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# Empowering the Invisible Child: A Narrative Case Study of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program

Jessica Torrez

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**APPROVAL (SIGNATURE) PAGE**

**EMPOWERING THE INVISIBLE CHILD:  
A NARRATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN  
MIGRANT PROGRAM**

**BY**

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B.S., Elementary Education, Western Michigan University, 2000  
M.A., Elementary Education, University of New Mexico, 2003

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December, 2008

**2008, Jessica Starr Torrez**

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather, José Torrez, who was, in my eyes, one of the greatest individuals that has ever walked the earth. Every day that I struggled and wanted to walk away, I thought about you grandpa, your bright green eyes, the sweet aroma of tobacco, and your tender smile. Your intense feelings of love and struggle gave me strength and encouragement, even when I felt that I could no longer navigate an educational system I still do not understand. I also dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful and exceedingly strong mother, Alberta Camacho Torrez. A relentless believer in and supporter of your children, your encouragement has continued to push me, if at times ignored. Finally, I dedicate this work to my father, Jesús Torrez, whose strong will, dignity, and big heart have shaped me into the woman I am today.

Moreover, I am eternally indebted to my committee, who happen to be four of the most brilliant women I have been fortunate enough to know. Because of their unwavering guidance, support, and encouragement, I was able to navigate the complexities of a doctoral program and complete my dissertation, which at times seemed overwhelming. I cannot say thank you enough to Dr. Ruth Trinidad-Galván, Dr. Rebecca Blum-Martínez, Dr. Nancy López and Dr. Ann Cranston-Gingras. Your work and guidance will eternally inspire me, as well as future activist intellectuals, particularly Latinas and first-generation college students.

To my remarkable daughters, Reina and Mexica: I want to thank you for always making me smile and reminding me of the important things in life. And finally, to the love of my life, Dylan, you are more than my best friend. Your love and emotional support helped me stay focused, while your constant (albeit frustrating) encouragement kept me writing during those cold, dark winter nights in Michigan. We've come a long way since Caro High School's cross country team! *Gracias a todas/os!*

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**ABSTRACT**

This Narrative Case Study examines the curriculum of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program (NMMP), specifically focusing on the program's guidelines, attitudes, and implications of language instruction. Furthermore, this research focuses on the implications of the NMMP's services and curriculum for the migrant community. Through interviews with students, administration (on both the local and federal levels), as well as migrant agricultural laborers, the findings reveal the need for simultaneous heritage language (HL) and English language instruction. Parents, students, and staff emphasized the significance of HL in community maintenance and an individual's relationship to the community, while underscoring the importance of English language development for the student's academic achievement. As such, the migrant community stressed the need to concurrently maintain and develop both languages. However they also suggested the NMMP enlist qualified Latina/o teachers who have a deep connection to the farmworker community and maintain a commitment to student academic success.

All participants agreed that poor communication and an undeveloped purpose prohibited the NMMP from truly becoming a successful learning environment.



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*“We need to be made aware of what they need to be made aware of”*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*Yo se como pasó [cuando perdimos nuestro lenguaje]. La maestra de Tomato le dijo a María que el no podría entrar a la escuela sin hablar ingles. Yo quería que mis nietos tuvieran una vida mejor que los labores y pues empezamos hablar ingles. Nadie nos ayudaron [a hablar ingles], aprendimos solitos.*

*I know how it happened [when we lost our language] Tomatoe's teacher told Maria that he couldn't go to school until he spoke English. I wanted my grandchildren to have a better life than the fields and well, we started speaking in English. Nobody helped us, we learned on our own.*

*Delfina Torrez, age 75, 2004*

As my paternal grandmother's makes all too clear, the harsh reality was that to gain access into the rural Midwestern schools, and subsequent class mobility, Spanish-speaking Chicana/os had to learn English. As such, during the 1960s, my grandparents made the decision to end their migratory work, consequently ending their annual migration from South Texas to mid-Michigan. Both my paternal and maternal grandmothers decided that their respective sixteen and eleven children would have access to opportunities outside the fields by settling out of the migrant stream. These wise, although formally "uneducated," women knew that having a "formal education" could keep their children (and future grandchildren) from toiling in the fields from sunup to sundown.

My paternal grandmother, Delfina, remembers the exact date that English became a necessity for survival in her new family's community. She recalls the harsh experience with simultaneous bitterness and powerlessness. According to my grandmother, her first grandchild (whose birth name was Tomas, but affectionately known as Tomato) entered

school a monolingual Spanish speaker. The teachers at the rural Midwestern school did not know how to communicate with him and he was promptly sent home with strict instructions not to return until he could speak English. Since we were the only family who spoke a language other than English in the community, my family had to learn the dominant language without support from the school faculty or Anglo-American community. The onset of our family's educational experience mandated English proficiency, the language of the hegemonic community, teachers, and pedagogical materials without any assistance or support. However, as each subsequent generation developed their English language skills, they also struggled to maintain the remnants of a heritage language on path to being lost.

Thirty years after Tomato walked into the rural Michigan kindergarten classroom, I entered the ivory towers of academia as a graduate student. It was within these walls, that I began to reflect upon my families' experiences of struggle and their efforts to become "members" of a rural Anglo-American community. What surfaced, during that time of contemplation, was the correlation to the community's acceptance of my family and our English language proficiency. During this period, I realized how my English comprehension and fluency gave me the ability (or potential) to maneuver through the Anglo-controlled or dominated educational system; whereas my (limited) Spanish capabilities gave me the language to actively engage within community dialogue. I began to understand that although English was the language of power, my heritage language offered opportunities that English could not. Spanish served as the key into my community's discourse.

However, the necessity for English continually trumped the need for Spanish. In the eyes of the educational system, as exemplified in our current anti-immigrant and xenophobic society, English is the only language of importance. This realization became salient the summer I worked as a lead teacher for a migrant summer program in northern Michigan in 2003. The migrant farmworker students, whom I encountered, were extremely capable in their heritage language (Spanish), yet could not prove their academic aptitude in English (a language not spoken at home). My colleagues at the program (monolingual English speakers) were convinced that our students were severely behind in their academics, without even entertaining the thought that the issue was English proficiency not the students' academic aptitude.

As I worked with preschool children in this rural migrant summer program, I was taken aback by how little attention was applied specifically toward language instruction in either academic English or Spanish. Even more confusing was the absence of language instruction in the curriculum, even though it was clearly evident that receiving English language instruction would benefit the monolingual Spanish speaking students' progress in their academics. So while course material was presented in English, *the students were not taught the language*. Nor did the materials reflect the skills and background knowledge held by the students.

Unfortunately, the state funded and distributed materials I received were in English, however the curriculum did not reflect English language instruction which put the students at a serious disadvantage. Through my experiences working as an instructor, I began to recognize how migrant education was not sufficiently providing for its

students the ability to gain an active understanding of either English or the student's heritage language.

At this point I feel it prudent to emphasize my disdain for the English Only movement, and its biased agenda. Moreover, this research project is not, by any means, advocating for any student to replace their heritage language with English. Instead, as you will see, what I advocate for is that all students receive instruction that will enable academic success. Decades of research has proven that students, who are able to maintain and develop their heritage language (HL) while acquiring a second, succeed academically (Au, 1993; Cummins, 1995; Valdes, 1997; Carreira, 2007). Having said this, research has also found that the loss of an HL creates immense academic and identity related issues.

The year following my work in the summer migrant education program (SMEP), I began my doctoral coursework, which leaned heavily on heritage language issues. However, even though my family settled out of the migrant stream, we still were seasonal farmworkers, laboring each summer in the fields and orchards. My experiences of working as a seasonal farmworker are forever engrained in my memory. These were stories of the brutality endured by my parent's generation for speaking their heritage language. This was combined with the Eurocentric comments made by the SMEP teachers that swirled around inside me. I knew that my dissertation research project needed to focus on heritage language and migrant education, but until that particular summer it was unclear how the two would meet. After reading a great deal of literature on migrant education, it became abundantly apparent that much still needs to be done in the area of language instruction and migrant education. It is at the intersection of these

two fields, HL and migrant education, that I had found my niche. This dissertation is the result of how I see these areas mapping onto and dialoging with one another. Therefore, my work is a significant contribution in the fields of migrant and heritage language education, as it is the first to address the disparaging gap between the two.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The U.S. has a long history of building and sustaining its agricultural economy off the backs of migrant laborers, beginning long before the historic, although problematic, Bracero Program of the 1940s. In contemporary times, families make the arduous trek across state lines, to find in some cases crossing state lines has become just as complicated as that of the U.S.-Mexico border. Especially when considering the laws that individual states are passing to deny immigrants public services (for example, the current court case in North Carolina attempting to deny college entrance to “undocumented” students).

Parents make this decision to procure opportunities for their future generations, leaving behind the social networks in their native lands. As with my grandparents, migrant laborer parents (or any other guardians, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, *comadres*, cousins, sisters, brothers, etc.) understand the importance of formal education and expect that it provides their children opportunities to leave the fields. Because of their place within Mexican and U.S. society, many of these children enter school with limited or no English language proficiency. The recent National Agricultural Workers Survey (2005) cited that 77% of all farmworkers are born in Mexico. Moreover, four out of five agricultural workers have Spanish as their native language.



While school districts that have permanent populations of Spanish-speaking students are commonly able to provide English language instruction, not all migrant students find themselves in such “fortunate” schools. Depending upon the linguistic population and how their immigration benefited US society, the educational system has selectively accommodated the linguistic needs of certain immigrant groups<sup>1</sup>.

Unfortunately, the children of seasonal and migrant children (mostly of Mexican heritage), who have entered the US educational system for decades, cannot depend on receiving education that addresses their unique needs. According to the Michigan’s Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study in 2005-2006 the state’s agricultural and nursery/greenhouse economy was supported by approximately 40,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers. In addition to the adult workers, they brought with them approximately 26,000 school age children. The U.S. Department of Education reported that 58.3% MEP eligible students in Michigan were advanced or proficient in reading and language arts. The scores for third grade children begin slightly with over half of students labeled as proficient or advanced however once students reach high school the percentage drops off dramatically with only 39.8% students labeled as proficient or advanced in reading and language arts (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/mep/resources>). Moreover, it is note worthy to state that these statistics are based off scores of tests administered in English. Unsurprisingly, the

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<sup>1</sup> An example being during the late 1800s in Michigan, in addition to other Midwestern states, public German-English bilingual schools were created. These programs were meant to assist German immigrants assimilate into American culture and reverse the decrease of student loss to parochial schools (Wiley, 1998). Another example was Coral Way Elementary a Spanish-English bilingual schools in Dade County, Florida. The school was established for the children of Cuban exiles during the 1960s, whose funding came from the Ford Foundation and federal entities (Lyons, 1995).

National Council of La Raza reports that on a national level 65% of migrant students drop out of high school (www.nclr.org).

Countless obstacles are continually set in place to disavow these children from achieving the promise that the US educational system offers other racial and ethnic groups. One such barrier, a fairly significant one, is language. In fact, those students that follow the crops to rural Midwestern school districts have a difficult time encountering appropriate language instruction. They are habitually unable to find programs that unify the curriculum with the migratory farmworker experience. As Cinthia Salinas and Reynaldo Reyes, scholars of migrant and Latina/o education, emphasize

In general, many common school policies and practices diminish the cultural capital migrant children and their families bring to school...First, linguistically and culturally diverse students face institutional barriers. Second, like parents of other linguistically and culturally diverse students, migrant parents are much more likely to be left out of the equation...Educators should foster culturally relevant learning environments in which migrant students can comfortably incorporate their knowledge and skills (2004, pp.126-32).

As Salinas and Reyes demonstrate, MEPs must be cognizant of the life experiences and skills that migratory children and their families bring to the class, by concentrating on how to develop these skills to reinforce academic success. One skill MEPs should capitalize on is the student's home language and ability to acquire English.

In his text *Demystifying Language Mixing: Spanglish in the school*, Peter Sayer maintains

Of course, ensuring that all kids gain the linguistic and literacy skills in the standard variety is one of the main responsibilities of schools. At the same time, students from linguistically and culturally diverse (i.e., non-English-speaking/mainstream White American) background are often disadvantaged by being submersed in a language and curriculum that does not connect to their cultural knowledge or lived experience (Sayer, 2008, p. 96).

Through connecting the student's cultural knowledge or lived experience with the classroom creates a unique opportunity. This opportunity would enable MEPs to simultaneously incorporate the student's HL and English language instruction thereby ensuring migrant student's engagement in community and classroom discourse.

Furthermore, MEPs would bridge the gap between the migrant community and schools.

As Latina/o education scholar, Angela Valenzuela (1999), posits in her seminal text

*Subtractive Schooling: US-Mexican youth and the politics of caring,*

[i]mmigrant students who possess essential skills in reading, writing, comprehension, and mathematics in their own language (or those who acquire these skills through a bilingual education program) outperform their U.S-born counterparts...Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) point out that a bilingual/bicultural network of friends and family helps youth to successfully cross sociocultural and linguistic borders. This in turn may allow them entrée to multiple, potentially supportive community and institutional settings (p.11).

Although not all migrant farmworker children are immigrants, by and large they are part of immigrant communities. As Valenzuela emphasizes bilingual/bicultural programs are integral in the academic success for these children.

In a 1990 publication reflecting upon three decades of migrant education in the U.S., the author and former Executive Director of the Interstate Migrant Education Council, John Perry noted that “[l]anguage is both an academic barrier for students and a social barrier for parents in dealing with schools” (p. 4). Nearly twenty years ago, Perry highlighted the fact that language was an obstacle for migrant children, a problem that still remains present. As I will argue throughout my dissertation, migrant students, even those that have some command of English, are not equipped to succeed in an academic setting unless they are provided with proper language instruction. However, if these same students are thrust into environments that force English acquisition at the cost of their

HL, they then become alienated from their communities. Without the tools to engage in meaningful dialogue in and out of the classroom, migrant students are continuously marginalized in classroom and home discourses.

In the same vein of Perry's research is that of Andres Vargas, Janice Grskovic, Phillip Belfiore, and Janet Halbert-Ayala (1997). Vargas et. al. investigated spelling error correction on spelling accuracy of migrant students in a summer migrant education program. Although a seemingly small project, its implications are huge. The case study concluded that migrant students were able to improve their spelling in both Spanish and English with *proper instruction, in both languages*. Dovetailing these previous studies, my investigation explores the attitudes, opinions, and implications of English and heritage language instruction. Additionally, my research project investigates the NMMP faculty's design of the curriculum, and how the migratory families understand the curriculum. Lastly, through a culmination of my data sources, I describe how the various stakeholders believe the program is (or is not) benefiting its target population.

### **Purpose of the study**

I began this chapter with an explanation of my positionality and how I came to this project. For me, it was imperative that the reader understand how personal this project was for me (on multiple levels). Migrant education has always been immensely significant in my life, beginning with my days of attending SMEPs, where I saw firsthand the power education and English proficiency wielded. The significance of education and proficiency of dominant society was reaffirmed when I entered those very summer

program doors, not as a student, but as a teacher. However, it was at this point that I questioned the role that MEPs played in educating migrant children.

Migrant farmworker children continue to be marginalized not only in classrooms, but in society as a whole. This is especially true in recent times with anti-immigrant sentiments pervading all corners of North America. In the U.S., state legislators continually write and lobby for laws that create barriers for “non-American born” children to receive education. One needs only to look at the recent, “border protecting” House Bill 4437<sup>2</sup> or the current Arizona state bill 1108<sup>3</sup>, which labels Latina/o Studies anti-American.

In addition to the multi-layers of oppression (e.g. race, class, immigrant status, ethnicity, etc.), it is the lack of sustained English or HL language instruction for this population of children that I find problematic. I also question the neglect in integrating the lived experiences of the families for which the program was meant to serve thereby overlooking the utilization of the student’s cultural capital. In my opinion, the language needs of migrant children are continually relegated to the periphery of K-12 education, while also lacking researchers’ discourse on the subject. As such, through this project I investigated the curriculum of migrant education, specifically its guidelines, attitudes and implications of language instruction. Furthermore, my research examined the implications of the NMMP’s services and curriculum.

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<sup>2</sup>The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (H.R. 4437) automatically considers anyone a felon who is “unlawfully present” in the U.S., and therefore mandates that individual to be incarcerated and barred from future legal status and re-entry into the U.S. Additionally, state and local law enforcement are authorized to enforce federal immigration laws (<http://thomas.loc.gov>).

<sup>3</sup> Arizona Senate Bill 1108 declares that a primary purpose of public education is to inculcate American values, thereby criminalizing all studies that promote ethnic, cultural or linguistic diversity. It also prohibits students on state universities and community colleges from organizing groups based on race ([www.azleg.state.az.us](http://www.azleg.state.az.us)).

The result of a Freirian dialogue with migratory parents and students presented new perspectives on how federally- funded programs can better assist the migrant population. The Freirian dialogue emerged from the manner that Paulo Freire describes all dialogue being based “upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence” (1970, p.91). In other words, in this research a dialogue transpired where all individuals (participants and investigator) discussed their world views, in a fashion where each attempted to teach and learn from the other. I took special care to neither co-opt nor manipulate the participants’ voices for the benefit of the investigation. Rather, the narratives shared became both the backdrop and support for the research.

Through the use of a Narrative case study research methodology, which takes at its object of investigation the story itself, the focus of my research examined a particular educational setting designed exclusively for migrant children. Moreover the purpose of my investigation was three-fold: 1.) to pinpoint how the program addresses language needs of the children it serves, 2.) to analyze the fundamental reasons for the curriculum’s design and, 3.) to investigate the implications of both the language practices and curriculum on the student’s academic achievements.

The narratives provided by NMMP staff and families, which supported my project’s findings, diverge and converge on multiple topics. In terms of English language instruction, both sets of participants agreed that the SMEP should primarily use English, however the reasoning offered from each group diverged. Another point of subject convergence was the discussion of communication. Staff and families expressed the need

for more communication, as well as building a bridge to connect the family and classroom cultures.

Teachers and families were both confused by the purpose of the curriculum, as well as concerned with its implications for the student's overall academic success. Families stressed the need for curriculum alignment between sending and receiving schools, whereas NMMP staff was unsure how to structure classroom curriculum and consequently sought to entertain students over provide academic instruction. Families stressed the need for migrant community representation within the staff, whereas NMMP faculty did not mention staffing choices as an issue to resolve. A final point made by families and staff was the need for developing the staff's knowledge of the migrant community, either by interacting more with families or by employing migrant community members.

Succinctly stated, the findings from my investigation pointed to crucial areas in need of development for the NMMP, particularly in regard to its language practices, staffing choices, and communication with families. Therefore I argue for the simultaneous promotion of heritage language education and English language development. The need for heritage language is based on its status and necessity in the migrant community, whereas English holds power (socially and legally) in dominant society. Furthermore, I argue for the need for NMMP faculty to engage in culturally relevant pedagogy. Based on the staff's world views, it was salient that the children were left to consistently accommodate their teacher's limitations; thereby leaving the children to sacrifice incorporating own lived experiences with the classroom culture. Culturally relevant pedagogy would enable the dismantling of this inequitable situation.

Using the narratives supplied by teachers and parents, as well as classroom observations this investigation will create a springboard from which migrant educators

may discuss the wants and/or needs of its constituency. These narratives will contribute to conversations of how to incorporate the migratory life experience in classrooms, as well as demonstrate the families' views on language instruction (English and HL). Hopefully, program administrators will utilize this document to supplement existing discussions or introduce new issues. Subsequently, this research is meant as a platform for the necessity of culturally responsive teaching in rural Midwestern migrant education programs.

### **Research questions**

My overarching questions for this research project were:

- What are the language practices utilized by the NMMP and the attitudes informing those practices?
- What are the underlying reasons for the design of the NMMP's curriculum and its implications for or on students?
- In what ways is the NMMP serving its students, parents, and staff?

The specific questions that were directed toward the three major participant groups (students, parents, and NMMP staff) can be found in Appendix A. The questions found in this section began and guided the discussions, as additional questions were raised depending upon the information presented by the interviewees. In open-ended dialogues with families and NMMP staff, a space was created where participants were encouraged to actively engage in creating meaning in our discourse.

### **Definition of terms**

A majority of the following definitions were taken from governmental documents, and terminology utilized by state agencies to provide assistance. Other definitions, such as



heritage language and *americanito*, were taken from my own understanding of the term used within the context of my research project. By combining these approaches, we get a fuller and wider understanding of the terms.

Migrant student- A child who is, or whose parent, spouse or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain or accompany such parent, spouse or guardian temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work ([www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)).

Seasonal student- A child who is, or whose parent, spouse or guardian is a person who during the preceding 12 months worked at least an aggregate of 25 or more days or parts of days in which some work was performed in farmwork earned at least half of his/her earned income from farmwork, and was not employed in farmwork year round by the same employer ([www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)).

“americanitos/gringos”- U.S. born citizens, usually white Anglo-Saxon

Heritage language- A language used by speakers of a specific, usually minority, community. Native language of ethnic minority communities (Wei, 2000, pp.495-496).

Sending state- This is generally where the migrant streams begin and where the farmworkers will return once the season has ended, to await the start of the next season. They are also the areas with the longest growing seasons ([www.hud.gov/local/fl.working/farmworkers/commonquestions.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/local/fl.working/farmworkers/commonquestions.cfm)).

Receiving state-A state where farmworkers migrate to follow the crops. Generally, farm laborers work in the state during a specific season and then return to the “sending state.”

Migrant education program (MEP)- Federal funds support high quality education programs for migratory children and help ensure that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among states in curriculum, graduation requirements, or state academic content and student academic achievement standards. Funds also ensure that migratory children not only are provided with appropriate education services (including supportive services) that address their special needs but also that such children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet ([www.ed.gov/programs/mep/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/mep/index.html)).

Summer migrant education program (SMEP)- Federally funded programs that operate during the summer months, once schools open during the traditional academic calendar year have dismissed. These programs are meant to provide academic instruction and support for migratory children who move among the states (Solis, 2004).

### **Limitations of the study**

The study focuses on the opinions, observations, and practices built in and around the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program's (NMMP) summer 2007 session. The MEP was situated in a rural Midwestern area and operated only during the summer months. Therefore, this research project does not expound on existing literature concentrating on SMEPs along the Eastern or Western states (of which there is a plethora). I argue for the implementation of culturally sensitive instructional practices within programs serving migrant students located in rural areas of the U.S. Rural Midwestern programs employ teachers who utilize instructional practices that do not take into account the linguistic and academic unique needs of migrant students, nor call upon the families for resources.

One substantive limitation of this study, which was inherent in the nature of the investigation, was the time constraint which occurred during the summer months of June, July and August. Even though the families continued to live in the northern Michigan area throughout the fall months, a significant portion of the NMMP staff did not. Although my investigation could have continued into the fall of 2007, I was sensitive to the participants' time and did not want to occupy more than absolutely needed. I did not want to intrude on the families' time during their heavy work periods (which occurred in late fall and early winter months), when parents worked in the orchards during the morning and processing plants during the afternoons. Another limitation was my time spent with staff and classroom observations which concluded with the end of the NMMP summer session. My interactions with staff ended at the conclusion of the program because most staff members either began other employment opportunities or left the area for remaining summer weeks.

## **Outline of chapters**

There are seven chapters in this dissertation. The Introduction, as you have already read, addressed my positionality, how I came to the study, statement of the problem, key terminology, the research questions that guided the investigation, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature. The chapter begins with a description of a few of Mikhail Bakhtin's key concepts used to support my findings. These key concepts include: social dialect, authoritative discourse, dialectic tension, and dialogism. This section is followed with a discussion of Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), its five tenets and its application to the study. The literature review moves onto exploring the concept of culturally sensitive pedagogies, as described by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Cornel Pewewardy. Additionally, I address literature which argues for the utilization of HL instruction to encourage academic success.

Chapter Three provides a brief history of the founding and progression of migrant education programs in the U.S. The chapter begins by describing the term "migrant" as used by federal programs and in hegemonic discourse. Next, the chapter outlines the inception of the MEP throughout the decades, highlighting additions and subtractions to the federally funded program based on the current administration. I conclude the chapter with a brief history that places migrant farmworkers in Michigan.

Chapter Four explicates the methodologies employed in collecting data and analyzing said data. I provide rationale for the usage of the case study method, in addition to justify the need for narrative case study in this particular project. The chapter then moves to a brief description of the participants and site, followed by an account of

the various data resources collected for this investigation, which were: interviews, observations, and documents. I segue into a delineation of the method used to analyze the data collected, and conclude with a description of how I gained entry into the community.

The next section, Chapter Five is a simultaneous discussion and analysis of the findings extrapolated from observations and narratives provided by the five participating families. The chapter begins with a description, which provides a holistic portrait, of the NMMP's teachers and teaching assistants. Then, I answer the three research questions based on the key concepts presented by Bakhtin and scholars in the fields of HL acquisition and culturally responsive pedagogy (all which are presented in Chapter Two). The findings point to family's needs based on their understanding of language instruction, academic support, and NMMP's services. The chapter ends with the families calling for the program to employ community members into the class, not only to assist with monolingual Spanish speaking students, but to assist in the understanding of migrant students in general. In the end the families are supportive of the program, regardless of the fact that the program neglects to integrate the student body home life (and HL) into the classroom.

Chapter Six is structured similarly to the previous chapter, in that it presents the findings from observations and interviews with the educators in tandem with the data analysis. Much like the chapter focusing on the families, this chapter answers the investigative questions based on the findings. The educators addressed their limited linguistic and cultural ability in communicating with the families and students. Due to these limitations, creating meaningful classroom experiences was extremely difficult.

Educators, at differing levels, attempted to integrate the student's HL and life experiences to the best of their capacity. The chapter concludes with the educators expressing their desire to learn more about the population the NMMP serves.

Chapter Seven concludes the dissertation, with a culmination of the suggestions offered by staff, parents, and students to NMMP administrators and the Office of Migrant Education in Washington, D.C. In this final chapter, I summarize the recommendations offered, in addition to supplementing those with suggestions of my own.

Appendix A is the list of questions used in the initial interviews with NMMP staff, family members, and students.

Appendix B is the list of tenets created by the Oral History Association, which describe the responsibility of the interviewer to the interviewee.

Appendix C is the descriptive charts of participants, which succinctly outlines important characteristics of the participants.

Appendix D is a sample of the objectives and assessments provided by the NMMP teachers.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

It is no secret that the key for marginalized children's academic success in the U.S. education system equates firstly to access to educational opportunity, and secondly to maintaining their community ties. The question then becomes, how is a marginalized student able to gain and retain access into the educational system and maintain their status in their cultural social group? Perhaps the most logical answer may be seen through the parallel development of the dominant and heritage languages (in all of their capacities), which are supported through an educational environment.

Through understanding the educational system's dominant language, (in the case of the US is English) students are able to: understand instruction, actively engage in classroom dialogue, participate in extra-curricular activities, converse with peers and teachers and question unjust situations to name only a few. However, by sustaining the development of the student's heritage language the benefits are two-fold: first, the student remains an active member in their home community and secondly nurturing the HL promotes that student's academic success. Both of these factors are needed to allow a child to participate in the social environment and create peer networks in and outside of the classroom.

Consider data retrieved from the most recent report provided by the Office of Migrant Education on the conditions of migrant students notes that 63% of migrant farmworkers do not speak English and 75% cannot read English, whereas 59% report to have the ability to read at a grade school level in their primary language (US Dept. of

Education, 2005). This data, demonstrates that an overwhelming number of migrant students, who cannot read in either their HL or English it would be logical that the curricula focal point for the most oppressed groups in the country center around increasing English and heritage language instruction; unfortunately this is not the case. Therefore this study argues for the incorporation of migrant education and heritage language education. Juxtaposing the two areas will assist in the mission of No Child Left Behind (the unfortunate backbone of the present educational system) by ensuring that all children, including those students marginalized at the classroom's periphery, "have the opportunity to obtain high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments" (*U.S. Code 20*, Title III, Part a. §1301-1309, p.13).

### **Theoretical Framework**

One outcome of this study is the bridging of the gap between two related, yet disparate fields of study: migrant education and heritage language research. While each respective educational field has a considerable body of scholarly work, this project hopes to produce the foundational text of the justification for the two joining, or at the very least lay the groundwork for a dialogue between the two. Therefore, I find it fitting to apply the writing of Mikhail Bahktin combined with Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), two views seldom used as companions, but that here act as the theoretical backdrop for this research project.

Writings from the Bahktin Circle and the theories produced by LatCrit, were applied because the migrant farmworker community is a racially stigmatized working-class Latina/o community (Lopez, 2003). Bakhtin aided in the analysis of the complex

relationships between language and power, while LatCrit applied the analysis of the layers addressing race, class, ethnicity, and other strata of oppression. Accordingly, the incorporation of both brings to the forefront the interdependency of race, class, gender, citizenship status, language use, and power among the migrant farmworker community living in northern Michigan and their interactions with the hegemonic Anglo-American educational system. Finally, I have also evoked the culturally relevant pedagogy and Heritage language scholarship, although to a lesser degree. These approaches are paramount because they engage the study in a discourse with critical educational notions that critique hegemonic pedagogies pervading classrooms.

### ***Bakhtin***

The primary source of the theoretical framework falls with Mikhail Bakhtin, who believe that language is neither passive nor neutral, rather it is inherently saturated with socially constructed power-relations. Bakhtinian scholar Susan Stewart characterizes the Russian philosopher and literary theorist understanding of language as “mutable, reversible, anti-hierarchical, contaminable, and powerfully regenerative” (1981, p.49). For Bakhtin, language continuously shapes and is shaped by utterances, and therefore refuses to be stagnant. Language is full of life, and therefore language creates and recreates social structures. Moreover, language becomes the intersection of political, social, and historical dimensions (Moraes, 1996).

The Bakhtin Circle, composed of Bakhtin, Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov, Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev and Lev Pumpianskij, were active during the 1920s and 1930s, a time when the Soviet Union was suppressing dissent and a true insurrection.



Those intellectuals involved in the Bakhtinian circle were engaged in analyzing the discourse of language from the perspective that all language is inherently ideological or political. In defining language Bakhtin (1981) writes that, “We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life” (p.271). For Bakhtin, language is neither passive nor neutral, rather it is inherently impregnated with socially constructed power-relations. Moreover, signification is continually contested and negotiated within society, which Bakhtin terms as the *dialogic*. Bakhtin (1981) explains that “[t]he word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way” (p.279). It is this active dialogue between and amongst individuals and texts where meaning is constructed.

Bakhtin further discusses the understanding of word by adding the layer of history. Historicity reflects and imprints unspoken knowledge garnered throughout the generations, which enables younger generations to cope, survive, and thrive in their lives. “when we speak, we take up the social languages and genres that are already in existence in the language and cultural communities in which we actively participate” (Lee, 2004, p.104). The historicity of word is crucial in communities that depend on communication to pass knowledge onto future generations, such as the case with the migrant community.

On a personal level, I am a member of a social group who speaks a specific variation of working-class Tejano Spanish and rural Midwest English, not to mention my training in the academy. As a result of this conglomeration of languages I observed my

own construction of language, as well as the stratification of my various languages. For instance, when I speak to my grandmother or my *tías y tíos*, I am acutely cognizant of the language (verbal and physical) to use. Our greeting begins with an embrace and a loving kiss on the cheek. Never in our conversation do I use English slang terms or refer to the elders solely by their first name, rather our conversation is filled with Spanish language colloquialisms and warmth (“Tía Minerva, how are you feeling today?”). Instead vocabulary filled with English, Spanish and Spanglish slang is reserved for interactions with my friends, whom I do embrace upon greeting (“Hey Todd, what’s up? Como estas”). In greeting colleagues, I maintain my distance while invoking a formal vocabulary void of colloquialisms or slang terms (“Good morning, Terese. How are you today?”). Similar to my strata of language, the children of agricultural laborers have constructed their own language genres to use within their differing social groups.

Bakhtin posits that

At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, “professional” and “generic” languages, languages of generations and so forth...And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static variant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing (1981, pp.271-2).

Linguistic interactions between and among linguistically diverse people is a culmination of the Unitarian language, as well as social and historical heteroglossia. What this means is that concrete utterances are a battle ground where dominant discourse and that of a particular social group discourse intersect. It is this tension and negotiation that brings language to life.

Speech genres are part of this discourse, they are the coming together of what Bakhtin identifies as centripetal and centrifugal forces (Bakhtin, 1986; Braxley, 2005). For Bakhtin centripetal forces ensure that speakers of a language understand one another, while centrifugal forces collide with the normative discourse, resulting in the creation of new genres (Bakhtin, 1981). Concrete utterances, both oral and written, reflect the specific conditions and goals of the various areas of human activity. Although utterances are individual, the sphere that they are structured within is what Bakhtin calls *speech genres* (1986). He goes on to elucidate the three aspects that create these spheres:

These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects-thematic content, style, and compositional structure-are inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication...These we may call speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986, p.60).

Speech genres carry not only grammatical structure, but also the individual style and social context that construct the discourse. In these terms, speech genres could be limitless but are bound by the unfathomable number of possible human activities and interactions.

The Bakhtin Circle moved beyond the examination of the mechanics of language and began to investigate how the use of language enabled individuals to gain access to power, particularly within literary discourse. Of particular importance to this research project is Bakhtin's differentiation between passive understanding and active understanding of language. Passive understanding can be described as purely receptive in that the speaker is unable to place upon the word their personal understanding or epistemology.

Reciprocally, an active understanding “establishes a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements” (Bahktin, 1981, p.282). In her interpretation of Bakhtin, Susan Stewart demonstrates that an individual or community can be “silenced,” as is the case with migrant farmworker children, commonly called the “Invisible Children.” Stewart’s use of the term of being “silenced” refers to the inability to access the dominant discourse. While much sociolinguistic theory proposes that all utterances are successful speech acts, Bakhtin maintains that utterances are always in tension and conflict with the utterances of others, which makes them dialectic. As such, speech acts are commonly surrounded by significant silences. Moreover, for Bakhtin the power lies not simply in the act of speaking or being silent, but also through the powerful force of being silenced.

Such is the case with Northern Michigan’s farmworker community, when they are denied access to attain fluency in either academic English or Spanish. A guiding factor, was without proper language instruction (in either academic English or Spanish academic or vernacular) migrant students are unable to actively engage in the classroom leaving them at a passive state. As, Marcia Moraes, a Brazilian scholar of language and literature writes, “language is used to legitimate one voice or history over another, and language does not only influence students toward a particular world view but also serves as a vehicle of alienation by preventing access to certain questions and answers” (1996, p.109). In many cases, language may be used to silence migratory children in that they are not properly equipped to survive and negotiate the educational system, never fully entering into dialogue.

In a similar fashion, without HL support younger generations are at risk of losing their familial ties. Therefore, students are prohibited from becoming active, engaging members in their community's discourse, while also being silenced in the classroom. Bakhtin would argue that discourse is inextricably linked to ideology, where "one's speech both reveals and produces one's position in class society, in such a way, moreover, as to set into dialogue the relations among classes" (Stewart, 1981, p,52). At this point it is consequential to clarify the intentions of this investigation. It became evident, through participants' voices their understanding of the relationship between language and power. The families acknowledged the power English carried, and consequently wanted their children to access such power. However, just as English linked to the macroculture, Spanish was linked to the community. Families voiced the necessity for HL development, however the language's cultivation lay in the hands of the community and not the NMMP. The community's expectation of English language development was the obligation of the white, middle-class teachers. Having said this, the study's goal was to promote spaces where the students' native language and academic English might reciprocally develop.

Moraes utilizes Bakhtin in her analysis of bilingual education. She concludes that language is always and inevitably part of an ideological and cultural process. This statement leads to the term used by Bakhtin, "language ideology." Briefly stated, language ideology both reveals and produces one's position in class society. For instance, in their study of Filipinos in Norway, Lanza and Ailin Svendsen (2007) found that migratory families demonstrated their language ideology through the negotiation and construction of interactions through linguistic means. In this study the linguistic choices

made by the participants displayed their membership with specific social networks: peer groups, ethnic groups, class groups, etc. The Filipino migrants designated their ethnic group membership by the usage of Tagalog (used to show respect to elders and show kinship terms), whereas English and Norwegian were used to demonstrate a sense of belonging in the migrant's new home.

Moreover, language ideology is not only the product of social life, but it is reproductive and productive of social life. In other words, language is both a continuous product and producer of social practices, just as in the case with the Filipino migrants who used language to transmit the practice of respect for elders. In turn, this begs the question: what does this mean for migrant farmworker children? By providing these students with access to a dialogue that engages them into academic discourse, they are able to negotiate through the educational system and preserve social group membership. Without this access these children are left on the periphery and may never engage in an active understanding of either classroom or community discourse.

Continuing the discussion of power relations is the Bakhtinian term *authoritative discourse*. This particular discourse is firmly attached to power relations and in the context of this study *authoritative discourse* is rooted in white, middle-class, U.S. English. In *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), Bakhtin contextualizes the creation of *authoritative discourse*. He writes that

The speech of another, once enclosed in a context is, -no matter how accurately transmitted-always subject to certain semantic changes. Given the appropriate methods for framing, one may bring about fundamental changes even in another's utterance...The tendency to assimilate other's discourse takes on an even deeper and more basic significance in an individual's ideological becoming, in the most fundamental sense. Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, direction, rules, models and so forth-but strives rather to determine the very bases of

our ideological interrelations with the world, our very behavior; it performs here as *authoritative discourse* (pp.340-342).

For Bakhtin, *authoritative discourse* is demarcated by the prohibition of dialogic discourse, rather from its privileged position exercises great power over all other discourses. It is the language of, as Bakhtin states, “the fathers” –fathers meaning individuals who hold stature, power, and whose discourse is considered moral- which was *acknowledged* by the past and therefore part of a prior discourse.

The English-Only movement is an excellent example of attempts to institutionalize an authoritative discourse. This specific discourse is created by and for the benefit of the individuals (who hold power to shift social norms or as Bakhtin terms “the fathers”). Not surprisingly, these “fathers” systematically construct a structure which oppresses people-of-color, and therefore defines the systems’ perimeters to keep marginalized people disempowered. One example of the oppressive nature of English-Only is the recent state mandated measure which prohibits voter-registration cards to be printed in any language other than English (<http://www.us-english.org>). The legislation also requires that all state business be conducted in English, including student enrollment forms, health services, etc. Reforms such as this target immigrant communities, specifically concentrating on creating obstacles for the Spanish-speaking community.

Through the utilization of Bakhtin I investigated the language practices employed in the classroom. My acute interest was in the practices which left students silenced in either their classroom, community or both spaces. Moreover, I delved into the underlying investigative question: Can adequate language instruction empower these “invisible children?” To draw upon Bakhtinian terms, how does the centripetal force of language i.e. the production of a Unitarian language (the language of power that inextricably linked

to power of dominant groups) which in this case is English affect these children versus the social group constructed centrifugal forces, ie. regional dialects of Spanish?

### ***Latina/o Critical Race theory***

Another foundational element of the theoretical framework was the ideas put forth by Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), which is closely aligned to Critical Race Theory (CRT). Both theories were born out of legal discourse and attempt to critically engage the discourses surrounding the oppressive facets of society, in hopes of coming to an equitable alternative. LatCrit and CRT recognize the legitimate purpose of experiential knowledge and how this form of knowledge is crucial in understanding the inequalities people-of-color endure (Villapando, 2004, p.43). Moreover, LatCrit understands the complex nature of the Latina/o community and examines oppression through race, language, immigration status, ethnicity, culture, identity, and phenotype.

These issues are particularly pertinent to the migrant farmworker community. Because LatCrit is normally applied to legal studies, it has only recently entered the education discussion (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano and Delgado Bernal 2001, 2002; Villalpando 2003, 2004; Valdes 1996, 1998). Yosso and Solorzano (2001) provide a succinct adaptation from the *LatCrit Primer* (1999) to create the following definition of LatCrit theory in education:

A LatCrit theory in education is a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which *race and racism* explicitly and implicitly impact on the education structures, process, and discourses that effect People of Color generally and Latina/os specifically. Utilizing the *experiences* of Latina/os, a LatCrit theory in education also theorizes and examines that place where racism *intersects* with other forms of subordination such as sexism and classism. LatCrit theory in education is conceived as a *social justice* project that attempts to link theory with



practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community (p.479).

Although LatCrit has just recently entered the arena of educational discourse, it is becoming an increasingly crucial tool utilized to broaden and deepen the analysis of institutionalized racism and subordination.

Drawing from its roots in ethnic studies, women studies, cultural nationalist paradigms, Marxist and neo-Marxists frameworks, CRT emerged from the critical analysis of legal studies generated by legal scholars of color (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Solorzano and Yosso, 2001; Lynn, 2004). The purpose of CRT is to uncover, through a critical analysis, the racism embedded in all U.S. social structures and practices. The beginning of CRT was “initially developed as a critique of critical legal studies—a Marxist analysis of the US legal system—critical race theorists are also concerned about creating and sustaining a politicized discourse that was by and about people of color” (Lynn, 2004, p.155). CRT critiques existing white supremacist structures that have historically marginalized peoples.

