LATINIDAD IN SUMMER READING: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO MULTICULTURAL LITERACY FOR LATINO/A ENGLISH LEARNERS’ SELF-EFFICACY IN TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Elizabeth Fincher entitled "LATINIDAD IN SUMMER READING: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO MULTICULTURAL LITERACY FOR LATINO/A ENGLISH LEARNERS’ SELF-EFFICACY IN TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Judson Laughter, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)
LATINIDAD IN SUMMER READING: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO
MULTICULTURAL LITERACY FOR LATINO/A ENGLISH LEARNERS’ SELF-
EFFICACY IN TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Elizabeth Fincher
August 2022
DEDICATION

To Mom, Who took me to the library. To Dad, Who taught me that education is one thing no one can take away from you. To all of my parents, Whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

And to my loving husband, Ben, Who made the ultimate sacrifice as I spent countless hours on research and whose fervent support never ceased, near or apart.

In memory of Grandma Lu, Whose faith, service, and unconditional love was contagious.

And to my future son- may you never stop learning.
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative interpretive case study unites literacy education and the field of second language acquisition with quantitative surveys and questionnaires to explore self-efficacy beliefs and literacy learning during transitional experiences of rising fourth through ninth Latino/a English Language Learners (LELLs) in a summer reading program. Community Engaged Scholarship in a co-developed summer program with community partner Centro Hispano de East Tennessee frames this research to offer diverse perspectives in curriculum and instructional improvement efforts towards equitable literacy education. How schools and youth-serving organizations support LELLS’ transitional processes in second language acquisition and literacy is shaped by how well teachers and community members understand their lived experiences and the mediating role of self-efficacy in reading and academic achievement. I facilitate book clubs using Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s from a Latino/a critical literacy framework to cultivate the narrative that marginalized languages can be a language of power in literacy pedagogy and in curricula and program development. I explore the mediating role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) during Latinidad book clubs to understand how culturally responsive literacy practices influence development of second language selves. The question is what are the overall effects of beliefs about Latino/a cultural values on ELs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy? Findings suggest ways self-efficacy and ethnic identity mediate the construction of second language selves through collaborative literacy practices in participants’ interviews as counter-stories, autobiographical poems, and critical reflections with Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s; results from descriptive statistics inform positive self-efficacy beliefs and suggest methodological approaches to study self-efficacy in interdisciplinary SLA and education fields.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAME

I am from pinatas- from chilies and salsa. I am from La Rosa de Guadalupe, Drama, and lost tios locos. I am from the red rosa. The sunflower brings joy. I am from first communion and making tacos. From Rosa Maria y Hermilo. I am from birthday songs and parties. From never giving up and praying at the dinner table. From tortillas y frijoles. I am from hard, hard work.

- “Where I Am From,” Yasmin’s Poem

Through this poetic vignette, we see the reality of Yasmin’s world and her family’s ties to their cultural heritage through the experience of coming and living in the US. Sharing this story, Yasmin is dialoguing with Latino/a, bilingual peers to grasp her personal and familial experience while also reconciling the sense of who she is in America. Further discussions and critical reflections explore her struggles with the reality that sometimes, immigrants face discrimination and racial profiling crossing the border. To have this conversation, Yasmin positions herself with her understanding of what it means to be Latina in the US. Dörnyei (2009a) mention that learning another language is different from much other learning that takes place in school and learning another language involves making something foreign a part of one’s self (Gardner, 2005). This new individual ‘self’ influences the second or foreign language learning and willingness to change the old individual “self” (Dörnyei, 2009b). This study is guided by the overarching research question: How do Latino/a English language learners (ELs) in rising grades fourth through ninth describe their self-efficacy beliefs with respect to their participation in Latinidad book clubs that incorporate cultural heritage materials into literacy
learning? The question is what are the overall effects of beliefs about Latino/a cultural values on ELs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy?

**Background of the Study**

The Latino/a population in the US is increasingly larger and more diverse (Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project, 2022), and there is an increased awareness of a need for children’s books in schools that represent the multiple and diverse experiences of Latinx, seen in the #weneeddiversebooks movement in social media and in scholarship. Children’s books by and/or about Latinx populations include 109 books by Latinx authors and 205 books about Latinx culture in 2017, according to Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC, 2020). This does not include books by and about Black/African and indigenous cultural groups. Although a few more books have been published in English and Spanish that represent authentic Latino/a experiences, including more translations of children books into Spanish, there is a continual dearth of such books, especially for readers younger than five (Brinson, 2012). More options for children aged 5-7 portray Latino/a children and families and incorporate Spanish through translanguaging practices (including Spanish words in text or translated stories) (García, 2009). Yet, only fifty-seven titles in 2013 and sixty-six in 2014 represented Latino/a s, despite their large presence in the US. Of the distinct linguistic and culturally diverse groups in the US, Latino/a s are the largest and Spanish is the language most spoken in the home (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016). As Spanish is a very common home language, Latino/a children are likely becoming bilingual within schools and communities.

Latino/a literary production is influenced by Mexican literary tradition and other Latin American groups, but it derives much of its force from the context of Latino/a culture in the US.
Latino/a literature development has historically been based on the “thoughts and conflicts associated with the process of struggle, denial, acceptance, revitalization, and validation of self” in America (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016, p. 5). Latino/a communities have experienced cultural, linguistic, ethnic self-acceptance and self-awakening to understand the subtleties of living in the US. Considering Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s to be more than books by and about people of color, it is about specific books that represent the lived experiences of many Latino/a and Mexican groups in the US. As adults need to see books that reflect their world, so do Latino/a children and youth. Expanding Latino/a multicultural literature must be seen as reflective of a tradition that has survived and undergone cultural adaptation in all places where Latino/a s reside; and to broaden the breadth and scope of diverse experiences in reassessment of such literature. This collaborative research study involving rising 4th through 9th grade Latino/a or Mexican American learners in multicultural Latino/a book clubs during a summer camp highlights the multifaceted nature of being Latino/a in America by reading, discussing and creating stories through poetry that commemorates the identity and experiences in Latinidad heritage.

Individuals residing in the US who come from a Latin American or Mexican background often struggle to maintain heritage languages and cultures in addition to integrating or acquiring the culture and language(s) in the US (Serrano, 2020). For children of immigrants, cultural change is the process of adopting or acquiring traditional practices and values of the new culture; cultural maintenance involves continuing practices with the heritage culture.

The transmission of heritage culture and language within immigrant families for extended periods of time is referred to as enculturation (Birman, Addae, Marks, & Abo-Zena, 2015). A
substantial amount of literature shows that the majority of immigrant children and youth do maintain their heritage culture (i.e. language; traditions) as well as participate in new culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Thus, in learning and maintenance of heritage traditions and language, it begs questions of the development of heritage ethnic identity and its role in self-efficacy beliefs. How do Latino/a ELs’ views of heritage culture, their values and beliefs, relate to their identity in second language selves? The question is what are the overall effects of beliefs about Latino/a cultural values on ELs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy? Does incorporating cultural heritage materials into literacy and language learning affect LELLs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy beliefs?

Straddling two or more different cultures as someone who identifies as Latino/a or Mexican American can impose certain expectations to speak English and acquire the “American culture” (Serrano, 2020). While most Latino/a s are native born or naturalized US citizens (US Census Bureau, 2021), the rhetoric in the media suggests many Latino/a s are illegally in the US. Fueled by political rhetoric that dangerously profiles who undocumented immigrants are, such as criminals are from Mexico, spurs discrimination among immigrant youth and families (Lovato, Lopez, Karimli, & Abrams, 2018).

A survey (Flores & Schachter, 2018) showed that many Americans have often factually incorrect stereotypes about who undocumented immigrants are and assume Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans to be illegally in the US regardless of documentation status, framing a conflict-driven narrative around immigration in the media (Osorio, 2018; Pérez Huber, 2011). Since 1968, National Hispanic Heritage Month has commemorated Latino/a identity and “Hispanic heritage as American heritage” (Rubio, 2011) in the mainstream media, yet it is also a
painful reminder that the power of the community is incommensurate to its role in society. Latino/a children and youth residing in the US face complex issues concerning their lived experiences. This includes “being the victims of, or observing, racial profiling; living in fear of being deported or having a loved one deported; the meaning and consequences of being undocumented” (Osorio, 2018, p. 93), especially considering the rhetoric portrayed in the media; and the possibility of familial separation given family members undocumented status.

As long as Latino/a stories and voices are written out of textbooks and absent in film, TV, and print, the Latino/a community will continue to be seen as something not inherently American (Rubio, 2011). The underrepresentation of Latino/a s in the media industry is an example of the disconnect between rhetoric and reality, with only eight percent Latino/a s in the news-and-publishing industry, according to a US report (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2021). Schools are vital narrative-creating institutions, yet the media is the driving force in image-defining as a storytelling industry in the US (Rubio, 2011). The way stories are told, whose stories are told, and who is a part of the storytelling affects how Americans see each other and see ourselves in terms of Latino/a representation.

This study explores the mediating role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) during Latinidad book clubs to understand how culturally responsive literacy practices (i.e. incorporate cultural heritage materials) influence development of second language selves. How do Latino/a ELs’ views of heritage culture, their values and beliefs, relate to their identity in second language selves? The question is what are the overall effects of beliefs about Latino/a cultural values on ELs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy? Does
incorporating cultural heritage materials into literacy and language learning affect LELLS’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy beliefs?

Drawing from the collaborative summer program’s book club (grades four through nine) literature and LELLS’ critical reflections, I present the Latino/a learners’ first-person narratives in “Where I Am From” poems (Chapter 4)- which are counter-stories to the dominant Eurocentric curriculum in U.S. classrooms (Osorio, 2018). Counter-story as a concept derived from Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and LatCrit Theory (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006) serves as a theoretical extension for scholarship that incorporates, as data, lived and embodied experiences of people of color (Martinez, 2014), including marginalized language groups. In this study, the form of storytelling aims to cultivate the narrative that minoritized languages can be a language of power in literacy and language curricula and instruction. CRT counter-story recognizes that the experiential and embodied knowledge of people of color is legitimate, counter to the rhetoric of normalized structural values and practices that illegitimatize such cultural knowledge. In this study, I employ CRT counter-story as a hybrid form of scholarly inquiry and composite counter-storytelling as a writing genre (Martinez, 2014).

I define counter-stories as LELL participants’ personal narratives as case narratives derived from the interview data and autobiographical poems that represent the cultural heritage identification of participants as it relates to their experiences, values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape their second language selves. These narratives as counter-stories are created in concordance with readings and discussions of multicultural literature for Latino/as with themes such as border-crossing, immigration, and Spanish-speaking cultures’ heritage and traditions.
LELLs’ poems represent their familial experiences coming to the U.S. and/or living in the U.S. as well as bilingual identity as a Latino/a or Mexicana or Hispanic (e.g. as self-identified).

A shared discourse with peers about topics from books and their personal lives, that is cultural heritage and family values is integral to the scope of this study in which I examine the role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy in forming language learner selves. Self-efficacy and self-concept are two distinct constructs that are connected in this study; although this study focuses on reading self-efficacy of language learners. Self-efficacy is conceptualized as when learners believe they can do something successfully, such as read or speak in English or be prepared to succeed in middle school, they will choose to do it more, expend more effort, and be more persistent around any challenges.

In Chapter 5, I include the conclusion with overview of findings and present recommendations for literacy curricula and practices using Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s in Teaching with CARE framework from a culturally and linguistically responsiveness (CLR) lens (Hollie, 2017; Muhammad & Hollie, 2011). I also discuss the study’s limitations and suggestions for future research in self-efficacy research and in CLR literacy instruction and teacher education. The research design uses a qualitative methodological approach to study self-efficacy beliefs of LELLS that includes quantitative surveys and language self-report questionnaires to provide a microscopic view of self-efficacy in literacy learning based on a sociocultural framework. This perspective considers the role of ethnic identity in shaping second language selves and fostering positive self-efficacy beliefs. Lastly, I discuss an approach to reciprocity in building relationships with community partners through the practice of community engaged scholarship. I suggest ways to improve equitable practices in teacher education and
leadership in CES research. Research that includes participation of key community stakeholders offers diverse perspectives in shared understanding of curriculum and instructional improvement efforts towards social justice education and cultivates the narrative that minoritized languages can be a language of power in literacy pedagogy and program development.

What follows first is a brief discussion of relevant research on education policy and its implications and summer learning resources for English language learners in the U.S. in the problem overview. Next, I provide a description of the context of this research study. Then, I highlight the theoretical considerations that guide this study, including Latino/a Critical Race Theory (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006) and Sociocultural Theory (Bruner, 1986, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978). Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain’s (1998) construct of Figured Worlds explores processes by which people are constituted as agents as well as subjects of culturally and socially constructed worlds. Organization of the study is then described in detail. Lastly, key terminology is defined.

**Overview of the Problem**


One in five families (21.9%) in the US spoke a language other than English at home in 2018, a percentage that has doubled since 1980 (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). In 2018, English learner (EL) students whose home language is Spanish represented 75.2% of all EL students in public schools; and English was the fourth most common home language among ELs (NCES, 2021). English language learners (ELs) are a rapidly growing student subgroup in US public schools
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy designated ELs as a sub-group, emphasizing the persistent achievement gap in which schools were mandated to provide language accommodations to EL students in support of reading growth and narrowing reading achievement gaps (No Child Left Behind, 2002; Lyons, Dadey, & Garibay-Mulattieri, 2017). Reading development among the prominent ELs subgroup has historically been addressed in education policy rendering equal participation among students in addressing language barriers (EEOA, 1974). Nevertheless, research on school reform efforts has not adequately considered the effects of summer regression for at-risk groups like EL students (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003).

Research posits that while school year reading gains may be similar for advantaged and at-risk groups (ELLs or low-SES), the achievement gap between ELs and Native Speakers (NS) widens over the summer months, in which summer reading regression occurs (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2001; Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Beach & Philappakos, 2021; Jaekel, Jaekel, Fincher, & Brown, 2022 (under review); Kim & Guryan, 2010). Summer regression occurs when students lose the skills they have gained over the previous academic year. While summer loss has been widely studied across elementary, middle grades, and adolescent students (Alexander et al., 2007, Beach & Philappakos, 2021; Kim, 2006; Zvoch & Stevens, 2015) and findings report a decrease in academic performance by at least one month of instruction (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996), there is limited research on the effects of summer loss for ELs, compared to their native-English speaking peers. Mixed findings report that gaps between students of high and low socioeconomic status (SES) may grow fastest in the summer (Cooper et al., 1996; Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004; Entwisle
& Alexander, 1992), largely due to a lack of learning resources (Entwisle et al., 2001), and that during these months that the reading achievement gap widens the most (Allington and McGill-Franzen, 2003; Kim & Guryan, 2010).

Studies attribute gaps to contextual school-based factors and educational practices (Condron, 2009; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2009), yet aspects of second language acquisition and respective limited exposure to English in literacy experiences during the summer months have been minimally studied. Overall, research has demonstrated strong effects of summer intervention on reading outcomes, particularly oral reading fluency (ORF) (Beach et al., 2018), for students who participate in programming (Johnston et al., 2015; Zvoch & Stevens, 2011, 2013, 2015). While skill losses have been identified in research in reading comprehension, word recognition, and spelling (Cooper et al., 1996), summer reading programs can deter loss across a range of language skills (Beach & Philappakos, 2021). EL students may be more susceptible to summer reading loss which research must address as the number of EL students enrolled in US public schools continues to climb (NCES, 2021). Nevertheless, there has been a lack of experimental research to measure the effects of summer learning programs on children and youth, particularly for ELs (Beach & Philappakos, 2021; Terzian & Moore, 2009).

Academic loss was exacerbated with the sudden infringement of the Covid-19 pandemic sweeping the globe and, in the US, closing schools for an extended amount of time. The Eastern Tennessee school district, in which participants in this study attend, closed schools to provide virtual learning alternatives and offered in-person options with mandates such as masks and social-distancing measures to limit Covid-19 exposure in the academic years of Spring 2020-Fall 2021.
Knox County School District saw a widespread learning loss during the 2020-2021 school year due to disruptions caused by Covid-19, as measured by TCAP standardized assessment scores which showed a proficiency decline in each grade level and subject area (except U.S. history) compared to Spring 2019 (TN Department of Education, 2021). KCSD had a student participation rate of 94.1 in TCAP in which elementary school (grades 3-5) exam scores in ELA declined from 38.8% to 34.9% in “On Track” or “Mastered.” For middle school students (grades 6-8), TCAP exam scores in ELA declined from 38.5% to 29.8% in “On Track” or “Mastered.” Math and science scores also declined across all grade levels (TN Department of Education, 2021).

English learners suffered gravely with academic achievement, furthering the inequities in assessment gaps. WIDA ACCESS assessments measure English learners’ English language proficiency (ELP) levels according to standards (WIDA Consortium, 2020). According to data from TN Department of Education, about 34.5% of ELs in KCSD met growth standards of WIDA ACCESS in the 2019-20 school year (TN Department of Education, 2022). Whereas about 23.8% of ELs in KCSD met growth standards of WIDA ACCESS in the 2020-21 school year. About 18.8% of ELs across the state of TN met growth standards of WIDA ACCESS in the 2020-21 school year (Knox County Schools, 2021). Due to school closures and low access to learning resources for English learners, the 2019-2020 WIDA ACCESS assessment data is limited and incomplete; thus, it cannot be meaningfully compared across TN districts or time (TN Department of Education, 2022). Nevertheless, the decline in WIDA ACCESS achievement scores is indisputable and represents one measure of academic decline.
Overwhelmingly, research suggests that retention does not effectively address achievement inequities (grades K-8) for students with low content-area assessment scores (TN Department of Education, 2022). KCSD has taken initiatives to expand summer programming to offer additional opportunities for students to earn missing credits (Knox County Schools, 2021); however, the effects from the loss still impede gaps in students learning across the district. Partnerships with community organizations (Knox County Schools, 2021) have supported students who suffered gravely; particularly, African American students in the decline in enrollment in post-secondary education. The KCSD Welcome Center designed to assist immigrant and refugee families with transitions into schools has provided in-home support to engage parents of children in learning; KCSD is in early development of a Newcomer Academy to help EL students who have fallen behind academically to recoup losses; yet limited information has been publicized about this program (Knox County Schools, 2021).

The initial school district response to the pandemic in Spring of 2020 required the department of the Theory and Practice of Teacher Education (TPTE) to strategize an alternative for preservice teachers’ (PSTs) field placements. I, as the primary investigator in this study, supervise PSTs in their English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms in KCSD and thus, was called to respond to the sudden school changes in support of PSTs’ field credit hours required for graduation and state teacher licensure. Support from faculty supervisors who initiated a collaborative community response involved TPTE partner organization Centro Hispano de East Tennessee, an NGO that serves the Latino/a community in KCSD and participants in this study. We quickly developed an opportunity for PSTs to continue their teaching internship with ESL
students in an online, virtual learning program for Latino/a ELs enrolled in KCSD grades K-8th designed by Centro Hispano.

As we transitioned to virtual instruction, my involvement as a departmental PST supervisor was the start of a three-year professional relationship with Centro Hispano. Supervision involved introducing curricula methods of teaching language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and English language proficiency standards according to the WIDA consortium (WIDA, 2020) with emphasis on theoretical and research-based methods for ESL classroom practices. I co-led online seminars to support PSTs seeking EL licensure in dual ESL-ENED programs as they co-taught groups of emergent bilingual students in K-8th grades online through an online program facilitated by Centro Hispano. I supervised PSTs as they designed lesson plans and creative literacy activities collaboratively for virtual learning.

As the Covid-19 pandemic became an on-going issue for schools to resume typical programming, the virtual learning collaboration began a university-community multi-year relationship with partner Centro Hispano. The inequities in students’ learning experiences, particularly for ELs, were heightened during the extended out of school time and perhaps what was most troubling were the cumulative negative effects of summer learning loss with long-lasting effects and implications in later academic years. As learning resources typically provided by schools during the academic year are absent during summer months (Entwisle et al., 2001), there is further limited access to learning resources during the academic year with school disruptions due to the on-going pandemic. The Faucet Theory (Entwisle et al., 2001) suggests that this absence disproportionately affects students from low-income families who are often less positioned to replace or supplement learning resources in the summer. Thus, positioning EL
students who likely have limited exposure to English academic language in the summer at further disadvantage (Deussen, Autio, Miller, Lockwood & Stewart, 2008). Coupled with the out-of-school time effects from Covid, the result is stagnation or decline of academic growth in summer for students from low-income families and arguably putting ELs at greater risk of academic loss.

In the context of transitioning to middle school grades, students adjust to a new school community. English learners who speak a language other than English at home also experience cultural shifts as they transition from home to school environments where English is the dominant language of instruction. Overwhelmingly, researchers report this transitional adjustment can cause loss of L1 (i.e. Spanish) and a disruption in the acculturation process for minoritized language groups, such as Latino/a s (Alvarez, 2015; Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010; Krashen, Tse, & McQuillan, 1998). Oftentimes, ELs experience high stress, emotional upheaval, anxiety, and difficulty coping as responses to acculturation in a new culture or school system, and can be academically and socially isolated (Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010; Katz & Valenzuela, 1999; Krashen, Tse, & McQuillan, 1998; Olsen, 1997). Also, ELs’ self-efficacy beliefs and use of English in bilingual spaces in this context are not well understood due to little research on ELs’ transitional periods to middle school, especially of newcomer students (i.e. ELs who have received less than two years of instruction in U.S. schools) (Silva & Kucer, 2016; Orellana & Phoenix, 2017). Positive self-beliefs (i.e. self-efficacy and self-concept) can empower ELs to use language learning strategies in bilingual spaces, such as code-switching or language brokering (i.e., communication across linguistic and cultural differences) in English language learning through conversations with Latino/a multicultural texts, which may mitigate linguistic and social challenges experienced in school transitions (Alvarez, 2015).
Latino/a ELs navigate academic and social challenges in the transition from elementary to middle school settings, in which their adjustment processes require school support (Alvarez, 2015; Callahan, 2005; Tong, Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Koch, 2014). How schools adapt to address students’ transitional processes, particularly in language use and literacy, is shaped by how well teachers understand ELs’ experiences and self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve), especially following a pandemic. While much is known about the association between self-efficacy and reading achievement for student subgroups vulnerable to educational inequities, there is less research about this association for EL students in the U.S. (Soland & Sandilos, 2021).

The ongoing disparity in educational opportunities and outcomes between BIPOC students, low-income students, and EL students is not because of an unjust educational system; it is due to a network of injustices that disadvantage these students and restrict their learning opportunities both in school and out of school (Anyon, 2005). Considering inequities in learning, this study and future research may provide a better understanding of the academic consequences of ELs’ transitional experiences during the summer months and use of Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth practices (Torrez, Ramos, Gonzales, Del Hierro & Cuevas’, 2017). This community engaged research aims to explore how the literacy experiences in Latinidad book clubs and LELLS’ self-efficacy beliefs influence the development of ethnic identity in possible second language selves to support their transition to middle school.

**Theoretical Foundations**

Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s recognizes the dimensions of methods and pedagogy from a Latino/a Critical Theory (LatCrit) and Critical Literacy Lens (Bernal, 2002;
Pérez Huber, 2011; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, 2001b) through texts and practices that challenge dominant language and cultural ideologies in mainstream classrooms to offer a transformative response to historical, racial, ethnic, gender, and class oppression that minoritized language groups have experienced. LatCrit elucidates Latina/os’ multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of colorsism, racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression as an anti-subordination concept that can link theory with practice in literacy education. LatCrit theory is transdisciplinary in educational research methods to better understand and improve the educational experiences of students of color which involves coalitional Latina/o pan-ethnicity (Bernal, 2002; Solórzano, 1998; Valdés, 1996).

LatCrit Theory (Solórzano, 1998) is an appropriate lens for qualitative research in the field of education, as it demonstrates how critical raced-gendered epistemologies recognize students of color as holders and creators of knowledge and explores ways policy and practices perpetuate “racial and/or ethnic and gender subordination” (Bernal, 2002 p. 107; Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999). Epistemology is more than just a “way of knowing” and is better defined as a “system of knowing” that is linked to worldviews based on the conditions and context in which people live and learn (Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billing argues that “there are well-developed systems of knowledge, or epistemologies, that stand in contrast to the dominant Euro-American epistemology” (2014, p. 258)

LatCrit Theory builds on Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Han, Laughter, & Howard, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999, 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997), through emphasis on issues that shape the lives of Latino/a s/as in the United States, such as language, immigration, ethnicity, identity, phenotype, gender, and culture (Bernal, 2002; Espinoza, 1990;
LatCrit emphasizes experiential knowledge and an asset-based approach to literacy learning. Multicultural Literature for Latino/a needs to be reflective of traditions that have survived and gone through cultural adaptations within the US sociocultural context as it has the potential to be utilized as a critical literacy mechanism for ethnic dignity, establishing a learner’s sense of place in a multicultural world (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016).

The power of our selected poetry and books centered in the celebration of Latinidad offer views of the world that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange to which any reader can tap into and learn. LatCrit Theory informs this study in Multicultural Literature for Latino/a to challenge the dominant cultural stereotypes found in narrative storylines and autobiographical poetry in curricula (Clark, Flores, Smith & Gonzales, 2016; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006) to mirror real-world experiences (Sims-Bishop, 1990) and represent Latino/a youth as navigators and social brokers (Alvarez, 2015) in Latinidad book clubs as Figured Worlds (Holland et al., 1998)

Holland and colleagues (1998) develop this theoretical construct of self-formation in which identities become the pivot between discipline and agency; turning from experiencing one’s social positions to making one’s way into cultural worlds as knowledgeable and committed participant. In this study, I define figured worlds as the dialogic critical spaces of Latinidad book clubs in which second language selves are formed in ethnic identity construction. Figured worlds emphasize that identities are not static and coherent, but multivocal and interactive. As a synthesis of Vygotsky (1978). Bourdieu (1977), and Bakhtin’s (1986) work, positioning theory examines the sociocultural perspectives in the literacy and learning context of book clubs in
which figurative and positional aspects of identity interrelate in myriad ways. It is important to
distinguish aspects of identities that have to do with *figured worlds*—storylines, narrativity,
characters, and desire—and aspects that have to do with a position relative to socially identified
others, bilingual, Latino/a peers, one’s sense of social place and entitlement. I argue that the
ways these aspects of identity relate is conducive to the role ethnic identity plays in forming
positive self-efficacy which are explored in this study. Bourdieu (1977) and Bakhtin (1986)
acknowledge speakers’ awareness of social valuing of languages, genres and styles of speaking
and emphasize the judgments of linguistics forms that are likely to be valued, of one’s command
over these linguistic resources, and of social privilege (or lack thereof) that a person of one’s
position has to employ their resources (i.e. code-switching; translinguaging; literacy brokering)
(Alvarez, 2015; Garcia, 2009; Garcia & Lin, 2017; He, 2008; Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992;
Potowski, 2016). Culturally sensitive educators become supportive literacy brokers in the lives of
youth and families who view educational success as a life necessity, offering educational merit

*Sociocultural theory* (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978) conceptually frames this study in
Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain’s (1998) construct of *Figured Worlds* or critical spaces in
which Latino/a youth learn to recognize and reform their identity and acknowledge the shifting
roles of themselves in the construction of second language selves through the use of
Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s in *Latinidad* book clubs in a summer reading
program. Second language selves, as it relates to self-efficacy, involves how one envisions
oneself in the present (i.e. *Latinidad* book clubs) and our possible future selves (i.e. in middle
school). Sociocultural perspectives view literacy as complex, purposeful, and collaborative
interactions involving texts and provide a useful lens to explore the role of Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s and poetry.

*Positioning theory* is a highly relevant educational theory that examines sociocultural perspectives on literacy and learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Scholars view positioning as a discursive process that involves the ongoing construction of the self through talk, particularly discourse at an individual level in speech and action, or at a group level in which Latino/a youth use poetry to position themselves and their knowledge (Harre & van Langenhove, 1991). *Language socialization theory* further frames and describes a reconceptualization of youth’s sense of self as a socially constructed and contested positioning for being in the world of new literacies. The program’s collaborative model provided an approach for examining ways Latino/a youth are supported in their literacy learning, particularly how their positioning in Spanish and English linguistic contexts create constructions of self as a Latino/a and English language learner.

**Epistemology**

An interpretive case study assumes that social reality is not singular or objective but rather, it is shaped by human experiences and social contexts (Ponelis, 2015). As engaged scholarship with community members, interpretivism provided multiple views to address the research question as it allowed myself, as a participant-researcher, to see participants’ experiences through their eyes (Greener, 2008). As individuals constructed possible language selves from their own perceptions, an interpretive approach suggests meanings are constructed as I engage with the case to better understand the phenomenon and recognize participants’ subjectivity through their own words in relating their experiences and beliefs (Merriam, 2002).
Therefore, this study reconciles LELLS’ subjective interpretations within a socio-historic context through *Latinidad* book clubs. The epistemological framework of this study is social constructivism which prescribes that all knowledge develops as a result of social interaction and language use as a shared experience (Vygotsky, 1978). Knowledge results from many social processes and interactions, as individuals are active participants in its creation (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, constructivist learning connects as much meaning to the process of learning as it does to the acquisition of new knowledge. Thus, it is important for scholars to take risk in research and not hesitate to try new methodologies and approaches that best reflect the participants and context of study. Being aware of risks with participants in confidentiality and building strong rapport in relationships with all community stakeholders is key.

**Latinidad: (Re)imagining Selves through Poetry**

Community cultural wealth operates from an asset perspective, in which Yosso and Solórzano (2006) posited that communities have unique forms of cultural capital expressed through “an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts: that allow youth and their families to resist historical, social, and institutional forms of oppression (p. 77). Funds of knowledge of a community is important to tap into because it positions the teacher as the learner and youth and families as experts which better supports youth to leverage their prior knowledge and skills in the curriculum and in literacy practice. Language is an important component of cultural capital, and books that are bilingual offer early childhood learners the possibility of drawing from their full linguistic repertoire in reading, as well as developing language and literacy skills in English and Spanish.
The cultural capital of communities can be represented through six types of cultural capital, functioning in a dynamic relationship: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016) which is a useful lens to determine if poetry, literature, and digital literacies affirm or perpetuate cultural stereotypes (Bernal, 2002). Cultural aspirations overlap with the other forms of capital and develop in familial and social contexts, often in linguistic storytelling or advice (consejos) that give navigational goals to challenge (resist) oppressive conditions (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016). When paired with empathy and genuine respect for rich and strong family values, the power of a storyline can prompt educators to organize literacy activities seeking autobiographical and community funds of knowledge while aligning diverging academic aspirations among Latino/a and immigrant families (Alvarez, 2015; Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti, 2006).

Positioning in Latinidad book clubs involves youth navigating individual and social attributes through dialogic discussion and personal expression in reading and responding to poetry that represents their shared history of Latin American/Mexican heritage and lived experiences. Using multicultural Latino/a poetry as a tool means that text-embedded cultural ideologies reflect youth’s language and connect to their ethnic and cultural identity, contemporary and historical relationship, and future second language selves.

This study of Latinidad book clubs aims to create a culturally brave space in which Latino/a and Mexican American youth can interrogate their identity and relationship with past and present experiences through exploring and composing poetry. Book clubs are modeled by the concept of “Figured Worlds” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) or critical spaces to which Els learn to recognized and reform their identity and acknowledge the shifting roles of
themselves in the construction of second language (L2) selves, using English, in book clubs as bilingual shared spaces. I use LatCrit Theory to analyze the Latino/a children and youth’s personal narratives because stories that the learners read were not typically a part of the school curriculum, though, nevertheless represented parts of their heritage and personal and familial lived experiences (Bernal, 2002; Pérez Huber, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, 2001b)

*Latinidad* is local, starting in our neighborhoods, our cities, and the world, and as it shifts, so do our identities (Caminero-Santangelo, 2007). Grounded in one’s roots of being Latino/a creates a culture of *Latinidad* because as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, Cubans and more, a similar history is shared of complexity, adversity, and discrimination (Aparicio, 2019). Though culturally distinct in nationality and in communities, coming together in unity during both times of crisis and in celebration defines *Latinidad*. Children and youth of Latino/a parents of different nationalities are the biological instantiation of *Latinidad* in which their personal lives and experiences negotiating different national communities are often not documented, analyzed, or integrated into our knowledge about U.S. Latino/a s/as (Aparicio, 2019). United in *Latinidad* can empower Els to become more vocal, express their opinions, share their voices, and view themselves as assets to their school and community in developing agency and possible second language selves (Aparicio, 2019; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). Second language selves involve one’s identity as an EL in how one envisions oneself in the present and our possible selves in the future; defined by the role of learner characteristics (i.e. gender, nationality, race, status, language, ethnicity) in the perception and construction of possible selves. (Dörnyei and Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). *Latinidad* involves:
• cultural authenticity in literature and voices of poets/authors with Latin American (and Mexican) heritage

• a celebration of the culture and past and present lived experiences

• intercultural diversity of Latino/a, Chicano/a Mexicana/o nationalities

• intersectionality of ethnic, racial, gender, languages, status, and mobility identities

This study explores multicultural Latinidad book clubs as a part of a summer reading program co-developed by the author and a local NGO that serves the Latino/a of East Tennessee. This partnership emulates community engaged scholarship through collaboration with the diverse members of the Latino/a community. We leveraged each other’s strengths by establishing the expectation that time and commitment to partner with Latino/a communities must create a sense of validation and support, but also confianza, a sense of trust, or confidence that can result in more opportunities for collaboration and community reading programs. A bond of confianza through community collaboration may be requisite for Latino/a youth’s education and reading success.

Latinidad book clubs embed youth’s home and school experiences and their funds of knowledge (assets founded in diverse languages, cultures) in which youth are encouraged to engage in cross-linguistic language practices in conversations with poetry. Funds of knowledge help us see the assets or bodies of knowledge that youth derive from their households and communities; these funds of knowledge can be embedded into classrooms and programs to support and enhance youth’s educational experiences (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2006). For example, Latino/a immigrants might return to their homeland to visit extended families where
they gain an extraordinary amount of rich material for oral language development, literacy activities, and creative expression (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016). While schools might not engage in Latino/a experiences in the curriculum, using a funds of knowledge framework to appreciate and examine the learning that takes place in immigrant homes, allows classrooms and reading programs to become spaces where we examine multicultural Latino/a texts that corroborate what many Latino/a youth feel: that it is rewarded to be themselves.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how the use of Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s in *Latinidad* book clubs an instructional practice influences academic self-efficacy, and the role of ethnicity in self-efficacy, for Latino/a ELLs (grades fourth through ninth) as a part of a collaborative summer reading program in transitional experiences to middle school grades. Use of quantitative surveys and questionnaires to measure self-efficacy are coupled with qualitative methods to understand how perceived English language competencies of LELLLs play a part in their perception of academic self-efficacy and the role of ethnic identity in mediating the construction of possible second language selves.

This proposed study aims to address gaps in research to address LELLLs’ transitional school experiences, based on the augmenting evidence of academic and linguistic challenges of the developmental period, lack of adequate learning resources due to summer loss coupled with covid-19 and the detrimental effects of insufficient academic and transitional support. I sought to describe effective literacy support in transitional experiences to understand how LELLLs’ self-efficacy is fostered within a culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) (Muhammad &
Hollie, 2011) shared, bilingual space. *Latinidad* book clubs adopt Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s as a tool to relate learners’ ethnic identity and cultural heritage in their construction of second language selves (English), considering its significance in developing positive academic self-efficacy (Falout, 2016; Leeman & Serafini, 2021; Serafini, 2020). Considering the transitional period to middle school grades and the participant grade levels in the summer program, I ask: How do Latino/a English language learners (LELL) in rising grades 4th-8th describe their self-efficacy beliefs and learning experiences with respect to their participation in *Latinidad* book clubs? I further explore how culturally and linguistically responsive literacy practices with Latino/a multicultural literature influence the participants’ ethnic identity development and possible second language selves. I sought to understand in what ways, if any, did the participants re-gain their language and cultural heritage? *Latinidad* centers language and cultural heritage and lived experiences as well as is embedded in the literature selected and explored in book clubs which reflects aspects of Latino/a intersectional identities. Thus, I want to know the role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy (belief in the ability to achieve) as a language learner. I ask, what ways does self-efficacy beliefs of Latino/a learners (ages 9-14) influence the construction of second language selves in transitional experiences to middle school grades?

**Overview of Findings and Recommendations**

Findings from this study suggest ways learners’ self-efficacy beliefs and the role of ethnic identity mediate the construction of second language selves through culturally and linguistically responsiveness in collaborative literacy practices; and results from descriptive statistics and correlational analysis inform suggestions for a new methodological approach to study self-efficacy in interdisciplinary fields and pedagogical approaches to language and
literacy education. A major contribution of this study to community engaged scholarship as a practice and research methodology is recommendations on how to create mutually beneficial relationships with community partnerships. Oftentimes mutual benefit is not an outcome in spite of best interests, to which I argue that cultivating *culturally brave spaces*, further discussed in this section and in chapter five, in learning communities and partnership initiatives foments beneficial outcomes of all vested interests and strengthens relationships among community members and stakeholders. This conclusion also can signify ways to support the transitional processes of ELs to middle school grades in the summer months and in youth-serving educational programs. The pertinent findings from this study are herein discussed, including recommendations for future research within curricula and instruction for literacy and language development and in initiatives of community engaged scholarship in which a model is included.

First, the analyses signify that LELLS’ positive self-efficacy beliefs and the connection to strong heritage culture identification are prevalent when literacy practices incorporate heritage culture materials, that is multicultural literature for Latino/a children and youth. LELLS’ connections to their cultural heritage and comments made during any singular Book club session often answered more than one of the research questions and enriched the findings and implications discussed in this dissertation. The context of book clubs considered learners’ ethnic identity in literacy experiences to determine their self-efficacy beliefs in analysis of values coding (beliefs, values, and attitudes). Reading literature by and about other Latino/as, Mexicans, and Mexican-Americans emphasized aspects of LELLS’ own family values, beliefs and attitudes. When these “root cultural elements” are embedded in classroom instruction and community or youth-serving programs, ethnic identity becomes an integral part of the process in becoming their
second language selves. Multicultural literature for Latino/as may support heritage identification in second language self-development when literature, poetry, and dialogic activities mirror the individual’s life experiences, geographic roots, cultural legacies, or cultural and linguistic critical connections with Latino/a readers in a way not possible through Eurocentric texts. Poetry that affirms one’s culture helps Latino/a children and youth construct a holistic identity. CLR literature for Latino/as benefits non-minorities as well, helping children and youth to understand cultural commonalities of shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and customs of people, whether commonalities are the same or different.

Each book club session was unique due to the context of individual’s identity and the collective bilingual culture, as well as the multicultural books and poetry for Latino/as that were included. Engagement within book clubs and the connections to texts, heritage materials, and peers in a collectivist group were essential. The collectivist structure of Book clubs deemed to be an important component to transitional social-emotional and academic support to rising middle school grades, in which LELLS’ root culture and ethnic or geographic background is reflected. As many of the participants had roots in Mexican culture, the collectivist nature of learning in such countries supported adjustment to US individualist formal school system.

Development of peer relationships in participant’s construction of second language selves were fundamental in building learners’ self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) in schooling in which Book clubs helped establish a sense of belonging. Participants note peer acceptance and the value of friendship, indicated by the theme of establishing a sense of belonging in schools, among peers, and in their communities. Sense of belonging within a shared learning community requires LELLS’ positive belief in ability to work well with peers, supported in Book clubs and
the summer program. Participation in book clubs led to more participants expressing a high belief in ability to make friends with new people and at a new school, in which the collaborative structure of summer program activities enabled them to experience success in creating friendships and receive and provide encouragement to peers in difficult tasks. They used their voices to describe the unique challenges they have individually faced yet represent a commonality in shared experiences as LELLS. These challenges relate to academic, language-learning, and social-emotional factors in experiences in and outside of school. Positive self-efficacy as presented in LELLS’ narrative voice depict attitudes and efforts to face challenges.

The findings indicate that connection to ethnic identity as a language learner is an indicator of personal belief in ability to achieve goals and to grow with effort in transitions to middle school. A strong sense of ethnic identity connects to self-efficacy beliefs in literacy experiences in the summer program, in which participants expressed: belief in ability to succeed academically in school next year; confidence in ability to read and ability to succeed in reading in school next year; and confident in ability to achieve goals that they set for themselves. As literacy experiences in summer programs celebrate ethnic identity and support language learning strategies (i.e. translanguaging, code-switching), LELLS develop possible second language selves in which they show positive self-efficacy beliefs. These strategies are defined and discussed in chapter four and in key definitions. A sense of belonging among peers and positive self-efficacy beliefs help ELs mediate challenges in transitioning to middle school.

**Communities of CARE Framework**

The pivotal conclusion from this study emphasizes the importance of creating a *culturally brave space* in a learning community which expands Hollie’s (2016) Teaching with CARE
framework my model of Communities of CARE seen in figure 17 (Appendix K) to use as an equity analysis tool and program and initiative guide. This Communities of CARE framework can be used in analysis and implementation of curricula and instruction as well as in building relationships with partners in CES initiatives discussed here and furthermore in chapter five. Recommendations include a) pedagogical strategies for practitioners to build CARE in a learning community in figure 18 (Appendix L) and b) strategies to building caring relationships in community partnerships in initiatives such as CES, as in this collaborative program with Centro Hispano de East Tennessee (Appendix K). The infographics feature strategies for creating culturally brave spaces in a Communities with CARE framework as recommendations for practitioners, researchers, community organizations, and community stakeholders like students and families.

Culturally brave spaces are critical spaces in which individuals a part of a collaborative effort towards a socially just initiative (i.e. LELL participants; CES partners) learn to recognize and reform their individual and collective identity and acknowledge the shifting roles of themselves towards creating change and/or in solving a social problem. For example, in this study, LELLS’ participate in literacy and language learning in book clubs as a part of a CES youth-serving program during the summer months to support transitions to rising middle school grades. The summer program celebrating Latinidad culture includes book clubs that respond contextually to individual, school-based, and systemic challenges related to reading. Particularly, book clubs as bilingual spaces in this study acted as culturally brave spaces which contributed to LELLS’ construction of second language (L2) selves in using English. Additionally, our relationship building in a community engaged partnership in this summer program called for a
shift away from “safety” towards “bravery.” My engagement with participant and partner relationships challenged the notion of a culturally safe space which often result in exclusive benefits to the researcher and/or a single community member or partner (Martinez, 2014), towards a rebranding to *culturally brave space.* Both terms are discussed in detail in chapter five.

I emphasize *culturally brave spaces,* because often shared community spaces and schools concentrate on cultural safety. Prior research has suggested that *cultural safety* should be a priority when working within communities and that it only transpires if partners fundamentally and epistemologically believe in the rights of those considered a vulnerable population, marginalized, or underserved to be heard and treated with respect as *more* than an ethical obligation (Wilson & Neville, 2009). I argue that *cultural safety* is not an effective proponent towards an equitable, social justice framework, in goals and practices in educational spaces. Rather, it can reinforce negative stereotypes that discriminate Latino/a children and youth. Safety implies comfort and does not challenge educators, students, and community-members to extend their thinking beyond what cultural narratives and beliefs already exist. Rather than counteract deficit-based mindsets or discriminatory stereotypes of ELs, it inhibits programmatic goals towards equitable literacy and language learning in schools, transitional programs, and in teacher education. I suggest that *cultural bravery* is more aligned with equitable principles and practices in education, as it depicts the bravery necessary to challenge and change normalized, oppressive behaviors, practices, and curricula that exists within schools, society, and teacher education. Cultural bravery requires recognition and empowerment of community cultural wealth, which I argue is necessary for a partnership initiative to be sustainable.
Cultivating *culturally brave spaces* with LELLs and in CES required on-going involvement of participants and partners in book club sessions and in summer program-related acts which concern them, and planning and decision-making activities that aim to affirm and validate their cultural beliefs and practices, bridging home-culture to school-culture, that LELLs bring into the community space. I assert that striving to create *culturally brave spaces* can support community or practitioner endeavors leading to mutually beneficial outcomes to all members of the community, and herein the organization partner. Often, the mutual aspect is not an outcome even when benefits are a mutually recognized objective. I believe that recognition of and implementation of tenets of a culturally brave space guided by the teaching with CARE framework can inform knowledge, practice, and outcomes for scholarship of teaching and scholarship of community engagement in research and beyond.

Understanding of what *culturally brave spaces* entail within our own contexts and endeavors as practitioners, researchers, and community partners is the first, pertinent step. Especially when endeavors include marginalized cultural and linguistic groups such as Latino/a ELLs, a culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) (Hollie, 2016) approach is essential to embody equitable programs, resources, and outcomes. This study’s findings expand how the Teaching with CARE framework must define and include *cultural bravery* in literacy and language learning spaces and expands the framework as a curricula design and equity analysis tool. I discuss tenets that create a culturally brave space stemming from the Teaching with CARE includes Validation of voices of power (students and the community); Affirm or legitimize and make positive cultural and linguistic knowledge; Bridge home culture to school culture in skills and behaviors; and Build authentic and contextual cultural and linguistic knowledge.
I incorporated CLR strategies and materials (i.e. inclusive and responsive of gender, religious, orientation, nationality, SES, and ethnicity) in book clubs in this study. I learned that when learning activities and literature tap into who students are based on their cultural knowledge and behavior, it must also include family-root culture or heritage identification and language(s) spoken within homes and communities. Teaching with CARE in this way must recognize or validate, affirm or legitimize, bridge, and build student cultural heritage identifiers in literacy and language learning spaces through books, stories, written or spoken personal narratives, poetry written by and for Latino/a authors and students themselves. When values, attitudes, and beliefs of participants’ ethnic identity are included in heritage identification materials, curricula, and instruction, then positive second language selves form, supported by positive self-efficacy beliefs. Positive self-efficacy beliefs contribute to a culturally brave space and further equip students and teachers with equity-oriented literacy and language tools.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation presents this study in five chapters and a participant-research-place interlude positioned between chapters three and four. Here, in Chapter One, I described the context for the study; stated the problem, purpose, and significance of the study; summarized the developmental history of Latinidad and Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s; explain theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding methodological choices; and synopsized the study’s six chapters.

In Chapter two, I review several bodies of literature relevant to this study of self-efficacy in second language acquisition: in particular, ethnic identity and its role in self-efficacy. Additionally, summer learning regression literature is reviewed. I offer an overview of the SLA
field to account for methodological gaps that this study seeks to address. I review the existing literature on SLA research across disciplines, particularly in education and motivational research and different methodological approaches to self-efficacy, calling attention to the importance of considering the ways in which qualitative interpretation expands, challenges, and completes the picture of SLA in applied educational studies. SLA is an increasingly interdisciplinary field that intertwines sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, education, and sociology to illustrate how second languages are learned by different individuals across a variety of contexts. Therefore, I attend to this thread by reviewing current scholarship incorporating qualitative methods, such as interpretive case study, interviews, participant observations and their critical reflections into social justice education research practices in order to demonstrate how my own accounts of my research process may contribute to future work in SLA that engages qualitative methods.

After attending to past and present enquiries into the field of SLA and multicultural education discourses, I provide context of the timeliness and necessity of this study of self-efficacy beliefs in culturally responsive literacy experiences of rising Latino/a middle school students in review of Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s and its influence children and youth’s ethnic identity development and perception of second language selves.

To further illustrate the timeliness of the study of effects of summer regression on English learners, particularly the Latino/a community, during the novel time of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on learning, I review the transitional experiences of students in rising middle school grades. Transitional experiences to middle school as a Latino/a English language learner (LELL) is highlighted in literature that focuses on the challenges, transitional support
practices, and partnership with key community stakeholders that serve children and youth academically, socially-emotionally, and linguistically.

Chapter 2 concludes in discussion of existing literature on community engaged scholarship and participatory approaches to sustaining community partnerships between university programs and local youth-serving organizations to contextualize the partnership that developed between Centro Hispano de East Tennessee and myself, as a researcher in the TPTE department over the course of three years. I describe how effective community partnerships must establish trust or confianza in a collaborative summer program. Key to collaboration is seeking to create “brave spaces” rather than “culturally safe spaces” among LELLs in book clubs.

In Chapter Three, I present a discussion that tends to the qualitative methods I used to answer my research questions and highlights gaps in methodological approaches using only quantitative research in the field of SLA and the ways I responded to these gaps. I discuss the intramethod mixing of quantitative surveys and questionnaires to strengthen the methodology in self-efficacy research and to triangulate the data, lending validity and rigor to this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). I begin by describing the research paradigm and research methodology that informed this study, explaining their suitability for addressing my research questions and outline how they shaped procedures utilized in this study. I proceed to describe my methods for selecting participants and data sources, data collection and data analysis. I also sketch out my methods for establishing a partnership with Centro Hispano de East Tennessee in this study design of community engaged scholarship. I then discuss the measures taken to enhance study quality and credibility of the results. I end the chapter by addressing the study’s limitations and delimitations.
In the Participant-Researcher-Partnership Interlude, I take pause before I begin attending to the dissemination of the findings, conclusion, and implications of the study in the following chapters to provide the reader a fuller understanding of the inter-relations between participants, research, and partnership or the processes of community engagement within a specific cultural context and how these relations come to bear on the research process. I begin this section with a positionality statement articulating my worldview and its potential effects on the research process, as well as my relationship with the study, with my participants and community partners.

I then draw from information gleaned from the community organization and my partners through our co-development of a summer reading camp, English language self-report questionnaires (appendices F and G) and observational notes from book clubs and interview data to describe the study’s participants as a group and to construct individual profiles of the community partners, children and youth with whom I worked are such an integral part of this project. I want to practice relational accountability by acknowledge them as much more than research participants, and rather, treat them as collaborators and co-participants. I proceed to describe the research setting and context.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings of qualitative data presented in participants’ background information, thematic analysis of interviews as counter-stories, and written autobiographical poems as personal narratives in relation to discussions around Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s. Theming the data in multiple rounds of coding through Values Coding and theming the data are further detailed, as well as how community partner and committee member checked my interpretation of data and provided valuable insight as the program director. I also conduct statistical analyses in factor analysis of survey and questionnaire data to determine if the items
and subscales were reliable in assessing the appropriate construct of self-efficacy. I used
descriptive statistics to compare the results of respondents, looking at the mean and standard
deviation of data. Chapter 4 concludes with answering the research questions in the conclusion.

Chapter 5 is the discussion and conclusion of this study in which further suggestions from
findings are made and implications for practice are delineated. This includes the power of
Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s in constructing ethnic identity and its role in positive self-
efficacy beliefs as a language learner. The discussion highlights community centered literacy
practices and the necessary tenets of transitional support for Latino/a s/English learners in rising
middle school grades. Central to this chapter is the Community Engaged Relationships Model to
which I offer foundational components in creating sustainable community partnerships that offer
mutual benefits to key stakeholders in efforts to engage Latino/a children, youth, and families in
literacy and language learning through teacher education departments.

I converge SLA studies on self-efficacy with discourse on multicultural education in an
effort to demonstrate how these avenues of scholarship are working together to expand our
knowledge and pedagogy of discourses on language learning and identity development in
transitional experiences. This cross-disciplinary approach also provides pathways for future
scholarship in the fields of literacy education, teacher education, and ESL education. I outline
future research (chapter 5) to explain how investigations using intramethod mixing or qualitative
and quantitative measures in the study of self-efficacy can offer critical insights into local,
contextualized discourse communities and experiences of learners. I end the chapter with a
sidebar to further contextualize identifying terminology around Latino/a groups in this study and
beyond to understand how individuals and groups are positioned versus position themselves in the world. There are several terms to define in the context of this study below.

