me there. Wow! I did it.]

Latina immigrant parent students had college experiences that built mindfulness, confidence, and interpersonal skills. They viewed their classes as invigorating, assisting them in being focused and interacting with classmates who provided support and minimize their stress. They felt proud of their decisions to reengage in their learning and build skills to communicate more effectively. Their successes helped them build self-confidence and strength in expressing themselves. They commented on their desire for continuous growth and found confidence in their college experiences. They also described their transformation in how they approached their family, work, and academic responsibilities. Through their experiences, these women felt changed, having gained a sense of empowerment. They expressed a deep appreciation for learning, skills acquired, access to information, and the ability to advocate for themselves and others.

Conclusion: Familial Capital

Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs brought a wealth of strategies, skills, and resources rooted in their identities as family members and mothers. Whether explicitly communicated or not, their college persistence was a powerful example for their children, fueling their determination. Understanding their significance as role models, these women were mindful of the influence they wielded and strived to set positive examples. As they progressed in their educational journey, they shared their firsthand knowledge with their children, fostering a college-going culture. Recognizing the impact of their educational experiences, these Latina students appreciated the effects of their academic endeavors on their

families. Moreover, they acknowledged the transformative impact of education on their emotional well-being, confidence, and sense of accomplishment, recognizing its significant impact on themselves and their families as they pursued higher education.

Other Findings: Experiences of Marginalization

An additional finding, though not directly related to the study research questions, pertained to instances of marginalization the Latina immigrant parent students expressed in the interviews. Unfortunately, this aspect was an important and challenging part of their experiences as immigrants arriving in this country, and it continued while they were in college. These Latinas navigated the college while contending with feelings of frustration stemming from the institutional barriers they encountered. Through their journey, these students expressed their sense of belonging and perceived marginalized status at the college, their experiences, and how they countered these barriers with motivation and persistence. They confronted and acknowledged the systemic discrimination they faced, employing their resilience as a driving force for success.

Latina immigrant parent students often expressed feelings of marginalization in the classroom and, more broadly, concerning their status at the college as immigrants, nontraditional adult students, and language learners. They conveyed frustrations stemming from their limited language competency. Upon enrolling at ECC, they encountered an environment where communication is predominantly conducted in English. This linguistic barrier led to isolation and uncertainty about their potential for success in this unfamiliar academic setting. As Sally shared:

> *El primer día que entré, frustración porque yo, yo sí estaba en cero, cero, cero. Le entendí, la maestra estaba hablando, la clase ya habia empezado, estábamos en mediados de febrero, la maestra estaba dando instrucciones todo en inglés. Ella sí no*

hablaba nada de español y yo sentía cayendo por todos lados y decía no, esto no es para mí. No le entendía nada lo que estaba diciendo. Yo no me voy a salir. [The first day I entered, frustration because I was truly starting from zero, zero, zero. I understood it, the teacher was speaking, the class had already begun, it was mid-February, and the teacher was giving instructions all in English. She didn't speak any Spanish, and I felt like everything was falling apart and I said no, this is not for me. I didn't understand anything she was saying. I'm not going to quit.]

Sally continued and elaborated on the second-tier status they encountered concerning college services and credit classes:

Porque siento que clases, no se si clases o recursos que no son como para todos los estudiantes. Solo son para los estudiantes con clases con crédito. No siento como la igualdad en ciertas cosas. [Because I feel that classes, I don't know if classes or resources are not for all students. They are only for students with credit classes. I don't feel equality with certain things.]

Further elaborating, Rosie and Alicia highlighted the disregard for students like them, the absence of information, insufficient program availability, and the lack of support they encountered, such as financial aid. Rosie offered the following perspective:

Sí, que nos tomen mas en cuenta. A veces el programa no está tomado al cien porciento en cuenta. Más ayuda financiera. Más ayuda el programa para que hagan mas niveles, por ejemplo, de conversación, que haya otro nivel. Que haya mas clase es algo que la gente le guste. Le llame la atención y diga, hay algo más, hay algo más aquí. Algo que sea, que no nos dejen abandonados, que nos tomen mas encuenta. [Yes, that they take us more into account. Sometimes, the program is not fully taken into account. More

financial assistance. More program support to create more levels, for example, in conversation, that there be another level. That there be more classes, something that people like. That catches their attention and makes them say, there's something more, there's something more here. Something that doesn't leave us abandoned, that they take us more into consideration.]

Alicia shared:

Si siento que todavía hay mucha desinformación en nosotros sobre como saber más, más ayuda sobre los colegios comunitarios. Que estamos totalmente, como dicen a ciegas de las oportunidades, las ayudas en todo lo que hay aquí en el país y en el Colegio. Entonces este esperamos principalmente que haya esas ayudas que nos encaminan a lo que más nos conviene según los proyectos que tenemos en mente. [I do feel that there is still a lot of misinformation among us about how to learn more, more help about community colleges. That we are totally, as they say, blind to the opportunities, the assistance in everything that exists here in the country and in the college. So, we mainly hope that there will be that help that directs us towards what is best for us according to the projects we have in mind.]

These women raised a notable concern regarding their immigrant status and how their encounters at the college left them feeling marginalized, anxious, and neglected. Marla elaborated:

Al principio, yo tenía miedo, tenía de hablar con ellos. Por eso le decía que yo he estado con diez años en Eastland Community College pero yo tenía miedo porque yo tenía miedo de decir algo, y que les voy a decir. Es que hay algo que siempre tienes en tu mente. Eres inmigrante. [At first, I was afraid, afraid to talk to them. That's why I would

say I've been in Eastland Community College for 10 years, but I was scared because I was scared to say something, and what am I going to tell them. There's always something on your mind. You're an immigrant].

Saira described challenges with her education and immigrant status:

> *Llegué y empecé, dije, pues traigo una carrera de allá pero no tengo documentos. No sé el idioma y se me cerraban las puertas.* [I arrived and started, I said, well, I have a degree from there, but I don't have documents. I don't know the language, and the doors were closed to me.]

Latina immigrant parent students also recounted their frustrations with the limitations of college programs not accessible to them. Rocio shared her experience:

> *Y luego entré en el primer semestre. Pero ellos, pues, me dijeron por qué hasta el segundo semestre ya no califique. Me dijeron que solo residentes.* [And then I entered the first semester. But they, well, they told me why I didn't qualify until the second semester. They told me it's only for residents.]

Despite feeling lost and excluded, Latina immigrant parents insisted on their student experience and used strategies to familiarize them with the campus and help them gain a sense of belonging. Sally stated:

> *Porque al final también somos estudiantes. A veces uno no se considera estudiante. Se siente uno apartado. Pero a este junto me considero parte de la comunidad en la escuela, aunque creo que eso nos haría falta es conocer.* [Because, in the end, we are also students. Sometimes one doesn't consider oneself a student. One feels excluded. But in this group, I consider myself part of the campus community, although I think what we need is to get to know the campus.]