Alongside CRT, LatCrit challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism, which also includes the close examination of how educational theory and practices are used to subordinate and marginalize Latina/o students. As the renowned social justice and feminist scholar, Dolores Delgado Bernal explicates, “LatCrit is conceived as an anti-subordination and antiessentialist project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community. LatCrit is not incompatible or competitive with CRT” (pp.108-9, Delgado Bernal, 2002). Instead what she posits is the convergence, partnership, and collaboration between the two theories. In terms of education, CRT and LatCrit working together challenge the dominant discourse

on race, gender, class, and other forms of oppression, as they permeate all corners of the existing system.

LatCrit and CRT attempt to understand the oppressive facets of society in hopes of rectifying this oppression through social transformation, particularly in terms of legal discourse. The difference between LatCrit and CRT is that the former deals with issues beyond racism. Solorzano and Bernal (2001) view LatCrit as being

concerned with a progressive sense of a coalitional Latina/o pan-ethnicity and addresses issues often ignored by critical race theorists such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity and phenotype, and sexuality...LatCrit is a theory that elucidates Latinas/os multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, and classism and other forms of oppression (pp.311-312).

Through the use of a LatCrit framework one can challenge how hegemonic ideologies (specifically in regards to educational theory and practice) continually marginalize migrant students. The use of LatCrit highlights issues of citizenship status, class, and race in addition to those of language. In the vein of all critical theories which propose advocacy and activism, LatCrit calls for the researcher to “speak for some (oppressed and exploited) person or group and from a particular (ideological or political) position, rather than simply speak to an audience about a group or phenomena of interest” (Schram, 2003, p.34). As a former seasonal farmworker, I speak with and from the interests of migrant students, keeping in mind the oppressive situation that Latina/o farmworkers face.

Furthermore, LatCrit creates a core by which to investigate and critique oppressive hegemonic structures. LatCrit’s framework rests upon the five tenets laid out by Daniel Solorzano and Dolores Delgado Bernal (2001).

- 1.) The intersectionality of race and racism with other forms of oppression, such a

language, citizenship status, gender and class. LatCrit understands that race alone is not the sole reason for oppression, rather it is a conglomerate of the aforementioned forms of oppression;

2.) The second tenet, challenges dominant ideology. LatCrit challenges the traditional idea that the educational system is objective, color-blind, and provides equal opportunities. Instead LatCrit argues that these fallacies camouflage the self-interest, power and privilege of the dominant groups in US society.

3.) LatCrit is committed to social justice and offers a transformative response to oppression based on race, class, gender, immigration status and language.

4.) LatCrit is committed to the continuous involvement of the lived experiences of the Latina/o communities, through the use of storytelling, narratives, testimonies, etc.

5.) LatCrit juxtaposes the analysis of the multi-layers of oppression in both a historical and contemporary context.

The educational system was not created with the consideration of migrant students unique educational needs in its design. While migrant students, like other students-of-color, continually enter school doors, they cannot leave their race, class, citizenship status or heritage language at the door. Rather these multiple identities follow them bringing along the scrutinizing eyes of a hegemonic educational system. LatCrit recognizes that students-of-color are holders and creators of knowledge, whose stories, experiences, languages and cultures are historically devalued (or omitted altogether) from formal educational settings (Delgado Bernal, 2002). LatCrit recognizes this and attempts

to rectify these educational practices through a critical discourse of the multiple dimensions of oppression.

Moreover, as a framework it offers a space for Latina/o counter-storytelling. Counter-storytelling “is both a method of telling the story of those experiences that are often not told (i.e. those on the margins of society) and a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power and whose story is a natural part of the dominant discourse” (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001, p.475). In LatCrit’s beginning stages of discourse with education, it challenges the dominant discourse which traditionally subordinated certain racial and ethnic groups, especially Chicana/o students through methods such as counter-storytelling.

Beyond their marginalization and inability to gain an active understanding of academic English or further the development of their heritage language, migrant workers (almost exclusively Mexican nationals) are also excluded due to a variety of social factors, such as phenotype, class, gender, and citizenship status. LatCrit provides the link between the linguistic analyses of Bakhtin and aforementioned social factors. LatCrit’s five tenets served as the backdrop of my research project, as they actively examine social structures and oppression, whereas Bakhtin is interested in the dialectic between language and power. By using these two intertwined theoretical frameworks, I sought to not only address the complex educational issues, but as LatCrit emphasizes, offer an alternative.

### **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

The advent of theorizing the intersection between culture and teaching began over twenty years ago with Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (1995) work with African American students. In

her text *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, Ladson-Billings moved beyond the existing terminology attempting to bridge the gap between home and school to create a holistic understanding of students. Prior to educational pedagogy put forth by Ladson-Billings were the terms *culturally congruent*, *cultural appropriateness*, *cultural compatibility*, and *cultural responsiveness* (Mohatt and Erickson, 1981; Au and Jordan, 1981; Vogt, Jordan and Tharp 1987; Cazden and Leggett 1981). Through teaching, all these terms set out to address the gaping chasm separating the student's home/community and school culture. However, these teaching pedagogies suggested how to fit marginalized students into an educational system constructed by the macroculture, rather than formally critique the educational structure that systematically marginalizes students of color. As Ladson-Billings maintains,

Three of the terms employed by studies on cultural mismatch between school and home-culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, and culturally compatible-seem to connote accommodation of student culture to mainstream culture. Only the term *culturally responsive* appears to refer to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture...A next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions perpetuate. I term this pedagogy, *culturally relevant pedagogy* (1995, pp.467-9).

The clear distinction made here is that prior pedagogies broke away from cultural deficit models that pervaded the educational discourse of students-of-color, whereas *culturally relevant pedagogy* conjointly addresses student achievement and student perceptions of self, community and identity, while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that the educational system perpetuates (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995).

Culturally relevant teaching can be defined as *pedagogy of opposition*. It is committed to a collective empowerment and collaborative learning, therefore shunning individualistic learning. Ladson-Billings has structured three criteria that establish culturally relevant pedagogy. She writes that “(a) [s]tudents must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (1995, p.160). In these propositions, it is apparent that culturally relevant teaching rests not only on the success of the student, but must also transcend the negative effects of hegemonic society. In fact, it works to assist marginalized students critique those systems which force their communities to the periphery.

Teachers who practice culturally relevant pedagogy are identified by how they interact with students and their respective communities. These teachers believe that all students can succeed, not in spite of their communities, but because of their communities. Furthermore, educators who utilize culturally relevant pedagogy help students to build connections between their multiple communities and identities (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

For migratory children, culturally relevant pedagogy is especially powerful, as these students are acutely in danger of dropping out of school, sensing that their cultural competence is invalid when compared to the macroculture. The educational marginalization of migratory students has existed for such a long period that it has now become normalized, thereby allowing teachers to neglect its presence in their classrooms.

Australian teacher-educator, Barry Osborne (1996) further explains this process,

Native Americans, African Americans, Australian Aborigines, and Torres Strait Islanders, among others, were once at the centers of their cultural worlds. By a variety of forms of force they have all been marginalized by Western nations. Their practices were not understood but were belittled

and degraded. Their worldviews were ignored and even used against them...The historically derived images, textual constructions, and an explanation of “their failure” in our system of schooling continues today. In other words, the dilemmas we face today in schooling all “our nations’ children” were created and are being created currently by distorted images and understanding of how the dilemmas originated. As a society, we pushed these people to the margins and came to see that as their normal condition. The dilemma is not benign and is a sad outcome of history. It is intensely political, and while rooted in the past, its politics are worked out daily in our classrooms and in our wider societies. (p.288).

Culturally relevant pedagogies demand that teachers take an active role in not only educating students to end the cycle of marginalization, but insists that the teacher remains personally self-reflexive throughout the process. As Osborne notes, the marginalization of individuals outside of the macroculture is historic and has become a normal facet of society.

Whereas Ladson-Billings argued that students-of-color should be encouraged to explore their cultural identity and use it as a source of empowerment, indigenous scholar, Cornel Pewewardy (1998) advocated for *culturally responsive teaching*. Pewewardy describes the role of culturally responsive teachers as, “focus[ing] on the strengths that exist in indigenous families while using a culturally accepted group pedagogy to promote social cohesion” (p.30). This pedagogy stresses the significance of including community practices into the macroculture’s classroom, placing less emphasis on the actual act of critiquing existing oppressive institutions and structures. Pewewardy emphasized the accommodation of student’s home/community lives, whereas Ladson-Billings insisted that classroom accept and affirm these cultures. Briefly stated, these educational theories diverge in how they believe the educational system should educate marginalized students.

After thirty years of classroom experience and interactions with preservice teachers, Pewewardy has composed the definition of culturally responsive teachers as,

“Those who think multicultural rather than monocultural in content; they communicate in discursive and nondiscursive methods and languages; they utilize methodologies that are congruent with cultural learning styles” (1998, p.70). Pewewardy asserts that teacher-student interactions should consider the child’s knowledge holistically, mindful of all their activities, in a formal educational setting. Teachers who alienate students from their community are forcing children in a monocultural model (which is not representative of their lived experiences).

At the core culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogies share a similar thread, although diverging in their use of critiquing the education system in their respective models. Ladson-Billings denotes the synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture, more importantly she stresses that this relationship must occur without the student sacrificing their cultural identity. In her study with African American students, Ladson-Billings determined,

[t]he primary aim of culturally relevant teaching is to assist in the development of a ‘relevant black personality’ that allows African American students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and African American culture (1994, p.17).

The ability to maintain a cultural identity is of the utmost importance for the educator, while encouraging the student’s academic success.

Pewewardy would agree with Ladson-Billings in her assertion for the maintenance of cultural identity. For Pewewardy, culturally responsive teaching

involves providing the best possible education for children that preserves their own cultural heritage and prepares them for meaningful relationships with other people, and for living productive lives in the present society without sacrificing their own cultural perspective (1996, p.70).

The educational success entails the simultaneous acquisition of interactional skills with the maintenance of cultural identity.



The thread that ties the two pedagogies together is the commitment to cultural identity. Ladson-Billings argues for teacher's to take a proactive role in cultivating a critical consciousness among students, whereas Pewewardy puts forth the notion of culturally responsive teaching as connoting a more dynamic relationship between marginalized community culture (specifically, tribal communities) and school culture. However, both strive to reduce the alienation of students, within the classroom and community, by expecting academic success and commitment to retaining their cultural identity.

Through the use of these two educational pedagogies, I argued that the NMMP is not providing a space where the migrant agricultural laborer community and classroom can meet. Furthermore, I assert that the program does not create an academically rigorous space to prepare its students for academic success. Finally, through the use of both culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogies, I was able to critically observe classroom dynamics and the NMMP's curriculum mindful of the ways in which the educators were creating challenging and meaningful academic experiences for their students.

### **Defining Heritage Language**

Guadalupe Valdes, arguably one of the most influential scholars on Latina/o education, posits,

In recent years, the term *heritage language* has been used broadly to refer to nonsocietal and nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities. Those members of linguistic minorities who are concerned about the study, maintenance, and revitalization of their minorities who are concerned about the study, maintenance, and

revitalization of their minority languages have been referred to as *heritage language students*. Minority languages or heritage languages include indigenous languages that are often endangered and in danger of disappearing as well as world languages that are commonly spoken in other regions of the world (2005, p. 411).

As a state or federal definition of Heritage Language does not exist, scholars from varying disciplines are able to define it based on their understanding of the term.

However, for the purposes of this investigation, the definition provided by Guadalupe Valdés (2001) is exceptionally appropriate. She broadly defines a HL speaker as someone who has a language other than English in the home and is to any proficiency level bilingual. By and large, HL learners comprise a diverse group covering the gamut of language proficiency continuum—from fluent to passive learners to those who are generations removed but feel a cultural connectedness to the language (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003, p.221).

She expounds on this definition by writing that “heritage language has been used broadly to refer to nonsocietal and nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities” (2005, p.411). For Valdés, HL is the language spoken by the “other.” In the U.S., it is any language other than U.S. English. In her discussion of the complexities when defining a HL speaker, Guadalupe Valdés (2005) links the individual’s home language to a personal investment in maintaining the HL for future generations.

The term *heritage language* was born from a dialogue surrounding the usage of *native speaker* by bilingual education literature. Foreign language educators and sociolinguists understood that *native* implied proficiency, whereas *heritage* is understood to be socially determined and constructed (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003). Fishman (2001b),

the Father of Sociolinguistics, divides heritage language into three categories: indigenous, colonial, and immigrant languages. Succinctly stated, indigenous languages are those spoken by the indigenous peoples of the world, colonial languages are comprised of those languages spoke by early settlers in the colonial period, whereas immigrant languages represent any languages spoken in virtually any region in the world (Fishman 2001b; Van Deusen-Scholl 2003).

In Canada, HL is denoted as the “languages other than the country’s two official languages, English and French” (Fishman, 2001, p.116). According to Joshua Fishman, a HL is a language that is not considered to be the “official” language of a country, a concept that I agree with to an extent. In the case of the United States, where English is considered the “official” language by nationalist or anti-immigrant zealots, an HL is any language that differs from English. However, some individuals may claim that English is their HL, as they come from Anglo-Saxon descent and it is the only language that their family has known for many generations.

In *The Bilingual Reader* edited by Li Wei (2000) HL is defined as the “[n]ative language of ethnic minority communities” (p.496). Although, I also agree with her definition of HL, I question her evocation of the term “communities,” and would replace the term *ethnic* with *marginalized*. If “community” is used in the sense that it is a group of individuals who share common racial and/or cultural experiences, but are not bound to geographical locations I concur with the definition provided.

An HL is an indicator that one belongs to a particular group, an accepted member by the perimeters created by that specific group. It is a tool that is used to aid in the

construction of an ethnic identity, which is also supported through various interactions with specific ethnic groups. In “Language and Ethnicity,” Fishman (1988) states,

[l]anguage is recognized as a guide to ‘kinship’-interpreted group membership, as a desideratum and demonstration of such membership. Language is commonly among the conscious ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ as well as among the unconscious ones: that is, it is among the evaluated dimensions of ethnicity membership...Language is not only code but Code (p.28)

Fishman’s argument gives credence to my idea that to gain complete membership into an ethnic group, certain markers must be present, the first and most visible is language. As Bakhtin posits, language is inseparable from behavioral and ideological purviews. Meaning, utterances are a continuation of interactions, and therefore never an end to itself (Bakhtin, 1981; Moraes, 1996). In social groups, which are close knit networks, such as migrant farmworker communities, membership is incredibly important. Language is a cultural marker, the conscious ‘do’ that Fishman speaks of.

Prominent second language acquisition and heritage language scholar, Lily Wong Fillmore (2000) investigates the significance of language in ethnic and cultural communities. In her case study of an immigrant Chinese family in the U.S., Fillmore illuminates how the loss of HL disrupts familial interactions, consequently interfering with the socialization of younger generations in their cultural communities. She concludes that without parent-child communication children are left floundering to understand who the nuances of life. She contends

schools cannot provide what is most fundamental to success in life. The family plays a crucial role in providing the basic elements for successful functioning. These include: a sense of belonging; knowledge of who one is and where one comes from; an understanding of how one is connected to the important others and events in one’s life; the ability to deal with adversity; and knowing one’s responsibility to self, family, community (p.206).

When considering the detrimental effect the loss of HL has on communities, it is no wonder the myriad of complexities it places on cultural communities and schools that preserve them. Therefore, for children to truly succeed in life schools and communities must be committed to maintaining student's HL.

Sociolinguist and scholar of Spanish in the U.S., Maria Carreira, posits that for Latina/o students to succeed in school they must have access to a rigorous academic preparation and English; be socialized in the ways of American educational system; and utilize the resources produced through their linguistic and cultural heritage (2007). Migrant students are placed in an educational system that does not prepare them for challenging academics, nor capitalize on their cultural and linguistic heritage.

The definition of heritage language (HL) employed for this study, was a combination of 1.) my experiences with the language community with which I have group membership (the Spanish-speaking Chicano migrant farmworkers of the Midwest) and 2.) readings from sociolinguists developing their understandings of HL. As such, my working definition may not be the definition of HL used by other language communities who may have their own circumstances and understandings of "language." However for the purposes of this study notions of HL were established from the literature by monumental scholars in the field of language acquisition. I am particularly interested in the work of Joshua Fishman (2001a,b,c), Lily Wong Fillmore (2000), and Lucy Tse (1998) whose scholarship on HL addresses the complex nature of language in the U.S.

## **Conclusion**

The four sections outlined in this chapter-Bakhtin, LatCrit, culturally relevant pedagogy and heritage language- were incredibly significant in the formulation and triangulation of this study. Applied individually or layered together, each section supported my findings, as well as aided in the analysis of the collected data. However, as previously stated, the concepts set forth by Bakhtin served as the core of my investigation, while LatCrit was employed in a supportive role.

Because this project focused on language, Bakhtin was an obvious choice. However, a Bakhtinian framework does not address issues of race, class, gender, immigrant status, or citizenship (as well as other key factors to this study). LatCri, however, does speak to these factors. LatCrit enables me to emphasize the significance of experiential knowledge and its validity when understanding the lived realities of marginalized peoples.

The power of language and the oppressive nature of hegemonic society were further addressed by the educational pedagogies discussed by Ladson-Billings and Pewewardy. These pedagogies support the aspects of my investigation that center on curriculum and teacher-student interaction, whereas the definition of HL contextualizes my understanding of what is considered a heritage language and its importance to linguistically diverse groups.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF MIGRANT EDUCATION

#### Introduction

Children of migrant farmworkers and fishers are among the most educationally disadvantaged in the country (Salerno, 1991). Although the MEP was created to address the special needs of migrant students, in its devise MEP imparted little guidance as to how to design such programs. The result from this lack of this leadership was the construction of a loose skeleton of guidelines was constructed to allow for individual state autonomy. Consequently, migrant students have been left at a disadvantage and MEP in a state of flux.

Anthropologist Daniel Rothenberg (1998) states in *With these hands: the hidden world of migrant farmworkers today*, “[g]overnment assistance programs for farmworkers are premised on the idea that the farm laborers’ poverty is a permanent feature of American agriculture” (p.225). The author further emphasizes, with which I strongly concur, that although governmental services are in place to open opportunities for migratory populations, none of these programs actually attempt to “transform the farm labor system itself and none addresses the economic structure that defines farm laborers as the epitome of America’s working poor.” It is safe to surmise that any educational system put in place to serve a specific disenfranchised population must include equal opportunities for its students to break the cycle of poverty.

The following review of migrant education history documents its inception, its growth throughout the decades in addition to highlighting the purpose of the migrant

program; which was never to provide language instruction but rather to furnish loose guidelines for individual states to follow in creating their own programs. As stated before my research examines the language practices and curriculum design of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program, in addition to investigating the implications of these practices on the students.

### **Who is a “migrant”?**

In present media, the label migrant creates images of transient, uneducated, unhygienic, and undocumented workhorses; in turn allowing dominant society to keep migrant farmworkers at an arm’s length. While much of America wanted to deny that migrant workers existed, the US government began to observe that these laborers were bringing children with them into the educational system. As early as the 1950s, the US Office Education recognized the specificities of educating migrant students (Gouwens, 2001).

In 1952 the US Office of Education reported that migrants enter school later, attend fewer days, show greatest retardation, achieve the least progress, drop out of school earlier, and constitute the largest single reservoir of illiterates. The report’s findings were problematic, in that they were racially charged and did not take into account the child’s home language when testing intelligence (ie. testing was only occurring in English). Regrettably, this nationally recognized report, with its negative perceptions of migrant children, set the stage for the educational system’s treatment of this population.

As Macedo and Bartolomé (1999) clearly illustrate, the present day term of *migrant* has not varied much from the misinformed data presented in 1952. They write



that “[m]igrant’ not only relegates the Hispanics labeled as such to a lower status in our [US] society, but it also robs them of their citizenship as human beings who participate and contribute immensely to our society” (p.26). In this statement, Macedo and Bartolomé address how inhumanely migrants are treated, as they stripped of rights that should be bestowed upon all human beings.

While Macedo and Bartolomé recognize the term “migrant” stigmatizes Latina/os, the federal government has taken a different view of how to define migrant. Office of Migrant Education’s definition of a “migratory child” is based on the actual act of migration, rather than denoting any racial or class connotation. Federal law defines the term “migratory child” to mean (according to the most recent language of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, signed in January 2002):

a child who is, or whose parent, spouse or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain or accompany such parent, spouse or guardian in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work,

- has moved from one school district to another;
- in a state that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such district; or
- resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in a fishing activity.

(P.L. 107-110, Title I, Part C, §1309)

In the 1993 Comprehensive Plan for the Education of America’s Migrant Children presented by the National Association of Migrant Education (N.A.M.E), it is clearly stated that

While there is nothing ennobling or enriching about being migrant farmworker, a grinding life of hard work and frequent deprivation, the fact is that migrant workers are a working population which makes a significant contribution to the well-being of our (US) society and our economy (p.6).

Astonishingly, after such a powerful proclamation, the needs of all migrant children have been and continue to be ignored, as can be seen with the development of programs geared toward migrant students in a rural setting. Governmental agencies have created programs to address some needs of these children, nonetheless it has yet to fulfill their most basic needs for academic success.

### **A wake-up call**

It is commonly argued that Migrant Education Program was the response to public outcry over Edward Murrow's 1960 documentary, "Harvest of Shame." A documentary that Crawford (2003) explains as having increased public awareness of the lives of migrant laborers and families. The documentary aired on public television while most Americans rested after their Thanksgiving meals. Murrow's film offered a raw glimpse into the lives of those who toiled in the fields to place the overindulgent feasts on middle-class America's dinner tables. Although the documentary placed the inhumane conditions of farm labor in public discourse, six years passed before politicians took a sustained interest in the education of migrant farmworker children. The film did, on the other hand, encourage Congress to pass the Economic Opportunity Act<sup>4</sup> in 1964, which was the first

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<sup>4</sup> The ambitious act passed as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty." The act established eleven new programs supervised by the Office of Economic Opportunity. The programs, some still presently functioning, were: Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Work Study, Urban and Rural Community Action, Adult Basic Education, Voluntary Assistance for Needy Children, Loans to Rural Families, Assistance for Migrant Agricultural Employees, Employment and Investment Incentives, Work Experience and Volunteers in Service to America ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)).

legislation that specifically addressed education for migrant children and youth (Gowens, 2001).

### **The creation of the Migrant Education Program**

In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson launched a “war on poverty,” which included two fairly momentous laws that significantly paved the road for the MEP. The first of these laws was the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which provided federal funding and guidance for supplemental compensatory education programs for children and youth in poverty. The second being the Bilingual Education Act, which placed bilingual education in classrooms with significant numbers of non-English speaking students. The ESEA has continually been reauthorized every three to five years, adding or subtracting provisions in congruence to new research. The years following the initial authorization of ESEA created the foundation for present day MEP services. Essentially, each time ESEA is reauthorized it secures the longevity of MEP’s life.

William D. Ford, a Michigan congressman, composed an amendment in November of 1966, as a provision to the ESEA Title I. The amendment, entitled the “Programs for Migratory Children,” sought to cover migrant children under the protective umbrella of Title I, while providing completely different expanded services that sought to address the needs of the migrant student (Branz-Spall, Rosenthal, and Wright, 2003). The amendment fashioned a national specialized educational program which addressed the needs of students often left in the periphery.

One aspect of the amendment that Ford thought was imperative was the inclusion of consortium programs. The consortium programs involved schools and other agencies providing after-school and summer programs. These programs allowed for students who do not follow the traditional academic track to continue their schooling year round. It is important to note that, the focus of these programs was on basic academic themes, literacy and arithmetic, not on any type of language instruction.

### **Migrant Education on the move: 1960s**

Congress modestly funded MEP almost sixteen years after the first interstate pilot study in 1950, funded by the National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor and the Rural Education Association of the National Education Association. Prior to the amendment, individual states had created impromptu migrant educational programs, often times housing them in churches. The location was convenient for the community members that instituted the programs; as they were usually devout church members who wanted to “help the less fortunate.” The funding for such programs fell squarely on the shoulders of the farming communities as schools did not receive funding allocations for migrant students. . Due to the added expenditures of the migrant programs community members began to ask for monetary assistance to defray the extra costs. This community pressure impacted the authorization of the MEP, Wright (1996) notes that,

the essential character and purpose of MEP became (and remains) ‘a state grant program’, i.e., state educational agencies will receive and administer the grants; and the stated purpose of the program continues to be to address the special educational needs of migratory children (p.118).

The authorization of the MEP ensured states funding to create migrant programs, however it did not provide guidelines as how to create programs that addressed the special educational needs of migrant children. The six guidelines are listed as follows,

- (1) support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves;
- (2) ensure that migratory children who move among the States are not penalized in any manner by disparities among the States in curriculum, graduation requirements, and State academic content and student achievement standards;
- (3) ensure that migratory children are provided with appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner;
- (4) ensure that migratory children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet;
- (5) design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability for children to do well in school and to prepare such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment, and
- (6) ensure that migratory children benefit from State and local systemic reforms.

(No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, Title I, Part C, §1301)

The aforementioned guidelines not only made certain that students would be receiving appropriate education, but it mandated that all educational programs be designed to assist migratory students overcome factors that inhibit their ability to do well in school. I find it intriguing that the guidelines did not (and do not) detail how programs were able to do this, nor in the terminology can you find that the programs would be designed to assist students *succeed* in the educational system. A final note in regards to the guidelines, is that although both the fourth and fifth guidelines require that migratory children receive

full and appropriate opportunities and programs (cultural and linguistic) bilingual programs are still not being implemented in all migratory programs.

The guidelines set in place a loose skeleton of the federal requirements on migrant education programs, all were meant to support students in their academic endeavors through various support systems. Each guideline in its own way secured that migratory students be administered with educational programs tailored to their special needs. One very specific need of migratory students that is not a concern for any “traditional” student labeled “at-risk” is how to provide information from one educational institution to the next. Because this is a migratory population, students often times find themselves moving from one school district (or state) to another. The transfer of their academic records caused confusion, the loss of credits toward graduation and the misplacement of children in grade levels.

The end of the 1960s saw the founding of the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS). The nationwide centralized system was created after a meeting held by 37 state migrant education directors. The state officials voiced the difficulty of placing migrant students in appropriate grade levels, in addition to the transferring of credits from one district (or state). The machine-readable data file was a collection of education and health files on migrant children across the U.S. (with the exception of Hawai’i). The MSRTS was unique in that it was a state run program, and not a federal controlled program. Local schools sent migrant students’ education and health records to central a series of data centers (known as terminals), where high concentrations of migrant communities were located. Once the data was entered, local schools could access information by contacting the MSRTS (Gouwens, 2001).

In 1971, two years after the program was designed, the MSRTS became operational exchanging critical academic and health records of over 800,000 migrant students in approximately 100 terminals nationally (Branz-Spall and Wright, 2004). Migrant students and their parents no longer had to wrestle with grade level misplacement, the loss of credits, the misplacement of critical academic information or having to provide immunization records multiple times. Migrant students could now have the semblance of continuity as they relocated from one school district to another.

### **Migrant Education Program expansion: 1970s**

The first reauthorization of the ESEA Education Amendments of 1972 expanded the eligibility of some services to preschool migrant children. The extended services were limited to addressing health issues and not educational concerns. In addition to Johnson's proposed "war on poverty," the reauthorization created the development of two programs addressing the needs of migrant students in secondary education. These programs were "aimed to level the playing field in education for children impacted by poverty" (Branz-Spall, Rosenthal and Wright, 2003, p. 56). Two programs resulted from Johnson's intentions, each provided further assistance for migrant families, the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) (Gowens, 2001). The new programs were created to help migrant youth complete high school and prepare to enter and be successful in postsecondary education. HEP aids migrant students, who have dropped out of school, attain their GED. CAMP continues to assist migrant students in their first year of college with academic, personal and limited financial support.

While migrant education was expanding, other marginalized communities began to demand equity in the educational system. One being the monumental Supreme Court case, *Lau v. Nichols*, which mandated

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.

(*Lau v. Nichols* 1974, 414 US 563)

Simply stated, a school district's failure to provide instruction in students' primary languages denies those students access to public education (Gouwens, 2001). Although the Supreme Court ruling provides non-English speaking students instruction in their native or home language, this pivotal ruling did not require that English-language instruction be a part of LEP student curricula. Rather the *Lau v. Nichols*' ruling focused on requiring individual districts to create the means by which students have solutions to the challenges of educating non-English speaking students (Pappamihel, 2004, p.13).

One year later, 1975, *Casteñeda v. Pickard*, established a legal standard for resolutions, which *Lau v. Nichols* did not grant. Essentially, the latter case set a legal standard for school districts' responsibilities for ELLs. The courts ruling in this case, also known as the *Lau Remedies*, specified, "programs for LEP students must be sound in theory, provided with sufficient resources in practice, and monitored for effectiveness, with improvements when necessary" (Crawford 1996, p.2). The remedies, which were more akin to guidelines than solutions, allowed for districts to determine whether a school district was in observance with the law and search guidance in the construction of education programs that protected the rights of language minority students.



In the following years the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) aggressively upheld the Lau Remedies, resulting in the adoption of bilingual education for over 500 school districts nation wide. However, as the Reagan administration came into power, funding for bilingual education under Title VII was reduced tremendously. The OCR changed its focus from enforcing the Lau Remedies to reviewing school districts on a case-by-case basis.

The reauthorization of the ESEA of 1978 secured funding for the MEP for an additional five years. This year also saw the passing of the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) in California. A short time after the inception of California's PASS program, it received federally funding. PASS allowed for students, who migrated throughout the US, to continue to accrue credits toward high school graduation. The credits are earned through self-directed study, while remaining in close contact with governing agencies (Gouwens, 2001). Essentially, PASS are competency-based activity books and accompanying tests created to assist migrant youth in accruing the credits necessary to graduate from high school. Although PASS is another step in securing the academic success of high school migrant students, regrettably it does not extend its services to younger students or adults, who successfully complete the General Education Development examination.

### **Including Early Childhood: 1980s**

Until the late 1980s, only children ages 5 to 17 years were considered eligible to participate in MEPs, however under the Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Act of 1988 the ages were expanded to 3-21.

Governmental officials recognized that migratory youth needed services beyond the pre-existing age range. The act also focused on program improvement, increasing participation of parents, expanding school-wide projects, as well as coordination (Branz-Spall, Rosenthal, and Wright, 2003). Once again, I should note that although the Hawkins-Stafford Act called for program improvement, involving English-language or heritage language instruction was not included in the enhancement. Even if the act did not affect curricular issues, it did modify the age at which a child could generate funding, allowing states access to extra monies (Pappamihel, 2004).

In 1989, MEP took an interest in family support, specifically through family literacy. Family literacy was considered as being a critical factor for student success. After connecting family literacy, in addition to parent education with student academic success, MEPs first early childhood program was initiated. Entitled as the Migrant Education Even Start (MEES), the program combined, "early childhood education with parenting education and adult education, and helps link families to other education, health care, and social services available within their communities" (Gouwens, 2001, p.46). Like other migrant programs, the main focus of MEES is on literacy, health and adult education. The program does focus on early childhood language instruction, but is limited to English language instruction for adults.

### **Transnational Education: 1990s**

The new decade saw the development of an incredible program, the Migrant Education Binational Program, which advocates for "grade-age placement, transference of course credits [across US-Mexico lines], school enrollment opportunities, and outreach to increase parents' understanding of the need to enroll students in both countries" (Dolson and Villasenor, 1996, p.125). Mexican president Carlos Salinas constructed the binational program to link communities in the US whose heritage was predominantly

Mexican, with communities in Mexico. Eventually the program included the exchange of teachers, educational coursework and materials from Mexico to the US. Disappointingly, as Green (2003) notes, “many teachers in Mexico are not well prepared to teach English, either; teachers educated in Mexico usually only take a 4-hour English course in their last semester” (p.65). Placing teachers from the native communities of the migrants definitely is beneficial to the students; however these teachers were not equipped to provide any type of English language instruction and were even less prepared to provide academic English language instruction.

In 1991, the National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (N.A.S.D.M.E) formed a committee to examine ways to improve the coordination, effectiveness and quality of educational experiences for migrant children and their families (Friend, et al, 1992). The committee became recognized as the Migrant Education Goals Task Force, which expanded its responsibilities to include redefining the goals of migrant education. The redefined goals kept in alignment with the goals for American education established by the President and the nation’s education state officials. After its first year in existence, the task force issued a report, from the perspective of migrant education, to initiate a national level discussion about the importance of migrant education. The report’s findings included challenging MEPs to ease and strengthen the transition between home and school, expand Migrant Head Start, develop standards of quality for migrant education programs, and develop collaborative arrangements with local resources. The result of the report left migrant education officials (local, state, and federal) to “reflect about what matters in the education of migrant children and their families” (Friend, et al, 1992, p.7). Finally, governmental agencies

were given concrete proof of issues that existed for migrant families, moreover these issues needed immediate resolve.

In 1994, MEP was reauthorized as part of the Improving America's Schools Act, which was enacted to enable all K-12 students to meet challenging content and performance standards. The act applied extra pressure on teachers and state agencies to ensure that migrant students would receive services to "assist them in meeting the same challenging state content and performance standards all children are expected to meet" (PL 103-382 § 1304). In the reauthorization, the emphasis was placed on K-12 students meeting the challenge of "content and performance" standards.

In spite of this emphasis, states made known that the needs of migrant students varied greatly; which resulted in the adoption of federal government programs to allow for maximum state flexibility in addressing the needs of the students they serve (Kindler, 1995). Depending upon what each state concludes as the needs of its migrant population, determines how and where the funds will be allocated. In other words, after a state has conducted a needs assessment of their migrant student population, it may choose to place monies in programs other than language programs. The placement of monies into programs is the discretion of each state. States must provide some language instruction, but if they do not determine that language is the most pressing matter for their particular migrant population, federal dollars can be placed in other programs (which in many cases are also open to the school's other "at-risk" population). According to the Office of Migrant Education, what individual migrant programs provide, in terms of academics, for their students is at their discretion. If a state does not determine language to be urgent for

their migrant population, language instruction is not emphasized; therefore, it is not a priority.

One year later, in 1995, saw the demise of the MSRTS, which made students once again rely on inter-and intra-state cooperation of (overworked and understaffed) counselors and registrar officials to successfully transfer academic records (Salinas and Reyes, 2004). In 1988 Congress established the National Commission on Migrant Education to evaluate the effectiveness of the MSRTS. The commission found that as the reporting requirements became more complex and burdensome to local schools, individual agencies became less responsive and timely in collecting data. Furthermore, the program was paper-based and did not reflect contemporary technological advancements nor did individual agencies routinely notify migrant families of the uses of MSRTS records (National Commission of Migrant Education, 2001). Briefly stated, the termination of the program was done, in large part, to its ineffectiveness and reliance upon individual schools to provide sufficient data for each entering and exiting migrant student. The data collected was not informative, therefore not useful to agencies or schools wanting to provide services to migrant students (L. Gillette, personal communication, June 30, 2008).

### **No Child Left Behind: Entering a new millennium**

The majority of current transformations of MEP are those caused by the most recent reauthorization of ESEA, entitled No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB has added to the frustrating experiences of migratory students. Because the provision has increased the demand for standardized testing on students, it places even more emphasis

on arithmetic and literacy in grades third through eighth. Administrators and teachers are so pressed to make adequate progress that less attention is given to migrant students than in previous years.

In a recent interview with officials from OME it was made clear that due to Title III of NCLB all school programs must provide some language support (L. Gillette, personal communication, November 28, 2005). Title III mandates that states create standards for English-language development and measure incremental progress made by English-language learners. However, to determine what language programs are used and how they are moderated is not completely clear.

Essentially, states monitor their own school districts and then report to their findings in a form provided by the OME to the federal government. But, as an OME official clarified outcomes may be swayed if a school does not necessarily want to spend monies on creating and implementing language instruction. Furthermore, due to the large number of districts in a state not all schools are thoroughly monitored. The OME does not monitor individual districts, rather each state monitors and provides statistics based on data collected statewide. In a 2001 report published by *Education Week*, of the 50 states (and the District of Columbia) only thirteen states had English language-proficiency standards, with two states not having (or in the process of establishing) standards and 70% of states in the process of fashioning standards. Even if a school is closely monitored, the need for ESL programs, sheltered English, or bilingual education must be warranted for the district to implement such a program. As a staff member for OME explained,

[L]anguage requirements specifically for migrant students comes in when a state identifies language proficiency as a need of migrant students.

Obviously language/reading is in state assessments and migrant student information should be disaggregated from the data. However, the state can not understand if it is meeting that need, unless they have specifically identified it and has certain goals for meeting the need.

(T. Ramsey, personal communication, December 5, 2005)

For this to be the case, school districts determine this by the numbers of LEP students. The problem then becomes how districts identify actual migrant LEP students. Because migrant children move, successfully transferring student records can make it difficult to take an actual count.

Briefly stated, the effects of NCLB have been mainly felt by secondary education. The act has placed emphasis on high school retention, holding schools accountable for lowering drop-out rates and improving postsecondary transition. However, the MEPs are not given guidance as to how to do so or extra funding to expand their existing programs. NCLB has also emphasized inter- and intrastate coordination in keeping academic and health records of migrant students, doing so using the least amount of funds. Although states were strongly encouraged to devise a program to replace the MSTRS for the transfer of student records, without funding or leadership this endeavor has not yet been accomplished.

### **Placing migrants in Michigan**

*“They [Mexican-Americans] were lured to the North by stories of its attractiveness, the lack of distinción (discrimination), and especially by promises of high wages”  
(Valdés, 1991, p.11).*

Migration has been part of my family’s history for many years, as it has been a significant part of Chicana/o histories in general. Rene Rosenbaum, economist and Midwestern migrant farm worker advocate, investigated the reasons for Latino migration

to Michigan. He found that for those who currently make a home in the Midwest, migrations began in the 1920s when the Continental Sugar Factory closed its doors to European immigrants, and actively recruited Mexican-Americans and Mexicans from Laredo, Texas to work in their sugar beet fields (1997). The purpose of the recruitment of workers was due to the increased consumption of sugar (rising from 18.5 pounds to 109 pounds) in the United States, which was a direct result of the U.S.'s population quadrupling in size (Valdés, 1991).

Business owners of the sugar company drove trucks down to Texas from Michigan to bring men up to work in their fields during the summer months and then take them home after the work was complete. This occurred for about ten years until the men began to purchase vehicles of their own and bring their families North with them. Unfortunately, the wages of the workers began to dive and the *méxicana/os* found themselves lacking funds to return to their respective homes. About this time the Continental Sugar Factory recruited the workers to work in the factories during the winter months (Rosenbaum, 1997).

In the 1940s, the World War I caused a shortage of laborers in the Midwest. The labor shortage required workers from other parts of the country, therefore large migrations of Mexicans moved to the region to fill these positions. Once these governmental contracted factories closed, the workers did not have money to return home, or in some instances they had already grown accustomed to living in the Midwest. Consequently, many families did not return to their homes in Mexico or Texas hence it was with this second wave of Spanish-speaking peoples that the Midwest's Latina/o population began to grow.



The move from Texas to Michigan was not especially hard to make considering the overt racial discrimination that Mexican-Americans endured daily in the Lone Star State. Dennis Valdés (1991) notes, in *Al Norte, agricultural workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970*, “[s]igns reading ‘No Mexicans served’ and ‘We cater only to whites’ appeared in towns where they congregated; in other places hostile stares and a simple refusal to provide service were equally effective” (p.109). According to a family member the racial discrimination in some instances resulted in death of Mexicans (Torrez, J., 2002).

The preceding decades led migrant agricultural workers to the Midwest on search for employment. As is the case of my family, many chose to settle in Midwestern states as a way of evading racial persecution and achieving a better future for their children (D. Torrez, personal communication, 2002). Through oral histories, I was told on several accounts of horrific instances where Mexican-American children were physically and mentally punished while in the Texas public school system. Consequently, parents viewed schools in Texas as institutions that were not welcoming to people-of-color and even less so to those who did not speak English. Therefore many families left in hopes of finding schools that would benefit their children. It was the decision of families to no longer return to Texas once the fall’s harvest was complete; rather they chose to settle into the rural villages of Michigan.

Recently, the demographics of agricultural workers have shifted. Through my own observations, I have witnessed the changes occurring in Michigan’s migrant communities. In a personal communication, Amador Diaz, an Agriculture Employment

Specialist for the Department of Labor in Michigan, described the recent agricultural laborer trends in Michigan.

When I think about the changes in the Migrant and Seasonal population in our area I see several trends of sorts and I separate them into two categories. One obviously being the undocumented worker who do the majority of the field labor and then you have the traditional Tejano workforce who is in the migrant stream but seeking primarily processing jobs in our fruit processing plants. There has always been a divide between these two populations and I see fewer Tejano families in the stream as they are now educated and off doing better things for themselves and their families.

Traditionally migrant farmworkers in Michigan have come from the northern and central states of Mexico. We have seen more and more indigenous Mexicans coming out of the southern states and the Yucatan. Many have attributed this to the recent trade agreements that have forced traditional subsistent farmers into joining the migrant stream. Also these states are being affected by the influx of undocumented workers coming into Mexico from Central America and taking low-wage, low-skilled jobs. Many of these new migrants speak Spanish as a second language and pose a growing issue for service providers as we just got set up to assist Spanish speaking individuals and are not ready to assist those who speak indigenous dialects or tongues. (personal communication, A. Diaz, September 26, 2007)

Even though Michigan's migrant population is shifting, this change has not yet entered into the summer migrant programs. During the 2007 summer session, all students were either bilingual or monolingual English or Spanish speakers. In other words, the program did not have any students whose primary language was an indigenous Mexican language.