**Definitions of Key Terminology**

**Autobiographical Poetry:** Related to “identity is story”; poetic expression composed of personal stories you tell about yourself within a social group that actively constructs and co-constructs stories that define them which highlights personal agency (Sfard & Prusak, 2005)

**Community Engaged Scholarship (CES):** Research of mutual benefit to community and academic interests which requires scholar capacity building and on-going institutional support. There are current shifts towards engaged scholarship practices in higher education pedagogy, research methodology, and community development. CES refers to mutually beneficial partnerships between communities and universities designed to collaboratively develop and apply knowledge to address a goal and/or public concern (da Cruz, 2019)

**Culturally and Linguistically Responsiveness:** A framework informed by Hollie (2015, 2017) in literacy education and teacher education which leverages and utilizes the cultural learning tools that students bring to the classroom; asset-based approach; an equity tool with evaluating criteria: teacher support, critical consciousness, portrayal, and representation.

**Critical Literacy:** literacies that are based on traditional school practices around reading and writing such as pre-selected reading texts and essay writing to argue a thesis (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

**English Language Learner:** Student who comes from non-English speaking homes and who are learning and/or acquiring English language proficiency; a rapidly growing student subgroup in US public schools (Linquanti & Cook, 2013).
**Figured Worlds:** critical spaces in which children and youth learn to recognize and reform their identity and acknowledge the shifting roles of themselves in the construction of second language selves using Multicultural Literature for Latino/a s and poetry

**Heritage Identification:** A strong affiliation with heritage ethnic identity (Kiang et al., 2006; Zhang, Noels, & Lalonde, 2018).

**Identity:** Related to self-efficacy; the process of building cultural self-awareness and metalinguistic knowledge in a) what values, beliefs, and qualities learners attribute to themselves and b) how one envisions oneself in the present and our possible selves in the future

**Latino/a:** Latino/a represents an individual with particular ethnic and heritage orientation who may speak many different languages such as English, Spanish, Portuguese, and indigenous languages (i.e. Quechua or K’iche’). Latino/a may include first-generation U.S. immigrants or refugees seeking asylum; have descendants across generations of families who consider America their homeland; or Indigenous Latino/a s or Afro-Latino/a s. While my intention is not to dissuade the use of pan-ethnic labels which historically have been useful, labels are used with an understanding that the Latino/a community cannot be compressed into a singular, cultural, ethnic or linguistic homogeneous group.

**Latinidad:** Defined by the culture, heritage, and lived experiences of Latino/a s of varying nationalities, racial and gender identities, generations, languages, status, mobility and identity. Latinidad is local, starting in our neighborhoods, into our cities, and to the world, and as it shifts, so do our identities. Grounded in one’s roots of being Latino/a creates a culture of Latinidad because as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, Cubans and more, a similar history is shared of complexity, adversity, and discrimination.
**Latinidad Book club**: A learner centered experience in which Latino/a children and youth navigate individual and social attributes through dialogic discussion and personal expression in reading and responding to poetry and literature that represents their shared history of Latin American/Mexican heritage and lived experiences. Learners make critical reflections of the text as it connects to their identity, self-concept, and social justice topics. This includes written reflections and autobiographical poetry (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Grounded in home and school experiences and LELLS’ funds of knowledge (assets founded in diverse languages, cultures), learners are encouraged to engage in cross-linguistic language practices in dialogue.

**Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Children and Youth**: literature and poetry which seeks cultural authenticity in literature and voices of poets and authors with Latin American (and Mexican) heritage, as a celebration of the culture and past and present experiences of diverse Latino/a (and Mexicano) nationalities, ethnic, racial and gender identities, languages, and status and mobility

**Second Language Selves**: Identity as an EL in how one envisions oneself in the present and our possible selves in the future; defined by the role of learner characteristics (i.e. gender, language-related differences, ethnicity) in the perception and construction of possible selves.

**Self-efficacy**: the belief in one’s ability to complete a task and/or skill (i.e. English speaking, reading, writing, listening) (Bandura, 1997) and the belief in one’s capability to organize and execute action and to attain goals dependent on context (Zimmerman, 2000).
Sidebar: What's in a name? Reimagining Latin-American heritage identifiers

It is important to address the common identifiers when speaking to, with, and of children and youth who speak Spanish, as misconceptions and generalizations have spread in cultural labeling. How we define cultural terms when discussing children and youth’s identities and experiences can reinforce or transform beliefs or hegemonic structures, especially for minoritized language groups (Oboler, 1992). While most people use their national origin group as a primary identifier, such as Mexican American, oftentimes we defer to pan-ethnic labels such as Hispanic or Latino/a which can be problematic. While such identifiers might unify Latin American communities in certain contexts, they often exclude others, such as indigenous Latino/a s or Afro-Latino/a s. While my intention is not to dissuade the use of pan-ethnic labels which historically have been useful, labels must be used with an understanding that the Latino/a community cannot be compressed into a singular, cultural, ethnic or linguistic homogeneous group.

A consensus regarding Latin American identity has included a constructed negotiation between government, the media, and community organizations. Hispanic is a term coined by the US federal government in a 1980 census to identify people from Spain and Spanish-speaking countries, excluding Brazil, as it refers to all speakers of Latin-based languages from the Americas (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2015). The identifier Hispanic was an attempt to categorize many different nationalities and cultures into one label; this has been problematic as Spain colonized much of Latin America and people of Mexican descent prefer Mexicano or Chicano (termed by the 1960s Chicano Movement by Mexican Americans to express pride in a shared cultural, ethnic, and community identity) (Martinez-Roldan, 2000).
In academic research today, data is typically reported as it pertains to the overall group of U.S. Latino/a s rather than specific subgroups. Broad terms of Latino/a communities have permeated society and schools for many generations, making any attempt to restructure use of these labels difficult. According to Perez and Hirschman (2009), before the Hispanic category was born, the three largest US communities of Latin American descent- Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans- attempted to increase awareness of local cultural needs with little progress. Thus, a strategic unification effort resulted in increased awareness of specific community challenges nationwide. This joining of forces also enforced false and misguided narratives that Latino/as constituted a homogeneous group.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, monumental shifts have increased intercultural and cross-cultural diversity in communities of Latin American descent in the US. For example, Latino/as represent diverse racial characteristics and speak many different languages such as English, Spanish, Portuguese, and indigenous languages like Quechua or K’iche’. Latino/as may include first-generation refugees seeking asylum in the US or have descendants across generations of families who consider America their homeland.

The question is how current cultural identifiers bring us closer or drive us further away from achieving the goal to be more intentional and inclusive of marginalized Latino/a groups by frequent acknowledgement of the limitations of the terms Hispanic and Latino/a to accurately reflect Latin American diversity.

A popular Latino/a pan-ethnic label in this attempt to be more inclusive in identifiers in the Spanish language is Latino/a. While Latino/a is a gender-neutral term used in recent research
in lieu of *Latino/a or Latina* for individuals with Latin American descent or cultural ties, the community is often labeled by stereotypes such that heteronormative expectations are assumed; for example, girls wear pink and boys wear blue (Serrano, 2020). Additionally, there is widespread disagreement and confusion regarding the pronunciation of Latino/a (i.e. La-teen-ex; Latin-ex; La-tinks). For example, considering the sentence structural patterns fomented by the term Latino/a /a, does the word “los amigos” need to be made gender-neutral and would the result look like “Lxs amigxs?” While pronunciation varies, the discrepancy in the use of Latino/a may lead to more misconceptions or generalizations about the nuances of Latin American cultures and paradoxically block the road to inclusivity of marginalized Latino/a groups.

For the purpose of representing the intersecting, multiplicitous experiences of BIPOC youth with Latin American or Mexican heritage, I elected to use Latino/a /a, which refers to those from Latin American cultures (including Brazil but not Spain) as well as *Mexicano or Mexican American or Hispanic* as they are the preferred terms by the youth in this study. This community is defined as a culture *de Latinidad* by participants and community organizers in this collaboration. *Latinidad* is defined by the culture, heritage, and lived experiences of Latino/as of varying nationalities, racial and gender identities, generations, languages, status, mobility and identity.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the larger context of research in applied linguistics, the classic theoretical construct for self-efficacy was developed in the field of psychology by Albert Bandura (1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1986) who posed a foundational theory of motivation to highlight the role of self-referent thought in guiding human behavior and change. According to Bandura (1990), behavior changes that occur through methods of modeling, guided exposure, persuasion, and anxiety reduction are pointedly the result of creating or strengthening an individual’s efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1994; Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012). Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1978a) postulates that different modes of influence can alter people’s coping behavior by creating and strengthening expectations of one’s personal efficacy. According to this theory (Bandura, 1978b), perceived efficacy affects behavior in ways such as motivating choice of behavior in an environment. Factors that determine choice behavior can have significant effects on one’s own personal development and self-conceptions in processes of identity construction.

Self-efficacy as an Explanatory Construct in Language Learning

Foundational to the trajectory of self-efficacy research is the Bandura, Reese, and Adams (1982) experimental approach, in which perceived self-efficacy is assessed in probes from apparent non-existent levels to pre-selected low, moderate, or high levels in mastery experiences in which coping strategies are modeled to participants until the desired level of efficacy is reached. Results show high levels of perceived self-efficacy correlated to higher performance achievements (Bandura, Reese, & Adams, 1982). Students need more than ability and skills in
order to perform successfully and a sense of efficacy to use these well to regulate their learning (Bandura, 1993).

Bandura (1990, 1993) posited that self-efficacy is the foundation of human motivation; as an individual’s perception of ability to accomplish a goal or task in specific conditions, it is a powerful predictor of student motivation and achievement (Bandura, 1986; Cheema & Kitsantas, 2014). Traditionally in the field of applied educational linguistics, self-efficacy is measured by specific task performance and its relation to an individual’s skills and abilities being measured in a particular sociocultural context (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Schunk, 1994). An early research approach to frame self-efficacy as task-oriented involves the notion of efficacy-action relationship. This approach tested causality in self-efficacy by selection of level of ability to various perceived self-efficacy levels in mathematical performances (Bandura, 1990; Collins, 1982). Significant replicative studies test causality: participants report high or low mathematical efficacy beliefs at three controlled levels of mathematical ability and were asked to solve varying levels of mathematical problems, revealing a relationship between perceived self-efficacy and performance on individual tasks (Bandura, 1990; Collins, 1982). The results demonstrated that perceived self-efficacy exerts a significant independent effect on participant performance; at each level of mathematical ability, children who viewed themselves as efficacious were quicker to solve problems accurately, rework problems, and try different strategies (Collins, 1982).

Other research found that mathematical self-efficacy beliefs were predictive of students’ choice to engage in subtraction problems as opposed to a different task, proving that the higher an individual’s sense of efficacy, the greater their choice of the mathematical activity (Bandura, 1990; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Marsh, Roche, Pajares, & Miller, 1997). Self-efficacy is also
highly correlated with individual rated intrinsic interest in motor-skills learning task as well as in writing revision tasks (Cheng, 2002; Pajares, 2003; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007; Raoofi, Gharibi J., & Gharibi H., 2017; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005).

Bandura (1990) employed another approach to examining causality in the construct of self-efficacy by introducing a trivial variable without knowledge to affect competency and alter perceived efficacy, in which the level of motivation is then measured. Research findings support Bandura’s theory (1986) that perceived efficacy beliefs can mediate the effect of skills or self-beliefs on subsequent task performance by shaping effort, persistence, and perseverance (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984). Other experiments have shown that the higher the individuals’ perceived self-efficacy, the longer the individuals persevere on difficult and seemingly unsolvable problems before quitting the task, to which external influences on performance motivation is completely mediated by perceived self-efficacy; and many more studies have helped to determine how people judge their competencies by social comparison (Bandura, 1978a; Collins, 1982; Hackett & Bets, 1989).

Self-efficacy evaluation by one directional causation places the causes of behavior on the individual which pose that behavior is driven by unconscious impulses and complexes. Contrarily, behaviorists place the causes of the behavior on the environment. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1978b) posits that adaptation and change of behavior occurs through an interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences. Triadic reciprocal causation is a three-way interplay of influences in which important determinants of life paths shape an individual’s self-development (Bandura, 1986; Pajares & Johnson, 1996). An individual’s personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender, race, ethnicity, social status, language) can evoke
different reactions in others when behaviors are the same. Personal agency is a function of self-beliefs that is socially rooted and operates within sociocultural influences as individuals are viewed as both products and produces of their own environments and of their social systems (Bandura, 1982, 1990; Marsh, Pekrun, Parker, Murayama, Guo, Dicke, & Arens, 2019; Morais, 2018; Potowski, 2016; Robinson, Bair, Persich, & Moen, 2016).

The environment includes social interaction, construction, modeling, and persuasion which can alter personal characteristics, according to *reciprocal determinism*, changing an individual’s behavior (Bandura, 1978a, 1978b; 1986). Performance feedback can inform and alter individual’s environments and self-beliefs, affecting their subsequent performances. This foundational concept of *reciprocal determinism* is shown in Figure 1 to depict how personal factors in cognition, affect, and biological events; behavior; and environmental influences create interactions that result in a triadic reciprocality (Bandura, 1978a; 1986; Pajares, 1996).

Self-efficacy is hypothesized to influence one’s choice of behavioral activities, task performance, effort expenditure, and persistence in the face of obstacles (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984; Pajares and Schunk, 2001). *Social cognitive theory* describes how peoples’ beliefs in their capabilities affect how much stress and anxiety they experience in threatening situations as well as their level of motivation; it takes a resilient sense of efficacy, or L2 grit (Teimouri, Plonsky & Tabandeh, 2020), an individual difference construct associated with L2 development (i.e. English), to mitigate challenges and perceived or external impediments to successfully complete a task or adjust to a new circumstance.
Figure 1. Model of triadic reciprocality from Bandura (1986)

FIGURE 1. Model of the relations between the three classes of determinants in Bandura's (1986) conception of triadic reciprocality
The construct of self-efficacy became a model of human functioning in which self-regulatory factors have a central role within learning contexts (Bandura, 1986). Bandura (2002) conceives the construct of self-efficacy as an individual’s ability to self-regulate, reflect, and act in literacy and language learning, making Social Cognitive Theory foundational in fields of education and applied sociolinguistics. Researchers in the field of education (Karas & Faex, 2021; Martinez, 2017) have often relied on Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory and, more specifically, on the agent of self-efficacy, to encourage reflective practice. Pajares (1996) noted that self-reflection allows individuals to evaluate their own experiences and thought processes by mediating between knowledge, self-concept, and action.

Self-efficacy in educational research often refers to how individuals view their own abilities to perform specific tasks or actions (Bandura, 1990). The higher an individual’s self-efficacy, the more that individual believes in their ability to successfully complete a specific action or perform at a particular level (Bandura, 1990). The construct of self-efficacy measures a student’s confidence in his or her ability to attain a certain educational goal or outcome, such as the ability to do well on a skills test or earn good grades in class (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). Defined by Zimmerman (2002) as ‘‘the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skills’’ (p. 65), self-regulation is a metacognitive process that requires students to explore their own thought processes to evaluate the results of their actions and plan alternative pathways to success (Schunk, & Zimmerman, 2007; Usher and Pajares, 2008). Bandura (1986) and educational researchers have provided insights over the past four
decades about how these factors operate within learning contexts (Anderson, 2003; Graham, 2006; Schunk, 1999).


Across disciplines, researchers have investigated changes in self-efficacy, such as in inquiry or project-based learning (PBL) settings in the field of education. Prior research on individual self-efficacy in the context of PBL environments indicates that student self-efficacy is affected by quality design and PBL experiences, validating Bandura’s notion that environmental factors can change one’s behavior and affect self-efficacy in reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978b; 1986) However, there are mixed results of the direction (positive vs. negative) of change in self-efficacy (Eccles, 1999; Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012). Studies have shown the influence of PBL on student efficacy with increased academic knowledge in medical education (Papinczak, Young, Groves, & Heynes, 2008), communication and cultural knowledge in English as a foreign language (EFL) (Dwyer & Fus, 2002; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007), and
determined the usefulness of the measure of self-efficacy for cross-disciplinary team learning (CDTL) (Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012).

Measures of self-efficacy correlate significantly with students deciding on a major in college or university, their success in course work, and perseverance in adverse experiences (Borman, Yang, & Xie, 2019; Hackett & Betz, 1989; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984). There is ample evidence (Bandura, 1997) that self-efficacious individuals participate more readily in tasks, work harder, persist longer, and often have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficult tasks or circumstances than individuals who doubt their own capabilities.

In SLA research, the most studied emotion is anxiety (MacIntyre, 1999; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014) presenting a one-dimensional view of positive and negative emotion; however, a two-dimensional view of emotion expands the possibility of ambivalence, a common experience in SLA, when a person feels both confident and anxious when giving a classroom presentation or talking to a native speaker (MacIntyre, 1999) and its relatedness to perceived self-efficacy. Although different constructs, self-concepts and perceived self-efficacy can determine the amount of effort people expend and to what extent in the face of mitigating adverse experiences with sustained persistence leading to increased competencies (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007; Teimouri, Plonsky, & Tabandeh, 2020).

Similar research observes highly efficacious students as confident in their capacity to achieve and tend to work hard to avoid failure, set goals or challenges in learning, and are resilient to academic adversity (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). Pajares and Schunk (2001) found that learners who believe in their ability to perform tasks use more metacognitive strategies in

**Ethnic Identity in Academic Self-Efficacy.**

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the number of ELs enrolled in middle school was at its highest in the history of the US (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003), and approximately 5.3 million ELs were enrolled in public schools (PK-12) in 2012, according to Migration Policy Institute (Smith, 2016). The majority of ELs were immigrants or children of immigrants as part of the fastest growing sectors in the nation (Fránquiz & Salinas, 2011; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009. It is important for educators and scholars to know that not all designated ELs are immigrants, as many are born in the US with families of immigrant origin and bring diverse cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills into schools and literacy programs. Among Spanish-speaking students, there are linguistic differences and varied cultural traditions. Also, Native American children and youth speak a variety of home languages including, but not all, Cherokee, Choctaw, Apache, Chippewa, Crow, and Navajo; and many Mexican families, particularly in the Southwestern US along border towns, have been living in their communities for five or more generations before their land of residence became US territory (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003).

Although ELs are a vastly heterogeneous group, a recent report showed that of the people in the US who speak a language other than English at home, approximately 41 million people speak Spanish (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzales, 2016; Duff, 2019). It is indicated that 62 percent of individuals aged 5 and older speak Spanish at home, according to the US census
The population of Latino/a children aged 5 and under is projected to increase to 39 percent by the year 2023, representing most children in the U.S., according to a report “The Condition of Latino/as in Education 2015” (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzales, 2016). Hispanic students (coined by the U.S. Census data, 1980) belong to the largest ethnic group in the US, yet according to research, their academic achievement is far lower than other racial and ethnic groups (Smith, 2016; US Census Bureau, 2021).

The role of ethnicity is vital to academic self-efficacy, although less studied in SLA research. Thus, it is important for teachers and scholars to reconsider views and assumptions about English learners’ (ELs) ethnic identity and to better understand common identifiers of predominant school-age groups today. Cheema and Kitsantas (2014) reported self-efficacy to be one of the most important predictors of academic achievement, especially since its effect is not the same for all racial and ethnic groups. Some research suggests that although student self-efficacy has a general positive effect on academic achievement for all students, the racial achievement gap persists with a faster achievement growth rate for White students compared to Black (yet not Hispanic) students (Cheema & Kitsantas, 2014; Smith, 2016) to which variables of adverse experiences should be more thoroughly investigated in relation to efficacy. Often, these differences in self-efficacy beliefs based on racial constructions are evident when students enter middle school and expand during the middle school years across content (Britner & Pajares, 2001; Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Reading experiences, such as successes or failures related to academic achievement, begin to shape ELs’ self-beliefs (i.e. self-efficacy) in different content domains (Britner & Pajares, 2001; Schunk & Meece, 2006). These findings suggest reasons for the proclaimed self-
efficacy gap, but also offer potential implications for closing it. Considering limited research on Latino/a EL students’ academic achievement in relation to academic self-efficacy in the face of adverse experiences, I believe that influential variables of individual differences (i.e. race, ethnicity, language, gender, SES, language status, prior achievement) and environment (e.g. peer interactions, language ideologies, literacy pedagogies, teacher beliefs, family values) in schools and in the community should be extensively investigated (Cheema & Kitsantas, 2014).

**Language Learning Theories, Models, Hypotheses, and Self-Efficacy**

Research in educational disciplines has generated learning theories grounded in a sociocultural framework (Vygotsky, 1978; Bandura, 2002; Bruner, 1986, 2020) to which knowledge and literacy learning is socially constructed. In the same vein, the subconscious process of storing knowledge and acquiring a language is what Krashen (2003) refers to as “acquisition-learning hypothesis” and “language learning” is a conscious process in which we are metacognitively aware of our learning through speech, thought, and action. Sociocultural theories of literacy learning take an interactionist approach and are taken from the new literacy studies movement (Gee, 2013) and stem from sociocultural, sociohistorical psychology, and constructivist theories of learning (Bruner, 1986, 2020; Vygotsky, 1978, 2012).

Vygotsky’s (1962) *sociocultural theory* postulates that socially mediated activity is an important influence on thought and self-beliefs. Considering Bandura’s *reciprocal determinism* (1978; 1986) in environmental influence on one’s competency perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs, Vygotsky (1962) posits that the social environment and personal factors produce learning through its various tools in cultural objects, language, interactions, and social institutions. A social cognitive model (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007) emphasizes that cognitive change, and
potentially change in self-efficacy beliefs, results from internalizing and mentally transformative social interactions in which cognitive and metacognitive mediation plays a key role, according to Vygotsky (Schunk, 1999). A significant difference in Vygotsky’s theory (1962) is the emphasis on private or internal speech as a means of promoting internalization. Internalization can also be based on visual images, verbal meanings, and gestures that can be translated through modeling, which facilitates learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007; Bandura, 1990). High self-efficacy is known to develop through modeling as an effective means of developing self-regulation and academic skills (Schunk, 2003; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007).

Second Language Acquisition Theories

A transdisciplinary framework for SLA (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Hall, 2019) can outline areas of interest and theoretical underpinnings of different approaches in the field of SLA. First, foundational SLA scholars’ epistemological interpretations fit within a frame of: behaviorism (Lado, 1957; Skinner, 1957); innatism (i.e. universal grammar; language acquisition device) (Chomsky, 1967); cognition, psychology (i.e. interaction, input processing) (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1983; Swain, 1985), and sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978). I describe these as it relates to areas of interests, key findings, and theoretical underpinnings. Then, I discuss a transdisciplinary lens of scholars who have merged or transformed research in SLA; followed by a figure (see figure 2) to depict the direction of the field over time.

Initial Phase.

Dulay and Burt (1973) and Cancino, Rosanksy, and Schumann (1978) studied order and sequence of acquisition, which stemmed from L1 acquisition research (Klima & Bellugi, 1967).
1966; Brown, 1973), and reported that young children acquire grammar and a first language through distinguished stages of development and therefore, as do child and adult L2 learners, in a universal or fixed way. Behaviorists challenged these accounts of L2 learning and audiolingual methods of teaching (Lado, 1957).

**Expansion Period.**

One area of interest in SLA is language transfer (Kellerman, 1983; Ringbom, 1987) in which it was reconceptualized as cognitive rather than behaviorist phenomena with emphasis on conditions that govern negative and positive transfer, as well as avoidance, in response to Lado (1957) and Krashen (1983). Another area of linguistic universals, i.e. Universal Grammar (UG), (Chomsky, 1965; Comrie, 1984), is a tested hypotheses from linguistics in whether L2 learners had access to UG in which Gass (1984) and Eckman, Bell, and Nelson (1988) reported universal principles affect order of acquisition and language transfer. Skinner’s (1957) behaviorist view is contrary to Nativist Theory of Language Acquisition in which Chomsky (1967) viewed language rules as innate in “Universal Grammar” as the foundation upon which all languages are built and that one deciphers the grammatical structures of native language(s) with a brain-based Language Acquisition Device.

A third area of interest is second language pragmatics (Searle, 1969) and politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Scholars (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989) focus on comprehension and production of speech acts (e.g. requests, apologies) to identify pragmatic and pragma-linguistic differences between native and non-native speakers. Another area of interest in input and interaction (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1983; Swain, 1985) influenced by research on foreigner talk (Ferguson, 1975; Schumann, 1978), L1 acquisition in caretaker talk
(Wells, 1985), and discourse analysis (Coulthard, 1977) has studied how the linguistic environment influenced L2 acquisition.

**Cognitive Phase.**

Theoretical grounding of cognitive psychology and information processing models (Reber, 1975, 1993) studies on consciousness and L2 acquisition, implicit and explicit knowledge, emergentism, and skill learning theory in the 1990s (Schmidt, 1990; Tomlin & Villa, 1994; Ellis, 1994; DeKeyser, 1998). Findings of conscious attention to examples of linguistic features in input and output required for L2 acquisition meant that implicit knowledge (e.g., primary knowledge) and explicit knowledge are distinct.

**Sociocultural Phase.**

Sociocultural scholars offered an interactionist theory of language acquisition (Atkinson, 2011, 2014; Bourdieu, 1986; Bruner, 1986; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978) to explain that children learn language out of a desire to communicate with the world around them and that language is dependent upon social interaction, implicating that an environment affects one’s speaking development. Bruner (1986) overtly acknowledged that learners bring their experiences and linguistic repertoires to use with any text or interaction, as well as a knowledge of skills to interpret the meaning from texts (including digital literacies) (Bruner, 1986, 2020; Erickson, 1985; Gee, 2013). Bruner (1986, 1987) referred to this as the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) and language development is actively supported in social interactions. LASS involves collaborative learning (i.e. reading), and this meaning-making interaction involves the use of cultural tools, symbols, texts and ways of thinking in an active process that is one of culturally and contextually influenced “world making” (Bruner, 1986, p. 694).
Fifth and Wagner (1997), Block (2003), and Norton (2006) reported that in learner agency and the active construction of learning contexts, social identity is crucial in which learner to learner interactions are common. Lantolf (2000) and Swain (2006) studied constructs of mediation; private speech; zone of proximal development; internalization; collaborative dialogue; and ‘language’ and reported external learning occurs within interaction.

**21st Century Developments.**

Tomasello stated (2000) “To become a competent speaker of a natural language it is necessary to be conventional: to use language the way that other people use it.” (p. 209). Concurrent with the growth of SLA and the crossover of other disciplines is the development in research tools used to investigate L2 acquisition (Gass & Mackey, 2016). Both etic and emic research perspectives have permeated the field of SLA, in which etic (i.e. observer of behavior) and emic (i.e. learners’ subjective understandings of their own behavior) both influence a learner’s use and acquisition of L2. Primarily, this work has been etic (Hatch, 1978), yet the sociocultural turn prioritized more emic research (Schmidt, Frota, & Day, 1986; Tarone, 2002), such as narrative inquiry to investigate learning across social contexts (Barkhuizen, 2014) or in conversational analysis (Norton, 2006). Researchers have adopted mixed-method approaches with both etic and emic lines of inquiry in cognitive-interactionist studies (e.g. observation and learners’ subjective response to L2 activities they engage in) (Révész, Michel, & Gilabert, 2016).

Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) combines social and cognitive perspectives on L2 acquisition in which learning is viewed as individualized and non-linear; rather, there is interconnectedness of multiple variables. Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1978; Schleppegrell, 2013) posited
that meaning-making is a process that language shapes and scholars of SLF (Maton & Doran, 2017) considered code theory and the subjectivities of scholars who are bilingual. The multilingual turn (May, 2013; Ortega, 2019) considers the transdisciplinary approach that rejects the view of bilingualism in terms of monolingual competencies and centers multilingualism in enquiry with emphasis on the multiple competencies of bi/multilingual learners (e.g. translanguaging, code-switching). This trajectory of SLA is depicted in Figure 2.

**SLA and Self-Efficacy in Education.**

Educational psychology and language learning theories have informed an adaptive language learning model related to successful language performance (Woodrow, 2006). This proposed model reflects the relations between motivation, self-efficacy, effect such as anxiety, and learning strategies to measure oral language performance, aligned with educational research that suggests that adaptive learning reflects a task-oriented goal to accomplish high self-efficacy and low language learning anxiety (Krashen, 2003; MacIntyre, 1999; MacIntyre, MacMaster, & Baker, 2001; Woodrow, 2006). The empirical evidence validates this model of adaptive language learning in that successful learners demonstrate a task goal orientation and positive affect, thus are highly motivated to use metacognitive language learning strategies compared to learners who are unsuccessful and more likely to exhibit performance avoid orientation and show negative affect (Anderson, 2003; Graham, 2006; Woodrow, 2006).

Second language acquisition theoretical underpinnings stem from Krashen’s (1981) widely known hypotheses which have permeated all areas of second-language research and teaching since the 1970’s in the US. Linguistic competence is how language is produced through what Krashen (2003) called “Monitor hypothesis,” responsible for fluency and accuracy.
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<td>• Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Larsen-Freeman &amp; Cameron, 2008)</td>
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Figure 2. SLA Theories Across Time
His input \((I + 1)\) hypothesis attempted to answer important questions in the field of education and language acquisition in that we acquire language when we obtain comprehensible input or when we understand messages communicated to us in text, speech, or gestures (Krashen, 2003).

Interaction hypothesis, first developed by Long (1981, 1985), proposed that interaction is the primary means by which language proficiency develops. Larsen-Freeman (1991) and Long (1981, 1985) posited that interaction is not necessary yet it supports learning in certain circumstances. Larsen-Freeman’s (1991) Complexity Theory recognized language as cognitive yet interrelated to other areas as language is a complex adaptive system. Ellis (1984, 1991, 2008) posited that interaction is not always positive; that sometimes input becomes more complicated or produces amounts of input that can overwhelm learners. Krashen’s (1980) original hypothesis of comprehensible input from an interaction hypothesis lens stated that 1) comprehensible input is required for SLA and 2) input is made comprehensible to learners via negotiation of meaning-making in conversations; a later addition by Pica (1987) proposed that in addition to comprehensible input and negotiation of meaning, an interlocutor relationship balance and shared communicative goals are required for effective SLA.

Similar ideas in learning theory in the field of second-language acquisition were posited by scholars James Asher (1969), Harris Winitz (1969) and Robins Burling (1984); and in the field of literacy by Frank Smith (1979) and Kenneth Goodman (1996) who proposed that one learns to read by comprehending messages. Krashen’s (1980) input hypothesis \((i+1)\) claims prior acquisition of linguistic competence and “extra-linguistic knowledge, which includes our knowledge of the world and our knowledge of the situation” (Krashen, 2003, p. 4) enables
learners to move from i to i+1 or the next structure able to acquire. Essentially, regular exposure to comprehensible input, for example, reading and listening to academic English, is a key requirement for language acquisition to be successful (Krashen, 1981, 1982). Additionally, children’s language use reflects the input or exposure received from parents in their home or with their peers or teachers (Ellis, O’Donnell & Römer, 2015; Tomasello, 1999).

Exposure to English as their second language (e.g. comprehensible input) is important in developing both basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), i.e. everyday language, as well as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), i.e., academic English (Cummins, 1981, 2000). Language learners can develop their interlanguage much better, i.e. develop a transitional linguistic system of English, if they are exposed to language in meaningful contexts. Both the quality of the input and the amount of time spent on ELs’ language development, i.e., whether ELs have Opportunities To Learn (OTL), impact the language acquisition process (Aguirre-Muñoz & Amabisca, 2010). The affective filter hypothesis claims that affective variables do not directly affect language acquisition but prevent input from reaching “language acquisition device” (LAD) or what Chomsky (1967) refers to as the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition as a nativist approach to language learning. Krashen (2003) notes that if a learner is anxious, has low self-esteem, or does not view themselves as a speaker/member of a language group, the input may be comprehensible, yet the affective filter “blocks” input out of the LAD.

While input theories support the language acquisition process, comprehensible input is not sufficient alone for second language development; thus, Swain (1985) proposed comprehensible output in which learners must use the target language, making language
comprehensible to others, enabling the second language to be processed more deeply in coherent and grammatically improved discourse (Swain, 1993, 2005). In the production of comprehensible output, learners go beyond current target language competency and out of comfort zones to which Swain (2005) terms “Stretched language” necessary for ongoing language development, from an interactionist perspective on language learning (Bruner, 1986; Tomasello, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978, 2012).

Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (1985) maintains that the development of a learner’s communicative competence does not merely depend on comprehensible input: the learner’s output has an independent role to play. This idea has proved to be of relevance to the writer’s experience as a self-directed learner (Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012) or what Swain (1985) termed as the critical role of comprehensible output: “... using the language as opposed to simply comprehending the language may force the learner to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing.” (p 249).

Output serves three main functions to support the language acquisition process (Swain 2005): (1) Noticing/triggering function in which learners recognize gaps in linguistic knowledge which triggers cognitive processes that foster the acquisition of relevant language structures; (2) Hypothesis testing function in which comprehensible output allows learners to test their understanding of the target language; and (3) Metalinguistic (Reflective) Function in which learners reflect language use by reading, writing, or speaking about it to foster acquisition. Conversational feedback in both oral and written language use allows learners to modify their interlanguage if necessary. This feedback-loop in interactions follows the Initiation, Response, Evaluation pattern, and provides practice in comprehensible language output in a target language
(i.e. English) (Swain, 2005). Interactional patterns allow learners to negotiate meaning, experiment with developing language structures, and use academic language discourse to which use of linguistic strengths achieve a communicative goal (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010).

**ELL Program Models.**

ELL programs in schools continue to grow at a rapid rate; thus, more examination into second language acquisition (SLA) is necessary for teachers to understand the language acquisition process (Flynn & Hill, 2005). Educators are increasingly challenged with the task to support and teach EL students both grade-level content and a second language simultaneously (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013). Understanding how second language acquisition occurs and using specific teaching strategies may assist educators in helping students achieve success in second language acquisition while being engulfed in content.

Application of beneficial teaching strategies might assist ELs to communicate their thoughts adequately in class and access grade-level content, including literacy skills, which heralds an important development in their perceived self-efficacy. Higher self-efficacy means learners can recognize and use their linguistic resources in reading or producing speech in the process of acquiring a target language (i.e. English) in which their cultural and linguistic identities emerge as strengths (Bandura, 1997; García, 2009).

There are six second language acquisition (SLA) models or theories that can determine which types of teaching strategies will be best for students learning English as a second language. The acculturation model (Schumann, 1973; Barjesteh & Vaseghi, 2012) uses social-psychological factors to predict language proficiency levels of acquiring a second language.
which include proximity to the target language, attitude, congruence of the two cultures, the desire to assimilate, preserve, and adapt, as well as the intended length of time spent immersed in the target language. Scholars who validated the acculturation model were interested in input and interaction during the expansion period of SLA, including Schumann (1973, 1978, 1986) and Schmidt (1983) who acknowledged this model as the initial process of natural L2 acquisition, albeit not linear, as social and psychological factors must relate to literacy part of the language.

Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (1962, 2012) is widely used to explain SLA in education in which social interactions and the use of psychological tools (i.e. language) are a critical part of cognitive development. Social and imitation experiences allow learners to progress through stages of language acquisition in meaning-making processes. The Zone of Proximal development is interpreted by educators as teaching students at a level slightly beyond what the child already developed cognitively in which interactions between one who is learning a new language (i.e. English) and one who has mastered the language are a way to negotiate language as a means of communicating.

A third and quite contrary model is Universal Grammar (UG) and Interlanguage Theory in which Chomsky (1965, 1967) hypothesized that UG is innate programming to learn language and that environmental factors were insufficient because one’s output can become more than just what was received through input. Explicit grammar instruction is not required to learn and acquire a first language; thus, biologically, one is able to acquire a second language without explicit instruction or socially mediated experiences. Chomsky (1967) believed that universal principles in UG to be activated, it must be triggered by an input which influenced SLA theories. Interlanguage is considered a type of continuous changing grammar as one moves through
acquisition processes to apply the rules that govern the language in which one’s cognitive abilities acquire L2 in this application of L1 or L2 grammar rules (Selinker, 1972; Tarone, 2012). Selinker (1972) developed this theory to explain adults’ L2 acquisition processes, believing that adults could not access innate UG after puberty; though interlanguage now accounts for both children and adults’ L2 acquisition or lack there of (i.e. fossilization) (Tarone, 2012).

The final three hypotheses models in SLA are coined by Krashen (1981, 1982) and previously described; however, arguably the most influential hypothesis is the input hypothesis model because of the emphasis on making input comprehensible in language acquisition. These models are frequently applied in ELL programs and pedagogy to support EL students in English development across content-areas and grade-levels. Two common pedagogical strategies are Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarría & Short, 2011) and the 1986 Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) (Chamot & O’Malley, 1996) which connect to the second language acquisition theories. SIOP is applicable across content and grade levels and is comprised of 30 features listed throughout the eight components for teachers to use to guide their lessons, including the following: lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice & application, lesson delivery, and review & assessment (Echevarría & Short, 2011). CALLA was created to teach students specific learning strategies to help learn and become proficient in their L2 while learning content, considering learning as an active process through interaction (Chamot, 1995).

**New Directions in SLA Theory.**

While these theoretical and hypothetical underpinnings of Krashen (1981, 1982, 2003, 2011), Swain (1985, 2005), and Cummins (1981, 2000) are foundational to SLA; the field has
expanded in theory and research to incorporate an L2 pragmatic approach. Though prominent SLA researchers (Ellis, 2015; Tomasello, 1992, 2000) underscore the social foundations of language, in that “language is social in nature” and “is used for social action within a context of use” (Larsen-Freeman, 2006, p. 593), a Usage-based language (UBL) lens depicts much of SLA research to have ignored the social aspects of language learning (Eskildsen & Kasper, 2019). UBL research indicated that reuse of semiotic resources in meaningful interaction is a central issue in L2 learning, as speakers seem to draw on linguistic resources that have proven useful in prior experience which essentially makes UBL possible (Eskildsen & Kasper, 2019).

Conversation Analytic SLA Research (CA-SLA) concerned with L2 learning as a socially-observable phenomenon, i.e. as something the learners do and demonstrably orient to in and through talk, demonstrated that L2 learners are not defective communicators; rather, people have ways and methods to display learning behavior in which metalinguual talk might lead to more opportunities for L2 learning.

Eskildsen and Kasper (2019) assert that SLA research has largely disregarded the social aspects of language learning and turn to a usage-based language (UBL) perspective that explains the emergence of linguistic structures as forming meaning patterns as language is a residual of social sense-making practices (Ellis, O’Donnell, & Römer, 2015; Ellis, 2019; Hall, 2019).

Considering the limited epistemological scope in UBL, Eskildsen and Kasper (2019) explored an interactional usage-based approach in L2 acquisition to determine if there are firm links between language constructions and actions in social interactions, finding that L2 learning is shaped by experiences in the present, in which speakers draw on linguistic resources that were useful in their prior experiences. Usage-based and emergentist approaches to SLA assume that learners
have extensive (social) exposure to language representing strong form–meaning mappings provided initially through oral interaction focused on shared meanings (Ellis & Ferreira-Junior, 2009; Ellis, O’Donnell, & Römer, 2015; Ellis, 2019; Ortega, 2019). Neurobiological SLA research asserts that learning is mediated by a variety of emotional, attentional, and other mental systems, yet arises from social experience configuring these mechanisms (Duff, 2019).

**Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA).**

Bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) is used to define an individual who is exposed and/or uses two language from birth, thus has two first languages (L1) and are highly socially integrated into their communities that speak each language (De Houwer, 2015). While uneven development of two languages is common in BFLA, with learners exhibiting some deficiencies in proficiency due to input factors in their socializing environment, researchers purport there is a mutual influence of linguistic systems (L1 can affect L2 and vice versa) (De Houwer, 2015). SLA research has referred to this as an interlanguage system in which input and output connotes that a learner cannot turn off one language and operate in a monolingual mode. Ultimately, what seems highly effective for bilingual outcomes are learners’ “active use of two languages rather than just one” (De Houwer, 2015, p. 169).

**Language Learning and Self-Efficacy.**

Language learning research into self-efficacy is rare in cross-disciplinary literature and in studies of young language learners, despite empirical evidence that self-efficacy is a relevant predictor of academic achievement (Woodrow, 2006). Pajares (2003) posited that self-efficacy beliefs should be cultivated early, and that young people should develop self-belief habits to
assist them throughout their lives. Self-perceptions of competence take on different meanings and are weighed differently across different times in one’s life (Nicholls, 1984; Wigfield, 1997). Nicholls (1984) suggested that young children view effort and ability as complementary; yet, with schooling and age, children view them as contradictory. Self-efficacy has been defined as an aspirational outcome for continuing education (von Suchodoletz, Jamil, Larsen, and Hamre (2018), but there are few longitudinal studies of changes in self-efficacy and its predictors. Research like this study can provide information about how students across age, grade, ELPs, and academic levels use many sources of efficacy information to develop self-efficacy beliefs.

Research has considered use of strategies and their relation to self-efficacy (Graham, 2007; Magogwe and Oliver, 2007) but has specifically been investigated within motivational research. Dörnyei and Otto (1998) included self-efficacy as a part of the process model of motivation, believing that self-efficacy influences students’ initial decision to begin a task or action. Chang (2010) investigated the correlation between motivation, measured as self-efficacy and autonomy, and group processes, described in cohesion and norms and reported group processes to be faintly related to aspects of L2 motivation.

Educational research into language learning depicts motivation models that generally include the construct of affect (i.e. emotional efficacy), including anxiety or another form of self-construct, which empirical evidence suggests is a significant predictor of linguistic and academic success (Chang, 2010; MacIntyre, MacMaster, & Baker, 2001; Midgley, Maehr, Hicks, Roeser, Urdan & Anderman, 1997; Woodrow, 2006). Researchers posit that integrative goal orientation is related to adaptive learning (Gardner, Lalonde, & Moorcroft, 1985; Woodrow, 2006), accurate self-efficacy appraisals (Bandura, 1997), low performance anxiety (MacIntyre, MacMaster &
Baker, 2001; Midgley et al., 1997), the use of appropriate learning strategies, and (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007) consistently is found to relate to language performance, despite debate on motivational constructs in language learning and performance (Woodrow, 2006). Throughout research, causal analysis indicates that causal attributions to one’s performance outcomes are mediated by self-efficacy beliefs rather than directly on performance (Hsieh, & Schallert, 2008; Hsieh, & Kang, 2010; Schunk, 1999; Schunk & Meece, 2006).

Figure 3 shows that a cross-disciplinary approach into language learning research is appropriate to study self-efficacy or competency perceptions, since thought and self-beliefs are influenced by different aspects of a sociocultural framework. A sociocultural framework embeds literacy education theory in an interactionist approach with a second language acquisition theory and model, such as adaptive language learning, as both are means of socially-mediated activity (Vygotsky, 1962). Collaborative learning and meaning-making with the use of cultural tools, language, symbols, and texts in active acquisition processes are culturally and contextually influenced, which Bruner (1986) coined as “world making.” Based on reciprocal determinism (e.g. environment, personal factors, and behavior), this conceptual framework influences language performance in a) motivation, b) effect, c) self-efficacy, and d) integrative goal orientation which are mediated by self-efficacy beliefs and self-concepts as two separate constructs (Bandura, 1978; 1986).

**Language Performance Outcomes in Self-efficacy Research**

Vast literature has investigated the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, related language performance outcomes (e.g. motivation) and academic achievement. While motivation is not a construct under study in my research questions; it is one of the most important language
Figure 3. Literacy and Language Performance Outcomes in Self-Efficacy
learning outcomes, among others (e.g. language aptitude), as a positive predictor of language performance success (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Gardner, Lalonde, and Moorcroft (1985) identified motivation as the single most influential factor of language performance achievement. Thus, it is important to understand how motivation to use natural bilingual language strategies (i.e. code-switching, translanguaging) is an outcome in language performance in which self-efficacy is a mediating factor. Code-switching and translanguaging were discussed by participants in this study as a part of their language usage in schools, with their families, and among their peers in interviews. Participants practiced both strategies organically in book clubs, albeit, as a finding, yet not explicitly explored in the scope of the research questions. Due to the prevalence of bilingual language strategies in the findings as it relates to the construction of possible second language (L2) selves, it is necessary to discuss literature on the topic of motivation in relation to self-efficacious behavior of ELs.

Dörnyei (2009a) proposed a broad construct of second language learning motivation in a new *L2 Motivational Self-System* (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998). This new interpretation of motivation consists of three dimensions: 1. *Ideal L2 Self* that is a powerful motivator to learn a second language to become a competent L2 speaker through reducing the discrepancy between actual and ideal selves; 2. *Ought-to Self*, which refers to the possible self or ‘outcome self’ that the learner wants to achieve (Dörnyei, 2005, p 105); and 3. *L2 Learning Experience*, which concerns the immediate learning context and culturally-situated self in the language learner experience.

Dörnyei’s (2009) L2 self-system model posited that individuals are motivated to mitigate perceived discrepancies between a current sense of self and their ideal future selves (Serafini,
This phenomena emphasized the importance of integrating future goals, establishing an optimistic view in one’s ability to change and potentially reach ideal future selves, and building knowledge and skill aptitudes to achieve future goals. Research highlighted the role of positive self-efficacy, sense of competence, and a growth mindset towards the ability to change one’s self as crucial in construction of possible L2 selves (Dweck, 1999; Dweck & Master, 2009; Dwyer & Fus, 2002; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

To understand the participants’ construction of second language selves in Latinidad book clubs, it’s important to explore how motivation is defined in this L2 motivational self-system. Across research, “‘motivation’ is a term frequently used in both educational and research contexts; although, it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature with regard to the exact meaning of the concept” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). Gardner, Lalonde, and Moorcroft (1985) looks at motivation as the “combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning” (p.10).

Motivation in this language-performance system is studied in educational research that explored language learning outcome expectancies and self-beliefs based on culturally and contextually influenced environments (Bandura, 1986; Bruner, 1986). Self-efficacy researchers (McMahon, Wernsman & Rose, 2009) have reported that learners’ perceptions of classroom or learning climate (i.e. disciplinary climate, teacher support, peer relations) influence their motivation and academic achievement. Studies on how learning climate influences student achievement reported that disciplinary climate was more influential on self-efficacy beliefs and surpassed effects based on a learner’s socioeconomic status (SES) and individual student variables or characteristics (Cheema & Kitsantas, 2014). Despite this evidence of a link between
classroom disciplinary climate perceptions and learners’ perceived self-efficacy (McMahon et al., 2009), there is limited research to confirm the correlation, even with Bandura’s model of triadic reciprocity (see figure 1) or reciprocal determinism supporting the connection (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996; Cheema & Kitsantas, 2014).

Theoretical groundings of intentional behavior as it relates to reciprocal determinism and motivation research include Expectancy-value theory which describes the relationship between actions-outcomes expectancies (Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece, & Midgley, 1993; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Irwin, 1971; Vygotsky, 1962). Expectancy-value theorists posited that strength of motivation of language performance behavior is governed by the dual expectation that specific actions will produce outcomes measured by the value placed on outcomes (i.e. individual value or environmental value) (Rotter, 1966). In other words, when a learner is motivated to use natural bilingual language strategies, it is due to its perceived value by the individual (i.e. language learner) and the sociocultural value placed on these strategies in a specific context (e.g. book clubs) through socially-mediated activities with others (i.e. peers, teachers, camp counselors, family members). If learners’ expectancy-value of code-switching and translanguaging is high, then individuals may be more motivated to employ natural bilingual language strategies.

Additionally, Dweck’s (2013) Incremental theory of ability reported that students adopt learning goals that motivate their engagement in self-regulatory strategies and language learning strategies, as common practices in self-efficacy research in growth mindset (Dweck, 1999). Incremental theory of ability implicated that language learners’ beliefs in their ability to acquire a new language is improved with persistent effort and practice when provided comprehensible
output (Swain, 2005) or opportunities to use (i.e. read, write, speak, listen) L1 and L2. Growth mindset is linked to self-beliefs in academic tasks in which learners’ linguistic knowledge and repertoires (e.g. code-switching, translanguaging) are incorporated in language performance.

A consensus across literature is that student motivation predicts school achievement more often than intelligence assessment scores (Kriegbaum, Becker, & Spinath, 2018; Zimmerman, 2000). High self-efficacy can predict one’s motivation in language learning and performance, according to Zimmerman (2000), as well as a learner’s choice of activity/strategy, persistence in an activity/strategy, level of exerted effort, and affective or emotional responses to difficult tasks or circumstances. Self-efficacy beliefs are associated with educational achievement (Grant & Dweck, 2001; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Zimmerman, 2000) and, therefore, can influence motivation and persistence to use bilingual language strategies in the transition to middle school.

**Second Language Acquisition, Self-beliefs, and Language Learning Strategies**

Research that has widely contributed to second language acquisition (SLA) examines language learning strategies and their relationship to constructs such as self-efficacy, academic proficiency, level of education, and age. Researcher reported that these constructs have a positive influence on the process of language acquisition (Krashen, 2003; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Woodrow, 2006). Woodrow (2006) and other researchers (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Waddington, 2019) show a strong link between increase in language strategy use and success in language learning as measured by proficiency scores. Waddington’s (2019) action research on self-efficacy beliefs showed strong causal links between learner attributions, self-efficacy levels and reported that debilitating learner attributions may impede positive language
identity. Waddington (2019) also highlighted the volatility of quantitative measures in self-efficacy assessment to which I posit that qualitative means are particularly useful for gauging learner perspectives and exploring LELLs’ learning-related attitudes and values. While other studies do not report a positive causal influence on language learning (Gardner, 1997; Jaekel, 2015, 2020), self-efficacy beliefs in relation to SLA for language learners in rising middle school grades have rarely been investigated. Since few studies that have explored these self-beliefs in language learning show an existing relationship between self-efficacy and language strategy use; more research is needed to address this connection in cultural and contextual collaborative learning (Gardner, 1997; Jaekel, 2015, 2020; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Waddington, 2019; Woodrow, 2006).

**Self-beliefs Across Disciplines**

It is important to distinguish self-constructs from each other; self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy signify quite different ideas in applied educational linguistics and other disciplines (Jansen, Scherer, & Schroeders, 2015; Marsh et al., 2019). Research has conceptualized positive self-beliefs in a variety of ways (e.g. self-concept, self-efficacy, expectations of success, agency, outcome expectations, confidence, competency, growth mindset or locus of control) (Marsh et al., 2019). A central construct in educational psychology disciplines are positive self-concept and self-efficacy as the most used and theoretically significant representations of positive self-beliefs (Marsh et al., 2019).

Positive self-beliefs are the most widely studied psychological constructs which arguably trace back to Socrates and Plato (Hattie, 1992), and acknowledged to be distinguished by James (1890/1963), as cited in Marsh (2007) in cognitive science studies on the phenomenal “me” and
“I” concepts. According to James (Marsh, 2007), “Me” reflects the self as an object, while “I” reflects the self as a subject of an experience, referring to consciousness and subjectivity to which some scholars argue should be examined using fundamentally distinct methodologies, considering the theory of phenomenal self-models (Metzinger, 2020). Self-beliefs are key components in motivation research to which Marsh, Martin, Yeung, and Craven (2017) view competency self-perceptions as powerful, and Elliot and Dweck (2005) conclude:

a basic psychological need that has a pervasive impact on daily life, cognition, and behavior, across age and culture . . . an ideal cornerstone on which to rest the achievement motivation literature but also a foundational building block for any theory of personality, development, and well-being. (p. 8)

The importance of positive self-beliefs is considered in diverse disciplines of education, child development, mental and physical health, linguistic anthropology, and generalized social sciences to which a multidisciplinary appeal can make the theoretical constructs murky which affects empirical research findings (Duff, 2019). Thus, operationalized definitions, measurement, validation, and rigor of self-efficacy as a construct is critical to examine in the context of this study, considering the range of similar constructs used in different phenomena. Here, I will explore the distinctions between constructs within self-beliefs, with emphasis on self-efficacy and how scholarship has pragmatized the construct in applied fields of educational linguistics (i.e. second language acquisition).