Latinas interviewed conveyed their experiences of navigating both their sense of belonging and instances of marginalization at ECC. As language learners, they encountered challenges in communicating with faculty and accessing information at the college. They expressed frustration with an unfamiliar educational system, starting over with the education they acquired from their country of origin and not being validated in their new college home. Students described feeling shame when seeking college services, attending events, and interacting with staff. They referenced the college culture and their status as nonresident and immigrant students, facing restrictions in accessing college programs and facilities as students in noncredit programs. The perception that college events were not tailored to them or their families deepened these sentiments.

Despite acknowledging these limitations, Latina immigrant parent students recognized the available opportunities as they persisted and actively sought them within the college. They spoke positively about their experiences at ECC, conveying favorable feelings and describing the college as their own. They also expressed a feeling of privilege as college students, resisting negative experiences and embracing their right to be part of the college community.

Conclusion

Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs at ECC highly prioritized college, aiming to acquire proficient English language skills to facilitate their career goals and eventual degree attainment. As a strategy, these students came to the college with lived experiences that strengthened their approach to navigating and overcoming obstacles in both their college journeys and those of their children. They employed specific ways to enhance and instill educational values, strategies, and knowledge for themselves and their families. The identity of these students as mothers was an asset and a source of motivation for their college-

going and pursuit of higher education and success. Their roles as mothers shaped their college experiences, influencing their strategies and decision-making processes, ultimately contributing to their overall success and impacting not only themselves but their families.

In the following chapter, I discuss the findings, how they relate to existing literature, and their broader implications. I then elaborate on the significance of the findings and address the study's limitations. Finally, I offer recommendations tailored for community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and employers, along with suggestions for future policy initiatives and research endeavors.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The participation of adult students enrolled in CCNCR programs most likely comes as a surprise for many higher education practitioners and stakeholders who are unaware that these students have been at their colleges since the system's inception over 100 years ago (Voorhees & Milam, 2005). Yet, despite the longstanding presence of students enrolled in noncredit programs within our system, there remains a lack of understanding regarding their goals, experiences, and impact on higher education.

As the country's largest and most diverse higher education system, the CCCs provide educational pathways for all who enter. According to the CCCCO (n.d.-a), the system served 1.9 million students during the 2022–2023 academic year, of which 12.5% were enrolled in noncredit courses. These students, predominantly Latinx (46%) and female (60%),[2] represent a rich diversity, which is a testament to the inclusivity of the CCC system. Notwithstanding their intention to provide greater access to the community by offering noncredit courses, their designation often hinders these programs, implying they are not on par with credit programs or do not lead to degrees (Romano & D'Amico, 2021; Turner Cortez et al., 2021). This isolation of many students relegated to terminal degrees and certificates impedes their academic advancement within the CCC system, limiting their full potential.

Playing a pivotal role in asserting themselves as vital constituents within the CCCs, Latina immigrant parents enrolled in noncredit programs demand consideration from higher education stakeholders. If community colleges are to advance their vision for 2030 and uphold their mission of serving the underserved, it is imperative that they actively engage with the needs

[2] Per the CCCCO DataMart, the latest disaggregated data by race and gender was available for the 2021–2022 academic year.

and experiences of these Latina students. Failure to do so risks excluding a significant segment of CCC students, a responsibility that cannot be overlooked.

Study Purpose

This mixed methods study aimed to understand the experiences of Latina immigrant parents enrolled in noncredit ESL programs. It included a survey of ECC's CCNCR ESL students and interviews with a subgroup of 12 survey respondents who met set criteria. The research questions centered around students' reasons for enrolling at the community college, their strategies to navigate the college environment, and the perceived benefit of their enrollment for them and their children.

This study revealed the resilient spirit, adaptive strategies, and potential familial impact of Latina immigrant parents engaged in noncredit programs at the community college. Through their firsthand narratives, these women shared their experiences at ECC, revealing their determination to pursue higher education, transforming themselves in the process, and positively influencing their children's lives.

In this chapter, I summarize the study findings and their implications. Additionally, I address the study's limitations and propose recommendations for community college leadership, practitioners, nonprofit organizations, and employers. Finally, I provide some reflections on this process and the impact of these findings on my work as a 20-year veteran serving adult learners in noncredit programs at the community college.

Summary of Key Findings and Implications

Key findings of this study centered on Latina immigrant parent students' reasons for enrolling in CCNCR (RQ1), the strategies they used to navigate the college (RQ2), and the perceived benefits they and their families derived from their enrollment (RQ3). The following

themes underscored the findings: first, the aspirational reasons for their enrollment at ECC; second, the navigational strategies employed by Latina immigrant parent students to persist and succeed; and third, the familial capital used to serve as role models, exert influence, and empower both themselves and their children to adopt a college-going culture.

RQ1: Reasons for Their Enrollment—High Aspirations Amid Challenging Circumstances

Like most community colleges, ECC students enrolled in noncredit programs are siloed and relegated to a second-tier status (Romano & D'Amico, 2021). As a distinct program at community colleges, the narrative is that these students only come for these noncredit programs to gain skills and immediately return to work (D'Amico et al., 2017; Xu & Ran, 2020). Although this is a critical reason adult learners come to our community colleges, this study indicated Latina immigrant parent students aspire to pursue higher education. These students initially came to the college to acquire English competency. They then stayed to get classes that provided skills for better job opportunities, such as a high school equivalency or specific job training. Furthermore, the survey revealed Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs expressed a desire for a bachelor's degree or higher, with agreement levels of 48%, demonstrating they were motivated to continue to credit programs and university degrees.

Latina immigrant parent students also revealed they intentionally selected to enroll at a college because of its reputation. Often referred to the college by a family member or trusted friend, the community college represents opportunity, high quality, available resources, and a pathway to higher education degrees for these students. Their decision to attend college was a significant reason and determination for them to realize an unfulfilled college degree. These students continued their educational journey, having been interrupted by circumstances of having migrated to this country and being challenged with multiple responsibilities managing

households, working, and raising children. Despite their high motivation, noncredit students rarely transition to credit coursework, a change observed only in a minority of students (Bahr et al., 2023).

However, Latina immigrant parent students in this study were aspirational in their educational goals and enrolled at the college to benefit from the intrinsic value of education that reinforces habits, knowledge, relationships, and community involvement practices that foster personal growth, build character, and improve society. Much research has explored the role and influence of Latinx immigrant parents in instilling the value of education in their children, fostering their educational aspirations (Alvarez, 2015; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Kiyama et al., 2015; Matos, 2015). Latina immigrant parent students reminded us of the value of education and lifelong learning embedded at the root of higher education. For them, education went beyond skills and a return on investment. Their aspirations centered on opportunity and the ideal of a better society, reinforcing values that enrich community members in invaluable and multiple intrinsic ways.