### **The presence of the past**

The changing demographic of agricultural workers was visible to individuals providing services for this labor force, however the change went unnoticed by the greater northwestern Michigan community. The local population traditionally ignored the labor force that arrived in its orchards, fields and processing plants. During my stay in

northwestern Michigan I did not see media, neither print or television, that addressed issues concerning farmworkers in the nightly news nor did I find articles in the local newspapers. The few instances where the local newspapers published articles concerning migrant worker issues, the stories were investigated from the point of view of local growers who did not have enough farm labor. Not once did I read an article that addressed the multiple hardships endured by the farmworkers, for instance, their deplorable housing conditions, racial profiling of police, or constant fear of having their camps raided by ICE.

The presence of the labor force has been unrecognized for a number of reasons, but mainly because both communities (the white population in northwestern Michigan and the migrant Latina/o population) strive to keep Michigan's agriculture labor force invisible. The fact that the community strove to keep the labor force hidden demonstrated the hyper-visibility of the workers. For example, I witnessed on more than one occasion NMMP recruiters instructing families to ensure that taillights were operational, Mexican flags were not flown, as well as all overtly religious symbols (rosaries, pictures of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, etc.) be taken down. According to NMMP staff, this practice was done so not to make the workers visible to the local community. Recruiters were adamant that workers did not call attention to themselves or give the local police force any reason to stop Latina/o workers for "routine traffic violations." However, using a LatCrit perspective, it becomes apparent that the reason for this advice, although well intentioned was based on an inequitable system that not only marginalized Mexicans, but also forced them to stop expressing their cultural traditions. Through counsel such as this, intended

to help undocumented workers evade unjust laws, NMMP staff are in fact reinforcing Latina/o marginalization by advising them to discontinue their cultural life-ways.

In many ways, the physical location of the worker's housing camps serves as another testament to their hyper-visibility. Traditionally, camps are set in the center of orchards or deep in dense wooded areas on the grower's land, always away from main road traveled by tourists. In a sense the invisibility of the workers made their presence overtly visible. That is to say that due to increased immigration raids and the growing anti-immigrant sentiment mixed with the seemingly absence of Latinas/os in the region, makes them inescapably visible.

Sadly, by continuously (and possibly intentionally) neglecting to acknowledge or recognize the work force that sustains the area's agricultural economy, the Anglo-American community has erected a racial barrier that excludes and oppresses Latina/o farmworkers. The obvious phenotypic and racial oppression was multiplied by the complexities of citizenship status and class-standing. In one of the most affluent communities in Michigan, the visibility of farmworkers would have forced community members to acknowledge the repressive means to how its wealth is earned.

### **Conclusion**

A program that began with the urging of farmer's wives and local churches developed into a federally funded program addressing the unique needs of migrant students. The history of migrant education began as well intentioned, however was destined to fail due to lack of programmatic research, funding and programmatic instability. The program has taken different shapes and forms, as it acquired and dismissed programmatic changes. However, without a stable funding source migrant education has little opportunities to

truly arrive at the potential envisioned by Lyndon B. Johnson. The following chapters investigate one program that was born out of “War on Poverty” era, and has unfortunately struggled to serve its target population. Many of the issues illuminated in the early stages of Migrant Education Programs still pervade present programs, and will continue to do so without adequate funding and attention.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“[Narratives] flexibility allows a gifted storyteller to adapt a given narrative to make sense of a confusing situation.” (Cruikshank, 2002, p.7)

#### Introduction

This chapter details the methodology that was applied in the identification and examination of the language practices of, curriculum, and services provided by the NMMP. Finally this chapter illustrates how ideas, suggestions, comments, and concerns offered by students, parents and teachers to improve the state of the summer migrant/seasonal program were compiled. This collection of information was done through the use of Narrative Case study, a form of qualitative research. As it was of the utmost importance that the participants’ ideas remained true to their original sentiment, guiding principles provided by the Oral History Association were employed.

Before we explore the details of data collection, it is pertinent that I describe my vested interest in this topic. One summer before I began my doctoral coursework I taught preschool children (ages 3 to 5) at a SMEP. During my summer teaching experience, I began to analyze the pre-existing curriculum, in addition to its supplemental materials (books, workbooks, etc.). My attention focused on if and how the curriculum developed academic English, as well retained Spanish as a HL for migrant students. Looking at the materials before me, I quickly realized that a small portion reflected maintenance bilingual education. In fact, the curriculum did not incorporate any HL development, nor did it attempt to provide adequate academic English language instruction. Moreover, the materials did not demonstrate the integration of the migrant experience, nor did it recognize these unique experiences. Although, I incorporated personal bilingual

materials, I was not in a position to make structural changes to the pre-existing curriculum or pedagogical strategies.

Two years later, during the summer months of 2005, I found myself working at the Office of Migrant Education (OME) in Washington, D.C. It was here that I began to question the OME staff of its position on the incorporation of language policies into the migrant education curriculum. According to OME staff only adults are given access to English language instruction, while students are placed in English submersion programs. At this time I was also given a state level monitoring instrument, a rubric of sorts, which the OME staff uses to conduct state and local migrant education programs. The first assessment made is:

Has the State developed and adopted a set of high-quality yearly assessments, including assessments in at least mathematics and reading/language arts, to be used in determining the yearly performance of each local operating agency and school?

(Title 1, Part C-Migrant Education, Section 200.2-220.8)

The responses contributed by the staff at the OME, in addition to the documentation presented did not demonstrate any requirement for states to offer migrant students with English or Spanish language instruction. Needless to say, I did not feel that this was an adequate response to an inevitable need for bilingual education and/or heritage language education. Therefore, it became apparent that more research needed to be done in this area. Through my investigation, I gained an enhanced perspective of the existing curriculum design. Consequently, through this understanding I was able to supplement the curriculum to better serve its target population.

The following sections will outline the procedures used to examine the existing language practices of the NMMP, in addition to the procurement of the

ideas/suggestions/comments/concerns offered by students, parents and teachers to improve the state of the summer migrant/seasonal program.

### **Research design**

This particular research topic was explored, through the use of a qualitative research design. Data collection occurred through a narrative case study design which combined open-ended interviews, observations, and the review of documents. The case study method was selected for this investigation for multiple reasons. Primarily, “it [case study research] attempts to provide a holistic portrayal and understanding of the research setting” (Cousin, 2005, p.423). In this type of investigation, the situation, setting, or environment was not contrived or manipulated in any fashion. For example, all observations transpired in their natural setting: the classroom, the home, the farm worker camp, etc. Additionally, the case study method accommodated to the limited time frame I had to work with the participants. The time restriction was due to the operational period of NMMP, which is an eight week summer program. Most important to a case study is that it transpires in specific site, which in the case of my investigation the research site was set in northwestern Michigan location. All observations and interviews with the NMMP staff and students occurred over a ten week period, beginning the week prior to the onset of the program and ending one week after the program’s conclusion.

### ***Case Study***

Utilizing a case study design I was able to answer the questions that were posed in my research, as well as gain additional insight of the program. As Yin (2003) states, “[i]n



general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed...In brief, the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (pp.1-2). The ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions that Yin refers to are found in my research, as they speak specifically to the themes that were extrapolated from the narratives. Within my research, my interest lay in how the program supports language development (for both English and Spanish) and why such practices are put in place. Beyond these questions of language instruction, I sought to discover how these practices effect the migrant community the program serves. In his discussion of case study methodology as pertaining to social inquiry, Robert Stake (1978) asserts “[w]hen explanation, propositional knowledge, and law are the aims of an inquiry, the case study will often be at a disadvantage. When the aims are understanding, extension of experience, and increase in conviction of that which is known, the disadvantage disappears (p.6).” Because this project explored *how* participants understood the significance of language, as well as *how* the curriculum affected the families, a case study methodology appeared ideal.

Only through a case study, which highlights a specific program and community, could the questions be thoroughly examined. Furthermore, my questions attempted to encapsulate *how* the program developed the English and HL skills for its students. The study sought to uncover *how* these practices affected the various stakeholders and *how* the NMMP’s services could be enriched (based on the ideas presented by the families and staff). In addition to the “how” portion of the investigative questions, are the “why” segments. These questions brought to light, *why* the families and staff were content (or discontent) with these practices. By employing the “how” and “why” questions, the

dialogues lent themselves to open-ended conversations, where participants spoke candidly about the program. Within these Freiran dialogues that encourage reciprocal learning and teaching from interviewer and interviewee, narratives surfaced offering a holistic view of the case at hand, as well as the participants' world views.

Case studies are like most other research methods, in that they all investigate an empirical topic by following a set of prespecified procedures (Yin, 2003). Using case study research, five family units (which included parents, siblings, *comadres*, aunts, uncles and grandparents) were interviewed and observed. Schwandt (2001) explains in a case study research "the *case* is at center stage...a case study strategy is preferred when the inquirer seeks answers to how and why questions (p.23)." Following this strategy the study concentrated on one (out of the two existing migrant summer programs) in northwestern Michigan, which led to the selection of one specific migrant community in the surrounding area. Accordingly, all the 'how' and 'why' guiding research questions were generated with both the program and community in mind.

Sharan Merriam posits that a case study is an exploration of a "bounded system." She goes on to explain case study as, "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system (Smith, 1978) such as an individual, program, even group, intervention, or community (2001, p.19)." In the case of my research project, the investigation is bound by the time frame of the program, the locations where I observed the participants (home and class), and the project was bound to the specific individuals chosen to participate. The uniqueness of the program, community and location of the investigative site rendered the research design ideal for case study methodology.

Furthermore, in a case study it is advantageous to use the triangulation of multiple sources of evidence. Cresswell further describes, case study is an examination of a case through “detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (1998, p.61).” In order to gain a full understanding of the learning environment it was imperative that all participant observations of the language practices took place within the research site. The interviews also took place in various context, depending upon the comfort level of the participants. Moreover, to support the findings I reviewed the program’s evaluations and the guidelines supplied by the Office of Migrant Education (the federal governing agency). In collecting the various forms of data, I was able to piece together an informed understanding of the case at hand, which enabled an in-depth analysis of the findings.

### *Narrative Case Study*

A Narrative Case Study approach, as the name implies, combines both narrative and case study designs. The former allows for the participants to tell their stories as they see and experience the social world. For Pentland “[p]articipants not only make sense of their world in narrative terms but they proactively plan and enact narratives that are consistent with their expectations. Stories are like ruts in the road that people follow and thereby re-create” (1999, p.712). As such, participants provided additional insights into the world through their personal or communally constructed narratives. Pentland’s description of narratives fits precisely into my research design, as it is my intent that this dissertation was a place where migrant families narrated their stories and to do so was not only to understand the importance of their stories, but to incorporate them as much as possible

throughout the investigation. Traditionally, researchers collecting histories focused on interviewing elite persons, without considering the stories of the “everyday citizen” as having importance (Janesick, 2007). It is precisely for this reason that I sought out individuals whose stories are left out or whose stories are told *for* them (not *by* them) and their narratives to be the center of my investigation.

Narratives bring varied elements of experience, thought and feeling together in a centralized whole that is connected to a central theme or purpose (Gilbert, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1995). In his description of narrative, Donald Polkinghorne, stresses,

Narrative as story is of special interest to qualitative researchers as they try to understand the fullness of human existence by including in their inquiries the unique characteristics that differentiate human existence from other kinds of existence. Stories express the kind of knowledge that uniquely describes human experience in which actions and happenings contribute positively and negatively to attaining goals and fulfilling purposes (1995, p. 8)

For Polkinghorne, stories can not be reduced to mere emotional expressions, rather narratives help in understanding human actions and the particularities of those actions.

Narratives provide a face-to-face orientation that helps in creating a path to understanding behavior, and its motivations for interviewer and participant. In creating the pathway together, qualitative researchers and interviewees are able to document multiple histories to make sense of our world (Janesick, 2007).

In their text, *Narrative Research: Reading, analysis, and interpretation*, Amia Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Tamar Zilber expand upon Polkinghorne’s understanding of narrative. The three authors believe narratives to be “constructed around a core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide periphery for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, addition to, emphasis on, and interpretation of

these ‘remembered facts’ (1998, p.8).” When working with narratives, researchers must utilize dialogical listening to three voices: the narrator, the theoretical framework and self-awareness. Dialogical listening is explained as the process of juxtaposing the voice of the narrator (as represented by transcriptions, video or audio-tape) with the theoretical framework and the researcher’s self-awareness of their decision making process when drawing conclusions from the material (Bakhtin, 1981; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998).

Narrative research design was the most effective because of its ability to “call attention to detail of practice as well as to experience of marginalized individuals” (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999, p. 88). Through the use of narratives the participants expressed how the language instruction, or lack thereof, has affected their children’s educational experience. Beyond the language instruction families and staff were able to articulate concerns of the summer migrant program. Furthermore, through the use of narratives this research became enriched with valuable insights into the lives of the students and parents.

Just as case studies are meant to have the case at the center, narrative case studies are designed to carve a space for the participants to narrate their lived experiences. In this study the NMMP staff and families speak about the case study site in their terms, utilizing the discourse created (and sustained) by their respective communities. For the purpose of this study, families and staff generated their narratives based on the initial investigative questions developed to explore specific components of the NMMP. However, the interviews were not limited to these researcher derived questions, rather the inquiries served as conversation starters.

## Guiding Principles

### *Decolonizing Methodologies*

As stated previously, encapsulating the thoughts and true feelings of a marginalized population is of the utmost importance to this research. While case study methodology allows for the investigation to focus on understanding, on a holistic level, narrative case study supports the findings with narratives from the participants. As I have stated before it is crucial that participants were able to tell their stories (or as LatCrit delineates, counter-story tell). These factors are all significant in the approaches put forth by Linda Tuhiwi Smith. Unlike the yes/no answers elicited by the surveys or questionnaires, narratives produce a rich, detailed, and heart-felt insight to the topic brought forth (which did not limit themselves to the specific scope of this particular research project). Through the intertwining of the three approaches (case study, narrative case study and decolonizing methodologies) the investigation became a platform for the experiences, stories, perspectives, and feelings of marginalized peoples to be set in the forefront. Only through the meshing of these methodologies could the participants' narratives provide a detailed and intimate picture.

In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith describes indigenous projects that are in solidarity with the needs of marginalized populations, which frames the entirety of my dissertation work. She maintains that “testimonies,” “story-telling,” “celebrating survival,” “remembering,” “intervening,” “reframing,” “negotiating” and “sharing,” among others, are all paramount to rectifying the oppressive situations of all marginalized and oppressed communities. Because not all of the projects pertained to this particular research project, I employed only those that were immediately relevant.

Those projects used to guide my investigation are described in the proceeding paragraphs.

Briefly stated, “testimonies” are a way for the participants to publicly discuss a particularly painful or sensitive event. “Story-telling” is one form of sharing such testimonies; each testimony contributes to a collective story in which every person has a voice. One central component of storytelling is the act of remembering, distinctively remembering a painful past and the people’s response to such pain. My place within the research is clearly defined by the project entitled “intervening.” Smith simply states that,

[i]ntervening takes action research to mean literally the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change.

Intervention-based projects are usually designed around making structural and cultural changes (p.147).

This particular research project accomplished intervention not only because it investigated a student body often ignored, but in doing so it provides important information for those who design the curriculum for migrant children. Not only am I, the researcher actively engaged throughout the process, but I aim to use the information gathered to make considerable structural changes to the curriculum of migrant students. Beyond informing the program’s staff (including administration), this document may offer assistance to the site director in creating workshops for incoming (and present) SMEP classroom instructors. The findings from this study will be directly utilized in improving the program directly in the following ways: creating workshops, assist in a curriculum framework, advocate for the employment of community members, and develop partnerships between local universities and the NMMP. Finally, this document will be used in assisting

agency officials, on the state level, develop future migrant education projects. All these actions place the study as the impetus for active, structural change.

The next project listed, “reframing” discusses making decisions in regards to the perimeters of the research through the eyes and influence of the community. Basically, reframing calls for defining the issue and the finding an appropriate resolution. The resolution may not come quickly and may be a long-term goal. Nonetheless, response may come through what Smith terms “negotiating.” In “negotiating,” a resolution only comes through patience, as well as through carefully constructed strategies. Finally, the last project to be utilized is “sharing,” where the knowledge collected is shared globally, as well as used as a form of resistance. Sharing is especially crucial for this project, as this investigation is meant to share its findings with the community, program and other migrant education programs. Furthermore, the sharing of information from all participants was used to create a document that would inform on a local, national and possibly global scale how to improve migrant education. In the end, the composition of the aforementioned projects leads toward the transformation of the community.

By using her theoretical underpinnings, I consciously demonstrated to my participants that their issues matter and that they have processes and solutions that are applicable to their particular needs. Moreover, through using the collected words and emic voices of the migrant population, the information gathered is both sincere and representational of its participants. According to Tuhiwi Smith (1990), these types of projects allow participants the ability to claim and remember their histories in frequently inhospitable climates. In keeping with the true meaning of the aforementioned projects



clearly defined by Tuhiwi, each project was executed in close collaboration with the participants of this study.

By focusing on one specific site, my investigation examined how this site addressed the essential research question of language practices and instructional needs of the migrant community. Although the fundamental curriculum is designed on a national level, I am interested in how it is individualized and then implemented by one particular rural migrant school. My attention was shifted to how this particular summer program implements language instruction within its curriculum, providing a case study for larger migrant education issues.

### **Research Questions**

It is through my lived experiences as a seasonal farmworker, former student of summer migrant programs, teacher at the summer migrant program, and educational specialist at the OME that I am committed to improving the education of migrant students. I specifically investigated the following three fundamental questions:

- 1) What are the language practices utilized by the NMMP and the attitudes toward those practices from the various stakeholders (migrant families, students, and program staff)?
- 2) What are the underlying reasons for the design of the NMMP's curriculum and its implications for students?
- 3) In what ways is the NMMP serving its students, parents and staff?

In the initial stages of interviewing and observing, it became apparent how my original research questions needed to be refocused. The investigative questions shifted from

centering on examining language practices to addressing, on a holistic level: the language usage (in home and classroom), the NMMP's curriculum and these factors' consequences for students. Through the preliminary interviews, issues emerged that reflected larger matters at hand. These issues addressed concerns voiced by the participants that did not directly fall under the umbrella of my original questions, but in order to understand the questions needed to be answered.

The initial interviews and observations re-directed my investigative focus slightly to understand why the families did not want Spanish language instruction in the class, as well as the educators' perceptions of ESL integration or Spanish as a heritage language in the classroom. The purpose of the project sought to explore the ideas of NMMP staff and families in light of language and curriculum. However in doing so, the project required the understanding of how the world views of the families and educators informed their views on language, curriculum and services offered by the NMMP.

In the end these questions framed my study, whose ultimate goal was to enrich the education of migrant children and therefore investigate obstacles created to prohibit the success of farmworker children in the status quo educational system.

### **Participants and site**

#### ***Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program***

The research site was conducted primarily at a rural Northwestern Michigan migrant summer program, with occasional observations in the homes of the families. The Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program (NMMP) began serving children of migrant farmworkers in 1963, a period when migrant education programs across the country

began to emerge. The program was at its peak in 1972, when it opened fourteen separate sites to over 5,000 students. On July 31, 2006 a local newspaper, the *Traverse City Record Eagle*, noted that due to funding, deportation issues, and the mechanization of farm labor, the number of sites, who provide services for 145 students, had dwindled down to two. Unfortunately, the fate of one of these sites was uncertain which may lead to one program having to service children in over a forty mile radius of the school.

The community where the school was located was agriculturally based in an area known for its tourism. The demographics of the community were primarily white, middle and upper class, monolingual English speakers. During the summer months the town's quaint shops were filled with tourists or summer residents. The school was set two blocks away from the interstate which separated the town from Lake Michigan, creating a nature border between the charming community and the bay. The school itself was a public school during the traditional academic school year, with Kindergarten through high school housed in three adjoining buildings. The migrant program was operating in the public elementary school while it was not in session for the summer. The facility permitted the NMMP use of a majority of its classrooms, cafeteria, and playground. However all the materials (books, outdoor equipment, art resources, etc.) were locked in storage units.

### ***Staff***

Most staff members of the summer migrant program were white, monolingual English speakers who lived in the northwestern Michigan community, however occasionally bilingual teacher aides were brought in. Although the NMMP administration did not

record and document the demographic of its educators, through observations and discussions with participants generalities could be compiled. Furthermore, it is important to note that most of the staff members work as teachers during the regular school year for either the local public or parochial school (although they do not always work for this particular school district).

During the summer session, the school employed state-certified teachers for all of its six lead teacher positions (PreKindergarten, Kindergarten/First, First/Second, Third/Fourth, Fifth/Sixth, and Junior/Senior High). The lead teachers for the 2007 summer session consisted of five women and one man, who were all Anglo monolingual-English speakers. The teachers' years of experience with the program ranged from one to ten years, with the exception of one teacher who began her first year with the program.

The three teaching assistants were all Anglo women. These women had a wide range of experience in classrooms, some were in their final year of teacher preparation programs, while others were beginning their student teaching the following fall and yet others had just begun their teacher preparation courses. An interesting fact here is that only one teaching assistant had some command, though limited, of Spanish. This limited Spanish-speaking teaching assistant was assigned to the PreKindergarten class, and had spent a year studying abroad in Spain to acquire Spanish.

Four of the six classroom teachers participated in my study, in addition to two of the three teaching assistants. Classroom teachers from the Kindergarten/First grade, First/Second grade, Third/Fourth grade and Junior/Senior high agreed to contribute to this research project. Unfortunately, the PreKindergarten and Fifth/Sixth grade classes opted to not take part. Therefore neither teacher (in addition the teaching assistant in the

PreKindergarten class) was interviewed, nor were their classes observed during the data collection period.

### *Students*

Through purposive sampling the selection of children as participants was based on the following criteria. The participants

- volunteered to participate
- had parental consent
- could be observed in both home and school
- were members of a family that participated in the NMMP for a minimum of three years
- were bilingual (with Spanish being their first language)
- planned to (and attended) the NMMP on a consistent basis throughout the summer

I interviewed three children ranging from ages ten to thirteen, who were selected based on information provided by the NMMP administrators. However, children ages five to sixteen participated in interviews while their parents were interviewed. The children, who participated in dialogues with their parents, were in addition to the three children interviewed individually. Informal interviews with various children occurred while I was observing the classes. Many times spontaneous conversations would take place with children, who sat next to me inquiring about what I wrote in my field journal.

Ultimately, seven digitally recorded conversations were held with children, and notes of impromptu conversations were held with four children.

In terms of language usage, I consciously waited until the children began the conversation. By allowing the children to begin the conversation, they determined what language would be used. Many times a child would begin in English, however once I said the student's name with a Spanish pronunciation the remainder of the interaction was in Spanish. The only instance of a conversation occurring in English, was with a group of students who were interviewed together. When I asked if they felt more comfortable speaking in Spanish, the only male in the group said that he preferred we use English; therefore the conversation was completely in English.

The children who enter the NMMP attend an average of three to four schools during the academic year. For the most part, the students only spoke of the schools they attended in their sending states (which were Texas and Florida) and the schools in northwestern Michigan. On a final note, it is important to add that all children were born in the US, yet they all traveled to Mexico annually to visit family members. Therefore, all the students were Mexican-American but would when asked respond that they were *mexicana/o*.

### ***Parents***

Through purposive sampling the selection of parents as participants is based on the following criteria. The participants

- had at least two children presently attending any class in the NMMP, one of which is in the first through third grades
- had children attend the program for a minimum of three summers (not necessarily consecutively)

- were recommended by recruiters from the NMMP
- had stronger abilities in Spanish than in English, therefore used Spanish primarily with their children.

A total of seven adults participated in the interviews. Of the seven adults, four were mothers, two were fathers and one was an older sister. Five of the adults had at least two children participating. One mother had one son and a younger brother (whom she was responsible for) attend the NMMP. Another participant, who was an older sister of a student in the NMMP, had participated in the program herself and now was partially responsible for her younger sister. Two children of two different sets of parents (one mother and one father) were interviewed, whereas the remaining child participant had an older sister participate. Even though, not all children were interviewed individually I made an effort to speak with those children, whose parents were interviewed, weekly in various contexts (during classroom time, recess, lunch, or in the hallway).

On an average, the adult participants had migrated for nearly twenty years between their sending states and Michigan. All of the participants ended their agricultural work in Michigan, where they arrived between the months of March through May. Additionally, all participants' native language was Spanish. The adults had varying ranges of English proficiency. Of the seven adults interviewed, one spoke English fluently, two had limited proficiency and four had no English language proficiency. Six of the adult participants were born in Mexico, with the seventh being born on the Texas-Mexico border.

## **Data collection**

Contributing to the study are three sources of information: interviews, documentation, and observation. The first source, interviews, called for the incorporation of the emic voices of multiple participants who are, those affected by the curriculum of migrant education (migrant parents and children) and those who deliver the curriculum (the administrators, teachers and teaching assistants). The second source, the actual curriculum and assessment documentation, supports the voices of both groups of individuals. Bi-weekly observations, the final data source, triangulated with the first two sources allow the research to clearly inform the OME and policymakers of the language issues.

Ultimately, the data collected for this project sought to encapsulate the ways that the participants understand their world through narratives. F. Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin (1990) explain that,

Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study... Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (p.2)

Through a Narrative Case Study methodology the researcher, is able to understand that all humans live their lives through storytelling. This allowed me, the researcher, to focus on the experience of the participants, as well as situate those experiences in an educational investigation.



### ***Documentation***

Documentation retrieved from the OME, Michigan Department of Education, and the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program was the preliminary information collected. Documents supplied by all three governmental agencies' were used to create programmatic guidelines for the NMMP. Yin (2003) supports the need for documents by stating "[t]he most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (p.87)." Beyond reviewing government supplied documents, were those provided by the individual teachers. Due to the loose guidelines set forth by the OME and the Michigan Department of Education, there was scant information that could be procured through documentation. The majority of the curriculum guidelines examined was contributed by the NMMP and its teachers. The guidelines were in the form of grade level entrance exams, worksheets, and lesson plans. OME documents consisted of government reports and executive summaries; whereas state issued documents entailed demographic and educational reports. In collecting and reviewing this information I was able extract threads that emerged from both the observations and interviews.

### ***Observations***

Observations were included in the design of the data collection. As stated before, weekly classroom observations were scheduled in one to two hour intervals for each of the four classes, allowing me to visit each class bi-weekly. This totaled an average of sixteen classroom observations, in some instances I was able observe classes more than the twice a week. Additionally, I visited each home once to observe language usage within the

home. Due to time constraints all observations focused on language instruction and usage within their respective settings. However, as other issues arose (through observation or participant discussions) I widened the observation focal point to include those emerging themes. Jorgensen (1989), for instance, explains that, “what you select to concentrate an observation on should be derived from the emerging problem and issues of study” (pp.83-4). Information gathered through classroom observations not only provided important information, but it added new dimensions for understanding both the context and the topic of the research (Yin, 2003).

Classroom observations were targeted toward the grades that included children ages five to nine. The classrooms were divided into the following grades: Kindergarten/First grade, First/Second grades, Third/Fourth Grades and an occasional observation in the Junior/Senior High class. Arrangements were made so that the observations occurred during the morning portion of the day, due to the schedule of afternoon activities (lunch, recess, naps, health, and physical education). Additional classroom observation times were arranged as requested by the teachers, which enabled observations outside of the classroom to take place. For example, I was able to observe teachers and students working together in the corridor between classes or outside during recess.

Considering the families’ long work hours, I made certain that observations were brief often times occurring during parent interviews. Moreover, home-setting observations took place when it was convenient for the families. In most cases, observations coincided with interviews to reduce intrusions on the family. During this

period parent-child interactions, spousal interactions and children interactions with siblings, cousins, friends, aunts, uncles, and grandparents were the focal point.

### ***Interviews***

Using interviews through an open-ended nature, the questions asked allowed the participants to truly express their feelings, and remove formal aspects of the interview. Open-ended interviews remove the sterility and artificial aspects from the interview; thereby creating a space for participants to be candid in their responses and true in expressing their feelings. In *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (2003), Yin describes open-ended interviews permitting for the flexibility of the interviewers to be able to

ask key respondents about the facts of the matter as well as their opinions about events...you may even ask the respondent to propose his or her own insights into certain occurrences and may use such propositions as the basis for such inquiry (Yin, p.90).

These open-ended interviews occurred twice throughout the eight-week duration, transpiring both at the beginning of the program and again at the end. Additionally, the digitally recorded interviews expanded from forty-five minute to three hours, depending upon the availability of the participant. In all cases the interviews took place in the homes of the parents, whereas the school was the interview site for NMMP's staff members. The interview sites and times were designated by the participants.

Using informal interviews, information was gathered from the participants through the form of narratives. Jorgensen (1989) illustrates the significance within a study of informal interviews researchers by stating,

You [the researcher] will be able to gather information systematically. You frequently will have a general idea about a matter of interest and desire to be more certain of the insiders' perspective. By raising the same set of issues with different respondents, you are able to systematically collect information about these issues (p.88).

It was my full intention throughout the informal interviews to strictly adhere to the responsibilities of the interviewer to the interviewees. The responsibilities are made available on the Oral History Association website (<http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/>). The main tenets of these responsibilities, clearly laid out on the website can be found in Appendix B. As a result of the adhering to the descriptive and informative tenets, this investigation was ensured to remain a Narrative Case Study.

### ***Parents and Students***

The aforementioned parents, those described in the *Participants and Site* section, were interviewed. These migratory and seasonal agricultural laborers were a combination of monolingual Spanish speakers and bilingual (English/Spanish). The language used in the interview was chosen by the families. Therefore four families (a total of seven participants in total) opted to be interviewed in Spanish, whereas one family chose to be interviewed in English (one person). In addition to the seven adults were “formal” interviews with three students, as well as impromptu conversations held throughout the summer with other students. The students and staff members chose to be interviewed in English.

### *Staff*

Simultaneous with family interviews, were those of the staff from the summer migrant program. Faculty members participating in the interviews included four teachers, the NMMP director, site directors, and two teaching assistants. The interviews involving the teachers, teaching assistants and the NMMP director were held on a one-to-one basis, whereas interviews with the site directors were in groups. The interviews held in the beginning of the program helped to guide the focus of the classroom observations. As mentioned in the previous subsection, because all staff were monolingual English-speakers (or English dominant) the interviews were conducted in English.

### *Additional notes*

Chapters Five and Six provide a more detailed and intimate portrait of the participants. The information from the narratives was recorded and transcribed. Appendix E also provides a succinct chart of the participants' characteristics. Because this study's participants may not have legal status, extra precautions were (and continue to be) taken to secure their anonymity. Additionally, all identifying information and audio recording gathered will be destroyed, once the final draft of this dissertation is accepted.

### **Analysis**

The initial stage of analysis began with the organization of the data. Ultimately, the end result of the organization process was the reduction of the information. The summation of the information enabled further organization of the reduced data into core themes. As

I read through the information, notes were continuously made in the margins. Through core themes extracted and my margin notes, patterns became distinguishable. These patterns acted as a guide through the process of “pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways” (Creswell, 1998, p.154).

In following Spradley’s Semantic Relationship (1979) model interviews were organized into themes. For instance, from a content-based analysis the following themes emerged: the role of HL in the community, the NMMP’s role in language development, the implications of the program and curriculum, NMMP’s staffing choices, communication between families and staff. This particular model stresses the utilization of the phrases and words used specifically by the participants. Using the words of the participants their emic voice can be clearly seen throughout the research. Additionally, triangulation of the findings has come about through the use of a researcher journal, artifacts, observation field notes and documentation.

### **Gaining Entry**

As the working season began in early June, most families arrived a week or so beforehand to become situated within the supplied accommodations (camps on the farm). Before the arrival of families into the area and in accordance to the criteria selected, a list of possible participants with the aid of the NMMP was made. Prior to the initial family visits, I became acquainted with NMMP staff, as well as created a schedule of classroom observations and interview times.

### *Parents and students*

For initial contact with the families, I accompanied a NMMP recruiter (an individual who is employed by the NMMP to enroll students into the educational program) during his farm worker camp site visitations. It is common practice that migrant education programs go to the camp sites to make families aware of the educational program, as well as provide assistance with other possible governmental services. During my attendance in these informational meetings between recruiters and families, I observed how both made preparations for the students during the summer.

It was at these meetings that introductions involving families and myself took place. In all the initial meetings I waited until the recruiter had visited with the families and enrolled the student into the program before introducing myself. Formal introductions entailed who I am, the research project and an invitation to participate in the study. However, if I felt that the family would not be comfortable participating in the study, I stood quietly off to the side. Fortunately, all the families that I visited with the recruiter were willing to participate. After a brief conversation of my background and how I came to the project, a rapport was built with the families. During a number of the visits I enjoyed conversations with the families about work, traveling and political issues. All adults in the household were invited to participate in the discussion, therefore it was natural to have various individuals sit for a while to join the conversation.

### *Staff*

Prior to introductions with staff members, a meeting was arranged between the program director, site directors and myself. At this meeting the focus of the project was discussed,

as well as my role and the part of the program. In this meeting an agreement was made that all staff members would be made aware of my project and that there was no obligation to participate. The week before classes commenced, I introduced myself to each staff member individually. In these initial meetings, staff members were able to ask questions pertaining to the project, as well as recommend convenient times for classroom observations. During this meeting, staff members were arranging their classes and preparing for the students. Instead of pulling the staff from their responsibilities, I assisted in making copies, emptying boxes, setting up easels, sharpening pencils, etc. On an average I spent twenty to thirty minutes with each staff member. On more than one occasion I was pulled into a classroom or stopped in the hallway to discuss students, classroom activities, summer events, and my research.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was part of the study in multiple ways. As stated earlier in this proposal I worked as a teacher in the particular school site allowing me to be familiar with some of the families. Furthermore, recruiters for the NMMP provided information on families that participated. Finally, member checking and peer debriefing was used as a way to check my understanding of the findings with the participants to gain an insight of their thoughts of the program. The final week of the program, I met with the participants to discuss my understanding of their ideas extrapolated from the interviews. A compilation of preliminary themes were presented to the families, as well as the opportunity to explicate further or dispute my findings.



A final copy of the research document will be made available to the participants to get their feedback. As I have stated earlier, the parents of the students were Spanish monolinguals, therefore transcriptions were both in English and Spanish. Digital-audio recordings of my document, if the request is made were also available.

Beyond member checking and peer debriefing, trustworthiness was accomplished through following the four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Credibility was clearly seen as the participants had access to the final product, after having been supplied with summations of the material (transcriptions, notes, classroom observations) throughout the process. Transferability occurred as there are many rural migrant educational programs that grapple with providing appropriate language instruction and services for migratory families. The end product, my written document, can offer a critical and holistic analysis of the SMEP, and ideas of how to enrich programs like the NMMP. The analysis may result in staff discussions as to how their individual programs can be modified to provide more successful academic programs.

The third criterion, dependability, was seen as I gathered information from multiple sources. The sources included in my research were interviews from multiple participants (parents, students, teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators), curriculum guidelines supplied by the OME and NMMP, field notes taken from classroom observations, personal journal, and artifacts (flyers from local growers or organizations, newspaper clippings, etc.) . Confirmability, the final criterion, was achieved through my personal journals which illustrated the participant interviews, margin notes found in the field notes, observations and personal reflections. Through

these multiple resources a complete picture of the research site and participants was drawn, maintaining (as close as possible) true to the events which took place.

It is very likely that a portion of the participants can be considered “undocumented” and for these circumstances great precautions have been taken to not only protect their identities, but to secure any identifying information. Extreme measures were (and continue to be) in place to guard the participants, especially in times like these when governmental agencies are aggressively seeking out any individuals without documentation. I am fully aware of the seriousness of the situation, considering that only last summer camps in northern Michigan were raided by INS agents in addition to individuals with brown skin pulled over and forced to show identification.

In an article published by the *The Detroit Free Press* on July 28, 2005 the author highlighted numerous reports of Mexican workers being picked up on their way home from the fields, the orchards, the grocery stores and even churches. It is for these reasons that the following procedures took place: all names of participants have been changed, only the general locations that the participants were and will be migrating to were used, once the interviews were transcribed all audio recordings were destroyed. Finally, the participants were asked to review all written portions for confidentiality, in addition to accurate representation of their opinions.

### **Ethical stance**

The research project has multiple uses beyond the obvious of fulfilling my doctoral requirements; it will also serve the NMMP and its future students. The end result presents the NMMP with the thoughts and voices of the community it serves, as well as

imparts a springboard from which future conversations surrounding the improvement of the NMMP's language practices.

The voices of the families and the NMMP's staff can only be captured if it is evident they were respected throughout the research process. Beyond building a rapport with the families, interviews were conducted on their time schedule and in the location of their choosing. Prior to the interviews I ascertained from the participants their preference of recording the conversations (through my note taking or digital-audio recording device). Additionally, the families were informed that they can stop the interview at any point or ask that particular parts of the interview not be recorded. It goes without saying that any identifying information was destroyed after all data analysis had taken place and all participants were given pseudonyms for anonymity.

All participants had access to the final draft of the transcribed interviews, as well as any summations completed prior to analysis. By offering these documents to the participants, I could further clarify or gain detail of comments made in the interviews. Furthermore, the participants could suggest the amendment or omission of interview sections. In either case of amendment or omission, conversation ensued that kept the root of the comments in tact.

### **Remaining Objective**

Due to the nature of my personal and emotional investment in the project, I found myself straining to remain objective throughout the entire purpose. As researchers, we are taught to remain as object as possible while conducting investigations which may be easier for a quantitative researcher than a qualitative researcher. In the beginning of this

document I expressed my deep investment in this project, which stems from my own and familial ties to migrant education in the rural Midwest. The loss of my family's HL began with my generation. My cousins and I were instructed to separate home from school. This lived experience shared by present and past migrant students is yet another intimate tie connecting me to my investigation. Therefore, while I strove to maintain as neutral as possible throughout this process there were times when my personal bias emerged. However, it was my close relationship to the subject matter that allowed me to build a strong rapport with the participants. My unique perspective (having been a student of and educator for a SMEP) demonstrated to the participants my sincere commitment to improving migrant education and their present situation.

While collecting data I was incredibly sensitive to the issues brought forth by all participants, and not to the information that I wanted to emerge from the data. It was in this instance that I applied dialogic listening to the voices of the narrators, theoretical framework and my self-awareness. In gathering and analyzing the narratives I became acutely aware of the narratives which spoke to me directly, and those that I felt did not. It was at this point that I began to question what drew me to certain narratives and why others were dismissed. Through this process of self-reflexivity I was able to bring my personal and emotional investment to a somewhat neutral place, which enabled me to remove myself from the process (to an extent).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE FAMILIES: “*ESPAÑOL ES NUESTRO LENGUAJE, Y INGLÉS ES EL LENGUAJE DE ELLOS*”

#### Introduction

In a special issue of *The National Elementary Principal* entitled “Education for the Spanish speaking,” the publication focused on Latina/o education (1970.) The Chief of Migrant Programs Branch for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Vidal Rivera Jr., discussed how migratory and seasonal farmworker children could gain access to a meaningful continuum of education. The scholar of Latina/o education detailed the challenges met by the educational system and service oriented organizations in meeting the needs of migrant students. Rivera proposed five changes to MEPs, they were:

- Design better testing instruments-instruments that do not penalize migrant children because of their different cultural background and language.
- Make greater efforts to involve the community and address the comprehensive problem of housing, employment, and community acceptance.
- Develop teacher education and inservice programs that take into account the special problems of migrant children.
- Encourage bilingualism and do away with instruction that de-emphasizes a child’s own language.
- Seek alternatives to state-by-state planning of educational programs that negates a continuing instructional plan for migrant children. (1970, p.44)

As one can see through the above generated list, as early as the 1970s educators recognized that issues of language instruction were pertinent to the education of migrant children, in addition to how migrant education needs to reflect the values, cultural background and curriculum continuity across states. In the following chapter I will

discuss the intersection between the issues presented by Rivera and this investigation's driving questions,

- What are the language practices utilized by NMMP and attitudes toward those practices from the families and staff members?
- What are the underlying reasons for the design of the NMMP's curriculum and its implications for students?
- In what ways is the NMMP serving its students, parents and staff?

Much like the 1970 publication, contemporary agricultural worker parents and students contend that the summer migrant program in northern Michigan has offered some services, yet has not fully academically enriched its students. Through open-ended interviews with both migratory and seasonal farm worker families, in addition to classroom observation and assessments given to entering students, it is clear that the summer migrant programs in northern Michigan have yet to fully address a majority of the points addressed over thirty years ago.

In the end, the findings indicate that the families were not as concerned about bilingual language instruction as Rivera projected. Inversely, the parents explicitly stated they did not want the Anglo American teachers to attempt Spanish language instruction. What the parents did want, however, was to see community representation within the program's faculty and curriculum, better and more informative communication from the program, and academic support especially in English language development.

This particular chapter addresses the research questions, but additionally highlights themes which surfaced through dialogues with the seasonal and migratory farm laborer community. Moreover, the aim of the investigation was to carve a space within the field of migrant education for the voices of all stakeholders affected by the

summer migrant programs in the rural Midwest. As the analysis of the data proceeded it became evident that the participating families were concerned with language, community representation in the NMMP staff, communication between families and the program, in addition to the academic implications for students. But their demands were more complex than the propositions put forth by Rivera.