What is the difference between self-efficacy and self-concept beliefs?

Self-esteem is a generalized term to define an individual’s sense of self-worth, irrespective of the field (e.g. language learning). Self-concept is also more generalized, as its
measured qualitatively by questions referring to likelihood of achievement (e.g. Are you good at writing in English?) (Creswell, 2012, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Self-efficacy is distinct from self-concept both theoretically and methodologically, as a delineated construct examined by criterial, quantitative questionnaires (e.g. How confident are you in writing a sentence in English to describe yourself?) and can-do-type scales based on task performance and evaluation (Cheng, 2002; Marsh et al., 1997; Marsh et al., 2019; Pajares, 2003; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007; Raoofi, Gharibi J., & Gharibi H., 2017; Woodrow, 2006).

Notably, self-efficacy is widely credited to hold more predictive and explanatory power over other self-constructs such as self-concept, as judgment of self-efficacy mediate the effect of other influences such as prior achievement, aptitude, or subsequent language performance (Bandura, 1997; Jansen, Scherer, & Schroeders, 2015; Kim, Wang, Ahn, & Bong, 2015; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Marsh et al., 1997; Pajares & Johnson, 1996). New empirical approaches are necessary in research for theoretical distinctions between these two constructs.

**Interdisciplinary Approaches in SLA Research.**

In the field of positive psychology (PP), important implications can be made for SLA research considering the human and social dimension of language learning in the development of one’s motivation, perseverance, and resiliency, as well as affect or positive emotions necessary for maintenance of learning a new language (Gardner, Lalonde, & Moorcroft, 1985; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). In the brief history of PP in SLA, (Lake, 2013, as cited in MacIntyre & Mercer 2014) explicitly adapted positive psychology to study Japanese learners’ self-efficacy, positive L2 self, and exerted effort in language learning.
The most recent line of relevant research in SLA has emphasized the self as a central construct. Considering learner psychology and behavior, few would dispute the salient established self-constructs that PP brings to the field of SLA that include models of motivation that incorporate affective factors, the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1981, 1985), humanistic movement in language teaching (i.e. Total Physical Response, The Silent Way) (Asher, 1969), studies of a “good language learner” (Naiman, 1996), and most recent literature on self-efficacy, self-concepts, and language development (Neugebauer & Howard, 2015; Soland & Sandilos, 2021; Thompson & Aslan, 2015).

**Self-efficacy Measures.**

Quantitative research is the widely used methodology to study self-efficacy in the field of education. Academic domain-specific assessments of self-efficacy are often used, primarily because summative criteria tasks (i.e. grades or achievement assessments) administered in schools tend to not delineate self-efficacy growth. While outcome tasks used have high internal consistency and reliability, educational assessments (i.e. benchmark tests, grades) generally measure content-knowledge or tasks in subject-area domains. Measures of self-efficacy are usually task and domain-specific; and various research has used general academic self-perceptions of competence (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Kriegbaum, Becker, & Spinath, 2018). The contention with generalized assessments is that learners generate judgments about their own academic, behavioral, or social-emotional learning without contextualizing it to a specific task, activity, or experience. Bandura (1982) argued that effective judgments of behavioral task ability that relate to specific outcomes generate the highest prediction and best explanations of behavioral outcomes. Bandura (1986) suggested that to predict academic outcomes from
learners’ self-efficacy beliefs, scholars should follow theoretical guidelines for specific self-efficacy assessments and correspondence with tasks to improve accuracy of prediction results.

Questionnaires are a primary assessment to measure learners’ self-efficacy growth. For example, questionnaire items based on four elements by Schaffer and colleagues (2012) that have been used include the following: identification or the ability to self-identify skills and knowledge; recognition or ability to see potential contributions of others to a task; interaction or ability to interact with others; and the ability to synthesize awareness and appreciation of others’ contributions. Reliability and predictive validity of questionnaires have been examined using factorial analysis to help determine how well items loaded onto the theoretical factors they intended to measure; and exploratory factor analysis can determine the factor structure in all of the items to assess self-efficacy (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993; Schaffer et al., 2012; Wang & Bai, 2017).

Questionnaires collect relevant information on how language develops and language background information which can create more variation in participant samples. Studies can also include other, directly measured evidence of literacy and biliteracy competencies (e.g. fluent word recognition in two languages, morphological awareness levels, comprehension) in addition to questionnaires that can be used in critical education research, sociolinguistics, and other related disciplines (Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992). Teimouri (2018), as cited in Ortega (2020) provided an excellent model for self-efficacy assessment in the field of bilingualism, using three, validated questionnaires that can be used to also model the process (Bialystok, 2001; García, Johnson, Seltzer, & Valdés, 2017; Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992).
Self-efficacy Related to other Constructs.

Self-efficacy studies in language learning research use quantitative scales and analysis to assess a variety of relationships between constructs. There has been limited success in clarifying the relationship between self-efficacy and other expectancy beliefs or discerning their differences which Zimmerman (2002) argues has to do with problems in mismeasurement of self-efficacy largely due to specificity and correspondence. Particularly in research of self-beliefs and motivation, researchers often focus on measures of personal preference, and can mind relatively low attention to assessing how measures differ from other, seemingly related constructs (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Jansen, Scherer, & Schroeders, 2015). While similarities and differences in conceptualizing and operationalizing these two constructs have been discussed in literature, limited research investigates if and how both constructs have differential relations to antecedents of competence beliefs and educational outcomes, to which self-belief constructs (i.e. self-efficacy) get used interchangeably (Dwyer & Fus, 2002; jangle-fallacy, Kelley, 1927; Marsh, et al., 2019).

Learners’ competence beliefs, academic self-concept (ASC), and academic self-efficacy (ASE) are positively linked to high academic achievement, effort, and language attainment; yet, appropriate measurements must be used to test for validity and generalizability in language education research (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Marsh et al., 2019; Pajares, 1996). To test for this fallacy in research, a construct-validation framework design (Kelley, 1927) called jingle-jangle fallacy used scales in a factor analysis of two different motivation instruments. Marsh (1994, as cited in Marsh et al., 2019) demonstrated how mastery and performance scales from each instrument portrays common linkages but reflect different constructs (i.e. performance and task
orientation) even with the same labels on scales. Testing the interpretations of measures, studies showed items from a given scale on a single factor are valid when the scale does not account for different factors in a single factor analysis. In other words, at a scale level, the label assigned to a factor is an insufficient basis for establishing how scales relate to other constructs, whether similar or dissimilar, or not measure the same construct disguised in different scale labels (Heyman & Dweck, 1992; Marsh et al., 2019). Inappropriately labeling competencies as self-efficacy can lead researchers to sort through different operationalized measures that have similar conceptualizations (Pajares, 2003). Thus, it is necessary for self-efficacy researchers to operationalize its definition, the role of evaluation, worthiness, and outcome expectancy in measures, and account for complications in generalized measures (Marsh et al., 2019).

**Current Methodological Approaches.**

Recent studies on self-efficacy in SLA research used qualitative and mixed-methods approaches, yet researchers still predominantly utilize quantitative analysis (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Qualitative case studies on self-efficacy have employed questionnaires in which it is important for researchers to create one or a few instruments that are tailored to address the specific research question, variables of interest, and yet flexible enough to be modified and used across social contexts with different learner populations (Duff, 2019). Research designs of these case studies provided an in-depth description about the characteristics of participants, information on how cases are selected, time involved, and how data is obtained and analyzed to interpret findings and consider relevance, significance, and transferability to different populations of learners (Duff, 2019) more effectively.
New Methodological Approaches and Constructs in Self-Efficacy Research.

Here, I will briefly synthesize methodological approaches in self-efficacy research and new, explanatory constructs relevant to study language performance outcomes across education and SLA fields. Despite the lasting influence of the self-efficacy construct guiding epistemology and methodology in SLA, there has been vast criticism of their use in instructional methods for a lack of scientific validity (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

Potowski (2004, 2007) pointed out that SLA research employs the construct of motivation to explain learner desire to practice their second language (L2) in a fixed, unitary quantity (Gardner, 1985) while coming to various conclusions on whether integrative or instrumental motivation increases L2. A mixed methods approach to SLA research has integrated language performance constructions like motivation with perceived competence, anxiety, and communication of a language (Dwyer & Fus, 2002). While these constructs may relate in language performance, mediated by self-efficacy beliefs, the ways these relevant constructs are measured should be distinct and include robust scientific validity.

A mainstay of SLA theory development in self-efficacy research involves studies that used group correlations and averages in addition to large-sample methods (Dörnyei, 2009); yet recent interest in greater methodological diversity in the field and documentation of the complexity of the individual has expanded desired methods and epistemology in SLA research. To address gaps in SLA research that has predominantly been quantitative and mixed-methods, scholars pursued theory development and pedagogical applications that further establish self-belief constructs’ place in language learning and presented literature that encapsulated both
positive and negative experience with language learning and its processes (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Dörnyei, 2009; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

SLA development researchers, as it relates to self-efficacy, have been open to learn about implications from empirical studies that utilize systematic and rigorous qualitative research; researchers consider the general scholarship’s ability to a) view language phenomena from more than a singular or positivist perspective and b) to accept a diversity of methods in SLA that otherwise might not have yet explored (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Dwyer & Fus, 2002; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Norton, 2019; Potowski, 2004).

**Investment Constructs in Self-Efficacy Research.**

While qualitative research in the field of SLA in self-efficacy studies is rare, researchers that use these methods have showed that a level of investment in language learning may be a more conducive construct to explain language use and performance than motivation; investment considers other individual and contextual factors that influence a learner’s choice to communicate, speak, or to not (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2016; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2019; Potowski, 2004).

The investment framework views language learning as more than skill acquisition of efficacious learners, but rather as a complex social practice that engages the identities of learners, which has not been widely considered in the field of SLA before the twenty-first century (Norton, 2019). Researchers argued that investment is a relevant construct in L2 acquisition, heritage language development, and language maintenance studies as studies are designed to understand why learners communicate in their L1, L2, L3 or use code-switching (He, 2008). While self-efficacy as a construct is related to why language learners choose to communicate in
any of their languages or both/all, opportunities to develop the target language(s) are dependent on levels of investment in their growth (Potowski, 2004, 2007; Serafini, 2020).

Investment framework in Heritage Language (HL) research also considered the positioning of HL speakers by themselves and by others (i.e. level of language proficiency, connection to “root culture” as ethnically authentic) in language performance in their social worlds at school, home and in the community (He, 2008; Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992; Potowoski, 2007, 2016; Serafini, 2020). These studies investigated HL development, ethnic identities, code-switching, and language use and retention (He, 2008; Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992; Potowski, 2016). Another related construct to investment in language learning is one’s agency (i.e. one’s capacity to take action; exert some degree of discursive control) which is salient in HL research; studies reported some opposition by children and youth toward HL use, retention, and cultural identities associated with older generations (Potowski, 2016; Robinson et al., 2016). Researchers reported heritage speakers of Spanish show positive self-perceptions of heritage language competencies as correlated with better literacy performances in reading, spelling, and writing across the curriculum (Van de Poel & Gasiorek, 2012; Pajares, 2003; Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007; Raoofi, Gharibi J., & Gharibi H., 2017).

Across heritage language maintenance studies in SLA (Serafini, 2020), researchers agreed that both motivation and investment constructs in learning a language, the complexity of the L2 system, the degree of L2 difference from L1 system, and the language learning aptitude are significantly influence the quantity and quality of L1/L2 exposure which in turn, affects L2 learner identity, motivation, and language performance outcomes (Potowski, 2004, 2007; Serafini, 2020). For example, the quantity of bilingual learners’ language output is relevant in
opportunities to use and receive feedback on developing language systems (Swain, 1985) and L2 input during peer interactions in negotiations of meaning (Guardado, 2009; Long, 1990).

SLA research (Long, 1990; Swain, 1985) identified the need to produce or use (Ellis, O’Donnell & Römer, 2015, 2019) an L2, such as in heritage language maintenance studies, because it is critical to examine both L1 and L2 students’ language (i.e. Spanish output) in bilingual or dual immersion classrooms as it relates to possible L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Potowski, 2004). Other researchers (Norton, 2019; McKay & Wong, 1996) posited that SLA theoretical models should develop a conception of L2 learners (e.g. heritage Spanish speakers) as having complex linguistic and ethnic identities that are socially mediated. McKay and Wong (1996) argued that how learners negotiate their identity are not interruptions to language learning tasks, rather, they “must be regarded as constituting the very fabric of students’ lives and as determining their investment in learning the target language” (p. 603).

Thus, conducting book clubs during the summer program in a bilingual environment increased opportunities for peer interactions and feedback in developing language and language selves. Continued research in language performance outcomes and the mediating role of self-efficacy might explore whether language learning strategies among bilingual peers affect one’s language use and investment and positive self-efficacy in development of L2 language selves.

Multicompetence in SLA and Literacy Fields.

Self-efficacy research in applied linguistics must pursue and generate knowledge that is relevant across disciplines and connected to real-world phenomenon and methodological limitations. Cross-disciplinary research provides valuable insight to the means to evaluate disciplinary
progress in second language acquisition (SLA). The SLA discipline has potential for the field to be a central source of knowledge in support of language education that fosters bilingualism as a societal asset that is not limited to those with social privilege but expands to minoritized linguistic populations (Dixon et al., 2012; García, Johnson, Seltzer, & Valdés, 2017). Luk and Bialystok (2013) asserted that bilingualism and monolingualism are gradient and there is not a clear line to distinguish each experience. Educational scholars and linguistics (García & Tupas, 2019) have criticized monolingual discourse strategies to achieve bilingual outcomes as it purports a language separation ideology. As some researchers posit that monolingualism and bilingualism are different in linguistic competence (Dixon et al., 2012; Dwyer & Fus, 2002) and its process, Cook and colleagues (2012) coined a new construct to conceptualize -lingualisms: multicompetence.

Multicompetence within a linguistic environment in the digital age involves the link between parental or familial input and linguistic outcomes in learners’ bilingual, multilingual, and multilectal spheres of influence (Ortega, 2019, 2020). Huettig, Kolinsky, and Lachmann (2018) define language learners as language students who have been brought up in homes and communities where a) a language other than English language is spoken; b) individuals may speak or merely understand their home (L1) language; and c) individuals may have varying degrees of bilingual competencies. Literacy experiences foment cognitive, metalinguistic, and social developmental changes in learners’ language acquisition (i.e. mono-, bi- multi-lingual competencies). Early language and literacy skills herald identity development that has cognitive, metalinguistic, and social consequences which are foundational to positive self-efficacy in literacy learning (Hutettig et al, 2018).
Language socialization theory positions individuals as competent members of social groups (e.g. school, home, and in the community) by investigating the function of language in learning processes (Ortega, 2019). Language socialization is grounded in ethnographic research and concentrates on the process of becoming a culturally competent member of a community through sociolinguistic activities, which I believe involves multicompetence (Ortega, 2019) and the use of multiliteracies (Danzak, 2011; Duff, 2019; Futures, 1996; Gee, 1996, 2013; He, 2008). The integrated process of language acquisition and socialization underscores that “language and culture are reflexively & systematically bound together & mutually constitutive of each other” (He, 2008, p. 202). This theoretical construct reconceptualizes a learner’s sense of self or identity in a socially constructed and contested positioning in the world of new literacies.

Since the 1960s, linguistic scholars recognize that the traditional approach to language education in schools upholds White linguistic hegemony which are based on deficit theories and pedagogies that are discriminating to the language education of Latino/a students (Bernal, 2002; Bruner, 1986; Labov, 1970; Pérez Huber, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a). Labov (1970) referred to a deficit-approach as interpreting the language defect of a student rather than a defect of the educational system’s response to students’ L1 or heritage language and/or dialect. Two traditional lenses are eradicationist and respectability language pedagogies that both disregard the multiple linguistic resources and repertoires that bi/multilingual learners bring into classrooms.

Pedagogies that reflect and value multicompetence of bi/multilingual learners as a part of their identity (e.g. second language selves) must reexamine language processes and performance from a linguistic justice framework. Through a linguistics justice lens in SLA research and
multiliteracies, Ortega (2019) explored the role of systemic inequities in language learning programs and noted that equitable multilingualism as an explicit goal of research can bridge understandings and improve teaching practices in language acquisition (Ortega, 2019).

Researchers Morais (2018) and Bai and Wang (2020) explored the complex interactions between literacy and democratic action that necessitate both agency and self-efficacy beliefs for Latino/a English learners and posited these as essential to engage EL students in dialogue and learning (Bai & Wang, 2020). Dialogic literacy practices develop critical thinking skills, analysis of complex issues, and enable well-informed public debates for collective decision-making which Morais (2018) argued is associated with a strong sense of self-efficacy.

A solidarity-based language pedagogical framework re-positions the languages of power in classrooms and reading programs in which students tap into their diverse linguistic resources to develop critical linguistic awareness that self-efficacy may mediate. Individual learner subjectivities become stitched together when participating in bilingual/biliteracy interactions. In a digital world of language socialization (Martinez, 2017), the singular competencies within self-efficacy constructs that have been operationalized in how people motivate and regulate their behavior (e.g. social cognitive theory; Bandura, 1990) need to be further reexamined in SLA and literacy education studies (Danzak, 2011; Futures, 1996; Gee, 2013).

**English Language Learners and Summer Reading**

Research on school reforms to address academic achievement gaps posits that during the academic year, low-income students frequently show achievement growth at the same rate as middle and high-income peers (Cooper et al., 1996); yet during the summer months, low-income students are at-risk for summer learning regression (Alexander et al., 2007; Beach &
Philippakos, 2021; Cooper et al., 1996). National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data from 2017 and 2019 revealed that few students performed at proficient levels in reading (e.g., 37% in 2017), and scores are declining over time (Beach & Philippakos, 2021). The result is decline or stagnation of academic growth in summer for students from low-income families. Moreover, research on school reform efforts has not adequately considered the effects of summer regression for at-risk groups like EL students (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Beach et al., 2018; Beach & Philippakos, 2021). During a time when the policy climate is focused on improving reading achievement levels of all students, summer reading loss has the greatest effect on at-risk groups, particularly EL students who can least afford to fall further behind.

Little research shows that ELs experience summer learning loss and may have limited exposure to English during the summer months during the transition to middle school (Alexander, Entwistle & Olsen, 2007). Summer learning loss or setback, often referred to as the “summer slide,” is a devastating loss of academic achievement students experience during the summer months. Summer regression occurs when students lose the skills they have gained over the previous academic year. Entwisle et al. (2001), in what they refer to as Faucet Theory, suggested that learning resources from schools during the academic year are absent during summer, and this absence disproportionately affects students from low-income families who are less well-positioned to replace learning resources in summer. It is estimated that, on average, students lose two months of grade-level mathematical computation skills over the summer, and low-income students can lose up to two months of reading achievement. Research suggests that two-thirds of the reading achievement gap between high-low socioeconomic statuses in 9th-
Graders can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during elementary school, and one-third of the gap is present before students begin school (Alexander, Entwistle & Olsen, 2007; Foster & Miller, 2007). This also disproportionately affects English learners, considering the respective limited exposure to English during the summer months. Furthermore, the negative effects of summer learning loss are cumulative with long-lasting effects and implications in later academic years (Beach & Philippakos, 2021).

While school year gains may be similar for advantaged and at-risk groups, the achievement gap between EL and NS students widens over the summer months (Alexander et al., 2001; Beach & Philippakos, 2021; Kim & Guryan, 2010). School reforms may have shifted reading instructional focus but have not emphasized the loss of reading achievement that students experience over the summer, despite evidence from many researchers, such as Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003), Kim and Guryan (2010), and Beach and colleagues (2018) that it is during these months that the reading achievement gap widens the most.

Studies of young children have found that significant summer regression occurs during summer in skill areas such as phonological decoding, sight word reading, and reading rate (Zvoch & Stevens, 2015). These effects are particularly severe for students living in poverty and second language learners (Alexander et al., 2007). Mixed findings report that gaps between students of high and low socioeconomic status (SES) may grow fastest in the summer (Alexander et al., 2007; Entwisle & Alexander, 1992). Similarly, in their meta-analysis of 13 high-quality studies, Cooper et al. (1996) found that although reading comprehension scores declined for children in all income groups during the summer, and more pronounced among low-income children. Many studies attribute gaps and gap growth to contextual school-based factors.
and educational practices (Condron, 2009; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2009), yet the aspect of second language acquisition and respective limited exposure to English during the summer months has been minimally studied. Other studies have addressed inconsistencies in gap growth, arguing that summer reading loss is a margin of error through measurement artifacts (i.e., scaling; test form changes) analysis (von Hippel & Hamrock, 2018).

While summer reading interventions (SRIs) vary widely in their design, researchers find that summer reading intervention matters (Allington et al., 2010; Beach et al., 2018; Beach & Philippakos, 2021; Kim & Guryan, 2010). In a meta-analysis of SRIs, Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, and Muhlenbruck (2000) found that children who received SRIs improved achievement by 0.14 SD; Kim and Quinn (2013) found positive and significant effects for fluency and decoding combined. While SRI studies focus on immersion in books, such as a longitudinal study of 1,330 Black and Hispanic participants at high-poverty schools, Allington et al. (2010) found that book access is not effective alone for increasing achievement. Other studies report similar findings (Denton et al., 2010; Kim and Garcia, 2014; Kim, 2006; Schacter and Jo, 2014). However, scaffolded book access plus strategy instruction is effective, as evident in studies with primarily Black and Hispanic elementary students (Kim and Garcia, 2014; Kim, 2006).

Many of these studies included ELs in their samples but did not separate analyses for this population specifically; thus, it is difficult to determine whether summer interventions provided were equally effective for ELs and NS. In a recent synthesis of the effectiveness of reading intervention for ELs, Richards, Tutor, Baker, Gersten, Baker, and Mercier Smith (2016) reported that reading interventions delivered to ELs in early elementary were moderately effective at
improving foundational reading skills; although, effects for ORF were only found when instruction was delivered in Spanish. Notable research on SRIs have resulted in significant ORF growth for rising third graders (Beach et al., 2018; Kim & Quinn, 2013); yet, these studies did not account for ELs’ ORF growth in comparison to NS’s growth. Studies report positive effects of SRIs that use explicit, systematic reading instruction and can improve ORF skill of low-income readings, including ELs, over the summer months (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016).

The body of summer learning research demonstrates the critical importance of developing summer reading habits that can combat summer learning loss and provide a foundation for academic success. Recent research suggests that summer reading programs may enhance reading achievement for participants which ultimately can increase academic motivation and attitudes towards middle school (Roman & Fiore, 2010).

**Transitional Experiences to Middle School**

The successful transition from elementary school to middle school is crucial for on-going academic success. Nationwide statistics show that English Learners in grades 6–12 are often among the lowest performing students in all academic areas and have some of the highest rates of dropout (Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, & Perry, 2011). Their academic deficiencies are usually attributed to their limited English language proficiency, often ignoring the social-emotional, behavioral, and cognitive problems they might be experiencing (Castro-Olivo, et al., 2011). A large body of literature shows that academic achievement is associated with social-emotional learning constructs like self-efficacy, yet this relationship has rarely been examined for ELLs (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). Additionally, there is evidence that slower growth in math and reading for ELLs is associated with their low self-efficacy at the beginning of middle school;
furthering self-efficacy as a potential mediator in the association between EL status and achievement growth (Soland & Sandilos, 2021).

Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, and Perry (2011) illustrate specific needs of LELLs through social-emotional resilience scores (as measured by the Behavior Emotional Resiliency Scale) and analyze academic outcomes of 62 middle school LELLs; results showed that social-emotional resiliency had a positive correlation with academic progress and negative correlation with amount of time spent in English Language Development programs. The purpose for providing English Language Development (ELD) services to support English language acquisition is to help LELLs overcome language barriers that impede meaningful participation in academic programs (Aud et al., 2010); yet, ELD support programs vary in availability, intensity, and level of language support in middle school grades. Indicators of stress and anxiety that many middle schoolers experience stems from peer relationships, conflict with school administration or teachers, academic achievement pressure; and for ELs, less structured ESL/ELD programming and lower confidence in academic skills and English competence (Akos, 2002; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). According to August and Hakuta (1998), students who stay in ELD programs for longer periods of time without being reclassified as non-ELs due to their low academic progress might be the ones at greater risk.

School districts implement ELD programs to meet the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which mandated schools to provide services to students with Limited-English Proficiency with expectations to integrate in “regular” English classes (Castro-Olivo, et al., 2011). However, ELD programs are not designed to provide support for the most intensive and special needs some LELLs experience; thus it is not an adequate conclusion to consider ELD
as a panacea for the needs of LELLs as it often fails to address the social-emotional needs that frequently arise for ELs.

Research sheds light on why ELs may have lower self-efficacy upon entering middle school in segregation of separate classrooms to support English language development causes ELs to doubt their own language competencies and likely damages their academic and social-emotional achievement (Dabach, 2014; Gándara & Orfield 2010; Schunk & Meece, 2006); emotional needs are denied or ignored for long-term ELs (Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, & Perry, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999); and a lack of self-confidence in math (Sandilos et al., 2020) to demonstrate an indirect effect of self-efficacy on ELs’ academic achievement. Such findings indicate the pertinent role of self-efficacy on ELs’ academic achievement. Current literature suggests that LELLs who suffer from mental health problems related to internalizing issues are often unidentified and are unlikely to receive the services required to be successful in school and life (Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, & Perry, 2011; Vincent & Tobin, 2010).

LELLs experience developmental changes in transitioning to middle school and many transition between home and school environments in which they experience cultural shifts such as in primary language use (i.e. English as the dominant language of literacy instruction). Individuals residing in the US who come from a Latino/a background often struggle to maintain heritage languages and cultures in addition to integrating or acquiring the culture and language(s) in the US (Serrano, 2020). Straddling two or more different cultures as someone who identifies as Latino/a and as American can impose certain identities and expectations to speak English and acquire the “American culture” (Serrano, 2020). Gersten
(1996) stated that learning a new language while adapting to a new culture is a complex process that often places a double demand on students, thus necessitating sophisticated coping skills.

ELs enrolled in American schools must learn to cope with thoughts of perceived discrimination, feeling alienated for not speaking the mainstream language proficiently and feeling unable to fully participate in school-sponsored activities like leadership clubs/organizations or sports due to language barriers (Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, & Perry, 2011; Kiang et al., 2006; Zhang, Noels, & Lalonde, 2018). Experiencing feelings related to perceived discrimination or being marginalized from one’s social world and networks are found to have a significant negative impact on adolescents’ views of self and motivation to succeed (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003). Moreover, ELs rarely receive support from school systems (e.g., districts and/or schools) with their acculturation process. Not knowing how to cope with feelings of marginalization leads ELs to experience mental health problems that hinder academic achievement (Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, & Perry, 2011).

**Developmental Significance**

The transitional period to middle school marks a developmental period of late childhood and adolescence during which individuals experience significant changes related to identity development and self-efficacy (i.e. beliefs in personal abilities) (Eccles et al., 1993; Schunk & Meece, 2006). Grades 5–8 mark the transition between late childhood and adolescence during which EL students experience significant changes related to the development of their identity and academic self-concept (e.g. self-perceptions of one’s own academic abilities; Eccles, 1999; McKown & Weinstein, 2003; Soland & Sandilos, 2021). During these years of development,
increasing demands are placed on language skill as academic content becomes more complex (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). Schooling experiences, such as successes or failures related to academic achievement, begin to shape students’ self-efficacy in different content domains (Schunk & Meece, 2006). Reading successes and failures related to academic achievement shape ELs’ self-efficacy in different content area classes and literacy experiences (Eccles, 1999; Schunk & Meece, 2006). Thus, students’ academic self-efficacy becomes more differentiated (e.g., content-specific) and tends to decrease as they advance through the grade levels (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Schunk & Pajares, 2002). The decreasing trend in self-efficacy across grade levels is particularly concerning for EL students, given that they typically report lower self-efficacy compared to monolingual peers (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). Thus, a greater understanding of the influence of self-efficacy on ELs’ achievement is needed for this age group so that students’ feelings of competence can be supported in the school setting.

Additionally, community socialization creates the space (e.g. ethnic community; peer gatherings) and tools (e.g. heritage language; L1) that offer ethnic or linguistic minority children and youth the opportunity to explore the meaning of their heritage ethnicity, a developmental stage important to fostering a well-grounded heritage ethnic identity (Phinney, 2006).

Considering the developmental age of participants (grades four through eight), this study prioritizes self-efficacy in reading and English language skills. Self-efficacy beliefs are contingent on context and may shift as ELs construct second language selves in schools or spaces where English is the dominant language (i.e. School, Summer program) (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). This developmental period requires significant adjustment in academic settings to which higher self-efficacy may mitigate potential academic and social-emotional challenges in
upper elementary and middle school. Eccles et al. (1993) described developmental needs of late childhood and early adolescence as mismatched to the environment of middle schools (i.e. academic tracking, increase in competition, and hyper social awareness of peer group status). Furthermore, academic tracking of ELs in middle and high school has been shown to limit students’ opportunity to learn, which affects SLA and academic self-efficacy (Callahan, 2005; Duff, 2019).

Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, and Blyth (1987) emphasized that declining student motivation had more dire consequences for students transitioning to middle school, compared to the transitional period in K-8 schools. Many studies link the transition to middle school to negative educational outcomes (Alspaugh, 1998; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). Increasing academic demands are placed on language skill as academic content becomes more complex and educational inequities among subgroups persist (Kondo-Brown, 2005; Tong, Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Koch, 2014). At the same time, middle school ELs are often denied access to more challenging, grade-appropriate content area instruction due to their perceived linguistic deficit (Valdés, 2001).

**Challenges and Inequities in Transitions**

A few studies report that students thrive in the transition from elementary to middle school (Crockett, Peterson, Graber, Schuernen, & Ebata, 1989) yet a substantial body of research have found this transitional period as stressful for many students (Alspaugh, 1998; Anderman & Midgley, 1996; Crockett et al., 1989; Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987). Ample research looked at
specific factors in the middle school environment that substantially differ from elementary school and are a source of stress on many students, including multiple sets of behavioral and classroom expectations, a larger impersonal environment with changing peers and teachers, higher academic demands of middle school in addition to basic task competencies (i.e. studying, note-taking, tests, larger cafeteria, making new friends) (Theriot & Dupper, 2010; Perkins & Gelfer, 1995; Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987). Research suggests that, especially in middle school when students become long-term ELLs, emotional needs are consistently denied or ignored (Valenzuela, 1999) and students begin to “face reality” when it comes to their status as ELLs (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003, p. 133). More generally, the tracking of ELLs in middle and high school has been shown to limit students’ opportunity to learn, which could affect academic self-efficacy (Callahan, 2005).

Research shows the significant developmental changes as a source of stress (Chung et al., 1998; Crockett et al., 1989). Developmental changes involve physical, emotional, and social changes that are associated with heightened emotion, conflict, and defiance of adults (Akos, 2002). Additionally, young adolescents experience heightened social awareness, self-consciousness, and familiar relationships also change (Gutman & Midgley, 2000). Akos (2002) reported that students' primary concerns were bullying behaviors of peers, physical and emotional safety, making friends, getting lost, and academic success. The negative consequences of adverse experiences on ethnic minorities, such as daily stress and discrimination, can be protected through increased self-esteem and subjective well-being through strong affiliation with heritage ethnic identity (i.e. heritage identification) (Kiang et al., 20016; Zhang, Noels, & Lalonde, 2018).
Research has shown a substantial increase in student disciplinary actions following the transition to middle school and an increase of in-school suspension in middle school (Theriot & Dupper, 2010). This increase is most dramatic for more subjectively defined infractions like “class disturbance” and “failure to follow rules” compared to more concrete, objective infractions; Theriot and Dupper (2010) report that males, minoritized ethnic groups and low socioeconomic status groups are disproportionately overrepresented in all discipline categories (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Research shows discrepancies are most extreme for subjective infractions and linguistic and ethnic minoritized students such as Black and Latino/a EL students (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Theriot & Dupper, 2010).

Research has explored some of the detrimental outcomes of challenges in school transitions and in middle school environment, as it relates to socio-emotional well-being, relationships with peers and teachers, behavioral and academic expectations, and bias of minoritized ethnic, linguistic, racial, and gender-based groups. However, limited research has explored the transitional experiences of rising middle school grades and their academic social-emotional, physical, and linguistic/cultural experiences and adjustment processes. Research has also explored both effective and ineffective interventions to support students’ transition; however, few studies have incorporated student perceptions during the transition to middle school in immigrant middle school groups (Akos, 2002). While the range of these developments are outside of the scope of this study, such research on the experiences of rising middle school Latino/a ELS in summer programs (i.e. book clubs) can offer insight into perspectives, values, attitudes, and beliefs during a significant transitional period.
Immigrant Students and Latino/a English Language Learners.

Research show immigrant ELs can experience tension with their teachers resulting in learning difficulty; Valenzuela (1999) reported that both Mexican Americans and recent immigrants from Mexico experienced discomfort with peers and teachers; and Rubenstein-Avila (2003) reported that Chicanx and Mexican students experience conflicts with their identity. Rubenstein-Avila (2003) found that when LELL students feel discriminated against and unjustly blamed for low academic achievement or use of standard academic English by their teachers, the relationships with teachers and peers suffer. In addition to not learning content that was relevant and challenging, students felt teachers used curricula that disregarded students’ identities and did not attempt to create meaningful relationships with students (Valenzuela, 1999).

Adjustment to new schools and new cultures may not be adequately supported in schools in which the students’ language and content development is compromised. Middle school teachers must develop knowledge of language learning instruction for effective teaching of ELs in addition to empathy, carino, for greater understanding of the challenges EL students face both in and beyond the classroom; (Schunk & Meece, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). Carino, or empathy and understanding, are essential in building teacher-student relationships with diverse, linguistic groups especially, as ample research shows the bond ELs create with their teachers greatly affects their academic achievements (Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009).
Middle School and Diversity

The heterogeneity of diverse students is often confronted for the first time upon entering middle school which can create social tensions for many EL students. Middle schools bring together students from various community neighborhoods in which there is likely less familiarity between students’ families and teachers in addition to student differences in personal characteristics, interests, and motivation. Middle schools consist of students who differ in prior formal schooling experiences, in ethnicity, language, culture, country of origin, family SES, and levels of proficiency in their home language and English language proficiency. (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). This has long been an important topic for educators and community stakeholders in how schools are equipped to address diverse students’ transitional processes and preparedness for middle school. Particularly in how ELs’ academic achievement, social-emotional learning, and language and literacy engagement are shaped by how experiences at home, school, and in the wider community are understood.

The circumstances in which ELs encounter adverse experiences or difficulty in school transitions is largely contingent on SES, language proficiency in conversational and academic English, and generational status to which self-efficacy may be a mediating role in academic achievement, social emotional learning, and graduation completion (Smith, 2016). Socio-economic status and cultural capital play a role in English learners’ transitional experiences to middle school and language and academic development but may not be widely recognized in schools. The complexities of SES involve students’ immigration status which should be examined in social, historical, and economic contexts. Historically, during the first wave of immigration in the twentieth century, immigrant workers learning English and skills required by
the economic workforce had ample opportunities for work in factories and mills in which immigrant children and youth were often able to succeed in this economic structure of upward mobility to achieve their own version of the American Dream (Wiley, Deaux, & Hagelskamp, 2012). Children and youth from the wave of immigration, beginning at the Immigration Act of 1965 and peaking in the 1990s had different social and economic realities in the US compared to those at the turn of the twentieth century as required labor and workforce skills evolved (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2009).

ELs today who are first, second, and generation 1.5 immigrants face a different economy where highly skilled and educated individuals with generally better English proficiency enter top-level jobs, and lower skilled workers have poorly compensated jobs with low to no security, benefits, and opportunities for upward mobility (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003), widening the SES gap and diversity of immigrant student backgrounds. For example, compared to refugees or other immigrant groups, ELs who are temporarily living in the US with parents who are highly skilled professionals or university professors from other countries can bring educational experiences and resources that are aligned with US mainstream school culture and academic expectations to which their adjustment processes are likely supported by teachers (Chung et al., 1998; Rubinstein-Avila, 2003).

Middle school preservice and practicing educators have assumptions and attitudes about children and youth, often coupled with limited preparation in literacy and second language acquisition pedagogy, which is a great disservice to Latino/a ELs during formative years of development. Research that explores preservice teachers’ assumptions about rising middle school students (Mora & Grisham, 2001) documents the majority belief that EL students are
homogenous, made up of a cultural group rather than complex individuals, and assume that language development is also homogeneous within cultural groups. Additionally, structural conditions of middle schools often limit the interactions between teachers and the increasingly diverse EL student body (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999).

Other research has demonstrated teachers’ negative assumptions of ELs and attitudes towards their forms of communication, such as “Spanglish bashing” of Latino/a youth to assert standardized academic English (Labov, 1970; Zentella, 2002). Sociolinguist Zentella (2002) asserted that these new forms of communication were created naturally among first- and second-generation immigrants to reflect their postmigration lives (or passed down to new generations) as a means of cultural adjustment (Labov, 1990). Zentella (2002) writes, “It is, after all, in the borrowing and criss-crossings of forms and meanings that the hybrid identity of Latinas is most manifest” (Zentella, 2002, p. 32). Teachers, youth-serving organizations, and community members alike need to better understand the experiences of immigrant children and youth and the 1.5 generation (born in the U.S.; parents are immigrants) in transitional experiences integral to ethnic identity development.

**Transitional Support Practices**

ELs navigate academic and social challenges in the transition from elementary to middle school settings, with higher academic rigor and less structured EL/ELD programs (Rubinstein-Avila, 2003; Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Valentino & Reardon, 2015) in which their adjustment processes require school support (Chung et al., 1998). Latino/a students often navigate a bicultural and bilingual identity in these spaces, as opposed to losing their home language or
“root culture.” Future language selves or second language selves are constructed in experiences with L2/L3 or perceived positive language interaction (PPLI; Thompson & Aslan, 2015). PPLI refers to whether bilingual learners perceive positive or negative interactions among languages they know or are learning as well as how the ideal bi/multilingual self relates to language-specific ideal selves. Second language selves are defined by the role of learner characteristics (i.e., Language-related differences, gender, ethnicity) in the perception and construction of possible selves in bilingual settings. In Eastern TN where “English-only” policy is implemented in ESL/ELD school programs, unique challenges in developing language skills in both English and first language affect language selves that high self-efficacy may help mitigate.

**Policy Implementation in Schools.**

The English-only movement in schools gained momentum in the US in the 1990s as pushing non-native English speakers into English-only classrooms became the norm (Alverman, Young, Green, & Wisenbaker, 2004). Even after ELs are transitioned into mainstream classrooms, they are likely to continue needing English language support (Dabach, 2014). Schools that separate EL students from non-ELs, have reported EL students’ increased misbehaviors and lower academic progress (Dabach, 2014). Policies such as Proposition 227 in California (1988) and Proposition 203 in Arizona (2000), for example, limited support services to ELs (Gándara & Orfield, 2010). Albeit 227 was repealed by Proposition 58 in California Multilingual Education Act (2016) as legislation attempted to: a) rebrand bilingualism; b) reflect current research on second language learning, bilingualism, program effectiveness, and policy research; c) shift financial decisions to local school districts and d) increase funds for equitable learning conditions in closing language-based achievement gaps.
Specialized schools and programs that service EL students and recent immigrants have been in place since The Bilingual Education Act (1968) as a part of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which established federal policy for bilingual education for economically underserved, minoritized language students through more funds for innovative programs with special services for non-English speaking students (Bilingual Education Act, 1968). No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) reallocated funds to states to “improve the education of limited English proficient students” (p. XX) through supporting English acquisition and achievement of academic content and standards. At the time of NCLB (2001), approximately 80-percent of ELs (K-12) were enrolled in special language support programs (i.e. bilingual, dual immersion, ESL classes, self-contained, or sheltered English content instruction). Programs that serve EL students may give an “illusion of inclusion, according to Valenzuela (1999, p. 162); yet the implicit message is that multilingualism is not on the national education agenda.

Minimal federal guidelines around bilingual education cause states to be solely responsible for implementing best practices and creating programs that support the development of ELs’ language, academic, and social-emotional needs. Schools with high numbers of ELs generally serve many students from low SES families and are Title 1 recipients of federal financial resources to implement high quality language instruction programs (Smith, 2016; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Many different language instruction programs that serve ELs in elementary and middle school vary across the country (i.e. 50-50 dual language (DL) programs, two-way immersion (TWI), transitional bilingual (TB) programs, sheltered English immersion).

DL programs and TWI programs are considered additive bilingual programs because of emphasis on ELs’ development of native languages that is used to help learners develop literacy
and second language proficiency (Umansky & Reardon, 2014). However, subtractive programs such as sheltered English immersion (EI) and transitional bilingual programs do not necessarily promote bilingualism for all students as the focus is on English language acquisition within the first three years of enrollment, replacing native language usage with L2 (i.e. English) (Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005, and Garcia, 2009). Subtractive programs may send the message that ELs’ native language, cultural, and ethnicity is less valued as it is not emphasized in teaching or language development (de Jong & Bearse, 2014).

Classifying students as English language proficient (ELP) often occurs at higher rates in EI programs compared to two-way programs, yet ELs who are newly classified as ELP no longer receive English language support or transitional support which can lower academic achievement and falling behind in secondary schools (Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Valentino & Reardon, 2015). A common concern of some dual language programs in middle school is that ELs may experience a sense of separateness and not belonging (de Jong, & Bearse, 2014) which studies report cause ELs to experience increased misbehaviors and lower academic progress (Dabach, 2014). Thus, the inclusion of ELs in mainstream classes with transitional and language supports allow students to capitalize on their linguistic strengths rather than concentrate on limitations or areas of growth in a “least restrictive environment.”

Nevertheless, there has been extraordinarily little research into policies, teachers’ practices, and the experiences of transitioning middle school students attending these types of schools (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Short & Boyson, 2012). Some research suggests that newcomer programs for transitioning students (i.e. Students with limited or interrupted formal education or SLIFE, (Potowski, 2016) are marred by deficit perceptions of immigrant children
and youth (Smith, 2016), and some offer students limited access to content learning and language and literacy development (Short & Boyson 2012). For example, Kim and Garcia (2014) reported that at the end of middle school, 77-percent of EL students who had ranked “very limited” in English proficiency continued to fail Texas state assessments throughout secondary school (Smith, 2016).

The SLIFE population represent a subgroup of ELs, as students who a) have no prior formal education or lack of consistent schooling, b) perform two or more years below grade level in content areas, and c) are mostly members of collectivistic cultures (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). In collectivistic cultures, self-beliefs, identity, and well-being are predicated on the sharing in and fulfillment of reciprocal obligations and commitments to the members of one’s cultural group, such as an extended familial network or clan (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; Oyserman & James, 2011), in which most SLIFE students are accustomed to group interdependence with fostering and maintaining group relations (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Notably, limited to no formal education implicates that SLIFE students may have limited literacy skills in their native language (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; WIDA Consortium, 2020) and may not have foundational academic skills (Custodio & O’Loughlin, 2017).

SLIFEs’ limited to no prior formal educational experiences can be attributed to many factors, including the following: armed conflicts and types of violence, natural disasters, and political, religious, and ethnic persecution (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011); refugee status, living in regions that lack educational infrastructure, and economic reasons (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015); lack of transportation, poverty and living in isolated geographic regions (WIDA Consortium,
and access to formal educational opportunities in many developing countries is limited (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011).

There are no accurate statistics in the U.S. indicating how many ELs are SLIFE students (Custodio & O’Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; DeCapua et al., 2009; Short & Boyston, 2012; WIDA Consortium, 2020) for many reasons (DeCapua et al., 2009). First, there are differences in opinion about which characteristics should be accounted for when identifying a student as being SLIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Also, school districts do not distinguish the SLIFE students from the EL population when reporting data to the state (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Frequently, school districts also do not obtain ELs’ previous educational experience history upon school registration (Custodio & O’Loughlin, 2017). Upon registration, parents may provide inaccurate information about their child’s previous education in fear of not being accepted in school because of their education status (Custodio & O’Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2009), and DeCapua et al. (2009) reported that some parents feel embarrassed of their child’s gaps in education. Parents may provide school records showing prior education, but sometimes those documents are fabricated (DeCapua et al., 2009).

Additionally, considering the number of SLIFE students in EL programs, many of whom who are members of collectivistic cultures and have experienced pragmatic learning, the wealth of information SLIFEs bring to school is generally not the knowledge valued in formal education or included in curricula (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Despite efforts of educators to recognize, promote, and integrate the knowledge and cultural and literacy practices of SLIFEs and other ELs into the classroom (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2006; Olmedo, 2009), many U.S. schools are unresponsive to the needs of SLIFE students (DeCapua, Smathers, 2020).
Tang, 2009; Freeman & Freeman, 2002). A mismatch between home and school culture, which Ibarra (2001) termed cultural dissonance, can cause SLIFE and EL students’ feelings of isolation, confusion, disengagement, and inadequacy when they enter the formal education system of U.S schools (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Students face the challenge of adapting to the individualist orientation inherent in formal U.S. schools in which EL/SLIFEs position themselves as independent agents of learning versus members of a larger group, calling for an examination of best practices, pedagogy, and policy to support students’ transitions.

**Best Practices for Transitional Support Implementation.**

It is critical for middle school teachers and faculty, as well as youth-serving organizations to identify and implement best practices for supporting this transition within school settings and in summer programming. Some research highlights elementary teacher education programs that have made concerted efforts to prepare all preservice teachers to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (Mora & Grisham, 2001); yet limited research has reported many middle school and secondary teacher preparation programs that have adequately addressed the needs of EL students (SLIFE and immigrants too) across disciplines (Terzian & Moore, 2009).

First, it is critical to ensure that the growing number of ELs receive culturally responsive literacy instruction and content-rich language education (Paris & Alim, 2017). Language instruction of isolated drills are less meaningful for students, and ELs are unlikely to be familiar with cultural and linguistic contexts or usefulness of skills taught. Whereas a context-rich environment that includes materials, literature, and content that is meaningful and relevant to student interests is far more appropriate. A reassessment of literature in libraries and school
curricula that serve rising middle school EL students is necessary to examine the notion of ethnic identity and its role in developing academic self-efficacy and academic achievement.

LELLs are often in schools with irrelevant materials and literature in which the education they receive may be subtractive of who they are. This reminds educators and researchers of the work to be done to address gaps in schooling to build and co-create spaces for Latino/a students to be heard. DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) described the importance of spaces for students to discuss culturally responsive books in multicultural literature in conjunction with teacher facilitation in modeling academic language and language learning strategies to support understanding of content. Modeling has been found to be a positive predictor of academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1990, 2002; Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012). When ELs see and hear their language echoed in their academic discourse (Gee, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999), their ethnic identity is valued, affirmed, and celebrated. When students feel validated in their ethnic and linguistic identities, it may improve positive self-efficacy and affiliation with ethnic identity to support adjustment to middle school (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012).

Library resources and school curricula should examine and incorporate Multicultural Literature for Latino/as that is reflective of cultural traditions that have survived and gone through cultural adaptations within the US sociocultural context, as it has the potential to be utilized as a critical literacy mechanism for ethnic dignity, establishing a learner’s sense of identity and place in a multicultural world (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzales, 2016; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006). Books offer views of the world that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange to which any reader can tap into and learn. Rudine Sims Bishop offers this to us, “Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own
lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.” (1990, p. ix) Considering the significance of Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in learners’ development of ethnic identity and construction of future L2 (English) selves, it’s role in developing positive academic self-efficacy is important to explore (Falout, 2016). Opportunities for ELs to interact academically (CALP; Cummins, 2000) and socially (BICS, Cummins, 2000) with peers and teachers is imperative for language development and academic achievement. When ELs collaborate with fluent English-speaking peers through problem-solving tasks, inquiry-based projects, and reading circles/book clubs, it can facilitate meaning-making of new, complex content to improve reading comprehension (Alvermann, Young, Green, Wisenbaker, 2004; Rubinstein-Avila, 2003).

These academic practices also provide opportunities for building on learners’ funds of knowledge and modeling authentic functions of bi/multilingualism to which academic self-efficacy is developed (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). Explicit modeling of content vocabulary and task processes as well as the goal or outcome can greatly reduce anxiety ELs may feel (Bai & Wang, 2020; Bandura, 1990; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012). According to Bandura (1990), academic behavior changes that occur through methods of modeling, guided exposure, persuasion, and anxiety reduction are pointedly the result of creating or strengthening and individual’s efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1997, 2002; Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012). Additionally, research has found that ELs with strong academic backgrounds in their heritage or first language may have difficulty adjusting to the implicit text structure conventions valued and expected in US schools and can benefit from modeling
strategies; considering that academic language conventions are not universal and vary across languages (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000).

Student academic performance and use of language strategies in potential bilingual contexts are not well understood due to little research on ELs’ transitional periods to middle school and for immigrant students, to a new culture (Orellana & Phoenix, 2017). Several studies have identified an association between higher levels of self-efficacy and ELs’ increased use of language learning strategies (i.e. using cognitive or metacognitive learning strategies, seeking help, persisting despite difficulty) (Kim & Garcia, 2014; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). These findings support the notion that EL students who believe in their learning capabilities may employ strategies that enable them to be more successful across academic content domains and reading (Kim et al., 2015). Further, student ratings of self-efficacy partially explained the relation between limited English proficiency level and ELs’ science achievement (Sandilos et al., 2020). A recent study (Sandilos et al., 2020) of fifth grade students with varying levels of English proficiency revealed that students with lower English proficiency reported lower levels of academic self-efficacy compared to their more English proficient peers, suggesting an association between English language perceived efficacy and beliefs about academic competencies. Prior research with ELs indicates that self-efficacy influences students’ classroom performance (Wang & Bai, 2017).

Other research has examined literature discussion circles or book clubs using multicultural literature to encourage middle school student voice and enable students to take pride in aspects of their language, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and identities (Alvermann et al., 2004; Bishop, 1997; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006). Multicultural literature emphasizes
characters’ cultures and present authentic representations of ethnic identity for students to relate to and construct meaning, ultimately supporting their academic self-efficacy (reading motivation and perceived competencies) (DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Martinez-Roldan, 2000). The use of dialogue to explicitly guide emergent bilingual Latino/a ELs to connect sociohistorical, fictitious, and current events in comprehension of texts they read, leading to perspective taking. Agency in facilitating discussion, critical reflection, and writing personal narratives can leverage academic self-efficacy (Garcia & Wei, 2014). LELLS can benefit from transformative pedagogy as it nurtures social consciousness inspired through critical thought, interpretation, and perspective taking (Cummins, 2000).

Reading support in this context can empower ELs to use code-switching or language brokering (i.e., communication across linguistic and cultural differences) in conversations with multicultural texts, which may mitigate academic and social challenges ELs experience in school transitions (Alvarez, 2015). For example, Sepúlveda (2011) uses a pedagogical approach to literacy education that integrates critical literacy, poetry and storytelling, in the exploration of experiences of undocumented Mexican high school students in the US in what he called pedagogy of acompañamiento (accompaniment). Sepúlveda’s research (2011) objective was to explore the academic achievement gap that undocumented Mexican students experience but found that the real gap was in the lack of connection to the authentic real-life experiences the students brought into the classroom like Torrez, Ramos, Gonzales, Del Hierro & Cuevas’ (2017) findings of fostering a Comunidad de Cuentistas through collaborative storytelling with Latino/a and indigenous youth.
SLIFE Student Pedagogy and Culture in Transitions.