As the primary caregivers in their families, they were transparent with their children about the importance of education. Their commitment to these values was evident in their actions and how they openly discussed them with their children. Research has acknowledged the importance of cultural knowledge and values Latinx parents impart to their children that support academic goals and college-going (Garcia & Mireles-Rios, 2020; Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2018; Marrun, 2020; Matos, 2015). This study expanded the understanding of how Latina immigrant parents promote family engagement through their college experiences. For Latina immigrant parent students, participation in noncredit programs at the community college was a tangible expression of their educational values. Through their educational journey, they served as living

examples, demonstrating the significance and relevance of these values in their lives. Education was revered, and there was a firm expectation that their children would pursue higher education.

By acknowledging and harnessing the aspirations of Latina immigrant parent students to pursue higher education, community colleges can proactively provide customized support to help them achieve their academic objectives. Their aspirations and interview narratives regarding their desire to obtain a degree indicated a determination to progress from language proficiency to degree attainment. Community colleges should capitalize on this aspiration and provide the necessary support to assist them in reaching their academic goals.

RQ2: College Strategies—Navigating College the Way They Need It

The study findings revealed Latina immigrant parent students at ECC faced multiple challenges and shared strategies for enrolling in short, manageable programs when navigating their educational journey. Research has confirmed the difficulties these students face given their unfamiliarity with college, discrimination, and language barriers encountered (Becker, 2011; Davaasambuu et al., 2020; Xu & Ran, 2020). Juggling many responsibilities, including work, household duties, and family obligations, these students approached their coursework with a commitment to incremental progress and unwavering consistency. Drawing upon their rich life experiences, they adeptly balanced their academic pursuits with the demands of daily life. Despite time constraints, they prioritized class attendance while making sacrifices, such as forgoing participation in college events.

In addition to navigating the college with manageable schedules, Latina immigrant parent students skillfully acquired necessary resources through collaborative efforts with peers and proactive engagement with faculty, enhancing their learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. This reliance on interpersonal connections and pragmatic approaches proved

instrumental in supporting Latina immigrant parent students' persistence in an educational environment not inherently tailored to their needs as adult learners.

With a large umbrella and multiple unique student needs, community colleges are challenged to support all constituents. For Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs, community colleges may need to learn how these students currently navigate their college experience. Academic programs, outreach, and student services may not be tailored to their needs nor account for how these students have to take classes in increments and forgo services and practices that do not support their success. These learners approached their college journey by taking classes the way they needed them, given their time constraints and high level of responsibilities, so they could be successful. They navigated the community college in a collaborative system of practices to push through, persist, and complete.

Although collaboration is crucial to their success, Latina immigrant parent students set themselves apart from their college peers even more. Given their adult status, they identified themselves as having different priorities, needs, and student interactions. They recognized the inequity and inflexibility in college processes, services, and practices that disadvantaged them in a college environment catering mainly to young students. Given their realities as adult immigrant learners, they were confronted with experiences in and outside the classroom with services and programs they could not access or benefit from. In response, these women developed strategies that honored their realities, held themselves responsible for strengthening their resiliency, and drew inspiration from their abilities to persist and demonstrate their success to themselves and their children.

As challenging as navigating college without adequate support can be, Latina immigrant parent students recognized their marginalization as students enrolled in noncredit programs.

They expressed feelings of invisibility, abandonment, and alienation due to their immigrant status or language barriers. Research on Latinx families facing numerous obstacles in accessing resources and information to navigate college successfully and the detrimental effects of their exclusion from the college-going process and decision making has highlighted the need for improved approaches to engage these families (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Baum & Flores, 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Luthra & Soehl, 2015). Experiencing similar challenges, Latina immigrant parent students also spoke about their sense of belonging and the need to be fully incorporated or appreciated as credit students are perceived. They witnessed the distinction between their status as students enrolled in noncredit programs and students enrolled in credit or transfer track programs.

As an approach to counter the second-tier status within the college, Latina immigrant parent students viewed the institution as a space for all. They asserted themselves and rejected that they were insignificant or should feel like outsiders. Recent research by Sáenz et al. (2020) highlighted the significant impact of engagement that fosters agency and empowerment among Latina immigrant mothers. These parents, enrolled in noncredit programs at the community college, exemplified their empowerment by actively seeking inclusivity. All students, including Latina immigrant parent students, enrolled in community college to secure employment and career opportunities, enhance their work and life skills, and aspire for a degree beyond immediate practicalities. However, these women navigated college through a distinct lens shaped by their immigrant status and adult responsibilities, requiring tailored services and support. Although their approach may differ, the essence remains the same. Community college leadership and personnel should actively strive to foster inclusivity among Latina immigrant

parent students enrolled in noncredit programs, recognizing that they, like all students, seek access to higher education.

RQ3: Perceived Benefits—Latina Immigrant Parent Students Are Motivated by Their Status as Role Models, Knowledge Gained, and Personal Growth

This study shed light on the profound and tangible benefits Latina immigrant parent students experienced through their enrollment in ECC's noncredit ESL programs. Enrolling at the college elevated them as role models and empowered them with the confidence and skills crucial for assisting their children with homework and initiating discussions about higher education. Moreover, their college experiences fostered academic growth and personal development, empowering them to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

Most outstanding among the findings were the various ways Latina immigrant parent students leveraged their status as role models to persist and succeed in college. The act of enrolling at the community college was an indicator for these women that they need and belong in higher education. They persisted in their programs because, as parents, they demonstrated to their children that they, too, could go to college. Using their status as role models, Latina immigrant parent students enhanced their college engagement and achievement, knowing they inspired their children's academic endeavors. Additionally, they attended community college and used their status as role models to persist and succeed in reaching their goals. Research has demonstrated family engagement and a mother's college enrollment positively impact a child's educational outcomes and college attendance rate (Marrun, 2020; Monaghan, 2017). As college students, Latina immigrant parent students embraced the benefits of their college-going to inspire themselves and their children to excel in their educational environment.

Role Modeling College

Role modeling was a powerful way for Latina immigrant parent students to motivate themselves and convey to their children the importance of education, how to navigate it, persist, and succeed in reaching their goals. The more success they had, the easier it became, and their children also drew motivation from their parents' success. Then, children could envision their success in completing their degrees, witnessing their parents doing it, and overcoming insurmountable obstacles.

Their status as role models was complemented by the college knowledge they transfered to their families. Latinas recounted their understanding of the college experience with their children, offering advice, assisting with college-going decisions, and sharing services and programs that may benefit their families. Their student experiences enhanced current approaches of incorporating parents in the efforts of parent college orientation that transcended them as bystanders. The college experience of these Latinas and its impact on their children significantly enriches the research on parent involvement beyond supporters and advocates (Albrecht, 2021; Auerbach, 2007; Kiyama et al., 2015; Langenkamp, 2019). The participation of these Latinas in noncredit college programs puts into context and tailors their actions in a manner that incorporates them as leaders, consumers, and family partners with our higher education institutions. It would benefit our community college system to support Latina immigrant parent students in noncredit programs in reaching their goals, so they can actively engage their families in the process.