After reintroducing the reader to the families, I present the families' perspectives on the significance of heritage language and its role within the community. This section illuminates and contextualizes the need for a language component of the program. Before presenting the data, which speaks directly to the project's overarching research questions, I find it necessary to explicate the issue of language and how this is manifest in the school culture, community representation on the staff, and family-teacher communication.

Having said this, the chapter contains a total of eight sections. The first portion entails a brief description of the participating families, serving as personal snapshot of the families. This will be followed by a section which describes the importance of heritage language (HL) to the community, as well as clarifying the language's role in gaining club membership (ie. the migrant farmworker community). The remaining six sections are grouped according to the investigative questions that each addresses respectively. Therefore, the first and second sections speak to the issues of language practices, while the third and fourth sections center on curriculum. The final two sections focus on how the NMMP serve its target population.

### **The families of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program**

To begin this project, I spoke with NMMP administration, which provided me with the names of potential participatory families. The director and other staff members supplied me with the names of parents who fell within the sample selection perimeters. The criteria for participants were as follows,

- [parents will] have at least two children presently attending any class in the NMMP, at least one child in grades first through third
- [families will] have had children attend the program for at least three summers (not necessarily consecutively)
- [families will] have been recommended by recruiters from the NMMP
- [families will] have stronger abilities in Spanish than in English, therefore use Spanish primarily with their children.

Ultimately, five families participated in the research project, offering insights into the summer migrant program, life as part of a farm worker community in Northern Michigan and aspirations for their children. Many of the families lived and worked within the same social network and had similarities. For instance, four of the participating families followed the same migrant stream from Texas to Michigan. Only one of the five families had settled in the northern Michigan area, while another had settled in Michigan temporarily but then rejoined the migrant stream after remaining sedentary for five years. The descriptions presented not only acquaint us with the families discussed in the previous chapter, but offer additional information that contextualizes the narratives shared.



### *La familia Sánchez*

The Sánchez family consists of both parents and their six children, who range in ages from three to fourteen. Mr. Sánchez, a man in his upper forties, is the decision maker in the family, while Mrs. Sánchez is seen as the caregiver, a conclusion that was surmised after my observing the family, where often times the patriarch answered while Mrs. Sánchez sat quietly. When asked if their family would ever emigrate to their native land, it was Mr. Sánchez who feverously replied,

No, ya no, para México no. No, ya nos vamos a quedar porque nosotros ya estamos, pues no establecidos verdad, pero vamos y venimos a Texas y ya es – para México no regresamos. No pues mis niños son de aquí. Entonces no, no, no hay idea de regresar para México.

No, no more, to Mexico no. No, we are going to stay because we are here, well we are established right, but we go to and come from Texas and there is-but Mexico no we will not go back. No well my children are from here. Then well, no, no, no there is no idea to go back to Mexico.

The family has been a part of the migrant trail for more than fifteen years. Originally from northern Mexico, they now reside in Texas, a place where Mr. Sánchez is quite happy. Most years, the family begins the working season in early spring. The Sánchez's began their agricultural season in lower Michigan harvesting asparagus. However this year they opted out, since the crops “[n]o servio. No costea el trabajo ahora, pues no costeo este año. ([w]eren't of use. The work now wasn't worth it, well it wasn't worth it this year).” The most determining factor was the family inability to secure childcare. Mr. Sánchez, the family's patriarch commented,

Batallamos muchos con ellos [sus niños] porque no había, no empieza el summer school y como ella [la niña menor] estaba en head start y el otro niños también de los migrantes [la escuela de los migrantes] y ahí [en el sur de Michigan] no empezaba ya, casi ya pa'terminarse el espárrago y batallamos mucho para quién los cuidaba [sus niños].

We struggled a lot with them [the children] because there wasn't, the summer school didn't start and like, she [the youngest child] is in head start and the others [programs for migrant students] and there they didn't start until almost the asparagus ended and we struggled a lot with someone to take care of them [the children].

Although the Sánchez's did not actively look for the summer migrant program, they were nonetheless excited that it existed and furnished childcare. As seen through the above quotation, the Sánchez's depended upon the summer program to offer care for their children, while the parents labored in the fields and orchards.

Like the other dozen families who resided in the migrant housing complex (known as a *campo*), the Sánchez's lived there through the cherry season and then continued onto harvest apples in a community thirty minutes away. They took up residence in this complex from early spring until late fall (and in some cases, early winter). The living space where the families inhabited was situated between two other designated migrant housing spaces. The only other room in the two-room home was a small bedroom that only fit a queen bed and a six drawer dresser. The 12 x 20 living quarters were furnished, by the grower, with beds (queen or twin bunk beds), dining table and chairs, a television, basic kitchen amenities, and a dresser. The camp was set one-quarter mile off a country dirt road in the middle of the cherry orchard, completely hidden from tourists who enjoyed a drive down the country road.

Mr. Sánchez was proud that his older children were literate in both English and Spanish. He is equally proud that the older children were assisting the younger children learn their native tongue, which was the required mode of communication within the household. He boastfully proclaimed,

Si, uno a otro se estan enseñando. O sea ellos saben leer en inglés y saben leer en español. A veces mas mocho, pero saben. Pero estan se estan ayudando y apoyando uno a otro.

Yes, they are teaching each other. Or rather they know how to read in English and they know how to read in Spanish. Sometimes it is not great. But they are helping and supporting each other.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Sánchez was unable to participate in the learning process of either language. She had minimal literacy skills (in terms of reading and writing), her husband assisted Mrs. Sánchez fill out the consent form. The matriarch of the family quietly supported the academic endeavors of her children duties for the family. Although her husband spoke the majority of the time during our conversations, Mrs. Sánchez responded with nonverbal communication (nodding or shaking her head, smiling, etc.), it was apparent that she was equally proud of her children although felt uncomfortable speaking outwardly.

### *La familia Sosa*

Mr. and Mrs. Sosa were the proud parents of five children (one girl and four boys), two of whom attended the summer migrant program. Each year the Sosas returned to this same location in northern Michigan where a group of five trailers were situated on a clearing in the middle of towering pine trees. The location is across a dirt road from the farmer's home, and encompassed by cherry orchards.

The three older boys worked alongside their parents, while the young Sosa daughter (Diana) and youngest son (Enrique) attended the junior high, in the sixth and seventh grade respectively. The family became part of the program when their eldest son, Juan, who was nineteen at the time of data collection for this research project, was

three years old. Working as migrant laborers for over thirty years, the Sosas had narrowed their migrant stream sites to Michigan and Texas. No longer wanting to deal with the long travel and constant changing of schools for the children, the Sosa's worked in Michigan for more than half of the year (approximately March to October) after which they returned to Texas.

In the beginning of March, Mr. Sosa and Juan depart Texas for Northern Michigan. Upon arrival the two men prepared the machinery and readied the orchards for the cherry crop. The matriarch of the family arrived in the region with the rest of the family the first week of June. Each year the family leaves their home, shortly after the regular school year has ended. The Sosas put a great deal of emphasis on education.

Accordingly, Mrs. Sosa made this comment on the topic,

Pero de aquí a cinco o diez años, pues primeramente Dios uno quiere que estudien [los niños], y que agarren una carrera, y que no anden como uno en la labor, en el sol, en el aire, en el viento, en lo que sea. Aunque sea chiquito pero que estudien algo, verdad? Porque ellos ya nos ven como andamos nosotros trabajando, mudándonos, pa'alla y pa'aca y parecemos nomados de allá de México, nomás pa'rriba y pa'bajo. Pero ellos pa'que vean que, para que estudien para que tengan otra vida diferente que uno.

Well, in about five or ten years, well first God willing that they [the children] study, and that they get a career, and that they aren't in the fields, in the sun, in the air, in the wind, in whatever. Even if they are young, that they study, right? Because they see us how we are working, moving from here to there and we look like nomads from Mexico, only going up and down. But they see that, if they study they can have a different life.

For the Sosas, education is a means to get out of the fields, it allows their children opportunities that they otherwise do not have. It is for this reason that the Sosas are strong advocates for education, and have tried to push their children to do well while in school.

### *La familia Gutiérrez*

Mrs. Gutiérrez, her husband, and their six-year-old son (who was four at the time) first arrived from Mexico to a southwestern city in Michigan then moved to the northern part of the state approximately two years ago. The young couple followed Mrs. Gutiérrez's younger brother who informed his brother-in-law of the year-round employment opportunities in the area. They quickly found a small, two-bedroom modular home tucked away on a county road. The closest neighbors are approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away. The first year that the couple arrived, along with Mrs. Gutiérrez's brother, they gathered money to send for their parents and two more of the Gutiérrez siblings. This was the only reference in any of the interviews of any sorts of remittance.

While we converse in Mrs. Gutiérrez's living room, I saw her walls filled with family photos of her brothers, sisters, and parents. The twenty-two year old woman, proudly pointed to each picture explaining who the smiling face was and where they were presently living. Out of her eight siblings, only four were in the US (the others have stayed in Mexico). She was a monolingual Spanish speaker and the primary caretaker for three younger siblings, her aging parents, as well as her own family. Like many eldest daughters of Mexican decent, Mrs. Gutierrez has taken on the responsibility of caring for her parents and younger siblings without question.

Without prompting, Mrs. Gutiérrez told me that she had taken the responsibility for the youngest of her siblings and her parents. During the summer months, she and her son are the only two who are not working in the orchards, this was similar to the winter months, when her family members worked in the processing factories while she did not. This arrangement, of course, would change once her new child will be old enough to

enter school (children must be at three years old to attend the NMMP). At this point in time the young mother will rejoin her family members in the labor force.

Mrs. Gutiérrez was supportive of the summer migrant program, mainly because she believed it reinforced elements that were covered during the regular school year. She stated,

Pues casi como que está repasando lo mismo [tema] que han visto en el año [normal]. Es lo que, o sea lo que me he dado cuenta porque pues ahí en la escuela en normal les enseñan que-ahorita estan con las sumas, restas. Y es lo que he visto que han estado viendo ahorita, por los papeles que me [hijo] trae. Y este las oraciones, todo eso. O sea eso lo ha estado viendo ahorita en la escuela él. Yo creo que esta bien porque no le afecta en nada, al contrario le ayuda a aprender más.

Well they are revisiting the same [subjects] that they had seen during the [regular] year. It's like, or that I have noticed because in the normal school they teach-right now they are doing addition and subtraction. And that is what I see they [the NMMP] are doing now, from the papers that he [her son] is bringing. And the sentences, all of that. Or maybe its what they are seeing right now in his school. I think that it's good because it doesn't affect nothing, on the contrary it is helping him learn more.

Mrs. Gutiérrez perceived the NMMP as supplementing the curriculum that her son, Josúe, receives during the regular school year. Although an advocate of the program, she was unable to communicate with the school due to two factors: the language barrier and her inability to drive. Therefore, Mrs. Gutiérrez was dependent on her younger siblings to assist in translation, as well as transportation around the area.

It is important to note that although the Gutiérrez's had one son attending the SMEP at the time of this study, Mrs. Gutiérrez's youngest brother and sister also frequented the program when the climate was not conducive to working conditions (for example, when it rained and the crops were too wet to work) or during the brief interludes between harvests.

### *La familia Romero*

Mrs. Romero and her younger sister, Arianna, were the only individuals (from the Romero family) to participate. The two daughters participated because the Romero male family members were away (working day labor on the eastern part of the state) the entire duration of my investigation, and the Romero matriarch was uncomfortable being interviewed. Mrs. Romero was a twenty-three year-old mother of a young toddler, as well as the eldest sibling in the family. Arianna, was a thirteen year-old student in the NMMP's junior/senior high class.

The Romero family settled in the Grand Traverse area when the eldest daughter entered her freshman year of high school, which was before Arianna was born. After Mrs. Romero graduated from the local high school, her parents rejoined the migrant stream until their youngest child began school. At this time they decided to re-settle, once again in the Grand Traverse area. The family resettled in a trailer provided by their employer.

The Romero parents, daughters, son-in-law and grand daughter all live in a two bedroom trailer. The large living area, serves as a dining area and bedroom for the newly married couple. Situated in a row of six other trailers, which were perched on a small hill in the center of a cherry orchard, the Romero home was the only trailer equipped with both satellite dish (for cable television) and air conditioner.

Because her family was continually employed by the same farmer- her mother worked in a processing plant while her father worked on the farm (mostly tending to the machinery and preparing the crops for the planting season) during the winter months-the family became increasingly surrounded by English through interactions with the Anglo

community. Although both Romero parents learned some English through these interactions, only Mr. Romero felt comfortable enough to pursue his English skills to learning to read and write (interestingly, Mr. Romero would only practice these skills in his home).

Even though the Romero family lived in the area on and off for a number of years, the two sisters were proficient in English, while the parents had limited English language skills. Mrs. Romero was the only family member able to read and write in both languages. An outcome of Ms. Romero's bilingualism was her designation as the translator for the entire family.

### *La familia Lucero*

The Lucero family consisted of both parents and four children, who live in a trailer adjacent to the Sosa family. The eldest children, Linda (17 years old) and Leandro (19 years old) worked alongside their parents, while the other two children attended the summer migrant program. Efrain, who entered the fourth grade in the fall, attended Mrs. Rynowski's class; whereas, Dolores, who planned on beginning the seventh grade, spent the summer in the Junior/Senior High class with Mr. Roger. Dolores was the only child to have their mother's clear green eyes, curly light brown hair and (initially) quiet demeanor. Dolores's features resonated with me upon our initial meeting, mostly because she seemed to hide the features that separated her from the other children in the school.

During the summer, I observed the young girl constantly shoving her hair under a hat and pulling the brim down low. The other girls in her class slicked their thick black



hair back into tight ponytails. Dolores's hair would not allow her to do so leaving her no alternative but to tame it under a baseball cap. When I commented how I thought she had beautiful eyes that were the same color as my grandfathers. Dolores briefly smiled only to quickly look away. After the initial meeting with the family, both Mrs. Lucero and Dolores quickly opened up revealing their thoughts and opinions of the NMMP.

The Lucero children entered the NMMP when Linda was approximately three years old. Their children have all been involved in the NMMP for over thirteen years. Like most other families in the *campo*, the Lucero family arrives in the late spring and departs Michigan during the final days of November. The family entered the migrant stream nearly three decades ago, first making multiple stops in various states but since have decided to only work in Texas and Michigan. The winter months find the Luceros working in canaries or other processing plants in Texas.

### **The significance of Heritage Language to the community**

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa writes that,

[i]f you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity-I am my language. Until I take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself... Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speaker rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate (p.59).

Although applying the work of a Chicana poet and critic, Anzaldúa may at first appear counter-intuitive to ideas of migrant farm workers, in fact many of the adult interviewees directly agree with her. For them pride was more than attached to language, it was superimposed. Although the families were not explicit in underscoring the reciprocal

nature between language and community identity, it was clearly intimated through the conviction in their voices when speaking about the Spanish language. For the participants the heritage language (HL) of the community was something that members held close, and although the families wanted their children to learn the HL, they did not want HL instruction be part of the curriculum. Family members understood that learning a specifically working-class variant of Spanish was done through home and community discourses.

***Spanish is learned at home, not at school***

In spite of the push toward monolingualism through English immersion in US schools, the parents recognized the role Spanish played in the lives of their children. As such, English and Spanish were partners that worked together, alternating their individual presence depending upon the space (location or individual). English was the language used to explain unfamiliar terminology, not yet attained in the Spanish language.

Students would weave between the two languages, sometimes within the same sentence, to formulate their expressions. While in other ways, the two languages were held in dialectic tension. English held the upper hand in the classroom; whereas Spanish was the language of choice at home. Even with this tension, the parents were aware of the value of English in an educational setting, but recognized that Spanish is inextricably connected to their personal and communal identity and cultural background.

This parallels the findings of Karen Beckstead and Almeida Jacqueline Toribio (2003), who investigated language acquisition in Latino Spanish-speaking junior high students in a California suburb. Through the students' narratives the findings revealed the

high value the participants placed on both their native Spanish and the hegemonic English. In the end, Beckstead and Toribio characterized the value that students place on both English and Spanish as high and instrumental.

Students recognize the value of Spanish in the preservation of their Latino identity, while recognizing that wider educational and employment opportunities are available to them through English. Though instrumental and integrative factors favored English, our findings additionally revealed a strong preference for Spanish in the classroom; students articulated empowering agendas that could ultimately benefit them and their school and home communities (2003, p.166).

Much like the migrant families, the students in Beckstead and Toribio's investigation recognized the role that their HL and the societal dominant language played within their lives. Mrs. Sosa acknowledges the complex relationship between her children and the two languages with,

Pues si también eso, lo que pasa es que también [las maestras] pueden como sugiriendo que [los estudiantes] puedan hablar español e inglés. Como los dos idiomas, porque casi la mayoría de nuestros niños, la mayoría hablan español. Ya sabemos que en la escuela se habla inglés verdad, y todo eso, pero también como uno es hispano, habla con ellos la mayor parte en español.

Well that too, what happens is that also they [the teachers] suggest they [the students] will speak Spanish and English. Like with the two languages, because almost all of our children, most of them speak Spanish. So, we already know in the school they [the children] speak English, right, and all of that, but also because we are Hispanic, we speak with them for the most part in Spanish.

In this instance, the mother observed the benefits of having her children immersed in English-language education. She also insinuated that parents must be active in speaking and developing Spanish-language skills. With this dichotomy, also paralleled in the findings of Beckstead and Toribio (2003), English acquisition is left intended for the schools, whereas Spanish is left within the communal network.

The language practices spoke through the lips and held in the hearts of the migrant community tied them to their *comadres, compadres, tias, tios, and abuelos*. In a Bakhtinian framework a HL could be viewed as a “social dialect,” which is deeply rooted in the context and consciousness of individuals and communities (Landy, 2004).

Bakhtin (1981) maintains,

In any given historical moment of verbal-ideological life, each generation at each social level has its own language; moreover, every age group has a matter of fact its own language, its own vocabulary, its own particular accentual system that, in their turn vary depending on social level...and other stratifying factors. All this brought about by socially typifying languages, no matter how narrow the social circle in which they are spoken. It is even possible to have a family jargon define the societal limits of a language, as for instance, the jargon of the Irtenevs in Tolstoy, with its special vocabulary and accentual system (pp.290-1).

Social dialects are languages of group behavior; languages of differing age groups; generations and of different circles; languages that serve the sociopolitical functions of the day (Bakhtin, 1981; Landy, 2004). For this particular community working in northwestern Michigan, Spanish (or rather their specific dialect) was the social language for their circle. The community’s HL, a dialect specific to those members with similar lived experiences of the *campo*, has its own vocabulary, its own accentual system, and does affiliate the speaker with a particular social network. The group’s HL thus becomes a “social dialect” because of these roles that it fulfills, as well as its inherent role in all community members’ consciousness.

In turn, these kinship networks restricted the language teachings to community members. As case in point, during one of my conversations with the Sosas and Luceros, we were seated outside in lawn chairs. Our conversation centered on the lack of medical attention or respect offered to workers at a local migrant health clinic. Mrs. Sosa

explained how more approachable and considerate doctors needed to be available. In describing the characteristics of a desired physician, Mrs. Sosa used a colloquialism that Mr. Sosa felt I may not be familiar with. The phrase used by the Sosa's demonstrated how specific particular aspects of their Spanish variation were. Responding to my questions about the medical treatments, the conversation developed as such:

Mrs. Sosa- [A]lguien a quien también que les arrimen las  
chivas pa'que también entiendan que uno que también es humano  
y tiene –  
([S]omeone that the goats can approach  
because they know that an individual is a person and has-)

Mr. Sosa: Ella no entiende de chivas, cómo chivas?  
(She doesn't know of the goats, like the saying of the goats?)

Mrs. Sosa: De que les llamen la atención. Uh huh!  
(That they know how to treat someone with respect. Uh, huh!)

Mr. Sosa: Que les llamen la atención.  
(That they are aware of proper behavior)

Jessica Torrez: Cómo se dice?  
(How do you say it?)

Mrs. Sosa: Que te arrimen las chivas.  
(That they can let the goats get near.)

Mr. Sosa: Si quiere decir que les llamen la atención. Nomás que son  
dichos de los abuelos de antes.  
(It says that they are aware of their behavior. They are just  
sayings of the grandfathers of the past.)

Mrs. Sosa: De más antes.  
(From a long time ago.)

Mr. Sosa: La verdad ellos decían puras cosas buenas, verdaderas.  
(The truth is that they [the grandfathers] only said good things,  
truths.)

As can be seen in the provided example, Spanish was not just a tool to communicate with their family members; it allowed them to engage in communication in such a way that they were given access to their community. The HL marked them as insiders. The phrase the Sosas described was a part of their social dialect, the dicho “que les arrimen las chivas” was used within a specific class and generational discourse. It was a discourse that community outsiders could not understand, unless provided an explanation. The dicho used, marked me (a Spanish HL speaker) as an outsider to this particular community.

Renowned socio-linguist, Joshua Fishman argues that “[l]anguage is commonly among the conscious dos’ and ‘don’ts as well as among the unconscious ones...Language is not only code but Code” (1988, p.28). Fishman’s differentiation of code and Code here helps to accentuate how social dialects act as group markers, allowing those who understand the Code to actively engage as part of the group. Language is the key to the unsaid knowledge of the community; it is the multiple layers of meanings attached to phrases, words, and sentences. Hence, language is simultaneously signifier and signifies club membership. The Sosas recognized how language passed knowledge from one generation to the next, bestowing wisdom created by their ancestors. In this sense, language transcends the constraints of grammatical categorization into the realm of ideologically saturated marker of world views (Bakhtin 1981). In the context of this dissertation, Spanish and English (not to mention how they are used) form dialectally opposed epistemologies or world views.

*Raíces en español: The significance of HL*

The Sánchez family sat around their dining table, the fan directly behind the couple was blowing warm air into an already stiflingly warm and cramped room. We sat collectively inside the agricultural laborer's two-room temporary home. The cement floor was surprisingly cool against our feet, despite the fact temperatures were above ninety degrees outside. We actively conversed around a small kitchen table, which was one of three pieces of furniture (the other being a queen-sized bed and a TV on a worn stand).

Initially, Mr. Sánchez acted timid during the first few minutes of the discussion. Since our previous conversation, it seemed as if he had forgotten me, the point of the discussion and our earlier scheduled interview. His wife, a jovial woman in her forties had reddish-brown hair (bleached both by chemicals and the sun, and then dyed red by the rust from the camp's water). She quickly reminded him of our initial meeting and of my (or rather our collective) research project. Shortly into the interview, the family patriarch loosened up and offered me *una soda*. The five Sánchez children, who sat on their parents' laps and the adjacent bed (a shared sleeping space for four of the children) surrounded us listening to our dialogue, which started with the topic of the abnormal July heat and working in the excruciating conditions.

As we sat, sipping cold sodas, the dialogue turned to the subject of language usage in the home. Mr. Sánchez spoke for his family as his wife and children silently sat and listened intently on his views of the schools teaching migrant children Spanish. Occasionally, the children and their mother contributed to the conversation. Mostly, their additions further illuminated Mr. Sánchez's points. For Mr. Sánchez, Spanish language instruction was superfluous. He argued that

Para mi no es necesario [que les enseñen español] porque es que yo, nosotros vivimos en México antes de venir para acá para Estados Unidos y allá estudiaron en la escuela. Ellos saben leer y escribir en español porque estudiaron. Los más grandes estudiaron hasta tercer año. Tercero y cuarto años. Los otros chiquitos aquí mismos están aprendiendo con los demás.

For me it is not necessary [that the schools' teach them Spanish] because it's that I, we lived in Mexico before we came over here to the United States and over there they [his children] studied in school. They know how to read and write in Spanish because they studied. The older children studied until the third grade. Third or fourth grades. The younger children are learning here with the others.

As Mr. Sánchez emphasized that the importance of Spanish, a language used within the home, should be taught at home, as well as within the families' home-base schools or sending-schools in Mexico or Texas. When asked if the program should assist its students acquire English or Spanish, Mr. Sánchez answered,

Pues, creo eso. Es como le digo, o sea como ella [mi niña mayor] tiene ese maestro, me imagino que es un Americano, y habla mas inglés o no habla español. Si les [las maestras] ayudan. Si les ayudan porque yo los miro que – a veces o sea como allá [en Texas] no hay tanto americanito o sea gringos, y aquí hay [en Michigan], o sea allá hablan [los niños] más español con las maestras y aquí tienen que esforzarse por hablar un poquito más de inglés, entonces si les ayuda a fortalecer el inglés, a fortalecer las dos lenguas porque allá [en Texa] el español y aquí [Michigan] el inglés.

Well, I think so. It's like I said, or that her [my oldest daughter] has a teacher, I imagine that he is an American, and that he speaks more English or doesn't speak Spanish. Yes, they [the teachers] help them [his children] because I see that they- sometimes or maybe because over there [in Texas] there aren't as many Americans or gringos, and here [in Michigan] there are, or maybe there they [the children] speak more Spanish with the teachers and here they have to force themselves to speak a little more English, well then it will help them strengthen English, strengthen both languages because over there [in Texas] Spanish and here [in Michigan] English.

In his view, it was not the responsibility of Michigan's receiving schools to aid in the acquisition of Spanish for his children. Instead this was the domain of the schools in



Texas, with Latina/o students and faculty, where the children could speak to their teachers in Spanish. The adults assumed that their children were getting a bilingual education in a school that employed community members, and combined academics with the community's lived experiences. Later when I questioned other families about the importance of Spanish language instruction in the NMMP, they echoed Mr. Sánchez's sentiment. Mr. Sosa, a man of few words, was brief and blunt in his comments of the relationship between the NMMP and the community's HL:

Inglés, que [los niños] aprenden inglés! Que les [las maestras] enseñe a leer y matemáticas y todo eso, en inglés. Español es nuestro lenguaje, y inglés es el lenguaje de ellos [las maestras].

English, that they [the children] learn English! That they [the teachers] teach how to read and mathematics and all that, in English. Spanish is our language, and English is their language.”

Mr. Sosa clearly delineated where English and Spanish should be taught, and the languages' respective roles in the lives of the students. This situation, however, is quite complex and multifaceted. As I probed into this topic with families three rationales were revealed. First and foremost, the parents maintained that Michigan-based teachers cannot provide proper Spanish language instruction because the educators simply were not equipped to do so. In the view of the families, since the teachers within this program were both exclusively Anglo and monolingual English speakers, their lives (and subsequent world views) were quite different than *mexicano* migrant agricultural workers.

Furthermore, the parents justified the absence of Spanish-language instruction by stating that it gave their children an opportunity to develop their English skills (which was seen in the earlier comments made by Mr. Sánchez). The final, and most intriguing, reason voiced by families was that the Spanish spoken by the families in the home was

not the “standard” version supplied by outsiders of the migrant community. Therefore, even if the teachers could provide Spanish-language instruction, it would vary greatly from the social dialect used within the students’ homes. This differentiation is significant because the language is not neutral, as Bakhtin (1981) and Linsey (1993) maintain, discourses arise out of the speaker’s situation and out of the multiple structures (social and economic) in which the individual is embedded in any given society. Bakhtin understands language as world view, and therefore stratified into linguistic dialects. It is ideologically saturated.

The communal HL maintenance established and then secured by the families, stems from the unspoken understanding of the language’s position within the community. As such, Spanish usage within the home is tied to many aspects of culture, particularly to one’s place within the community. For Lucy Tse (1998), language allows the individual to gain club membership by securing an active part within their community, as well as demonstrating their loyalty to their respective community.

Mrs. Romero shared this anecdote about a family who had settled out of the migrant stream. As in all interviews, Ms. Romero was offered to have the interviews in either Spanish or English. She, unlike any of the other participants, opted to have her interview in English. Through my observations, Ms. Romero felt more comfortable holding bilingual dialogues with younger individuals while she chose to speak in exclusively in Spanish with elders in the community. The new mother narrated a situation which occurred with a friend, whose parents had taken on “regular” jobs in the area and as a result their home language shifted:

See, I have this friend, and she has three younger brothers, and they actually live like if they were white people. They don’t speak Spanish at

their house. Their parents- they're fluent bilingual, so at home, all they speak is English. So the kids grew up just talking English, English, English. No Spanish. And the older sister, she's two, three years younger than me, so she learns it because maybe she was around it more than her brother and sisters. But her brother and sisters don't speak Spanish. Or if you say- they might understand it, but if you tell them something in Spanish, they answer you in English because they don't know how to speak the language, in Spanish....Her dad does agricultural work, but it's, like, tractor work and something that's not really mainly in the field. No, her mom works at Hanson's [a local grocery store], and she's been there for years. They're fluent English, so they just always speak that language.

Judging from the manner that she addresses the loss of HL within settled families, Mrs. Romero has a certain distaste toward those individuals who come from a Spanish HL, but have "chosen" not to pass it along to their children. In a critical reading of the above narrative, one can see the young mother's aversion to families that have made the "choice" to neglect instilling a pride of their heritage language onto the next generation. Furthermore, Mrs. Romero is tying the dismissal of Spanish with, as she believes, "liv[ing] like they were white people." Consequently, "living like white people" functions as a conscious choice as one will therefore lose their membership within the agricultural community (and *mexicano*). Even though, her friends' father works in the agricultural industry alongside fellow Latina/os, Mrs. Romero is quick to point out that it is not the same as working in the fields. Another added dimension to this particular family "liv[ing] like they were white people" was the parents' jobs, which Ms. Romero emphasized was removed from

After all a community, such as that of migrant farmworkers, is incredibly close-knit with kin network based on language, cultural and class identity. These community members worked and lived in close proximity to one another, often times depending greatly on each other in times of economic or emotional hardship. The participants of

this investigation all came from the same sending state, and in some cases same town or city. It is unfathomable to imagine these community members choosing to disconnect from the club membership.

In *Language, Culture and Power*, bilingual/bicultural theorist, Lourdes Díaz Soto illustrates how socializing children with a strong knowledge base in the language and culture of their family is a dualistic process. She writes that

First, young children obtain the intergenerational wisdom that loving families impart...intergenerational wisdom families provide includes stories and traditions. Second, young children robed in cultural and linguistic knowledge attain a healthy sense of self and family pride. (p.39)

This is certainly the case for Mexican farmworkers isolated from large communities of Latina/os. For instance, Mr. Sánchez indicated how Spanish was the language of the home, it was what connected them to their community. Their community was linguistically and epistemologically distinct from that of the “americanitos.” In Michigan, the migrant community is well aware that they live as “Others” when viewed from the perspective of Anglo citizens in the agricultural towns that employ them in the Grand Traverse area.

Spanish allowed the migrant community to connect with their children and extended family, as well as with other farm workers (settled or migratory). Following the lead of socio-linguist and foremost Freirean scholar, Donaldo Macedo (2003), language shapes all individuals, as well as the discourses that are formed through their identities. Furthermore, language affects the perceptions of that individual. In the context of the agricultural laborer community, language is instrumental in gaining entrance into community-based and outsider discourses (Macedo, 2003). If an individual does not

signify (by using the appropriate social dialect) their identification with other community members, interactions are retarded and future membership limited.

Mrs. Sosa, a forty year old mother of five and migrant worker for almost three decades described this connection between language and community identity:

Por que en primer lugar, nosotros, con nuestros hijos, nosotros les hablamos puro español por que nosotros no sabemos mucho ingles y nuestra raza es de México y por eso. Y si ellos hablan puro ingles pues no van entendernos a nosotros. Y pues la mayor parte se comunica uno con ellos en español. Y en español, español por que es nuestro lenguaje de nosotros. Y ellos ya es diferente porque ellos es otro nivel de vida que llevan ellos y ellos ya están aprendiendo otro idioma, y que bueno. Pero si aprenden los dos es más bueno para ellos.

Because in the first place, we, with our children, we speak to them only in Spanish because we don't know much English and our people are from Mexico and that is why. And if they [the children] only speak English, well they won't be able to understand us. And, well, for the most part we communicate with them in Spanish. And in Spanish, Spanish because it is our language. And for them it is different because they are in another level of life and they are now learning another language, and how great. But, yes learn both is better for them.

Mrs. Sosa recognizes that if her children do not retain or further develop their Spanish skills, communication between parents and children will be extremely limited. Therefore, it is possible to conceive that parents with limited English skills and children with limited Spanish skills will be unable to have meaningful conversations.

While visiting with the Sosa and Lucero families, the complexities of this intergenerational and linguistic tension were clarified. Sitting under the lush canopy of immense Northern Michigan pine trees, both families narrated their initial arrival into Michigan. The stories were narrated completely in Spanish, and the storyteller would occasionally ask the other adults, “que no comadre/compadres?”

Although, the children were not asked to be quiet throughout the narration, they listened intently. Intermittently, the children would add an additional detail, forgotten by their parent. This communally-based oral tradition indicated that they had heard this story on multiple occasions. As I watched the interaction between the parents and their children, the role that Spanish played in their interactions became increasingly apparent. Mrs.Sosa's point came to an apex: without their heritage language (the language that was so clearly their language) these storytelling episodes could not take place. Consequently, children would be left *silenced* not only from these experiences of oral traditions, but also within their home communities. Linguist and ethnographer, Muriel Saville-Troike (1985) describes the importance of communication and the necessity of heritage language by writing that,

Language learning for children is an integral part of their *enculturation* process from three perspectives: (1) language is part of culture, and thus part of the body of knowledge, attitudes, and skills which is transmitted from one generation to the next; (2) language is a primary medium through which other aspects of culture are transmitted; (3) language is a tool which children may use to explore (and sometimes manipulate) the social environment, and establish their status and role relationships within it. Children learning their first language are learning their native culture....

This is further developed by the anthropologist Norma González (2005). The Arizona bred scholar discusses her own intimate relationship with Spanish, while in investigating the role that language plays in the creation (and sustenance) of social identities for border families. González speaks of her grandmother and the manner in which the language that the elderly woman spoke was impregnated with emotions, smells, feelings, and history. She writes:

I learned that the world was not carved into discrete and knowable chunks that were simply labeled differently in different languages. When Yaya [her grandmother] spoke of the sierra, of the smoky campsites of Mexican

miners on their treks to mining camps, the images that she conjured could not be mapped onto any English equivalents. Ineffably, I knew that the dimensions of Spanish were far more different from the dimensions of English. They did not feel the same, taste the same, or sound the same. Spanish was the language of family, of food, of music, of ritual-in short, of identity. (p.50)

This is exactly what was seen in farm worker families in Michigan. For them language was tied to more than the tangible object itself. Language is a living tool that (re)emerges, (re)constructs, (re)creates, maintains, and shapes cultural existence for their own purposes.

The process by which a language generates its own meaning is what Bakhtin refers to as *dialogism*. Bakhtin (1981) explains that “[t]he word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way” (p.279). For the Russian linguist and literary critic, when a community uses its language to communicate, it is assigning more to the word than a basic definition. It is embedding knowledge and emotion, as well as a definition into each word. As previously discussed, language is at the core of a community’s world views. In turn, the individuals who teach the language in an academic or popular setting must not only have a command of the language, but they must also have club membership (Tse, 1998). Otherwise, these individuals will not be able to interject the additional knowledge that is needed in one’s HL to fully engage in the development of that discourse.

When children and parents interact, they are consciously choosing, which *speech genre*, as Bakhtin names them, to utilize within the discourse. According to Bakhtin, speech genres provide the history of an utterance. Speech genres bring the values and definitions of the context to the moment. Basically, speech genres bring a way of

thinking about the moment. Beyond bringing the generic definition to a word, it allows the speaker to infuse their own voice into its use (Bakhtin, 1981; Holquist, 1981).

All the families in this study understood that the Spanish spoken in the kitchen, while sitting in lawn chairs, or with other community and family members moved beyond constraining boundaries. Each utterance was attached to a specific speech genre, which was intended for a certain audience. The speech genre did more than define an object, but added definitions that represented both past and present. The utterances used were assigned place, history and personal voice. In a Bakhtinian framework, the construction of meaning occurs when individuals understand the context of the word, in regards to its social, historical, and political background.

If an outside individual, who is of different racial, social, economic and linguistic standing, attempted to step into the linguistic role of HL teacher the migrant community would become unsettled. After all, language is at the center of the group's culture. Basically as Valverde (2006) states, the "language brings to life the group's identity and concept of self" (p.23). Macedo (2003) would concur with Valverde, as he perceives language as ideology. Language is not simply a codified message, but rather a communication which reflects and produces and/or reproduces specific ideologies, as well as the feelings, values, and beliefs which are being defined. Therefore, identity is mapped onto language (Macedo, Dendrinis, and Gounari, 2003). Someone who does not identify with (or is identified by) a certain community is not welcome to instruct future generations on an aspect of the community that is essentially its lifeline.

In sum, I hope to have demonstrated, how HL is integral to the livelihood of the farm worker community in Northern Michigan. Inasmuch that the language is guarded



and protected from individuals outside of the community, especially those that may have a cultural experience different from the community's as well as stigmatizing preconceived notions of migrant families. In a sense, the community would very much like to see their HL represented in their children's schooling experience, especially as a way to build bridges between the child's home life and academic life. But, by the same token they are hesitant in allowing staff members, who do not have a tie with the language, serve as HL models. Mrs. Lucero attests to the significance of Spanish in their community, while simultaneously expressing her understanding of the importance of English,

Porque los papas de ellos [los niños] son sus raíces en español y para que ellos [los niños] también sepan como lo español de uno, que ellos [los alumnos] aprendan a leer y a las palabras. Cuando ellos [los niños] saben inglés no saben muchas cosas en español y así pueden saber las dos cosas, español e inglés.

Because the children's parents have their roots in Spanish and for the children to know their language, that they learn how to read and know the words. When they [the children] know the words they don't know many things in Spanish and so they can know the two, Spanish and English.

The implications of such findings are broad and its applicability great. How migrant education administrators respond to this will shape the future of these students.

### **Teacher roles in developing the student's language**

Community matriarchs and patriarchs appreciated teachers who openly encouraged translation within the class among students. This appreciation was rooted in perceptions that the students (members belonging to the migrant communities) were utilizing the HL rather than staff members (those individuals not belonging to the community). By and large parents did not want the staff members to attempt HL instruction. Instead, the

families wanted the NMMP staff to further the students English language skills, conversationally and academically. Consequently, this section illuminates the question focused on the practices utilized by the NMMP and attitudes toward those practices by the various stakeholders. The first portion explicates the attitudes held by family members toward NMMP staff and HL instruction, which centralize on the family's reluctance in allowing outside community members access to the migratory community's HL. The subsequent section describes the implications of English submersion on family discourse and development of the student's HL.

*Americanitos no pueden enseñar nuestro lenguaje*

The families that participated in the investigation were vocal in that their children were taught the community's heritage language by members of the community and not the "americanita/o" teachers in the NMMP. Although the families wanted future generations to develop their HL, they were uncomfortable with the staff members offering this particular service. Instead, most of the families were content with English instruction and translation done between students.

Mr. Sánchez was the first to comment on *americanitos* teaching NMMP students the migrant community's HL. The father of six had this to say in regards to his children learning Spanish in school:

En Tejas ellos [los maestros], *como vinieron de Tejas*, allá hay clases en español. Les ayudan [los alumnos] porque yo los miro que- a veces o sea come allá no hay tanto americanito o sea gringos.

In Texas they [the teachers], *because they came from Texas*, over there have classes in Spanish. They help [the students] because I saw that- sometimes or maybe because over there, there aren't so many *americanitos* or that is gringos.

In a sense, the father is recognizing that language is a social act and therefore, when one uses language he/she is utilizing the speech genres that exist within specific language and cultural communities (Bakhtin, 1981; Volosinov, 1986; Lee, 2004). Consequently, only those that are actively engaged within the language and cultural communities, such as the teachers who “come from Texas” are able to participate within those speech genres.

In the context of migrant agricultural labor communities, I would argue the particular social dialect used within community discourse is equally, if not, more important than classroom discourse. My argument stems from the sentiment that language is a powerful mediator of learning, and is the dominant medium in which communication occurs (Lee 1991). Accordingly, the learning of culture begins at birth when children interact with parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, neighbors, cousins, etc. (Garza, Reyes and Trueba, 2004). These interactions take place not only through physical interactions, but through verbal interactions as well.

Consider the proceeding narrative shared by a former student of the summer migrant program. Mrs. Romero remembers a time when the senior high classroom instructor-an ESL teacher who worked jointly with Mr. Roger- attempted to teach migrant students Spanish during a period when the summer migrant program offered evening courses to students in the ninth through twelfth grades. The instruction, as described by Mrs. Romero, was based on teaching models of Spanish as a foreign language (an entirely distinct pedagogical approach), rather than following a HL model. Consequently, the instruction was more detrimental to HL development than beneficial.

Needless to say, the experience left Mrs. Romero believing that HL students not receiving Spanish language instruction was actually less of a detriment than receiving

methodologically inappropriate instruction. For her, this was manifest in the ideas that “*americanitos*” are not properly equipped to teach young migrant children Spanish. As she states,

Here [in Michigan MEP], they don't teach you that. It's not the correct way of teaching Spanish...[s]he teaches it in terms of Spain Spanish, like *vos* and *vosotros*. We don't speak like that!...[W]hen I was in Spanish II in Texas, to me that was very, very difficult because it's more like grammar and punctuations and the correct punctuations on letter, like on the 'n', there's an *enya* [*eñe*]. There's a bunch of things like accents and stuff. And here, they don't teach you that. It's not the correct way of teaching Spanish. So when I was here, to me, Spanish was like a piece of cake...