Educational policies concerning how and if students receive transitional support services examine how many students enroll in programs, district curricula decisions and mandates, and use of heritage language in the classroom, and communicate to families of ELs the “powerful ways of promoting and obstructing the education opportunities” for immigrant youth (Bigelow, 2010, p. 123; Hersi & Watkinson, 2012). Educational programs for ELs, SLIFEs, and immigrant children and youth, must be strategically designed to meet their language, academic, and social-emotional needs that value and integrate students’ rich cultural and linguistic resources, provide content-based instruction, differentiate culturally responsive instruction, and monitor student academic growth (Bai & Wang, 2020; Cook, Linquanti, Chinen & Jung, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2019; Smith, 2016). Instruction, such as the mutually adaptive learning paradigm (MALP) model for SLIFE (DeCapua & Marshall, 2009) is a framework to help teachers learn to accept the culturally based conditions SLIFE need for learning which combine students’ ways of learning with expectations in formal U.S. classrooms. For example, MALP teaches new academic tasks through familiar language and content with pragmatic tasks; combines processes such as oral transmission and group responsibility with written word and individual accountability; and emphasizes interconnectedness and immediate relevance with independence and future relevance in the individualistic U.S. culture (DeCapua & Marshall, 2009). MALP is culturally responsive as it incorporates the collectivistic cultural orientation of the majority of SLIFE students and provides adjustment strategies in transitioning to the demands and requirements of US schools.
Partnerships: Key Community Stakeholders

The transition from elementary to middle school is especially challenging for students as it involves significant academic and personal change. How schools support rising middle school students is particularly challenging, as most middle school environments different from elementary environments (Perkins & Geifer, 1995) in which there are new and often unfamiliar students and school staff, multiple teachers and schedules with various behavioral and classroom expectations (Akos, 2002; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). Helping professionals such as school counselors, family liaisons, psychologists, behavior specialists and other professionals from youth-serving organizations within the community can facilitate successful transitions by considering the developmental period, personal changes (physical, mental-emotional) and contextual changes (school environment and structure), increased academic rigor, and for English learners or immigrant newcomers, a cultural and linguistic adjustment (Chung et al., 1998).

Achievement gaps that widen in middle school are influenced by factors related to experiences that children and youth have outside of the school, in their families and communities (Foster and Miller, 2007). Thus, strengthening community-school partnerships and improving robust resources between schools, families, and community stakeholders is key in supporting adjustment in transitioning to middle school grades.

School-based Transitional Programs.

School-based transitional programs such as orientation to middle school address the persistent concerns during this significant developmental period in a myriad of ways. Successful
interventions for supporting the transitional period for ELs must address social, organization, and motivational factors (Kim & Guryan, 2010; Terzian & Moore, 2009). Strategies that create a school environment appropriate for the development of young adolescents include team and cooperative learning, elimination of tracking, building smaller and stronger communities within the school, create more robust family resources while tapping into community resources that serve youth, empowering teachers and students, improving relationships between teachers and students, and utilizing peer mentors (Eccles et al., 1993).

Structural mentorship in recruiting higher grade secondary students as peer mentors to new students may ease social aspects of a new school and set an example for future roles of incoming students (Kim & Guryan, 2010). Engaging teachers builds transitional support, fosters collegiality, and minimizes resistance to the time involved in transitional activities and increase involvement in student-centered clubs or initiatives (multicultural club, student ambassadors) (Alvermann et al., 2004; Schaffer, Chen, Zhu, & Oakes, 2012). Notably, student-led extracurricular clubs tied to cultural and ethnicity empowerment or civic-engagement can ease the transition (Akos, 2002). While school-wide bullying programs may help alleviate student concerns about school safety (Akos, 2002), multicultural awareness in curricula and representation in school and transitional programming is important, especially for ELs that face additional challenges.

Addressing challenges in ELs’ academic achievement means structural support that builds their confidence in and outside of the classroom in English language proficiency, literacy skills, academic content, and social-emotional learning. English language proficiency is a determinant of reading achievement (CALP, BICS, Cummins, 2000; Roman & Fiore, 2010).
development of positive peer relationships (Akos, 2002), and overall academic success (Soland & Sandilos, 2021). Academic language is a prerequisite for content learning in which confidence and perceived competence in English and reading or math knowledge can support student success (Cheema & Kitsantas, 2014). Social-emotional learning supports autonomy and use of effective academic strategies in middle school where there is less structure for EL students.

The attributes of successful transition programs, that is summer programs, middle school orientations, and continued structural support throughout the academic year, should include recognition of family members and teachers as partners, in which students’ adjustment to a new school setting is an on-going process that causes challenges (Chung et al., 1998). Research shows that community partnerships can support successful transitions to middle schools and improve student social networks and interactions to foster attachment to the school (Akos, 2002).

Parents, families, and youth-serving organizations (e.g. Big Brother, Big Sister, YMCA) are important community stakeholders that through commitment in collaboration, community members, parents, and school staff can work together to design and implement successful transition programs to middle school grades (Carnegie Council, 1989; National Middle School Association, 1995). The on-going participation of relevant community members, families, and school faculty in professional collaboration enhances teachers’ cultural knowledge of students’ backgrounds and informs curricula decisions, beliefs, and perceptions that can improve diverse and inclusive practices (Woloshyn, Chalmers & Bosacki, 2005). Participation of crucial stakeholders offers diverse perspectives in efforts to support EL students’ transitional experiences and creates a foundation for shared understanding within a local and community context (Woloshyn, Chalmers & Bosacki, 2005).
Shared cultural experiences in communities with other immigrant students and families can improve ELs’ opportunity to learn, contributing to a linguistically and culturally welcoming experience that can validate transnational knowledge and biliteracy in concert with public resources accessible in the local community (Dávila et al., 2017). Shared cultural experiences show that community members feel empowered and interested in commitment in spaces where they feel validated and heard (Dávila et al., 2017; Potowski, 2016; Serrano, 2020). Studies suggest that strong partnerships increase a sense of personal agency, the feeling of being heard and feeling useful, empowerment, and collective efficacy (Akos, 2002; Woloshyn, Chalmers & Bosacki, 2005). A partnership built on transparency and commitment can foster agency in all key stakeholders to contribute to decision-making and power within summer reading programs, throughout the school year, and beyond to future selves across school and community contexts.

**Community Engaged Scholarship: Establishing Trust or Confianza**

University programs emphasize community-engaged scholarship (CES) in research, which DeLugan, Roussos, and Skram (2014) defined as “research of mutual benefit to community and academic interests” (p. 1), asserting that CES requires scholar capacity building and on-going institutional support. Shifts towards engaged scholarship practices in higher education pedagogy, research methodology, and community development depict value towards holistic learning and sustainable social change through university-community partnerships (Peterson, 2009). Researchers require support to develop mutually beneficial research projects with community stakeholders that involve institutional functions (i.e. recognition and rewards at universities) to increase sustainability of community partnerships (da Cruz, 2019; DeLugan, Roussos, & Skram, 2014). According to da Cruz (2019) CES refers to mutually beneficial
partnerships between communities and universities designed to collaboratively develop and apply knowledge to address a public concern, such as inequitable access to schooling or challenges navigating barriers in literacy learning as a minoritized language group (i.e. LELLS).

While Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) practices vary in design and scope, they are distinct from service-learning as it focuses on collaborative development and application of scholarly knowledge to address dire social or educational issues. It is imperative to recognize the limits and cautions in service learning, while exploring how community-based education programs can change short-term service-oriented relationships to transformational, social justice initiatives with long-term advocacy goals (Peterson, 2009). Research on community and campus partnerships described by Jacoby (2003), as cited in Peterson (2009) mostly focus on service-learning, however, described as:

service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning (p. 3)

McKnight and McKnight (1995) posited a traditional paradigm of a service-learning programs operate from the lens that an “outside” service is needed to implement their knowledge and skills in an attempt to address a social issue or problem within a neighboring organization or community. This paradigm naturally asserts power imbalances and can cause cultural dissonance between members providing the service and the receiving community group or members, which questions the purpose, goals, and outcomes of the service that perpetuates a deficit-lens.
Distinguished from service-learning research, asset-based community development is defined by Peterson (2009) as “supporting communities to build on their own strengths, talents, and networks, in order to negate the need for outside services to build them up” (p. 549) and can be incorporated in community-based education programs from a mutual reciprocity perspective, rather than a traditional service-oriented paradigm (McKnight and McKnight, 1995).

**Building Mutually Beneficial Relationships**

It is important to be attentive to the reciprocal process between community and institution as an essential component to ongoing collaboration in CES. To successfully build mutually beneficial relationships, the benefits must be defined according to community organizations, key stakeholders, and students and families in the context of study (DeLugan, Roussos, & Skram, 2014). Miron and Moely (2006) recommend building relationships in CES, keep in mind that “reciprocal actions between individuals or groups of individuals contribute to a relationship that is two-sided, mutually contingent, and mutually rewarding (Peterson, 2009, p. 545). Mutually beneficial partnerships between universities and communities require commitment and dedication over a long period of time. Da Cruz (2019) recommends six key points to develop mutually beneficial relationships stemming from themes across CES literature:

1) a focus on real-life social problems that are defined with or by the community
2) scholarly investigation of these real-life social problems or public issue
3) community-university partnerships that are collaborative and reciprocal, in which community organizations have shared authority in defining success (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998)
4) the generation of knowledge to address and improve public concerns collaboratively

5) utilize institutional resources and knowledge to address these real-life social problems

6) production of scholarship that is relevant to faculty and/or graduate research agenda and praxis

Component one concerns issues or common goals that should be defined by all members in engagement which requires trust, respect, and support by university-community collaborators. It is imperative to keep large goals of community building and social investment at the forefront of any work without giving into the constraints of an academic calendar or desire for immediately gratifying service projects (Peterson, 2009).

Component two includes the importance of conducting scholarly investigations of real-life social events or issues and/or producing research on such issues or events (da Cruz, 2019). This requires active participation, active listening, and general standards for assessing the scholarship such as clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique, according to Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997).

Component three focuses on characteristics of partnerships emphasizing the importance of reciprocity, collaboration, and mutually beneficial, viewing engagement as a “two-way street” in which each partner is valued for the resources and skills that they bring to the table to achieve a common goal (da Cruz, 2019). Research asserts that long-term community relationships provide more opportunities for each contributing member to benefit over time in reciprocal ways (Warren et al., 2018). These relationships can be established in a multitude of ways, to which da
Cruz (2019) notes they can be built through seeking community members’ input in identifying issues or valuing community expertise around a topic.

Warren et al., (2018) suggests that an essential piece is the commitment to promoting an equal partnership between interests of the academics (researchers, or university) and the community participants or stakeholders. Some literature states that researchers tend to “parachute” into a community or organization simply for their own research agendas or funds without nurturing the kind of relationship for a long-term form of collaboration necessary to foment concrete or sustainable change (Warren et al., 2018). Kenneth Reardon (1998) has described a transformative approach as “social learning processes that can develop the organizational, analytical, and communication skills of local leaders and their community-based organizations” (p. 59).

Component four (da Cruz, 2019) emphasizes the importance of product of knowledge as a collaborative effort in which new knowledge is created when theoretical knowledge is applied in the field or when indigenous knowledge informed university research (Colbeck & Wharton-Michael, 2006; Peterson, 2009). Component five (da Cruz, 2019) involves recognizing universities and researchers as resource-rich in areas of researcher-expertise, information, and technology and communities that may be low in access to material resources yet high in knowledge of practical application or the community under study provide their own rich resources to the partnership. Lastly, component six recommends that the community-based project or research is integrated into researchers’ scholarship to support collaborative knowledge production and result in many strategies to address the public issue in question (da Cruz, 2019).
DeLugan, Roussos and Skram (2014) adopted and modified a CES model (Blanchard et al., 2009) to illustrate the ever-evolving conversation about how to better connect the dots between theory and practice in engaged scholarship within community dynamics. The modified model (DeLugan, Roussos, & Skram, 2014) included competencies required for successful engaged scholarship practice at various levels of scholars’ and community members’ experience (novice, intermediate, to advanced).

According to DeLugan, Roussos, and Skram (2014), novice CES participants must have the following competencies: understand concepts of community engagement and community-engaged scholarship and familiarity with literature and history of CES (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997) including the research process; understand the various contributes to community issues; develop skills and commitment for fostering community and social change.

As intermediate scholars develop abilities to negotiation across community and academic groups, write grants expressing mutual goals and principles and approaches, and write articles based on the processes and outcomes for publication, then the researcher and community member is considered to enter an advanced level, according to the model (DeLugan, Roussos, & Skram, 2014).

An advanced practice of CES includes understanding policy implications and ability to work with many communities in translating the process and findings of CES into policy, knowledge of outcomes and measures of quality design, and the ability to balance tasks in academia (i.e. research, teaching, service) posing challenges to graduate student researchers.
engaging in an academic environment simultaneously. This adaptation (DeLugan, Roussos, & Skram, 2014) from Blanchard and colleagues’ (2009) model provided a useful tool for all community stakeholders with an explicit description of competencies for community-level engagement in addition to academic researcher competencies. Competency development should fit the context of study, the discipline, the research question, and the specific goals and needs of the community members involved. Various competency levels of stakeholders provide structural mentorship to strengthen the partnership in sustainability.

Recently, Blanchard and Furco (2021) refined their original CES model as depicted in Figure 4. The Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching and Scholarship at Loyola University Chicago serves as an academic support service for faculty members who embrace engaged scholarship; thus, to transform connections with outside entities from outreach to partnerships, the updated framework reflects this sustainability aspect of CES (Blanchard & Furco, 2021). Furthermore, the principles of participatory, reciprocal, shared authority, shared resources, democratic practices, and co-constructed knowledge are the basis of my collaborative initiative with partner Centro Hispano.

Academic and community partners must ask questions, reflect, and discuss relationship goals, expectations, roles, and needs in cyclical process with a system of accountability. These principles that seek to recognize the value of co-constructed knowledge and shared authority are imperative to meet such desired democratic outcomes (i.e. social equity, diversity, and inclusion; improved educational outcomes; community development). For example, a study of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) organization in Texas (Warren, 2011) that prioritized efforts
Figure 4. Framing Engaged Scholarship: “Reciprocity in Relationships”
to build a multiracial organization across African American, Latino/a, and White members focused on a long-term campaign to address social injustices in the community. IAF experienced racially-driven hate crimes to which the Black community responded in protest to the injustice. Warren (2011) reported that Black members of the group were outraged at the failure of justice-driven action, which represented a lack of appreciation of Black community members by non-Black organization members, including the lead organizer who identified as White. According to Warren’s report (2011) demonstrated a dire disconnect between mutual reciprocity of the in-group members’ relationships, the expectations, goals, and processes of the organization itself.

Another example is CES work of Dávila and colleagues (2017) who explored the ethics and politics of educational research through work with U.S. students from Vietnamese Central Highlands and gave insight into the ways research with newcomer refugee and immigrant youth may be conceptually and methodologically laden with issues around positionality, cultural and linguistic differences, and challenges in interpreting and representing data. According to Dávila et al. (2017), collaborative community research must account for researcher positionality and to recognize oneself as not necessarily transparent within the community of study; rather, it is important to recognize the intersection of class, gender, race, language as a key stakeholder involved in the research. A researcher is constantly constructing, narrating, and negotiating relationships of power among research participants (LELLs) and in the wider community.

Studies have focused on the practice of relationship building and reciprocity with communities in partnership programs with emphasis on the unit of the partnership (Peterson, 2009). Research has found that viewing the partnership as a unit leads to community partners sharing their voice and/or are more involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the
program or initiative and can improve positive interpersonal relationships with consistent communication in which the partnership is perceived as beneficial (Peterson, 2009). Dorado and Giles (2004) posited that negotiated order theory provides an approach for assessing both outcomes of partnerships and the context of social interactions in which three dominant behaviors occur in community partnerships: learning stage (gaining familiarity with partners); aligning stage (reviewing and assessing the aims, goals, processes, and outcomes of the partnership); and the nurturing stage (cultivating mutual support in engagement). These stages are not necessarily linear in the path of reciprocity and relationship building; however, they provide a structure for engaged scholarships in particular community contexts.

American Educational Research Association (AERA) statement on research ethics emphasizes the tenet of social responsibility in scholarship:

> Education researchers are aware of their professional and scientific responsibility to the communities and societies in which they live and work. They apply and make public their knowledge in order to contribute to the public good. When undertaking research, they strive to advance scientific and scholarly knowledge and to serve the public good. (2011)

A contribution to “the public good” begs the question of who defines the public good, to whom are researchers accountable and what is the evaluation process of the impact of community-based research, as well as who benefits from the research. Research aims to produce knowledge, yet in engaged scholarship practices that involve minoritized groups, who shares “cultural authority” in a community endeavor? How is “engaged” defined? Relationship building does not guarantee that engagement lends authority to research findings.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology implemented during this study. This includes a description of the research design in community engaged scholarship and a rationale for conducting a qualitative interpretive case study with descriptive statistics to provide a rich description of participants in this case using a self-efficacy survey and English language self-report questionnaire. These methods are used to explore Latino/a English language learners’ (LELL) self-efficacy beliefs in language and literacy experiences during Latinidad Book clubs in a summer program. This methodological approach addresses the gaps in methodology in self-efficacy research from an interdisciplinary lens in SLA and literacy education. A qualitative approach provides a microscopic view of reading self-efficacy and identity in case narratives that focuses on the role of ethnicity. The community-based site in this study is important in extending a deeper understanding of the contexts in which Latino/a ELs’ and their families are embedded.

Case study research with qualitative methods was conducted for three primary reasons. First, the nature of the phenomenon of self-efficacy beliefs of Latino/a ELs in literacy experiences required an in-depth exploration to dig deep into participants’ thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and to understand their beliefs and the construction of second language selves process. Qualitative techniques are used for exploring the cultural and ethnic role of self-efficacy in meaning-making processes in Latino/a groups, collectively and individually (Creswell, 2013).

Secondly, values, attitudes, and beliefs as it relates to self-efficacy are contextual and ever-changing for LELL children and youth, determined by them in the identity construction process (Creswell, 2013). Individual’s experiences, emotions, relationships, and learning affect
the realization of values, so to understand the sources of values and meanings through participants’ own words, qualitative methods are appropriate (Creswell, 2013).

Thirdly, interpretive case study aimed to discover the processes involved in self-efficacy beliefs and possible second language selves construction. Interactions with participants in the natural setting of a summer program and book clubs to discover patterns through careful documentation and thoughtful interpretation of empirical data.

This chapter begins by reviewing the research questions proceeding the theoretical framework of the study. Following thorough descriptions of the research design and the research setting, participant case narratives describe the case study groups (i.e. grade levels) and Latinidad book clubs are explained as an instructional practice. Data collection procedures and methods of analysis are discussed, including limitations and concerns with reliability.

This proposed study aims to address gaps in research to address LELLs’ transitional school experiences, based on the augmenting evidence of academic and linguistic challenges of the developmental period, lack of adequate learning resources due to summer loss coupled with covid-19 and the detrimental effects of insufficient academic and transitional support. I sought to explore the mediating role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) in the development of second language selves during transitional experiences to middle school grades. Transitional experiences are identified as Latinidad Book clubs that incorporate culturally and linguistically responsiveness in literacy practices (i.e. incorporate cultural heritage materials). How do Latino/a ELs’ views of heritage culture, their values and beliefs, relate to their identity in second language selves? The question is what are the overall effects of beliefs about Latino/a
cultural values on ELs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy? Does incorporating cultural heritage materials into literacy and language learning affect LELLS’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy beliefs? Heritage identification is defined as strong affiliation with heritage ethnic identity (Kiang et al., 2006).

Strong heritage identification has benefits such as increased self-esteem or protection against negative consequences of adverse experiences like discrimination (Hong, Wan, No, & Chiu, 2007; Hughes et al., 2006; Kiang et al., 2006). *Latinidad* book clubs adopt Multicultural Literature for Latino/as as a tool to relate learners’ ethnic identity and cultural heritage in their construction of second language selves (English), considering its significance in developing positive self-efficacy beliefs (Falout, 2016; Leeman & Serafini, 2021). Considering the transitional period to middle school grades and the participant grade levels in the summer program, I ask: *How do Latino/a English language learners (LELL) in rising grades 4th-8th describe their self-efficacy beliefs and learning experiences with respect to their participation in *Latinidad* book clubs?*

I further explore *how culturally and linguistically responsive literacy practices with Latino/a multicultural literature influence the participants’ ethnic identity development and possible second language selves.* I sought to understand in what ways, if any, did the participants re-gain their language and cultural heritage in sharing their voices in Book club activities?

*Latinidad* centers language and cultural heritage and lived experiences as well as is embedded in the literature selected and explored in book clubs which reflects aspects of Latino/a intersectional identities. Thus, I want to know *what is the role of self-efficacy in Latino/as/as (age 9-14) construction of possible second language selves? And what is the role of ethnic*
identity in self-efficacy (belief in the ability to achieve) as a Latino/a language learner? Overall, I intended to understand the ways self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) of Latino/a learners (ages 9-14) influence the construction of second language selves in transitioning to middle school grades.

I explore how participation in culturally responsive literacy practice centered in Multicultural Literature for Latino/as will influence Latino/a English language learners’ positive self-efficacy and development of second language selves to support their transition to middle school grades (4th-8th grade). I hypothesize that LELLs’ self-efficacy beliefs are a mediating factor in combatting deficit-based perspectives and development of second language selves in summer camp and navigating middle school experiences development. I believe that the participants will identify with aspects of their language and cultural heritage in the construction of second language selves through Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in Latinidad book clubs. Considering the small sample population of 20 participants (N=20), descriptive statistics are applied to triangulate the data with qualitative findings. However, future statistical correlational analysis of personal belief in ability to grow with effort and achieve subscale will address the research postulation that a) when LELLs participate in Latinidad book clubs, their autonomy and positive self-efficacy as a language learner will improve and b) the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and perceived English competencies will influence ELs’ perception of second language selves.
Theoretical Framework

A sociocultural theoretical framework (Vygotsky, 1978; Bandura, 2002) grounds this study as *Latinidad* book clubs are modeled by the construct of “Figured Worlds” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) or critical spaces in which LELLs learn to recognize and reform their identity and acknowledge the shifting roles of themselves in the construction of possible second language (L2) selves in interactions with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as. Positioning theory in “figured worlds” conceptually frames this study as it is relevant to educational research on individual and social attributes in the context of sociocultural perspectives on literacy and learning (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). Learners position themselves as an individual in a collective group (i.e. book clubs) to which self-efficacy, identity, prior experiences and/ or background factors (e.g., socio-economic status, language, gender, ethnicity, generational status, adult expectations, prior achievement) influence their social situatedness of self, or positioning (Harre & van Langenhove, 1991).

Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in *Latinidad* book clubs is recognized as integral to literacy instructional practice from a Latino/a Critical Literacy (LatCrit) lens (Bernal, 2002; Pérez Huber, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, 2001b). LatCrit pedagogy involves texts and practices that challenge dominant language and cultural ideologies in mainstream classrooms to offer a transformative response to historical, racial, ethnic, gender, and class oppression that minoritized language groups have experienced, such as participants in this study whose first language is different than English, the dominant language of instruction in schools. LatCrit builds on Critical Race Theory (CRT) through emphasis on issues that shape the lives of
Latino/as in the United States, such as language, immigration status, and culture (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006).

Thus, Latino/a Critical Literacy (LatCrit) offers a sociocultural perspective on literacy in which Latino/a ELs are afforded opportunities to see themselves, their cultural norms, and perspectives included in the books they read. LatCrit is an extension of Critical Race Theory or CRT (Ladson-Billings, 2009) through the focus on issues that shape lives of Latino/as in the US, such as language, immigration, status, and culture (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Espinoza & Harris, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Multicultural Literature for Latino/as as a tool to foster high reading self-efficacy may play a mediating role in ELs’ development of a positive sense of self by experiencing their cultural background and language in reading interactions (Jiménez, Moll, Rodriuez-Brown, & Barrera, 1999).

Grounded in a sociocultural framework (Vygotsky, 1978; Bandura, 2002; Bruner, 1986), which views reading as a process of constructing knowledge tied to an individual’s identity, ELs’ academic self-concept is socially constructed and not cognitively fixed. Bandura’s (2002) Social Cognitive Theory conceives the construct of self-efficacy as an individual’s ability to self-regulate, reflect, and act in literacy and language learning, a foundational theory of motivation research. Bandura (1993, 2002) posited that self-efficacy is the foundation of human motivation. Researchers in the field of education (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Karas & Faez, 2021) have often relied on Bandura’s Social Cognitive theory (2002) and, more specifically, on the agent of self-efficacy, to encourage reflective practice.
Social Cognitive Theory in the field of psychology explains how people acquire competencies, values, and styles of behavior yet it must also describe how people motivate and regulate their behavior (Bandura, 1978a; 1986); this is aligned with this study’s qualitative analysis method of values coding that focuses on participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions. English language competencies in reading, writing, speaking, and listening are self-reported in the questionnaire (WIDA Consortium, 2020) by participants in this study to measure their perceived language self-efficacy. Many psychologists operationalize competence as a human characteristic to explore and attempt to master their environment (Vygotsky 1978, 2012; White, 1959); in this phenomenon, the theory of cognitive regulation of motivation and action (Bandura, 1990) concerns the question of causality or whether self-efficacy beliefs operate as influential factors in human functioning. This theory has been explored in psychological experiments to test the dual causal link in which conditions affect self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn, affect action or behavior (Bandura, 1990). The higher an individual’s self-efficacy, the more that individual believes in their ability to successfully complete a specific action or perform at a particular level (Bandura, 1993). The construct of self-efficacy measures a student’s confidence in his or her ability to achieve a certain educational goal or outcome, such as the ability to do well on a skills test or achieve career goals (Soland & Sandilos, 2021).

Navigating the transition to middle school, LELLS’ self-efficacy may influence perceived abilities in their academic self-concept and social-emotional learning (SEL) (Marsh et al., 2019; Pajares, 1996; Soland & Sandilos, 2021), considering its potential causal role in facilitating (or deterring) academic learning over time. Although the explanatory (mediating) role of self-efficacy has been less widely studied in EL populations in the U.S., theoretical and conceptual
models of self-efficacy support this construct as a potential explanatory variable pertinent to the schooling experiences of ELs given that language proficiency is tied to an individual’s identity (Danzak, 2011; Soland & Sandilos, 2021).

**Research Design**

To address this phenomenon, the research design is primarily a qualitative interpretive case study (Creswell, 2005; Merriam 2002) within community-engaged scholarship in a collaboration with local Latino/a youth-serving organization Centro Hispano. Case study research is an intensive study and a focused in-depth analysis of a single population, the Latino/a English language learners, in a summer reading program during the transitional period to middle school (Good, Maseqicz, & Vogel, 2010; Merriam, 1998). As engaged scholarship with community members, interpretive case study approach provided multiple views to address the research question as it allowed myself, as a participant-researcher, to see participants’ experiences through their eyes (Greener, 2008). Case study protocol should include the following: research question, research method, permission seeking, ethical considerations, interpretation process, and criteria for assessment. This research method is appealing for applied educational disciplines since processes, problems, and/or programs can be studied to engender understanding that can improve literacy practice (Ponelis, 2015).

Using a case study approach in research has several strengths including the ability to use a variety of research methods (Davies, 2007), the ability to establish rapport with research participants (Ponelis, 2015), to obtain sufficiently rich description that can be transferred to similar situations (Merriam, 2002) and, ultimately, in-depth insight. The purpose of this approach
is to provide an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a case situated in a specific context to provide insight into real-life experiences (Merriam, 2002).

While this study is primarily qualitative in design, the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative survey and questionnaire data further encapsulates the role of self-efficacy in development of second language selves for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research inquiry (Creswell, 2003, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used when neither alone is sufficient to fully capture trends and details of a study (Ivankova et al., 2006). Quantitative data (i.e. survey and questionnaire) is used to further describe participants and indicators of self-efficacy through correlation analysis as Latino/a English language learners within an integrated critical literacy framework. Primary collected qualitative data is from semi-structured interviews as well as observational field notes, critical writing reflections, and autobiographical poetry or family story portraits. Multiple sources of data provide further explanatory power to the self-efficacy (belief in personal ability) predictors identified in the quantitative survey and questionnaire (Creswell, 2009).

Methodological issues that must be considered when conducting qualitative and quantitative research design include (1) assigning priority or weight to the quantitative and qualitative data during both collection and analysis, (2) sequence of data collection and analysis, and (3) stage in the research process when quantitative and qualitative data are connected and results integrated (Creswell, 2003).

This research assigned highest priority to qualitative data as an interpretive case study in which interview data analysis were used to guide other qualitative data analysis and the
quantitative phase of the research. The survey and questionnaire results were used to further analyze the qualitative findings in a merging of the data phase of the research. After all qualitative data were analyzed and member-checked by Megan, community partner and dissertation committee member, findings were integrated with results from descriptive statistics and correlational analysis using Spearman and Pearson measures and final conclusions and implications were made.

While a survey alone can certainly help identify learners’ values, attitudes and beliefs, it is necessary to prioritize qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, critical reflections, written artifacts, and case narratives. These data sources allow myself as the researcher to a) explore the role of perceived self-efficacy during shared reading activities and how they influence the construction of second language selves within a critical literacy framework and b) enhance reliability of qualitative methods in self-efficacy educational research (Colton & Covert, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Additionally, it is known that a limitation to using only surveys in self-efficacy researcher is that they limit the amount and type of information as well as response choices (Colton & Covert, 2007). Thus, qualitative methods enhance the type of information and the quality of data through participant case analysis.

Triangulating multiple data sources develops a deeper understanding of the self-efficacy constructs that elicit particularly strong or inexplicable responses from participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). While the use of open-ended questions can address this limitation, qualitative interviews and first-person narratives can also supplement and enhance understanding of survey responses (Creswell, 2003).
Community Engaged Scholarship: *Latinidad* Summer Camp

I, as a TPTE graduate student and researcher-participant, sought to develop a more sustainable partnership with local NGO Centro Hispano and a community of rising 4th-8th grade Latino/a ELL students that they serve. I initially reached out to CH’s youth and family engagement director Megan Barolet-Fogarty to co-develop a summer program centering on *Latinidad* and literacy in the Fall of 2020, following a collaboration in Spring of 2020 in virtual learning program because of COVID-19 pandemic. Megan is also a member of my dissertation committee, lending validity to the study as a valued, shared community stakeholder. As a prior K-12 educator and current graduate student in TPTE, this study emulates the practice of engaged scholarship to address Latino/a EL children and youth development in social-emotional learning, English, and literacy in a bilingual space (Spanish and English). Our shared goals for the summer program include:

1. Social-emotional curriculum component
2. Collaborative reading for Latino/a EL students (identity; future selves)
3. Family engagement
4. Celebration of *Latinidad!* (Heritage/cultural authenticity)

Our mutual objective is to support family literacy and develop literacy skills in children and youth, as well as social-emotional learning resources through peer mentoring and support, and ways to strengthen community-university partnerships to provide robust resources for Latino/a students and ultimately support their transition to higher grades.
Our model of Community mentorship provides a structural approach for examining ways English learners are supported in their literacy and language learning, particularly in how their positioning in specific bilingual contexts create constructions of self as a language learner. Using Multicultural Literature for Latino/as as a tool means that text-embedded cultural ideologies may reflect students’ language, how ELs relate to their ethnic/cultural identity and future L2 selves, and improve reading engagement. *Expectations* involve strengthening our relationship which requires dedication to have pertinent outcomes. Time and commitment to school collaboration within Latino/a communities can create a sense of validation and support, but also *confianza*, a sense of trust, or confidence resulting in more opportunities of discussions about schools and community reading programs that offer beneficial reciprocity (Alvarez, 2015). A bond of *confianza* through community collaboration may be requisite for Latino/a ELs’ educational success. Informed parents and teachers are more likely to be further involved in creating consistent educational expectations with ELs.

**Research Site**

The Centro Hispano de East Tennessee main office building offers on-site Latino/a children and youth educational programming (e.g. after school programs at partner elementary schools, youth mentoring through Centro Youth L.E.A.D., post-secondary access programs through the Latino/a student Success Coalition, and parent education programs). Centro Hispano is a bilingual organization (Spanish and English) and serves a community of Latino/a Mexican-American in Spanish-speaking families including children and youth. The summer program took place June 7th through July 1st over the course of four weeks, Monday through Thursday each week from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.. The site was Centro Hispano main office building with classrooms, a library, a patio and yard, a playground, and soccer fields. The summer
program theme was in celebration of *Latinidad*, so we delineated each week to celebrate a particular Spanish-speaking country or region of the world. Week one centered on Mexico, week two on Central America, week three on South America, and week four on the Caribbean region.

The *Latinidad* book clubs for rising 4th-8th grade Latino/a ELs occurred at Centro Hispano’s main office building as the location of the summer program. As a co-developed summer program focused on Latino/a (and Mexican) literacy and culture through my on-going partnership with Centro Hispano, I recruited participants in the research study from families already enrolled in the program. I recruited participants verbally at CH office building at the first pick-up or drop-off of children and youth registered for the program using CH’s flyer (Appendix A). A letter requesting informed parent/guardian permission and children/youth assent was given to each learners’ parent or guardian during enrollment into the summer program, during the recruitment process (Appendix B). The informed parent/guardian permission and children/youth assent form were available in English (See Appendix C) and Spanish (See Appendix D) depending on the preferred home language. I wrote the Spanish permission/assent form as a native English speaker using language assistance tools (iTranslate and Google Translate) to translate the forms to Spanish. My partner and director of youth and family engagement (YFE) of CH read over the form to check for Spanish fluency and accuracy. I as the researcher and CH staff members combined forces to explain the study in both English/Spanish and clarified or answered families’ questions once they were registered.

To participate in the study, but not the summer program, those who registered were required to bring back the permission and assent form signed by both the child/youth and a parent or guardian. Included in the permission/assent letter was a description of the study, the
purpose of the study, the responsibilities of the learner and researcher, and assurance of confidentiality. All learners who participated in book clubs, whether they returned a signed informed permission/assent letter or not, were given a book of their choice at the end of camp. No program attendee was required to participate in the study, as book clubs were considered regular instructional practice at the summer camp.

Participants

Participants in the study are rising fourth through ninth grade Latino/a English language learners from the same community in Eastern Tennessee and registered to enroll in the summer program developed by Centro Hispano’s department of youth and family engagement. A rising middle school cohort (grades four through nine) was utilized based in part on research showing that the association between self-efficacy and achievement is especially strong in middle school, including among minority students (Pajares & Graham, 1999). All participants in the study were girls and boys between the ages 9-14. These grades were selected because this is the transitional period to middle school grades (defined as the summer before fourth through ninth grade) and a formative developmental period academically, socially, and in language learning. The children and youth enrolled in the program ranged from ages pre-K to 10th grade and were assigned to respective age groups, including rising 9-10th grade peer counselors to the younger participants and self-identified as CIT (Counselors in training).

This study focused on book clubs for rising two grade level groups: fourth through fifth with 10 total participants and sixth through ninth with 9 total participants. One rising 9th grade (boy) CIT did join in on our book club two weeks into camp. As a bilingual organization, the Latino/a children and youth who enrolled in the overall summer program had a variety of
experience and proficiency levels in speaking and reading in a language other than English, primarily Spanish. Thus, all participants in this study spoke and/or read in Spanish to varying degrees.

**Latinidad Book Clubs: An Instructional Practice**

The aim of *Latinidad* book clubs was to conceptualize different forms of social, historical, and political knowledge that serve as cultural resources for transforming Latino/a youth’s self and heighten awareness of the cultural and linguistic capital within the Latino/a community. The design of critical pedagogy from a LatCrit lens enhances Latino/a youth’s cultural capital and promotes new perspectives in developing and utilizing multicultural literature for Latino/a children and youth. DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) describe the importance of spaces for students to discuss culturally responsive books or multicultural literature in conjunction with teacher facilitation and modeling can support deeper understanding of both cultural tensions and connections, reinforcing students’ ethnic identities. Literacy practices are the cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives; it is what people do with literacy (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016).

Folk stories can help Latino/a youth become socialized into the traditions and oral storytelling of their families and communities. Youth who tap into Latino/a historical cultural knowledge through the lens of their families and communities in poetic storytelling reflects the multiplicity of interests and influences of many different forces of all Latino/as in the world. Thomson (2007) notes that stories allow us to explore “the relationships between the past and present, between memory and personal identity, and between individual and collective memory”
Shared cultural experiences in communities with other immigrant students and families contribute to a literacy experience that can validate transnational knowledge and biliteracy in concert with public resources accessible in the local community (Dávila, Noguerón, & Vasquez-Dominguez, 2017). Shared reading experiences in discussion with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as within Latino/a youth groups can remind teachers, schools, and community stakeholders alike that members of the community feel empowered and interested in spaces where they feel validated and heard (Dávila et al., 2017; Potowski, 2016; Serrano, 2020).

Throughout *Latinidad* book clubs, I, as the participant-researcher, guide learners to discuss comprehension questions, respond to writing prompts, read and express poetry, and share personal stories to connect themes to culture and identity, using English and some Spanish. Poetry is shared in text, spoken word, and in writing each week to introduce other styles of text genres/features and narratives about Latino/a culture and identity. These act as mentor texts or models for youth to write their own poems as narratives of personal expression. Critical reflections and discussions using multicultural Latino/a texts are centered in youth’s choice in forms of expression (i.e. summary, poem, illustration). I regularly provide guided questions, writing prompts, and activities that focus on youth’s thoughts, feelings, and connections to thematic elements and cultural assets as it relates to their lived experiences.

**Selection of Multicultural Latino/a Books.**

The research site had a wide selection of books; however, one of Centro Hispano’s primary goals in our partnership was to expand their book selection to meet learners’ needs, including: appropriate grade level, reading level, language proficiency; bilingual books (i.e.
English and Spanish); poetry; younger chapter books; and Multicultural Literature for Latino/as that their children and youth could connect with. One of my goals in the selection process was to identify multiple genres (poetry, autobiography, literature) written by and about Latino/as or Mexican-Americans to celebrate Latinidad and reflect the summer program theme exploring Spanish-speaking regions and countries (Mexico, Latin America, Central America, Caribbean).

Multicultural Literature for Latino/as and poetry was selected through criteria of “cultural authenticity” and participant choice, as it relates to the summer program theme of Latinidad and celebrating diverse, global cultures. Books, picture books, and poems are all written by Latino/a or Mexican authors and represent Mexican American, Mexican, Central American, South American, and the Caribbean cultures. These were selected through searching online, anecdotally by other teachers in preparation for the program, and by suggestions from Centro Hispano staff.

Using culturally responsive literature requires educators to consider certain aspects when selecting books or poetry for Latino/a children and youth in bilingual spaces (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999, 2009, 2014). During preliminary program meetings, Centro Hispano partner and director, Centro Hispano summer program staff, and I discussed and shared books that might be appropriate for the age/grade level, interests, English and Spanish language, and literacy levels of all summer camp kids, particularly book club participants. At preliminary meetings, I brought a few books to share with Megan (director of youth and family engagement) and others at Centro to get their input and vice versa. Centro Hispano also had books on record from prior programs (e.g. after-school elementary, summer camps). An important criterion for book clubs was that most of the books we looked at be representative of Latinidad cultures (Mexico, Latin America, Central America, and Caribbean) as our theme.
I used Axelrod, Ysaaca, and Gillanders (2016) criteria for selecting multicultural literature that is relevant for Latino/a children and youth seen in Table 1. These categories guided my narrowing down books in the selection process. I examined (1) stories I felt were interesting and would appeal to learners; (2) stories that seemed to allow learners to see aspects of their lives reflected positively; and (3) books with which I felt the learners could connect. This interpretation includes my underlying assumptions and biases; however, partnering with the expertise of the Centro staff, children and youth, and community members allowed for conversations around the books selected. When Centro co-counselors expressed their enjoyment of books I had selected, as did the participants, I took it as confirmation that books met the criteria of 1 and 3.

I first had to glean information about books of interest to the participants from Centro staff, counselors, and my site partners, as a co-participant, to gain a general idea of their cultural backgrounds, interests, and if participants were bilingual/multilingual in Spanish or other indigenous languages. I knew that as the book club facilitator and native English speaker, I would develop a better understanding and get to know the participants firsthand throughout the program. I knew some of the poetry and literature might change as I sought input from the participants and Centro program staff. The final selection of Latino/a multicultural literature and poetry are listed and described in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects to Consider When Selecting Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authenticity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sociocultural beliefs and practices does the book describe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do these socio-cultural beliefs and practices reflect the children's experiences at home and in their community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are these socio-cultural beliefs and practices depicted in the book? Do they reflect the stereotypical views of people of specific cultural and ethnic groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is Spanish used in the book?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the book introduce sophisticated vocabulary in both English and Spanish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the book uses translation, are the spelling and grammar correct without any typographical errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If two languages are used, are they shown with equal importance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illustrations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the illustrations enrich the youth’s reading experience of the book?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the illustrations depict authentic images of Latino/a children and families?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are possible misconceptions that can emerge from the illustrations of the book?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the story engaging and interesting for the audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the story appropriate for the ages of the audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the story include topics that are important and meaningful for youth in the class?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Multicultural Literature for Latino/as and Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calling the Doves</strong> (Herrera, 1995)</td>
<td>Juan Felipe Herrera</td>
<td>Autobiographical</td>
<td><strong>Bilingual, Social Class, Family, Labor, Latino</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Esperanza Rising</strong> (Ryan, 2000)</td>
<td>Pam Munoz Ryan</td>
<td>YA Novel</td>
<td>Immigration, Family, Social Class, Grief, Mexican, Borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La Linea</strong> (Jaramillo, 2016)</td>
<td>Ann Jaramillo</td>
<td>YA Novel</td>
<td>Immigration, Borders, Social Class, Labor, Youth, Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Upside Down Boy</strong> (Herrera, 2000)</td>
<td>Juan Felipe Herrea</td>
<td>Autobiographical</td>
<td>Immigration, Farm workers, Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superniña del Cilantro</strong> (Herrera, 2003)</td>
<td>Juan Felipe Herrera</td>
<td>Picture Book</td>
<td>Immigration, borders, cultural duality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where I’m From</strong> (Lyon, 1999)</td>
<td>George Ella Lyon</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Identity, Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Procedure

The *Latinidad* Book clubs took place on Monday-Thursday for four weeks during the summer program. Book clubs occurred daily for one hour for the rising fourth through fifth grade group and one hour for the rising 6-9th grade group. Participation in book clubs accrued to a total of four-six hours each week, making it a total of 16 hours in book clubs for the program duration. I also interacted with participants outside of book club in activities, games, soccer, team building tasks, and during lunch/snack times which developed my relationship with participants and helped me learn more about learners’ interests, cultural backgrounds, and experiences in and outside of school. However, this study uses data during book clubs’ times only.

Book club activities include team building or getting to know each other activities, discussions informally as well as formally about social justice topics (e.g. immigration and the border, bicultural or bilingual identity), learners’ “root culture” experiences, and intercultural diversity of Latino/a and Mexican-American cultures through arts, math, sciences, and multicultural Latino/a picture books, novels, and poetry (some bilingual). Book clubs included literacy activities appropriate for each grade level group, critical writing reflections, art activities, discussions, a pre- and post- academic self-efficacy survey, and English language self-report questionnaires, all as regular instructional practice. Only data from participants who gave verbal and written assent with parent/guardian permission were included in the data analysis and reported findings.
Each day during book clubs we read and respond to a Latino/a multicultural text, selected through criteria of authenticity and participant choice, as it relates to the summer program theme of the celebration of Latinidad. This includes identifying texts by authors from and characters representing Spanish-speaking cultures in regions of Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. All literature is written and illustrated by Latino/a authors. Additionally, we participated in corresponding activities that include discussions, connections to self and their world, and critical reflections as it relates to social justice topics such as immigration, border crossing, and experiences based on class, race, ethnic identity, and gender. Activities tied in key vocabulary, reading comprehension, and intratext connections to engage learners to their own lived experiences as a second language learner.

As the book club facilitator, I read some texts and poetry in groups as well as and participants read literature, poetry, and their own writing. Book club roles (discussion director, connector, literary luminary, word wizard, illustrator) are utilized during participant-guided discussions. As a facilitator, I led comprehension questions, writing prompts, poetry writing, and encourage discussion to connect themes and ethnic identity, using English and some Spanish with support of a bilingual, co-counselor. Poetry from multicultural perspectives was shared in text, spoken word, and in writing each week to introduce other styles of text genres/features and narratives about Latino/a culture and identity. These serve as mentor texts or models for kids to write their own poems as creative expression and connect to cultural identity. Critical Writing Reflections could be in a form of ELs’ choice (e.g. summary, poem, illustration) and most were completed in participants’ journals that they took home at the end of camp. Participants wrote at least two critical reflections each week about literature connections to thematic topics and
I provided writing prompts that encouraged making connections to prior learning and lived experiences to gauge learners' thoughts, feelings, and connections to the story characters and themes.

**Methods of Data Collection**

A qualitative research design with intramethod mixing primarily interprets and analyzes qualitative data with quantitative measures to address the research questions. Intramethod mixing, or the use of a single method of data collection (i.e. qualitative interpretive case study) to obtain a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). An interpretive case study uses multiple sources of qualitative data to create case narratives, with supplementary self-efficacy survey and English language self-report questionnaire in descriptive statistical analysis. This methodology will enhance understanding of participants’ self-efficacy beliefs in their construction of second language selves and the role of ethnic identity centered in Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth practices.

The questionnaire and survey instrument as Likert scales are designed to collect and measure a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs about self-efficacy when participating in Latinidad book clubs and the role of self-efficacy in the construction of second language selves in transitional experiences to middle school grades. While quantitative scales assume direction and intensity of a value, belief, or attitude, they necessitate a fixed, linear continuum of response rather than a three-dimensional sea allowing for diverse responses and varying levels of depth (Saldaña, 2016). Thus, qualitative inquiry into self-efficacy provides richer opportunities for gathering and assessing, in language-based meanings, what the participants in this study value.
believe, think, and feel about the role of their ethnic identity and self-efficacy in their perception and construction of second language selves. The primary data sources are qualitative data are presented in table 3 which includes semi-structured interviews (Appendix H) with select participants, critical written reflections, Autobiography Poetry (sixth through ninth) or Family Story Portraits (fourth through fifth) (Charmaz, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2002).

Quantitative measures include a self-efficacy survey (Appendix E) and English language self-report questionnaire for grades fourth through fifth and sixth through ninth (Appendices F and G). The survey and questionnaire are tailored to address the variables of interest to the study and yet flexible enough to be modified and used with different LELL/EL populations, considering variations of social contexts (Duff, 2019). I include descriptive statistics to summarize this information. All data collected is HIPPA-FERPA protected by using pseudonyms for participants, gaining participant assent and parent/guardian permission for data use, and keeping all data secure in an online UTK server (i.e. Drive, Sheets) and papers in a secure cabinet in a locked UTK office. Only data with participant assent and parent/guardian permission is used in research analysis and report of findings and results. Following COVID-19 pandemic, participant school circumstances, changes, and adjustments will be considered in interview questions and in data analysis procedures.

**Qualitative Data**

As a socially conscious researcher drawing from an asset-based model to see participants’ perspectives and stories as opportunities for understanding their lived reality in co-constructing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Evidence</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interviews</td>
<td>Discussions were semi-structured; one-to-one; flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book club Observations</td>
<td>Aspects such as engagement, participants learning and sharing, interaction, interest in books/activities, meaning that was shared were observed and interpreted in notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical Poems</td>
<td>Written and verbally shared poetry by participants to reflect cultural heritage, traditions, and experiences to reflect on their ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical reflections</td>
<td>Written and/or verbal reflections participants made in relation to literature, discussion prompt, and/or personal lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo-writing</td>
<td>Memos were used to jot down my reflection, thoughts, interpretations in the data collection and analysis phases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
knowledge. My intention was to facilitate a rich and authentic data collection process. I took a culturally responsive approach to interviews and book club methodology to create a participant-focused environment rather than a researcher-focused way of communicating and storytelling which included language(s) requested by participants (English).

Interviews.

Qualitative researchers rely extensively on in-depth interviewing (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The number of participants in book clubs and initial self-report surveys and questionnaires helped determine selected participants for an in-depth interview; however, participants were ultimately selected for interviews based on attendance and availability. One interview was conducted from a peer mentor or Junior counselor in training that supported our book club each week; and thus was a participant who did not complete a survey or a questionnaire. Four interviewees (Irma, Lena, Maggy, and Rosa) were conducted with participants in rising grades sixth through ninth and three interviews (Rodrigo, Alfredo, Loidaly) were conducted with participants in rising grades fourth through fifth. Participant audio-recorded interviews are for research purposes and seek to learn about language and learning experiences in and outside of school, as it relates to self-efficacy beliefs and ethnic identity in the construction of second language selves. These interviews aim to understand Latino/a ELs’ attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors towards themselves as a language learner in transitioning to higher grades (i.e. middle school) during the summer months and b) triangulate data as a microscopic view on self-efficacy through participants’ voices in first-person interviews.
The face-to-face interviews were conducted over a four-week period. Each interview lasted about one hour, except for Rosa’s which lasted about ninety-minutes, and was conducted face-to-face at summer camp site to establish rapport, build trust, and to identify any nonverbal cues that warranted further questioning. All 7 of the interviews were conducted in English, as I am an English speaker and the participants spoke Spanish at various levels. 5 of the interviewees were female and 2 were male. Interviews were conducted at the Centro Hispano summer program site, normally in a quiet classroom, except in three instances in which they were conducted in a breakroom while other summer camp participants engaged in activities.

Prior to starting the interview most of the participants were interested to know why they had been chosen to participate in the research. The first 5 minutes of the interview was spent discussing my background, the reasons for conducting the research, and what I hoped to achieve or learn. This introduction to interviews allowed me to explain the purpose of the study as well as confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, the option to withdraw at any point and details to follow procedures of informed assent and obtain interviewees’ signature (Interview assent form given to participants are included as appendices) I also requested their permission to record the conversation for transcription using my cell phone recorder, that some notes will be taken (notes were taken as back-up in case of equipment failure).

Observational Field Notes.

Data collected from field note observations occurred following book clubs that I facilitated each week. The observations focused on activities and interactions that occurred inside and outside of book clubs (e.g. outdoors, soccer field, lunch area, other classroom) with
participants in fourth through ninth grade. I observed and wrote brief, reflective notes of book club discussions with participants which included LELLs, peer ambassadors (a rising 9th and a rising 10th grader), and a co-camp counselor who is a full-time staff member at the local NGO. I engaged in analytic memoing and interpretation concurrently while collecting data which allowed me to observe themes, inform instructional practices, and reexamine the selected literature and poetry in terms of how participants were engaging with and responding to texts and discussion topics. Then, I strived to come to decisions with participants in a democratic process (i.e. vote) to choose different books or poems from a list I had selected during the four-week program.