Influencing College Knowledge

Several studies have addressed the challenges Latinx immigrant families face in navigating higher education, including their limited exposure to it and the obstacles hindering

their active engagement (Baum & Flores, 2011; Fann et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Harper et al., 2020). Among these barriers is the lack of familiarity with the cost of higher education and the financial aid process (Alvarez, 2015; Kiyama, 2010; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). However, the present study revealed a positive shift in acquiring college knowledge and familiarity. Latina immigrant parents currently enrolled in noncredit programs at ECC leveraged their educational experiences to overcome these obstacles. Through their engagement with college, they enhanced their understanding and familiarity with the higher education landscape and empowered themselves and their children to strive for success.

Specifically, the knowledge they gained was shared with their children, with whom they had influence and time to teach about learning skills, navigating education and college, accessing services, and strategies to persist. The knowledge they appreciated most was how their learning translated to their ability to assist their children. Examples of the cultural capital they instilled in their children reflected tenants of Yosso's (2005) CCW framework. Women with young children mentioned how the knowledge they gained by enrolling in noncredit programs allowed them to assist their children with homework and begin to prepare them for college. Women with older children mentioned their ability to influence their children to consider or support their college by going beyond initial goals to advanced degrees. They discussed college practices, services, and programs with their children that they may need to be made aware of and encouraged them to persevere in college.

These women also discussed how they navigated college, drawing from their experiences of overcoming challenges. Research has confirmed the benefits of the active engagement of Latinx parents that builds on their family and cultural assets (Langenkamp, 2019; Sáenz et al., 2020; Villalba et al., 2014). Latina immigrant parent students demonstrated they were equipped

with this understanding and imparted valuable knowledge to their children, emphasizing that the path to college may vary. It may entail taking a break after completing high school or taking gradual steps in attending college. This firsthand knowledge of the college experience enabled them to guide and advise their children, offering tailored support to meet each child's needs. As parents, they possessed a deep understanding of their children and could serve as their most effective advocates and mentors throughout their college journey.

Community colleges have yet to recognize the profound influence Latina immigrant parents enrolled in noncredit programs at our institutions could have on entering traditional community college students. Community colleges can make a meaningful impact if they invest in and establish effective partnerships with current students participating in noncredit programs to support them and their children. Doing so could positively influence the entire pipeline of families in our communities who have demonstrated a strong college-going culture. Community college practitioners can empower them to succeed and thrive by providing the necessary support and resources.

Fostering Empowerment Through Personal Growth

The insight gained from Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit programs lies in their personal growth and development. These women demonstrated immense pride in their accomplishments, persisting through numerous challenges to excel at the college beyond their expectations. Their academic success is a testament to their strengthened self-esteem and confidence. Most notably, these women were surprised by the extent of their personal growth, which held profound significance for them. They acknowledged having experienced drastic positive changes and reaching educational and personal milestones they never thought possible.

Their newfound fulfillment resonated across various aspects of their lives, demonstrating confidence in academic pursuits, the workplace, and at home.

Latina immigrant parent students beginning their college journeys in noncredit courses discovered their innate strengths and leadership potential within their classrooms, households, and workplaces. Research studies have acknowledged the unequal power dynamics in K–16 institutions, particularly disadvantaging parents lacking college experience; this recognition has led to a shift toward asset-based and culturally relevant approaches to support Latinx families in achieving college success (Albrecht, 2021; Harper et al., 2020; Huerta et al., 2022; Sáenz et al., 2020). As this study revealed, these women experienced personal growth, reinforcing their belief in education's transformative power. Moreover, this study emphasized the potential to enhance the agency of these students who have enrolled in noncredit community college ESL programs.

These findings contribute to existing research by shedding light on Latina parent students' experiences as they navigate their college journeys. Their insights enabled them to advocate for the support they required to succeed and effectively guide their children. Transitioning from passive observers to active participants in the college experience, these women were empowered to shape the educational landscape within their families. Their transformation triggered positive change as they skillfully used their newfound insights and personal growth to improve their lives and families.

Significance of Findings

This section addresses the significance of this study's key findings. Supporting Latina immigrant parent students accessing CCNCR programs can expand their educational goals, reinforce ongoing efforts to support underserved student populations, and contribute to establishing a college familial pathway for the communities our colleges serve.

Latina Immigrant Parent ESL Students Want Degrees and Access to Higher Education

Community colleges have a unique opportunity to empower and uplift motivated and persistent students committed to achieving academic success. Latina immigrant parent students demonstrated remarkable determination as they purposefully enrolled in noncredit programs at ECC to learn English and eventually earn their degrees. In addition, the overwhelming desire for higher education among the 195 students surveyed in noncredit ESL programs underscores the potential for community colleges to harness and nurture these aspirations. Community colleges can create a supportive environment that welcomes and sustains their educational journey by implementing a comprehensive framework inclusive of practices, services, and programs tailored to the needs of adult immigrant learners.

Moreover, by establishing a credit transfer pipeline designed explicitly for Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit programs, community colleges can positively impact not only individual students but also their entire families, thereby fostering educational attainment and socioeconomic advancement within the community. In alignment with the community college's mission of prioritizing students with the greatest needs, leaders and practitioners can engage with adult learners in a manner that effectively addresses their unique college journeys.

Supporting College Navigational Expertise of Adult Immigrant Learners

Latina immigrant parent students identified differences among their general college peers and their experiences as adults. Given their adult status, they identified themselves as having different priorities, needs, and student interactions. Community colleges lack awareness of how Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs currently navigate their college experience. Outreach, academic programs, and student services must consider practices

tailored to the needs of student–parent populations (Huerta et al., 2022). In addition, the college may need to account for how these students must take classes in increments and forgo services and practices that do not support their success. Community colleges must acknowledge adult learners' unique needs and requirements, which can manifest in diverse ways.

Recognizing the linguistic diversity among immigrant and first–generation students at community colleges is paramount (Fann et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2012; Harper et al., 2020; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). Latina immigrant parents enrolled in noncredit programs often encounter significant challenges when navigating an English-only college environment. Failing to provide essential services and outreach information in the languages spoken by students inadvertently conveys a message of exclusion. This lack of support leaves them to navigate their college journey alone, often feeling marginalized and isolated on campus. To address this issue, college leadership must prioritize campus inclusivity and linguistic diversity for these learners seeking higher education.

There is a prevailing assumption that Latina immigrant parent students are solely focused on acquiring immediate skills, such as English competency and job skills, to advance in the workplace and reinforce their family responsibilities. These priorities are essential given their multifaceted roles as heads of household, diligent workers, and nurturing mothers. However, the survey data and interview excerpts revealed a deeper layer of motivation and ambition among these students, showcasing their sincere desire to pursue advanced degrees.

Even with aspirations of advanced degrees, Latina immigrant parent students cannot endure a prolonged process of years to acquire their degrees. They are willing to do the work and are prepared to put in the necessary effort; however, it is incumbent upon colleges to facilitate their aspirations by offering tailored services and programs designed for adult parent students

enrolled in noncredit courses. It is imperative to recognize that Latina immigrant parent students, as adult learners, have diverse interests and objectives. Ensuring equitable access to college services for these learners is vital. This may require embracing innovative approaches and adapting existing systems to ensure all students feel welcomed and supported throughout their academic journey. Initiatives should encompass a blend of practical work skills, life skills, and educational opportunities, building upon their existing knowledge from their countries of origin. These practices would alleviate the marginalization of the Latina immigrant parent student population that currently perpetuates their isolation and hinders their ability to pursue transfer and advanced degrees despite their aspirations.