According to both families, the educators in Texas are of Mexican-descent and have therefore a stronger understanding of Spanish used within the migrant community. On the contrary, this is not the case with the educators in northwestern Michigan. In this particular case, Spanish was taught through models developed from foreign language pedagogical approaches and was therefore presented in a dialect that was completely different from that used in the community. Moreover, it was taught in such a rudimentary fashion that it did not challenging students in developing their HL. The *vos* and *vosotros* that Mrs. Romero emphasized is a specific dialect used within a particular language community. By using this form, the teacher demonstrated her language association with a linguistic community outside that of the HL learners. Through this association, as Joshua Fishman argues (2000), the teacher demonstrated her intimacy, status and solidarity with a Spanish-speaking, community, but not the community of HL learners with whom she was working.

Inversely, I believe that the summer migrant program could be effective in its teachings of the community's HL, if it recognized and acknowledged what the

community wanted in terms of language development. As has been pointed out by many Latina/o scholars, educational programs targeted at Latina/os are successful, when they actively promote the value and use of the children's home languages (Colombi and Roca, 2003; Portales and Portales, 2005; Valdés, 2001; Valverde, 2006). These studies show that the program does not necessarily have to be taught in the HL, but needs to carve a space for the children to utilize the language when needed or desired (Blackledge, 1994). In many ways, the farmworker community wouldn't be so reluctant in allowing *americanitos* to teach students the HL, if NMMP staff utilized the children's home language skills rather than impose a foreign language variation. Additionally, the faculty must be genuine in their encouragement of the HL's use within the classroom.

In one respect, the lack of HL instruction suits the participating families, however the rationale for not wanting the NMMP to provide HL instruction has a lot to do with that decision. This complex relationship needs to be disentangled so that parents understand that there is an alternative and that students' HL development may be properly encouraged. Currently, however, families are uncomfortable with HL instruction presented by an individual who is not from the native speaking community. Especially since these figures often serve as a model, Mrs. Romero's experience with Spanish language instruction underscores this fact. By not having a community-outsider (seen as non-Latino) offering HL instruction, the program is following the wishes of its target population. However, the reasons for this are complex and do not actually represent the desire for English-only instruction. Rather, this points to the past failures of HL instruction and pedagogical changes that must occur. For this to occur the MEP must make use of community member resources for HL instruction.

### *English invading the home discourse*

The lack of HL support and/or representation in the classroom has left some students to rely on English as their prime venue for communication. On multiple occasions, I observed younger students codeswitching or applying general nondescriptive terms in their HL when coming upon unfamiliar vocabulary. For example, during a free choice time in the kindergarten/first grade class, a group of children were playing with a Lego zoo set. The children would use Spanish when asking for items while pointing to the specific plastic animal, “dame eso/esa” or “pongelo allí.” In other instances the children would code-switch, such as, “ira me pego the monkey” or “Dame lo brown bear.”

As Guibeson et al maintain language behaviors such as the increased usage of general non-descriptive terms (eso, esa, esto, esta, etc.) or code-switching, in addition to grammatical errors are the early signals of language loss (2006). I observed in my field work that, even though some classes allow for conversations to take place in either language, English was shown to become the language of choice with younger students. Ultimately, the immersion of the dominant language through the classroom, as well as through popular culture, led to its encroachment on the home language.

This was a concern voiced by Mrs. Gutiérrez, a mother-to-be (for the second time), who expressed her unease with the intrusion of English in the conversations of younger children. This matriarch noticed the invasion of English within her once monolingual Spanish speaking home. Interestingly, however, she and another settled family were the only participants to speak about the implications English has had on their HL usage in the home.

As Lily Wong Fillmore (2000) puts forth, ordinarily, we assume that when a child learns a second language, this will be added to the child's native language and will result in bilingualism. For Latina/o students in rural America, this is not always the case. Consider Mrs. Gutiérrez's experience with the effects of English on her home. She states,

Ah! Está bien, eso es lo malo que les pasa a los estudiantes. Mis hermanos también, aquí pues hablamos puro español, a veces dicen que entre ellos hablan ingles. Pero hay palabras [en español] que luego no entienden también...Pues con mis hermanos si luego [mi hijo] hablan en inglés con ellos. Pero pues a mi luego me dice algo así y le digo, "Qué es eso?" Y es que pues como estaba chiquito pues no sabe 100 por ciento español ni 100 por ciento inglés. Y las cosas que no se sabe en español las dice en inglés y ya luego las pregunta a mis hermanos que qué es eso, y pues ellos también hay veces que pues no sabe que es y ya le empiezan a decir verdad,

Ah! That's right, which is the bad thing that happens to the students. My brothers too, here [at home] we speak only Spanish, sometimes they speak with each other in English. But, there are words [in Spanish] that they don't understand...Well, with my brother, my son later speaks in English with them. But well later he'll say something to me and I'll ask him, "What is that?" And it's like because he's little he doesn't know Spanish 100 percent or English 100 percent. And the things he doesn't know in Spanish he says in English, and then later he'll ask my brothers what it is, and they also will have times when they don't know what it is and they'll start to tell him

In this interview, Mrs. Gutiérrez shares how English has pervaded the discourse of her younger brothers and thereby beginning to replace Spanish. This process has resulted in the younger family member's small-scale HL loss. Although, Mrs. Gutiérrez would like to learn English, she does not want it to replace her native language, nor does she want it to dominate the discussions within her home.

Unfortunately once these migrant children enter into the school system, they are almost exclusively contained within an English-Only environment. The English

language learning process becomes a subtractive process that ultimately leads to the loss of the family's HL (Valenzuela, 1999). In the short period of time that both settled families laid roots in rural northwestern Michigan, English has begun to take its place in the home discourse. In an interview Joshua Fishman (1994) argues,

[L]anguages do not exist independently from the people, families and communities that use them...When people lose their native language to English, they do not become Anglos and obtain social acceptance. They lose the language as a tool for accessing the help that their families and communities give them. (p.28)

Although Fishman counters some of the arguments put forth in the previous section, he builds upon my previous arguments. As students lose Spanish, they do not gain acceptance into the dominant society, but do begin to lose their group membership.

The farmworker participants of this investigation would agree with Fishman. Consequently, the families' HL has been marginalized which not only excludes the children from family dialogues, but also restricts discussions between the older generations and the younger family members.

Mrs. Romero noticed the impact of English on their home discourse. The presence of English was evident, especially after her younger sister (Arianna) entered the local public school in Michigan. Arianna's entrance into English dominated school resulted in the child's reliance and preference for English. Mrs. Romero stated that:

After that year, second year, they [school officials] would always say she would be kind of, like, a shy person, but after she got the confidence in speaking English or whatever, she learned it. But right now, her English is better than mine. It's really perfect, and you can't really hear an accent because she was here through all those five, six years that she's been going to school...[m]y sister, she doesn't-she's like, "I don't know what it says there." It's really hard for her to read it [Spanish] because she's just used to the English. And here at home, we always speak Spanish. Or me and my sister, we speak English, Spanish, Spanglish. We mix it around, but that's why I tell her-I'm like, "It's very important for you to learn both languages." There's a lot of kids here that live here in Michigan,



they're from Hispanic parents, and they don't know any Spanish, even to speak it. So that's very hard, and it's kind of bad because they lose their language, how to speak Spanish.

In reading the above passage, one can see that Mrs. Romero was active in allowing English to enter the home, as she simultaneously advocates for HL sustainability. In the beginning of her narrative, Mrs. Romero comments on how well her sister speaks English (“you can't really hear an accent...”), but as she continues the young woman recognizes how English may eventually replace one's heritage language.

As has been pointed out in canonical bilingual education text, heritage language loss may happen as few as three generations, leaving grandparents and grandchildren unable to interact (Grosjean, 1982; Wong Fillmore 2000). According to this literature, initially the first generation, upon arrival in the U.S., is generally monolingual in their native language (in which case they remain monolingual or bilingual in their native language and English). When their children, first generation “Americans,” come into contact with the English-speaking majority they become bilingual. From this point, first-generation Americans retain their HL, however once they enter an English-dominant setting (school, work, neighborhood, etc) they use the dominant language more frequently. When their children, the third generation, come of age the HL is rarely used within the home setting and the language then becomes lost (Grosjean, 1982).

Such was the case in my family, who settled out of the migrant stream in the late 60s. My family, like the Romero's and Gutierrez's, continued agricultural work as seasonal farm workers. Also, like the families of the two women, my family settled in a predominantly white community. Immersed in English through school, peer, media and the neighborhood communities, this process left its toll on my family's language

practices. Ultimately, my family's HL followed the fate of other marginalized peoples, it became lost and replaced with English. The concerns about HL loss, as expressed by both Mrs. Romero and Mrs. Gutierrez, are my family's reality.

As Lily Wong Fillmore (2000) documents among Asian Americans, if English continues to permeate the home discourse heritage language loss is inevitable. In turn, the loss of familial interactions will lead to the eventual deterioration of familial relations, specifically speaking in regards to family members' roles within the family. If communication between children and their parents, aunts, uncles or elders is restrained how can the younger generation understand the crucial role the older generation plays in the development (and sustainability) of that community? Children will be left out of those particular social dialects, therefore not a part of the heteroglossia within their communities. Through the continuous use of English, younger generations are choosing the stance they want to take, hence using those utterances and discourse to shape their identity (Bakhtin, 1981; Landy, 2004).

Concluding this section, I would like to return to the topic of the NMMP's practices. In considering this topic it is important to note that, the program's view of language (which will be further discussed in Chapter 6), was that English served as the only avenue for instruction. Lack of Spanish language skills and ESL (or any language strategy) instruction, in addition to the program administration's strong encouragement for English immersion, left classroom instructors with no other alternative than English-only classes. It was this classroom dynamic which thrust children into an English/Spanish dichotomy, leading to the slow (but inevitable) eventual replacement of Spanish with English.

### **Understanding the program's purpose**

As previously stated, in this particular section I will address questions centering on the program's curriculum design, in addition to the academic implications for the NMMP's students. Moreover, this section discusses the ways in which the families understand the curriculum. While visiting families with the program's recruiter, as well as through discussions with program administrators and participating families I gained insight on the program's function through multiple lenses. The section begins with the informative role played by the NMMP's recruiters, often times the first individuals to speak to the families about the program.

#### ***The recruiter's role***

Let me commence by analyzing the role of the recruiter. Each summer for the past four decades, the NMMP has sent recruiters into the Grand Traverse area to visit farmworker families and persuade parents to enroll their children in the summer migrant program. Additionally, the program has worked with other MEPs along the migrant stream as a way of informing each other of families that are departing and/or arriving in the area. Since the NMMP recruiters have many years of experience recruiting, they demonstrate strong personal relationships with the families.

The summer that I collected data, the NMMP employed two recruiters (one male and one female). I accompanied the male recruiter, Derrick, while he went to each camp welcoming returning families and registering new families into the program. The Anglo man in his mid-thirties with a smile and kind demeanor had been part of the NMMP staff for almost a decade, and appeared to thoroughly enjoy his job. Due, in large part, to his

good-natured personality Derrick had built a strong rapport with families and was someone that the migrant community trusted.

The recruiters' experience with the families has allowed them entrance into the community. Often times, recruiters are offered homemade corn tortillas, quesadillas filled with queso fresco, and home grown chiles as gifts; others are invited to birthday parties while being notified of new families in the area. In return, the recruiters pass along local information and knowledge to the political climate and caution families of certain areas that are uninviting to migrant (and "undocumented" families).

In one such visit, Derrick warned a family to limit their trips into the city and that when visiting the city to be cautious to heed all traffic laws. The recruiter told the families to "Make sure to take down the Mexican flag hanging from the mirror, and don't ever put anyone in the back of the truck and make sure that none of your lights are out" (personal observation, July 2007). Later when I asked Derrick about these warnings he explained:

Since those guys were carried off [a nearby camp had been raided, with seven men apprehended by ICE] people are very afraid. They [police officers] say they don't profile them [migrant workers], but they do. I tell them take off the Virgen and rosary, those are telling signals. It is usually Mexicans, from Mexico, who do this. But those are the people [Mexican nationals] that need to be careful.

The main responsibility of recruiters is to inform families of the goals (as supplied by the Office of Migrant Education) of the summer migrant program, as well as the services it provides. However, as the previous dialogue alludes, recruiters also feel obligated to pass along crucial survival information to families. The director of the program explained that the goal of the recruiters is to "enroll students and let the families know how we [the NMMP] can help their kids academically." Ideally, families who are recruited into the

program, are provided with the both the goals of the program, as well as how the MEP achieves those objectives. Unfortunately, there was a breakdown between theory and practice, as many families were not given the educational mandate of the NMMP.

On one particular family visit, the NMMP recruiter explained the program in terms of the non-academic services offered: meals, dentist clinic and the occasional field trip. Throughout the entire forty-five minute meeting, the recruiter described how the children are given breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. He then went on to explain how at the end of the summer, students will (excluding the preschool) go to the beach, as well as the fire station (K-second) and the library (third grade-senior high). Furthermore, he went in to detail about the dental clinic (a separate program, which is facilitated by a state university). While describing the program to the parents, I observed that the way in which the recruiter explained the summer migrant program (SMP) resembled a daycare center. In his description, he failed to address the details of how the program functioned as a school and that it employed certified teachers.

While speaking with the families, I noted that three out of five families interviewed were concerned that the program was not academically challenging to their children. In the multiple home visits by the recruiter, in which I participated, it became apparent that parents, primarily those with students in the younger grades, saw the program as a daycare. The parents of older children saw the potential of the school, but were left out of the educational process for one reason or another. Cinthia Salinas and Reynaldo Reyes (2004) found by keeping the program's academic potential behind its non-academic services MEPs repress graduation opportunities for migrant students. By suppressing the MEPs potential, the program then creates an additional barrier between

migrant parents and the schooling process. Meaning, by MEPs placing dental and health services at the forefront the program does not emphasize or develop its academic components. Mrs. Sosa illuminated this point by stating:

Si porque aquí les pregunta uno, “Que hicieron en las escuela?” “No, pues nada mas jugamos o hicimos, esto.” Yo pensé que los habían puesto a leer o hacer matemáticas o a-no...No mandan tareas, nomás en la otra escuela, en la pública cuando ya entran; pero en esta no. En esta no, y nos gustaria que fuera adelantada también [y que] aquí que les enseñaran las materias [en las] que van atrasados para que no se atrasen ellos.

Well, yes because here I will ask them [the children], “What did you do in the school” “No, well we just played games and we did this.” I thought that they [the NMMP staff] would have the children read or do mathematics or a-no. They don’t send homework only the other school, the public school when they enter, but in this one no. In this school, and we [the families] would like it also to be ahead [in academics] here and teach them [the students] the materials that they are behind in so they don’t get more behind.

So while the necessity for the children’s safety was at the forefront, parents also sought for the development of a challenging curriculum. Mrs. Sosa’s children, who are junior/senior high class, have also witnessed the effects of a misaligned curriculum between states. Therefore, as mentioned in the Sosa family description, education is a high priority for the family. When asked if the program’s subject matter was challenging, Enrique Sosa, a seventh grade student in Mr. Roger’s class, responded

Enrique: Well, we like school.

Jessica Torrez: Why?

Enrique: Yeah, it’s fun. Like, we don’t do hard work. Just like-play around.

Jessica Torrez: You don’t do any hard work?

Enrique: We do do work, but not that hard. Fun work. We do activities instead of, like, doing work...They teach more of the same things. Like we’re already going to do career paths, and we already did

that stuff back there [in Texas].

Enrique suggests that the junior/senior high subject matter was not as challenging for students, which may be a response to the different standards and benchmarks used by home and sending states. In my observations, I saw students complete their day's assignments before lunch, thereby leaving the remainder of the day for visiting with other classes or fellow classmates. The misalignment in curriculum between sending and receiving schools is a leading factor migratory students dropping out of school (Friend, et al, 1992). Disconnected curriculum is one factor that the NMMP needs to address, or assist in reducing the implications of gaps between state-to-state curricula.

Enrique's mother, Mrs. Sosa, also mentioned the misalignment between the home school's academic expectations and the NMMP's academics. Mrs. Sosa had this to say

Del programa de los migrantes nada mas que les enseñen nada más las materias que ellos van atrasados. Porque así en Texas, así si no saben como ciencias las enseñan. Si no saben mas ingles también les enseñan. Matemáticas también, si van atrasados también les enseñan más. Por eso nos gustaría que también aquí fuera adelantada la escuela. Por que hay unos niños que dicen que no les gusta ir aquí a la escuela de verano porque dicen que aquí va atrasada la escuela, y también en la otra que va atrasada y que les enseñan lo que ellos ya saben.

The program for migrants should teach them [the students] nothing more than the subjects that they are behind in. Because in Texas, like, if they [the students] don't know science, the school teaches them. If they don't know more English, they teach the students. Math too, if they are behind in it they [the Texas schools] teach them. For that reason, we [the parents] would like that the [NMMP] school would be ahead. Because there are some kids who say that they don't like to go to the summer school here because they say the school is behind, and also the other school [traditional academic year school] is behind and that they [educators in both the traditional year school and summer program] teach what the students already know.

The families expect the program to assist their children bridge the academic gap that occurs through migrating. Mrs. Sosa sees that the children are not challenged, thereby leaving some children with little motivation to attend the program. For her, the program would be attractive to students if it offered subject matter that has not previously been covered in their home schools.

Instead, the program is perceived to be a combination of daycare, a distraction to keep the children occupied while their parents are working, and an educational setting for academic review. Mrs. Romero reflects on how she views the program. For her:

[I]t helps them out, distraction, like besides, as I said, from going to work. To me, that's one of the strongest points [about the NMMP] that it has because as I told you, when I was going to school, there wasn't time for me to go to summer school. I would always have to go to work. So these kids have a little bit of an advantage of going to school to get away from work....

One goal for many MEPs is to offer effective academic support, especially for students in the junior and senior high classes, which promotes student achievement (and ultimately graduation). This is the program that Mrs. Romero recalls and sees as an advantage for attending students. However, if a discrepancy disrupts the curriculum between sending and receiving schools, the NMMP is unable to provide such support. These discrepancies, although not the sole problem, need to be properly addressed.

Summarily, this section speaks to the function of the program and its implications for students. Migrant and seasonal agricultural laborer families see the design and implementation of the program as being loose, thus serving less as a tool to bridge a gap in the academics and more as a safe haven for the students. Hence, the summer education program is seen as a place that offers a safe space for children, rather than a program which builds students academic skills. Although parents want a school to create such a



space, they also desire a curriculum that will allow their children access out of non-agricultural employment.

*(Mis)Communication between stakeholders*

Involving parents in their children's education seems to be a given for middle to upper class US citizens (Epstein, 1990). On the contrary, working-class parents are often marginalized. This leaves poverty stricken parents out of classes and out of the institutions that educate their children. Parents of migrant students are left out of the process more frequently than other disenfranchised peoples. It could be assumed that a program specifically designed to address the unique needs of migrant students would, as Rivera suggests in 1970, "[m]ake greater efforts to involve the community"(p.44). This is especially apparent as, communication among the summer migrant program (SMP) and the families it serves would indefinitely benefit all NMMP stakeholders. By including parents in school activities, students frequently achieve academically higher than those students whose parents continually are marginalized. Students of Mexican-origin have demonstrated significant improvements in academic aptitude when there is parental involvement in the school (López, 2004; Chavkin, 1991; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

In previous sections, I described the language barrier between parents and staff members, as one factor inhibiting parent participation with the summer migrant program. Yet another cause, a quite obvious one, was the distance between the school site and the homes where the farm laborers were living. The geographic distance between the school and the *campo* was at a minimum a thirty minute drive, while the average was closer to forty-five minutes. Most students rode the NMMP bus to and from school, commuting between home and school for as long as 90 minutes. Therefore, parents wanting to be

involved would have to spend significant time driving to the school, in addition to the money spent on gas. As such, parents who labored all day in the fields would have to return home, prepare themselves (i.e. shower, change their clothes), and then drive to the school site.

Unfortunately, if parents were to go through all the preparation of meeting with their student's teacher, they might find that the instructor had left for the day (as happened on a few occasions). As in most cases, staff members would leave school grounds shortly after the students would get onto their respective buses unless parents made special arrangements to meet with staff after school (which entailed another lengthy process).

In my observations while visiting families with the program's recruiter and through discussions with program staff, I discovered the information that the families received was through either the recruiters or the site director. Inversely, the information that the school gathered about its students was also through the recruiters and the site director. What this means was that most of the information gathered and disseminated was done through these two individuals. Thus, these two individuals became the pipeline of information. Consequently, parents were left to rely upon two individuals to receive and document information. Teachers rarely communicated or interacted with families. In one example, a family asked the recruiter if their child would be given an opportunity to visit the dentist. The recruiter responded with, "*Ah, si yo pregunto a Mrs. Nettle [la directora del sitio] y ella puede llarmarte, si quieres. Si no, yo puedo vistarte otra vez.*" (Ah, yes I can ask Mrs. Nettle [the site director] and she can call you, if you want. If not, I can visit you another time.)"

What this situation highlights is that, parents were left reaching out to both NMMP staff, while teachers were not involved. The only instance that the program actively engaged in communication with the families was when the recruiters went out to the *campes* to enroll students. By and large, any other initialized communication was left to the families.

Often times, families who were concerned about their children passing to the next grade contacted the site director. The following example shared by Mrs. Lucero illustrates a situation in which parents must initiate conversations with the summer migrant program:

Lo que pasa es que como que tiene que ponerse en contacto verdad [con el NMMP]? De que uno también de padre tengo como que este listo y activo de que su hijo si paso, y si no paso pues tener atención e ir a decirle [a el programa], “pues sabe que, mi hijo no paso, y quiero que por favor hable usted a esta escuela [la escuela que vienen de] a ver que grado necesita, que materias necesita para yo poderlo ayudar con eso y que el pasa porque el esta asistiendo aquí en la escuela,” verdad? Entonces así es como uno puede ayudar, pero uno también de padre también tiene que poner algo; y también tiene que ir a decirle [a el programa], verdad? Porque si nomás uno mete los niños a la escuela y si ellos no saben, pues no van a saber.

Como nomás te preguntan, “¿A que grado vas [el alumno]? ¿A este, y pasaste?” ... Si, como cuando yo los registro a ellos [sus niños] preguntaron en que grado van, y yo les digo este no paso, o este si paso, o necesito eso, o necesito lo otro, verdad? [¿En el programa del summer school, los maestros hablan con usted?] No, el señor que viene a registrarlos, pero ya después va uno y dice, pues tiene que ir a hablar con el director o maestro, lo que sea, y le dije yo, “ah, esta bueno y fui. Porque la misma señora esta ahí.

What has to happen is that you need to yourself be in contact [with the program] right? Parents need to be ready to be smart and active that their children pass, and if they [the children] don't pass that the parents pay attention and go to tell them [the NMMP], “well, you know, my child did not pass, and I would like you to please talk to this school [home school] to see what grade they need, what materials they need so I can help them with that, and that my child passes because they are attending the school here,” right? After that we can help, but parents also have to do

something; and also have to go and tell them [the NMMP], right? Because if you just send your children to the school and they [the staff] don't know, well they won't know.

Like they [the recruiters] only ask us, "What grade are you [the student] in? This one, and you passed?...Yes, when I register them [her children] in the grade they are going in, and I tell them [the recruiters] that they [her children] didn't pass, or that this one passed, or they need this, or they need that, right? [In the summer school, do the teachers talk to you?] No, the recruiter who registers them, but after that you go and he says, well I have to go talk to the director or teacher, or whatever, and I tell him, "Ah, that fine" and I went. Because the same lady is there.

This narrative provided by the mother of four suggests that the students' academic transfer is primarily left to the parents, and that she must personally take on an active role in getting that information to the school director. Parents must also take an active role in educating themselves about the standards and benchmarks from their children's sending schools. Although she does not negate the program administration's helpful role in assisting students to satisfy requirements for Texas schools, she does demonstrate that only once did any NMMP staff actually engage in communication with families. Parents must be proactive on behalf of their children to ensure that the SMP provides subject matter that aligns with Texas standards. This proactive role is exactly what must be done for marginalized students' voices to be heard (Garcia, 2001; López, Scribner and Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Garcia, 1996). Nonetheless, NMMP faculty must be willing and open to parent involvement.

Sadly, communication between staff and families appeared to be one-sided. The NMMP visited families when it was time to enroll children in school (or in the rare instance that a child severely misbehaved) and families contacted the program's faculty when their child needed specific academic support. In both cases, the first group to initiate communication did so to gain information (program gained information to enroll

students and families gained information to support their children), rather than to share in a dialogue or build an intimate relationship. This contrasts with literature that documents the hesitation Latino parents feel when dealing with teachers and administrators in a formal setting.

This literature, as seen in the work of Garza, Reyes and Trueba (2004) and Portales and Portales (2005) speaks to the fact that Mexican or Chicano families tend to shy away from initiating dialogue between parents and schools. However, I found the opposite occur within the pool of parents whom I interviewed. Families, regardless of their level of education, would frequently initiate conversations with NMMP faculty and staff members if the parents wanted their student to receive specific academic instruction. NMMP faculty rarely did the same.

Furthermore, studies have proved the various ways parent participation in schools is beneficial to student academic achievement, particularly amongst the Latina/o community (Chavkin, 1993; Epstein, 1986; López, 2004). Given the findings in literature on year-round migrant education programs, it may be extrapolated that MEPs could also benefit students in summer migrant programs. In a study of MEPS in three Texas districts found that “before any type of substantive ‘involvement’ could be expected of parents, they [the MEPs] first needed to address the social, economic and physical needs of migrant families” (Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha, 2001 p. 256). Obviously, the NMMP would have a difficult time addressing these needs if the program was only meeting with families once and then relying upon the family to make subsequent communications.

When I questioned Mrs. Gutierrez's about her understanding of the program's curriculum, she simply stated,

La verdad yo nunca he ido así a ver [la escuela]...pero pues a mi se me dificulta de que yo no manejo. Se me dificulta ese estar allí, tengo que buscar quien me lleve y quien me va a traer. Y a veces como no tengo alguien que me pudo llevar. Y pues no es tan fácil poder ir así a los lugares. Y luego pues en el taxi uno tiene que saber por lo menos como decir "llevame a tal parte." Es un poquito complicado eso. Mejor pues me quedo en mi casa.

The truth is that I have never gone over there [the school site] to see...but well it is a bit hard for me because I don't drive. It is difficult for me to be over there, I have to find someone that can take me and bring me back. And sometimes I don't have anyone that can take me. And well it isn't as easy to go to those places. And even in the taxi one has to be able, at the least, to say can "you take me here." It's a little complicated. It's just better that I stay home.

This situation illustrates why, the young mother was unable to personally interact with the school for two reasons: lack of transportation and the language barrier. She trusted that the school would support her son's learning, without questioning what exactly was happening at the program. In Mrs. Gutierrez's case, a home visit would have been beneficial, given that the program made arrangements beforehand. Reciprocal dialogue, initiated by both parties, must commence so that parents may become involved and the NMMP is apprised of the educational issues concerning migrant families.

### **Serving the community**

By and large the families felt that the program was, in fact, serving the community. The facility functioned as a safe space for the children, while their parents were out working, in addition to supplementing the student's existing academics. However, the families felt that the program could serve the community better if it employed individuals from the

migrant community. The parents saw how dissimilar they were from the teachers, and how these differences hindered interactions between the two. Additionally, community members could assist in the integration of the student's culture and HL into the classes. When speaking on the topic of the teacher's knowledge of their students, Ms. Lucero commented

De que [los maestros] convivieran más con ellos [los alumnos] , de que los [maestros] conocieran como tratarlos, verdad? Para que ellos puedan tratarlos más mejor, a conocerlos como son ellos. Y no son malos, pero si ellos se ponen a pensar que los niños de ellos tienen como diferentes pensamientos, verdad? Ellos como – a saber como reaccionan si el maestro les esta diciendo – como nomás le esta hablando en español, I mean, o en inglés y si él no sabe suficiente inglés, verdad? Cómo va a reaccionar el niño, verdad? Y esta bien, como quiera ellos no son malos pero si ellos agarran otra actitud de que ellos puedan entenderlos más.

That they share their life with them, and they understand how to treat them, right? So they can treat them better, and understand how they are. And so that they are not mean, but they begin to think about how their kids will have different ideas, right? They will-know how to react if the teacher is saying something-like they don't only speak in Spanish, I mean, or in English and if the don't know enough English, right? How will the teacher react, right? And it is okay, that they are not mean but that they get another outlook that they can learn about them more.

What Ms. Lucero commented on is how the program's staff reflected a world view, as well as had life experiences that did not prepare them to interact meaningfully with the student body. The proceeding section delves deeper into the investigative question which focuses on the ways that the program serves its target population. Through my observations and discussions with the families, I found that the community believed the program could serve them better by hiring individuals from the community.

*“Ellos nomás agarran americanos”*

A theme that ran through all the interviews was the race of the teachers and how this prohibited the success of the program. Ms. Romero, a young woman who was a student of the program for ten years, relayed her experiences in relation to her teachers. In a discussion the former student, she emphasized the surprise of never having a teacher who was representative of the migrant community.

So it's kind of-I don't know, something that's going on because it's-if you were to go to migrant school, you would actually see migrant or Mexican or Hispanic people working as teachers, they would understand bilinguals and understand the kids, but it's mostly just white people that are working.

As we move through the discussion, Mrs. Romero brought to light her concern with white teachers' relationships to migrant students. Through her emotional narrative, it became apparent she never felt a connection with the teachers in the program.

The rapport she created with her fellow students was connection that continually drew her to the program for over a decade and the reason she encouraged her younger sister to attend. The twenty-three year old mother loved the fact that there was a school set up specifically for migrant students. Unfortunately, the migrant population was not represented in the staff hiring.

The missing connection that Mrs. Romero alluded to was the result of a combination of two factors. Firstly, the lack of linguistic understanding and secondly the lack of cultural understanding. In the young mother's critique of NMMP staff, she specifically stated the following in regards to the educators

I think it [having monolingual white teachers] doesn't really help out because there are kids that don't speak the language. The teachers should be like us [community members], or at least bilingual, or that understand Spanish to at least communicate with the kids. Because to me, I can't see there was a problem because there was never a problem because I spoke



both languages and I lived here for a while. But other students, I would see them struggling during school...I think they should have more-recruit more people that are bilingual. There are some people [from the migrant community] that would really like to go, but I guess they [NMMP administration] don't give them an opportunity. Like me, I went there, and they never called me back, but I would have liked to go there [as a teacher's assistant].

What she proposed parallels practices strongly advocated by African-American and Indigenous scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings (1990) and Cornel Pewewardy (1998), among others. Pewewardy and Ladson-Billings call for educators of students of traditionally marginalized groups to apply culturally relevant teaching methodologies, a methodology which engages the home life into the curriculum. Presently, this type of methodology is absent from NMMP teaching strategies.

Mrs. Romero was not the sole participant to question the absence of migrant or Mexican or Latino (or Hispanic, as used by Mrs. Romero) representation in NMMP faculty and staff. Mrs. Sosa provided the following narrative,

Por que cada año que ellos hacen un opening, esos de la escuela, ponen yo creo en el papel o algo, ellos nomás como, no se en que parte, verdad? Pero ellos nomás agarran puros americanos. A lo mejor porque ellas son "bolillas," no se. A mi me dijo una señora que ella fue a aplicar porque están abriendo la escuelita para los niños chiquitos. Entonces que fue allá a aplicar y le dijeron que llenara la aplicación pero que no estaban seguros que porque ya habían aplicado muchos, pero que casi la mayoría eran americanas. So le dijo pues llena la aplicación, dice, pero no estoy segura si te voy a hablar porque ya han venido muchas y la mayoría son americanas. Y le digo yo, supuestamente son como migrantes, verdad? Puede agarrar a alguien-o póngale que agarre la mitad en español/ingles y la mitad en puro ingles?

Because every time they create an opening, those from the school, they put on the paper or something, they will only like, I don't know from where, right? But they will take only Americans. Better yet, because they are 'white', I don't know. Once a lady told me that she filled out an application because they opened up a toddler class. Then she went over there to apply and they told her that many had applied, and most had been Americans. So they told her to fill out the application, they said, but I am

not sure I am going to call you because many had come and the majority were Americans. I say, suppose they were like migrants, right? They can get someone-or suppose they get half that speak Spanish/English and the other half that only speak English.

Mrs. Sosa, like her fellow agricultural workers, recognizes the discrepancies between migrant students and the Anglo teachers who serve the migrant population. Even though some community members have applied for positions within the NMMP, they have been told that their chances of employment are slim. Parents of NMMP students' question why community members are not hired for classrooms filled with migrant students, instead placing "*puras americanas, son puros que hablan puro ingles/ only Americans, they only speak English*" in the front of the class. By hiring teachers (or teacher assistants) from the migrant farm worker community the families believe that the program could better serve its target population.

Community members want to see staff members, who have similar cultural experiences as themselves, employed by the NMMP. Ideally, parents would like to see community members as faculty. By hiring community members, the NMMP instructors would take into account the special needs of migrant students (a concern voiced by Rivera over thirty years ago). The families do not want educators to view their children as "deficient" or "lacking," an all too common perception among Anglo American teachers. In *Scholars in the field*, Treviño (2004) notes that teachers tend to view the migrant experience as a deficit, rather than acknowledge their struggles and hardships as endowing strengths such as "perseverance, focus, motivation, discipline, attention to detail, teamwork, resiliency, initiative, priority setting skills, resourcefulness, and

bilingual/bicultural skills” (p.159). Instead teachers approach migratory children through the educational lens of academically “deficient.”

In one sense, parents see the program only hiring “*americanos*,” a group of people whose lives are culturally removed from those of the farm laborer community. This cultural chasm, so to speak, is overtly evident in the phenotypic differences but also evidenced in language, class, and life experiences. For example, Mrs. Romero shared the following insight:

I don't really think they know what's going on. They just – I think that if there was more Hispanic people working as teachers, they know where the kids are coming from. The white people really don't know. They're like, "Oh, they just work in agriculture. What do they do? Or where do they live? How do they live? Or how is it? Or is it hard to live where they're at? They don't really know because I have friends, and they're like, "What do you guys do?" And I'm like, "Oh, we work in cherries." "I bet that work is really hard." And that's true. They work here, and they're like, "Oh, man. I don't know how you guys do it. It's hard to be out here in the sun all day."

To them, it's, like, a shocker. They're like, "How do you guys work there all the time?" Well, it's like you guys. How can you just sit in an office all day? It's kind of like that. But I know a lot of the friends I had in school, they would be like, "How can you work in a factory all day? Don't you get bored?" And I was like, "Well, you guys don't know where we come from. You don't know how long we've been doing this, or you don't know how it is to go from one school to another." It's very hard, but they don't understand that. Even teachers, I don't think they would understand that, how we live and stuff like that.

This former NMMP student saw the existing cultural gap primarily based on comprehending the reality of farm laborers, but through her testimony she also reveals something teachers could not understand. Mrs. Romero goes onto say that

I think they should have a video or something, go around camps and see how the camps are because sometimes, like us, we have trailers, there's restrooms inside. Other camps don't have restrooms inside. They're all outside, and it's public. All the people that live in the camp go to that

exact same place and take a shower, take turns taking showers, take turns going to the restroom. The restrooms are not all that sanitary.

Maybe people that work there in school, they might think, “Oh, well they live in a camp. How does a camp look like?” I think they should do, like, a little video or something of just going around the camps and seeing how people work, during how they’re working, while they’re working, how they interact when they’re at camp all together. I think that’d be a lot more helpful.

The cultural chasm could be slightly reduced, if teachers initiated an effort to visit families, in the families’ home context. Through connecting family life to children’s school experiences teachers would demonstrate that they are attempting to reach out in solidarity to the population they serve. Joining Ms. Romero’s narrative with the theories put forth by Mikhail Bakhtin, I find that she is alluding to the idea of heteroglossia. Heteroglossia, reminds us that every utterance is embedded in a specific set of social circumstances, shaped by the particular context in which it occurs, therefore is most clearly understood by those who share a common understanding of circumstances and contexts (Bakhtin, 1981; Landay, 2004). Thus, because staff, who is white, middle-class, and mostly mono-lingual English-speakers, does not share the same understanding of circumstances and contexts they have an incredibly difficult time relating to the migrant families.

However, it is imperative to keep in mind that teachers must not enter the homes and lives of the migrant community with an anthropological focus. Teachers are not, and by all means should consider themselves, anthropologists. In building a rapport with families, teachers must build relationships through acquiring it in natural situations, rather than study family culture (Télliez, 2004).

Although the NMMP employed state certified teachers, as well as assistants that had some degree of classroom experience, it still failed to employ individuals who were familiar with the community they served. Migrant community members are not asking that all teachers have the same life experiences as the children, however they are seeking some program members with related life experiences and asking others to employ a “culturally responsive” method. Employing staff or faculty who represent the migrant community is one service that the families would see as positively influencing their children on multiple levels.

### **Conclusion**

In the beginning stages of this project, it was my supposition that language would be at the forefront of programmatic concerns for the participating families. Instead, I found that, in addition to language, the community also lent its attention to other matters, such as community representation, misalignment in curriculum, and communication between families and staff. These themes surfaced through observation analysis, my personal journaling, and dialogue with families. The preceding text offered insight into the pressing educational issues for the migrant/seasonal agricultural laborer community.

Importantly, all five families were hesitant to have “*americanitos*” instruct their children in the community’s HL. This trepidation was due to a myriad of reasons, the most prominent being a disconnect between the NMMP staff and the migrant farm worker community. The misalignment in life experiences affected not only the interactions between faculty and families, but also intercultural communication, the program’s curriculum, and HL instruction.

Through this chapter it becomes clear that the families' heritage language is inextricably linked to individual and communal identities; therefore HL instruction must be performed by a community member. Furthermore, many families adjoin ethnic or racial identity to certain life experiences, which also alludes to (working-)class status. These factors left instructors lacking the contextual knowledge needed to fully engage in the understanding of utterances and discourse within the community.

Furthermore families noted the communication strain between community members and NMMP faculty. In fact, participants noted that communication primarily occurred when families directly initiated conversations, otherwise they are frequently left with the limited information provided by the NMMP recruiter. Active partnering between community members and the summer migrant program fell squarely on the shoulders of the families, with inadequate staff or faculty outreach. These findings demonstrate that NMMP families are, in fact, concerned with HL maintenance as well as the learning that transpired during the school day. However, through participant dialogue, it became apparent that their issues revolve around who is deemed adequate to instruct in their HL, in addition the programmatic and curricular ineffectiveness of migrant school programs. Yet these faults were overshadowed by the overall community support for the NMMP.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE EDUCATORS: “*We need to be made aware of what they need to be aware of*”

#### Introduction

In the August 29, 2007 issue of *Education Weekly*, Mary Ann Zehr illustrated how tough public policy and the shifting demographic of migrant workers factor into low migrant education program (MEP) enrollment. Zehr’s article, like the majority of literature addressing migrant education, focused on the successful MEPs and those that were able to provide a linguistically inclusive curriculum for the predominantly Spanish-speaking migrant students. Furthermore, her article centered on programs in geographic areas that sustained a fairly sizeable and constant migrant student population. Zehr’s article is an example of how rural migrant education programs often times are left out of studies, either because their population is both small in numbers and seasonal, or because the program does not operate throughout the traditional school year. This dissertation, however, hopes to counter this lacuna.

Let me begin by discussing the specifics of the school I was investigating. The summer migrant education program (SMEP) that was at the center of my study was situated in an area that was predominantly White, had a history of seasonal agricultural laborers and located in the rural Midwest. Through this research project a single migrant education program was critically examined, this approach diverges from past projects because previous scholars have examined multiple MEPS in the rural Midwest in hopes of extrapolating effective instructional strategies (Vocke, 2007; Romanowski, 2001, 2002, 2003). What this means is that, earlier scholars have investigated MEPs to search

out successful teacher practices in hopes of creating instructional guidelines for MEP educators. SMEPs, similar to my study site, are often not represented in the focus of articles like Zehr's or sites of inquiry.

Rarely, has a MEP and its curriculum been examined through a critical lens and engaged in dialogue with educators, families, and students in a meaningful fashion, while simultaneously centering on the program's language practices, curriculum, and services. Therefore the precise focus of this research project is on this dialogue. Keeping all this in mind, this dissertation is meant to fill a void in the field of migrant education.

In Chapter Five, the findings indicated that the families were not as concerned about English language instruction as might be hypothesized nor did they want the migrant summer program to develop the children's heritage language (HL). For a multitude of reasons, the parents explicitly stated they did not want the Anglo American teachers to attempt Spanish language instruction. However, the parents did want to see community representation within the program's faculty and curriculum, as well as academic support in English language development. Chapter Six, consequently, focused on uncovering how the migrant families' need for rigorous academic instruction, development of heritage language and English skills, and community representation throughout the school's culture were not met by the NMMP.

What is offered in this chapter is a discussion of the following themes: language usage in the classroom (creating a space for HL and the educators' misunderstanding of HL development), developing the curriculum with limited resources and guidance from administration and the need for connecting the program to the community it serves. Specifically, this chapter seeks to explicate how teachers, who have vastly different world



views from their students, grapple with providing a learning suitable and culturally relevant learning environment from migrant students.