**Quantitative Data**

Participants complete self-efficacy surveys regarding beliefs about reading and learning abilities in their grade level groups (Appendix E) at the start and end of the summer program. Survey items 5 through 13 are used in correlational analysis as a reliable subscale measuring personal beliefs in ability to achieve. Participants self-reflect on their perceived English language competencies in an English language self-report questionnaire (Appendices F & G) based on WIDA grade-level (fourth through fifth; sixth through eighth) Can-Do descriptors as a language self-efficacy measure (WIDA, 2020). WIDA ELP levels measure reading, writing, speaking, and listening competencies or can-do descriptors quantitatively as 1 = entering, 2 = beginning, 3 = developing, 4 = expanding, 5 = bridging (i.e. grade level standard), and 6 = reaching. Self-efficacy measures constitute instruments of self-evaluation as an EL in a) what values, beliefs, and qualities participants attribute to themselves and b) how one envisions oneself in the present and our possible selves in the future.
As conceptualized by Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is an individualized self-perception that is in course of change across diverse contexts and activities and situational circumstances which can be tested using collective tests. The self-efficacy construct is a useful source for developing measures on assessment of an individual’s self-perception of competency and an indicator of confidence in social behavior and academic success. Social self-efficacy is defined by Wei, Russell and Zakalik (2005) as an “individuals’ belief that they are capable of initiating social contact and developing new friendships.” Social self-efficacy plays an important role in social behavior and academic success of students. Survey items on the self-efficacy subscale measure belief in personal ability 1) to grow with effort and 2) to achieve goals. Questionnaire measured participants’ perceived “can-do’s” of what learners can process or produce in English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) (WIDA, 2020).

The English language self-report questionnaire and Self-efficacy survey are both administered the first week of summer camp to all participants in both rising 4-5th grades and rising 6-9th grades as separate groups. While both data instruments measure self-efficacy, particularly they are formative measures of the respondents’ perceived level of proficiency and performance and self-competency in effort, progress, and learning as an English language learner transitioning to middle school grades.

I administered the questionnaires individually to each participant and I read each item as participants tactiley responded on an emoji Likert scale and I marked their response on the related 5-point Likert scale form. I administered the 18-item self-efficacy survey in grade-level groups as participants responded to each item on a 5-point Likert scale with paper-pencil at their own pace with available language support from me as needed. Creswell (2013) recommends a
group administration with a teacher, in which myself as the researcher and co-participant, read the questions and answer choices aloud to the students. I alone collected and analyzed this data, using respondent pseudonyms for confidentiality.

**English Language Self-Report Questionnaire.**

I administered an English language self-report questionnaire to individual participants verbally in age-appropriate language in a quiet setting the first week of the summer program. Each respondent tactively answers each item directly using a rating scale of emojis that correspond to WIDA English language proficiency (ELP) areas of English: vocabulary, reading comprehension, fluency, use of language, pronunciation, language domains according to grade level descriptors. WIDA is a national consortium in which can-do descriptors are a part of systemic language standards, assessments, and professional learning. This questionnaire utilizes a Likert Point scale in which participants are provided a question verbally in reading, writing, speaking, or listening domains in English and then mark the box indicating where they stand.

The questionnaire incorporates applicable components of TN State’s WIDA Can-do descriptors at corresponding grade levels (3-5th and 6-9th) and English language proficiency levels (ELP) in reading, writing, speaking, and listening domains that correlate to a Likert Scale rating (WIDA, 2020). Bandura (2006) makes several recommendations about constructing a self-efficacy scale, including: a) using “can do” rather than “will do;” (b) conceptually analyzing the relevant domains of functioning (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

On the questionnaire, each Likert scale value corresponds to appropriate ELP levels (1-Entering, 2- Emerging, 3- Developing, 4- Expanding, and 5- Bridging.) Each item in the report is modified based on 4-8 grade WIDA can-do descriptors that reflect school-based English
language development (ELD) standards in ESL programs in the Eastern TN district (WIDA, 2020). Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are practiced in book clubs as an instructional practice in the summer program. Only self-reports from participants who gave assent and have parents' permission will be included in data collection/analysis. Each report will take 15-20 minutes to administer. The goal is to a) evaluate respondents’ self-reported English language proficiencies as another source of data showing participants’ perceived language beliefs in development of second language selves and b) triangulate with survey data and qualitative data to strengthen validity and understanding of results. Language self-reports are also a significant self-evaluation tool to support learners’ metalinguistic knowledge and efficacious behavior in developing language skills (Moyer, 2018).

**Self-efficacy Formative Survey.**

This study is primarily qualitative; however, the survey provides insight into the participants’ beliefs in their ability to achieve in reading and learning as a supplement to qualitative data. The self-efficacy formative reading survey was administered the first week of the summer program (June 7, 2021) and the last day of the summer program (July 1, 2021) for participants to complete with paper and pencil in grade level groups (fourth through fifth; sixth through eighth). The dataset includes 20 students in rising fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades and both rising grade level and gender are distinguished. This measure is an 18-item self-efficacy survey that participants independently complete with paper-pencil. I administered the survey to each grade level group and was available to assist in translation if needed; however, not much additional support was asked. The subscale in the survey that is used in data analysis (items 5 through 13) included in descriptive statistics and correlational analysis include belief in
personal ability 1) to grow with effort and 2) to achieve goals (Gaumer Erickson, & Noonan, 2018). The items on the survey are written at a sixth grade reading level, per the Flesch–Kincaid readability score (Kincaid et al., 1975). This survey measures participants’ knowledge of experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors as constructs of self-efficacy as a language learner.

After my thorough review of literature on self-efficacy surveys, looking at related terms of perseverance, motivation, confidence, growth mindset, and identity. I found appropriate self-efficacy surveys to adopt to my participants based on grade level and the central research question. The self-efficacy survey used in this study is adopted from the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (Muris, 2001) which is based on items from both a) the Children’s Self-Efficacy Scale (Bandura, 2006) and b) the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (Bandura, 1996). I also adopted the self-efficacy survey from Gaumer Erickson, & Noonan (2018).

The description of Bandura’s surveys (1996; 2006) is that it measures children and youths’ views of their ability to grow and manage their own learning to succeed academically in reading, socially, and emotionally as a Latino/a English language learner (LELL). Gaumer Erickson, & Noonan (2018) scale is designed to measure each participant’s perceived level of proficiency in the two essential components of self-efficacy, which are: 1. Belief that ability can grow with effort. 2. Belief in one’s ability to meet specific goals and/or expectations in the context of reading self-efficacy in transitioning to middle school. I further discuss reliability analysis of the self-efficacy survey subscale’s Cronbach’s alpha below and results in chapter 4.
Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed through an emergent and iterative process that involved multiple readings of the case data and organizing codes and themes into higher levels of categories within and across the interviews, observations, and other written sources of data (Merriam, 1998). I first transcribed interviews and coded using a thematic analysis method (Saldaña, 2016). The data analysis process included a first and second coding cycle of coding. As noted by Cooper (2009), “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). First, the multiple sources of qualitative data were analyzed using different coding methods 1) values-coding and 2) theming the data (Saldaña, 2016) in which interview data and written artifact data were stored and analyzed in Google Sheets through the locked UTK server.

I conducted analytic memo-writing during initial coding, preceding the two rounds of coding. I then asked the Centro Hispano program director and research partner to review initial codes, categories, and themes. I themed the data according to values, attitudes, and beliefs codes in values coding and subsequent categories (Saldaña, 2016). After the qualitative analysis phase, the quantitative pre- and post self-efficacy survey and initial questionnaire results were tabulated with general descriptors and compared frequencies with descriptive statistics. During the final phase of the data analysis, the quantitative results and qualitative findings were compared to provide an enhanced case description and to address the research questions and elaborate on the processes of LELLs’ identity development and self-efficacy beliefs in transitional experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2011).
This design matches the purpose of the study because quantitative data were used to identify the participants’ identity as a Latino/a English language learner and the role of self-efficacy; the qualitative findings acquired from interviews, critical reflections, autobiographical poems and family story portraits, observational field notes, and analytic memoing were used in conjunction with the quantitative descriptive statistics (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

Interpretive case study lends itself to theming the data after multiple rounds of coding analysis as it presumes relational sufficiency for each of the designated inter-case paths between self-efficacy, perceptions of second language selves and ethnic identities in *Latinidad* book clubs in the transition to middle school grades for 4-5th and 6-9th grade Latino/a groups. Thematic analysis is a bottom-up, iterative, cyclical approach to coding data compatible with the reflexive research practice in analytic memo-writing (Saldaña, 2016). The cycle involved the following: 1. Holistic reading >>2. Identification of coding categories >>3. Selection of primary and secondary codes >>4. Data saturation >>5. Interpretation of themes. This process involved multiple readings of the case data and organizing codes and themes into higher levels of categories within and across the interviews, observations, and other written sources of data (Merriam, 1998). Codes and themes were then further analyzed to identify data related to key concepts in the research question(s), the theoretical framework, and current research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This process helped to identify issues necessitating further attention and alternative explanations of the phenomenon studied.
I analyzed the qualitative data according to researched techniques (Saldaña, 2016). Qualitative data sources include participants’ autobiographical poems, family story portraits, and critical reflections, observational field notes, and transcripts of interviews; analytic memos supported analysis during coding cycles. Memo-writing includes reflexive writing by myself as a researcher-participant to reflect on book clubs, data collection, researcher-participant bias, and inform in-depth analysis during the stages of preliminary planning, data collection, and coding processes. Memo-writing during data collection and analysis will address cultural or linguistic assumptions and allow the researcher to remain ethical in relationships with community partners and participants, as a native English speaker and out-group member (Charmaz, 2006).

**Values Coding.**

A few months after the summer program concluded, I transcribed the interviews in the same order that they were conducted. I read over each transcript and set of notes several times to familiarize myself with the data from an objective point of analysis (Ponelis, 2015; Saldaña, 2016). I began the process of organizing and structuring the data by type and by participant.

Bernard, Wutich, and Ryan (2016) recommend starting any text analysis project with pencil-and-paper methods. After transcribing all audio recordings, I printed hard copies. I read each piece of data multiple times and completed two rounds of values coding in search of patterns. Values coding relates to participants’ worldviews and is useful in research inquiries that explore cultural values and intrapersonal experiences and actions. Before coding, I created abbreviations according to values-coding method: (a) attitudes (b) beliefs, and (c) values (V/A/B). I assigned a color to each and conducted the first cycle of values coding by highlighting
terms related to these a priori codes throughout the transcripts to visually identify references to the targeted codes (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2016).

In the initial coding stage, my objective was to garner an overview of participant data by reading through and understanding it and develop a priori codes. Then, in deductive coding (i.e. line by line coding), I dive deeper into the data to add details and specificities to the codes to capture as much richness from the interview data as possible. I organized codes by each participant in Google Sheets to reflect on their collective meaning and interplay through analytic memoing with the premise that the three constructs V/A/B are interconnected to create categories. Concurrent, analytic memoing weaves the three values-coding constructs’ most salient codes together (Saldaña, 2014, 2016). These codes and categories were used to create interwoven themes used in the analysis phase. During analysis, I asked myself: How do participants interpret what is happening, and how do they speak about it? What does their language reveal? What are the assumptions made by the participants?

Values coding is applicable to an interpretive case study as it explores cultural values, constructed identity, oral history, and participant experiences and actions in differential association (Saldaña, 2016). Differential association suggests that an individual's values are influenced by the groups they interact with intensively (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Values Coding methods focus on participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions and is compatible with this study’s objective to determine LELLS’ self-efficacy beliefs and literacy experiences with respect to their participation in Latinidad book clubs. Values-coding explores participants’ cultural value, belief, and attitude systems derived from their personal and schooling experiences, language development, and self-constructed identities in social interactions in this study (Saldaña, 2016).
While coding according to values, attitudes, and beliefs, I acknowledge that I observed participant beliefs and constructs at that moment in time which evolve in different trajectories for different reasons throughout a life-course. The goal is for codes to be grounded in the participants’ worldview or personal ideology and not reflective of my own as the researcher.

**Theming the Data.**

Following the first round of values coding of interview data, I proceeded to analyze participants’ critical written reflections and autobiographical poetry (grades sixth through ninth) in conjunction with reading my field notes related to Multicultural Literature for Latino/as and social justice themes. Written reflections and poems were typed into a Google Sheet as a part of the participant’s case. I re-examined current codes, categories, and themes from participants’ written artifacts and my field notes. I then used these to analyze participants’ written autobiographical poems, defined as “identity is story”; in which second language selves are actively constructed and co-constructed in book clubs. In the cyclical, iterative process of coding case data, codes, categories, and themes were re-examined and revised (Cooper, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Saldaña, 2014, 2016).

**Case Narratives.**

Following initial analysis, the transcripts and notes are developed into coherent and manageable write-ups for each case structured according to the descriptive framework to allow subsequent cross-case analysis. Rich descriptions in the form of case narratives allow the reader to assess the transferability of the interpretation and the results, thereby increasing dependability (Ponelis, 2015). This project’s case study narrative was both thematic and chronological because
the narrative explains the use of data and information in relation to establishing a community partnership, summer program decision-making, and the LELLS’ development over time. I shared the case narratives along with categories/themes with Centro Hispano partner, and summer program director, and asked if there were any inaccuracies, misunderstanding, or content they were unhappy with for any reason that they please let me know within two weeks after which I would assume that they agreed with the write-up of the data. This confirmation also adds to the credibility of the research (Creswell, 2012; 2013).

The themes that I interpreted from the data were as follows: Creating a sense of belonging, Constructing second language self, Connecting to root or heritage culture: “Where I’m From,” Change in transitional experiences, and Community-university research partnerships. These themes are discussed further in Chapter 4 and the salient codes (values, attitudes, and beliefs), categories and themes from two rounds of coding interviews and written artifacts (Saldaña, 2016) are presented (Table 8 in Appendix I. The categories in red typeface were amended during coding data of multiple participants through analytic memoing in two rounds of coding. It is important to keep in mind that findings of qualitative data interpretation are considered dependable if the researcher’s subjective role (see Positionality: Interlude section) is outlined and the researcher explained the data collection and recording process in detail (Chapter 4: Methodology) (Gorman & Clayton, 2005).

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

Paper-and-pencil responses of both surveys and the questionnaire were manually entered into the IBM SPSS (Version 27) predictive analytics software, resulting in a single dataset.
Descriptive statistics were primarily conducted to provide more information about participants in this study and variables in the dataset to highlight potential relationships between variables using Spearman and Pearson Correlational Analysis. Descriptive information also enhanced the case narratives with detailed background information about the participants.

The self-efficacy survey used in this study is adopted from the following scales: Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (Muris, 2001) which is based on items from both a) the Children’s Self-Efficacy Scale (Bandura, 2006) and b) the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (Bandura, 1996). I also adopted the self-efficacy survey from Gaumer Erickson, & Noonan (2018). The description of Bandura’s surveys (1996; 2006) is that it measures children and youths’ views of their ability to grow and manage their own learning to succeed academically in reading, socially, and emotionally as a Latino/a English language learner (LELL). Gaumer Erickson, & Noonan (2018) scale is designed to measure each participant’s perceived level of proficiency in the two essential components of self-efficacy, which are: 1. Believe that ability can grow with effort. 2. Belief in one’s ability to meet specific goals and/or expectations in the context of reading self-efficacy in transitioning to middle school.

**Reliability and Validity**

The subscale in the self-efficacy survey that examines LELLS’ belief in personal ability to achieve, specifically 1) to grow with effort and 2) to achieve goals (Gaumer Erickson & Noonan, 2018) includes items 5 through 13. This subscale is included in the statistical analysis due to these items’ reliability. The reliability of this subscale, personal ability to achieve and ability to grow with effort (items #1-9; \( \alpha = .798 \)), shows internal reliability.
Furthermore, I conducted Correlational Analysis using Pearson (parametric) and Spearman (nonparametric) correlations to determine statistical significance of self-efficacy survey subscale with a) language self-report questionnaire data in reading, speaking, writing, and listening in elementary and middle school groups, and b) gender. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of initial SEQ-C subscales of the self-efficacy survey could not be applied due to small sample size (N=20). Future research on larger sample sizes using this survey will apply EFA to examine the salient characteristics and structure of the self-efficacy survey.

**Data Cleaning.**

Data were screened for outliers and missing data (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Data were screened to identify common sources of error such as missing data, typing errors during data entry, column shifts, coding errors, and outliers. Also, the need to reverse-score items was assessed, but did not prove applicable due to the purposefully forward-worded nature of self-efficacy items. Descriptive and frequency statistics were used to identify missing data, which were handled through use of valid percent in frequency analysis and listwise deletion of the item as noted later in the analysis and consisted of complete datasets. The Likert nature of the scale unsurprisingly eliminated outliers from the item responses. Deleted items were treated as missing data.

Qualitative data is cleaned using transcription software such as Otter to transcribe interviews with book club participants to correctly interpret language and meaning (i.e. English and/or Spanish, if applicable). I ensured interview transcripts were clear and readable; and included analytic memo-writing and observation notes in Google Sheets qualitative data sets. I
used analytic memoing during stages of coding interview data as well as other qualitative sources
which include my comments and reactions to begin to capture and interpret codes in thematic
processes. Additionally, codes, categories and themes were member-checked by community
partner and dissertation committee member to provide input on my data interpretation and
enhance validity (Creswell & Poth, 2013). All data will remain confidential through using
pseudonyms and de-identifying any personal information or names.

Trustworthiness.

In interpretive case study research, the number of participants is relatively small (i.e. 20
total participants; 9 in sixth through ninth grades; 11 in fourth through fifth grades) (Ponelis,
2015). According to Creswell (2014, 2016), a sample size of six to eight participants for
homogenous samples enhances trustworthiness. Using multiple sources of data corroborates the
coding and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

The depth, honesty, and quality of interview responses reflects the relationship that
develops between the researcher and participant in which establishing a rapport of empathy and
mutual trust is key (Saldaña, 2016). My researcher-participant positionality in this central case
of study will benefit establishing a mutually respectful relationship, but also demands a reflexive
nature in interviewing so that the deeper meanings and dynamics unfolding do not go unchecked
(Ponelis, 2015). Thus, I use memo-writing in planning, implementation, and data analyses.

Moreover, answering the following four questions (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987)
can help to determine whether the case method is appropriate for a particular research situation:
1. Can the phenomenon of interest be studied outside its natural setting? 2. Must the study focus
on contemporary events? 3. Is control or manipulation of subjects or events necessary [or possible]? 4. Does the phenomenon of interest enjoy an established theoretical base? (p. 372).

I followed these procedures (see Cresswell, 2009):

- Audio recording the interviews;
- Taking detailed researcher memos during and after each interview;
- Transcribing each interview; and
- Checking the transcripts to make sure they match with interviews, as well as align to my interview notes.

Following these procedures enabled me to ensure – prior to coding – that the data I was looking at accurately represented the parents’ voices. Next, understanding the analysis itself as a type of counter-story, I was careful to maintain a series of procedures to ensure the reliability of my analysis (again, following Creswell, 2009):

- Keeping researcher memos on the codes as they emerge – and allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than attempt to impose my own ideas;
- Clarifying my bias at every step, and how my background shapes the interpretation of data or findings; and
- Not dismissing opposing viewpoints, so the credibility of what participants told me is more reliable.
**Triangulating Data.**

Data triangulation design involves collecting and analyzing primarily qualitative data with some quantitative data concurrently and using the combination to understand a research problem (Clark & Creswell, 2008; Creswell, 2003). The convergence of both methods of data enhanced rigor of findings (Creswell, 2012, 2013). Multiple rounds of coding were necessary to reach saturation (Saldaña, 2016). I continued this method of coding, analyzed the data, and identified significant themes (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

The purpose for collecting survey, observational, and artifact data was to compare it with that from the semi-structured interviews. As Creswell (2003) explains, triangulation of data is essential to the validity of the data. This process allows for cross verification from two or more sources. Credibility was enhanced through the triangulation of data with multiple sources as well as researcher reflexive practice in memo-writing during data collection and analyses and thick descriptions through interviews and observational data. I conducted descriptive analysis to summarize this information.

Themes that reflect the observational and written and dialogic reflections during book clubs and summer program activities often appeared in interview responses. Interview responses often echoed information gleaned from the survey results. The process of merging these types of data supports the consistency of findings from these various research measures. In addition to validation, this process deepened my understanding of these results and themes. Considering this study was insider research, it was essential to be sure that multiple data points were used to allow for community partners to check the data interpretation (Josselson, 2013). Multiple sources of data allows for triangulation to reach saturation.
I also used investigator triangulation depicted in Figure 5 which involves the triad of member-checking with community partners as co-designers in the summer program, particularly Megan, the children, youth, and family engagement director of Centro Hispano de East Tennessee. Megan is also my research committee member and was given a portion of qualitative findings from thematic analysis to review my interpretation of codes, categories, and themes for authenticity. As such, my community partner read and reviewed Spanish writing accuracy in all forms, letters, and flyers in participant recruitment and during the summer program.

After my initial codes were established using values coding, I shared my codes, categories, and themes with to provide input on the authenticity of my data interpretation and aid my reflexive practice as a participant researcher. Her initial interpretation review could provide more context to participants’ case narrative to examine bias in my interpretation of participants’ experiences. As a partner in the research design and key community stakeholder, Megan’s input serves as a check on the viability of interpretation and lends validity to the research design in engaged scholarship (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).
Figure 5. Investigator Triangulation
INTERLUDE: THREE P’s OF ENTANGLEMENTS IN POSITIONALITY, PARTICIPANTS, AND PARTNERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

In the previous chapters, I reviewed and critiqued the extant literature pertaining to this study’s dual purpose: 1) intervening in the field’s methodological approaches that interweave qualitative and quantitative research methods by advocating for a more “embodied” and collaborative engagement with our research processes and our participatory roles through a model of community engaged scholarship, and 2) furthering research on culturally responsiveness in literacy instruction by investigating a local community of Latino/a children and youth in a community-based summer program. In this interlude, I take pause before I begin to attend to data findings, results, and discussion in the following chapters to provide for the reader a fuller understanding of the inter-relations between participants, researcher, place, and partnership and how these relations came to bear on the research process.

First, I must create a conversation about relationships—relationships between people and place and relationships between people as partners in research. This study would not exist without the people who agreed to participate as partners and as key community stakeholders towards educational outcomes for the local Latino/a community. It would not exist without a commitment to a mutual partnership that far extends the bounds of the co-developed summer camp: Latinidad in summer reading. It would not exist in the way it does now had the context and collaborative practices of the study been different. This study would not exist without my creation of it or my field work and background as a teacher. Each of these crucial elements—participants, researcher, place, and partnership—had profound effects on this study, individually and relationally.
My participants and our relations came to bear on my thinking about the local Latino/a community, in particular children and youth, their perceptions of self within the context of place—i.e., their home, schools, and communities. Particularly place as the context of transitioning to higher grades (i.e., middle school) and their perceived self-efficacy as a language learner in the processes of identity construction in formative developmental years. Place also as positioning within a local Latino/a community and place as positioning of oneself in a smaller group of Latino/a children and youth among their teachers or counselors at a summer camp. The interactions I had with the participants and partners and with the local Latino/a community space as a place also exerted considerable influence on myself as a person and on how I have come to conceive of relationships between people, place, and literacy practices.

Moreover, I influenced my participants and the place—the site, the partner organization, and the local Latino/a community. I left traces of myself and my thinking with every person I spoke with and with every step in and outside of the research process along the way. My very presence shaped my interaction with my participants. The four of us—participants, research, place, and partnership—together created this story and shaped this story, and we were all forever changed during the process. Therefore, I dedicate this interlude to attending to each of these elements in hope to make our individual and collective influences on this project visible to the reader.

I begin this section with a positionality statement articulating my worldview and its potential effects on the research process, as well as my relationship with the study and with my participants and partners. I draw from information gleaned from the community organization and my partners through our co-development of a summer reading camp, English language self
reports (see appendix F and G), reflections and observations of participants, and from interview
data to describe the study’s participants as a group and to construct individual profiles because
the community partners, children and youth with whom I worked are such an integral part of this
project. I then proceed to describe the research setting and context.

**The Researcher: Positionality**

As a prior elementary teacher in a racially and linguistically integrated and predominantly
low-income school, I am interested in the inequity effects of education, particularly in the ways
schools, teachers, and the community can transform teaching practices (e.g. literacy) to better
serve marginalized language groups. As a racially White American, able-bodied, cis-hetero
female and a native English speaker, I share many qualities with the current teacher force and
have similar experiences in under-preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse
learners, particularly English language learners. As an educator and researcher, I often struggle
to fuse my position as a monolingual, native English speaker or “cultural outsider” with my love
for diverse voices and literature in learning settings. As a participant-researcher to the central
case under study, I have wondered how I can support critical dialogue in connecting historical
and contemporary experiences of Latino/a children and youth with multicultural texts. How can I
develop meaningful relationships and honor the voices of Latino/a youth without “saving” or
“silencing” these groups?

Disclosure of these perspectives or biases builds critical reflexivity (i.e. memo-writing,
note-taking, member checking) into the research process, and allows myself, as the researcher, to
articulate my perspective in journaling and field notes for the purpose of critical examination.
Reflexivity is critical reflection on the kind of knowledge produced from research and how that knowledge will be generated (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

A researcher’s on-going self-reflection is an essential part of qualitative research, no matter the chosen qualitative method (Burnard, 1995). Researchers must take into consideration his/her/their “pre-understanding”, both in the planning process as well as during the analyzing process, in order to minimize any bias of his/her/their own influence (Long & Johnson, 2000). Reflection and perspective taking in on-going memo-writing during all stages of this study (preliminary planning, during the summer program, data collection and analysis, report of findings), I am able to:

1. Navigate unique bicultural/bilingual spaces
2. Address any cultural or linguistic assumptions
3. Remain ethical in relationships with community partners/ participants
4. Practice reflexivity to encourage thinking about cultural norms, expectations, and behaviors in the space.

Such practices increase awareness of subjectivities especially during analysis in which confidentiality, safety, and objectivism are important to prioritize. We must engage in reflexivity in all stages of the research process. Guillemin and Gillam’s (2004) assert that reflexivity occurs in multiple phases. The objective is to engage in reflexivity before entering the field to be mindful of “ethically important moments” (p. 265) as a research-participant. Reflexive practice ideally continues into the field work, with special attention to issues around the best ways for participant authentic representation (Aleixo, Hansen, Horii, & Un, 2014).
Guillemin and Gillam (2004) propose that to engage productively in this process, the researcher needs ample time and the ability to reflect on their own past or others’ field experiences. Recognizing beliefs, assumptions, and relationship to topic and participants is key and influential to the study. Self-reflexivity in research is asymmetrical in relationships between the researcher and the communities of study and recognizes that one’s thoughts and interpretations stem from who we are and what we believe (Davies, 1999).

The initial phase in establishing a community partnership with local NGO Centro Hispano de East Tennessee to serve LELL students (grades 4-8+) in a summer reading program involved reflecting on the ethics of research and my positionality in working in unique bicultural spaces.

Memo 1

What does it mean to be ethical in community research? Ethics stems from a set of beliefs, attitudes, or value that influence your choices or actions, often formulated by the culture or society you were raised in. As cultural norms change based on location or the society you’re in, ethics may adapt, challenge or adjust your position within that socio-cultural context. Ethics to me are truths that hold value to you, based on morals or laws that offer protections or safeguards to individuals in that cultural group. However, certain ethics apply to all people that relies on a consensus of truth or joint values. How you choose to treat others, in your words and actions, reflect your set of ethics. As a researcher, it’s important to be aware of ethical principles such as safety, confidentiality, objectivism, not oppressing individuals...etc. in order to find some version of truth. How subjective are ethics? Being observant and reflective in mentor relationships and looking at them from a positive perspective as to what I can learn,
gain, or understand based on different experiences. Respecting them means being careful of judgements or how you may treat others in an experience, but respecting their viewpoint and what they have to offer. Active listening and asking questions rather than jumping to conclusions or judgements. Use observable actions in research, not only our judgment. It is important to sustain a good relationship with community members, mentors and participants which involves analyzing my role in the research and wider community program. My role in research is to manage subjectivity in my bias, through reflection and journaling, while being objective with my goal or question of research. It’s important to be aware of other people’s possible subjectivity while not getting “caught up in it” as I deduce findings, analysis, or experiences I am inquiring about. Building a rapport that is essential in my relationships will allow you to remain objective in conducting research. As an empathetic and caring person by nature, remaining unaffected by others’ experiences is challenging to me. There are certain risks when it comes to doing research, either from the participants or researcher. If participants do not feel comfortable with certain information that they wish to remain confidential, handling the relationship’s efficacy with care is essential. Where do you draw the line?

The Participants

There will be evidence of reflexivity with respect to various aspects of the study, such as my roles and involvement, my relationship to participants and the wider community and context (language, culture, institution), and to the phenomenon under investigation, as well as my ways of managing ethical challenges and other practical decisions prior to, during, and after the study. I will be able to construct my own understanding and assumptions to improve cultural self-awareness and feel capable of framing narratives of other people’s lived realities. Empowering
participants involves enabling the groups’ individual and collective autonomy and the right to
determine the nature and terms of the involvement in order to ensure protection from
exploitation, even when unintended.

The stories participants shared with me regarding their families’ struggles in moving to
the US, whether it be based in English speaking or reading fluency, financial struggles, or family
insult or harassment, I declined to report these experiences as a protection of the children and
youth in the study, their families, and larger community nor did I mean to generalize their
experiences to a larger Latino/a or English learner population. As such, their voices in their
writings, storytelling, interviews, and autobiographical poetry served as a reflexive practice for
each LELL and what I gleaned from their words was not to strictly thematize the findings or
support their identity development, rather, to honor their individual and collective autonomy to
determine for themselves what they would share with me and their peers and to what extent.

My own cultural understandings and assumptions regarding what participants shared
about their lived experiences in learning English and navigating challenges within their families
and in school related to ethnicity, race, or class had to be “silenced, yet not disappeared.” It was
not my role to discourage sharing or depict the sensitive topics that came up in book clubs or in
one-to-one interviews, yet it was my responsibility to listen with well-meaning intent. I sought to
understand what drove their sense of self as an English learner, and as a human being.

As I report and interpret the words of others, even from the participant’s own words, I
make decisions of how to construct their voices and what to include or not include in my study
which ultimately leave margins of error in objectivity. This brings up the point of disclosure in
such scenarios and the ethical and legal implications as a researcher. I thought about how to respectfully respond to emotional disclosures when they occur, such that a person tells very sensitive information that I did not expect or reveals difficult emotional or sensitive information, i.e. trauma, that I (unintentionally) probed into the discussion. I thought about the ethical obligations I had in interviews and book club scenarios or “ethically important moments’ (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Memo-writing in the field and in analysis supported my reflection and interpretation as I sought out how to best represent the participants’ words but beyond that, their perceived selves and the emotions, desires, values, attitudes, and beliefs that lie within.

As a participant-researcher, procedural ethics or frameworks cannot address all that is needed for dealing with these important moments in research, so reflexivity is key in making ethical decisions (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexive practice through memoing, journaling, and critiquing my own methods and approaches in research can curb some unwanted repercussions from my very empathetic nature in doing interviews. Ultimately, by addressing disclosures in an ethical way, I interact with community members (LELLs and program staff) in a human, non-exploitative way while also being mindful of the dual role as a researcher.

I decided to begin book clubs with the Cross the Line or One Step Forward, One Step Backward activity. Cross the Line is a powerful activity that helps participants understand the effects of prejudice, ridicule, teasing and bullying. The goal of this activity is to help identify and eliminate the barriers between people that perpetuate acts of unkindness. Learners become aware both that they are not alone in facing insecurities, fears and challenges and that there are differences among those challenges. We made agreements before beginning to do the activity in complete silence, and we can talk about it after each prompt if necessary and at the end. Before
we began, I showed students Edward Hall’s Cultural Iceberg Model (1976) in Figure 6 to show the iceberg of our diversity. Despite this cultural model originating in the 1970’s, Hall’s (1976) research on the cultural perception of space within the context of culture is still revered today. It depicts how interpretations of core values become visible to the observer in the form of behaviors (e.g. words we use, the way we act, laws we enact, and ways we communicate). Observable behaviors and deeply rooted ideas can be understood by analyzing values, studying formative factors, and reflection.

I reminded LELLS that all feelings are important. In this exercise, participants are lined up, shoulder to shoulder, on a long piece of tape. I, as the facilitator of the book club, reads a series of statements related to society identity, privilege, language, and oppression; participants determine whether these statements are reflective of their lived experiences and then either step forward, step backward, or remain in place. After every prompt had been read, I led a group discussion on their interpretations of the pattern of the distribution of participants in the room and their reactions to the statements and both individual and collective responses. The goal of the exercise was to visually illustrate injustice, reflect on how it feels to cross the line, and understand the effects of prejudice, ridicule, teasing and other hurtful behaviors.

I was careful not to be judgmental or shaming in this activity, and rather be supportive and accepting. Everyone in the club will probably have a reason to cross the line, and I reassured participants that showing their feelings is healthy and participating was optional. Everyone participated. I allowed a space of silence after each “cross the line” before inviting students back to their original places. The participants all identified as Latino/a though we were of mixed genders. The exercise intentionally pushes the boundaries of the participants' comfort zones, as
Figure 6. Edward Hall’s Cultural Iceberg Model (1976)
the ultimate trustfall, in the hope of spurring them on to powerful learning about social justice issues and their own lives, as well as their commonalities and differences they share. After each of the “cross the line” categories, I: 1) Paused until the participants who have crossed the line have turned to face the other students; 2) Said “Now notice how it feels to cross the line and notice how it feels to watch other people cross the line (pause.) Notice who is with you (pause). Notice who is not with you (pause);” 3) Asked everyone to come back together behind the masking tape. Here are some of the statements:

“Cross the line in silence if you’ve ever been teased or called a bad name or made fun of.”
“Cross the line if you’ve ever felt left out because you’re a girl.”
“Cross the line if you’ve ever felt left out because you’re a boy.”
“Cross the line if you, or someone you care about, has ever been judged or teased because of the color of your (or his/her) skin.”
“Cross the line if you’ve ever been teased about your accent or your voice, or told that you couldn’t sing.”
“Cross the line if you or any one of your family members or any friends of yours has a disability that you can or can’t see.”

After reflecting quietly and writing or drawing their reactions in journals, we processed in the large group: What feelings did you have during this activity? What was the hardest part for you? What did you learn about yourself? About others? What do you want to remember about what we’ve just experienced? What do you want to tell others about this experience?”
Many participants had expressed feeling negatively judged or picked on based on their accents or the color of their skin and with that, could see they were not alone among their peers in book club. They wrote some of their specific experiences in their book club journals, including one participant (Jaquelina, grade 7) sharing that in other experiences, people have questioned her on speaking Spanish because of her race, “But you're black, why do you speak Spanish?” she shared. She elaborated on this to me and her peers in the group. Others chimed in about what they have been called or have felt from similar experiences outside of our group. I recognize that in this scenario, I was the only non-Latino/a person and the facilitator, thus I was careful to not place any judgments or emotional reactions to their sharing. I listened and I restated their feelings in a question form. However, while my hopes were to build a sense of comradery among the group’s similar and different experiences and to build trust with me and each other, I was hesitant to do this activity initially because I questioned my ability to navigate sensitive topics while creating a shared safe space. What I learned through memo writing that day is that some participants expressed feelings of guilt about their position in the exercise, such as saying, “Sometimes I wish I was white” (Maggy, grade 6) that perhaps the activity was a violation of their safe space and comfortability.

Gathering and analyzing data in bilingual spaces provides special insight into a) ethnic identity as a language learner and its development through critical literacy activities and b) social justice trends in the wider community. I used on-going reflexive practices to be open to all of the possible learning that the participants, the community, and the partnership could teach me, while positioning myself as researcher, teacher, and community partner in an ethical way to ensure mutual reciprocity in our budding relationship.
Therefore, how I and other researchers and teachers approach work with or on LELLs, their families, and youth-serving organizations must consider personal, ethical, and epistemological issues and perspectives. Personal perspectives include the ways that researchers critically reflect on how their beliefs and assumptions about a community group, research topic, or culture influence their study and how the study equally affects the researcher. Ethical perspectives consider establishing cultural safety in which the worldviews of those involved are respected while recognizing and including culturally driven differences in research or pedagogical and curricular design.

For example, in book clubs, participants chose to stop reading *La Linea* (Jaramillo, 2016; Figure 16 in Appendix J) in English as they either didn’t like it or didn’t connect with it or some words were too difficult to understand. I researched four other Multicultural Literature for Latino/a bilingual children and youth for them to read that I summarized to book club, and they voted on which book they wanted to read. They unanimously agreed that *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000; Figure 16 in Appendix J) was the winner, and we promptly switched while I changed book club plans, exploring themes of immigration, family, loss, and holding on to one’s heritage through difficult transitions. Only one participant Diego had read *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000) previously and was eager to read it again; while the rest of the group were super excited to find out what happened next at the end of each book club. I respected and recognized participants’ choice in the book and then responded in revision.

Epistemologically, belief in the rights of Latino/a English language learners (LELLs) who are speakers of a minoritized language (i.e. Spanish, indigenous languages) to be valued within brave cultural spaces, especially as a researcher who is not a part of Centro Hispano
organization. It was imperative that I reach a point of enough trust with the participants. Over time in the summer program and working alongside participants in meaningful ways beyond the bounds of Latinidad Book clubs, I began to feel welcomed into their community and their personal lives through LELLs telling me stories, asking me questions about myself, sharing their interests with me on the soccer field, making Tik Toks and art projects, and discussing Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in ways that it related to their lives and their world.

Educators who make positive personal connections with their students may position themselves to have a greater influence on the students’ reading achievements, attitude toward reading, and reading preferences. After spending time getting to know each of the participants during book club, they saw me as one of their own. Although there were two book clubs for rising fourth through fifth graders and rising 6th-8th graders, the members decided I was worthy enough to be the only teacher allowed on the “Reading Squad”. According to Rodrigo, he liked book club because I “got all those awesome books” specifically for them. I talked with each participant individually and listened to their stories so that I could get to know their personal interests in reading and outside of reading to help find books they might enjoy and connect to, but also books that extended their thinking to learn more about the Latinidad cultures we were exploring in camp (Mexican, Caribbean, South and Central American countries and cultures). Rodrigo learned that I cared about him and his success. If educators take time to interact with their students on a personal level, students will be more willing to listen to our guidance.

The Partnership

Ethics stem from beliefs, attitudes, or values that influence one’s choices or actions which are often informed by society and cultural membership. Cultural norms change in which
researchers must adjust their position within socio-cultural contexts to honor relationships, experiences in building community, and in data collection methods such as interviews or observations from the lens of what can I learn, gain, or understand better (Kumashiro, 2014). Ethics are values, morals, and laws that offer safeguards to all individuals involved in community building in the practice of engaged scholarship; to be trustworthy is to be not only credible as a researcher with ethical processes, but to have produced research that offers validity and has a meaningful influence in community engaged scholarship.

To address the phenomenon in this study, a partnership needed to first be established with key community stakeholders in the practice of engaged scholarship. For over one year, I developed a relationship with an NGO Centro Hispano (CH) in Tennessee through my role as a teacher intern supervisor and graduate assistant in UTK’s TPTE literacy studies program. Centro Hispano is an NGO that represents the local Latino/a community and serves children, youth, and families, including EL students in after-school programs in which there is shared cultural power in diverse learning contexts in bilingual exchanges. CH’s mission is to promote “empowerment and civic participation through education, youth and family engagement, and community-strengthening initiatives” (https://www.centrohispanotn.org/) As a response to the global pandemic, CH extended their outreach efforts in partnership with UTK’s teacher education program (TPTE) through creating and implementing an online program for 40 K-8th grade ESL students in Knox County in the Spring. This initial contact gave way to a potential sustainable community partnership. Our partnership further advocates for EL students that CH serves in literacy programming, which extends their current elementary program to higher grades.
This community collaboration sought to practice engaged scholarship and design a summer literacy program to address Latino/a EL students’ adjustment processes following COVID-19 and support their transition to fourth through ninth grades, specifically in language and literacy engagement. Summer camp activities are depicted in Figure 7. CES provides an opportunity to improve culturally responsive practices in teacher education centered on equity and inclusion, reflective of TPTE’s mission. Reflecting this mission statement, I developed a partnership with a community of rising fourth through eighth grade Latino/a EL students that CH serves in a summer camp. The director of youth and family engagement Megan Barolet-Fogarty and I co-developed a summer reading program centering on Latinidad (culture, heritage, and lived experiences of Latino/a members of varying nationalities, racial and gender identities, generations, languages, status and mobility and identity). Megan is also a member of my dissertation committee, lending validity to the study as a valued, shared community stakeholder. As a prior K-12 educator and current graduate student in TPTE, this study emulates the practice of engaged scholarship to address Latino/a EL students’ social-emotional, English language, and reading development in relation to reading self-efficacy following COVID-19.
Figure 7. Photograph of Centro Hispano Summer Program
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the qualitative study with surveys and questionnaires as instruments to answer the research questions during Latinidad book clubs. The case study design was used to examine in depth the literacy, language, and schooling experiences of Latino/a children and youth in book clubs centered on Multicultural Literature for Latino/as to support transitions to rising middle school grades. The case study design was used to explore a microscopic view of self-efficacy beliefs and the role of ethnic identity in the construction of possible second language selves and in what ways, if any aspects of cultural heritage was regained. I collected data by conducting participant interviews and facilitating book club discussions and activities. I also collected participants’ written artifacts during activities as well as administered self-efficacy surveys (pre; post) and English language self-report questionnaires.

The chapter begins with participant summaries from descriptive statistics and interview data to provide background information about LELLs. Qualitative findings are informed by an analysis of data collected from 7 participants’ semi-structured interviews (45-90 minutes) and 8 participants’ autobiographical poems and critical reflections (grades six through nine) or family story portraits (grades four through five) with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as. The findings in this chapter are interpreted from themes, categories, and codes from data analysis that closely reflect the participants’ experiences and voices in constructed interviews as counter-stories.

Participant exemplar quotes are provided from transcripts of interviews and my memos from observational field notes in an in-depth discussion of the identified themes. There are connections across the themes and categories (Table 8 in Appendix I) coming from empirical data and its analysis. These codes, categories, and themes reflect the values, attitudes, and beliefs
of participants as a related concept to perceived self-efficacy beliefs. It is important to note that the themes and categories explored closely in this chapter are intertwined and were checked for interpretation by my committee member and community partner with Centro Hispano youth and family engagement director for another insider perspective on findings.

Book clubs’ activities are described in order of each week at the summer program. Book club (grades sixth through ninth) focus primarily on two novels that we read: *La Linea* by Ann Jaramillo (Jaramillo, 2016) and *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan (Ryan, 2000) in which participants’ critical written reflections and autobiographical poetry are the empirical data analyzed. Book club (grades fourth through fifth) focus primarily on the author and poet laureate Juan Felipe Herrera with particular emphasis on his autobiographical picture books *The Upside Down Boy* (Herrera, 2000) and *Calling the Doves* (Herrera, 1995) and other poems from his collections *Every Day We Get More Illegal* in *Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice* (2016) and *Half of the World in Light: New and Selected Poems* (2008) in Book clubs (grades sixth through ninth) and the empirical data of drawings or family portrait stories.

Findings suggest ways self-efficacy beliefs and the role of ethnic identity mediate the construction of second language selves through collaborative literacy practices; and results from descriptive statistics and correlational analysis inform suggestions for a new methodological approach to study self-efficacy in interdisciplinary fields and pedagogical approaches to language and literacy education. Finally, the study’s limitations and delimitations are discussed.

Before I provide participant background information, I provide describe the interpretation process in this case study in sequential order of the analysis of empirical material in Figure 8.
Figure 8. Empirical material interpretation process.
This empirical material interpretation process (figure 8) addresses the research questions to explore the themes in qualitative analysis.

1) How do Latino/a English language learners (LELL) in rising grades 4th-8th describe their self-efficacy beliefs and learning experiences with respect to their participation in Latinidad book clubs that incorporate cultural heritage materials?
   a. Does incorporating cultural heritage materials into literacy and language learning affect LELLS’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy beliefs?

I sought to explore the mediating role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) in development of second language selves in transitioning to middle school grades.

2) How do Latino/a ELs’ views of heritage culture, their values, and beliefs, relate to their identity in second language selves?

3) What are the overall effects of beliefs about Latino/a cultural values on ELs’ a) heritage identification and b) self-efficacy?
   a. What, if any, is the role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy as a language learner?

**Participant Summaries**

Participants in this research project included 20 LELLS rising grades 4-9th enrolled in the summer program in Eastern TN. Demographic tabulation reveals the entire description of demographic frequencies and descriptive statistics, and some demographic factors are discussed. The convenience sample was an exact even gender ratio (10 males, 10 females) (Table 4.1) and grade levels varied (fourth through ninth) (Table 4.2). A total of twenty participants made-up Latinidad Book clubs for the duration of Summer Camp; due to some participants’ attendance of book clubs being inconsistent and whether or not all necessary data (i.e. interviews) could be
Table 4.1: Demographics - Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2: Demographics – Rising Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Participants #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
collected, ten participants are featured. The ten Latino/a ELs featured in this study are listed in Table 4.3. Participants created autobiography poems (sixth through ninth grades) or family story portraits (fourth through fifth grades) and were present the last week of summer camp when post self-efficacy survey data was collected; thus, they became the focus of the study.

**Participants in sixth through ninth grades.** Seven LELLS from the *Latinidad* Book club in grades six through nine are featured from their participation in this study. The following paragraphs describe the individual Latino/a English language learner.

*Maggy.* Maggy (Rising sixth grader) is an eleven-year-old girl who had participated in Centro Hispano after-school programs and summer camps in past years. Spanish is her L1; although, she had tested out of the ESL program in elementary school and participated in Spanish and English Head Start in preschool. Her family immigrated from Mexico, including her mother, and she has two younger siblings. She referred to herself as Mexican American. At the time of the study, she was a rising sixth grader and starting at a new school. Maggy loves anime, reading, and wants to be a voice actor one day. Maggy’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on can-do descriptors of language domains of the WIDA model are as follows: Listening 4.5, Speaking 4.4, Reading 4.9, and Writing 4.1.

*Irma.* Irma (Rising seventh grader) is a twelve-year-old girl who had participated in Centro Hispano after-school programs in elementary school. Irma had immigrated from Mexico to the U.S. as a small child with her sister and mother before moving back to Mexico in late childhood, and then moved back to the U.S. in 2019. Spanish is her L1 and she speaks Spanish primarily at home with her mother and English with her sister and younger brother. Irma is
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Rising Grade</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rodrigo</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Family Story Portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Family Story Portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loidaly</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Maggy</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Autobiography Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irma</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Autobiography Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Autobiography Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmin</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juana</td>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Autobiography Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diego</td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Autobiography Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Autobiography Poem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
enrolled in the ELL program at school; although, her family moved to a new home in the area and was starting at a new middle school at the time of the study. Irma identified herself as a Latina with darker skin. She loves art, drawing, and helping animals. Irma’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on can-do descriptors of language domains of the WIDA model are as follows: Listening 4.5, Speaking 4.6, Reading 4.2, Writing 4.2.

**Lena.** Lena (Rising seventh grader) is a twelve-year-old girl who had participated in Centro Hispano elementary after-school programs in past years. Irma referred to herself as Afro-Latina. Irma’s family immigrated from Mexico to the U.S. as a small child before moving back to Mexico in late childhood, and then moved back to the U.S. in 2019. She still has some family in Mexico, although has never met her father. Lena is enrolled in the ELL program at school, although she was starting at a new school at the time of the study. Lena enjoys animals, science, and playing outside. Lena’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on can-do descriptors of language domains of the WIDA model are as follows: Listening 4.3, Speaking 4.6, Reading 4.2, Writing 3.9.

**Yasmin.** Yasmin (Rising seventh grader) is a twelve-year-old girl who has participated in Centro Hispano after-school and summer programs since she was in kindergarten. Yasmin speaks Spanish and English and can read some in Spanish as well as in English. Yasmin referred to herself as a Mexican American and enjoys sharing her cultural traditions, including her religious practices and ornaments. Yasmin was not enrolled in the ELL program at school at the time of the study and was looking forward to the next school year and being back at school with friends. Yasmin’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) based on can-do descriptors of
Juana. Juana (Rising eighth grader) is a thirteen-year-old girl who is new to Centro Hispano and had not participated in prior summer programs or after-school programs before. Juana’s family speaks an indigenous Guatemalan language, although Juana was not enrolled in the ELL program at school. Juana speaks some Spanish, though prefers English at school. Juana enjoys art and drawing as well as likes to help take care of her younger siblings. Juana’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on can-do descriptors of language domains of the WIDA model are as follows: Listening 4.7, Speaking 4.5, Reading 4.2, Writing 3.5.

Rosa. Rosa (Rising eighth grader) is a thirteen-year-old girl who has participated in Centro Hispano programs for many years. She was a Counselor-in-training (CIT) at the program and supported book clubs. Rosa considered herself Hispanic and was born in Guatemala and raised by an adopted family in Tennessee. Rosa had visited family in Guatemala once and met her biological mother there and identifies with her Guatemalan heritage. Rosa was learning how to speak Spanish from friends at school and at the summer program, although considers her L1 English. Rosa has both adopted and not adopted siblings in her family. Rosa likes volleyball, to cook empanadas and tacos, and to make Guatemalan bracelets. English language self-report NA.

Diego. Diego (Rising ninth grader) is a fourteen-year-old boy who is new to the Centro Hispano organization. He was a Counselor-in-training (CIT) at the summer program and supported our book clubs as well as participated in book club activities (e.g. autobiographical poems). Diego considered himself Colombian and like to share about the food his mother cooks.
at home. Diego speaks Spanish and English and was in the ELL program in eighth grade. Diego’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on can-do descriptors of language domains of the WIDA model are as follows: Listening 3.7, Speaking 4.0, Reading 4.2, Writing 3.8.

Participants in fourth through fifth grades. Three LELLS from the Latinidad Book club in grades four through five are featured from their participation in this study. The following paragraphs describe the individual Latino/a English language learner.

Rodrigo. Rodrigo (Rising fifth grader) is a ten-year-old who is new to Centro Hispano and had not participated in prior summer programs or after-school programs before. Rodrigo shared a lot about his family in Venezuela and how they keep in touch over holidays. Rodrigo and his family are bilingual (Spanish and English). He shared that he tested out of ESL in school and passed the WIDA ACCESS test. Rodrigo likes reading, learning, and Roblox. Rodrigo likes to take care of his siblings and wants to follow in his parents’ footsteps and go to college. Rodrigo’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on WIDA model’s can-do descriptors of language domains are as follows: Listening 4.7, Speaking 5, Reading 4.8, Writing 4.2.

Alfredo. Alfredo (Rising fifth grader) is a ten-year-old who has participated in Centro Hispano camps and after-school programs in the past. Alfredo speaks English and Spanish and likes to go to school and book clubs and wants to be a professional futbol (soccer) player. Alfredo also likes spending time with his family and coming to summer camp. Alfredo’s English
language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on WIDA model’s can-do descriptors of language domains are as follows: Listening 4.3, Speaking 4.7, Reading 4.6, Writing 4.8.

Loidaly. Loidaly (Rising fifth grader) is a ten-year-old who has participated in Centro Hispano camps and after-school programs since kindergarten. Loidaly likes being at camp with her older sister because they can share food. Her family moved to the U.S. from Mexico before she was born, and she still likes to celebrate Mexican holidays like Dia de los Muertos. Loidaly loves book clubs and summer camp and is excited for the school year. Loidaly’s English language self-report (6/7/2021) averages based on can-do descriptors of language domains of the WIDA model are as follows: Listening 4.5, Speaking 4.5, Reading 4.1, Writing 4.3.