Welcoming a Latinx Family Culture of College Success

Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit courses at community colleges embraced their identities and recognized their pivotal role in supporting their families. As mothers, these students not only role modeled their academic practices but also exhibited remarkable resilience as they navigated the complexities of higher education, paving the way for their children's success from primary to high school levels and beyond. Specifically, they recognized the impact they could have on their children because of their experiences in college. Community colleges can advance their mission of inclusivity by leveraging this familial capital and supporting Latina immigrant parent learners. These students were keenly aware of their educational journey's profound impact on their families, a realization that fueled their determination and underscored the transformative potential of higher education within immigrant communities.

In addition, the personal development of Latina students holds immense significance because it contributes to the agency of Latina immigrant parent students in community colleges,

within their homes, and in the broader community. As mothers, they cultivated strategies to navigate college life, positively impacting various aspects of their lives, including their professional endeavors and household dynamics. This collective enrichment enhances the community and lays the groundwork for sustainable neighborhoods.

This impact on the family allows community colleges to collaborate on their college success with these families. As true partners, Latina immigrant parent students are already immersed in and know the benefits the college can offer them. Community college personnel can collaborate with these students, sharing insights, services, educational programs, and college strategies, with the knowledge that their children will become the future college-bound youth entering their institutions. Inevitably, this will strengthen the supportive efforts with nontraditional underserved communities. This would benefit Latina immigrant parents and elevate the college-going culture of their surrounding communities.

Limitations

This study's limitations include a narrow scope, the methods employed, and the protocols enacted. In addition, as the interviews were conducted in Spanish to accommodate the participants, the methods used to address their interpretations of linguistic and cultural context may have entailed certain limitations.

Scope of Study

This study was conducted at a single community college site in a suburban city with a relatively modest enrollment of students focused on those enrolled in noncredit ESL programs. The research methodology involved surveying 195 students and conducting 12 interviews with students meeting the criteria of Latina immigrant parents. The community college district offers these noncredit courses at various offsite locations, including neighboring adult schools,

community centers, and workplaces. I only gathered data from ECC, and the experiences of students from other colleges may differ from those participating in this study. In addition, the experiences of Latina immigrant parents may differ from those of nonimmigrants, nonparents, or students of other ethnic groups. As a result, the study findings were limited by their localized nature, student population, and sample size, making them unsuitable for broad generalizations across larger student populations.

Regarding the quantitative data, I distributed the survey to all students enrolled in noncredit ESL courses within one community college representing a program of small to mid-size scale. Consequently, the scope of the quantitative data lacked the depth required for a more comprehensive analysis involving a more extensive and diverse group of students from multiple colleges to yield statistically significant findings. Furthermore, I conducted this study in an area with demographics that may not have fully represented the experiences of rural or demographically distinct regions with different immigrant groups.

Despite its narrow scope, this study focused on noncredit student populations, including Latina immigrant parent students, for which there was limited research. Findings of this study could have significant implications for community colleges and other educational institutions seeking to enhance their ability to serve this demographic and their respective families. They also could shed light on the experiences of Students of Color and generations of students, including those of immigrant origin or first–generation college students. Moreover, results obtained from this study could apply not only to noncredit programs but also to other community college and higher education programs, both credit and noncredit, serving Latina immigrant parent students.

Use of Native Spanish Language

Initially, when designing this study, there was no doubt that the survey and interviews would be conducted in the language most comfortable for the primary participants. Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs were at various levels of English competency, with most possessing limited skills. Therefore, many students opted to complete the survey and participate in the interviews in Spanish. Conducting the study in participants' native language was essential for authentically capturing their cultural nuances and expressions. However, despite my efforts to convey the depth of their culture and translate the regional intricacies of their sayings into English, I grappled with the challenge of genuinely doing justice to their meaning. I prepared my interview excerpts in English and Spanish, acknowledging the complexity of translating Spanish sayings, cultural nuances, and traditions that may not have direct equivalents.

Recommendations

Drawing from my survey and interview findings, the sections below present recommendations for various stakeholder groups: community college policymakers, community college practitioners, nonprofit organizations and employers, and researchers.

Recommendations for California Community Policymakers

As a system, we have unknowingly created barriers for Latina immigrant parent students. Legislators and the CCCCO should prioritize assessing these barriers and work to eliminate them. They have already begun examining how better to support Latina parents in community college credit programs. Extending this focus to include adult learners in CCNCR programs, many of whom are highly motivated to pursue higher education degrees, is crucial.

Given that work is essential for Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit programs at community colleges, it is imperative to explore avenues for expanding work–study opportunities tailored to their needs and aspirations. By incorporating these students into work–study programs geared toward a transfer track, they can be better supported in achieving their academic milestones. Facing challenges related to transportation, childcare, and economic constraints, work–study benefits can serve as a valuable resource, allowing them to make the most of their time on campus while balancing work commitments with their academic pursuits. With their diverse skill sets, these students can significantly contribute to the college environment while adhering to a structured timeline that propels them toward obtaining a university degree.

Finally, the CCCCO should convene a team of noncredit practitioners and college leadership to investigate the feasibility of funding noncredit programs similarly to credit programs. To encourage the system to support adult learners better working toward degree completion, introducing the possibility of offering noncredit courses based on census dates rather than solely relying on daily attendance would provide more stable funding. Recognizing adult learners may need to pause their studies and encounter interruptions in attendance, ensuring consistent instruction with dependable funding would significantly impact students' progression toward completion.

Recommendations for Community College Practitioners

Community colleges must prioritize development of robust transfer degree pathways for students in noncredit programs. Although transfer pathways are commonly emphasized, they often overlook adult learners' unique needs in noncredit programs. To address this gap, colleges should establish partnerships between student services, academic transfer programs, and

noncredit programs. By designing tailored pathways collaboratively, these partnerships can ensure the challenges and responsibilities Latina immigrant parent students face are fully understood and incorporated into the transfer pathway that meets their needs. This comprehensive approach would recognize and accommodate these students' numerous commitments, such as childcare, family obligations, work responsibilities, and household duties.

Language Matters

Community colleges should also ensure information and student services personnel provide multilingual information. Generally, community colleges translate information into relevant languages, providing only basic or general details about their colleges. Ideally, essential college information would be accessible in the languages spoken by their local communities and offices staffed with qualified bilingual personnel to support their diverse community of learners. Colleges should prioritize supporting students in multiple languages, so they can be an immigrant language learner-ready campus.