These themes that emerged through participant narratives and observations were synthesized with theory provided by both Mikhail Bakhtin and those writings on Latino Critical Race theory. Additionally, ideas and theories created by canonical scholars in the field of heritage language development including Joshua Fishman, Lily Wong Fillmore, and James Cummins were utilized to support the language portion of the research. Ann Cranston-Gingras, Michael Brunn, and Michael Romanowski were called upon to reinforce the findings which spoke to issues of migrant education.

Chapter Six begins with a brief description of the four lead teachers and their assistants. The portrait presented highlights the staff members' previous teaching experience, their classroom interactions, and prior experiences with "non-traditional" students. Moving from this point, the chapter highlights how NMMP staff incorporates Spanish and English language instruction within the class through three sections entitled, "Carving a classroom space for the HL," "Language instruction the way we know how" and "Spanish can be used as a crutch." The first section elucidates efforts made in the classroom by students and classroom teachers to forge a bilingual environment. Within "Language instruction the way we know how" I then discuss how NMMP staff offered the language instruction based on their linguistic skills and prior experiences with limited English proficient students. Next, the chapter explores the different rationale offered by staff members as to why developing Spanish can be detrimental to students. This is followed by a section describing staff members' struggles to both understand and integrate the student's life experiences in the class. Concluding the chapter are the

segments where I devote my writing to the issues which prohibit NMMP staff from understanding and creating an engaging curriculum.

### **The Teachers of the Northwestern Michigan Migrant Program**

#### ***Ms. Rynowski***

Ms. Rynowski began each school day with a kind smile. Often times, her neon orange toe-nail polish, matched her Hawaiian-style linen top and Capri pants. Everything about Ms. Rynowski beamed with color. While interviewed, she answered each question with a bright smile, amplified further by her coral lips and her bobbed bleached blond hair. The mid-forties classroom practitioner was bouncy and carried herself with such energy that at times it became contagious. Her self-confidence did not seem to waver, except when she explicitly asked neither to be audio-recorded nor to be the center of any investigation (however her opinion shifted once she was informed that the entire program was part of the study).

Ms. Rynowski was a public school educator for five years, previously having taught in a parochial school. Her “regular teaching job” was at a school in the Southwest part of the state, where a significant population were settled farm worker families. Each summer since 2003, Ms. Rynowski drove her recreation vehicle (or “trailer” as she refers to her summer home) north to work for the NMMP. The first week of the program I found the teacher piecing together the split third and fourth grade curriculum. “In my class we cover all subjects: grammar, literature, social studies, and science. The social studies part is broken into thematic units, it all surrounds the topic of ‘Children around

the world.” This is a theme where the students rush through different cultures, mostly focusing on how to say “hello” in the native language, foods, and holidays.

She is the sole classroom teacher to insist that students refer to her by her last name (although she answered to Mrs.), as well as the only instructor who attempted pronouncing the children’s names with correct Spanish pronunciation. Apart from her previous classroom experience, Ms. Rynowski was the lone teacher to supplement the program’s furnished materials with that of her own. Her own materials reflect selected themes that she introduced during the summer program. She began the first two weeks of the summer with an assistant, however due to personnel issues, the third/fourth grade teacher was left to work independently.

### ***Mr. Roger***

An eleven year veteran in the program, Mr. Roger was the only male teacher. During the traditional school year he is a sixth grade teacher for a private parochial school. After receiving his teaching degree from regional university, Mr. Roger added subject endorsements in history, geography, English and social studies from a different regional university.

Having been born and raised in the Grand Traverse area, Mr. Roger was familiar with the agricultural industry of the area but had minimal interaction with the migrant population. The casually dressed teacher spoke about his awareness of the farmworker population and its contributions to the area’s economy, “I knew it [the migrant population] was here, but I don’t think I was really-paid full attention to how big it was or the significance of it at that point.” Only after having taught at the summer migrant

program did Mr. Roger become acutely aware of the area's farm worker population and of the seasonal labor force's effect on the local community.

Mr. Roger was known amongst the students as being the "cool teacher." He was laid back and came to class wearing tee shirts, cargo shorts, and sandals or running sneakers. While he walked through the halls he was quick to say hello and always addressed the students by their names (often times teasingly questioning the students, "You're causing trouble aren't you?"). In addition to his friendly demeanor, Mr. Roger was well liked because of his love of *fútbol*. The junior/senior high students (both girls and boys) enjoyed playing *fútbol* during their recess time, where you would find their teacher either officiating or playing on one of the teams.

When Mr. Roger entered the program, he was the classroom teacher for the night school program's Senior High class. During this time the night school portion program separated students into two classes, depending upon if the student was bilingual or monolingual Spanish speaking. According to Mr. Roger, an ESL teacher was on staff, while he instructed the bilingual students (meaning those who were English proficient). However, once "we were thrust into – night school into day school" Mr. Roger was left with the challenge of instructing both bilingual and monolingual students. Lack of funding and the decline of student enrollment have resulted in the combining of both junior senior high classes to form one large class without a single ESL instructor. The result of these changes has meant that the responsibility of administering crucial academic instruction (especially that needed for graduation) was left to a monolingual English speaking teacher. He or she must educate monolingual Spanish speaking students without the assistance of an ESL-trained assistant.

*Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Susan*

Ms. Rebecca was fairly young, having graduated from her teacher education program merely two years earlier. Since there was an overabundance of educators in the state of Michigan and due to a declining economy causing families to leave, classroom teaching jobs are scarce. The economic woes have left Ms. Rebecca with the only option (if she wanted to stay in education and the region) of employment as that of a preschool teacher's aid; however, during the summer months she had her "own" class. Directly after graduation, Ms. Rebecca began working for the NMMP as the kindergarten/first grade teacher, the position she held during this research project.

The teacher education program from which Ms. Rebecca graduated integrated multicultural education, as well as hands-on school experiences, throughout its coursework. "At my school, they did a lot of that. I took a lot of classes of how to teach in a multicultural setting, so that helped a lot. And they were also a very hands-on school, so I was placed in lots of experiences in elementary schools with multicultural children in there. So I got that hands-on experience." Ms. Rebecca was also able to exercise her knowledge of multicultural settings with the large influx of Ukrainian immigrants in the Grand Traverse area, an issue outside the purview of this study.

Of the teachers in the younger grade classes (pre-kindergarten through second grade), Ms. Rebecca had the most experience with only two years, this was quite shocking considering the program had been in operation for over forty years.

Nonetheless, the administrative staff regarded Ms. Rebecca as having a calming, patient, and gentle personality. Her demeanor was nurturing and mother-like, oftentimes

permitting the children to sit on her lap, play with her hair, and give her hugs. In the class she made the rules; however it was her assistant, Ms. Susan, who enforced them.

Ms. Susan had the most classroom experience of all the staff members, having spent thirteen years as a classroom assistant. In her ten years with the migrant summer program, she worked in multiple classrooms from preschool through second grade. The amicable woman began her career in the areas because of the inability to meet her hearing impaired son's needs. At the time, the school was not prepared to support her son's needs therefore Ms. Susan volunteered to be his personal classroom aide. She came upon the position at the NMMP through discussions with another classroom aide. Ms. Susan applied many of the techniques she uses to assist her son in the classroom, such as animated movements, hand gestures, pictures, etc.). Although not trained in ESL, Ms. Susan incorporated many of the appropriate practices.

### ***Ms. Natalie and Ms. Lauren***

Having just completed her teacher education program one month before the NMMP began left Ms. Natalie as the most inexperienced teacher on the entire staff. This young woman was offered the position at her graduation ceremony, as the result of a conversation between the program's director and Ms. Natalie's parents. According to Ms. Natalie, "And she [the program director] was just kind of got talking to them [her parents]. My mom's like, 'Well, I'm here for my daughter, who's graduating'...so I actually got into it the night I graduated." The following Monday, Ms. Natalie applied and was given the position of first/second grade teacher.

Besides Ms. Natalie's experience with migrant children being limited to when she began her first day in a NMMP classroom, her experience with the Spanish language was just as limiting. Admittedly, the two years of high school Spanish she took did not prepare her for having any conversations with monolingual Spanish speaking students. Furthermore, the teacher education program from which she graduated did little to prepare her for interaction with "non-traditional students." The only course she completed on the topic of diversity was done before she had committed to education at the time. As she stated however, she did not take interest in the course material.

There were positives to having such a young employee. An advantage of being a recent graduate was the enthusiasm and vigor that Ms. Natalie placed in starting each day. She entered the school every morning with a smile and bounce in her step. However, by the end of the day Ms. Natalie's energy levels were depleted and the bounce slowly waned. Although, the young teacher had not yet had a class of her own, she attempted to structure the first/second grade class's day like a traditional school day. Each day the class's schedule consisted of the following: morning circle, math centers, specials, recess, lunch, story time, language arts and social studies or science. Within a few weeks Ms. Natalie had forgone the schedule and structured activities around math centers, story time, and social studies lessons (which were created and facilitated by Ms. Lauren, the teaching assistant). Mostly due to the teacher's focus shifting from preparing for her summer class to completing job applications and preparing for interviews for the fall.

Paralleling Ms. Natalie's greenness, was Ms. Lauren. Ms. Lauren was the most inexperienced teaching assistant in the program. In fact, the autumn following my

research Ms. Lauren began her student teaching. She and Ms. Natalie were of the same age and collaborated continuously throughout the summer. The twenty-two year old and the lead teacher had agreed to have Ms. Lauren responsible for the Social Studies portion of the curriculum. This gave Ms. Lauren the space to practice the specialty area of her teacher preparation program. Like Ms. Natalie, Ms. Lauren had no prior experience with monolingual Spanish speaking children. In fact, she had not known that a migrant population even existed in Michigan (even though the university that she attended had numerous programs involving work with surrounding migrant communities). One advantage Ms. Lauren had over the lead teacher was some Spanish language skills, despite the fact they were very basic and only allowed for minimal communication between herself and students.

The relationship between the classroom practitioners in first/second grade class was much like that of the kindergarten/first grade class. Ms. Natalie was the nurturing teacher, who made the rules but left the responsibility of rule enforcement to her aide. Ms. Lauren was less jovial than the lead teacher, having a much more serious manner in the class. Unfortunately, the two most inexperienced teachers in the program were placed in the class with the most students, in addition to the only class that regularly had no less than three monolingual Spanish speaking students.

### **Language in the classroom**

I want to reflect briefly on a commentary made by Uvaldo Palomares over 30 years ago in response to the then state of migrant education. The long time curriculum specialist and advocate for rural youths eloquently wrote:



[H]ow can a dark-skinned six-year-old love his skin color if he is surrounded by books, children, and adults who value only fair skin? If a young student happens to have poor English language comprehension, he may be in for another blow. He may find that his English speaking teacher does not understand his feelings and thoughts and makes no effort to break through the barrier....This deliberate refusal to try to communicate strikes directly at the self-concept of the child. Children inwardly and unconsciously feel they get what they deserve. By glance, by gesture, by manner, the teacher can make children with language difficulties feel they must be to blame for the lack of communication (1970, p.47-48).

In this quote, Palomares comments on the importance of teacher's sensitivity to their linguistically diverse students. One would think that the issues raised over three decades ago would have been resolved, however this was not the case for the NMMP.

As can be seen through the preceding NMMP staff descriptions, each teacher had their own styles, personalities, and classroom experience which translated into differing teaching philosophies and implementation of the program's curriculum. Furthermore, individual teachers crafted the classroom environment based on how significant, in their own opinion, the students' language and culture were. The following sections highlight the research question: What are the language practices utilized by the NMMP and attitudes toward those practices by the various stakeholders? Since this chapter is devoted to the data collected from the educators (I discussed students and their families in the previous chapter), the research question will be addressed accordingly.

### *Carving a classroom space for HL*

Ms. Rebecca, the kindergarten/first grade teacher, is one of two individuals in the program, the other being a site director, who had any training for educating linguistically diverse students. In the months between September and May, one can find her as an

assistant to a local preschool teacher. In her “regular” school, the student body demographic began to mirror the population increase of Ukrainian immigrants. Working in this particular environment, Ms. Rebecca has learned a few techniques to help students who did not speak English in her preschool class and to assist students of the migrant program.

We have lots of picture clues, of course, things like that. I also, this past year, talked to the ESL teacher at the school I was working with, so it’s helping me a lot with just vocabulary. In the whole thing [the preschool lead teacher] did hand movements and picture clues and body movement, and even though I didn’t speak Spanish I could get the gist of the lesson...So I really-that stuck out, and I’m going to be using that a lot: body movement, repeating words, picture clues, things like that.

True to her word, Ms. Rebecca attempted to apply ESL techniques with the summer program’s students in the beginning weeks. Unfortunately, the methods did not reach their potential success for two reasons. The first being that she utilized most of the class time for craft projects and play area. Secondly, a majority of the students were bilingual which Ms. Rebecca perceived as an indication that ESL tactics were unnecessary.

In Ms. Rynowski’s third/fourth grade class, where I observed constant discussion among students in English and Spanish, could definitely have benefited from Ms. Rebecca’s training. Although, the students clearly felt comfortable transitioning between both languages English or Spanish language development strategies could have still been helpful. All the classrooms had varying degrees of Spanish permeating the classroom discourse. The determining factors in the amount of Spanish spoken were a combination of both the number of monolingual Spanish speakers in the class and the teacher’s encouragement of Spanish usage.

For example, Ms. Rynowski made it known that she welcomed conversations between students in Spanish. She also pressed the students to help those out whose English language skills were limited. The children were comfortable floating between Spanish and English in the presence of their teacher. In most cases, English was solely utilized when they addressed Ms. Rynowski or a set of twin girls, Tessa and Natasha, who were monolingual English speakers. During a conversation on the first day of school, Ms. Rynowski relayed a situation that occurred earlier,

I had a student today, his name is Victor. He didn't speak very much English, but he told me that he was bilingual. I didn't see it. Today we were learning about main ideas, you know, like in literature. I had a hard time translating 'main idea' into Spanish. There are some words that are hard to translate because they have a different meaning in English than they do in Spanish. I had to have the other students in the class translate it for me.

Some of the kids giggled at the student, because he was having such a hard time understanding it [in English]. I looked at them and asked, "Think about how you feel if they walked into a class where the teacher spoke a language that they didn't know." After that, the students explained to Victor what the main idea of the story was about. Once we resolved this situation, the students in the class were more relaxed. And then they begin to describe the topics in the class without me having to ask them.

I see language being a barrier that we need to break through. I feel so helpless when I can't translate or the other kids can't. I wish I had knowledge of the Spanish language. There are so many times that I want to talk to them, you know, in their language of their heritage, but I can't. I want to relate to them. Sometimes the kids can't translate what we are doing in class because they don't know, and that makes it difficult.

As this situation indicates, Ms. Rynowski saw how the language barrier precluded many of the teacher-student interactions. The teacher was thrust into a situation where she could not relay the subject matter to the monolingual Spanish speaking students and

because the concept was new to the bilingual students the concept was not easily translated.

Interestingly, whenever the children worked in groups with the young girls the entire conversation was done in English. However, once the girls left the group Spanish was the preferred language. French psycholinguist, François Grosjean (1982), postulates that bilingual students engage in the language functions based on the language behaviors of their audience. Hence, if students encountered a monolingual speaker the interactions were influenced by that language as can be seen in the following scenario. This is exactly what student behavior demonstrated.

One day Tessa and Natasha were working in a group with three other students, who were all bilingual. Their assignment was to create a group response to questions Ms. Rynowski posted on the board about Charlotte's Web (the only literature the class, as a whole, would complete in its entirety). While seated together at their desks, the conversation was completely facilitated in English. However once Natasha and Tessa went to sharpen their pencils the code switched.

Once the girls moved away from the group, the conversation turned completely to Spanish, only reverting to English when Natasha returned. Later a young male group member needed an item from his desk, which was being occupied by a different group. While getting up he asked Tessa a question in English, and then turned to a girl seated in his desk asking, "¿Puedes darme mi lápiz?" ["Can you give me my pencil."] This was an occurrence I commonly witnessed.

Bilingual education advocate and scholar, James Cummins, would suggest that the children's multilingual usage is evidence of a positive multilingual classroom. In

such a learning environment, students are encouraged to use their multiple languages, without anxiety of being reprimanded, and where the languages are afforded genuine value. Consequently, the languages should develop side-by-side, valued equally (Cummins, 1986; Bleckledge, 1994).

Students, either bilingual or monolingual, seemed very cognizant and accommodating to those classmates and teachers who did not speak Spanish (even those students whose linguistic skills were stronger in Spanish than English). For instance, two children-Lupita and Raul-were seated in the hallway with a classroom aide/volunteer, Ms. Diane. Raul is a monolingual Spanish-speaker; Lupita is bilingual with stronger skills in Spanish and the aide/volunteer that is also bilingual with basic Spanish conversational skills. The children completing a math worksheet spoke to each other in Spanish when Ms. Diane left the table or conversed with another staff member passing by. However, once the elderly aide redirected her attention the children, Lupita first addressed Raul in Spanish and promptly turned to Ms. Diane translating everything said in Spanish. Lupita knew that Ms. Diane has some understanding of Spanish, but through her constant translation the young seven-year-old ensured that the adult could remain part of the conversation.

On a separate incident, Angel, a five-year-old boy, in Ms. Rebecca's class, was sitting with Xochitl at a small table. They were engaged in an activity of coloring giraffe puppets. The two were seated alone, with Ms. Rebecca and the teaching assistant, Ms. Susan, at a table nearby. Angel grabbed a yellow crayon that was near Xochitl shouting, "Dámelo, es mío!" ["Give it to, it's mine!"] Xochitl's lower lip trembled and then she turned to Ms. Rebecca saying, "Teacher, teacher he is fighting with me!" Angel, who

was quick to keep himself out of trouble responded (before Ms. Rebecca had time to turn around), “Pero...uhm, she won’t give the color. I just need the *jello*.” In this case, Angel wanted to react before he remembered with whom he was speaking. Upon formulating his response, he caught himself and quickly accommodated to his teacher’s language ability.

On another occasion, two students in Ms. Rebecca’s class were seated on the carpet discussing an upcoming migrant clinic physician’s visit. It had come to the children’s attention that they were to have their blood checked through a finger prick. Ariana, the eldest child in the class (although her age should have put her in the next grade level, her “behavior” relegated her to the younger class), was the student to announce this to the rest of the five and six-year-olds. With a captivated audience, Ariana sat herself on the carpet and explained the clearly unpleasant experience. She began her narration in English, but quickly switched to Spanish when Angel asked a question in Spanish.

Ariana: First the Ms. Needle comes to get you. They take you to the rooms over by the office, where Ms. Needle is. You take off your shoes and get on a thing to weigh you. You stand next to the wall to see how tall you are.

Angel-Quien?  
(Who?)

Ariana-The doctor, la doctora. Ms. Needle gives you her. You sit on a bed and they check your ears, eyes and mouth.

Angel- Como? Como chequiaron tu boca? Con un flashlight o que?  
(How? How did they check your mouth? With a flashlight or what?)

Ariana- Si con un flashlight. Mira tu haces asi “ahhhh” y ponen el flashlight en tu boca pa’ mirar tu throat.  
(Yes, with a flashlight. Look you do like this, “ahhh” and they put

the flashlight in your mouth to see your throat.)

Angel- Oh.

Ariana- Y después te ponen un cotton en tu dedo con medicina. Y Ms. Needle detiene tu mano cuando te dan tu poke. Huí....te duele mucha. Pero te ponen un Scooby Doo band-aid y te dan un sucker y sticker y coloring book.

(And afterwards they put cotton on your finger with medicine.

And Ms. Needle holds your hand when they give you the poke.

Ouch...it hurts a lot. But they put on a Scooby-Doo band-aid and they give you a sucker and a coloring book.)

Angel- Te duele mucho? Quiero ver tu dedo? Tiene mucho sangre?

Huí...mira esta sangrando tu band-aid.

(And does it hurt a lot? I want to see your finger? Does it have a lot of blood? Ouch..look it is bleeding through your band-aid.)

Angel continued asking Ariana questions (and often times answered his own questions) in Spanish. Occasionally, code-switching occurred within dialogue, possibly because the children were not familiar with the necessary vocabulary in Spanish as can be seen with the terms: cotton, sucker, band-aid, poke, coloring book.

In this context, Angel and Ariana appeared to lack the appropriate lexical terms in one language. Another rationale for the usage of English terms within the predominantly Spanish conversation, may be that proposed by Genesse (2000) and Swain and Wesche (1975) who suggest that bilingual children identify a lexical term in the first language or the language most frequently used to label it. These linguists assert that bilingual children may insist on using the lexical term regardless of the linguistic context. In this context, medical terms were almost exclusively English.

Code-switching was most frequent when the children began a game of matching cards with pictures of clocks to their digital representations. On one occasion, Angel and Ariana took turns picking up cards, while directing each other on which card to choose

completely in Spanish. Interestingly, the answers the children verbalized (in between the Spanish language directions) were in English. Initially I thought the children used English in this situation because they could not tell time in Spanish, however I later observed that the children used English whenever they referred to number words. This led me to believe that the children's lexicon, especially in reference to numbers, is limited. British scholar, Adrian Blackledge in his edited text *Teaching Bilingual Children* (1994) chronicles his experiences with bilingual children in a British classroom. Here he found that the young students, who had older siblings, tended to intermingle English with their home language. Although not all the children had older siblings, they did live in communities where other kin networks (such as cousins, aunts, uncles and neighbors) fulfilled the role of "older sibling." As the surrogate "older siblings" entered English dominated schools, they brought the dominant language back to the community and into the language learning process of the younger children.

Some students were able to create clear distinctions in their language usage, while others were in the process of understanding the nuances of that distinction. For example, in Ms. Rebecca's kindergarten/first grade classroom the students would begin a sentence in Spanish and end in English or vice versa. This code-switching occurred on at least two instances. I found that a majority of code-switching took place when the students would be speaking to the teachers or with other students who did not understand Spanish (or in one case when a student "refused" to use Spanish, even though everyone in the class knew she was proficient in the language). Through my observations, the children demonstrated their awareness and sensitivity to the linguistic ability of their audience.



Mr. Roger was equally aware and sensitive to the linguistic abilities of the junior/senior high students. Similar to Ms. Rynowski, he depended greatly on students to help one another. So much, in fact, that he asked bilingual and monolingual students to pair up even if they were not studying the same area. Moreover, he encouraged students to use Spanish in class.

Sociologists Rueda, Ruiz, and Figueroa suggest that migrant students are more receptive to teachers, who provide activities meaningful to students, require active participation, promote the language of the students in high-level academic activity, as well as encourage “nonstandard” interactional patterns to support learning (1995). Observing the open interaction between students in the third/fourth grade and junior/senior high classrooms reinforced those concepts.

The faculty’s incapacity to converse in Spanish obligated their reliance greatly on the bilingual students to provide instruction to their monolingual Spanish speaking classmates. Mr. Roger suggests that the NMMP administration prepare faculty to communicate with its students.

You feel guilty because it’s like, you’re trying to do all this stuff, and then you leave students out sometimes; not on purpose but because different things are going on and everything...I would like to see-being that I really don’t know if the funding would ever come through or any way being increased. Things like how to ESL. I think even offering a Spanish class. Or just something basic so you could communicate a little easier with the ESL students or you could write assessments or you could write things for them in Spanish where they would have to translate it into English. Because like I said, when you don’t have a strong vocabulary it’s hard to piece things together.

Two of the most experienced teachers were self-reflective on their own inability to communicate with their students. They were also critical of the lack of materials that were representational of the students’ life experiences. However, surprisingly, neither

teacher commented on how they would present the material if it were made available. What these classroom educators did not know was that the integration of culturally and linguistically appropriate materials does not have to be such a daunting task. Even though Ms. Rynowski and Mr. Roger were not equipped to converse with limited English proficient students, they did support the usage of Spanish and English within the classrooms. This encouragement, in of itself, was enough to demonstrate their appreciation of the students' home language.

Each educator recognized how much the language barrier was a detriment in both their instruction and capacity to communicate with students. However, neither took the initiative to further develop their communication skills in Spanish. Even though all of the teachers acknowledged that having a Spanish speaking aide (some teachers specifically commented about having an aide from the migrant community) would benefit the communication between teachers, students, and families, none had questioned the NMMP administration as to why members of the migrant community were not employed by the program.

### ***Spanish can be used as a crutch***

Unfortunately, the kindergarten/first grade teacher did not share the same sentiments as her third/fourth grade or junior/senior high counterparts on the topic of Spanish language encouragement for migrant students. Although, Ms. Rebecca understood the difficulties language barriers impose, she felt that developing Spanish was a disservice to the students. Ms. Rebecca disclosed that the application of Spanish language materials or

even the utilization of a Spanish speaking teaching assistant has both positive and negative implications for monolingual Spanish speakers. Accordingly, she stated that

The only reason is because I found with the limited English speakers last summer that if they were here often enough and I was able to converse with them as much as I did, by the end of the summer they had learned so much more English. And I guess that goes both ways. If I had more support with a Spanish-speaking person here to help me out, it probably would-I don't know. That's a tricky question.

It would help, obviously, to tell you the truth-instead of having to go through this huge ordeal of explaining something, it would help to have somebody just explain the Spanish. But then I don't know if that's going to really help them. It kinda builds a crutch. It could go both ways, I think. It could help the lesson go smoother and quicker or it could build something that they [the students] rely on it. They would depend on somebody to always to translate for them.

Surprisingly, the only ESL trained teacher, albeit with a limited repertoire of ESL strategies, is not entirely convinced of the importance in using Spanish materials in class to support the students' English language development.

The issue of using Spanish materials in the classroom was both perplexing and complicated for this individual. On one hand, she appreciated how accessing Spanish in the class assisted students in the comprehension of new concepts. However, she also believed that by using Spanish, the children became dependent and encountered obstacles in acquiring English.

Research has proven the opposite to be true. In fact, having a strong command in one's first language paves the way for acquiring a second language (Krashen, 1991; Tse, 2001). In addition to the assistance with language acquisition, learning a new topic in one's native language is easiest and quickest, rather than learning new material while simultaneously grappling with the acquisition of English (Au, 1993; Moll and Diaz, 1985). Long time champion of the linguistic rights of children, Lucy Tse (2001) argues,

[F]or English language learners, building background knowledge in the first and stronger language while learning English is the most efficient and effective means to ensure English is acquired and school subjects are learned well. This is the strategy behind bilingual education.

Children in primary grades acquire the foundation from which their future academics will be built upon, however if these fundamentals are not accessible due to language barriers the students will not be able to erect such a base. Migrant students attended the NMMP specifically because attaining the building blocks during the traditional school year was difficult, therefore it was the program's responsibility to ensure that the fundamentals were made accessible during the summer program. However, when teachers believe the HL is a crutch, the base is undermined.

The first/second grade teacher, Ms. Natalie, felt similar to her neighbor across the hall. The bubbly blond, who had recently graduated from a local teacher preparation program, reiterated Ms. Rebecca's ideas of "creating a crutch" for migrant students. Her reasons were a culmination of the "creating a crutch" ideology, her own inability to supplement the existing curriculum with ESL strategies, adding more stress on an already over extended staff, and the monetary strain of purchasing additional materials.

During brief "hallway" conversations with Ms. Natalie, I discovered that the young woman's ideals were a reflection of various things. Primarily, they reflected the geographic, demographic, and political views from the community she was reared in. For a community member nurtured in a region that is predominantly white, conservative, and middle to upper class, understanding the challenges of "non traditional" students was perplexing, if not attainable.

The teacher education program Ms. Natalie attended did little to expand her knowledge base of such populations, simply requiring that its students take one federally mandated course on diversity. According to Ms. Natalie,

They [the teacher education program] don't require a year or two of Spanish like some colleges do. No...I took a class on diversity, and it talked a lot-and it was specifically for elementary teachers. It was for diversity. We did a bit-this was my first year of college, so I didn't even realize I wanted to go into teaching yet. I mean, I did, but I wasn't-I didn't declare my major. It was just kind of floating around there. So I don't really remember. I just remember it was very-talked about different cultures, but not necessarily focused on migratory stuff in Michigan. Nothing like that.

Without prior knowledge or guidance from the university from which she graduated, Natalie continued to reproduce the structure that she witnessed, in addition to espouse its ideals.

Further solidifying Ms. Natalie's notions of Spanish language usage within the class were the instructions furnished by NMMP administrators. As a first year teacher Ms. Natalie turned to one of the two site directors for guidance in creating themes and in designing the curriculum for the first/second grade class. The guidance she received was in the form of copies of worksheets from the previous year's teachers and the strong encouragement to use only English in the class. When asked if the NMMP requests that its teachers help students develop their first language skills, Ms. Natalie responded with

No. Actually, they asked-my understanding is they want the opposite because they want them to learn their English, so when we-the first day they get here and the last day, too-or, around there, the first week and the last week, we do some testing to see where they're at, and we're actually told, "Don't"- Some kids will say, "Can I do this in Spanish?" And we're actually told not to because we want to see what they can do it in English. We know they can probably do two plus two in Spanish, but we want to see if they can understand the directions, say, in English-what they're supposed to do in English. Does this make sense? But, I mean, a part of us was like, "Okay, this half of the page, we know they can do it if they

could just- if we can just read the top line instructions to them.” So I think she [teaching assistant] would [translate the instructions]. I don’t think we’re supposed to.

In reviewing the assessments administered to entering students, Ms. Natalie’s point was well taken. The assessments were completely in English, as were any resource materials made available to the NMMP’s staff. Even if such materials were available, the first/second grade teacher would still be limited in providing Spanish language instruction, due to her lack of Spanish language skills and knowledge of strategies to apply in developing English or Spanish language comprehension. As counterintuitive as this may appear, NMMP’s pedagogy goes against present literature.

Through discussions with NMMP faculty and staff, I found that many employees reiterated the rationales listed, which led me to believe that the staff are mirroring the views of the student’s community and not what present research suggests. Although some of the staff members of the NMMP agreed that language was integral to the development of the students, they were not prepared to play an active role in that development. Instead the educators deferred to the families or other students in the class to provide Spanish speaking opportunities. Yet other teachers, like the first/second grade teacher, believed students must have a firm understanding of the dominant language if they live in the U.S. She said,

I think that if they're going to live here, they definitely need to learn how to do the basic skills in English, you know? Same thing if I was to go to Mexico and just decide that I'm going to live there for half of the year, and I don't mean that in a negative way.

Statements such as these are often found within the English-Only movement, which amongst its xenophobic, racist and nativist rhetoric, pushes for English to be the official

language used within the U.S. The conservative linguistic movement, is as Freire and critical pedagogy intellectual, Donaldo Macedo emphasizes,

[t]he English Only movement's position points to a pedagogy of exclusion that views the learning of Education as education itself...I want to propose that the attempt to institute proper and effective methods of education non-English speaking students can not be reduced simply to issues of language but rests on a full understand of the ideological elements that generate and sustain linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination (2000, p. 16).

In other words, English can guarantee linguistic minorities a better future, so it must be mandated that all immigrant children learn English without truly looking into the underlying notions pervading education. Rather, the English-Only movement, like Ms. Natalie, believes the fallacy the educational system is objective, color-blind, and provides equal opportunities (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001).

As can be seen through Ms. Natalie's comments, English Only propaganda has definitely left an impression on her views of language. The SMEP educator's notions fall into the classic characterization of American society being a "melting pot." A belief where all immigrant groups merge into a single undifferentiated whole. Language and literacy experts, Catherine Snow and Kenji Hakuta, describe the prerequisites for this "ideal" American society, "a prerequisite to the melting pot has been acquiring English, an unsurprising requirement in a country where English is the language of government, of education, of business, and of daily life...The United States, is at the societal level, staunchly monolingual" 1992, pp.384-385). In essence the English-Only movement is based on a racist, anti-immigrant, class ideology which institutionalizes discrimination against marginalized peoples.

## **Developing the curriculum**

The program's curriculum was based on the English language assessments, which were based on Michigan's standards and benchmarks (sample of assessments are found in Appendix D). These assessments reflected reading comprehension, basic math and writing skills. For example, the first/second grade assessments required students to read a list of sight words, complete addition and subtraction problems, as well as read a few paragraphs on a given topic and then answer questions based on the reading. Each student was evaluated upon entrance into the class, which was meant to inform the classroom teacher of their academic ability. Therefore, the assessments served as the backbone of the curriculum whereas the students' academic needs and creativity of individual teachers served as the flesh.

When asked if the administration supplied classroom instructors with guidance or manuals, the first/second teacher had this to say,

It was (the openness and flexibility of the curriculum)-from here to Texas. You could do whatever you want. It was wide open, which is nice if you have all these glowing ideas, but as a first-year teacher, I had to go to the resources room every day the first couple of weeks, because I had no idea. I couldn't get a theme rolling. It was tough. They don't give you anything.

Ms. Natalie then went on to describe the materials found in the resource room:

I think that we don't have very many updated resources. I mean some of them are still perfectly okay. Some of them I used in the 80s when I was still in elementary.

The purchase of new materials was hard to achieve, as the program barely survived on its shoe-string budget. According to the program director, the NMMP began that particular summer without allocation of federal funding. Instead of postponing the program's start date, Ms. Freed borrowed enough money from the bank to pay the staff. The eighty-



seven year old woman confided, “Jessica, this is the first time that I am sweating blood. We are normally late getting our money, but never this late.” Considering this information, I found it understandable that the program director paid little attention on the actual implementation and design of the curriculum. Ms. Freed was more preoccupied with keeping the program afloat rather than worry about what language instruction transpired within the classrooms.

Ms. Freed’s charge was not to police the program, thereby ensuring its students were provided with an appropriate curriculum. She had left the responsibility to the two site directors, who were at the school each day and had direct contact with both students and staff. The design and the implementation of the curriculum fell squarely on the shoulders of each individual classroom teacher with verbal guidance supplemented by site directors (who depend on their experience from years past to provide guidance to classroom educators). Educators were left to piece meal their class’s curriculum based on out-dated assessments, Michigan’s standards and benchmarks, and tattered materials. Furthermore, the instructors were left with an abstract conception of what the curriculum was or how to design it for their classes. Needless to say, this allowed for many pedagogical challenges.

### ***Limited understanding of the curriculum***

When asked to describe Michigan’s curriculum for MEPs, the Office of Migrant Education Regional Director for the states of Michigan, Montana, South Carolina, and South Dakota wrote in an email communication:

Curriculum specifically for Migrant Ed is not common. Michigan is not ready for that yet. Every state uses standard skills and usually migrant is

aligned to the reading and math. Smaller student populations depend on IEPs.

The regional director is alluding to the fact that Michigan's MEPs are not organized or willing to work collaboratively to create such a framework.

If Michigan is not ready for a curriculum, then what type of curriculum is implemented? And if a curriculum is uncommon, how do specific program sites know how to create and present information to students? Moreover, without such guidance how are MEP educators expected to create culturally sensitive classrooms?

When asked about the program's curriculum, all NMMP staff members answered that state guidelines for migrant children were not supplied by any state or federal agency. With little guidance from either agency or the site director, the responsibility of constructing academic subject matter was up to individual teachers. Ms. Rynowski, the third/fourth grade instructor, commented on the lack of curricular support,

I wish we had a teacher manual or some other guidelines. We need more workshops and we need more teacher training. We need to be made aware of what they need to be aware of and how to break through the language barrier. We should get workshops on curriculum mapping, so that there is no duplicating. So that we are not covering something that an earlier grade has done. It's really important that all the children get a background on a subject area...We need a manual that helps us develop a curriculum around the building blocks of learning, to give us guidelines to build off what the students already know. Manuals would tell us where to begin, for example when I was a first year teacher I didn't know where to begin. I was floundering.

In terms of the support offered, it was achieved through previously made or purchased materials, as well as the provision of assessments. Each classroom teacher was given evaluations that they then had to administer to incoming students. The assessment tools were outdated, written in English and entirely based on Michigan's standards and

benchmarks. For example, the evaluations administered to the ten to twelve year-olds were dated over a decade old.

One teacher had this to say about the evaluations:

[W]e spent like the first two weeks of school pulling kids in and out of class. Lauren (teaching assistant) would just sit out here and test kids on math and reading. I don't think there's any writing. Math and reading skills and we don't do anything with it. We turn it into them (NMMP administration), but it's not like a report card where we test them again.

Initially, I thought we tested them again at the end of the summer, but we don't do that, so, I don't know. It just kind of seems like there's no point, you know? Like, if we tested them at the beginning, and then we test them again at the end, then we could see where they've grown. I can see, some of them, where they've grown, and like I've said, it's only been six weeks, what's the point of testing them once?

She then went onto to describe how the assessments were meant to inform the construction of the class's curriculum, but never truly assist the teacher in constructing a curriculum based on evaluation's outcomes:

In the beginning, they are [the assessments are meant to inform the curriculum]. I'll see [after the initial evaluation], okay, this person shows on here [the student's assessment outcome] they can't tell time. So then, when we do math centers, that group will work with time. So there's a point there, but as far as overall seeing what they- at the end, what they've learned, we don't go back and reassess them.

And I feel like a lot of that kind of stuff-I can tell just be working with them. I don't need to waste two weeks pulling them in and out of class.

The educator's point was well taken, as the assessments that I viewed were poorly copied worksheets stapled in packets, comprised mainly of multiple choice questions. The evaluations by no means were comprehensive, nor informative beyond basic reading and math skills. In some cases the assessments did not seem grade-level appropriate. Students were administered the evaluations their first day of school, which were

corrected by the teacher and then delivered to the administrative staff. Although the assessments were meant to guide the classroom teachers in providing academics for the students, only half of the educators interviewed admitted to loosely designing their classroom curriculum around the assessments, the other half disregarded the findings entirely. Because the NMMP operates only during the summer months, the students' evaluations function solely to direct curricula. In other programs, those that run year-round, student evaluations would be linked to funding. Even though, the intention of administering the assessments is to assist the teachers, the administration does little to offer guidance in how to implement the outcomes in curriculum design.

When asked how the curriculum was developed the program director replied,

The informal tests that we give help find the objectives. The curriculum is based off the objectives of the assessments. They [the assessments] are informal. They are an informal instrument, that tests the child's listening, speaking and writing. We need to know what he [the student] doesn't know. How else is the teacher going to design their curriculum? The curriculum has been erratically administered in the past summers. Teachers haven't done a great job setting up the curriculum for the child. But, next summer it will change we are going to make some changes.

It makes one wonder, what, then is being taught within the program? If the program does not offer language instruction in either English or Spanish, nor does it offer the necessary academics to move from one grade level to the next, then what academic instruction is presented? All the NMMP staff, including the directors and the OME regional officer, explained that the academics were taken from Michigan's standards and benchmarks. The contradiction then is that these students who do not graduate from Michigan schools, are held to Michigan's academic standards and benchmarks by a program that is created to fill in any academic gaps.

Interrupted schooling is among the challenges to migrant student education. Often times the movement from one school to another, leaves students missing critical components in curriculum. The variance in curriculum compatibility leaves students lost and confused, which eventually leads to a disinterest in school (Friend, 1992, Leon, 1996, Romanowski, 2003). This is a difficult conundrum and is not easily rectified.

When discussing the difference between academic expectations between school systems in Michigan and Texas with a group of junior high school students, the seventh and eighth graders had this to say:

Jessica: Has anybody talked to you about what you need to do to graduate from high school?

Enrique: Yeah.

Jessica: Besides taking tests.

Enrique: Oh, you have to get your credits.

Arianna: Credits.

Jessica: Credits? That's it?

Enrique: The thing is just credits and go to school. Try your best.

Jessica: How many credits do you have to get?

Enrique: Like, 30? I don't know.

Jessica: 30, really?

Arianna: Or more. Over in Texas you have to get a lot of credits but over here you have to get less than Texas. There, like, to get the credits you have to go after school and do extra stuff.

Jessica: So what does the school do if you're coming up here to work? How do you get your credits?

Enrique: You don't. Probably, like, this school tells the other school that we have, like, credits over here.

Arianna: We have a lot of trouble when we come here and then go back.  
My brother does.

Although slightly misinformed, these students are well aware of the obstacles created by moving from one state to another, as well as how the lack of continuity in curriculum made it nearly impossible to graduate from high school. Unfortunately, the lack of curriculum alignment between the NMMP and the students' sending schools was only noticed by the families, and not by the NMMP staff. The final report prepared by the Migrant Education Task Force, explains that curriculum alignment is crucial in having students view education as a continuum and strive to move along toward academic success (Friend, et al., 1990). The task force further explains the challenges by stating that,

Each time migrant students enroll in a school in another state, the rules and curriculum for that state govern the students. They can be placed into courses that are not required for high school graduation in their homebase schools or can be placed into courses they do not need. A difficult hurdle for them is trying to get their home school to give them credit for coursework completed in another state. (p.17)

Some states have made agreements whereby home-based schools accept credits or coursework from receiving schools. However, it is prudent to note these agreements take place between "traditional" year-round schools, leaving out SMEPs; even though SMEPs are meant to bridge the gap in the student's missing curriculum.

The data collected demonstrates that the NMMP has been unable, either by programmatic design or lack of teacher awareness to bridge the gap between what the students truly need to move along in the educational system and the program's objectives. Results from this miscommunication (either intentional or unintentional) are students who are left lacking adequate academics to pass onto the proceeding grade level or

graduate. Through structural and pedagogical changes, these inadequacies may be addressed.