Descriptive Statistics for Self-Efficacy

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS (Version 27), a statistical software package commonly used in self-efficacy survey data analysis. IBM SPSS (Version 27) was used to analyze both English language self-report questionnaire and self-efficacy survey data. Five-point Likert-scales ranging from Not very like me to Very like me for both survey and questionnaire were organized into a database for statistical analysis. The participants (n=20, 10 male and 10 female) responded to the paper-pencil self-efficacy survey. The participants in grades four through five (n=10, 7 male and 4 female) responded to the language self-report questionnaire in one-on-one verbal administration. The participants in grades six through nine (n=8, 2 male and 6 female) responded to the language self-report questionnaire in one-on-one verbal administration. Descriptive statistics allow for indication of statistical estimates such as mean, standard deviation, median, and variance.
The descriptive statistics for self-efficacy measures are shown in Table 5. The subscale in the self-efficacy survey that examines LELLS’ belief in personal ability to achieve, specifically 1) to grow with effort and 2) to achieve goals (Gaumer Erickson & Noonan, 2018) includes items 5 through 13. This allowed for the direct comparison of items within the subscale without reducing the reliability. The results are in logits obtained from the frequencies analysis and show that the measures of SE have normal distributions. Table 5 shows the participants’ self-efficacy beliefs over the four-week summer reading program and indicates positive self-efficacy in reading, considering the timeframe in administration of pre- and post- surveys. All of the means of the two administrations were positive indicating that the group of participants generally had fairly high SE in ability to grow with effort and to achieve goals in reading and in school, yet some individual participants reported low self-efficacy on specific items, as noted by lower scores and the large standard deviation (e.g. item #5). Yet high self-efficacy beliefs in 9 items’ mean scores from pre- and post- survey assessments are apparent, indicating positive self-efficacy beliefs, particularly in belief in ability to succeed in reading next year.

**Pearson and Spearman Correlational Analysis.**

I ran a correlation analysis of Pearson parametric measure and Spearman nonparametric measure of the language self-report questionnaires (grades four through five; grades six through nine) and results showed significant correlation between variables of elementary and middle grades listening, speaking, reading, and writing when compared to self-efficacy subscale (belief in personal ability) and gender. This self-efficacy subscale of items 5 through 13 in the survey is included due to determined reliability (α= .798) and can be endorsed as an indicator of self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, the questionnaire variables have correlational significance with
Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Self-Efficacy

<table>
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<th>SE Survey Item</th>
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<th>SD</th>
<th>Post-Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Difference in Means</th>
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internal variables as well as significance between elementary listening items and gender and elementary speaking items with personal ability subscale. I report each participant’s English self-report score in the participant summaries to provide quantitative information about individuals’ self-efficacy beliefs in the case under study. I hypothesized that there is a significant relationship among self-efficacy beliefs in reading and English language self-report competencies in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The Spearman and Pearson Correlation analysis tests were conducted to determine whether there is a positive or negative correlation between bivariate variables, including English language self-report scores in WIDA (WIDA Consortium, 2020) Can-do descriptors of reading, writing, speaking, and listening scales in elementary or middle school; perceived ability to achieve self-efficacy subscale, and gender. This test provides a correlation coefficient that determines the strength of the relationship between the relative movements of two variables. This correlation allows us to understand participants’ self-efficacy beliefs during the 4-week summer reading program. I examined the correlation direction and relationship between the two variables that were statistically significant in sets. If there was a strong negative or positive correlation (p-value <= 0.05), then the correlation value is significant, and I reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship among self-efficacy beliefs in reading, perceived English language competencies, and gender. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the significant coefficient values (r) among variables in the Spearman non-parametric correlation analysis. Table 7 shows a breakdown of the significant coefficient values (r) among variables in the Pearson parametric correlation analysis.
Table 6. Spearman Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Spearman Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Listening: Elementary</td>
<td>-.679*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Ability Subscale</td>
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<td>.636*</td>
<td>0.048</td>
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## Table 7. Pearson Correlation Analysis

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<tr>
<td>Reading Elementary</td>
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<td>0.799**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Elementary</td>
<td>Writing Elementary</td>
<td>0.662*</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Middle</td>
<td>Writing Middle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking Middle</td>
<td>Listening Middle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking Middle</td>
<td>Writing Middle</td>
<td>0.742*</td>
<td>0.035</td>
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Belief in ability to achieve goals and in growth with effort.

Personal belief in ability to achieve goals in reading and grow in reading with effort showed significant correlation with elementary participants’ self-report of speaking competence (p-value: .048) in Spearman correlation (Table 6). According to the correlation analysis results (Table 6) comparing the self-efficacy subscale that measured participants’ perception of ability to succeed in reading in school next year and confidence in ability to read, elementary LELLs belief in speaking ability in English has a significant correlation and positive relationship. Speaking in English relates to oral reading as both are language outputs. Participants’ confidence in ability to read and speak in English is demonstrated in subscale mean scores and in the positive correlation. *Latinidad* Book club experiences that included daily dialogic discussions about Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth (i.e. speaking in English) and oral reading in peer groups, as facilitated by myself as the participant-researcher, may have supported their attitudes about ability to succeed and grow with effort in reading in preparation for middle school grades. Practice in English language output (i.e. speaking, reading) in a shared cultural brave space may support LELLs’ perceptions of their confidence in reading and speaking abilities. Notably, the trust that participants built with me as Book clubs facilitator may have influenced LELLs’ self-report of English-speaking abilities as I administered the questionnaire and supported their reading in instructional activities. Thus, I explored the notion of *Latinidad* Book clubs being culturally brave spaces for children and youth, as opposed to safe spaces, to encourage dialogue in which participants could recognize and share their unique linguistic and cultural knowledge and experiences. The purpose of creating culturally brave spaces was to practice perspective-taking for LELLs’ to come to new understandings about
themselves and each other - a feat that is often difficult and typically uncomfortable. Culturally brave spaces versus safe spaces and this significant distinction in literacy and language instruction to decolonize the curricular canon towards authentic inclusion of Latino/a ELs experiences and cultural heritage identification are further discussed in the conclusion and recommendation chapter.

Overall, participants had a positive self-efficacy belief in ability to read in English and to succeed in reading in school next year. As participants’ self-efficacy or personal beliefs in ability to achieve also assesses the belief that hard work pays off in reading, interviews demonstrated their value of “hard work to succeed” in learning. This positive SE belief reflects participants’ value that hard work leads to success in reading and indicates that with effort in reading in English, they believe in their ability to grow.

Gender and English language self-report questionnaire.

The Spearman correlational analysis determined a negative correlation coefficient (r = - .639) between gender and elementary participants’ (7 males and 3 females) self-report of listening competencies in English (Table 6). This correlation is statistically significant (p-value = .031) and describes the monotonic relationship between listening in English and the gender of the participant. Elementary female participants reported their listening skills in English as higher than elementary male participants on the ELP scale of can-do descriptors (WIDA Consortium, 2020) as Expanding (level 4) or Bridging (level 5). Listening to words and identifying matching pictures, listening to stories, and listening to instructions in reading were included in the listening skills self-report.
Some research has suggested that the existence of a correlation between reading self-efficacy and L2 listening comprehension is positive for female learners but not for male learners (Mills et al., 2007). Similarly in this study, according to the results in the Spearman analysis, the association between female learners and male learners in L2 (i.e. English) listening comprehension shows an existence of a correlation in which the elementary female LELLs report higher perceived ability in L2 listening comprehension than the elementary male LELLs.

Though, these results contradict research findings in which females generally report negative self-efficacy beliefs compared to males in a case (Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Urdan, 2006), a possible explanation is the ratio of males to females in the elementary group in which there were more males. Another possibility is that the difficulty level of the listening tasks described in the self-report are generalized and not content or task specific, described as basic listening comprehension skills in which females perceived themselves as confident. For example, the can-do descriptor of listening to stories does not require an output component in comprehension, rather it describes an ability to listen and understand input (i.e. stories). Listening to comprehend directions and/or words are also basic L2 literacy skills that are generalized and not assessed in a task-specific administration. Further research is warranted to assess whether gender mediates the interaction effects between listening strategy use and L2 (i.e. English) listening comprehension.

**English language self-report Pearson correlations.**

The Pearson correlational analysis was conducted as an expected, criterion validity measure. It was used to determine positive or negative relationships among English language self-report skills (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and results are displayed in Table
7. Reading in English among elementary participants was positively correlated with speaking (r=.799, p<.01) and writing (r=.662, p<.05) WIDA can-do skills (WIDA Consortium, 2020). The reading can-do statements involved one’s ability to perform reading comprehension strategies (e.g. inferences, summaries), identify word and picture sound relationships, identify components of a story or text, read to apply a skill such as summarizing, writing, or recalling facts, and answer comprehension questions about a story. While these specific reading tasks were not practiced in conjunction with the self-report assessment, they do involve English language output skills (i.e. writing, speaking) and basic to higher order thinking skills (i.e. summarizing, interpreting, applying). The significant relationship between reading and both speaking and writing is notable as speaking and writing are both output functions in English language proficiencies. Thus, this positive correlation implies that participants’ beliefs in ability to achieve in reading relate to their beliefs in ability to achieve in speaking and writing, considering linguistic task co-dependence.

Additionally, the Pearson correlational analysis of the middle school participants’ WIDA can-do language self-reports (WIDA Consortium, 2020) resulted in three distinct, positive relationships. Middle school writing in English was positively correlated with reading (r=.835, p</= .01) and with speaking (r=.742, p<.05). There was also a positive correlation between speaking skills in middle school and listening skills (r=.731, p<.05).

As the elementary self-report, middle school reading can-do statements assessed belief in ability to read and interpret texts, such as the ability to identify topic sentences, main ideas and details in a story or use context clues to understand a story. Writing in middle school self-report included similar tasks for reading comprehension, such as the ability to make text-to-self
connections, tell what you think about a story verbally and in drawing, answer questions about a story, describe similarities and differences about characters, and think critically to make an argument. These can-do skills in the writing domain relate to reading comprehension ability and involve both input (i.e. reading, listening) and output (i.e. writing, speaking). Writing domain included the can-do statement “write critical reflections about stories” and the reading domain assessed perceived competence to “think critically and make an argument.” Both abilities require higher order thinking skills often embedded in instructional practice in middle school. Thus, I included them in our Book clubs daily instructional practice in reading Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth and sharing critical reflections verbally and by writing in journals. While the assessment itself was not task-oriented or administered in conjunction with these skills, the association between Book club activities in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills and the self-report assessment domains involve similar tasks and possibly explain the positive correlation among input and output language skills.

Conclusion

The hypothesis that there is a significant relationship among self-efficacy beliefs in reading and English language self-report competencies in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills remains to be assessed with specific tasks in these listening skills; however, results show a positive correlation among many variables in elementary and middle school language skills and in a positive relationship between self-efficacy subscale and listening skills among elementary participants. The self-efficacy survey pre- and post- assessments generally show positive self-efficacy beliefs among all participants, according to the means. And while the positive Spearman correlation is significant, it does not signify any assertion to the direct
relationship between the variables, considering the ceiling effect in pre and post survey tests. As the majority of the values obtained for the self-efficacy subscale variable approach the upper limit of the five-point Likert scale (i.e. Like me, Very like me), it could signify the ceiling effect. The ceiling effect occurs when most participants achieve or are close to achieving the highest possible score, in which it is possible that the assessment items were too easy.

It is also important to conclude that while the hypothesis is confirmed by positive correlations among certain self-efficacy and language skill variables, there are environmental factors in the study’s setting that may have influenced such results. These include the role of myself as participant-researcher in which I developed a trusting relationship with participants and facilitated Book club activities as well as was the sole administer of the quantitative assessments. Additionally, participant demographics and characteristics may have influenced the overall report of positive self-efficacy beliefs, such as some participants may read frequently or more often than other participants. There might be a variation of the access to books in English and Spanish in the home and in the learners’ community contributing to reading frequency. Such variables were not able to be controlled and must be considered when accounting for the acceptance of the hypothesis that there is a significant correlation among self-efficacy beliefs.

Overall, self-efficacy beliefs as a language learner are contingent upon environment, social emotional relationships, and perceptions of personal ability. As self-efficacy beliefs in this study include ability to be successful in reading, confidence in reading, and the ability to set and achieve goals in reading and language learning, results show a potential sense of confidence in ability to read and achieve goals. Participants’ growth mind-set about establishing goals for their future demonstrates them imagining possible bilingual second-language selves, such as being a
peer leader in future *Latinidad* summer programs as a junior counselor or CIT. Participants note peer acceptance and the value of friendship, indicated by the theme of establishing a sense of belonging in schools, among peers, and in their communities. Sense of belonging within a shared learning community requires LELLS’s positive belief in ability to work well with peers, supported in Book clubs and the summer program.

**Thematic Analysis: Counter-Stories**

Participant quotes from transcripts of interviews act as exemplars in an in-depth discussion of the identified themes. There are connections across the themes and categories (Table 8 in Appendix I) coming from empirical data and its analysis. These codes, categories, and themes reflect the values, attitudes, and beliefs of participants as a related construct to self-efficacy beliefs. The following themes depicted in Figure 9 were salient across data sources as it relates to positive self-efficacy beliefs in construction of second language selves. Participants shared perspectives and experiences around the following areas:

1. Creating a sense of belonging at summer camp and in rising middle school grades, yet navigating social relationships, isolation and acceptance, and particularly in relation to racial-ethnic tensions and how youth were treated in schools.
2. Constructing a second language self in literacy practices with multicultural Latino/a literature and in being bilingual in rising middle school grades, conceptualizing their self-efficacy beliefs as a language learner.
3. Connecting to their “root culture” or “Where I’m From” as a part of mitigating schooling experiences in an asset-based approach to *Latinidad* book clubs and summer camp.
Figure 9. Themes in Positive Self-Efficacy in Second Language Selves

Positive Self-Efficacy in Second Language Selves

Creating a Sense of Belonging

Connecting to "root culture" or "Where I'm from" in book clubs

Constructing a second language self with Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth

Changes in transitional experiences (middle school, US, Covid-19)
(1) navigating changes in transitional experiences and the challenges, expectations, and motivation participants had in a) transitions to US schools, b) transitions to middle school, and c) transitions to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A common thread underlying thematic findings was the development of voice, visibility, and respect with the aim of garnering positive self-efficacy in which ethnic identity played a role in past-present-future second language selves. Self-efficacy in identity construction as a Latino/a or Mexican American involved identifying with language and cultural heritage which aimed to challenge deficit-thinking about Latino/a and Mexican American children, youth and families in literacy curricula and youth-serving programs. Another broader theme in this research design is community-university research partnerships and the development of mutually beneficial relationships towards the goal of sustainable community engaged scholarship.

**Theme One: Creating a Sense of Belonging**

Creating a sense of belonging at summer camp and in rising middle school grades involves how LELLs navigated newly developed social relationships with peers and their social relationships from past and present experiences in schooling. By sense of belonging, I mean processes that account for positive adaptation and development in the context of adversity and disadvantage in navigating feelings of isolation and acceptance in schooling, particularly in relation to racial-ethnic tensions and how youth were treated in schools (Harris & Kiyama, 2015). Creating a sense of belonging in the context of summer camp among peers in a Latino/a and Mexican American cultural group in which most participants are bilingual in Spanish and English involves building community, comfortability, and connections between camp and home culture in which the value of friendship was evident for all participants.
Transitioning to new schools may mean insufficient support for their transitional social-emotional and language learning needs, as middle schools are not all equipped with ESL/ELD programming nor are school-based mentors available to support student transitions. A common concern in middle school experiences is that Latino/a ELs may experience a sense of separateness and not belonging (de Jong, & Bearse, 2014), to which I argue building comradery among diverse intercultural Latino/a groups can help mitigate by combating the deficit-mindset through developing a positive sense of self and self-efficacy as a language learner. Considering participants all held a value of friendship in their schooling and summer camp experiences, bonding with peers through similar cultural and linguistic experiences with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as and beyond contributes to social-emotional learning.

**Value of friendship.**

All participants’ interviews showed their value of friendship in camp and schooling experiences, in conjunction with their value of respect. Participants expressed feelings of belonging at summer camp which can increase their presence in visibility in schooling experiences as well to help counteract difficulties forming friendships as well as shyness in speaking English at school. Most participants (sixth through ninth grades) believe that they will be quiet at a new school in class, but with friends, they can feel more comfortable talking and being themselves.

*Maggy.*

Maggy connected her cultural heritage and identity with her value of respect among peers: “That’s who I am and that is where I come from. And without it, I couldn’t really be Mexican American. And I feel like other people should respect it and I respect theirs”
(06/30/2021). Maggy expresses how she is very nervous presenting at school because she doesn’t like being in the spotlight and fears she’ll mess up in English; yet feels encouraged by peers and teachers most of the time, “People are like ‘You’re gonna do great.’ Teachers encouraged me because they want me to learn. I was pretty good at learning English and learned pretty fast.” The value of helping others in language learning seems to be a common thread among establishing community as a bilingual speaker which participants say reading helps. “When we read stories that have Spanish words in it, it’s pretty fun to tell somebody the word” (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 14).

Participants also expressed how parents contribute to their sense of belonging as a bilingual speaker. Maggy shares how her mom and teacher were very proud of her when she spoke English for the first time, “They were pretty excited for me and I was really happy because I said a full sentence in English at school. I was happy because it was something new for me and I learned it” (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 11).

Maggy expresses how she doesn’t like to socialize that much but has made friends at the summer camp due to comfortability with friends who also speak Spanish and are bilingual. Maggy’s attitude on book clubs and camp supporting her ability to make friends is evident when she says, “If I can make friends in book clubs and at camp, then maybe I can do it in Middle School” (p. 18). She expresses how nice it is to speak Spanish too, “it’s okay to speak it outside of the house or home here. You don’t have to keep it hidden” (p. 10). Sometimes speaking Spanish at school among English speaking peers causes participants to use Spanish words and code-switch automatically. A bilingual space of book clubs made code-switching a common and accepted practice in which participants did not fear being misunderstood, increasing their sense
of belonging. This opportunity reflects how many participants expressed their family’s value of being bilingual, as a key component to establishing a sense of belonging in transitional experiences to middle school.

_Lena._

Lena (7th) expresses how it is hard to make friends in school, especially because they [her family] must move a lot due to unpredictable home experiences, which she feels is “kind of bad because we had to move” (Interview, 06/28/2021, p. 8). Personal beliefs in ability to make friends relates to language self-efficacy or perceived confidence in ability to speak the same language as her peers. Lena expressed how she felt more confident in school when she had friends who speak the same languages as her (English and Spanish) (Interview, 06/28/2021, p. 13). Also, translating Spanish to English can help make new friends at school. “When you help somebody translate them in Spanish they could become your friend” (Lena, Interview, 06/28/2021, p. 12). Participants’ attitudes about feeling embarrassed to speak Spanish at school were evident when Lena says,

Because once in school we learned about Mexico. I had to speak to the whole class in Spanish. It was embarrassing. Cuz I don’t love talking in front of people and because it’s Spanish, actually. Because lots of people don’t know how to speak it and they want me to say it again in English. I don’t want to, but they make me do it. It feels like people don’t understand me (Interview, 06/28/2021, p. 10).

Most participants discuss a value of being bilingual, as Spanish can help establish acceptance and improve relationships at school and at home, stemming from cultural family values. Lena shares how “At home, I have to speak Spanish because my mom says, ‘If you forget
your language, then you’re not gonna be able to speak it again. Because if we go to Mexico we are gonna have to speak Spanish. And my grandpa really doesn’t know English, but I have to speak Spanish to him. It helps me talk to my family and keep those relationships” (Interview, 06/28/2021, p. 9).

_Irma._

Participants agree that peers are encouraging when they “mess up speaking in English” (Irma, Interview, 06/29/2021, p. 9) Irma shares how she was scared to get words wrong in English when she transitioned to a new school and says she was “nervous about messing up words and stuff for the class.” Irma expresses how it can be uncomfortable not knowing much of a language, but you have to learn how to speak it to communicate and “my mom would get us books and told us to read them in English” (p. 13) and how she “gets used to talking to people in English and learns from ‘my’ mom to get more comfortable with it.”

Sense of belonging among peers in school ties to their confidence or self-efficacy as a Spanish speaker, contributing to their second language self and bilingual identity. “Being bilingual helps you communicate with more people, and my mom says it’s better to be bilingual because you can help people that don’t speak English and translate for them.” (Irma, p. 13).

 _Rodrigo._

Rodrigo shares how learning a new language is complicated, “but then you start speaking it and your parents teach you what they mean. I don’t know hard words in Spanish, but I do know beginner and medium words and I know chapter books in Spanish” (p. 6).

Rodrigo shares how “I think bilinguals better. Reading both Spanish and English sounds better for me. I want to learn how to speak a third language like French” (p. 14). Helping parents
translate English to Spanish in the community is common among the participants’ experiences, reflecting families’ values of maintaining fluency in L1. However, some participants feel it’s a challenge to code-switch, “sometimes it’s quite hard because I forget the words whenever I speak a lot of English. When I’m trying to speak both and translate, I mix up the words.” (p. 6).

Additionally, being a newcomer to the U.S. presented challenges in building community and establishing friendship, which are two values participants expressed, as they reflected on their past experiences coming to the US and learning English for the first time in school. Rodrigo expresses how he was scared when he moved to the new country, “I didn’t really know what people were talking. It was talking craziness. But then once I understood and it came all of the sudden, I was surprised. I don’t know how I got through. Once I learned more English, I got better at it,” (p. 8) reflecting his self-efficacy belief of growth with effort as a mediating factor to learning a new language.

**Rosa.**

One participant who has become acquainted with her Guatemalan roots later in her adolescence and is an aspiring Spanish speaker discussed how she struggles to communicate with people that ‘look like her’ because she is still learning Spanish, “Me no espano. I’m not fluent in it. So that’s a major struggle sometimes when I’m trying to communicate with people and they’re not fluent in English” (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021, p. 22). Rosa also expressed those peers at summer camp helped her learn some Spanish to communicate better, “I’ve learned words like de nada, por favor, gracias, which can be helpful when I got to my new school (p. 23).
Value of Hard Work in America.

Across grade level groups, participants’ belief that hard work equals success in learning was evident from interviews and in book club discussions. The value of being bilingual as a newcomer in America or an English learner was viewed as a “badge of honor” among participants, although at times their belief in ability to speak English well was both encouraged and discouraged in efforts to work hard.

Maggy.

Maggy expressed how she felt nervous not knowing English when she first came to the U.S., but a value in her family was to work hard at something new and her mom had to work hard to learn English and get her own place when she didn’t really know the language at first, saying “She did tell me that I should work hard. She had to make it happen” (INTERVIEW, 6/30/2021, p. 17). Connecting to her “root culture” in Mexico, Maggy describes how her mom came to the US “to find success and have a better life and future for her kids and her family so she wants us to stay in school because she had to drop out to come to America” (p. 17).

These experiences show how navigating a new culture and language as an English learner can present challenges within the home and school, which building a strong sense of belonging can help mitigate. Comparing America to Mexico, Maggy says, “It was different because of lies and stuff like that, ‘Oh in America, you can find jobs and everybody is rich’ which is not the case. And also not in Mexico” (p. 17).

Rodrigo.

Values of communication in this transition and the challenges related to learning the language (English) were apparent in participant interviews, as Rodrigo shared how, “First when I
didn’t learn anything when I moved here to a new country, I was scared. I didn’t really know what people were talking. First it was talking craziness” and “Once I understood, it came all the sudden, and I was surprised” (p. 8). In discussing how his confidence increased in speaking English as a newcomer, he related his success to passing the English test (WIDA, 2020). “I’m glad I passed it. I would not have too much English, but now that I passed it, I was very happy” (p. 12). Sense of academic success and belief in ability to do well in school supports one’s sense of belonging in a new school, especially as an English learner.

Students’ perceptions of teacher support and personalized attention seemed to make new students more comfortable in their classroom, indicating confidence in their teacher relationships which contributes to their sense of belonging. A supportive teacher relationship can affect one’s comfortability and indicates positive SE in speaking English. Rodrigo states, “She [EL teacher] gathers information about the language the student is speaking. So maybe it makes the new students more comfortable to talk to. They took me there. Once I went there [ESL] more, they did a test for me to see if I learned English and I passed it!” (p. 9). Confidence in speaking English eased transitions and adjustment to US schools, in which ELP assessments (WIDA Consortium, 2020) hold value.

Additionally, the challenges in learning and passing a school standardized English language proficiency test were evident, Rodrigo states, “It was sometimes hard to learn. Because sometimes my teacher was strict and whenever I tried to speak Spanish because I still didn’t know good English, she was strict about that” (p. 12). This experience reflects how teachers’ mindsets about acquiring English in an “English only” policy state (Flores, 2000; TN POLICY) influences how learners, particularly LELLS, see themselves and their possible second language
selves in which high confidence or positive self-efficacy can mediate such communication challenges in school. In discussing how he managed to communicate, reflecting other participants’ values as well, Rodrigo describes how he would use little phrases in English and Spanish (i.e. translanguaging) and “she would let that go. She basically knew what I meant. I was very happy to learn more [English] because not only I wanted to get rewards but to learn a bit more English to help me later on. So I can understand what people are saying and they could help me in anything I need” (p. 13).

Using his linguistic resources in Spanish and English (i.e. translanguaging) to communicate with teachers and peers supported Rodrigo’s adjustment in transitioning to US schools where English is the dominant instructional language. His perceived self-efficacy as a language learner is what motivated him to achieve (i.e. pass the ELP test and learn English) in which the learning environment and teacher’s language expectations in communication can support or hinder motivation and thus, success in English language learning.

Rodrigo shared his future goals in how he desires to take the same path his mom did and go to college and graduate, in which his mom had to learn everything from her school including working hard to pass tests to graduate college; he says, “They were like very big tests, And my mom had to pass them, and she passed the test and graduated. They [parents] told me if I want to pass school, I have to not look at the hard questions, but take my best guess and keep going” (p. 16). The value of hard work stems from family values, in which Rodrigo also shares how his dad “has two jobs, so he has to work extra hard. He helps Spanish people have better insurance. I could take over their business one day, a financial service. They’re working hard” (p. 17). The value of hard work connects with participants setting future goals for themselves and connects
their possible second language selves to a positive self-efficacy perception of belief in personal ability. “Because my dad works hard to get money from the family… you got to learn from school. I like to call college an extra bonus. Basically, few people have the choice to go to college or not, and I choose to go. It allows you more knowledge” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 18), reflecting the belief that knowledge is power, a common code across participant interviews.

Rosa

Rosa shares the belief that to reach one’s goals, it requires trying new experiences which educational opportunities afford learners. “Because if I was in Guatemala, I’d have drop out of school (to be a farmer or a maid), and here [US], I still got my education, for everything that I need to do. So, if I want to become a veterinarian, I can do it without having to be pulled out of school” (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021 p. 5); many participants speak to their family’s value of education.

“You can catch more flies with honey.”

Participants describe their experiences with peers at school and a feeling of isolation at times stemming from social tensions in relation to their identity (e.g. language, colorism, and racism.) An asset-based approach of book clubs that emphasizes cultural values and linguistic resources and in the celebration of Latinidad at the summer program provide a sense of comradery that can help mitigate these social challenges with an increasing feeling of acceptance among peers in which self-efficacy is a mediating factor. Speaking Spanish at school could be uncomfortable for participants, when English is the common spoken language and language of instruction; and peers’ reactions to participants speaking Spanish was off-putting. Assumptions that peers made about participants’ identity- the core of who they are- based on the color of their skin and the words that they speak can interrupt a students’ feeling of belonging, and harmony
among peers, affecting one’s social self-efficacy. A brave space in book clubs where Spanish was welcomed shifted some participants’ perspectives of their personal value: being bilingual.

**Irma.**

It can be uncomfortable when talking to new people and sometimes in speaking English at school, especially when peers ask LELLs to speak Spanish all the time. Irma says, They (peers) was like, ‘Oh my god, you speak Spanish.’ Every day they would ask or tell me a word to say in Spanish. It was kind of uncomfortable because it was a lot of new people. I don’t want to be rude, so I just get used to it. One time at school I was speaking Spanish to my sister and everyone was really surprised that I speak Spanish. They was like, ‘I don’t know you speak Spanish’ because my skin was darker.”

Navigating colorism and racism was a common thread in participant interviews in discussing relationships among peers that contribute to sense of belonging.

**Rosa.**

Rosa’s experiences of navigating discrimination among peers at school are expressed in her attitude of feeling put down because of who she is. “There are people who told me to go back to where I came from. I was like, you don’t know the whole story. When you need to look at yourself in the mirror and fix how you talk to other people, because you can catch more flies with honey than like with anything else” (p. 7). Rosa talked about being bullied in school because of what they look like and say, “I was trapped in corner basically, because of who I was. So I started getting depressed. Sometimes I feel misunderstood” (INTERVIEW, 7/1/2021, p. 11).

In discussion around comfortability among peers, Ross shared, “They weren’t used to seeing a person like me, and how I acted. So they started say very mean things. Sometimes I
cried about it, but that’s shaped me to who I was because I have grown from that and only focus on the positive and surround myself with only positive people” (INTERVIEW, 7/1/2021, p. 7).

Additionally, Rosa expressed the belief that political views influence behavior among peers which stems racism and colorism. “When Trump was president and everybody was saying rude things, this kid, C, started saying rude things. When Trump announced, he was going to build the wall (between Mexico and U.S.), and was gonna require Mexico to pay for it, C started saying, ‘Oh you should go back to the wall and go over there. You belong over there. You don’t belong here. This isn’t for your kind of people. And I was outraged by that, because he also said horrible things to black people. Like he said the N word to them. I literally told him one day, ‘One day you’re gonna meet the wrong person and regret it” (p. 12). Such negative experiences influence self-efficacy as a second language learner influenced by a lack of feeling accepted among peers. As participants share the belief to “stick up for myself and my culture,” doing so in a shared cultural group can help mitigate some tensions through fostering positive relationships among peers.

These experiences reflect the attitude of wanting to be accepted for who I am by peers, when she states how she desires peers to treat her, “Hi, how are you? I would like to get to know you better or I recognize that you’re different from us so can you explain how that is? Like, try and approach it in a nice and polite way. Not ‘You’re different. You don’t belong with us. Go away. Go back to the border.’ It’s rude and mean” (INTERVIEW, 7/1/2021, p. 7).

Establishing trusting relationships among peers at summer camp and counselors in book club supported participants’ social-emotional development and self-acceptance which Rosa states has allowed her to “be myself at camp and confident.” “I feel I’m more confident being
me” (p. 20). “I feel like I’ve been more myself as the weeks go on at camp because I can show real stuff and my real self and people start liking me more” (p. 23). At school, surrounding themselves with Hispanic people seemed to promote a feeling of acceptance: “I’m interested in Hispanic people because they are very welcoming and teach me what stuff I need to do and they do as a family” (INTERVIEW, 7/1/2021, p. 10).

Connecting to one’s “root culture” and cultural traditions in summer camp, in their community, and at school has supported acceptance among peers. Rosa states, “My parents are trying to expose me to my culture, like go to the hola festival, learning what holidays we celebrate in Guatemala, or for your birthday they make a huge feast of chicken, and having a quincenera. So because of them, I’ve learned more of who I am” (p. 9).

Additionally, to combat the feeling of loneliness and isolation in a new school, establishing a sense of belonging among peers in transitional programs can support social and academic preparedness. Rosa says, “I feel like I’ve been prepared. Academically, yes, I feel like I’m there. Socially… I feel like I’m kind of there, but not sure” (INTERVIEW, 7/1/2021, p. 17).

**Peer mentoring: Counselors in Training (CITs).**

A crucial finding in the summer program design was how peer mentorship increases participants’ desire to participate in the summer program and book clubs mainly do to the established sense of belonging in brings. Our program involved summer camp counselors in training (CITs) or junior counselors (ninth through eleventh grades) that helped our program operate and involved peer leadership. CITs supported book clubs and other activities at the program (e.g. fútbol, water games, team building exercises, gardening, math and science activities, art projects, and special events with partner organizations like Planned Parenthood, a
gardener, a musician, and a zoologist). CITs also participated in some of the book club activities (e.g. poetry writing, reading novels, sharing cultural artifacts, art projects, and discussions of novel themes) and set an example of a future role for younger program participants. Establishing a sense of belonging reflects how they have built community among peers and counselors in a transitional summer program through peer mentoring. For example, Lena (7th) expressed how she wants to come to summer camp again next year and the year after until she becomes a junior counselor or CIT in training (Interview, 06/28/2021, p. 23).

Rosa.

Acceptance from peers was enhanced for participants at summer camp in the feeling of being important and valued by peers. Rosa says, “Oh we’re famous now, because everybody wants to be us now (CIT)” (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021, p. 24). “It was fun to experience like being a junior counselor and feel more prepared for school. I feel like I’ve been more mature.” CIT mentorship in transitional programs show that when an EL feels valued and confident in a mentor role among peers, positive self-efficacy may help them feel more prepared for school.

Theme Two: Constructing Second Language Self

Constructing a second language self during book clubs and in the summer program with reflections and discussion around Multicultural Literature for Latino/as involved being bilingual in rising middle school grades, conceptualizing LELLS’ self-efficacy beliefs as a language learner. Theming the data involved categories within the construction of a possible second language self (SLS): being bilingual; confidence in speaking; comfortability with languages; motivation or influences to be bilingual; establishing goals and creating dreams relates to SLS.
As L1 and L2 develop, the preferred patterns of codeswitching can change, and some learners become habitual dense code-switchers who liberally exploit and mix their languages while other learners become aptly skilled at using both languages in separate domains (school, work, or home). In this study, participants’ value of being bilingual involves use of code-switching in book clubs and in and outside of school experiences. Participants discuss how it can be uncomfortable when they struggle in speaking a language or mix up words when they use “Spanglish” (Maggy); yet recognize their families’ value of bilingualism. Participants’ belief that being bilingual is a benefit is evident, such that it helps others in language learning, helps maintain family relationships, and achieve future goals, a key part of second language selves.

“Mom says it’s better to be bilingual because you can speak more languages and help people that don’t speak English and translate for them. You can get a good job and help parents with stuff” (Irma, p. 13).

**That little voice in your head.**

Being Bilingual involves using natural bilingual language strategies in both home (Spanish is dominant) and school (English is dominant) to communicate with peers, teachers, friends, and family members.

**Maggy.**

Maggy describes her cognitive thinking processes as “in my head, I think in English. You know how you have that little voice in your head- mine is English” (INTERVIEW, 6/30/2021, p. 8). Participants describe code-switching strategies to communicate at home and in school and how values, attitudes, and beliefs influence which language to use and their level of confidence and comfortability in using English and Spanish. Maggy shares that “sometimes I speak
Spanglish where I speak both and it actually kind of helps because when I don’t know a word in English, I just say the Spanish word” reflecting the attitude that knowing Spanish helps communicate.

Although many participants describe their language preference at home as typically Spanish, due to family values of being bilingual and attitudes within the family of a fear of forgetting a first language. “Mom’s scared that I was forgetting Spanish, because I talk a lot in English at school all of the time, so we speak Spanish a lot at home”

Another way it’s difficult for LELLS to be comfortable is when they feel as if peers judge them for being bilingual and/or for their cultural roots, “They [classmates] were like, are you from Mexico? I said, ‘I’m born here but my parents are from Mexico.’ They said, ‘Weird.’ They look at me weird. I don’t feel comfortable anymore” (p. 12). The value of being true to oneself is evident in participants’ responses to varying levels of comfortability speaking English as a bilingual Spanish speaker at school. She shares how once she started “being her true self and not pretending to be someone else- just be yourself” (p. 11) she felt accepted by peers (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 8).

Comfortability with one’s second language self within school settings is largely influenced by peers and confidence in speaking English and Spanish. Participants also share how their community, specifically at church, helps them understand Spanish better, reflecting the cultural value of speaking Spanish to be a part of their religious community. “We got to the Spanish one [service] because that’s the one I kind of understand better. I remember when I went to this class at my church, and it was in English, and I didn’t really understand. I understood it better in Spanish. Because I knew more about it in Spanish than in English. The teacher saw that
many of us were confused, and she talked more about it in Spanish. And I understand it more” (p. 13). Participants discuss how being bilingual at the summer program reminds us that it is okay to speak Spanish outside of the house or home, and it can help little kids learn; “You don’t have to keep it hidden” (p. 10). Reading support can empower ELs to use code-switching or language brokering (i.e. communication across linguistic and cultural differences).

Confidence in being bilingual wavered across participants’ narrative in both academic settings with learning, particularly reading, and among peers. A common attitude is that learners were nervous at first not knowing English well and were nervous to present projects at school in English. Maggy discusses how she created strategies to help her succeed, in which she felt encouraged by peers and teachers to present in English (p. 10). After participating in the summer program, Maggy shares that “I feel like I’ll do a good job. Because right now, I’m doing pretty good, so I think I’ll do good in middle school” (p. 17).

Participants’ dreams and goals were largely influenced by being bilingual. Maggy’s dream to be a bilingual voice actor stemmed from watching behind the scenes movie videos in which Mexican voice actors do different types of voices in which she sees herself “trying to get into film school or in middle school, get into plays or something like that so I can be in the industry” (p. 15). Reading books (i.e. Harry Potter) also inspired her to be a voice actor; including book club book Esperanza Rising, which she says, “I can connect with Esperanza and read with emotions” (p. 16). Doing Mexican-inspired graffiti art as a craft in book clubs inspired a couple of students to follow their passion for art and be an artist someday, including joining art club in middle school.
Irma.

Other participants discuss how translating is difficult because code-switching is challenging, “It’s quite hard because I forget the words whenever I speak a lot of English. Like right now I’m speaking more Spanish [at book clubs] but I get words mixed up a lot. When I’m trying to speak both and translating, I mix up words” (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 6, 7).

Participants discuss how it is uncomfortable when they struggle in speaking a language or translating; yet recognize how being bilingual is a family value. Participants view being bilingual as a benefit in many ways, such that it helps others in language learning and communication. “Mom says it’s better to be bilingual because you can speak more languages and help people that don’t speak English and translate for them. You can get a good job and help parents with stuff” (p. 13). Code-switching abilities is viewed as a benefit and an important component in constructing possible second language selves. “Obviously I’ll still be bilingual and it definitely would help me but also other people. It also helps when I read books with Spanish words in it. Normally classmates are like, ‘Do you know this word? Can you teach us how to say it?’ and it’s pretty fun to tell somebody the word” (p. 14).

Irma shares how she feels more comfortable talking to friends in English at school; yet moving a lot caused her to feel more uncomfortable, “It was kind of uncomfortable to talk to people that you don’t know. I had to get used to talking to people in this new school” (p. 8). “Sometimes it’s uncomfortable because I don’t’ know that much of the language. You’re going to have to learn how to speak it to communicate with people” (p. 13).

Irma shares how as a newcomer to the US when she was in early elementary school she didn’t really like to talk that much in school because “I was scared to get the words wrong” (p. 232).
16, 20); and “we weren’t that good at English yet, but I read little kids books with my sister and brother” (p. 17). Yet as Irma grew older, what helped her learn English was Spanish cognates, “because some words are spelled the same but pronounced different” (p. 12).

Lena.

Participants’ comfortability in speaking Spanish and English depended on the context and whether there were other speakers of Spanish or English or what was socially accepted. Many expressed feeling uncomfortable talking to new people; yet more comfortable talking in English at school than in Spanish. Lena describes how she feels uncomfortable when people don’t understand her in Spanish, but “I just ignore them and keep going to my next class” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 10).

Lena also shares how English helps her Spanish, “because some words are the same. They are spelling similar in English and Spanish” (p. 14). Self-efficacy beliefs in ability to speak and read in Spanish contributes to second language acquisition with strategy of identifying cognates, words similar in spelling and meaning. One key to expanding English vocabulary quickly is learning to recognize the word patterns seen in many English-Spanish cognates; similarities found between the two languages is significant (Erichsen, 2015; This strengthens word comprehension and building connections with Spanish-English cognates. Participants that recognize the cognates or similarities between linguistic characteristics in phonemic and phonological foundation apply an SLA strategy which can foster positive self-efficacy beliefs. Syntax and semantic structure similarities between English and Spanish cognates as in grammar-matching can support acquisition of the target language, such as in adjectives (e.g. intelligent/inteligente, honest/honesto); adverbs (e.g. personally/personalmente); infinite verbs
forms (e.g. to imagine/imaginar, to educate/educar). Recognition of linguistic patterns similarities between Spanish and English can be beneficial to enhance cognitive domains and perceived language competencies which affects self-efficacy (Rivera, 2019).

**Irma.**

Irma describes struggling in reading and her dislike to read out loud in class, reflecting her confidence as a reader in English; yet in book clubs, “I’m more comfortable because I have some of my friends with me” and “learning to read and stuff will help me in seventh grade” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 18). Lena’s attitude in that she is not alone- others struggle in reading in English too is reflected in her interview, “While I’m reading, I’m thinking that I’m not by myself because some other people also mess up some words in English too” (p. 21). She describes her increase in confidence, “I feel like I’m more confident in being me” (p. 20).

Reading in English supported learners’ confidence in speaking English, and vice versa. Thus, using Spanish bilingual books and English books that act as “mirrors” and “windows” into the lived experiences of Spanish speaking characters helped build confidence and comfortability in ability to read in English.

**Theme Three: Connecting to Root Culture: “Where I Am From”**

Participants had the opportunity to connect to their “root culture” or “Where I’m From” as a part of mitigating schooling experiences in an asset-based approach to *Latinidad* book clubs and summer camp. Cultural Traditions is a central theme in book clubs’ discussions, activities, and autobiographical poems reflected from the poems and books we explored in book clubs. Values coding in theming the data also reflected participants cultural traditions and values, related to their country of origin and/or familial and personal experiences, whether emergent
bilingual, bilingual, or an aspiring Spanish speaker (e.g. Rosa). Exploring cultural traditions in literacy experiences and instruction can counteract negative or discriminatory viewpoints about such culture or ethnic identity (Wilson & Neville, 2009).

**Cultural traditions and values.**

Participants’ ethnic identity as it relates to their cultural roots, whether it be their origin of birth or their family’s heritage, was evident in every aspect of theming analysis, and interpreted in relation to its role in self-efficacy. Coding the data showed that an important value that participants shared was identity in their family’s cultural roots.

**Maggy.**

Maggy states, “That’s who I am and that is where I come from. And without it, I couldn’t’ really be Mexican American. I feel like people should respect it and I’ll respect theirs [nationality]” (INTERVIEW, 6/30/2021, p. 6). Interviews, book club discussions around family’s cultural artifacts/traditions, and their autobiographical poem revealed religious beliefs of their heritage playing a vital role in their ethnic identity. Participants share their Catholicism and church attendance in Spanish, and how they “believe in La Virgen de Guadalupe... and we worship her as the mom of Jesus” (p. 6).

Participants also valued celebrating and learning about different cultures; particularly bringing traditions from Guatemala or Mexico to America to celebrate. Maggy discusses how her school celebrate different cultures in which can learn about multicultural traditions, “It was really fun. I learned food and facts about it. There was a dance from different countries with music from where they were from” (p. 12). Additionally, participant attitudes about sharing their own cultural traditions in book clubs showed, “When we learned about Mexico and you said to bring
something from our culture. That was cool. We got to learn a lot and I was happy to share about the *Rosaria* that you pray with and stuff (p. 13).

**Rosa.**

One participant who was adopted by an American family though has family in Guatemala and has met her biological mother when she visited, shares her desire to convert to Catholicism “because if I was in Guatemala, I would have been raised Catholic. That’s a whole totally different thing” and “my Nana [in Guatemala] got the Rosary and I didn’t really understand it until I went down there [Guatemala] and my biological mother taught me how to do it. Like how many “Mary’s” you’re supposed to say” (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021, p. 5). Rosa explains how she values new cultural learning experiences and loved trying the foods in Guatemala when she was there and then bringing them back to the people in the US to try (p. 3, 9). She explains how traditions in Guatemala are different than in America, but she is happy to celebrate them here [US]; although, “learning about my [root] culture was very strange at first, but I got used to it” (p. 6). Centralizing book club discussions on cultural heritage, such as their religious traditions, allowed LELLS to share their personal experiences and connect with their cultural roots.

**Rodrigo.**

Rodrigo discussed his family’s holiday traditions being enjoyable as he helped his mom make “Taquenos which are very yummy” and “we make a very big, big party for ourselves and what we dress up as on Halloween and send it to our family back in Venezuela” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 4).
Making connections.

As participants made personal and familial connections during book clubs, they further connected with their peers and communal identities. In the first round of coding, I identified the code Comparison to America, but after another round of coding and comparing other qualitative data, I re-identified the code as Coming to America, whether it be the participants’ firsthand experiences or their parents. These familial and/or personal experiences were central topics in book club discussions around the literature we read and in interview conversations.

*Lena.*

Lena shared how their families celebrate Día de los Muertos, a Mexican holiday, in the US “and you celebrate someone’s death” and “we celebrate the person that we loved that passed away” (p. 3). She discussed her memories celebrating in Mexico and how their families have brought these traditions to the US. Lena talks about how speaking Spanish at home and it being the only tool for her to connect with her grandfather reflects her value of speaking Spanish and close-knit family relationships as a cultural value, “It helps me talk to my family and keep those relationships” (INTERVIEW, 06/29/2021, p. 9).

*Rosa.*

Rosa shares how she appreciates her family for exposing her to her root culture of Guatemalan roots, calling it “my culture” (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021, p. 9), and “they will drive two hours to go to a festival for me of my culture, or the Hola Festival. So I appreciate them for doing all of that. Because of them, I learned more of who I am, and what holidays we celebrate down in Guatemala” (p. 9). She visited her biological family in Guatemala with her father and talks about differences from her home in the US, “It was a motel except fancier, but it was still
considered in the poor community of Guatemala. There is an open-door concept where everything is in the open, and it had a beautiful sunroof. There was nothing like it. If it was raining, you stand out in the middle of it. You could feel the rain” (p. 3).

Although Rosa has not lived in Guatemala, she considers her family there very much a part of her, including a brother she has yet to meet, “You have to love them no matter what. You can show genuine care for them and their own well-being and safety” (p. 15); in response to not knowing whether or not her brother is in a gang in Guatemala. “The government is being overpowered by gangs, and people are faced with three options: run away, work for them, or try and actually find a different job that isn’t affiliated with them,” (p. 13), “but I don’t know if my brother is alive or not. I don’t know if he’s faced with that hardship” (p. 14). Rosa further connects these hardships to her experience when she was visiting Guatemala, “my mom ended up having to leave us at 5 o’clock because of cartels. If she left even an hour later with the darkness, they could have gotten robbed or something” (p. 13). Comparing her experience to America, Rosa discusses the school shootings in the US and her belief about how the cops are trying to help; yet that isn’t how it works in Guatemala, “What they [Americans] don’t understand is that police in Mexico or Guatemala… it’s kind of hard for them to protect people, because the gangs are so powerful. That’s what they don’t’ understand here” (p. 14).

Rosa recognizes that her cultural roots have “had a big impact on me” (p. 8) and values connecting to her ethnic identity. Although, in schooling experiences, identifying with her ethnic identity has created social tensions, particularly about race. “I felt like I had to change myself a little bit at school, because the school I went to was 85% white and 10% black and a low percentage of Hispanic people. So I had to change myself depending on… how I talked to them,”
assuming that white people don’t care about her cultural traditions (i.e. making bracelets) (p. 8). She counteracts such tension by surrounding herself with more Hispanic people, saying, “I’m interested to be friends with Hispanic people because they are all very welcoming and teach me what stuff I need to do” (p. 10).

Relating book club experiences to self-efficacy as a learner, participants’ values of perseverance despite obstacles and “turning a negative into a positive” (Rosa p. 8); when peers would say mean things [about her appearance], “sometimes I cried about it but it shaped me to how I am because I have grown from that. I learned to keep all the negative energy out and focus on the positive and surround myself with positive people” (p. 7), reflecting the values and attitudes towards self-reflection and self-growth. Such reflection revealed how participants felt about preparation for middle school, “I feel I’ve been prepared. Academically, yes I feel like I’m there. Socially, I’m kind of there… not sure” (p. 17). Self-reflection demonstrates strategies that LELLS can learn and apply to improve beliefs of ability to achieve, as self-efficacy.

Maggy.

Expression of ethnic identity was welcome and encouraged in Latinidad book clubs, evident in participants’ willingness to share with me, as a native English-speaking American and in their critical connections to stories and themes we discussed. Relating to family values of cultural heritage, Maggy describes how she really wants to visit Mexico to see a lot of her family and how she liked learning about cultural traditions in book clubs, relating experiences from peers to her own. The value of self-growth is evident despite alluding to obstacles that Mexican Americans faced in relation to antagonizing from political discourse to build a wall between US and Mexico; Esperanza Rising discusses crossing borders as well. Maggy shares in an interview,
I grew a lot this year, even though there were some challenges. Like how we learned about borders [in book clubs] and people wanting to build a wall between the US and Mexico… I mean there were a lot of obstacles, but I think I still grew. We have read goals and math goals and I pretty much met them, so I think I grew (6/30/2021, p. 19).

Maggy shares her family’s value of the American Dream, stating, “my mom came but my grandma stayed in Mexico. My mom came here to find success and have a better future for her kids and for her family, so that’s why she wants us to stay in school so we can have a good life because she had to drop out of school to come to America” (p. 17), which speaks to immigrant families’ sacrifices when migrating to the US. Immigration was a recurring theme across poems (Every Day We Get More Illegal in Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice (Herrera, 2016); Half of the World in Light: New and Selected Poems (Herrera, 2008), picture books (Calling the Doves (Herrera, 1995); The Upside Down Boy (Herrera, 2000), and novels (La Linea (Jaramillo, 2016); Esperanza Rising (Ryan, 2000) and by making connections across autobiographical and fictitious experiences of Mexicans and other Latin American groups, participants made connections to their own family’s experiences.

**Theme Four: Navigating Changes in Transitional Experiences**

Navigating changes in transitional experiences and the challenges, expectations, and motivation participants had in a) transitions to US schools, b) transitions to middle school, and c) transitions to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Transitions to US schools.**

Comparing home versus school environment was a category that came up in book club discussions with literature themes; however, interviews offered a first-person narrative of
experiences and family stories of transitioning to US schools. These topics were visited in book club discussions with literature that embodied firsthand accounts and fictitious narratives about transitioning to US schools and crossing national borders (i.e. *La Linea* (Jaramillo, 2016), *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000) Juan Felipe Herrera picture books and poetry).

**Irma.**

Irma’s attitude towards being a newcomer in US schools was affected by her discomfort, “My teacher was really nice, but I sat at a table with two boys who made it uncomfortable” (INTERVIEW, 06/29/2021, p. 11); although she did not provide more details as to what hindered her comfortability among peers. “The first time I was learning English in school I was also moving into a new neighborhood. And then we moved a lot of times, so it’s always new people and new schools. It was kind of uncomfortable to talk to new people that you don’t know, and I had to get used to talking to people in this new school” (Irma, p. 8). Home-based disruptions affect comfortability in adjustment to new schools and new culture, and challenge participants to make friends while still learning conversational and academic English, to which self-efficacy in second language selves may help support.

**Lena.**

Additionally, other participants who moved often said “it was a bit hard to make friends and we always had to move” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 8) while feeling frustration to not be able to pronounce the English words.

**Transitions to Middle School: “I think I’ll do good at school.”**

To address how few studies have included EL student perceptions during the transition to middle school, particularly among immigrant groups (Akos, 2002); participants’ beliefs and
experiences about transitioning to middle school was discussed in first-person accounts through semi-structured interviews. Categories from analysis included values and attitudes around friendship; attitudes and beliefs around academics; attitudes and beliefs around motivational influences; and attitudes and beliefs about challenges in transitions and adjustment processes.

**Irma.**

Friendship was an apparent motivating factor for participants’ view of readiness for middle school grades, in that making new friends was both a challenge and a desire. “I’m going to see my friends and we might have classes together so that’ll be better than being home alone. Normally it’s gonna be more comfortable when you have your friends with you and meet a new teacher and stuff” (INTERVIEW, 06/29/2021, p. 18).