Community college human resources offices can enhance their diversity, equity, and inclusion training by incorporating bilingual proficiency development for college practitioners. This initiative can support those lacking a second language or require a refresher in their language skills. Employees can earn certificates through second language learning courses tailored to college-specific information, facilitating effective communication in writing and speaking. Furthermore, community colleges can incentivize new or current staff proficient in a second language to act as ambassadors for linguistically diverse communities. Colleges designated as Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) can lead efforts to establish a welcoming, bilingual campus environment that supports and enhances the educational journeys of immigrant

adult learners. By doing so, we purposefully cater to immigrant language learners within our communities who seek access to higher education and strive for academic success.

Moreover, researchers should leverage their cultural and linguistic capital to shape their frameworks, study designs, and protocols. Engaging with diverse students and community members can significantly benefit from intuitive strategies and contextual understanding that researchers can contribute to the process. As a first–generation Latina researcher with immigrant parents, my approach to the study was influenced by cultural insights. The study research design, framework, survey, and interview protocols were shaped and enhanced through the lens of my linguistic and cultural background. In recruiting potential survey respondents and interview participants, I went beyond traditional methods by visiting every classroom to extend invitations. Although I used English and Spanish in email communications, the personal visits approach resulted in a 30% survey response rate. This method resonated particularly well with Latina immigrant parent students, establishing trust and making the study accessible to them in a genuine way.

Also, I recognized the inherent challenges in translating language and understanding cultural nuances while interpreting the study findings. Therefore, I incorporated these considerations, ensuring the presentation findings accurately represented the language and cultural context. Researchers should recognize and employ their linguistic and cultural capital to enrich their work, thereby ensuring the voices of immigrant Students of Color are authentically represented in research endeavors.

Serving the Adult Learners in Noncredit Programs

Reinventing the existing academic framework within community colleges is another opportunity to enhance the educational journey for adult learners. Centralizing access to services

and program information within the classroom, with faculty serving as facilitators, presents a proven solution for Latina immigrant parent students. These women often struggle with time constraints that preclude visits to counselors or the use of student services, including awareness of initiatives like adult dual enrollment. A one-stop, one-place model seamlessly integrating the adult student experience, without requiring additional appointments or campus visits, would benefit adult learners. Similar to the streamlined integration of services and academic offerings in career pathways, providing program and service information within noncredit classrooms caters directly to Latina immigrant parent students and adult learners' unique needs. Community colleges must leverage this opportunity to alleviate the hurdles adult students face, thereby fostering a sense of inclusion within these communities.

Elevating Noncredit Programs

Although it is crucial to recognize and support the unique roles of noncredit and credit programs, the existing systemic and resource disparities create a two-tiered system that disproportionately affects noncredit students. Often, these students bear the brunt of these disparities. Moreover, community colleges inadvertently send negative messages to noncredit students, making them feel marginalized and unsupported compared to "traditional" credit program students. This sentiment is reinforced by college leadership and staff who may lack understanding of noncredit programs. It is essential for community colleges to actively integrate noncredit program practitioners and students into their processes, initiatives, and goals. Collaboration with noncredit program leadership and faculty is key to designing practices that serve adult noncredit students effectively. All student services and academic programs should be reviewed to ensure inclusivity for noncredit students, offering clear pathways from noncredit to credit programs and vice versa.

Recommendations for Nonprofit Organizations and Employers

Nonprofits, immigrant rights groups, labor unions, and employers can empower students enrolled in CCNCR programs by offering support to help them complete their programs and earn their degrees. Providing time, flexibility, and incentives in the workplace can significantly aid these students. Labor groups and nonprofits can play a crucial role by offering resources and funding for paid internships, particularly for students facing challenges related to their immigrant status, which may hinder their ability to secure traditional employment. Collaboration between community colleges and these organizations is essential to develop tailored workforce programs that cater to adult immigrant parent students' unique needs. Whether they are obtaining legal status, have varying immigration statuses, or are struggling to find work opportunities aligned with their career aspirations, these partnerships can facilitate their integration into the workforce and support their educational and professional goals.

Recommendations for Researchers

This study focused on Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in noncredit ESL programs. However, surveyed and interviewed students noted they were enrolled in additional programs. Research on Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in high school equivalency, short-term vocational, and credit programs could be studied to explore their educational journeys, strategies for navigating college, and perceived benefits for them and their families. Furthermore, exploring the college experiences of other student groups enrolled in noncredit programs would be beneficial. Research specific to other immigrant parent groups or male parents enrolled in noncredit programs at community colleges would expand the scope of this study. Data regarding their reasons for enrolling, how they navigate, and benefits for their children would provide lessons for the field and higher education.

Although this study was limited and focused on the beginning of the student community college journey with enrollment in noncredit programs, research focused on Latina immigrant parent students who began their community college experience, successfully persisted, and completed their university degree would be worthy of study. Students would have the opportunity to reflect on how they navigated the initial start of their journey as a noncredit student at the community college and what additional influence their college trajectory had on their children. Exploring and capturing the challenges and strengths these students experienced in completing their college degree would provide a greater understanding of how practitioners can better support adult learners.

Finally, exploring the perspective of children with Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in CCNCR programs would offer valuable insights into the impact on their lives. Understanding how they perceive their mothers' college journeys and the educational knowledge they inherit from their mothers' pursuit of higher education could be further researched to understand the experiences of family college-going.

Reflection and Conclusion

I have worked to build noncredit programs for most of my professional career, where my focus has consistently revolved around purposeful engagement with the community. Integrating community perspectives into my decision-making processes, program development, and service delivery is central to my expertise. Conducting this study reminded me of the power and influence held by members of the communities we serve and their stories, experiences, challenges, aspirations, resilience, and unwavering optimism for their futures. Latina immigrant parent students taught me valuable lessons on what education means to them, their genuine belief in its opportunity, and their commitment to the intrinsic values inherent in higher education.

Early in the process, I entered students' classrooms to disperse information about the study and recruit participants for interviews. I visited every ESL class at ECC to invite students to participate in the survey. Some students expressed shock that I was there, providing them with an opportunity to share their experiences with me and convey their importance to me for this study. They were intrigued, and I fielded many questions about the study and listened to comments about their experiences. Most significantly, one gentleman in the room asked that we (researchers) remember the men. He stated, "We also have stories to tell and experiences to share." I was reminded of the immense value of qualitative research and the meanings that surface in bringing our students' voices to our colleges. The women I interviewed and the students I surveyed were very grateful to have someone enter their space and seek their feedback, ask them about their experiences, and listen to their life stories and struggles. They welcomed the interaction and were humbled by the offer to give their accounts of their college journey.

Some of my most cherished memories revolve around my parents' years attending ESL classes. Their commitment to learning had a profound impact on me and my siblings. Like some interviewed participants who studied alongside their children, my role extended to assisting my mother with her homework. It was evident that my mother felt isolated from being in a predominantly English-speaking community. Despite these challenges, my mother was determined to engage with the community, particularly in our schooling and educational experiences. In her way, she succeeded. Reflecting on these experiences, I realize how deeply they have influenced my work within the community college system. The bond forged through witnessing my mother's role modeling by attending class and assisting her with English homework has instilled in me a profound understanding of the importance of equitable and inclusive education.