***Disconnect between the world views of the monoculture and the “non-traditional”***

Occasionally faculty members attempted to incorporate the families’ life experiences in to that of the classroom. Despite the classroom teacher’s best efforts, without proper materials or a basic understanding on their part, these lessons failed to truly engage culture into the class. Compounding the lack of personal understanding and materials with a significant language barrier and any attempts to integrate the migrant experience into the classroom became nearly impossible to succeed.

One particularly brisk July afternoon, the first/second grade classroom assistant, Ms. Lauren presented a social studies lesson to the class. She was charged with creating and presenting this portion of the curriculum. This lesson was focused on the children’s picture book *Radio Man* (Dorros, 1993). *Radio Man* was a bilingual story of a migrant farm worker boy, Diego, and his travels through the US. Diego uses a radio as his companion, which serves as a reminder of where he has been and where he is going.

The objective of Ms. Lauren’s lesson was to discuss migration and explore the different places the children have lived. Although the premise of bringing in student experiences in the following interaction, Ms. Lauren had difficulties understanding Jesús (who was primarily monolingual in Spanish). The teacher-student exchange depicts how language barriers and lack of experiential knowledge (principally on behalf of the teacher) resulted in an opportunity learning to be lost.

Lauren-We are going to color in the places that you have lived in. I only have lived in one place my entire life. First, who can tell me what is a country, a city, or state? Let's focus on the U.S., what is it?

José- A country.

Jerry-Miss, I lived in Texas.

Lauren-Write the name of Texas over the colored shade, that is called labeling. If anybody asks you to write it, they are asking you to label. Find the compass. Put your finger on it.

Lupe-Miss, I don't know how to write it. (Lauren spells out Texas on the board)

Jazmín-I lived in Mexico.

Lauren-This is a map of the U.S., so we need to only stay in the U.S. What are some other states? Think. Where are we right now?

Jerry-Michigan.

Jesús-I live in Westlaco.

Lauren-Where?

Jesús - Westlaco.

Lauren- I'm sorry, where?

Jesús -Westlaco!

Lauren-I'm not sure what state that's in. Jazmín has said California.

Ms. Lauren then walked around the class, glancing at the students' papers. As she walked past me, I told her that Westlaco was in Texas. Ms. Lauren responded with, "Oh, Westlaco. I didn't know what he was saying. Ha, ha. Thanks, I didn't know where it was anyway."

By not recognizing where the students live, or by simply dismissing that their lives take them out of the US, Ms. Lauren demonstrated that only one part of



the students' lives is relevant, the aspect that she was familiar with. The young teacher had lost out on an opportunity to learn of life outside of the US, a place that she explicitly stated she had limited experience outside of her home state. Ms. Lauren's dismissal of both Jazmín's and Jesús's responses be it unintentional or intentional, has relayed the message that their lives were not important enough to integrate into classroom discourse. In fact, Westlaco, a city in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, is one of the common origination points in the Texas-Michigan migrant stream.

The above interaction between Ms. Lauren, the teaching assistant for the first/second grade class, illustrates how little NMMP's staff understands the population they serve. Not only did this particular teacher have difficulty understanding the pronunciation of the child's response, but she had little knowledge of the geographic location where he lives.

Another example of teacher/student miscommunication took place in Ms. Rebecca's class. She presented a lesson on farm animals to the five and six year-olds. As she showed the children plastic replicas of farm animals, various children called out the animal's names. Ms. Rebecca questioned the students about what the particular use of each animal was. When she presented the sheep, the following dialogue occurred with Adrien a young boy who was bilingual (however his skills were stronger in Spanish):

Ms. Rebecca: What is this?

Adrien: Cheep

Ms. Rebecca: What are you saying? What are you trying to say?

Ms. Rebecca (questions me): What are these in Spanish? Is he saying it in Spanish?

Investigator: He is saying 'sheep.'

Ms. Rebecca: Oh, I thought he was saying it in Spanish. Adrien, it's 'sheep.'

After this instance Adrien did not join in with the other children in calling out animal names. Once the children moved to their tables for work time, which entailed coloring a pre-made sheep and gluing it onto a paper bag, I observed Adrien repeating to himself (under his breath) 'black sheep.' With each annunciation the young boy tried to pronounce the word exactly like Ms. Rebecca.

In a Bakhtinian framework, one can identify the interaction between the students and teacher as an example of *authoritative discourse*. Bakhtin argues that the authoritative word (religious, political, and moral language; the words of parents, adults, teachers, etc.) carries with it both privilege of being acknowledged by society and supported by authority. The authoritative word, carried by individuals in power, demands those without power's unconditional allegiance. Applying the additional theoretical layer of LatCrit, the *authoritative word* understands this privilege to be tied to race, ethnicity, culture and class. Moreover, in the U.S., the power carried by the *authoritative word* is maintained through existing hegemonic structures which sustain through the oppression and subordination of people-of-color. Bakhtin (1981) defines the relationship between authoritative discourse and its internal persuasiveness. He maintains that

The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to

persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it...It is indissolubly fused with its authority-with political power, an institution, a person-and it stands and falls together with that authority (pp. 342-343).

Through this structure, the individual in power (in this case, Ms. Lauren and Ms. Rebecca) is able to dominate, whereas the students are left without any authority to empower their voices. In the case of Ms. Lauren and her students, the university educated white teacher has the luxury of having access to an authoritative discourse. The students, on the other hand, do not. She was easily able to brush aside important pieces of the student's lives, and they were also made to dismiss it even though it represented who they were. In the example with Ms. Rebecca, Adrien was made to feel that his response was inadequate, which led him to isolate himself from the class activity. Both instructors may not have meant to shame the students, but in using the authoritative word teachers did exactly that. Bakhtin would see these interactions as proof that the authoritative word "may embody various contents: authority as such, or the authoritativeness of tradition, of generally acknowledged truths, of the official line and other similar authorities" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.344). The children took a risk and joined in the conversation, even though their English skills were not strong. Using the authoritative word the two teachers were able to project their power over the students. Bakhtin details the *authoritative word* as,

Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth-but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as *authoritative discourse*, and an *internally persuasive discourse*...Often the authoritative word is in fact a work spoken by another in a foreign language (pp. 342-343).

The first/second grade assistant and kindergarten/first grade lead teacher have been reared in what Cornell Pewewardy (2003) refers to as the "monoculture," or also known

as the hegemonic culture. The monoculture creates and disseminates the guidelines by which we must all follow to live. They have access to and enforce the use of the authoritative word. Farm worker children are not born with the privileges bestowed on members of the monoculture. The chances of migrant children ever gaining acceptance into the monoculture is slim.

Those individuals who are part of the hegemonic society are also part of the authoritative discourse. By being a member of the monoculture, Ms. Lauren is entitled to know and implement the discourse; therefore she is automatically privy to the authoritative discourse. Consequently, Ms. Lauren's interaction with these children also makes her fulfill the role of "teacher as gatekeeper." In turn, she is able to use her authoritative discourse to keep the children from accessing their own cultural capital in efforts to connect with the classroom.

By passing over Jesús's answer, Ms. Lauren lost an opportunity to capitalize on integrating the young boy's life experiences in the lesson. In a study conducted by Michael Romanowski, he found that classroom SMEP educators used students' geographic knowledge as a starting point for the basis of the curriculum. In my research the first/second grade teacher's assistant actually designed the lesson to integrate the student's life experiences into the social studies lesson. The children's migration routes were the focus of the lesson however without any geographic background knowledge, Ms. Lauren still missed the lesson's objectives. Not only did Ms. Lauren not know where Westlaco was located, furthermore she was unaware of the importance of the city to the migrant stream. Instead of embracing the opportunity to engage the students in a

meaningful dialogue of their lives, Ms. Lauren utilized her authoritative discourse to dominate the conversation and steer it to a place that she felt more comfortable.

Although the situation with Ms. Lauren and the seven –year-old children did not transpire ideally, she nonetheless attempted to link the student’s home life with the classroom. Fortunately, she was not the only teacher aide reaching out to the student population through the integration of the children’s home life and classroom lessons. Ms. Rynowski, the third/fourth grade teacher, also strove to include as much of the student’s life experiences as she could. In fact, the veteran teacher did not take the children’s experience as lightly as the less experienced first/second grade educator. In our initial interview, the veteran teacher indicated how important it was for the students to have their heritage language integrated in the classroom.

Ms. Rynowski was concurring with the research that argues how language must be recognized as one of the most significant human resources. As Antonia Darder points out, it operates in a variety of ways to affirm, contradict, negotiate, challenge, transform, and empower distinct cultural and ideological beliefs and practices (1997).

As stated before, her language skills are fairly limited but she attempted to integrate heritage language through the exploration of Mexican culture.

I wish I had knowledge in the Spanish language and of the culture. It would be good if we [staff members] had mini-Spanish workshops. They [program directors] push, push, push for Spanish children to learn English. They want them to be aware of English terminology. I want them [program directors] to know that the students are learning English, and their heritage is important too. I always try to incorporate their heritage in class. I find stories to read about kids who are like them. And when we study dinosaurs we make dinosaur piñatas.

For this teacher, incorporating the child’s reality into the classroom provided a space for the children to bring in their lived experiences into the classroom. She appreciated the

importance that the integration of the students' heritage language and culture plays into the acquisition of English.

I depend a lot on the students to translate for me. I feel helpless when I have to depend on them to translate. Today some of the students went back to the language of their heritage. I feel bad because I want to be a part of that. It would be great to use it [students' heritage language] to relate to the children.

Regrettably, Ms. Rynowski did not have a strong command of the language, which ultimately left her at a disadvantage in serving the students. She adorned the class's walls with photos of Mexico, ballet folklorico dancers, and Mexican flags in an effort to let the students know of her appreciation for Mexican culture.

In Leonard A. Valverde's (2006), *Improving schools for Latinos: Creating better learning environments*, he presents the argument that for Latino schooling to be successful it must have at its core the incorporation of ancestry, culture, and language. The director of the Hispanic Border Leadership Institute, Valverde firmly believes that schools should augment the academic curriculum with the student's family life, but do so in a sincere fashion. It was seen through observations and teacher interviews that a small portion of the staff was trying to incorporate these aspects into the curriculum. Unfortunately, their attempts fell into the clutches of a "tacos and Cinco de Mayo" representation of multicultural education.

Ms. Rynowski's and Ms. Laura's lessons hoped to integrate the migrant experience with classroom instruction. The third/fourth grade teacher's intentions were meant to demonstrate an appreciation and admiration for the Mexican culture, while the teaching assistant attempted to integrate the migrant experience in the curriculum. Although, the former desperately wanted her students to see how beautiful their heritage

was, her lessons became stereotypical representations of piñatas, pictures of Cinco de Mayo, and reading Charlotte's Web ("a book about life on a farm").

In an article addressing teacher cultural awareness, Renee White-Clark (2005) asserts:

Often their [educators] efforts consist of minimal, fragmented content, such as discussing holidays, reading multicultural literature, or having international food fairs...Teacher misconceptions can lead to minority students being misunderstood, miseducated, and possibly mistreated (p. 42).

Research involving migrant student success in the classroom has strongly suggested that teachers must have an understanding of the migrant culture, beyond stereotypical ideas such as holidays and food. It is imperative to incorporate the less tangible subjective dimensions, such as talking, acting and socializing, behaviors, attitudes, values and beliefs (Romanowski, 2003).

Migrant culture, like the communities Peter McLaren centers on, has "particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its given circumstances and conditions of life" (McLaren, 1998, p.175). A program that is designed to serve a distinct population should be mindful of the life experiences of that particular group of people. Moreover, when the program focuses on learning, it only makes sense to construct the foundation of the curriculum on the culture and language of that particular student body. Having said this, it is imperative to move beyond artifacts, which are often times, stripped of their expressions of intent by cheapening them to mere objects disembodied from their cultural meaning (Darder, 1997). As Franz Fanon writes in the *Wretched of the Earth* (1963) "Culture has never the translucidity of custom; it abhors all

simplification (p. 224).” For both Fanon and Darder, culture moves beyond and must not be reduced to artifacts.

Having been part of the monoculture, especially having received teacher education training through program’s which continue the production of cultural hegemony, these teachers sincerely felt they were doing their best in connecting the migrant life with the class. Even if these connections were done on a surface level, in a sense the blame lay not only on the teachers but also on the materials with which they have access. Since the teachers do not have control over budgetary issues, in regards to the inability to purchase culturally appropriate materials, it would be in their best interest of the students and faculty to better inform their own world views concerning the migrant farm worker population. In doing so, the NMMP educators simultaneously enrich their teaching experiences and offer a better learning environment for their students, which should be the ultimate goal of the program.

### **Serving the program’s stakeholders**

In his text, *Migrant Education: Thirty years of success, but challenges remain*, John D. Perry (1997) writes,

Summer school programs are a key element to all MEPs, especially in the northern receiving states when the summer is the time the largest number of migrant families is present...Summer programs are particularly valuable to maintain a continuity of educational services between academic years and to provide opportunities for remediation.

The former New York state senator and executive director of the Interstate Migrant Education Council clearly states that SMEPs main function is to provide academic continuity for migrant students’ academics or reinforce previously learned subject matter.



Furthermore, the objective of SMEPs is to establish a classroom space where migrant children are valued and intellectually challenged. The following two sections offer an analysis as to how the NMMP is constructing such a space for children, given the staff's limited resources, knowledge base, and support from administration.

*Language instruction the way they know how*

Unsurprisingly, migrant parents did want their children to learn English in the schools and assumed it was actually occurring within the classrooms. An assumption was made on part of migrant families that the NMMP teachers were instructing the students in English, because it was the only language the teachers knew. Parents understood English language instruction to be executed solely through submersion, and not necessarily through lessons.

The parents were correct, to a degree. The teachers were using English in the class, but they were by no means utilizing any English language learning strategies. The reasons for this are two-fold. First, because only one teacher had any experience with ESL or bilingual education strategies. As stated earlier, none of the teachers felt strong enough in their Spanish skills to communicate with students, therefore implementing Spanish to assist in English language development was not an option. Furthermore, Ms. Rebecca, who had prior experience using ESL strategies, was not entirely convinced of their benefits in the summer program. When asked her opinion on having ESL or Spanish language developmental strategies a required component of the NMMP curriculum, she responded with, "I don't know if that's really going to help them."

Essentially, the young teacher was unsure of the role either English or Spanish language instruction would play in the classroom.

Second was that the English used in the classroom was purely conversational, and not the dialect found in academic discourse. Language instruction portions of the day centered on reading for comprehension, answering questions, and story sequencing. In short, language instruction focused on language arts and less on developing English (or Spanish) language skills. This is problematic because the students were never given the opportunity to focus on language development itself, instead they did so in tandem with learning subject matter.

An analysis of classroom observations revealed that in some cases the teachers did not model academic English nor model how classroom dialogues function. Instead, classrooms were conducted in a way that resembled a day camp. A few examples to illustrate this include: (1) children spoke while teachers were at the front of the class; (2) rarely did the children refer to the teachers by name, instead by “Ms.,” “Sir,” and “teacher;” and (3) as the summer progressed, activities became less academically oriented and more toward craft projects.

For example, the daily activities of the kindergarten/first grade class all culminated in the coloring and cutting out of animals for worksheets. Often times, the children would complete the project in fifteen minutes, leaving the remainder of the morning available for “free time” (which entailed playing in the dramatic play area, lego area, puzzles or with random toys). Another instance would be when Mr. Roger’s class eventually became daily card game sessions. The reasoning stated by the teachers was

simple: it was the students' summer so the teachers wanted to let them enjoy it. As Ms. Natalie clearly states,

Me, personally, I hope that, as far as – not academics go, but just in general, I hope that they feel like I really have had a good summer with them. I don't know. That would be my biggest thing. I know academic learning, reading, writing, all that stuff, is important, but hopefully they've had a good time, you know?

This is their summer. I know. I know. I keep reminding myself it's their summer, too. And they can learn and have fun at the same time.

In the beginning of the summer, I witnessed the young teacher work hard at incorporating fun activities with the lessons, however as the summer moved along the “fun” activities began to outweigh the academic lessons.

Classroom educators recognized that the program fell during the students' summer and therefore wanted to make certain all activities were “fun.” NMMP staff members had access to students and ample opportunities to model the form of English needed to fair well in any classroom discourse, yet the educators chose to be lax in demonstrating these rules of engagement. What the classroom teachers did not take into account is the significant role they play in the language development of students, in fact for this group of students the teacher was, as Wong-Fillmore and Snow assert, the only source of academic English (2000).

Parents expected the teachers to supply their children with the necessary tools to succeed in school, thereby supplementing them with tools to move out of the migrant stream. Classroom instructors were expected to create an environment that provided migrant students access to the dominant discourse, which was academic English (when speaking in terms of the U.S.). For Bakhtin (1981), the more opportunities individuals have to interact with others in a specific speech genre, those opportunities result in an increased (and enriched) ability to participate in social life or in this case, classroom discourse. However, if these opportunities are not available,

migrant students cannot practice language thereby prohibiting their engagement in classroom discourse.

Without the tools to engage in classroom discourse, migrant students were marginalized within classroom dialogue. They were unable to have meaningful interactions. The provision of English language through teacher modeling, can guide students to the language of access. Brazilian scholar, Marcia Moraes, in her text that bridges the works of Freire and the Bakhtin Circle with bilingual education, notes “language is used to legitimate one voice or history over another, and language does not only influence students toward a particular world view but also serves as a vehicle of alienation by preventing access to certain questions and answers (1996, p.109).” As Moraes points out, language can be simultaneously used as a tool to oppress and legitimate, as seen earlier through the examples of the interactions between NMMP staff and students. Unfortunately, the individuals who held power were not aware of their role in this process of student alienation.

Regrettably, NMMP classroom practitioners did not see their roles as either ESL or bilingual educators, instead language instruction for them was just grammar and literature. Take into consideration Ms. Rynowski’s description of language instruction,

Well, all lessons are in English and I use a lot of visual objects and lots of hands-on experiences. We do grammar and literature, social studies and science and the vocabulary that comes out of that. We have word banks where we learn the vocabulary that they [the students] will need to know for the chapters [in Charlotte’s Web]. For the Spanish speakers that do not read in English, we have each page translated, you know say what the page is about, because we don’t have any books [in Spanish].

By way of observations, it became apparent that any type of language instruction took place in the thirty minute increments allotted to grammar or literature instruction. This idea of language instruction contradicts the goals of the NMMP directors, who test

children in their English language skills. How can one test a student in a language that is first of all, neither their native language nor a language they are receiving language instruction for?

The staff members of the NMMP concurred with the parents to some degree, in terms of providing Spanish language instruction. Observations, layered with staff narratives found that teachers were not truly prepared to offer any type of Spanish language instruction. When asked to detail the significance of English and Spanish language instruction, the site director commented,

We already do that [provide language instruction], or they [teachers] should be doing that. But it's absolutely essential, yes. But a lot of that goes hand in hand, with what they're doing with the reading and the language and objectives from the assessments.

[interviewer: Are the teachers given ESL or Spanish language materials?]

Oh yeah. We have all kinds of materials. There's access to materials. A lot of times, that specifically is done with-that specific instruction is done with volunteers, or if we don't have volunteers available, then I'll pull them [students] out myself and work with them. I work with the beginning ones. I mean if they have a Spanish background, I work with that Spanish background and build that what we're building English, work on the spelling. But usually if they have some English they stay in their classes.

Although previously stated, it is important to reiterate that the site director was one of two staff who had any training in assisting students in building Spanish or English language skills. As a matter of fact, beyond English language submersion, the teachers could not offer adequate English language instruction. The reason for this was because only one of the classroom teachers (Ms. Rebecca) had any ESL training, albeit minimal and done on a need-to-know basis.

Unfortunately, the one teacher, who had experience with ESL strategies, was not fully supportive of Spanish usage in her class. More importantly, the kindergarten/first

grade teacher did not understand her role in the student's ESL development. Ms. Rebecca was the first to suggest that using Spanish in the class "creates a crutch" for monolingual Spanish speakers, thereby prohibiting their further development of English language skills. Refuting the kindergarten/first grade teacher's theory is bilingual scholar Lucy Tse (2001). She states that,

Despite public perception to the contrary, children of immigrants are by and large learning English rapidly and succeeding in school...[T]he primary language 'problem' among most immigrants is not a lack of English-learning, but rather, the rapid loss of the immigrant languages across communities. (p29)

If the young teacher utilized the native language skills of her students, she would have become part of the solution to Tse's proposed problem of HL attrition. In Ms. Rebecca's case, as in other white educators across the U.S., an appreciation of HL leads to the broader cultural understanding of students-of-color, a definite attribute needed for MEP teachers.

### ***Wanting to understand***

American Indian scholar of multicultural education Cornel Pewewardy (1998) investigated the effects of stereotypes on children and came to focus on culturally responsive teaching. He explicates this particular teaching methodology by writing that

Culturally responsive teaching uses the child's culture to build a bridge to successful academic achievement. It places other cultures alongside middle class, mainstream macro-cultures at the center of the classroom instruction paradigm. For teachers of indigenous learners, being 'culturally responsive' means being sensitive, aware, and capable of employing cultural learning patterns, perspectives, family structure, multiple world views, and tribal languages in the teaching, learning, and mental ecology of the classroom (p.34).

Although intended for tribal learners, Pewewardy's research may be extrapolated for migrant learners. He delineates how incorporating student culture into teaching intertwines to create pathways for success amongst traditionally marginalized students, in the above case Pewewardy speaks of indigenous children while other educational theorists envision similar pedagogies for other marginalized students. Similar to his work is that of the pedagogue and scholar of African American education, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994). She argues that teachers who follow a culturally relevant methodology recognize and respect the skills and knowledge students have prior to entering the classroom. Moreover, these culturally sensitive teachers help students develop these skills by collaboratively erecting bridges and scaffolding learning.

The positions established within Native and African American scholarship can be expanded to fit all children of color. Through observations and interviews I do not believe that the NMMP staff would dispute these pedagogues, however they may question how one can provide culturally responsive teaching if they have no experiential knowledge of the student's life. In her text, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children*, Ladson-Billings (1994) highlights that a portion of the white educators in her study knew and were responsive to their student's culture. Through the usage of culturally relevant pedagogy, these white educators became successful teachers who inspired successful students.

The teachers interviewed felt that the cultural chasm could be minimized if they only knew about their students' lived experiences and home lives. One teacher even suggested going to the camps and visiting with the families. Even with these suggestions few had experienced the *campo*. Mr. Roger was the only teacher to have visited the

camps and had done so at the beginning of his tenure with the program (over ten years prior). The junior/senior high teacher arranged, with the NMMP administration's assistance, visitation. Based from this visitation, he suggested that all teachers visit migrant camps.

I think also too we need to go to the camps. I think we need to see how they live, see what kind of interaction they have amongst each other for a day, for an evening, something along those lines. I've always thought that was important because a lot of teachers come here not knowing what some of these camps look like. A couple I've been to are, wow, I can't believe they live there. I can't believe the farmer would allow them to live there.

The teacher then proposed a mini-workshop for new staff that briefly explains the living conditions and cultural experiences of the students and their families. Ms. Susan, the assistant from the kindergarten/first grade class, was also adamant that staff visit the students' homes. For her,

We need to see how they live. Where they live and how they survive. I can't imagine what it is like. I hear the kids talk and it hurts my heart. Maybe if we [the staff] go, it'll help us to understand the children better. If anything, it'll make us work harder to give everything we've got to these kids.

Although, Ms. Susan's intentions for visiting may sound benevolent, later comments expressed made me think otherwise.

During one morning classroom observation, I stationed myself at the usual chair and table in the kindergarten/first grade class when Ms. Susan, walked over to me with a little girl, Ana. In my observations, Ana was a very solemn child that rarely participated in the giggles or play of her fellow classmates. Instead, Ana would sit and watch intently the activities with a small smile. Whenever the children were completing a craft or one of the daily penmanship worksheets, Ana executed the activity with painstaking care.



The previous week, the teacher's assistant and I had discussed Ana's reserved classroom behavior. The petite, grandmother-like teaching aide had taken a keen interest in the child. Each morning during Morning Circle, Ana would be seated next to (almost leaning on) Ms. Susan. On more than one occasion, Ms. Susan said to me, "That girl has it. She has responsibility and smarts. She knows how to succeed. She could go far. Too bad for her family life." On this particular day, Ms. Susan sat Ana at a nearby table and asked the child to draw a picture. Once Ana became engrossed in her drawing of Ms. Susan, the teacher turned to me and said

You'll never believe what she said to me today. She told me that she loved Mondays and that she hated the weekends. I asked her why? Why do you hate the weekends? And you know what she told me? She said, "I hate the weekends because I have to work. Mondays mean I don't have to work. It means I can come to school and not to work. It means I don't have to take care of my little sister."

Can you believe that? She has to take care of her sister who is like, I think three. She has to watch this three year old until her mom gets home at night from picking. Can you imagine that? She is only six and she has to take care of a three year old. Ana hates the weekends because she has to work! She has to work! And they work long hours, I think she told me from like seven until after dinner. Can you believe that?

Digressing momentarily to the previous discussion on the topic of home visits, and through reading this statement one could question what would be the true motive in visiting the homes of migrant workers? Would it be to attempt to understand the lived experiences of the families? Or would it be to confirm the misunderstanding the middle-class white staff members already hold of migrant families?

Mr. Roger, the junior/senior high teacher, had at one time visited the camps when he had first begun with the program eleven years ago. What he saw not only impacted

his world view, but how he interacted with his students. In visiting the camps Mr. Roger saw first hand the importance of family, culture and language.

Yeah, and there-in going to the camps years ago-I haven't been in years-but just seeing it even at summer school you see the importance of that [culture]. And you see the importance of family, and you see how the family sticks together. And when somebody needs help somebody is there to help.

And sometimes, in some cases, it's not always the best situation. I have one student who will be gone as soon as everybody goes to work. She's going to have to leave school to baby-sit. It's sad in one respect because she's taken out of school, but in the same respect, I totally respect what she's doing. That's her way of contributing to her family.

And I've always seen that with, like, a lot of the families. I mean, it's a "we're an all-for-one group of people", and everybody seems to benefit in some way from that culture. And I think it's the family too, I mean, it's the older generation that keeps the younger generation alert to their culture.

Mr. Roger's views on migrant life opposed those held by the majority of the NMMP staff, while held by Ms. Susan were more representational. Antonia Darder (1997) argues that

In addition, teachers must take time to learn about the communities in which their students live. As teachers gain a greater understanding of students' lives outside of school, they are more able to create opportunities for classroom dialogue, which assists bicultural students to affirm, challenge, and transform the many conflicts and contradictions that they face as members of an oppressed group (p.341).

Darder asserts that teachers must be aware of their students' lives to fully understand how to engage them in meaningful dialogue, but I would expand these ideas to include the teacher's obligation to leave their biases behind. Having said this, I understand that one cannot entirely leave their world view at the door, but one can certainly attempt to reconcile their biases and stereotypes. It would be incredibly difficult to learn about any

community, if the lens used to view them does nothing more than demean the lives of the community members.

Comments such as Ms. Susan's demonstrate why migrant families are neither eager to open their homes nor forthcoming with invitations to NMMP staff. When meeting with the families, I questioned them on their thoughts of having staff members visit their homes. The suggestions did not bode well for NMMP faculty. Instead, the families were offended and asked me what possible information the teachers could glean from such visits. In fact, Ms. Romero bluntly stated,

Maybe people that work there in the school, they might think "Oh, well they live in a camp. How does a camp look like?" I think they should do, like, a little video or something of just going around the camps and seeing how people work, during how they're working, while they're working, how they interact when they're at camp all together. I think that'd be a lot more helpful. They [NMMP staff] might be thinking, "Okay. They live like-okay, how do they live? And she [a NMMP teacher] wouldn't want to be coming here because they think it's dirty, stuff like that. And that's how older people would react. "What the hell does she care? She's not working here anyways." No. It would be more-to me, it would be better if they would do, during one school, during summer school, they'd go out into the field and see how people work, actually work. They may even try it. They wouldn't like it. I mean, can you imagine them working in the apple. They wouldn't make it. Even in the cherries or even during the strawberry season, you cannot imagine them bending down and picking strawberries and hauling them to wherever they have to. You can't see them doing that because first of all, they're not used to it, and they're not brought up like that.

What can be extrapolated from Ms. Romero's narrative is an agreement that NMMP teachers need to understand the experiences of a migrant farm worker family. The young woman's narrative challenges teachers to truly understand migrant work, the importance of it to the family's livelihood and the pride attached to the labor. Essentially, Mr. Romero calls for teachers to look beyond their world views, instead to look critically at

the systems that marginalize migrant farmworker communities (as well as the role that the teachers play in upholding and replicating those systems). But what about learning and working in solidarity? This is not even an option for the current staff. The staff needs to get a feel for how the migrants live *and work*. Ms. Ramos, along with the other families, did not want the staff to simply come into the camps. They recognized that the “americanitos” would merely pass judgment and never truly appreciate the community’s struggle. Somehow the migrant families want the teachers to be made aware of the complexity of the migrant life and learn how to integrate those aspects into the classroom without victimizing the farm worker community.

Once again, I defer to the research presented by Romanowski in thinking about this incredibly complex and delicate situation. In his work with summer migrant education programs, he addresses the manner that teachers address their own personal stereotypes and biases of migrant farm worker peoples. These biases embed themselves into the educators’ world views. Even if the classroom practitioner’s interactions with students are not done consciously, their stereotypes will undoubtedly influence their teaching (Romanowski, 2003).

At NMMP, the contrasting life experiences between staff members and students were quite evident. The teachers were white, monolingual English speakers, born (and raised) in the Midwest, while the families were Mexican or Mexican-American, bilingual English/Spanish speakers and born in the southern part of the U.S or in Mexico. Beyond these were the dissimilarities that emerged through dialogue focusing on the issue of livelihood. The participating migratory families divided their time between two (or three) states, often times spending six to eight months in the north and the remainder of

the year in the south. NMMP staff members lived in Michigan, in some cases staff members had never even traveled outside of the Midwest.

All teachers voiced their desire to understand and see where the families lived, in hopes of gaining background knowledge that could translate into a culturally responsive curriculum. Furthermore, most of the teachers described their admiration for the “Hispanic culture,” especially in regards to the level of respect the children held for adults. Although the educators expressed their reverence for family values within the migrant community, they misinterpreted contributions made by the children as forced obligations made by selfish parents. In this sense it was obvious that the definition of community differed greatly between the white, middle-class, NMMP staff and Mexican (or Mexican-American) working-class migrant farmworkers.

Faculty interpretation of home, family, community, and responsibilities did not match what they saw practiced by the migrant families. Consequently, the monoculture’s view point misinterpreted the families’ realities. On more than one occasion the program’s educators voiced their concerns about the value of education among the migrant families. Ms. Rynowski faulted the students’ struggles on their being “transient” or moving across state (and curriculum) lines. She claimed, “The children missed out in certain parts of the curriculum because of the move.” The junior/senior teacher agreed with his colleague, although he offered a remedy to the hurdle,

It would help, I think, if the states like Texas and Florida – I know some in California, but we don’t see a lot from California – or even our own state, if we just – if everybody got onboard. And everybody – I mean, I hate to use the word, but like a nationwide curriculum I think would just be hugely successful.

Then an eighth-grader who leaves Texas is doing the same thing that an eighth-grader is doing in Michigan. So when you do make that transition

you might miss a week of school, but at least you're in the same spot. Because I know that a lot of times they come here they haven't done X, Y and Z in Texas, but yet they've done it in Michigan, or vice versa, they've done it in Texas but they haven't done it in Michigan. So they have no idea what we're talking about when we get to that point. That would help.

A "national curriculum" may not be too far in the horizon, much to the dismay of all educational advocates, but in Mr. Roger's view point it may rectify many of the issues apparent in migrant education.

The staff expressed their desire for workshops, manuals, or guidelines to assist in sustaining classroom interactions. In this sense, offering these inexpensive services would enable teachers to create a learning environment which reinforces subject matter attained from the students' sending states. It would also expand the experiential knowledge gained through the students' lived experiences. At the very least, extra professional support would prepare faculty members to understand and design appropriate language instruction.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, I would like to revisit the article, by Mary Zehr, referenced in the beginning of this chapter. The *Education Weekly* editor broadly discusses services provided through migrant education programs. She writes that

[t]hrough the program, many states provide summer classes for children, after-school activities, and help from 'student-support specialists,' who usually are bilingual and who assist migrant families in navigating the school system (p. 27)

Regrettably, the NMMP can not be counted amongst these programs. Its staff members were not able to offer student-support services and are by no means bilingual. Without

the communication skills or the implementation of necessary academic instruction, the staff was not able to assist the migrant students in navigating through the school system. In fact, the NMMP served as a child care facility as opposed to an academic setting.

Vigor and enthusiasm, years of experience, desire to understand, and a nurturing demeanor are all attributes that teachers need to empower marginalized children such as those who attend the NMMP. The classroom teachers who participated in this project all had a great deal to offer the students. However, they were limited by the language barrier and their lack of knowledge in regards to the migrant experience. Without these tools they were unable to create an environment open to culturally responsive teaching, which is necessary for migrant children to succeed in the school system.

The staff recognized the program's limitations, habitually faulting the lack of support from the administration and out dated materials. Regrettably, the teachers did not simultaneously acknowledge their own shortcomings or how they could support the students. As such, the educators did not focus on how the staff could improve the existing program, rather they concentrated on the structural limitations. In the end, the teachers did not discuss how integrating the migrant experience was a valuable and readily accessible resource. For this program to be successful, the faculty and staff must be both self-reflexive as well as reach out to the migrant community. Presently, both aspects are deficient.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

Allow me to conclude this dissertation by honestly expressing how emotionally exhausting and fulfilling this experience has been. The result of this study accomplished more than its investigative purposes, but also concludes an internal conflict which has raged within me since entering academia. When conceptualizing this study, its purpose transpired in more of a selfish than selfless state, regrettably. Honestly, this research project began as a form of personal reconciliation. It was an outlet for me to come to terms with my own privilege. I was grappling with the fact that I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to conduct an investigation for a doctoral degree in an U.S. institution, while many of my cousins did not complete a high school education.

This study was a way for me to prove, to myself more than anyone else that although I haven't worked in the fields for nearly twelve years, does not mean that I am disconnected to the farmworker community or that my commitment to the betterment of migrant education is insincere. Moreover, through this project I was able to apply LatCrit in an area of education that has historically been marginalized. It is my form of struggling to eliminate racial, gender, language, citizenship status and class subordination (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Villalpando, 2003). Through this investigation I was able to challenge the claims made by the U.S. educational system that it is color-blind, racially-neutral, objective and offers equal opportunities (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001).

Furthermore, I hope that, this project demonstrates my solidarity with farmworkers by advocating for the restructuring of spaces where other farmworker children could escape out of the agricultural economy, *if they so chose*. I envision this



space as similar to the one carved for me by my parents, by particular teachers (in my primary grades, as well as at the collegiate level), by family members (both blood and kin relations), by my mentors, by my fellow Chicana/o activists, and by my comadres. A space where farmworker families use counter-storytelling to challenge the stories of those in power (Delgado, 1993; Solorzano and Yosso, 2001), which is tells the stories of those experiences ignored by white America.

While attending SMEPs, I witnessed the multi-layered disadvantages migratory students face that seasonal students did not. As seasonal students, we had the privilege of attending schools in the same state throughout the year, therefore missing key curriculum components was not a concern. Inversely, migratory students were more susceptible to dropping out (or rather pushed out) before graduating because of the continuous disparities between differing state requirements. Even though seasonal agricultural laborers felt uncomfortable approaching teachers, they did so without the constant worry of a language barrier (as many acquired a conversational level of English through interacting with outside community members). Over time settled families became acquainted with the distinct *speech genres* used in the area and those used in the educational system. These prior experience and knowledge systems served as the catalyst in approaching my study.

My investigation's findings point to the insights presented in the 1991 National Conference on Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. This conference hosted by farmworker advocates and MEP administrators, held nearly two decades ago, highlighted issues that were still surprisingly relevant to this research and echoed throughout the families' interviews. The Migrant Education Goals Task Force final report was a

culmination of issues such as: 1.) lack of respect for language and culture differences, 2.) the lack of bilingual or ESL trained staff, 3.) the characterization of low expectations for migrant students, 4.) limited and outdated resources, and 5.) instruction limited to basic academic skills (Friend et al, 1992). These themes each identified by the prominent scholars actively working in migrant education, reemerged in my research project completed sixteen years later.

Interestingly, these tenets proposed by the Migrant Education Goals Task Force and my investigative findings fit nicely with some of the defining elements that form the basic assumptions, perspectives, research methods and pedagogies of LatCrit (Solorozano and Yosso, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Villalpando, 2003). The first parallelism considers the significance of identity, as well as those elements that inform identity formation. My findings illuminate how closely connected language was to the student's identity and group membership, whereas LatCrit highlights the intersection of race, language, generation status, class, immigrant status in identity formation (Valdes, 1996; Villalpando, 2003). The community spoke of the role their HL played in maintaining ties with elder generations, in addition to acknowledging the power that English wielded in the U.S. Even though English held power in dominant society, it did not hold the knowledge needed to survive and thrive in a migrant life.

The lack of cultural knowledge, on the part of teachers, translates into devaluing of the migrant student's experiential knowledge. By negating this crucial information teachers are rendering the student's knowledge as illegitimate. LatCrits recognizes

that the experiential knowledge of Students of Color are legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education. In fact, CRT and LatCrit educational studies view this knowledge as a strength and draw explicitly

on the lived experiences of students of color by including such methods as storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, *testimonios*, *cuentos*, *consejos*, chronicles and narratives (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 314).

In this sense the migrant community's cultural knowledge and lived experiences are placed at center and used as instruments to empower students.

Drawing upon my findings I found that families challenged the NMMP to seriously address the education of Latina/o migrant students. Although NMMP's educators followed the dominant deficit framework used to explain the student's educational inequality (children having to care for younger siblings, language barriers, parents pulling children out of school, high mobility, etc.), my investigation unveiled how these traditional explanations act as "camouflage for the self-interest, power and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001, p, 313)." The white, middle-class teachers were perpetuating a system that continues to marginalizes the migrant agricultural laborer community.

Another element which emerged through my research project was how little had changed throughout the NMMPs history. As I reviewed the data it became apparent that the context in which the program operated closely paralleled that of MEPs in the program's beginning stages. Migrant education program's begun in the church basements or farmhouses, and were created by well-intentioned white, farmers' wives. Although the women meant well, their motivation was not completely altruistic. By and large the primary program's purposes were to instill good ole' American values (i.e. cleanliness, hygienic practices and English language acquisition) in the "unfortunate" Mexican migrant children. In a sense, the farmer's wives felt that they knew what was

best for the children, completing undermining or devaluing the children's families and community's knowledge.

As I reread through the data and considered the historic journey of the MEP, I drew similarities between its presence and past. For example, one unchanging factor is the demographic of the teachers. In the early period of the MEP, the women who gathered the farmworkers' children were monolingual English-speaking white women from the local community like the white, monolingual English-speaking local community members. In both cases, past and present, the program's purpose advocates for American values and stresses hygiene without considering the children's home lives. Moreover, the program still advocates English language acquisition without considering maintaining the children's heritage language. Regrettably, the program has not advanced beyond the basic premise from which it originated. However, to keep from becoming fatalistic it is important to stress that there is a great commitment by NMMP staff to the migrant students. I truly believe that with guidance the program can become a space that does not replicate the misplaced motivations which have sustained it throughout the decades.

In the end, however this study is meant to uphold and sustain the objectives proposed by the Migrant Education Goals Task Force. Patricia Meyertholen, Sylvia Castro, and Cinthia Salinas (2004) succinctly summarize the responsibility of the state agencies to the migrant and seasonal children:

[D]esign and support programs that helped migrant students overcome the challenges of mobility, barriers of culture and language, social isolation, and other difficulties associated with a migratory lifestyle in order to succeed in school and to successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment (p.182).

The evidence collected through this research project may be used to assist the NMMP staff to create and maintain a more successful program which will address the abovementioned challenges. Ultimately, MEPs *must* function as places where farmworker children are no longer marginalized, silenced, or invisible. Migrant education programs must empower students through acknowledging that migrant students are holders and creators of knowledge, while doing away with the notion that their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are invalid and not welcome within formal educational settings (Delgado Bernal, 2002). MEPs facilitated and allowed me to find the power to use my own voice. This must be the purpose of the MEP, as opposed to an extraordinary case. As such, it is my hope that this study will be infused in the momentum to shift MEPs toward this path.

Having come “clean”, I now conclude this study in three parts. The first part contains suggestions and recommendations extrapolated from the families narratives. This section summarizes the points previously highlighted by parents and NMMP students. Beyond these points, additional ideas will be generated by the families to improve the existing program.

The second part of this chapter presents the ideas supplied by NMMP staff. Similar to the section addressing the families’ recommendations, this segment underscores points made beyond those presented in the sixth chapter (Discussion of the Finding-The Educators). These suggestions not only refer to ways that the program can better serve the migratory agricultural laborer community, but how it may also create a better environment for the staff.