In response to transitioning during COVID-19, Irma shares how “My only friend at the time [at a new school] and I didn’t talk to most people. Cuz I didn’t know them and I was scared to get the words wrong and stuff” (p. 16). Despite her hesitance in speaking English with peers, Irma’s attitude towards ELL class being fun is because of the stories they read, “we read them like in book club [summer program] and we read and act out stories” (p. 17). Irma also shares her attitude towards book club and how it will help her transition to middle school, “learning to read and stuff will help me in seventh grade” even though “sometimes I struggle [in reading]” (p. 18).

Beliefs about differences between elementary and middle school were expressed as well as comparisons in language use in schooling between Mexico to the US were made. “Spanish is normal because we were in Mexico a long time. We were here until we were eight years old so
mostly English. So after eight years old, we went back to Mexico and then came back to the US when we were 10 or 11 [two years ago]” (p. 5).

Irma shares what she is looking forward to in middle school is joining art club because “my art teacher told me and my friend to do art club” and something related to math and science because “science is my favorite general class” but I also “want to get more good at math because in sixth grade I had an F the semester” (p. 19). Additionally, motivational factors included joining middle school clubs and academic goals as participants envisioned themselves in their imagined and/or real clubs. “Technology club. I have technology classes at my school, computer literacy and keyboarding. Maybe robotics and art.” (p. 24).

*Rosa.*

Rosa shares how her experiences in “toxic relationships” when “I didn’t really feel happy and genuine” which was difficult (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021, p. 19). During her sixth-grade year “it made things way more challenging because females carry too much drama. I’m trying to stay positive. I’ve lived my life better than I have ever before” (p. 19). She discusses how now she can always rely on her female friends “they would help me out” (p. 20) and she looks forward to “meeting new people and getting out there in the world and getting herself known” (p. 21). This speaks to how positive social and emotional self-efficacy can mitigate peer tension or friendship challenges in starting new schools and in the developmental period of middle school ages.

Other social and emotional challenges in the developmental period of middle school include struggling with anxiety and stress related to peer bullying. She discusses how bullying stemmed from peers’ view about her assumed culture because of her appearance. “It’s tricky
sometimes, because since I moved to S, I’m going to face more racism probably than in K. There’s some racism in K, but not a lot” (p. 15). The value of being true to oneself is embedded in ethnic identity, in which participants’ positive self-efficacy beliefs of their abilities to share opinions and stick up for their values and beliefs is apparent when they have strong ties to their “root culture” (heritage/origin country). “Being truly you means you don’t care if anybody wants you to change, you’re gonna stay the same” (p. 15). Rosa states “You don’t have to always pretend you’re happy. You don’t have to hold in your anger and not talk about it. Because when you don’t talk about it, that’s when you get really bad anxiety or depression. It’s better to share things.” “In fifth and sixth grade I was getting bullied a lot and I felt like I was trapped in a corner…but that’s who I used to be. That’s in the past.” Value of self-growth and self-esteem relate to positive efficacy in how students respond to feelings of anxiety in middle school grades and how learning coping mechanisms might be possible with having a positive sense of emotional and social self-efficacy. Rosa shares, “I feel I’m more confident in being me” (p. 20).

**Maggy and Rosa.**

Maggy and Rosa discuss how school isn’t always an option for girls in the US, whose mothers and sisters have made sacrifices both in the US and in Guatemala. Maggy shares how her mom dropped out of school to come to the US and find success for a better future for her kids and family (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 17). This was a motivation for her to work hard and her perception of her ability to succeed in middle school is, “I feel like I’ll do a good job. Because right now [in book clubs] I’m doing pretty good so I think I’ll do good at school” (p. 17).
Rosa shares how her sister in Guatemala was starting high school, but she was pulled out of school, “Then she must do a lot of farm work and maid work, dishes and all that stuff. Because my mom also works as a maid [biological mother]” (INTERVIEW, 07/01/2021, p. 5). Thus, participants express their value of education and the opportunities they are afforded, “here, I still got my education. So if I want to become a veterinarian I can do it without having to be pulled out of school” (p. 5). “I’m still focused on all that (academics) because I know it’s very important to do. If you fail your classes, you won’t get into a college” (Rosa, p. 21).

Rosa shared how she wants to try volleyball again or photography classes, or “something that I want to try is being on the swimming team” but “I realize that I don’t have enough time for it [volleyball] because we didn’t meet the payday” (p. 25) and she discusses her home chores makes it hard to balance school-home responsibilities.

**Transitions to Virtual Learning: “It didn’t feel like learning.”**

Participants’ report how school changed during COVID-19 when learning transitioned to online and when schools shifted back in-person with particular mandates or suggestions for staying safe when learning. These sudden changes affected teachers, students, and families alike in which adjustment to the new normal required both flexibility and sacrifice. Teachers had to adjust to new teaching formats, technology changes, and drastically different pedagogy. Students adjusted to doing school at home in these new formats which often required a sense of autonomy and independence without the one-on-one teacher or peer support. Participants talk about how families supported their learning or siblings’ learning at home. Most notably, the change in access to learning resources and limitations put on by the pandemic highlighted inequities among TN schools (e.g. resources available, internet and one-to-one technology, at-home support).
**Lena.**

Lena shared how wearing a mask and social distancing was hard; and that virtual learning was hard because the teacher couldn’t be there to help and you weren’t with your friends. Lena did not like school online and was unmotivated to learn; “I did not like school online, and it was boring. You had to turn on your camera and talk and answer questions. I would just fall asleep or be on my phone. It didn’t feel like learning” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 18).

**Maggy.**

Participants share their initial reactions including being mostly worried because people were dying and “we couldn’t really go outside;” plus, “schools were running out of supplies” and it was “difficult to not see friends” (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 1). “We’re not going to school because of this dangerous illness, and I was nervous when they told me that we were going back [to school]” (p. 1). Participants describe how not wearing masks consistently was scary, but “I handled it pretty well” (p. 1).

Nevertheless, Centro Hispano created Zoom classes for the Spring 2020 until school ended which participants describe liking. “Centro provided computers and we would use the Zoom app on a phone or tablet or whatever device you had, but it wouldn’t always work because internet was tricky” (p. 3). Students faced many challenges in the transition online such as the internet not working, and they would lose connection or could not log on to go to class. “Most of the class would be spent on trying to fix what they’re doing instead of actual learning. We still got it done, but it was hard; especially because we didn’t really have materials at home. Because it wasn’t really going well. It would have been better if we were at school” (p. 3).
“There were these videos on KCSD website and they would have each grade level videos for each week: reading one, math one, science, and social studies. I did that for a few weeks before we went back” (p. 2). Participants describe changes being back in person included cleaning tables and equipment, social distancing and sitting at separate tables. They describe how elementary school was different in that “we played on the playgrounds. And you used to be able to mix in and play with anybody no matter what class, but now you couldn’t do that. There would be one separate place you could stay. We all had assigned seats at lunch which kind of sucked” (p. 2). Participants talk about how they missed how school was before, including sitting wherever you wanted to. “When we went virtual sometimes, I had to adjust. I had to sit back and just learn. It’s just what I had to do” (p. 2). The unknown of when students were safe to go back to school made it challenging, yet participants show attitudes of being adaptable to the changes.

**Teacher has little autonomy: “but, we still got what we needed.”**

In transitioning back to in-person school, participants describe how some students were behind and how teachers struggled to support them.

**Maggy.**

Maggy describes her experiences with teachers during the transition back to school in 2020; “Teachers were stressed too with having to keep us safe” (INTERVIEW, 06/30/2021, p. 2). Teachers tried to support students’ learning virtually; however, participants describe the belief that teachers had not autonomy in teaching virtually. “Kids really don’t pay attention because they’re at home. So, they don’t listen and turn their cameras and microphones off. Teachers can’t force them to because they’re not there. It was pretty hard” (p. 3).
Additionally, while siblings were also online learning, some participants describe how they tried to help them while attending to their own classes. They discuss how parents were there, “She would help my brother in kindergarten because he needed help” (p. 3).

Despite these challenges, participants all report that they handled online learning well. Maggy states, “I think I did a pretty good job. I didn’t get through the full math of fifth grade that I had to learn. But it wasn’t only us. A lot of other schools in the district weren’t really doing well. Virtual set them back” (p. 3).

Some students “had no idea what we were learning because they hadn’t learned it yet in the virtual classroom because they were behind. I remember one girl didn’t know decimals, but we were way past that. It’s one of the first things you learn in fifth grade. It was hard for the teacher to have her learn because that will only set her behind and haven more stuff to do” (p. 3-4). The structure of online school involved different teachers (i.e. two teachers for four subjects) “but they didn’t have any other helpers” (p. 4). “the problem was that they had to teach my class and other homeroom classes with different levels. One would have more low and one would be more high” (p. 4). Learners had time to read which Maggy describes as helpful towards reading growth; “It was pretty easy and normal. We still read and wrote with prompts- quick writes. We still got what we needed” (p. 4). Though the challenge was at home, students didn’t always have the book they needed and had to use a website, but the website wouldn’t always work. “A lot of kids didn’t really know how to work the websites to get reading things at home. The teacher is not there to help with the website, so students would have to listen and try to understand” (p. 5).

A common thread underlying thematic findings was the development of voice, visibility, and respect with the aim of garnering positive self-efficacy in past-present-future second
language selves. Participant case narratives are constructed from their autobiographical poems, critical written reflections, and in discussions [albeit, there is no recording, only field notes].

**Book Club Activities**

The framing of *Latinidad* book clubs as a literacy practice in Latino/a youth’s unique language-shaping experiences considers a linguistics justice lens in the ways youth respond to and represent their intersectional, multiplicitous experiences through reflections, discussions, and poetry with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as. These stories unfold through illustrations, written autobiographical poems, and reflections to connect stories and poetry to LELLs’ personal and familial experiences, and discussions with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in book clubs. I opted to not video record Book club sessions as to respect participants’ privacy and confidentiality.

*Latinidad* book clubs (grades fourth through fifth) explored Spanish/English bilingual picture books, chapter books, autobiographical picture books, and poetry to make connections to familial and cultural heritage in family story portraits. *Latinidad* book clubs (grades sixth through ninth) primarily made critical connections to the novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan which explores themes of immigration, crossing borders, family ties, grief, and intersectionality of social class, ethnicity, and linguistic identity.

**Latinidad Book clubs: Fourth through Fifth Grade**

At the start of the summer program during the first week, we did ice-breakers as getting to know each other activities such as Bingo, Find a Fib, and name cards with three things drawn or written to describe themselves. We also read a book to introduce Mexico: *Off We Go to Mexico!* By Laurie Krebbs and explored aspects of Mexican culture.
The first week of Book clubs we explored Mexico and read a young chapter book *My Name Is Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada. The story is about Maria Isabel, a “Hispanic” child growing up in the U.S. who begins to have problems in her new classroom when her teacher changes her name to Mary. This portrait of a common experience to many Latino/a, Hispanic, and Mexican American children and youth and other minoritized linguistic groups foments discussion on self-efficacy and ethnic identity and navigating bicultural landscape as a Spanish-speaker in schools. It captures an authenticity of Latino/a culture in this sentimental story: an entire family genealogy is encapsulated in a Latino/a name in which connections of heritage between its bearer and relatives for whom Maria Isabel was named which mirror what many LELLS face.

María Isabel’s reluctance to assert her wish to be called by her full name envelopes her in an apparent web of deception when she doesn’t get a part in a school pageant (she doesn’t recognize her teacher-given name “Mary” when the teacher is assigning roles for the pageant), but she lets her parents believe she’ll participate. An essay assignment provides a solution: María Isabel finds the courage to write to her teacher that her greatest wish is to be called María Isabel Salazar López and explains her reasons. Her teacher responds generously to her wish.

During the first week (Mexico theme) of Book club when reading this chapter book, the activities we did included making predictions before reading each chapter and the critical written reflection was to look back at the beginning of the story in which Maria Isabel has to face a frightening situation: a brand-new school where she doesn’t know anyone. Participants were transitioning to a new grade at school and could relate to Maria Isabel on different levels. They had to think, write, and share about a time when they’ve gone into a class or camp without knowing anyone. How did they feel about it? What helped them through that experience? How
can we help other people through similar experiences? Then, LELLS expressed themselves in writing an acrostic poem about themselves, writing their name vertically, and using words and phrases to describe their characteristics. We also created Mexican ethnic art in positive and negative adrinkra designs and amate paper cutouts. Amate art form comes from Mexico and the Otomi and Nahua people who create the paper by hand like their ancestors did long ago. Pictures include animals, flowers, plants, and scenes form everyday life in bright and colorful designs.

During the second week of Book club, we finished reading *My Name is Maria Isabel* (Figure 16 in Appendix J) continued to make predictions and to see how these compared to what really happened in the plot and did a “put yourself in the character’s shoes” activity. LELLS thought about how Maria Isabel didn’t know anyone her first day at school and empathized with Maria Isabel by “stepping” into her shoe cut-outs to make connections to the story. Participants created their own shoe cut-outs and wrote about a time they were new somewhere and how they felt and what helped them feel more comfortable through the experience. Lastly, because the author’s name Alma Flor means “soul flower,” we made tissue paper flowers in her honor.

The second week of Book clubs we explored Poetry from the Caribbean and other Latin American countries. The poetry unit focused on *Caribbean Dozen: Poems from Caribbean Poets* selected for the opportunities they provide for exploration of nature and their connection to senses, place, and the idea of home. During this poetry exploration, learners kept a poetry journal and we discussed themes and connections to self. *For Forest* by Grace Nichols focuses on the sights, sounds and feelings of a tropical forest exploring what sounds we would hear in a forest leading youth to imagine the lands of Guyana. Then, participants wrote a group poem using sensory words and phrases to describe a nature setting (i.e. ocean, forest, lake…) and relate it to
the places they have lived and traveled. We explored *The Sun is Laughing* by Guyanese Grace Nichols and *Wind* and *Hurricane* poems by Dionne Brand from Trinidad and Tobago to travel to other regions of the world and make connections to our own places we call home. We also read parts of a young chapter book called *The Color of My Words* by Lynn Joseph and made connections to the chapter *The Gri Gri Tree* and the character Rosa’s poem about the tree in a forest which connected to one of the poems in *Caribbean Dozen* book (i.e. *For Forest*). Participants made connections across texts which helped visualize the words and create pictures in our minds to understand real experiences of people in the Caribbean who have lived through and survived natural disasters such as hurricanes. Personification of nature (e.g. wind, tornado, earthquake) created characters with descriptive words in poems in which students began to make connections to the world and to their lives. LELLs wrote their own poems to personify something in nature (e.g. ocean, volcanoes, river, smoke) and discussed what mood their character will be in. What atmosphere did they want to create in their poem? What words or phrases and actions would best convey this?

During the third week of Book clubs, we began a short story collection called *Salsa Stories* by Lulu Delacre and connected to one of the holidays discussed in the book *La Semana Santa*. We created alfombras or “flower carpets” and learned about *La Semana Santa* or Eastern traditions in Spanish-speaking countries around the world in which students could share their cultural knowledge and traditions to celebrate *La Semana Santa* (e.g. food, music, art, dance). One of the critical reflections with this story involved practicing perspective taking by understanding characters’ points of view in writing a friendly letter. LELLs wrote a letter from the perspective of one character in the story to another, expressing their feelings about what was
happening in the book thus far. Perspective taking is important part of developing intercultural awareness and multicultural curricula.

We also finished reading *The Color of My Words* by Lynn Joseph and wrote critical reflections: In the story Ana Rosa discovers her power over words. Describe what she means by that. How does she plan to use her power of words to make her family’s life better? LELLS pick a word that is powerful to them or describes their own strength; then, I collectively created a word cloud poem with everyone’s words to show unity in strength. Participants also made a text to self-connection with Ana Rosa, the main character, when she wrote down all that she learned while she was 12 and her plans for her 13th year. I asked LELLS to think about all that they learned this year so far and what they hope to learn this summer or next year in school and to write down one goal or dream they have for themselves. In the book, the character Guario says that finding your future means “finding the something special you do with your life” (p. 101-102). I asked students: Do you know something special that you want to do with your life? What are you doing now to work towards achieving that something special? This activity allowed students to reflect on themselves as second language learners and begin to imagine a future, possible second language self.

During the third week of Book club, we also read *My Diary From Here to There or Mi diario de aqui hasta alla* by Amada Irma Perez (Perez, 2002) is a picture book used to introduce diaries as a form of personal narratives to elicit responses from youth about their own diaries to questions such as: How often do you write in a diary/journal? How is writing in a diary special? What do you write about? As a bilingual book in Spanish and English, it introduced autobiographical writing in words and pictures- a story that accounts a family’s immigration to
America from Mexico. Amada records her hopes, dreams, and fears of their new life, such as what if she can’t learn English? The protagonist learns that with her family's love and belief in herself, she can weather any change. I asked participants to write about what they think about their culture and family, as well as fears or wishes. Participants wrote in journals and took them home at the end of the summer program.

During the fourth week of Book club we finished reading *Salsa Stories* by Lulu Delacre and introduced Argentina and Peru. One of the written reflections was to think about what foods bring good memories of their childhood, relating it to a recipe provided in the story. I asked LELLS to think of a food that reminds them of something good that happened or a special occasion where they have a certain food. We also read poetry including *Dancing Poincinia* by Telcine Turner and did a visualization activity. We read the poem *I Am the One* by Opal Palmer Adisa about Jasmine flowers and participants chose one of these flowers to paint a creative representation of, reflecting on the imagery language in the poem such as *regal as a queen, fire in the treetops, on a sea of green, a ray on a cold bleak day, I dine with the moon and stars.*

**Family Story Portraits.**

During this week, we also read non-fiction or autobiographical picture books in which authors told their personal stories coming and/or living in America with beautiful poetry and illustrations, which included Juan Felipe Herrera’s *Calling the Doves* (Herrera, 1995) and *The Upside Down Boy* (2000).

*The Upside Down Boy* (Herrera, 2000) involved making critical reflections in response to reading about Juan as the main character in this story drawing a lot of his strength from a special
adult in his life, his teacher and his parents. I asked LELLs to think of a special person in their life who made them feel important too. “Who in your life helps you when you are having trouble, feel scared or doubtful, or have a goal you want to achieve? What advice has this person shared with you? What actions and qualities do you admire most about this person?” Participants compared how Juanito feels and acts at school and at home and described how his behavior at school changed at the end of the story in our Book club discussion. I asked, “What helped him to not feel “upside down” anymore? Describe a situation when you felt nervous and then became more confident. How did your behavior change as you became more comfortable?”

*Calling the Doves* (Herrera, 1995) is a poetic self-portrait of Mexican American author and poet Juan Felipe Herrera as he reminisces about his childhood as the much-loved son of migrant farmworkers in the U.S. Describing his memories of traveling from place to place to harvest California’s crops, he recalls sleeping under starry skies, bathing in gigantic tin buckets, eating meals cooked over an open fire, his mother’s songs and poems and his father’s bird-calls. Through this story, we talked about themes of family traditions, culture, and/or migrating to a new place to call home. I asked LELLs to think about what traditions their family has. We also discussed what “home” means to each of us and how this word might mean more than just the place where you live. We discussed what “family” means to each of us and how it might mean more than parents or siblings. LELLs created *family story portraits* to compare their own family to Juan’s family in the book. Participants drew a picture of their home and/or family and wrote 1) a similarity and a difference between my family and Juan’s family depicted in the story; 2) a strength of each family; and 3) dreams for myself and/or my family and Juan’s dreams. While we discussed these family attributes, some participants did not write complete sentences or wrote
“I don’t know.” A major focus of Herrera’s writing is on family and community, so participants shared oral poetry about a big or small tradition that is important in their family’s culture.

Notably, Alfredo’s family story portrait (Figure 10) portrays family strengths in which he wrote that Juan’s is strong because “they one day sleep outside” and “my family is strong because we love each other.” A similarity he wrote is that Alfredo is happy to have his family and that Juan is proud of his family; Alfredo included the dream he has for himself and his family: “I want to be rich so I can buy my family a big house” (Figure 10). Emulating the belief in the American Dream and the value of wealth as equivalent to success, Alfredo places emphasis on the family unit, a cultural value depicted in artifacts and in Calling the Doves (Herrera, 1995). Connecting to root culture in Book clubs is evident when cultural values and beliefs are communicated when making connections to Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth. Thus, the role of ethnic identity ties into their beliefs of their second language self. Dreams for oneself and their family are communal, not individualistic, and depict how cultural values and beliefs play a role in the construction of second language selves.

Additionally, Rodrigo’s family story portrait (Figure 11) depicts the cultural value of hard work leads to success that recurred in values coding of his interview data, further connecting the family’s influence on self-efficacy beliefs as a language learner in school. Rodrigo’s belief that his family members are hard workers (“We remodeled a house. We have built a lot of things”, Figure 11) and that his hard work has led to success in school (e.g. passed the WIDA ACCESS test, INTERVIEW, 6/28/2021) and Rodrigo’s dream to be wealthy that ties into his family’s belief in the American Dream (INTERVIEW, 6/28/2021) are reiterated in his text-to-self connections in Herrera’s (1995) Calling the Doves. He wrote that his family like
Figure 10. Alfredo’s Family Story Portrait
Figure 11. Rodrigo’s Family Story Portrait
Juan’s is from Mexico, and they work together and work hard, emphasizing the value of community and family and the belief that hard work leads to success, which is also a theme in Herrera’s work. Connections of values, beliefs, and attitudes reflect cultural knowledge and his connection to ethnic identity which reading and interacting with Latino/a literature mirrors, as evident in these empirical artifacts.

These family story portraits (Figures 10, 11, 12) encapsulate one artifact type of an activity from Book club yet do not account for the entirety of the rich discussions that LELLs shared about family and community in our dialogic practices with Multicultural Literature for Latino/as. Considering that language learning is a form of participating in specific cultural dialogue from a sociocultural perspective, learners’ communicative competence emphasized different combinations of English and Spanish orally and in written exemplars. We know that oral language proficiency has a significant influence on written language development (Butler & Hakuta, 2004), and here we see that the “input” or linguistic data students have learned is manipulated by prior language patterns and grammar they can use (Butler & Hakuta, 2004).

We see in Loidaly’s family story portrait (Figure 12) that written language includes vocabulary in English and Spanish, reflecting the oral strategy to code-switch, or use both English and Spanish in communicating responses to literature and making personal connections. Loidaly’s drawing includes labels in Spanish and English of an activity her family does together at home and food her family eats: “bemos las etreyas” or “we see the stars” and “caldo” for “soup” and “bejetales” for “vegetables” as well as “pizza” in English (Figure 12). When comparing her family to Juan’s, Loidaly shared that her dream for her family is “going to
Figure 12. Loidaly’s Family Story Portrait
school” in which she used English, associating the instructional language of English in school while using Spanish words when associating home and family life. While we read books in English, using code-switching strategies to communicate occurred naturally in dialogue about literature in book clubs which transferred to written structures when making connections to the text about LELLS’ home and family.

Gibbons (2002) emphasized that in school classrooms, EL students learn to use their L1 but a much more restricted range of contexts in English; therefore, without focused English language support, students might fall behind their native English-speaking peers who have communicated in a language they have been familiar with since birth. Thus, not only English language knowledge and properly constructed sentences learned in school, but the ability to use the language features of L1 and L2 (Figure 12) depicts the semantics and pragmatics of language learning. Thus, if learning means participating in specific cultural dialogue, negative cross transfer of L1 to L2 reflects patterns of discourse in the target language (i.e. English) and its culture of knowledge (Lado, 1957; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1999). This transfer involves mental representations in the form of schema that invariably cause linguistic knowledge and cognitive ability to evolve. The drawings and labeling with words and phrases in English and Spanish represent learners’ cultural schema and have implications on language development and cross-language transfer. While dialogue between teacher and student and between students are artifacts that mediate learning in English; written forms of language demonstrate English and Spanish semantics that are supported by code-switching as a natural bilingual strategy.

From a sociocultural perspective, this transfer is the process of transformation of cultural knowledge from lower to higher levels, based on developmental process involving mentor and/or
peer interaction (Butler & Hakuta, 2004). Lado (1957) believed that a challenge in second language learning is the tendency of a learner to transfer the habits or linguistic structure of L1 to the target language. A debate on whether the distance between two interacting languages is sociocultural, since language is a cultural product, has led to the belief that knowledge of an L2 (i.e. English) only develops in a social environment in which English is native (Cook, 1985; Hymes, 2001). Hymes (2001) argued that attention should be placed on competence in language usage or in communication rather than language competence as structural and grammar centered. The finding that family story portraits portray a transfer of linguistic knowledge in social interactions with bilingual texts reinforces the impetus to study language as it is practice in real-time patterns of dialogue and interaction rather than the isolation of language as a formal system.

There is also mixed research that supports Cummins’ (1979, 1991) interdependence theory, which contends that a learner’s level of L2 (i.e. English) competence is a significant function of their L1 ability. While we cannot control for native (L1) competence or ability or motivation to learn, scholars and educators can assess ELs’ L1 (i.e. Spanish) early in middle school, especially in the absence of bilingual instruction programs, to control for confounding educational variables to isolate the L1 effect. While the teacher, or myself as participant-researcher in this study, is a confounding variable, assessments at the start of middle school can contribute to the research on whether oral and written L2 (i.e. English) competence is a function of L1 competence. This is especially important considering the rising numbers of ELs in U.S. schools and the influx of immigrants and children of immigrants (1.5 generation) that may have had little to no exposure to U.S. public schools or prior formal education.
Book clubs consisted of reading literature and poetry written by and/or about Latino/as or Mexican Americans, and some had Spanish and English words. Each week’s theme of highlighting a Spanish-speaking country or region was considered in the literature we read and the corresponding activities and discussion prompts. We started out book clubs getting to know each other and sharing cultural traditions, bringing in artifacts from home, and doing ice-breakers while also learning about the culture of Mexico throughout the program activities. One of these introductory activities included Cross the Line (Interlude between chapter 3 and 4).

**Introduction: Cross the Line Activity.**

I decided to begin book clubs with the *Cross the Line* or One Step Forward, One Step Backward activity that I discuss in detail in the Interlude. Cross the Line is a powerful activity that helps participants understand the effects of prejudice, ridicule, teasing and bullying. The goal of this activity was to help identify and eliminate the barriers between people that perpetuate acts of unkindness. Learners became aware both that they are not alone in facing insecurities, fears and challenges and that there are differences among those challenges. I was careful not to be judgmental or shaming in this activity, and rather be supportive and accepting. Everyone in the club will probably have a reason to cross the line, and I reassured participants that showing their feelings is healthy and participating was optional. Everyone participated. I allowed a space of silence after each “cross the line” before inviting students back to their original places. The participants all identified as Latino/a though we were of mixed genders. The exercise intentionally pushes the boundaries of the participants’ comfort zones, as the ultimate
trustfall, in the hope of spurring them on to powerful learning about social justice issues and their own lives, as well as their commonalities and differences they share.

**Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth.**

The two primary novels I had selected though ultimately chosen by youth participants were *La Linea* by Ann Jaramillo (Jaramillo, 2016) and *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan (Ryan, 2000; Figure 16 in Appendix J) which lent themselves to discussions of emigrating to the U.S. from Mexico, including terms such as immigration (inmigracion), immigration patrol (patrulla fronteriza), la linea or border, and the American Dream. Other picture books and poetry led us into more complex reading and discussion with the novels *La Linea* (Jaramillo, 2016) and *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000) some of which also touched upon the theme of borders or frontera: an invisible line separating two countries. We also read picture books such as *My Diary From Here to There* by Amada Irma Perez (Perez, 2002) and poetry by Juan Felipe Herrera including: *Superniña del Cilantro/Cilantro Girl* (2015), *Calling the Doves* (1995), *Every Day We Get More Illegal* (2016); *Half of the World in Light: New and Selected Poems* (2008), and *Upside Down Boy* (2000). Literature discussions modeled shared authority as participants voted on a new book and collectively decided to stop reading *La Linea* (Jaramillo, 2016; Appendix K).

Some of the boys were into the book, but overall, it felt a bit of a far reach from their own experiences and as a whole were disengaged and some struggled with many of the words. From my own research of books that might be interesting to the participants, checked by Axelrod and Gillander’s (2016) criteria for selecting authentic and meaningful multicultural literature, I selected five books students could vote on. They unanimously agreed on *Esperanza Rising*, and then our discussions and writing dug deep.
Observations and notes from discussions and LELLS’ written reflections and poetry explore how the book reflects aspects of each of the participant’s lives. The fact that they could see themselves in the literature allowed them to share personal narratives related to their experiences, specifically about their cultural traditions and celebrations and sometimes, about crossing borders, immigration, and the separation of families. These are all topics not typically prioritized in an ELA curriculum, but they can offer compelling realities of many Americans and American immigrants. These counter-stories in the forms of poems model a story that participants might not often see in their classrooms; thus, in such self-expression, autobiographical poems emphasize their experiential knowledge and knowledge their family members have passed down over generations, in which the literature provided a critical space to tap into their experiences, make connections, and explore who they are.

At the start of Book clubs, we also explored our own cultural traditions and how we learn about culture from our families. Participants brought in an artifact that represented a family tradition such as sombreros, a rosary, calavera (skull from Dia de los Muertos), Mexican candy, and I brought in a picture of my dad as a kid milking a cow to represent a family occupation of dairy farming. We discussed what we brought in and why it is special or important to each of us with the goal to learn about each other and to make connections across cultural traditions.

We also looked at a map of the world and talked about different regions and nationalities. I pointed out that all cultures tend to focus on their own region or culture and thus, center themselves in the world. We discussed cultures that control vast areas of the world, forcing small, less powerful cultures to see the world from their perspective. Then, participants acted out a cultural behavior role play activity in which they pulled a scenario written on a strip of paper
out of basket in pairs. Partners acted out the scenario and the class had to reflect and answer what
the cultural behavior was and share their reaction to the behavior. The goal was for participants
to recognize their reactions and examine them from a point of “cultural conditioning” to
understand that different cultural behaviors are normalized in different regions or parts of the
world. The goal was not to alter LELLS’ cultural beliefs, but for them to begin to understand how
emotional commitments to their own cultural ways does not mean that their reactions are correct
or universal. The four scenarios that participants read and/or acted out were as follows:

1) Imagine sitting down to a dinner of fried rat tails (you can substitute any suitable
alternative such as caterpillars, snakes, etc. particularly if it is an item you have actually
consumed). (Props were included.) You may want to note that rats (or caterpillars) are
an excellent source of protein, are associated with dirt only in cities that are dirty, and
make as much ecological sense to consume as do cows or pigs.

2) Imagine sitting down with a friend at breakfast to a plate of fried eggs, sunny side up.
After eating part of the egg, she picks up the dish and licks the egg off the plate. What
would be your response?

3) Picture yourself on an international goodwill trip. It is time to greet the Ambassador from
country X. In this culture the appropriate greeting behavior is for you to kiss each other
on the lips. How would you react?

4) Imagine traveling in a South Asian country. It is time to eat a delicious shrimp and
coconut curry. The curry is liquid and is placed on some rice. After washing your hands
(a must!), you are expected to begin eating the curry and rice with your hand (your right
hand only). How would you feel? Note: You can point out that it is more hygienic to eat
this way, having washed your hand, then to eat french fries, sandwiches, chips, and other foods without washing your hands, as is common in the U.S. Also, silverware collects dust—yet we use it without washing it.

**Critical Reflections and Literature Discussions.**

During week one of Book clubs, we read and had literature discussions about the picture book *My Diary From Here to There* by Amada Irma Perez (2002), in which I asked participants what borders exist in their own lives. What does a border look like? This was to build background knowledge as an anticipatory set leading into the more complex, albeit short, novel *La Linea* (Jaramillo, 2016) about the journey of a fifteen-year-old crossing the Mexico-US border. Their responses included borders of their houses, yards, gardens, bedrooms, and schools which led to our deeper discussion about immigrating across borders and whether borders are important and why or why not. Youth practiced being mindful of their own and other’s personal knowledge of immigration and respected each other’s experiences, as such topics can be difficult to discuss.

The discussion involved positive and negative aspects of having a border in that Diego shared that he felt there shouldn’t be borders so “everyone can be free.” Others shared the sentiment about having an open border, so that they can easily see their fathers again. For example, Lena responded about how she came from Mexico, and while she is glad, she has not seen her dad since leaving about five years ago. Lena describes how the border makes it difficult to talk to and see her father as we share personal stories in discussion. Irma, a rising 7th grader, agreed and had not seen her father since she was four years old, and she wasn’t sure where he was but assumed he was still in Mexico.
“I don’t get why people assume stuff about my culture like we sell drugs or we are bad people. I often hear racist comments like “Go back to your country.” It’s not a good feeling. Sometimes people just don’t care about what happens to us. I sometimes wish or have had times where I wish I wasn’t Hispanic because of everything, but I can’t change it and I do feel proud of who I am and where I come from. I love the customs, traditions, holidays, food, and everything. I don’t know what I would do without them. They make me who I am and are a big part of me. My childhood is really important to me and my culture is a big part of it.”

- Maggy (7th grade reflection example)

In this example, we see how Maggy is aware of the tension that exists between being Mexican and having a fear of Mexicans which portrays a conflict between personal identity and national heritage. She expresses the fact that she has pride in her culture, but goes so far to disdain that part of her identity. Even at her age, Maggy has some kind of understanding of the complexities of race, language, and culture.

These topics required a shared, brave space in order to share these personal experiences and feelings with a peer group while possibly feeling uncomfortable. While these topics in literature discussions can be triggering, I ensured that participants had choice in what or if they shared any personal story as well as choice in what we read was most important. I wanted to challenge their thinking and provide a space to share their stories while being mindful of the difficulty and/or discomfort that might cause. Participants were not reluctant to share, although I never pushed. A participant shared in their writing reflection how others’ biases about her Mexican culture come out in demeaning remarks based on appearance and color of their skin.
Exhibiting cultural pride, she disagrees with bias remarks about “Mexicans” and “Hispanics” which reflects a finding from coding in participants’ belief to “stick up for what you believe in” and a value of “hard work” and “to be true to oneself.”

“I have lighter skin color than most Mexicans. So some people think I am white. People say bad things about our culture in front of me because they think I would agree with them, but I don’t. People say that we take their jobs, but truthfully, they don’t want the jobs, so they blame us. Hispanics are the most hard-working people I know.”

- Yasmin (7th grade reflection)

Maggy and Yasmin show intersectionality as well as nuances of race and racism. While all participants are Latino/as, using the American term Hispanic to define their culture speaks to a bicultural existence and that even within Latino/a groups there are many cultures represented with vast differences within those cultures. This speaks to the complexity of developing a positive identity when youth are surrounded by the discourse of “you don’t belong here as a Mexican.” Both are not just Mexican but also American since that is the place they have known most of their lives. The literature discussions and written reflections gave them a space to share their experiential knowledge, which was especially important when others in the group had similar experiences.

_Juan Felipe Herrera: The Upside Down Boy._

“Each word, each language has its own magic / Cada palabra, cada idioma tiene su propia magia” (The Upside Down Boy, Herrera, 2000, p. 23).
LELLs’ reflections were written throughout the program, and these exemplars were written during weeks one and two following our extensive look into the stories and poems of Juan Felipe Herrera, U.S. Poet Laureate, and the first Latino/a to hold this position. Herrera grew up in California as the son of migrant farmers, a theme we discussed throughout book clubs. Autobiographical picture book *Upside Down Boy* (Herrera, 2000) in Figure 16 in Appendix J describes the author’s journey coming to California from Mexico as a small child and his experiences learning the new land and the language. This engaging memoir paints the narrative of the year his migrant family settled down so that he could go to school for the first time. Juanito is bewildered by the new school and misses the warmth of the country life, on the road with his hard-working father and mother, and everything in the new place feels upside down. Juanito eats lunch when its recess and plays when it is time for lunch expresses initial concerns about not knowing English when he asked, “Will my tongue turn into a rock? / ¿Se me hará la lengua una piedra?” (pp. 6-7). Readers can begin to understand Juanito’s emotions as “the upside down boy / El niño de cabeza”. Nevertheless, his teacher and loving family support Juanito in this new reality as he finds his voice and makes a place for himself in this world through poetry, art, and music.

While the process of acquiring a new language can be challenging, especially for young students in new environments (i.e. middle school, U.S. schools), and as LPELLs explored this narrative told from the perspective of the main character in a lyrical story, they could imagine themselves attending a school where a language other than their native language (i.e. Spanish) is spoken. LPELLs discussed moments they had felt “upside down” when adjusting to a new school,
classroom, culture, or experience. As LELLS read the bilingual picture book, they connected with the author, recognizing the beauty and power in his voice when using a new language.

This story is about courage and the importance of family and community, reflecting the sense of belonging that is integral to develop one’s second language self, especially as a native Spanish speaker and Newcomer to the U.S. Readers can relate to Juanito’s story and the ability to overcome difficulties through a medium that provides an opportunity to develop biliterate language skills, reflecting the participants’ values of being bilingual. The story emphasizes the support children and youth need to achieve their goals, especially English language learners who navigate challenges in speaking and reading in a new language and in creating new friendships.

The encouraging role of his teacher and his parents are influential and foment Juanito’s desire to learn the new language; reflective of the feedback necessary to help ELs acquire a language and reflective of the value of hard work that participants express in their interviews, discussions, and poems as it relates to their root culture. The main character becomes confident in his ability to speak English and navigate the new school (i.e. positive self-efficacy as an EL) as well as included in the community through peer, teacher, and family support. This structural support through family, community, and peer mentorship guides the character’s personal growth by emphasizing his assets, Juanito’s courage and artistic talents. An asset-based approaching to teaching ELs in community-based programs and/or schools can leverage one’s strengths and build one’s confidence in language learning. Positive self-efficacy beliefs and efficacious behaviors support learners’ personal growth and their belief in their ability to achieve goals which are mirrored in the stories LELLS read and react to. Connecting with such literature
grounded in the celebration of *Latinidad* can enable learners to regain their cultural heritage in becoming their second language self.

Whether or not LELLs have similar experience to Juanito in this autobiographical story, it allows ELs and non-ELs to understand how a language learner might feel when they enter a new classroom, school, or culture before they are able to communicate effectively in English. Straddling the differences between cultures and languages at times can make one feel upside down, yet the value of being bilingual that participants expressed throughout the program as well as learning another language enables different language speakers to unite and create a story.

*Juan Felipe Herrera: Poetry of a “Half-Mexican.”*

We also read and discussed Herrera’s extensive poetry. We listened to and watched Herrera’s performance of his poem *Imagine*, his own story of growing courage and creativity to see beyond what is to what can be. I highlight one that struck the students deeply, *Half-Mexican.*

*Half-Mexican*

Odd to be a half-Mexican, let me put it this way
I am Mexican + Mexican, then there’s the question of the half
To say Mexican without the half, well it means another thing
One could say only Mexican
Then think of pyramids – obsidian flaw, flame etchings, goddesses with Flayed visages claw feet & skulls as belts – these are not Mexican

How they stalk you & how you beseech them
All this becomes your life-long project, that is
You are Mexican. One half Mexican the other half Mexican, then the half against itself.

- Juan Felipe Herrera

Herrera has noted the influences of distinct California in his work, from the small agricultural towns of the San Joaquin Valley he knew as a child, to San Diego’s Logan Heights, and San
Francisco’s Mission District in which all these landscapes become stories, and all those languages became voices in his writing, as all those visuals became colors and shapes, “which made me more human and gave me a wide panorama to work from” (Zambelich, 2015). He describes his emotional dance with using the phrase “half-Mexican” yet refers to the power of such words in that they are made of action and are a call to action (Zambelich, 2015). The power in the moments that someone’s words can give can be heard by everyone with the hope that someone will listen.

While his poetry brims with exuberance and creates a mural or portrait rather than a narrative frame, it becomes a new hybrid poetry- part oral, part written, part English, part Spanish- as an art form grounded in ethnic identity, fueled by collective pride. Latino/a children and youth read and discussed Herrera’s poetry and located this ethnic pride in comradery through their words, as their mural-like poems because irreducibly individual.

*Esperanza Rising: By Pam Muñoz Ryan.*

“I am poor, but I am rich. I have my children, I have a garden with roses, and I have my faith and the memories of those who have gone before me. What more is there?”

—*Esperanza Rising*, Pam Muñoz Ryan (2000)

Most of *Latinidad* book club (Weeks two, three, and four) consisted of reading, reacting, and writing with the novel participants unanimously agreed to read *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000; Figure 16 in Appendix J). Connections were shared during book club discussions, in written reflections, and in interviews. The novel’s theme of holding onto one’s heritage is reflective throughout Book clubs instructional practices, discussions and activities as we tap into the historical and present cultural knowledge of participants’ families and lived experiences.
Holding onto one’s heritage is an important part of LELLs’ identity or who they are and who they are becoming as they are navigating developmental periods, like the transitional time to middle school. A strong self-efficacy in LELLs’ connection to their root culture, their bilingual skills and cultural traditions in the home, community, and at school is what makes their ethnic identity and their identity as a language learner. As learners made connections to their root culture and heritage in book clubs, they connected with the novel’s theme of holding onto your heritage in difficult transitions, as Esperanza emigrated to the U.S. after losing her father, her land, her home, and everything she knew. As Esperanza “hung on” to her Mexican traditions and language in navigating a new place to call home, she began to adjust to the new country by making connections to Mexico in the U.S. and having a sense of pride in her ethnic identity.

Adjustment to a new culture, language, or school in formative development years requires a strong sense of self-efficacy in one’s belief in the ability to achieve in reading, academically, and socially. This theme of *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000) that holding onto one’s heritage can support one’s adjustment in difficult transitions resonated with LELLs as they transitioned to middle school grades and/or a new school. It is important to note that the following web was created to identify a key finding from theming the data: Connecting to Root Culture in “Where I’m From” and its relation to Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth in 6-9th grade book club *Esperanza Rising*’s central theme: holding onto one’s heritage (cultural; language) can support adjustment in difficult transitions. This web illustrates the different ways participants re-gained their language and cultural heritage in *Latinidad* book clubs in Figure 13.
Figure 13. Thematic Web in Esperanza Rising

Note: Web to represent the connection between the theme from book club (grades 6-9) book Esperanza Rising: holding onto one’s heritage can support adjustment in difficult transitions and a theme from thematic analysis: connecting to root culture in “where I’m from.” Three ways the book reflected participants’ lived experiences are identified.
Participants made connections with the novel *Espetanza Rising* (Ryan, 2000) in which the character faces crossing the border of Mexico into the U.S. when her father dies and her mother and her are forced to give up their land and their home and flee. Maggy shared in her interview how connecting emotionally to characters in Esperanza Rising during book club discussions and activities made her proud of her family and who she is, “We read with emotions and kind of similar to Esperanza, her story reminded me of my mom because she also used to work and didn’t have much money in Mexico. But we had a lot of kids. And the servants (in the book) reminded me of my grandma. And then when Esperanza and her family move, it reminded me of my mom when she moved to the US and had to look for a job and stuff” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 16). Maggy draws connections from the setting of a ranch in Mexico in the novel *Espetanza Rising* and her memories of Mexico. Lena connects Esperanza’s experience getting separated from her grandmother to her being separated from her grandmother in Mexico. “And Esperanza’s dad died and I never met my dad. Since I was five months old and we came to the US, I didn’t even see my dad. Only in pictures” (INTERVIEW, 06/28/2021, p. 16).

Lena is aware of the disconnect immigration can cause between families in processing grief in the shift in family dynamics. Grappling with monumental change and loss in place and family comes out in our discussions and in their journal writing around *Espetanza Rising*.

“I can relate to (character in *Espetanza Rising*) because I haven’t seen my dad since I was born.” “Espetanza’s dad died and her and her mom could have had their farmland in Mexico, and I also have only my mom because my Shamma (grandmother in Mexico) died and we got her land.” - Lena’s writing reflection (7th grade)
Many participants in book clubs have this separation among family members who live in another country which is a difficult reality often not discussed in US classrooms. Participating in literature discussions provides a way to express some of these feelings and realize that many peers can relate to similar experiences. Lena identifies herself as Mexican and American and makes connections to the characters in *Esperanza Rising* with very similar parallels, yet she has only been to her grandmother’s land in Mexico once since living in the US. Lena also describes how people are surprised to learn of her heritage and that she speaks Spanish as an Afro-Latina. “People always ask why I can speak Spanish when I am black,” Lena shares in our discussion. These reflections speak to how identities are fluid, not stagnant, and sometimes they come into conflict with one another.

In addition to reading chapters of *Esperanza Rising* together, discussing the story’s characters and events, writing one-two responses each week to discussion prompts about themes, and making critical connections, I also facilitated other activities to further comprehend the novel. This involved establishing Book club roles that rotated each day. Roles included summarizer (tell synopsis about what happened in the chapter/section), discussion director (gets the conversation started, listens and respond to what they liked or adds on to what others share, makes sure everyone is able to share), literary luminary (finds interesting, confusing, or powerful quotes and passages to bring up in discussion), word wizard (finds interesting, new, or unfamiliar words to bring up in discussion) connector (points out connections between the text/chapter and other things we may have read or seen before in current events, school, or personal experiences), and illustrator (draws and shares a visual depiction of the text selection/chapter to show
important or surprising moments and scenes). Participants took initiative to enact these roles and often they changed based on personal preference or attendance.

Each day during reading a chapter or two, we would pause and LELLS would enact their roles and have a discussion around the text in which I had question prompts to keep the discussion going. For example, in chapters one and two, questions we discussed included: 1) Abuela teachers Esperanza how to crochet. Is there a skill or talent that someone in your family has that you have learned or would like to learn? 2) Abuela says there is no rose without thorns. What does this saying mean? 3) Describe why the bandits wanted to take over Esperanza’s family’s land. Were they right in wanting to do so? Explain. And 4) Discuss perseverance and the metaphor of mountains and valleys in Abuela’s quote. Esperanza really learns what it means to be determined when her mom gets sick, and she must take on the responsibility of leading the family. Miguel is the main force behind Esperanza's perseverance—his ambition and optimism convince her to keep on keepin' on. Esperanza’s grandmother uses the zigzag pattern in her blanket as a way of explaining the ups and downs of life or peaks and valleys.

When things are easy, you feel like you are at the top of a mountain. When things are hard, you feel like you’re at the bottom of a valley. What are the mountains and valleys in Esperanza’s life so far? What about in your life? Is this a good metaphor for life? What object would you use to represent the difficulties and complications of life?

It means that she’s at the bottom of the valley and when she’s in California, she seems to be on the top when her life changes. They escape [Mexico] going through the grape field and they met Carmen who saves them. They were talking about their personal problems.

- Lena’s written reflection (7th grade)
Lena reflects on the “valley” or low point in Esperanza’s life is when she was forced to flee to California and the new life of hard work, grieving her father and her home country. Maggy reflects on being at the top as when Esperanza was wealthy and happy until losing her father, her land, and her home brought a series of unfortunate events to her life. Maggy makes a personal connection to Esperanza in that her grandfather passed away in Mexico and how her dad and family grieved, like Esperanza and her family mourned the loss of her father.

[Peaks and valleys metaphor] At first they were at top, happy, thriving, and rich. But then tragedy struck and papa was dead. Esperanza is heartbroken along with her family. She knew she was in the valley. It represents valleys and peaks. Valleys as in when life isn’t good. Peaks as in, you are on top of the world and your life is at its peak. A peak to me when I am older is being successful in my job and in a nice house with no chaos with a job I like. Maybe I will travel around the world. A valley is when my grandfather died. I have never met him, but my dad wanted me to have met him. And just like in the book, my grandfather died in Mexico. Of course it hurt my dad and his family.

Another object [metaphor] could be ocean waves (peaks and valleys) with you at the top with a surfboard. And sometimes, you fall off the surfboard.

- Maggy’s written reflection (6th grade)

Yasmin’s reflection on peaks and valleys depicts her future goals for herself, to finish high school and go to college, as a peak in her life which shows her imagining of her future second language self and belief in her ability to achieve.

The valley that Esperanza went through was that her dad died. The peak is that Esperanza’s family was rich and also it was going to be her birthday the next day. It’s the
peak. And the valley that represents difficulties. A peak in my life would be finishing high school and going to college.

- Yasmin’s written reflection (7th grade)

Discussions and journal entries led the majority of activities in Book clubs (e.g. Write about what the zigzag blanket that Abuelita gave Esperanza represents about Esperanza’s journey to California. A poor woman on the train to LA explains that although she is poor, she is rich. How can a poor person be rich? How can a rich person be poor?) LELLS reflect below.

A rich person is poor because they don’t have love or happiness. They think money is happiness. Rich is having a home.

- Yasmin’s written reflection (7th grade)

She is rich because she is happy. That is what it means to be rich to her. You can be rich and still be poor because you might not be happy. Money can’t buy happiness. Riches in my life is having a house and a dog. And my family being okay and happy.

- Maggy’s written reflection (grade 6)

LELLs also learned about advocates for campesinos’ rights like Cesar Chavez through a video about his autobiography and then wrote and discussed interesting facts about his childhood and education and his work to help farmworkers. We looked at other heroes who stood up for farmworkers’ rights: Emiliano Zapata, Dolores Huerta, and Maria Moreno depicted in a chart in Figure 14. Poets included Juan Felipe Herrera’s Laughing Out Loud, I Fly, Border Kid, Who Wants to Run with Me, When the Mail Carrier Discovered My Aunt, Imagine and Elizabeth Acevedo’s slam poetry. I highlighted these featured poems as representative of Latino/a voices in our discussions on the meaning behind the poets’ words.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emiliano Zapata</th>
<th>Dolores Huerta</th>
<th>Maria Moreno</th>
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<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Emiliano Zapata" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Dolores Huerta" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Maria Moreno" /></td>
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"I would rather die standing than live on my knees."

If you haven't forgiven yourself for something, how can you forgive others?"

“There is an overemphasis on picket lines and strikes and the official movement side of things. There is a lack of attention and interest in family and community stories and values that help people get by”

Figure 14. Heroes Who Advocated for Farmworkers’ Human Rights
**Autobiographical Poems.**

From the finger my grandfather lost to the auger the eye my father shut to keep his sight. Under my bed was a dress box spilling old pictures. a sift of lost faces to drift beneath my dreams. I am from those moments -- snapped before I budded -- leaf-fall from the family tree. —George Ella Lyon

The poetry anthology written by and/or about Latino/a populations that we explored over the course of Book clubs led to autobiographical poetry writing that empowered LELLS to grapple with their own culture: personal and familial histories as Latino/a or Mexican-American. In this way, participants’ ethnic identities were a part of their construction of second language selves in poetic expression. The final autobiographical poem we read that served as a mentor text for learners to create their own poem was author and educator George Ella Lyon’s poem *Where I’m From* (Lyon, 1999). reading the poem aloud and then all together a few times, we visualized his words and illustrated what picture we imagined in our minds. We discussed the meaning of the poet’s story and the cultural attributes he shared. Then, participants brainstormed ideas about themselves on heart maps or things close to their heart and their culture. We discussed how to create a poetic story with figurative language so that readers could create a picture in their mind that tells their story when reading their poem. Participants brainstormed: relative names, things found in their yard, items found in their house or neighborhood, names of family food, celebrations, special memories, sayings of their family, places they cherish, faces of loved ones near and far and more.
As participants had the opportunity to learn about Latino/a poetry, they were able to analyze and decode the social, cultural, and political references of poems while learning historical information and literary tools. As learners explored general information about poetry, including styles, figurative language, and format, they also were able to ask questions. Using a graphic organizer for the “Where I’m From Poem” template, LELLS thought and wrote ideas and components of their own unique Latino/a or Mexican American culture. Before they began to write, we looked at mentor poems to critically examine from George Ella Lyon and Juan Felipe Herrera. This activity had the purpose to allow participants to figure out how inaccurate stereotypes about cultures can be and also they could compare and contrast each other’s cultural heritage, within a Latino/a group, to find out how they are similar and unique.