As a practitioner responsible for noncredit programs at the community college, I held many parent workshops, conferences, college orientations, and college tours. I would start with *están en su casa*, a warm welcome that lets them know they are welcomed as if they were home. However, they were not in their home. They were in my home. Figuratively speaking, they were in the college that was like my second home, having graduated from the university and worked at the community college for many years. I know and am very familiar with higher education institutions. I could not expect that our noncredit students would know and have the same understanding of these institutions as I have. Practitioners, leadership, and policymakers understand the educational environment well. I have shifted my approach to community and student engagement. I now look to build college experiences alongside these families to ensure they are genuinely welcomed in the ways they need at the institution. What would that look like? What can I do to support their strategies? What motivates them? How can we better assist them and their families? In partnership with the strength of Latina immigrant parent students in our noncredit programs, I have no doubt we will succeed.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

You may change the language of this survey to Spanish by selecting the language on the top right.

Si lo prefiere, puede cambiar el idioma de esta encuesta a español seleccionando el idioma en la esquina superior derecha.

Please note: You may choose "decline to respond" to any survey questions. Anonymity is only possible if you choose to participate in an interview. If you indicate you are interested in a potential interview at the end of this survey, you will be asked to provide your contact information.

Q1 What is your gender?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."

- Female
- Male
- Other (Write In) _____
- Decline to respond

Q2 What is your age?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."

- 18-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36-40 years
- 41-45 years
- 46-50 years
- 51-55 years
- 56-60 years
- 61-65 years
- 66-70 years
- 71 or more years
- Decline to respond

Q3 How would you describe your ethnic background? (Please mark all that apply)
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."

- Asian
- Black or African America
- Latino/a
- Native American or Indigenous
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (Write in) _____
- Decline to respond

Q4 In what country were you born?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "decline to respond."

- Afghanistan

- Argentina
- China
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Korea
- Lebanon
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- Philippines
- Syria
- United States
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Other (Write-In) _____
- Decline to Respond

Q5 How long have you been living in the United States?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31 or more years
- Decline to respond

Q6 What is your main language of communication?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- Arabic
- Chinese/Mandarin/Cantonese
- English
- Korean
- Mon-Khmer, Cambodian
- Pashto
- Spanish
- Tagalog/Filipino
- Vietnamese
- Other (Write-In) _____
- Decline to respond

Q7_1 Apart from your enrollment in the ESL program at [Eastland College], what is your highest level of education?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- Elementary school, up to junior high
- Some high school, no diploma

- High school graduate or equivalency (GED)
- Some college, no degree (some credit or noncredit courses)
- Trade/Technical/ vocational training
- Associate's Degree - two years of college with degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate/Professional (example: master's degree, doctorate, etc.)
- Decline to respond

Q7_2 Where did you complete your highest level of education?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- In the United States
- Outside the United States. Please write-in the country below.
  _____
- Decline to respond

Q8 How many children do you have?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- None (0)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 or more
- Decline to respond

Q9 Please provide the ages of your children.
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31 or above	Decline to respond
Age of Child #1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Age of Child #10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Q10 Please select the statement that best describes your expectations for your child or children concerning college or your child's actual college experience.

If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."

	This child has earned a college degree.	Some college courses. I expect child to earn college degree in future.	Some college courses. I do NOT expect child to earn college degree in future.	No college courses yet. I expect child to attend college in future.	No college courses yet. I do NOT expect child to attend college in future.	Decline to respond
Child #1	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #2	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #3	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #4	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #5	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #6	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #7	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #8	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #9	●	●	●	●	●	●
Child #10	●	●	●	●	●	●

Q11 What are some of the reasons why you don't expect your child or children to attend college? Check all that apply.
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- Financial reasons
- Citizenship status/undocumented
- Unfamiliar with the process of applying to college
- Other (Write-In) _____
- Decline to respond

Q12 Do you have a family member who is in college or is a college graduate?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- Yes
- No
- Decline to respond

Q13 When did you first enroll at [Eastland College]?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- Less than a year ago
- 1-2 years ago
- 3-4 years ago
- 5 or more years ago
- Decline to respond

Q14 What ESL course are you currently taking?
If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."
- ESL Conversation (AED 42.05)
- ESL Low Beginning (AED 42.14)
- ESL High Beginning (AED 42.15)
- ESL Low Intermediate (AED 42.16)
- ESL High Intermediate (AED 42.17)
- ESL Low Advanced (AED 42.18)
- Vocational ESL (AED 49.02)
- Decline to respond

Q15 If any, in what other programs have you taken courses at [Eastland College]?
Check all that apply. If you prefer not to provide this information, please select "Decline to respond."

- Career or College Skills (i.e. canvas support, job skills training, college study skills)
- Career Technical Education (CTE) (i.e. Entrepreneurship, Energy & Solar, Apprenticeship, Electrical, OSHA Training)
- Citizenship
- College Credit Program
- College Math/English Preparation/Support
- High School Equivalency (HSE or GED)
- None - only ESL
- Older Adult Program
- Plaza Comunitaria (Spanish Literacy)
- Decline to respond

Q16 Indicate your level of agreement for this sentence, "By enrolling in a noncredit ESL course at [Eastland College], I hope to . . . "
Please skip any rows you do not wish to answer.

	Completely disagree	Mostly disagree	Mostly agree	Completely agree
. . . obtain job skills	●	●	●	●
. . . gain general self-improvement	●	●	●	●
. . . improve my English	●	●	●	●
. . . be able to assist my children with college preparation	●	●	●	●
. . . obtain a noncredit certificate	●	●	●	●
. . . transition to a credit college program to obtain a certificate	●	●	●	●
. . .transition to a credit college program to obtain an associate degree	●	●	●	●
. . . transition to a credit college program to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher	●	●	●	●

Q17 Are there other things you would like to accomplish by enrolling in your noncredit ESL class? (If so, please describe)

_____

Q18 The following set of questions may provoke negative feelings, and we realize you may not have the time or opportunity to engage in the following activities given the time parameters provided (i.e., work, family responsibilities, school events during working hours, don't have information about college, faculty hours conflict, counseling closes at 5:00 p.m., etc.). Please be candid with your responses and provide additional information in the space below so we can learn how to improve opportunities and support.

Q18 Within the past year at [Eastland College], how often have you . . .

Please skip any rows you do not wish to answer.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
. . . attended events or meetings hosted by the college	●	●	●	●
. . . talked to a counselor about courses to take and/or educational plans	●	●	●	●

. . . met with faculty outside of class	●	●	●	●
. . . visited faculty for advice and clarification on homework assignments	●	●	●	●
. . . discussed career or college plans with faculty	●	●	●	●
. . . talked to other college students about their experiences taking classes	●	●	●	●
. . . talked to other college students about their plans to continue their education	●	●	●	●

Q19 With your family, how often do you . . .
Please skip any rows you do not wish to answer.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
. . . help your children with their homework	●	●	●	●
. . . study with your children	●	●	●	●
. . . read books with your children	●	●	●	●
. . . share with your family what you are learning in class	●	●	●	●
. . . share with your family any positive experiences taking classes	●	●	●	●
. . . share with your family any negative experiences taking classes	●	●	●	●
. . . participate in your children's school-related activities	●	●	●	●
. . . talk to your children about attending college	●	●	●	●
. . . talk to your children about college preparation classes	●	●	●	●
. . . talk to your children about selecting a college	●	●	●	●
. . . bring your children to college events	●	●	●	●

Q20 Please provide any additional comments about your student experience and/or what [Eastland Community College] can do to better support you.