The final section of this chapter is a combination of my ideas and/or suggestions synthesized with those presented by the participants. In this portion, I reframe the recommendations made, inserting my own ideas for the program. I believe that the culmination of these final sections will function as the impetus for future discussion, an educator's handbook, a workshop, the development of a university course, or the springboard for further research.

### **The families' recommendations for the NMMP**

The dialogues with families led me to see that they truly believe the program was supporting their children the best way it could. The families have come to terms with the NMMP becoming less of an academic setting, and more of a safe haven for their children. The facility itself was a place where the families can send their children to receive meals, dental and vision services, as well as keep them safe. In years past, the program offered a space to maintain academic momentum (or create supportive structures) and for the older students it was a location that fulfilled graduation requirements. However, due to funding issues and the oppressive nature of standardized testing, the NMMP was forced to scale down its services. Yet, the families felt that minor adjustments could assist the SMEP in serving its student body.

- As noted in the previous chapters, families strongly suggested that NMMP administrators employ individuals from the farmworker community. Employing these individuals as teaching assistants not only aids in communication between the NMMP and families, but in recruiting new families into the program. When

asked, the families felt that employing community members would automatically build a bridge between the farmworker social network and the school.

- Parents and students would like to see program administrators communicate more with families. Communication is especially key for those students who are concerned about completing graduation requirements. Families find it cumbersome to rely on the recruiter (or in some cases one site director) to pass along information. They would like to see instructors or administrators take the initiative in discussing important issues, instead of depending upon the families to directly contact school representatives.
- The families' recommend the NMMP clarify the student's academic goals, as well as communicate these expectations. The parents want to know what is happening in the class, and how the subject matter presented throughout the day is supplementing or advancing the student's academic base. One parent proposed that teachers send home newsletters or devise a weekly report card.
- In all the interviews, parents emphasized the need for adult ESL courses. Families stressed the necessity for courses to improve their conversational English skills. One parent commented on his desire to learn how to read and write in English.
- Finally, all families suggested that the program bring in speakers to inform students of their post-graduation options. Even though a regional university does send a representative to speak with families at the end of the summer celebration, parents felt that these programs should become part of the curriculum.

### **The educators' recommendations for the NMMP administrators**

Conversations with classroom teachers and teaching assistants underscored the multiple barriers prohibiting meaningful engagement between the program and migrant community. It became apparent that classroom teachers sincerely cared about the students, even if this sincerity was misled and Ethnocentric. For instance, the site director commented on the staff's commitment by stating that,

The teachers that we generally find, just generally have a love of education anyway, or they wouldn't be working in the summer I'm thinking. And they really just wanna do whatever's best. So it's applying what you've learned in reading, and taking it a step further really.

It is evident, through the above statement, the site director was confident that the teachers were committed to the program and to serving the NMMP's students. Through my observations and conversations with the instructors, it was apparent they were genuine in wanting to provide the best experience for the students.

In my observations I witnessed the teachers (each in their own way, of course) conduct their classrooms in the manner that was "best" for their students. Similar to the families, the teachers had their own ideas of ways that the program could be improved.

- One such suggestion, echoed by all interviewed staff, was the offering of teacher or professional development workshops prior to the beginning of the summer session. Teachers, both novice and veteran, felt that workshops covering language instruction (English and Spanish), multicultural pedagogy, and strategies to incorporate information collected from entrance assessments would assist in the curriculum development.
- Another recommendation called for informative workshops centered on the students' backgrounds. One participant suggested that administrators coordinate



staff visits to the camps. Although I am reluctant to advocate for this, remembering previous comments made by Ms. Susan, I believe a workshop which prepares instructors of the living and working conditions of the farmworkers would be incredibly beneficial in widening the teachers' world views.

- Another point made was the creation of a manual or guidebook to keep instructors abreast of Texas (and other sending schools) curriculum and/or graduation requirements, which would enable the design of curriculum around key objectives to promote student success in their sending school.
- Bring in experienced migrant educators and professors from surrounding areas to assist in conceptualizing a holistic curriculum.
- The final points made on numerous occasions were the issues of funding (a cry that teachers across the country make annually) and the lack of materials. The materials stored in the resource room were sadly worn, and severely out-dated. Instructors emphasized how access to new and innovative materials would create a better learning environment for instructors and students alike.

### **Suggestions for families and the NMMP**

Concluding the portion of suggestions, are my own recommendations drawn from a culmination of the project's data collected. It is my belief that the families' and educators' recommendations scantily diverged, in fact their suggestions often times paralleled one another. Here is my advice based on those provided by all participants:

- First and foremost, create a culturally sensitive curriculum which is founded on the lived experiences of the farmworker community. Incorporate materials that speak about or topics related to agricultural laborers. Furthermore, structure class settings so that they emulate the social networks sustaining the migrant community. In other words, resist molding classes to fit the individualistic framework that plagues classrooms which does not reflect, but rather counters, the student's understanding of community. Communities, such as migrant farmworker communities, thrive on kinship networks. Meaning, the community members depend upon one another. Therefore, the culture of these children's classes should cultivate and encourage this interdependence. Unfortunately, the traditional classroom emphasizes individuality, competition amongst students, and autonomy (a culture that is vastly different from the student's home life).
- Communicate, communicate, communicate! Communicate with each other. If parents feel that their children have specific academic needs, speak directly with the NMMP administrators or teachers. In a time when a majority of the population has access to a cellular phone, making a phone call is possible. Therefore families, should call staff or arrange to meet with them (during a time and in a location of the family's convenience). The same could be said for teachers. If instructors feel that they are missing information, go to the parents. As different as families and classroom teachers may be, they have one thing in common: the student. Therefore, each group should make it their goal to communicate on behalf (and for the well-being) of the student.

- Utilize the resources that are available. Families have cultural capital that has assisted in their survival in an oppressive society. Teachers should utilize this cultural capital and channel these survival skills to guide students through the educational system.
- Consider developing a traveling adult ESL program. Listening to parents voice their necessity for ESL courses, I began to formulate a program involving local organizations, universities, the NMMP, and migratory families. It could be entirely possible to coordinate resources in constructing a program which would take ESL courses to each camp.
- Administration should seriously consider recruiting teacher's from Texas or the southwest, especially teachers who are bilingual. One such way of recruiting teachers would be by contacting sending schools and inquiring about potential candidates. In doing so, a relationship between sending and receiving schools, as well as the migrant community would be built. In the end, the families would have qualified bilingual teachers and the NMMP would have staff that is acutely aware of the issues which arise when educating migrant children (as well as how to address such issues).
- I would stress to NMMP administrators hire individuals from the migrant community (outside of Texas teachers). Families clearly emphasized the importance of having community members in the NMMP, as well as assisting in breaking through the language barrier. There are qualified individuals in the community.

- In terms of policy, I urge the administration to create a curriculum framework that would inform future NMMP teachers how to best instruct students. A framework that encompasses objectives needed to succeed academically both in Michigan and Texas schools. The curriculum should also include assessments that allow students to be evaluated in either English or Spanish.
- Additionally, I challenge the NMMP to build relationships with the students' sending schools and with other MEP in the state of Michigan. When building a relationship with Texas schools the NMMP would gain valuable information. This information is necessary in including into the NMMP's own curriculum crucial graduating requirements, thereby aligning the program's curriculum between states. Having the NMMP hold close discussions with other Michigan MEPs it would gain access to resources and information needed to create an enriching learning environment. In sharing information Michigan's MEPs would be aware of new learning/teaching strategies and materials, as well as migrant family concerns.

### **Implications of study**

The contribution of this study is three-fold, in that it has significant empirical, theoretical and methodological implications. The population at the center of this investigation has rarely been examined, and never the focal point of a research project layering LatCrit with a Bakhtinian framework and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Furthermore, my unique connection with the project and population definitely sets my investigation apart from all other research concerning migrant education.

The empirical implications advocate and support the integration of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Heritage Language Education in migrant education. The families and teachers spoke of how the migrant experiences and knowledge were lacking in the classroom, and thereby creating a disconnect between the student's home life and school life. Migrant education programs would serve the community better by doing the following: employing community members, structuring curriculum around literature and materials that discuss the agricultural worker experience or by adopting a heritage language approaches. Furthermore, having discussions in class based on themes that look critically at the circumstances that oppress migrant students or discourage the use of the children's heritage language would also prepare migrant students to achieve academic success.

The second implication constructs a new theoretical framework. Because my investigation focused on language and the power language fields, Bakhtin was ideal. However, the ideas put forth by Bakhtin are incomplete in that they do not take into account notions of race, gender, ethnicity, class, culture, and immigration status. Latino Critical Race Theory addresses the issues, therefore it was only fitting that the two were layered. Yet, Bakhtin and LatCrit did not address these issues in a classroom context. Hence, the additional layer of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy added which complicates the Bakhtinian ideas and LatCrit while applying them to educational pedagogies. Finally, I added the ideas within heritage language education to stress the importance of the student's home/community language in classroom and community discourse. By applying the four theories, I created a theoretical framework different from that found in the literature yet necessary for my investigation.

The final implication of my research effects methodological approaches. My investigation is similar to other sociological studies, in that precautions were taken, but because of the racial, class, linguistic and citizenship status of my participants extra precautions were taken. These precautions were considered, so that the participant's safety in any way, shape, or form was not jeopardized. Furthermore, I wanted to be sensitive to issues that may cause participants the feelings of embarrassment or shame. I did not want to be intrusive to the participants, therefore I respected the boundaries they created and allowed them to address and explore issues as they saw fit. In respecting their boundaries and by understanding the hostile nature surrounding agriculture workers by the media I created a methodology specific to the migrant community.

### **Implications for further study**

From this research project emerges the prospects for other future studies. The first being an examination of the possibility for standardized (for lack of a better term) graduation requirements designed specifically for migrant students. Although I would never argue for a nationalized curriculum, I would advocate for a structure set up exclusively for migrant students. What this structure would entail and how it would function is of acute interest, and a potential study for future migrant educators and researchers.

Due to the nature of the program, the time spent with families and staff was limited. I would be interested in examining a rural regular calendar year MEP. In a school context such as this, the opinions of all participants may vary to that of SMEP participants. Teachers' perceptions, who work with migratory children during the traditional school year, may diverge greatly from those of SMEP instructors. Moreover,

one might find that parents communicate more with these teachers therefore altering their opinions of MEPs.

Because the focus of my study was primarily on language (practices, instruction, and attitudes), I was not able to focus on the issues of immigration. As can be imagined, citizenship status and the racist attitudes mapped onto (or reinforcing) immigration themes were frequently addressed by all participants. In some cases, I witnessed families not sending their children for fear of their work locations raided and separated. It would be interesting for a potential study to explore how immigration and citizenship tie into MEPs or SMEPs. How can these programs skirt the issue to continue being safe places for agricultural laborer families to send their children?

### **Parting Words**

During the period of this research project, I have worked to establish partnerships with the NMMP, as well as local organizations and university programs which serve local agricultural laborers. These cultivated relationships are harvesting opportunities for migrant and seasonal children to not only earn their high school diploma, but also be university bound. Furthermore, these relationships may produce traveling ESL courses for adults.

In the meantime, discussions have begun with potential foundations to fund such projects. This project is just the beginning of my work with Midwestern agricultural laborers and the state agencies that support them. As put forth in the important manifesto *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, I will keep my hands in the soil and work alongside my brothers and sisters, *porque todos somos una raza*. Like my grandfather always reminded

his grandchildren (brown, green, and blue-eyed alike) “Todos somos mexicanos. No es importante donde nacimos. Todos somos del labór“(We are all Mexicans. It isn’t important where we were born. We are all from the fields.).



## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Teachers

1. How long have you been with the NMMP?
2. What drew you to the program?
3. What type of training did you receive prior to beginning?
4. What do you see as the strengths of the NMMP?
5. What do you see as the weaknesses of the NMMP?
6. What would like to know about your students or about their families?
7. What expectations do you have of your students both short term and long term?
8. Where do you project these students in five years? Ten years?
9. What support do you provide to the families? What support would you like to provide?
10. What suggestions, concerns, or comments would you give to the Office of Migrant Education?

#### Parents

1. How long have you been migrating? Where do you typically go?
2. How long has your family been a part of the NMMP?
3. Why did you choose to enroll your children in the NMMP?
4. What do you see as the strengths of the NMMP?
5. What do you see as the weaknesses of the NMMP?
6. What suggestions would you give to the staff at NMMP?

7. What would like the staff at NMMP to know about your child or about your family?
8. What expectations do you have of your child(ren) both short term and long term?
9. Where do you project your child(ren) in five years? Ten years?
10. What support would you like the NMMP to provide? What support does the NMMP provide?

#### Students

1. How long have you been working in the fields? Where do you usually go to work?
2. How long has your family been a part of the NMMP?
3. Why do you go to the NMMP?
4. What do you like about the NMMP?
5. What don't you like about the NMMP?
6. How could the teachers at the NMMP make it better?
7. What would like the staff at NMMP to know about you or about your family?
8. What do you think will happen in your future?
9. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
10. How would like the teachers at NMMP help you or your family?
11. Do you think the teachers at the NMMP help you or your family?

#### Padres

1. Desde cuándo estan migrando? Normalmente, hacia dónde migran?
2. Desde hace cuánto tiempo están asistiendo al NMMP? (Programa del noroeste de Michigan para estudiantes migrantes.)

3. Por qué decidieron meter a sus niños/as en la NMMP?
4. Cuáles creen que son las fortalezas de la programa?
5. Cuáles creen que son las mayores debilidades del programa?
6. Qué sugerencias tienen respecto al programa?
7. Qué quisieran que los maestros/as supieran acerca de su hija/o y de su familia?
8. Qué expectativas tienen sobre su hijo/a a corto y largo plazo?
9. Dónde creen que va estar su hijo/a en cinco años? Diez años?
10. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo quisieran que el programa ofrezca? Qué apoyo ofrece actualmente?

#### Estudiantes

1. Desde hace cuánto tiempo has trabajado en los labores? Normalmente hacia dónde vas a trabaja?
2. Desde hace cuánto tiempo estás llendo al NMMP?
3. Por qué estas en este programma?
4. Que te gusta de este programa?
5. Que no te gusta de este programa?
6. Como pueden las/los maestras/os mejoran el programma?
7. Qué quieres que los/las maestros/as sepan de ti y de tu familia?
8. Cuáles son tus expectativas en los proximo cinco años? En diez?
9. Qué apoyo quisieras que el programa te ofreciera? Qué apoyo te ofrece actualmente?

## APPENDIX B

### PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Oral History Association promotes oral history as a method of gathering and preserving historical information through recorded interviews with participants in past events and ways of life. It encourages those who produce and use oral history to recognize certain principles, rights, technical standards, and obligations for the creation and preservation of source material that is authentic, useful, and reliable. These include obligations to the interviewee, to the profession, and to the public, as well as mutual obligations between sponsoring organizations and interviewers.

People with a range of affiliations and sponsors conduct oral history interviews for a variety of purposes: to create archival records, for individual research, for community and institutional projects, and for publications and media productions. While these principles and standards provide a general framework for guiding professional conduct, their application may vary according to the nature of specific oral history projects. Regardless of the purpose of the interviews, oral history should be conducted in the spirit of critical inquiry and social responsibility and with a recognition of the interactive and subjective nature of the enterprise.

#### Responsibility to Interviewees:

1. Interviewees should be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the aims and anticipated uses of the particular projects to which they are making their contributions.
2. Interviewees should be informed of the mutual rights in the oral history process, such as editing, access restrictions, copyrights, prior use, royalties, and the expected disposition and dissemination of all forms of the record, including the potential for electronic distribution.
3. Interviewees should be informed that they will be asked to sign a legal release. Interviews should remain confidential until interviewees have given permission for their use.
4. Interviewers should guard against making promises to interviewees that the interviewers may not be able to fulfill, such as guarantees of publication and control over the use of interviews after they have been made public. In all future uses, however, good faith efforts should be made to honor the spirit of the interviewee's agreement.
5. Interviews should be conducted in accord with any prior agreements made with the interviewee, and such agreements should be documented for the record.
6. Interviewers should work to achieve a balance between the objectives of the project and the perspectives of the interviewees. They should be sensitive to the diversity of social and cultural experiences and to the implications of race, gender, class, ethnicity, age, religion, and sexual orientation. They should encourage interviewees to respond in their own style and language and to address issues that reflect their concerns. Interviewers should fully explore all appropriate areas of inquiry with the interviewee and not be satisfied with superficial responses.
7. Interviewers should guard against possible exploitation of interviewees and be sensitive to the ways in which their interviews might be used. Interviewers must respect the rights of interviewees to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to restrict access to the interview, or, under Guidelines extreme circumstances, even to choose anonymity. Interviewers should clearly explain these options to all interviewees.
8. Interviewers should use the best recording equipment within their means to accurately reproduce the interviewee's voice and, if appropriate, other sounds as well as visual images.
9. Given the rapid development of new technologies, interviewees should be informed of the wide range of potential uses of their interviews.
10. Good faith efforts should be made to ensure that the uses of recordings and transcripts comply with both the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement.

### Responsibility to the Public and to the Profession:

1. Oral historians have a responsibility to maintain the highest professional standards in the conduct of their work and to uphold the standards of the various disciplines and professions with which they are affiliated.
2. In recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and of the cost and effort involved, interviewers and interviewees should mutually strive to record candid information of lasting value and to make that information accessible.
3. Interviewees should be selected based on the relevance of their experiences to the subject at hand.
4. Interviewers should possess interviewing skills as well as professional competence and knowledge of the subject at hand.
5. Regardless of the specific interests of the project, interviewers should attempt to extend the inquiry beyond the specific focus of the project to create as complete a record as possible for the benefit of others.
6. Interviewers should strive to prompt informative dialogue through challenging and perceptive inquiry. They should be grounded in the background of the persons being interviewed and, when possible, should carefully research appropriate documents and secondary sources related to subjects about which the interviewees can speak.
7. Interviewers should make every effort to record their interviews using the best recording equipment within their means to reproduce accurately the interviewee's voice and, if appropriate, image. They also should collect and record other historical documentation the interviewee may possess, including still photographs, print materials, and other sound and moving image recordings, if appropriate.
8. Interviewers should provide complete documentation of their preparation and methods, including the circumstances of the interviews.
9. Interviewers and, when possible, interviewees should review and evaluate their interviews, including any summaries or transcriptions made from them.
10. With the permission of the interviewees, interviewers should arrange to deposit their interviews in an archival repository that is capable of both preserving the interviews and eventually making them available for general use. Interviewers should provide basic information about the interviews, including project goals, sponsorship, and funding. Preferably, interviewers should work with repositories before conducting the interviews to determine necessary legal Guidelines arrangements. If interviewers arrange to retain first use of the interviews, it should be only for a reasonable time before public use.
11. Interviewers should be sensitive to the communities from which they have collected oral histories, taking care not to reinforce thoughtless stereotypes nor to bring undue notoriety to them. Interviewers should take every effort to make the interviews accessible to the communities.
12. Oral history interviews should be used and cited with the same care and standards applied to other historical sources. Users have a responsibility to retain the integrity of the interviewee's voice, neither misrepresenting the interviewee's words nor taking them out of context.
13. Sources of funding or sponsorship of oral history projects should be made public in all exhibits, media presentations, or publications that result from the projects.
14. Interviewers and oral history programs should conscientiously consider how they might share with interviewees and their communities the rewards and recognition that might result from their work.

### Responsibility for Sponsoring and Archival Institutions:

1. Institutions sponsoring and maintaining oral history archives have a responsibility to interviewees, interviewers, the profession, and the public to maintain the highest technical, professional, and ethical standards in the creation and archival preservation of oral history interviews and related materials.
2. Subject to conditions that interviewees set, sponsoring institutions (or individual collectors) have an obligation to: prepare and preserve easily usable records; keep abreast of rapidly developing technologies for preservation and dissemination; keep accurate records of the creation and processing of each interview; and identify, index, and catalog interviews.

3. Sponsoring institutions and archives should make known through a variety of means, including electronic modes of distribution, the existence of interviews open for research.
  4. Within the parameters of their missions and resources, archival institutions should collect interviews generated by independent researchers and assist interviewers with the necessary legal agreements.
  5. Sponsoring institutions should train interviewers. Such training should: provide them basic instruction in how to record high fidelity interviews and, if appropriate, other sound and moving image recordings; explain the objectives of the program to them; inform them of all ethical and legal considerations governing an interview; and make clear to interviewers what their obligations are to the program and to the interviewees.
  6. Interviewers and interviewees should receive appropriate acknowledgment for their work in all forms of citation or usage.
  7. Archives should make good faith efforts to ensure that uses of recordings and transcripts, especially those that employ new technologies, comply with both the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement.
- 

## *Oral History Evaluation Guidelines*

### Program/Project Guidelines

#### Purposes and Objectives

- a. Are the purposes clearly set forth? How realistic are they?
- b. What factors demonstrate a significant need for the project?
- c. What is the research design? How clear and realistic is it?
- d. Are the terms, conditions, and objectives of funding clearly made known to judge the potential effect of such funding on the scholarly integrity of the project? Is the allocation of funds adequate to allow the project goals to be accomplished?
- e. How do institutional relationships affect the purposes and objectives?

#### Selection of Recording Equipment

- a. Should the interview be recorded on sound or visual recording equipment?
- b. Are the best possible recording equipment and media available within one's budget being used?
- c. Are interviews recorded on a medium that meets archival preservation standards?
- d. How well has the interviewer mastered use of the equipment upon which the interview will be recorded?

#### Selection of Interviewers and Interviewees

- a. In what ways are the interviewers and interviewees appropriate (or inappropriate) to the purposes and objectives?
- b. What are the significant omissions and why were they omitted?

#### Records and Provenance

- a. What are the policies and provisions for maintaining a record of the provenance of interviews? Are they adequate? What can be done to improve them?

- b. How are records, policies, and procedures made known to interviewers, interviewees, staff, and users?
- c. How does the system of records enhance the usefulness of the interviews and safeguard the rights of those involved?

#### Availability of Materials

- a. How accurate and specific is the publicizing of the interviews?
- b. How is information about interviews directed to likely users? Have new media and electronic methods of distribution been considered to publicize materials and make them available?
- c. How have the interviews been used?

#### Finding Aids

- a. What is the overall design for finding aids? Are the finding aids adequate and appropriate?
- b. How available are the finding aids?
- c. Have new technologies been used to develop the most effective finding aids?

#### Management, Qualifications, and Training

- a. How effective is the management of the program/project?
- b. What are the provisions for supervision and staff review?
- c. What are the qualifications for staff positions?
- d. What are the provisions for systematic and effective training?
- e. What improvements could be made in the management of the program/project?

#### Ethical/Legal Guidelines

#### What procedures are followed to assure that interviewers/programs recognize and honor their responsibility to the interviewees? Specifically, what procedures are used to assure that:

- a. The interviewees are made fully aware of the goals and objectives of the oral history program/project?
- b. The interviewees are made fully aware of the various stages of the program/project and the nature of their participation at each stage?
- c. The interviewees are given the opportunity to respond to questions as freely as possible and are not subjected to stereotyped assumptions based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, or any other social/cultural characteristic?
- d. The interviewees understand their rights to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to seal portions of the interviews, or in extremely sensitive circumstances even to choose to remain anonymous?
- e. The interviewees are fully informed about the potential uses of the material, including deposit of the interviews in a repository, publication in all forms of print or electronic media, including the Internet or other emerging technologies, and all forms of public programming?
- f. The interviewees are provided a full and easily comprehensible explanation of their legal rights before being asked to sign a contract or deed of gift transferring rights, title, and interest in the tape(s) and transcript(s) to an administering authority or individual?
- g. Care is taken so that the distribution and use of the material complies with the letter and spirit of the interviewees' agreements?
- h. All prior agreements made with the interviewees are honored?
- i. The interviewees are fully informed about the potential for and disposition of royalties that might accrue from the use of their interviews, including all forms of public programming?
- j. The interviews and any other related materials will remain confidential until the interviewees have released their contents?

What procedures are followed to assure that interviewers/programs recognize and honor their responsibilities to the profession? Specifically, what procedures assure that:

- a. The interviewer has considered the potential for public programming and research use of the interviews and has endeavored to prevent any exploitation of or harm to interviewees?
- b. The interviewer is well trained to conduct the interview in a professional manner, including the use of appropriate recording equipment and media?
- c. The interviewer is well grounded in the background of the subject(s) to be discussed?
- d. The interview will be conducted in a spirit of critical inquiry and that efforts will be made to provide as complete a historical record as possible?
- e. The interviewees are selected based on the relevance of their experience to the subject at hand and that an appropriate cross-section of interviewees is selected for any particular project?
- f. The interview materials, including recordings, transcripts, relevant photographic, moving image, and sound documents as well as agreements and documentation of the interview process, will be placed in a repository after a reasonable period of time, subject to the agreements made with the interviewee and that the repository will administer their use in accordance with those agreements?
- g. The methodologies of the program/project, as well as its goals and objectives, are available for the general public to evaluate?
- h. The interview materials have been properly cataloged, including appropriate acknowledgment and credit to the interviewer, and that their availability for research use is made known?

What procedures are followed to assure that interviewers and programs are aware of their mutual responsibilities and obligations? Specifically, what procedures are followed to assure that:

- a. Interviewers are made aware of the program goals and are fully informed of ethical and legal considerations?
- b. Interviewers are fully informed of all the tasks they are expected to complete in an oral history project?
- c. Interviewers are made fully aware of their obligations to the oral history program/sponsoring institution, regardless of their own personal interest in a program/project?
- d. Programs/sponsoring institutions treat their interviewers equitably by providing for appropriate compensation, acknowledging all products resulting from their work, and supporting fieldwork practices consistent with professional standards whenever there is a conflict between the parties to the interview?
- e. Interviewers are fully informed of their legal rights and of their responsibilities to both the interviewee and to the sponsoring institution?

What procedures are followed to assure that interviewers and programs recognize and honor their responsibilities to the community/public? Specifically, what procedures assure that:

- a. The oral history materials and all works created from them will be available and accessible to the community that participated in the project?
- b. Sources of extramural funding and sponsorship are clearly noted for each interview of project?
- c. The interviewers and project endeavor not to impose their own values on the community being studied?
- d. The tapes and transcripts will not be used unethically?

## Tape/Transcript Processing Guidelines

Information about the Participants:

- a. Are the names of both interviewer and interviewee clearly indicated on the tape/abstract/transcript and in catalog materials?



- b. Is there adequate biographical information about both interviewer and interviewee? Where can it be found?

#### Interview Information

- a. Are the tapes, transcripts, time indices, abstracts, and other materials presented for use identified as to the program/project of which they are a part?
- b. Are the date and place of the interview indicated on the tape, transcript, time index, and abstract and in appropriate catalog material?
- c. Are there interviewers' statements about the preparation for or circumstances of the interviews? Where? Are they generally available to researchers? How are the rights of the interviewees protected against improper use of such commentaries?
- d. Are there records of contracts between the program and the interviewee? How detailed are they? Are they available to researchers? If so, with what safeguards for individual rights and privacy?

#### Interview Tape Information

- a. Is the complete original tape preserved? Are there one or more duplicate copies?
- b. If the original or any duplicate has been edited, rearranged, cut, or spliced in any way, is there a record of that action, including by whom, when, and for what purposes the action was taken?
- c. Do the tape label and appropriate catalog materials show the recording speed, level, and length of the interview? If videotaped, do the tape label and appropriate catalog information show the format (e.g., U-Matic, VHS, 8mm, etc.) and scanning system and clearly indicate the tracks on which the audio and time code have been recorded?
- d. In the absence of transcripts, are there suitable finding aids to give users access to information on the tapes? What form do they take? Is there a record of who prepared these finding aids?
- e. Are researchers permitted to listen to or view the tapes? Are there any restrictions on the use of the tapes?

#### Interview Transcript Information

- a. Is the transcript an accurate record of the tape? Is a careful record kept of each step of processing the transcript, including who transcribed, audited, edited, retyped, and proofread the transcripts in final copy?
- b. Are the nature and extent of changes in the transcript from the original tape made known to the user?
- c. What finding aids have been prepared for the transcript? Are they suitable and adequate? How could they be improved?
- d. Are there any restrictions on access to or use of the transcripts? Are they clearly noted?
- e. Are there any photo materials or other supporting documents for the interview? Do they enhance and supplement the text?
- f. If videotaped, does the transcript contain time references and annotation describing the complementary visuals on the videotape?

#### Interview Content Guidelines

##### Does the content of each interview and the cumulative content of the whole collection contribute to accomplishing the objectives of the program/project?

- a. In what particulars does each interview or the whole collection succeed or fall short of the objectives of the project or program?
- b. Do audio and visual tapes in the collection avoid redundancy and supplement one another in interview content and focus?

### In what ways does the program/project contribute to historical understanding?

- a. In what particulars does each interview or the whole collection succeed or fall short in making such a contribution?
- b. To what extent does the material add fresh information, fill gaps in the existing record, and/or provide fresh insights and perspectives?
- c. To what extent is the information reliable and valid? Is it eyewitness or hearsay evidence? How well and in what manner does it meet internal and external tests of corroboration, consistency, and explication of contradictions?
- d. What is the relationship of the interview information to existing documentation and historiography?
- e. How does the texture of the interview impart detail, richness, and flavor to the historical record?
- f. What is the nature of the information contributed? Is it facts, perceptions, interpretations, judgments, or attitudes, and how does each contribute to understanding?
- g. Are the scope, volume, and representativeness of the population interviewed appropriate and sufficient to the purpose? Is there enough testimony to validate the evidence without passing the point of diminishing returns? How appropriate is the quantity to the purposes of the study?
- h. How do the form and structure of the interviews contribute to making the content understandable?
- i. To what extent does the audio and/or video recording capture unique sound and visual information?
- j. Do the visual and other sound elements complement and/or supplement the verbal information? Has the interview captured processes, objects, or other individuals in the visual and sound environment?

### Interview Conduct Guidelines

#### Use of Other Sources

- a. Is the oral history technique the best way to acquire the information? If not, what other sources exist? Has the interviewer used them and sought to preserve them if necessary?
- b. Has the interviewer made an effort to consult other relevant oral histories?
- c. Is the interview technique a valuable way to supplement existing sources?
- d. Do videotaped interviews complement, not duplicate, existing still or moving visual images?

#### Interviewer Preparation

- a. Is the interviewer well informed about the subjects under discussion?
- b. Are the primary and secondary sources used to prepare for the interview adequate?
- c. Has the interviewer mastered the use of appropriate recording equipment and the field- recording techniques that insure a high-fidelity recording?

#### Interviewee Selection and Orientation

- a. Does the interviewee seem appropriate to the subjects discussed?
- b. Does the interviewee understand and respond to the interview purposes?
- c. Has the interviewee prepared for the interview and assisted in the process?
- d. If a group interview, have composition and group dynamics been considered in selecting participants?

#### Interviewer-Interviewee Relations

- a. Do interviewer and interviewee collaborate with each other toward interview objectives?
- b. Is there a balance between empathy and analytical judgment in the interview?

- c. If videotaped, is the interviewer/interviewee relationship maintained despite the presence of a technical crew? Do the technical personnel understand how a videotaped oral history interview differs from a scripted production?

#### Technique and Adaptive Skills

- a. In what ways does the interview show that the interviewer has used skills appropriate to: the interviewee's condition (health, memory, mental alertness, ability to communicate, time schedule, etc.) and the interview location and conditions (disruptions and interruptions, equipment problems, extraneous participants, background noises, etc.)?
- b. What evidence is there that the interviewer has: thoroughly explored pertinent lines of thought? followed up on significant clues? Made an effort to identify sources of information? Employed critical challenges when needed? Thoroughly explored the potential of the visual environment, if videotaped?
- c. Has the program/project used recording equipment and media that are appropriate for the purposes of the work and potential nonprint as well as print uses of the material? Are the recordings of the highest appropriate technical quality? How could they be improved?
- d. If videotaped, are lighting, composition, camera work, and sound of the highest appropriate technical quality?
- e. In the balance between content and technical quality, is the technical quality good without subordinating the interview process?

#### Perspective

- a. Do the biases of the interviewer interfere with or influence the responses of the interviewee?
- b. What information is available that may inform the users of any prior or separate relationship between the interviewer and interviewee?

#### Historical Contribution

- a. Does the interviewer pursue the inquiry with historical integrity?
- b. Do other purposes being served by the interview enrich or diminish quality?
- c. What does the interview contribute to the larger context of historical knowledge and understanding?

### Independent/Unaffiliated Researcher Guidelines

#### Creation and Use of Interviews

- a. Has the independent/unaffiliated researcher followed the guidelines for obtaining interviews as suggested in the Program/Project Guideline section?
- b. Have proper citation and documentation been provided in works created (books, articles, audio-visual productions, or other public presentations) to inform users of the work about the interviews used and the permanent location of the interviews?
- c. Do works created include an explanation of the interview project, including editorial procedures?
- d. Has the independent/unaffiliated researcher arranged to deposit the works created in an appropriate repository?

#### Transfer of Interviews to Archival Repository

- a. Has the independent/unaffiliated researcher properly obtained the agreement of the repository before making representations about the disposition of the interviews?

- b. Is the transfer consistent with agreements or understandings with interviewees? Were legal agreements obtained from interviewees?
- c. Has the researcher provided the repository with adequate descriptions of the creation of the interviews and the project?
- d. What is the technical quality of the recorded interviews? Are the interviews transcribed, abstracted, or indexed, and, if so, what is the quality?

**APPENDIX C**

**PARTICIPANT'S DESCRIPTIVE CHART**

**NMMP EDUCATORS**

<b>TEACHER</b>	<b>MS. RYNOWSKI</b>	<b>MR. ROGER</b>	<b>MS. REBECCA</b>	<b>MS. NATALIE</b>
<b>GRADE</b>	3/4	JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH	KINDERGARTEN/FIRST	FIRST/SECOND
<b>YEARS WITH NMMP</b>	4 YRS	11 YRS	2 YRS	FIRST YR
<b>TEACHING ASSISTANT/YRS WITH NMMP</b>	NONE	NONE	MS. SUSAN/10 YRS	MS. LAUREN/FIRST YEAR
<b>AVG NUMBER OF STUDENTS FOR SUMMER 2007</b>	15	8	15	20
<b>EXPERIENCE WITH DIVERSE STUDENTS</b>	HAS WORKED WITH AMERICAN INDIAN AND BLACK STUDENTS	HAS WORKED WITH LATINA/O STUDENTS	HAS WORKED WITH UKRANIAN IMMIGRANT STUDENTS	NONE
<b>SUGGESTION TO NMMP ADMINISTRATION</b>	TEACHING MANUALS	INCREASED STAFFING AND WORKSHOPS FOCUSED ON BILINGUAL ED. STRATEGIES	MATERIALS AND RESOURCES	TEACHING MANUALS AND ARRANGED HOME VISITS

**NMMP FAMILIES**

<b>FAMILY</b>	<b>SANCHÉZ</b>	<b>SOSA</b>	<b>GUTIÉRREZ</b>	<b>ROMERO</b>	<b>LUCERO</b>
<b>PARENTS</b>	FATHER/MOTHER	FATHER/MOTHER	FATHER/MOTHER	MOTHER	FATHER/MOTHER
<b>AGES OF CHILDREN</b>	6 CHILDREN: 3-14 YRS	5 CHILDREN: 12- 19 YRS	1 CHILD: 6 YRS	FORMER STUDENT OF NMMP & HAD YOUNGER SISTER (13 YRS) ATTENDING	4 CHILDREN: 9-19 YRS
<b>YEARS MIGRATING</b>	15 YRS	30+ YRS	SETTLED AFTER 2 YRS	20+ YRS	30 YRS
<b>PARENT'S HL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	FLUENT W/ LIMITED LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ ADVANCED LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ LIMITED LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ LIMITED LITERACY SKILLS
<b>PARENT'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	NONE	CONVERSATIONAL	NONE	CONVERSATIONAL W/ BASIC LITERACY SKILLS	CONVERSATIONAL W/ BASIC LITERACY SKILLS
<b>CHILDREN'S HL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	PROFICIENT LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT SPEAKERS WITH LIMITED ABILITY LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT SPEAKING NO LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ PROFICIENT LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ PROFICIENT LITERACY SKILLS
<b>CHILDREN'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	PROFICIENT LITERACY SKILLS	PROFICIENT LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ FLUENT LITERACY SKILLS	FLUENT W/ FLUENT LITERACY SKILLS

**\*LITERACY-Reading and writing skills.**

## **APPENDIX D**

### **SAMPLE ASSESSMENTS AND OBJECTIVES**

THE FOLLOWING OBEJCTIVES (FIRST THREE OUT OF FIVE PAGES) AND ASSESSMENTS (LAST TWO OUT OF FIVE PAGES) ARE USED TO EVALUATE IN COMING 3<sup>RD</sup>/4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE NMMP STUDENTS. THE ASSESSMENTS AND OBJECTIVES WERE PROVIDED BY MS. RYNOWSKI, THE 3<sup>RD</sup>/4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TEACHER.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Entered: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Days Attended: \_\_\_\_\_

English Ability: \_\_\_\_\_

9 and 10 year olds

OBJECTIVES	Not Yet	Pass	Developing	Date Mastered\Comments
<i>Reading Test</i>				
Recognizes short vowels				
Recognizes long vowels				
Follows written directions				
Identifies compound words				
Understands and uses contractions				
Understands synonyms				
Understands antonyms				
Understands homophones				
Identifies main idea				
Recognizes cause and effect				
Alphabetical order: first letter				
second letter				
Applies synonym knowledge				
Applies antonym knowledge				
Applies contraction knowledge				
Predicting outcomes				
Identifies fact & opinion				
<i>Phonics Test</i>				
Identifies all letters and their sounds				
Identifies final word sounds				
Identifies 2 letter blends-initial				
-ending				
Identifies 3 letter blends				
Identifies "H" brothers-initial				
-ending				
<i>Observations</i>				
Reads with understanding				
Able to decode				
using phonics				
using picture clues				
using context clues				





NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

9/10-p.3

OBJECTIVES	Not Yet	Pass	Developing	Date Mastered\Comments
<b>Math</b>				
Addition sums: to 5				
to 10				
Subtraction: through 5				
through 10				
Place value: ones, tens				
hundreds				
thousands				
Addition sums: no regrouping				
regrouping 2 digit + 1 digit				
regrouping 2 digit + 2 digit				
regrouping hundreds				
Subtraction: through 20				
double digit no borrowing				
borrowing tens				
borrowing hundreds				
borrowing with zeros				
Multiplication: facts 0-5				
facts 6-9				
2 digit x 1 digit (w/o trade)				
2 digit x 1 digit (w/ trade)				
2 digit x 2 digit				
Division: facts 0-5				
facts 6-9				
1 digit w/ remainder				
2 digit no remainder				
2 digit w/remainder				
Fractions: identify 1/2				
identify 1/4, 3/4				
order by size				
addition-like denominator				
subtraction-like denominator				
Time: hour/half hour				
quarter hour				
5 minute increments				
minute				
Money: naming/value				
counting				
trading				
Calendar: days				
months				
reading				
Measurement: inches				
feet				
Word problems: Addition/Subtraction				
Multiplication/Division				
Time/Money				

Circle the correct word.  
Then write the word on the line  
to complete each sentence.

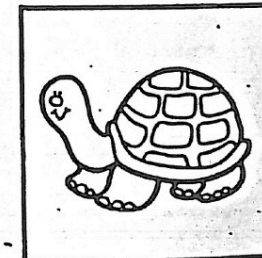
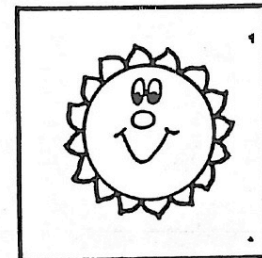
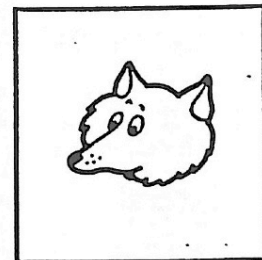
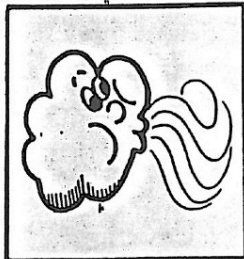


1. I want to buy an ice cream cone, so I need \_\_\_\_\_.  
spoons    money    pins
2. Mother said thank you because I \_\_\_\_\_.  
played    laughed    helped
3. When the new toy broke, I was \_\_\_\_\_.  
disappointed    hungry    friendly
4. Mother is late, so I must \_\_\_\_\_.  
laugh    wait    talk
5. The smell of cookies baking made me \_\_\_\_\_.  
sad    eat    hungry
6. When the ice cream was left on the table, it \_\_\_\_\_.  
melted    froze    cooked
7. There was no traffic, so she arrived \_\_\_\_\_.  
late    early    quietly
8. If you jump from the ladder you could get \_\_\_\_\_.  
bigger    heavy    hurt
9. I can't lift the box because it is too \_\_\_\_\_.  
dry    light    heavy
10. That mask is scary because it is \_\_\_\_\_.  
ugly    heavy    pretty

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Skill: Following directions

Follow each direction.



1. Draw a line under the king.
2. Circle the fox.
3. Draw a line from the sun to the wind.
4. Draw a  around the mouse.
5. Put a line above the lion.
6. Put an X on the rabbit.
7. Put a fat ● on the turtle.
8. Draw two lines from the turtle to the rabbit.

\*Color the pictures.

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