_____

_____

Q21 Are you willing to be contacted by the researcher for a potential interview?
If you respond Yes, you will be asked to enter your contact information and your survey responses will no longer be anonymous. Even though your responses will not be anonymous if you agree to be potentially interviewed, your personal information will be coded and study data will be physically and electronically secured to ensure your privacy.

- Yes
- No

Q22 Thank you for your interest!
Please provide the following information:

- Name: _____
- City: _____
- Zip Code: _____
- Preferred Email: _____
- Telephone Number: _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. The one-on-one in-person interview will begin with the researcher confirming the participant and introducing herself.
2. The researcher will inquire if there are any questions for the researcher regarding the study.
3. The researcher will verify the informed consent for the study and consent for audio recording.
4. The researcher will ask participants to select a pseudonym for the purposes of the interview.
5. The researcher will inform the participants that they may choose to skip any questions and opt out of the study at any time.
6. The researcher will inform the participant when the recording of the interview begins.
7. The researcher will commence interview questions and begin taking notes.
8. The research will begin with questions about the interviewee's college and experiences regarding students' navigating the college processes, engagement with faculty, staff, students, and others, and impact on their families.
9. The researcher will ask follow-up or clarifying questions when necessary throughout the interview to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives.
10. At the conclusion of the interview, the participant will be thanked and asked if anything else needs to be included.
11. The researcher will end the in-person interview and stop the recording.
12. The participant will be offered a $25 gift card for their time.
13. The transcription will be dated and saved for data analysis.

Name of Interviewee:
Date:
Time:
Preferred Pseudonym: _____

1. What do Latina immigrant parent students describe as the reasons for enrolling in a noncredit ESL program at the community college?
2. What strategies have Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL program applied when navigating their community college experience?
3. How do Latina immigrant parent students enrolled in a noncredit ESL program perceive the benefits they and their families derive following their enrollment?

Interview Guide (16 Questions)

I am interested in hearing your stories about your educational experience, knowledge, skills, and values, and the resources you used to help you at [Eastland College].

- **Tell me about your educational experience in your country of origin before coming to the U.S. (RQ1 and RQ3)**

- Did you have the opportunity to study in your country?
- What does getting an education mean to you? To your family?

Now, I'd like to discuss what brought you to the community college and your experiences at [Eastland College].

Aspirational Capital

- **Why did you choose [Eastland Community College]? (RQ1)**
  - Did you consider other colleges?
  - Other adult education programs?
  - What is your purpose (reason, motivation, long-term) for getting your education at [Eastland College]?

Navigational Capital

- **How did you become aware of the community college and the type of noncredit programs it offers? (RQ2)**
  - How did you learn the steps for applying to the college and registering for your noncredit ESL course?

Familial Capital

I would like to explore the role your family values played in your experience as a student.

- **Please tell me about your family values and how they have influenced your educational journey. (RQ3)**
  - Are there any family values that you believe helped you succeed as a college student?
    - Can you give me an example of these values?
    - In the survey responses, (46/64) 72%% of respondents expect their child or children to get a college degree. Can you speak to the value of obtaining a college degree?
- **How has your decision to enroll in the college ESL program affected your everyday life? (RQ2)**
  - The lives of your children?
  - What benefits have your family/children received as a result of your going to college? (RQ3)
    - In the survey responses, (28/56) 59% of respondents indicated NEVER OR RARELY bring their children to college events. Is this true in your experience, and why do you think children are not brought to the college?
- **In what ways do you think being a Community College has affected your thinking about your child's/children's education? (RQ3)**
  - In what ways has it affected your ability to support and guide your children who are preparing to go to college?
  - What advice would you give your children about college?
    - How would you describe your college experience in your ESL program to your children?

        - In the survey responses, (35/58) 60% of respondents indicate they OFTEN share positive class experiences with family, and conversely NEVER or rarely (28/58) 48% share negative experiences with their family. What are your thoughts about this? Is this true for your sharing of class experiences?

Let's talk more about your experiences at the college, with other students, and in the classroom.
Navigational Capital

- **Tell me about your personal interactions with other students enrolled in the school. Who do you most spend time with, and why? (RQ2)**
    - In the survey responses, more than half of respondents indicated they NEVER talked to other students or have attended college events. Has this been your experience? Why do you think a large number of students have not had opportunities to engage with other students or attend events at the college?

Aspirational Capital

- **Tell me about your first experience in your ESL class. (RQ1 and RQ2)**
    - What did you expect?
    - What happened that you did not expect?
    - Describe how you felt the first time you walked into your college class.

- **Can you recall any experiences that have had a positive effect on your experience as a [Eastland College] student? (RQ1 and RQ3)**

Navigational Capital

- **Think of a time you encountered a barrier or struggled at [Eastland College] (e.g., childcare, transportation issues, balancing work/life responsibilities). How did you overcome this barrier? (RQ2)**
    - What are some things you did to work through this challenge?
- **Did you use any college resources to help you achieve success (e.g., counseling, faculty office hours, financial aid, basic needs services, tutoring)? (RQ2)**
    - If so, what were they? Please tell me a time in which you used these resources.
    - How did you use them, and how did they help you?
    - How did you come to know about the support systems at the college?
    - What specific assistance (services or people) did you seek at the college and why?
        - In the survey responses, more than half of respondents indicated they NEVER talked to faculty or counselors about college. Has this been your experience? Why do you think a large number of students have not had opportunities to engage with faculty or counselors at the college?

Critical Reflection

- **Tell me how your identity and background impact your experience as a Community College student. You are an immigrant, Latina, and a mother. You are enrolled in a noncredit ESL program. In what ways do you relate to other [Eastland College] students?**
    - What are things you find that you share in common with other students?
    - In what ways do you think your experience is similar to other students?

    - In what ways do you have trouble relating to other students?
    - How is your experience different?
- **How would you describe your experience in a [Eastland College] noncredit ESL program to someone interested in the program? (RQ2)**
    - What advice would you give ESL students to help them succeed academically in college?
- **What things did you wish you had known about the college at the time you started your [Eastland College] noncredit ESL program? (RQ2)**
- **From your experience as a community college student in NCR ESL, what do you think the college can do to better assist students like you? (RQ2)**
- **Is there anything else you want to share about your educational experience with me? (RQ1 and RQ2**)
    - What do you believe has made you successful?
    - What has helped you reach your goals?
    - How do you feel being at [Eastland College]?

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