I am from Colombia, a wonderful, wild place.
From my grandmother and her little store, la tienda.
I am from the colorful mountains and the struggles between its people.
I’m from the guanabana fruta, the lulo fruta,
From Freedom.
I’m from Empanadas making and family loving.
From Dianna y Ulicer. From the saying:
“Be unique and find true love.”
From “Never be mean to your parents and honor them.”
From a better life in the USA.
From coffee tinto.
I’m from Puerto Lopez.
- Diego (8th grade poem)
As Diego and other LELLs in their poetry reflect on the importance of expressing their personal beliefs or self, including their opinions, it was apparent that they were not adjusted to expressing their self in such a free or exploratory way; rather, they were more accustomed to repeating someone else’s words and tiptoed around using the “correct” English words when writing the first draft of their poems. Thus, to develop their voice and use their language(s) in their poems took time, attention, and a sense of carefree thought in their expression. Developing a point of view in the practice of expressing themselves with their linguistic repertoires can improve their critical thinking skills as well as their fluency in English and Spanish. As Book clubs and the summer program as a whole emphasized cultural components of countries of the Latino/a world, learners had the opportunity to connect with Spanish and the heritage of their families. Such intercultural awareness highlighted the diversity among the Latino/a world through making connections, making comparisons between cultures and a sense of community.

As students analyzed, interpreted, and understood poems from various Latino/a and/or Mexican American artists and their points of view, they learned new tools to interact with, value, and create poetry. Most notably, LELLs acknowledged the relevance of the Latino/a/s in the U.S. and had the opportunity to use their Spanish while they take in the importance of historical and cultural connections. Maggy’s poem uses Spanglish while also painting a beautiful picture of the cultural traditions of her Mexican heritage, as it lives and breathes in her daily life in the U.S. Again, we see the cultural value of hard work that participants all expressed in her final line.

I am from Doria, Chavo, and Televisa,
From mercados and plazos.
I am from the abuelas sewing and praying to the Rosario.
I am from the Rosas de Guadalupe,
The flowers we have for El Día De Los Muertos,
Colorful and beautiful and all of us together.
I’m from quinceneras and posadas,
From a lot of tios and tias.
I am from a colorful culture and take pride in my traditions.
From Sana Sana Colita De Ranas and
Chanclas that fly across the room.
From tamales and quesadillas.
I’m from strong, hard workers.

- Maggy (7th grade poem)

Additionally, LELLS were able to discuss ethnic and cultural stereotypes about Latino/a and/or Mexican groups in the U.S. during Book club discussions, reflections and in poetry. As stereotypes spread easily and students tend to believe them without question, bringing these to the forefront allows students to think critically about information they have heard and tend to believe that may not necessarily be the truth. As youth are accustomed to cultural labels, exploring such false stereotypes about Latino/a groups through literature and poetry can help youth better understand the niche areas of cultural identity and how categorizing people or traits can be harmful. As youth discuss experiences of discrimination at school, among peers, or in their community, they are reckoning with the idea that sense of ethnic identity is unique to individuals and families; yet commonalities within their Latino/a or Mexican American cultural group emphasize the positive attributes and increase sense of pride, as heard in their poems. Such sense of cultural pride is related to ethnic identity and its role in a positive self-efficacy belief.
As learners write poetry that highlights the positive heritage cultural attributes of oneself and their collective culture, they construct self-efficacy beliefs and a second language self. A second language self involves the connections learners make using their linguistic skills of English and Spanish and the positive belief in their ability to use their bilingual voice through poetry. As one develops this bilingual voice in self-expression through poetry, they are expanding the linguistic skill of accuracy in oral and written productions of English (i.e. memorized words, phrases, sentences in a target language) to formulate oral and written presentations of a variety of linguistic and cultural expressions that connects to their identity. The goal of writing autobiographical poetry that encapsulates one’s linguistic and cultural attributes, contributing to positive self-efficacy beliefs, is to teach voice and identity through recognition of how Latino/a writers depict tradition, beliefs, and heritage identification in their writing as part of their second language self. Reflection on one’s/their cultural identity and how one expresses/they express their feelings about living in two cultures is about bridging heritage identification with one as an English speaker. As LELLS develop their literacy voice through tapping into their ethnic identity and linguistic repertoires in poetry, they are developing their second language self, as poetry is action-onto oneself and by oneself.

I am from Mexico.
From pinatas and candy.
I’m from Auguscalientes,
El centro de Mexico.
I’m from the eagles on the flag,
The granadas, the flowers.
I’m from 15 anos, Navidad,
From mama and papa.
I’m from “Keep the home clean.”
From tamales and tacos.
I’m from family with heart.

- Juana (8\textsuperscript{th} grade poem)

It is precisely at this juncture that we begin to see autobiographical memory serving as a vehicle for tracing the trajectory of a life and, via narrative, giving it meaning. Historical and autobiographical memory, and narrative identity therefore emerge as an interlocking discursive creation. An autobiographical account or a past that is re-told in a possibly inventive manner.

\textbf{Conclusion}

i think in Spanish
i write in English
tengo las venas aculturadas
escribo en spanglish
-Tato Laviera

This is the reality for many Latino/as in the U.S. who are straddling two cultures, two worlds, and are uncertain where they fit in. While many LELLS speak Spanglish, a hybrid language of Spanish with English terms, syntax, or phonetic translations, they are simultaneously trying to adjust to a society that does not completely accept them because they are somehow different, as we see in the participants’ interviews, reflections, and some in their poems. LELLS are learning more about their voice in two tones, two cultures. Using the term voice should be
examined as it is complex yet used throughout literature on the discussion of empowerment of ELs. I view voice in this context as related to the experience of the author, of the participant, and they way they want to convey a message, a point of view, or an experience. Literary voice brings a particular language, style, and tone in which both abstract and tangible elements define the voice and make it personal and unique. The ideology embedded in the LELLS’ voice in their poems are expressed through convictions and connections of their ethnic identity that they often fight to preserve.

Latino/a poetry is very broad in its cultural landscape, so I provide historical exemplar of a more specific genre Puerto Rican poetry and its themes to understand the “Nuyorican” poetry and learn about its important authors and founders (e.g. Miguel Piero, Miguel Algarin, and Pedro Pietri) (Flores, 1993). As Puerto Ricans are uniquely citizens of a commonwealth of the U.S., they are both American and immigrant. Their dual cultural identity marks their language, customs, traditions, and daily life. While Spanish is a dominant language used in the U.S., the nation is predominantly an English-speaking society. Spanglish is also widely used. This gives significance to language as an element of ethnic identity and cultural pride in personal development of sense of self. Code-switching or switching between English and Spanish is a practice sometimes referred to as Spanglish; however, Spanglish is diverse among Latino/a cultures (Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992). Code-switching is thus a product of a living artifact of culture in motion, in which use of code-switching in autobiographical poetry is action or making a statement (Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992). Thus, the power of Latino/a voices is contributing to the language evolution and the cultural capital these voices have. While some think a degradation of the two languages is a part of the evolution, others think this linguistic
shifting makes a political statement about the social status and cultural capital of the language; Puerto Ricans, for example, are American citizens and yet they are marginalized by their distinct language and cultural identity. Using such mentor poems in curricula allows LELLS to grapple with their cultural heritage, establish their voice, and build a positive self-efficacy as a language learner.

Puerto Rican poetry is unique in that Puerto Rico is a self-governing territory associated with the US with the *estado libre asociado* or status of a Commonwealth. The complicated history of invasions and cessions, such that after the Spanish-American war, Spain had to cede Puerto Rico to the U.S. and entered the twentieth century under its rule (Flores, 1993). Then, in 1917, the Jones-Shafroth Act granted Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. Many Puerto Ricans began to move the U.S. mainland in the 1940s for better economic conditions and livelihoods, particularly in the Northeastern United States where they were hired in farms and factories (Flores, 1993). This transition was difficult for Puerto Ricans as they experienced racial discrimination and linguistic barriers, for example (Flores, 1993). Such experiences and difficulties in adjustment are documented in literature in which themes such as identity, social background, cultural heritage and racial, ethnic, or linguistic barriers recur (Flores, 1993). The concept of identity and the experiences of living across cultures are important in many Puerto Rican writers’ work.

Some of these movements and topics that influenced poets in Puerto Rico and in the mainland are Spanish and African influences in which themes emerge: romance, "here and there" (or "aquí y allá," in Spanish)--the "love and yearning for an island homeland while being forced to remain somewhere else," self-efficacy in identity (Waldron, 2008). For example, Julia Ortiz
Cofer, from Puerto Rico, moved to New Jersey at age two and became a writer, focusing on reactions and feelings of a character searching for identity (Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992). The term Nuyorican was coined by Puerto Ricans on the island to refer to those who settled in New York and at first had negative connotations; yet in the 1960s, Puerto Rican authors began using their voice to reclaim the term to identify themselves with their own history and cultural affiliation to a common ancestry while being separated from the island itself, physically and culturally. Many of these writers were involved with a Puerto Rican Hispanic Nationalist group called the Young Lords and passionate about Civil Rights of their peoples (Waldron, 2008).

The power of poetry and counter-storytelling in which LELLS establish their voice is that it highlights the diverse linguistic repertoires and cultural experiences of learners, bridging home and school literacies. The range of linguistic practices that Latino/a youth engage in adds cultural capital, increasing the value of different communication practices from diverse backgrounds and may challenge the hegemonic school norms. Additionally, when given the space and opportunity, counter-stories in poetry reflect youth’s expertise and personal experiences that can enable them to grapple with complex issues in respect to immigration and identity. Sharing stories allows for in-depth dialogue and connection building that become a part of a culturally and linguistically responsiveness curriculum in which intercultural awareness is developed. Learning that draws on various communicative repertoires also improves the standard of ethics in schools, allowing Latino/a youth to make connections to the broader school curriculum and their cultural heritage.
CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following an overview of the main findings of this study, I discuss limitations and future research in relation to self-efficacy in SLA and educational research with EL children and youth. I provide an overview of the importance of increasing the authentic representation of Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in schools, libraries, and community programs that serve children and youth. I suggest recommendations for how the potential of schools and youth-serving organizations can be harnessed in ways that better fulfill their promise of equitable literacy education and support of all English language learners. I provide recommendations for establishing cultural responsiveness in literacy practices to better support ELs, particularly Latino/a ELs in language and literacy development in their transitions to middle school grades. Finally, I discuss the model for building relationships in community engaged scholarship, including epistemological and ethical considerations in community-based research.

Overview of Findings

As evidenced in the previous chapter, the findings of the study provided important information related to its guiding questions, not to mention the fact that it helped me realize new ways to improve my next student Book clubs. LELLS’ connections to their cultural heritage and comments made during any singular Book club Session often answered more than one of these questions, which was sometimes surprising, yet served to enrich the findings and implications discussed in this chapter. Each session was unique due to the various books and poetry discussed, and learner text engagement and connection in a collectivist group were essential. Peer relationships in construction of second language selves were fundamental in building
learners’ self-efficacy (belief in ability to achieve) in schooling in which Book clubs helped establish a sense of belonging. The collectivist structure of Book clubs deemed to be an important component to transitional support to rising middle school grades, in which LELLs’ root culture and ethnic or geographic background is reflected. As many of the participants had roots in Mexican culture, the collectivist nature of learning in such countries supported adjustment to US individualist formal school system.

The context of *Latinidad* book clubs considered learners’ ethnic identity in literacy experiences to determine their self-efficacy beliefs in analysis of values coding (beliefs, values, and attitudes). Reading literature by and about other Mexicans and Mexican-Americans emphasized aspects of their own family values, beliefs and attitudes. I was surprised that the learners had several connections to self, to other texts, and to the world, since some of the literature presented a different cultural, ethnic, and even geographic background from some participants’ own (e.g. Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador). When these root cultural elements are embedded in classroom instruction and programs that offer transitional support to middle school grades, ethnic identity becomes an integral part of becoming their second language selves. Reading in book clubs is a process of constructing knowledge tied to LELLs’ individual’s identity, to which their self-efficacy is socially constructed and not cognitively fixed.

A strong sense of ethnic identity connects to self-efficacy beliefs in literacy experiences in the summer program, in which participants expressed: belief in ability to succeed academically in school next year; confidence in ability to read and ability to succeed in reading in school next year; and confident in ability to achieve goals that they set for themselves. Following book clubs, more participants expressed a high belief in ability to make friends with
new people and at a new school, in which the collaborative, dialogic structure of summer program activities enabled them to experience success in creating friendships and receive and provide encouragement to peers in difficult tasks. Participants’ belief in ability to focus on progress instead of feeling discouraged when struggling to accomplish something difficult improved, reflecting that the challenges they will individually face and collectively face in school can be mitigated by a positive, growth mindset and strong self-efficacy beliefs. They used their voices to describe the unique challenges they have individually faced yet represent a commonality in shared experiences as LELLS. These challenges are related to academic, language-learning, and social-emotional factors as an EL in experiences in and outside of school. Their strong sense of self-efficacy as presented in their voice show their attitudes, efforts, and persistence in facing these challenges.

Additionally, the data presented here that resulted from the specific reading activities in book clubs seemed to help the participants understand the importance of reading for pleasure, as well as understanding that they are not alone in their struggle of speaking and reading in English to which they can rely on peer support. As SLIFE, immigrant and ELs experience academic and social isolation in adapting to a new culture or school (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Katz & Valenzuela, 1999), this recognition of solidarity in navigating language and literacy challenges can lessen feelings of being alone, especially with intentional peer and teacher support in bilingual community spaces (i.e. schools, summer programs) in which there is an increased sense of strong heritage identification (Duff, 2019; García, 2009).

Participants analyzed texts for deeper meaning and had meaningful discussions about how the themes of the books connected with their personal, familial, and cultural heritage lives.
Observations from these sessions demonstrated that the LELLs were better equipped and more confident in their ability to achieve in reading and in school next year, after having read a variety of Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth introduced throughout the book club. Most importantly, it seemed that by using a book they requested, *Esperanza Rising*—one that not all students will read in middle school—participants discussed next year at book clubs and summer camp fervently. Additionally, Centro Hispano made a commitment to continue summer programs next year, considering the participants’ interest to continue to take part in the program and become a Counselor in Training (CIT) in the future.

The three major themes from qualitative analysis—Creating a sense of belonging, Constructing a second language self, and Connecting to root culture: “Where I’m From”- address the research questions in that. Findings show that perceptions of positive self-conception present and possible second language selves can support reading and academic success in English, despite challenges from beginner ELP, peer social tensions, and a lack of support in structural mentorship in transitional summer programs and in middle school.

**Multicultural Literature for Latino/as: Culturally and Linguistically Responsiveness**

Topics of immigration are saturated across children and youth literature which can affect the ethnic identity development of Latino/a students, especially when stereotypes and broad generalizations are made. Impressions of racial profiling endangers youth and families (i.e. hate crimes, deportation) and Spanish use might worsen the situation (Lovato, Lopez, Karimli, & Abrams, 2018; Perez Huber, 2011). An increase in hate crimes toward immigrants (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017) has enhanced the focus on children’s literature with immigration themes as a way to foment dialogue with students in schools (Rodriguez & Braden, 2018).
Authentic stories in literature and poetry that focus on immigration can help children and youth who are dealing with the emotional and social toll extorted by prejudiced policies and public expression of anti-immigrant sentiments (Rodriguez & Braden, 2018). Multicultural literature about immigration can provide first and second-generation immigrant children and youth space to draw on their own experiences as they grapple with stories of their community. Research has examined texts about immigrant families and found a) awareness of familial and historical backgrounds were present yet did not adequately critique of stereotypes and biases imposed on immigrants (Sung & DeMar, 2020) and b) themes on the topic of border crossing between Mexico and the US from an “empathetic outreach” and “borderlands ethical stance” lens (Cummins, 2013).

Multicultural Latino/a children and young adult literature may support ethnic identity development when books and poetry mirror the child’s life experiences, geographic roots, cultural legacies, or cultural and linguistic critical connections with Latino/a readers in a way not possible through Eurocentric texts (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016). Poetry that affirms one’s culture helps Latino/a children and youth construct a holistic identity. The multitude of ways culture, language, and ethnicity play into the social construction of Latino/a youth’s identity and learning are factors that must be considered to form themes for children and youth Latino/a literature. Additionally, culturally conscious Latino/a literature benefits non-minorities as well, helping children and youth to understand cultural commonalities of shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and customs of people, whether commonalities are the same or different.

The analyses signify that LELLS’ positive self-efficacy beliefs and the connection to strong heritage culture identification are prevalent when literacy practices incorporate heritage
culture materials, that is multicultural literature for Latino/a children and youth. Thus, I purport that the voices of the Latino/a children and youth from interviews, discussions, and artifacts in this case provide a snapshot of what is possible in equitable literacy classrooms. Literacy curricula and instruction constantly changes, just as schools become increasingly representative of multicultural and multilingual student identities. Due to the prevalence of ESL program “pull-out” models rather than bilingual education programs as mandated by the school district within the community in this study, EL students and their families appear to strive to maintain first or heritage language in the home and in bilingual community spaces. Though opportunities for policy and programming for ELs are expanding, middle schools are often not equipped with English language development programming or school-based support for students transitioning from elementary schools.

Thus, summer programming in which literacy experiences and language development is emphasized can provide parents with robust literacy resources and students with a sense of belonging in the community. As this study shows, Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in bilingual spaces represents the values of students, their families, and the youth-serving organization in CES. Yet these values are under attack: as school districts opt for “English only policy” in pull-out ESL education programs, providing limited transitional support for ELs at the start of middle school, and curricula and teaching methods that focus on preparing student for high stakes tests, including the WIDA standardized English language proficiency test (WIDA Consortium, 2020). School curricula and instruction and summer enrichment programs need to make more strides to adapt to their bi/multilingual students and emphasize culturally and linguistically responsiveness in literature and in pedagogy.

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Recommendations

Middle school ELs may or may not have English language proficiency development or ESL programs and classes separate from content-based classes in which they are divided from native English speakers or students who have exited ESL programs in elementary school. Given that ELs are likely to be in school long-term before they are fully proficient in academic English (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000), continued support of language and literacy development is fundamental for ELs’ academic success. Additionally, students who are SLIFE and/or immigrant status require further transitional support in adjustment to a new school and likely, a new culture. Therefore, teachers and youth-serving organizations that better understand the lived experiences of LELLS, their cultural and familial background, prior education, and literacy and language skills, can better support students’ development in middle school grades and beyond. Additionally, a better conception of how changes in self-efficacy- personal beliefs in ability to achieve- relate to gains in language proficiency can support more success in language and literacy learning, which ultimately reaps academic success and beyond.

Self-efficacy beliefs potentially play a causal role in facilitating (or deterring) academic identity and second language selves’ development (e.g. bilingual and biliteracy skills). Therefore, if ELs perceive negative self-efficacy, attitudes, or reduced expectations on the part of peers or educators because of their prior achievement (Sandilos et al., 2020; Soland & Sandilos, 2021), it has potential to lower feelings of self-efficacy and ability in language and literacy learning. The mediating role of self-efficacy in possible second language selves inform the goals EL students set and achieve for themselves. Their perception of their academic progress can
serve as an underlying driver in how they approach language and literacy learning, in engagement and in confidence.

In the following sections, I make recommendations to how schools and youth-serving organizations can harness their potential to improve equitable literacy education and support of all English learners, particularly LELLs, in transitions to middle school. I offer recommendations for implementing Teaching with CARE framework as an equity-tool and curriculum guide to literacy instruction, based on culturally and linguistically responsiveness (Hollie, 2015, 2017; Muhammad & Hollie, 2011). Finally, I share an approach for building reciprocal relationships with community partners in the practice of community engaged scholarship (CES) to support children and youth and improve teacher education programs. I discuss epistemological and ethical considerations in general community-based research.

**Schools and Youth-Serving Organizations**

This study suggests that adopting CES in university-community-school partnerships provide benefits such as holistic education for students (K-10), enhanced literacy engagement, bridging theory to practice, widening knowledge base and research design, and empowering investment in community change. School and community program partnerships also have the potential to garner their unique knowledge bases, assets, and funds to support LELLs’ learning. Nevertheless, such partnerships are susceptible to unequal power relationships between partners in which researchers, schools, and community members should take steps to address potential challenges to ensure reciprocity and establish mutual goals of the partnership. This study shows that shared goals in a research-based partnership can help fulfill a community-identified need,
such as a summer reading program to support learning loss (i.e. summer; covid-related out-of-school time) and challenges in transitions to middle school for ELs. Emphasis on “engage” in CES requires engagement in: establishing clear goals, joint preparation, collaborative implementation methods, assessment of results, presentation of results, and peer review. In CES efforts with children and youth programming, collaborators recognize unique challenges such as developing trust between researchers/schools and community partners, determining common goals and methods in research or implementation of programming, as well as unique strengths.

I argue that community service programs that forward a call of “outsiders” entering a community to conduct a service or implement a program does a disservice to the partnerships’ mutual initiative as it often does not adequately assess and implement assets that community organizations, schools, and university programs bring to a partnership. Framing this summer program as an equal-initiative partnership, the research goals do not fundamentally change the program’s design, rather it enhances a literacy and language enrichment experience for LELLS.

Schools and youth-serving organizations should establish core commitments in efforts to support ELs, particularly Latino/a ELs, in equitable literacy and language learning and in transitions to middle school grades. Teacher education programs that have established social justice goals have two primary strategies to create equitable programming: 1) recruitment of BIPOC students and faculty, and 2) strategies that involve social relations, instruction, and structure (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). The summer program in this study required the contributing partners to establish core commitments and shared goals. This included the strategy to build and sustain a reciprocal relationship as community partners, in which I, the participant-research established a relationship with Centro Hispano staff and children and youth within their
Development of sustainable partnerships is an on-going process between researchers, schools, and community organizations that requires dedication and commitment to develop strong, mutually beneficial outcomes (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). It also involved leveraging my professional literacy knowledge as a prior educator and graduate researcher with Centro’s knowledge of Latino/a and bilingual books as well as materials to guide my instructional decisions for Book club activities. As a co-developed program, Centro staff and myself planned activities and events for the four weeks centered in the Celebration of Latinidad.

**Peer-modeling: Counselors in Training.**

Students in the transition to middle school benefit from “hybrid” programs, such as summer reading programs with libraries or youth-serving community organizations and include elements of peer mentoring and academic enrichment evident in this program design. Shared effort was also due to the structural peer mentorship with youth counselors or CITs supporting the program organization and implementation. Peer mentorship models are beneficial to supporting students’ transition to middle school, as evident from this current study in that opportunities for leadership among peer groups improves sense of belonging, positive self-efficacy, and values, attitudes, and beliefs towards schooling and language learning. Thus, programs that include upper middle school grade students with entering middle school grade students can provide structural support to peer mentoring and buffer the negative perceptions and/or attitudes in entering middle school grades as an EL. Structural mentorship in shared spaces that involve the participation of children and youth in decision-making translates beyond to students’ possible future second language selves in school and in their community. Summer programs in which there is cooperative learning within a shared, peer cultural group promotes
positive attitudes about learning and influences development of possible second language selves. Participant attitudes about ability to make friends reflected their desire to be accepted by peers which is essential in positive self-efficacy in navigating school transitions.

The findings indicate that connection to ethnic identity as a language learner is an indicator of personal belief in ability to achieve goals and to grow with effort in transitions to middle school. As literacy experiences in summer programs celebrate ethnic identity and support language learning strategies (i.e. translanguaging, code-switching), children and youth cultivate possible second language selves in which they show positive self-efficacy beliefs. A sense of belonging among peers and positive self-beliefs in their development help ELs mediate challenges in transitioning to middle school.

**Communities of CARE**

The pivotal conclusion from this study emphasizes the importance of creating a *culturally brave space* in a learning community which expands Hollie’s (2016) Teaching with CARE framework (see figure 15) in my model of Communities of CARE seen in figure 15 to use as an equity analysis tool and program and initiative guide. This *Communities of CARE* framework (figure 15) can be used in analysis and implementation of curricula and instruction as well as in building relationships with partners in CES initiatives discussed here and furthermore in chapter five. Recommendations include a) pedagogical strategies for practitioners to build CARE in a learning community and b) strategies to building caring relationships in community partnerships in initiatives such as CES.
Figure 15. Teaching with CARE Model
Teaching with CARE: A Framework in Literacy and Language Instruction

Schools, transitional, summer camps, and other youth-serving programming should incorporate culturally and linguistically responsiveness in literacy practices to support ELs, particularly Latino/a ELs in language and literacy development in adjustment and transitions to middle school grades. My LatCrit literacy lens (Bernal, 2002; Pérez Huber, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, 2001b) advocates for pedagogy emphasizing the importance for ELs to have opportunities to draw upon their linguistic resources, interact and reflect with literature that represents their ethnic identity and cultural heritage, and set goals for themselves with positive self-efficacy beliefs. This study offers an exemplar of a social justice literacy and language framework in multicultural education that expands the CLR model: Teaching with CARE in Figure 15.

Teaching with CARE can also be used as a literacy equity tool in examination of: strategies and materials in the classroom; practices of classroom teachers to inform continued professional development in CLR; how CLR framework exists in teacher education literacy programs to support pre-service teachers with continued advocacy; and culturally authentic social justice text sets for classroom teachers in critical content analysis.

NCATE has required teacher education programs to include multicultural education courses in preservice teacher curriculum for over forty years (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). Over 80% of institutions incorporated multicultural curriculum from 1988 to 1993 which predominantly focused on preparing teachers to improve educational opportunities and address achievement gaps of BIPOC students, low-income students, and later, English language learners.
(Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). There is a lack of attention in the US outside of ESL and bilingual teacher education programs to prepare teachers to teach ELs, evidenced by limited research on the preparation of teachers to teach ELs and in surveys of practicing educators after graduating from their teacher education programs (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). There is also limited research on specific ethnic or language groups of ELs (i.e. Latino/as) and the intercultural diversity within this cultural group in self-efficacy in reading and language learning, in transitional summer reading programs, and in social justice teacher education preparation.

Many education programs incorporate a single course in multicultural education or require a diverse school placement in which preservice teachers teach learners from “diverse backgrounds” (p. 598, Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Research suggests add-on efforts have limited influence on preservice teachers’ beliefs and attitudes in practices with BIPOC students, low-income students, and ELs, and it is rare for programs to integrate cross-curricula multicultural content and materials (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009).

This study emulates equitable literacy pedagogy in that book clubs go beyond celebration of diversity in Latinidad theme of Centro Hispano’s summer program to address issues such as racism and White and English language privilege in LELLS’ schooling experiences with peers and in language and literacy learning. This study includes the experiences, perspectives and knowledge of Latino/a EL groups to expand the “diversity on a pedestal” approach, which research supports is fundamental to engage in efforts of social change (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). The use of strategies in book clubs like Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth, reflective dialogue and journal writing, and autobiographies within a case study can offer insight into what multicultural curricula and social justice pedagogy looks like.
Some teacher education programs, such as at Evergreen State College, reflect a commitment to social justice goals in multicultural education courses that focus on equity and social justice issues by using a variety of instructional strategies like autobiography, dialogue journals, storytelling, literature, portfolios, and case studies (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). Notably, such strategies are not evidence that teachers are adequately prepared to teach for social justice, yet as shown in this study, they can be used to work towards creating socially just core commitments in teaching and learning (McDonald, 2005). Community engaged scholarship in partnerships with organizations that serve communities of Latino/as and ELs, as modeled in this case study, offers unique insight for teacher education field-placements. In this model with CLR book clubs, prospective teachers will see communities and neighborhoods as potential resources in their teaching and teachers will see themselves as part of the communities in which they work (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999).

To establish a multicultural ideology in curricula and practices in schools and teacher education programs, I recommend incorporating a literacy education framework: Teaching with CARE that involves four elements of culturally and linguistically responsiveness: teacher support, critical consciousness, portrayal, and representation (CLR; Hollie, 2015, 2017). Such multicultural education curricula should be embedded in teacher education programs, schools, and literacy-focused community programs. This involves incorporating Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth, for example, and literacy practices from a culturally and linguistically responsiveness framework (Hollie, 2019; Muhammad & Hollie, 2011), which includes an equity tool for evaluating criteria and curriculum. I offer practices, concepts, and
principles that extend this social justice framework to be inclusive of English learners, in particular Latino/a children and youth.

First, I incorporated CLR strategies and materials in *Latinidad* Book club practices. CLR activities tap into who student are based on their youth culture (i.e. gender, religious, orientation, nationality, SES, and ethnicity) (Hollie, 2019); however, this study would suggest that activities should also be based on their family culture, which involves their heritage or “root culture” and language(s) spoken in their homes and communities. These Rings of Culture (Hollie, 2019) recognize that children and youth are made up of layers, or rings, of culture which provide opportunity for validation through instruction and selection of authentic texts.

What are culturally authentic texts? The Multicultural Literature for Latino/as in Book clubs are texts of high-interest, cultural relevance, and nonfiction, and through the use of CLR, (Hollie, 2015, 2017, 2019) the discussion activities address specific content standards (i.e. WIDA can-do descriptors) in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (WIDA Consortium, 2021). Through this framework, literacy skills are built through interactive read-alouds with student-centered discourse in small-group facilitation of *Latinidad* Book clubs. Participants led discussions around texts, such as their text choice *Esperanza Rising*, in which my guided discussion prompts as well as Book club roles helped facilitate. Latino/a children and youth made connections to their past experiences, their family’s traditions and beliefs, and their own goals for the future as they made connections to the text that reflected the cultural experiences of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in particular. The goal of selecting such literature was to affirm cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all participants’ root cultures while also introducing
intercultural diversity within Latino/a homes that build skills to provide a bridge to school culture.

Latino/a youth position themselves as an individual in a collective cultural group in which their identity, prior experiences, and background factors (i.e. socioeconomic status, language, gender, ethnicity, generational status, adult/peer expectations, prior achievement) influence their social situatedness of self, and self-authoring (Harre & van Langenhove, 1991; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). In *Latindad* book clubs, reflective practices (a function of self-efficacy) using Multicultural Literature for Latino/as allow LELLSs to evaluate their own experiences and thought processes by mediating knowledge, identity, and action. I believe LELLSs’ complex cultural layers or rings become stitched together when reading, interacting with, and creating Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth poems in which self-efficacy is a mediating factor.

LELLs expressed interest in sharing their cultural values and linguistic knowledge (i.e. Spanish words, hard-work, religious practices) and enjoyed learning about other cultures in Book clubs and hoped to continue to share their identity with peers in middle school. At its core, CLR teaching pushes teachers to recognize their own cultures and the cultures of their students, which was feasible in *Latinidad* Book clubs as a summer transitional program. I was able to challenge my preconceived notions about Latino/a ELs and be open-minded to learn about their unique cultural backgrounds and experiences at home and school. The mindset shift that I experienced through facilitating Book clubs in CLR opened more possibilities of what authentic literature and dialogic practices in literacy instruction can look like in elementary and middle school classrooms.

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Dialogic practices in reading activities include shared and guided reading in Book clubs to actively engage LELLS as they read CAR novels, picture books, and poetry with peers and myself and sometimes Centro co-counselor(s). Participants, Centro co-counselors, and myself modeled fluency, expression, and comprehension in shared reading with students to provide access to challenging texts; I facilitated meaningful discussions and activities related to texts in guided reading (Hollie, 2019). CAR mentor texts with collaborative, dialogic reading in bilingual spaces supported sharing of cultural and linguistic knowledge within Book club activities.

Teachers and youth-serving organizers can apply acquired cultural knowledge to make learning experiences more relevant and effective for all students (Gay, 2010; Hollie, 2019). This speaks to the shift in meaningful literacy and language instruction that can occur when teachers establish a learning environment of shared cultural authority. That is, when teachers are willing to learn, they can be willful teachers.

Second, Teaching with CARE involves the cultivation of culturally authentic and social justice text sets for classroom teachers. For example, I applied a criterion for selecting and implementing Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth in instructional Book clubs (Axelrod & Gillander, 2016); yet, I also incorporated the voices of the Latino/a youth and Centro Hispano collaborators in the program. This criterion prioritizes relevance for Latino/a children and youth by incorporating their own voice of what is deemed relevant. Yet, to do so requires educators, counselors, and youth-serving professionals to learn how to listen to students and critically examine how books (1) might be interesting and would appeal to learners; (2) seem to allow learners to see aspects of their lives reflected positively; and (3) that connect to learners’ lived experiences.
Teachers that provide access to self-selected reading materials and time for voluntary reading can empower students to want to read, as evident in this study which involved student choice in the books we read. By taking the time to explore literature written by authors of Latino/a ethnic identity and written about Latino/a groups, I was able to invest in texts and materials that would be of interest to LELLS (i.e. Juan Felipe Herrera poems, *Esperanza Rising*). I also was able to learn about aspects of books that reflect their lives positively and reflect the cultural values that participants expressed (e.g. hard work, family-ties, friendship, being bilingual), as well as be mindful of negative representations and change course.

For example, *La Linea* (Jaramillo, 2016) which is about a fifteen-year-old boy dreaming of joining his parents in California since he was left in Mexico almost seven years prior and finally embarks on the journey of border crossing depicted the experiences of danger and a heart-wrenching personal story that includes fatal consequences for moving to the U.S. What seemed like an attempt to humanize immigration experiences and offer an authentic representation of immigrants’ experiences also had negative connotations of violence and stereotyping of Mexican youth. While these violent references are for mature audiences, the book is intended for an audience of young people, and as such, could be dangerously triggering for youth reading the story, considering the historical and present traumas of many Mexican immigrants. LELLS were not as compelled to read this novel, despite the occasional Spanish words and phrases that at first seemed like a positive aspect of CAR texts for bilingual participants. Thus, we stopped reading *La Linea* (Jarmillo, 2016) and changed to *Esperanza Rising*, a book that participants had chosen. The authority and autonomy participants had to make this decision empowered them to invest in
reading during Book clubs, participate in discussions, and frankly, ask to read more at the end of each chapter. Shared cultural authority in CLR literacy instruction is key.

Cultural and linguistic critically conscious Latino/a literature can empower teachers and community members to engage youth beyond functional literacy, such as reading and writing, into a deeper appreciation of their world and beyond. When examined in conjunction with critical engagement (i.e. reflective writing, dialogic practice) culturally and linguistically based texts become a tool to overcome the sociopolitical and economic barriers that may impede the academic and social achievement of Latino/a children and youth (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016).

Critical consciousness in selecting CAR texts is important, as the nuances of texts may be interpreted differently across contexts and influence readers emotionally. Portrayal and representation of characters, themes, and experiences of Latino/a and/or Mexican groups in literature is important for educators to pay attention to when selecting culturally authentic and social justice texts. These stories model experiences that readers either relate to or learn from, whether character representation is of the same ethnic identity. LELLS made connections to current events and personal experiences which shape their cultural ideologies and identity in their second language self. When Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth more accurately represents the cultural values and beliefs of readers, then personal connections can be made which increase interest in reading and sense of self-efficacy as a reader.

**Connecting to Root Culture: “Where I’m From”**

Participants reflected and celebrated their cultural heritage and identity, as it related to multicultural literature and activities in book clubs. Learners’ ethnic identity or connection to
“root culture” was enhanced through reading, discussion, and writing in culturally responsive literacy practice. Participants described many ways their cultural values and traditions played an important role in their lives and how they navigated this aspect of their identity at home and at school. Whether LELLS demonstrated strong heritage culture and language identification is determined by how their values, attitudes, and beliefs that are a part of their ethnic identity are reflected in book clubs’ multicultural literature and activities (e.g. autobiographical poetry and family story portraits) and interviews, but also in their sense of community belonging or group identity as well as self-efficacy beliefs as an individual in developing a second language self.

Their identity as related to self-efficacy beliefs involved the internal processing of their own cultural heritage and language self-awareness through reflexive practices (i.e. book club discussions, critical writing reflections, sharing personal and familial stories, autobiographical poetry). Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth allowed participants to recognize the past and present experiences of other Latino/as or Mexican Americans as well as make connections and reflect on their own cultural heritage, leading to self-expression in dialogic practices and poetry writing. Confidence increased in book clubs, according to participants, where they felt able to express who they are.

**Language Teaching Immersion: Professional Development**

Third, Teaching with CARE (Hollie, 2015, 2017) involves continued CLR Professional development for K-12 classroom teachers as well as in teacher education programs in universities. This study embeds CES in which the community-university-school partnership between Centro Hispano, me as a participant-researcher from a teacher education program, and the local Latino/a community garners the cultural assets and knowledge bases of each partner to
better support LELL students in the transition to middle school grades. A sustainable partnership involves on-going goal setting and collaboration in a multitude of ways, as Centro Hispano has been a valuable partner for the teacher education program at the local university for a few years. This collaboration has provided an opportunity for professional development for the preservice teachers in language teaching immersion in after-school tutoring programs of EL students. A continued partnership with community organizations that serve children and youth provides a unique resource for preservice and practicing teachers’ professional development in culturally and linguistically responsive learning settings in which students’ linguistic repertoires are valued.

Support of pre- and in-service teachers with continued advocacy is vital. CLR model reflects the mission of schools, youth-serving organizations, and literacy educators alike to embody caring in all its forms- personal, social, cultural, linguistic, and ecological- as essential to growing a positive learning environment. This study emulates how continued advocacy of Latino/a children and youth in educational summer programs can improve empathy and understanding of ELs’ lived experiences, cultural assets, and language competencies.

*Culturally Brave Spaces in Learning Communities*

Book clubs offered a shared, bilingual space or “culturally brave space” where participants’ languages could be seen, used, and valued in which code-switching and translanguaging occurred between peers and between bilingual counselors and myself, as an English-speaking book club facilitator. This study reinforces the importance of creating a brave space where learners can use their critical literacy tools and poetry to reflect and discuss their personal experiences (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Sepúlveda, 2011). Such spaces shift from “cultural safe spaces” to “brave spaces” in which the worldviews of participants are respected,
recognized, and inclusive of intracultural differences. Brave spaces involve natural bilingual language strategies (i.e. codeswitching or translanguaging) in literacy learning that reflect children and youth experiences in their homes and communities, which I argue counteracts the persistence of separation of languages in middle school that can denigrate language mixing.

Code-switching and its relation to self-efficacy as a language learner is relevant in understanding how linguistic habits and skills develop and how individuals become competent communicators within social groups (Huerta-Macías, & Quintero, 1992). Code-switching within the Latino/a community enhances communication. I suggest that it can be applied within school and learning programs to support emergent bilingual learners in English acquisition as well as buffer negative effects from summer reading loss and out-of-school time from COVID-19.

As participants use linguistic resources in Spanish and English to communicate with teachers and peers (in school) and with peers in book clubs, translanguaging occurs. Participants’ discuss transitioning to US schools where English is the dominant language in instruction, involving adjustment in communication that translanguaging practice can support. Participants’ self-efficacy as a language learner reflects their belief in ability to learn English, and their motivation to achieve is evident (i.e. Rodrigo passed the WIDA test and learned English). A learning environment that is conducive to translanguaging and teachers’ expectations around language usage in learning can support or hinder a student’s self-efficacy, possible language self, and success in learning English. Translanguaging can nurture ELs’ biliterate voice within dialogic literacy practices, supporting beliefs in English reading competencies. Translanguaging occurs with intentional teacher and peer support in bilingual communities (Duff, 2019; García, 2009), in which intercultural learning is cultivated. Code-switching is viewed as a benefit, even
when it’s a challenge, and is an important component in creating brave spaces in learning and in the construction of LELLS’ possible second language selves.

**Constructing Second Language Selves.**

United in *Latinidad* empowered LELLS to become more vocal, express their opinions, share their voices, and view themselves as assets to their school and community in development of positive self-efficacy in their second language self. In a collaborative literacy group where community identity is valued, individual self-efficacy beliefs are developed. When dialogue in book clubs provide learners with discursive control, such as comparing their own experiences and beliefs to texts, the focus is on constructing meaning rather than a supporting “participation gaps” of their perceived limited English proficiency as a Spanish-speaker or bilingual learner (Bai & Wang, 2020; Potowski, 2016). Expanding participants’ schema through collaborative knowledge building and connecting to their ethnic identity positively contributes to their personal beliefs in ability to achieve in SE. Attitudes around second language selves in schooling included being scared to get English words wrong and not being “good at English as a newcomer” (Irma, p. 17); participants share how book clubs helped them realize that they are not alone in struggles with English and that they can persevere when they face challenges in learning English. Also, participants becoming their second language selves with a positive self-efficacy is evident in Book clubs, in which participants value “being true to oneself” as a Spanish speaker when they don’t have to keep *that* part of themselves hidden. This process builds their possible second language selves and the versions LELLS imagine of themselves in transitioning to middle school grades. These shared set of values, beliefs, and attitudes LELLS attributed to themselves demonstrate how they envision themselves in the present and possible selves in the future.
Future Research

This study has also caused me to reflect on future research related to Book club design, implementation, longitudinal assessment, and possible ways to improve it. Chapter Five provides a discussion of this study conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for practice and research.

Future education research that embeds the CLR framework (Hollie, 2015, 2017, 2019) in a cross-disciplinary approach should consider self-efficacy in reading specifically. CLR builds on Culturally responsive pedagogy, a conceptual framework to book clubs as an instructional practice (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998) which in practice means going to where students are culturally and linguistically first, then leading them where they need to be academically and socially. Validate, Affirm, Build, and Bridge (VABB) frames CLR in book clubs with requires legitimatizing the cultural and linguistic behaviors that have been delegitimized by historical institutional language hegemony and provides a counter-narrative to the negative, stereotypical portrayal in media and in literature in classrooms and reading programs. The findings in this study suggest that to apply this framework to future research, whether in case-studies in schools and in community programs or in critical content analysis of Multicultural Literature for Latino/as, VABB is a valuable equity tool to identify literature and activities that are authentically reflective of who ELs are culturally and linguistically. While this study in CES builds on the authentic cultural and linguistic knowledge of both participants and Centro Hispano staff in the summer program structure, future research should include CLR authentic participant and/or researcher voice to select and validate the Latino/a in literature in a study.
Additionally, future research should consider how to contextually and thematically apply the CLR framework (Hollie, 2015, 2017, 2019) with the Teaching with CARE model. This model includes an examination of: practices in teacher education and beyond through longitudinal study of incorporation of CLR strategies and materials in the classroom; practices of classroom teachers to inform continued professional development in CLR; how CLR framework exists in teacher education literacy programs to support pre-service teachers with continued advocacy; and culturally authentic social justice text sets for classroom teachers in critical content analysis. Future research should explore CLR practices in teacher education in a longitudinal study of incorporation of CLR strategies and materials in teacher preparation courses and in K-12 language and literacy classrooms.

Critical content analysis in research of what books to use in summer programs, K-12 classrooms, and by literacy educators in teacher education programs extends the data collection measures used in this study. I opted to not video record Book club sessions as to respect participants’ privacy and maintain confidentiality. However, future research might consider scripting dialogue from book club sessions by video or audio recording discussions and/or conduct focus groups of teacher/facilitator efficacy to enhance validity of findings.

Longitudinal research can further address this study’s findings which may reveal differences in a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs in self-efficacy measures and in the role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy beliefs from one period of time through another and across different contexts. Applying values coding to such study may reveal differences in participants’ V/A/B from different contexts or from one time through another, such as from the end of an academic school year to the beginning of the next academic year or elementary to middle school.
grades (4th-8th) for rising LELLs. I would also extend this research design in collaborative research with community organizations or in collaboration with colleagues using data extending a four-week summer program and collect data from Spring, Summer, and Fall in which I’d use reading task-based assessments (comprehension or ORF) to compare in qualitative cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018) of EL student groups from a CR literacy framework.

Additionally, longitudinal research should explore cross-case studies in different contexts or research sites, such as in literacy instruction in schools or in community-based programs that serve children and youth English learners, particularly Latino/as. It is important for researchers to frame such studies by examining the intracultural diversity among Latino/a groups to be ethical in data representation and to avoid the dangers of perpetuating dominant narratives of Latino/a student groups. This can foment understanding of the cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes of other Latino/a groups and provide an in-depth picture of intercultural diversity. School-based interventions and summer programs contribute to learners’ self-efficacy beliefs through culturally responsive literacy experiences and should also be researched in larger sample sizes with implementing a Teaching with CARE framework of principles and practices.

Future research may provide a better understanding of the academic consequences of ELs’ transitional experiences during the summer months and the widespread implementation of equitable CLR literacy practices that incorporate heritage cultural materials and resources, including linguistic funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006). Transitional support programs of ELs to middle school, community organizations that serve children and youth and schools, as well as family involvement, must assume responsibility for development of children and youth’s bilingualism, which includes defining realistic language learning goals, assessment
tools, and appropriate literacy learning books and strategies. These observations point to the last area of research I have identified, which is how supporting Spanish development for emergent bilingual, Latino/a ELs in summer enrichment programs can help encourage language parity and improve bilingual outcomes for all students in the transition to middle school grades. Answers to these questions lie outside the scope of this investigation but are timely and urgent.

Schools and youth-serving community programs should seek ways to collaborate and work towards sustainable partnerships to better support all students in transitional experiences, particularly Latino/a ELs who navigate academic, linguistic, and social-emotional challenges. Tapping into the potential of schools and youth-serving organizations power in shared efforts can address challenges LELLS face in navigating transitions to and in middle school begins with a developed understanding of the lived experiences and cultural knowledge and assets of ELs across contexts and communities. Additionally, knowing that middle school transitional supports can improve self-efficacy beliefs, in which ethnic identity plays a role, provides an instructional and curricula approach in using Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth in a CLR framework with language-learning strategies (i.e. code-switching) in literacy and language enrichment programs.

Future research and community engaged scholarship initiatives and programs should consider the goals of professional development for teachers (preservice and practicing) and build reciprocal relationships to create robust resources for all partners in the community.

Academic self-concept (ASC) and academic self-efficacy (ASE) are positively linked to high academic achievement, effort, and language attainment; therefore, appropriate measures must be used to test for validity and generalizability in language education research (Creswell, & Miller, 2000; Marsh et al., 2019; Pajares, 1996). Mills (2007) has argued that two of the greatest problems with research into self-efficacy are that measures used are not specific, or measures of self-efficacy are combined with other questions measuring different variables, thus complicating interpretation. There has also been a lack of qualitative data to ascertain how students perceive self-efficacy, which this study addresses. Bandura (1997) argues that the strength of self-efficacy as a predictor comes from its specificity, and therefore this research and future research is needed to investigate particular language domains (i.e. speaking self-efficacy, reading self-efficacy). This study also attempts to address a gap in research and shows how changes in SE relate to gains in language proficiency.

Qualitative data in this study demonstrates LELLS’ self-efficacy beliefs, and the role of ethnic identity in constructing second language selves, as seen in empirical data of the case, which demonstrate learners’ personal beliefs in their ability to be successful in reading and in learning English in school and their community. Quantitative data as the survey scale, personal belief in ability to achieve, further measured learners’ self-efficacy beliefs in reading, setting and reaching goals they set for themselves, and persistence when facing challenges in learning. Some items on this subscale showed significance in median growth and in mean scores, in the pre- and post-assessment. While there was limited significance in language questionnaire “can-do” items in correlation to self-efficacy survey items, the participants’ questionnaire self-report was still
largely very positive and provides a description of participants’ self-efficacy language beliefs in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening task competence in the case.

Self-efficacy as the belief in ability to achieve, in this case in reading and in English use, was evident in their ability to reflect and act in literacy and language learning in Book clubs (Bandura, 2002). In this study, learners’ capability to act in reading and activities and belief to attain goals they set for themselves is dependent on context. Typically, learners’ positive self-efficacy beliefs are dependent on context and task, as beliefs in relation to reading and language abilities change overtime. While participants were not asked to do specific tasks directly before/after completing the self-efficacy survey in this study, the survey acted as pre- and post-measure to determine how Book club as a literacy experience, in a collaborative Latino/a, bilingual space, influenced their ability beliefs in reading, English, and success in school next year. Thus, future research should use specific measures of self-efficacy assessments with specific reading and language-usage tasks to address these research questions. This can help make the case of whether self-efficacy beliefs and the mediating role of ethnic identity increase over time when using specific language strategies (i.e. code-switching, translanguaging) in speaking self-efficacy and other collaborative reading-based tasks.

There were several limitations to the current study. First, random sampling of interview selection was used and not all participants were interviewed due to inconsistent attendance at Book clubs. Further interview data could have provided more comparison to participants’ quantitative measures to better merge the different measures of self-efficacy and garner deeper interpretation of the data. Also, the participant-researcher was the facilitator of both Book clubs (grades four through five and grades six through nine), which may have influenced student
responses to the questionnaire, surveys, and interview. The questionnaire was administered by
the researcher, thus could have influenced participants’ responses, as Book club facilitator.
Administration of the two surveys on separate occasions to the group of participants also means
that LELLs had some opportunity to become familiar with the items, and may have guessed the
intentions of the researcher, influencing results.

A further limitation is that although the study shows increases in certain items of self-
efficacy, there is no behavioral outcome in a follow-up data point to show that increased self-
efficacy had an impact on the classroom practices of students and peer relations in schools,
although research has shown that self-efficacy predicts performance (Leeming, 2017). Future
studies should attempt to show how self-efficacy in specific language domains (i.e. speaking)
directly influences the way in which ELs interact in the language classroom. Also, as there was
no control group, it is not possible to make strong claims regarding the reasons for changes in
self-efficacy yet understanding of LELLs’ self-efficacy beliefs does provide an understanding of
the role of ethnic identity in self-efficacy and how these garners possible second language selves
in literacy and language learning. Another limitation is no measurements of reading ability to
learn more about their specific task competencies as opposed to their competence self-report, and
therefore completing simple conversational tasks and reading in Book clubs as instructional
practice is what had a big effect on their beliefs. Varying ability means students have different
difficulty levels in sensing if their ability is increasing over a short time frame.

Further correlational analysis are also necessary next steps in this study to explain how
personal belief in ability to achieve and English language competence beliefs relate, specifically
by focusing on self-efficacy in one language domain (i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and
writing in English) and among demographic group differences (e.g. different L1s; gender). The research questions are conducive to qualitative methods and focuses on multiple qualitative data sources, as the small sample size in this case made results from a correlational analysis limited in explanation of self-efficacy beliefs in relation to WIDA Can-do language competence beliefs (WIDA Consortium, 2020) and in measure of growth in averages in pre- and post- survey data.

Additionally, further data points in reading and language-usage tasks at the start and end of a school year, before and after a summer reading program, would provide more measurements to show growth in personal ability beliefs. There are only a small number of longitudinal studies of self-efficacy within SLA (Piniel & Csizér, 2015), and limited research related specifically to speaking self-efficacy. Longitudinal data effectively shows that ELs are able to make gains in self-efficacy over a relatively short period, and that as educators, it is possible to nurture self-efficacy beliefs within ELs, potentially leading to greater levels of success with language learning.

**Discussion**

Latino/a youth are often in schools with irrelevant materials and literature in which the education they receive may be subtractive of who they are (Perez Huber, 2011). Straddling two or more cultural identities as someone who identifies as Latino/a and as American can impose certain identities and expectations to speak English and acquire the “American culture” (Serrano, 2020). This reality reminds educators and researchers of the critical work to be done to address inequities in schooling to build and co-create spaces for Latino/a students to be seen, heard, and represented. Addressing such adversity appropriately in equitable curriculum and literacy practices can offer a forum to discuss pertinent issues and topics as it relates to social justice.
themes, such as, what it means to be an American and allows opportunities for learners to discuss how deportation and discriminatory profiling influences their lives or their peers’. The importance of spaces for students to discuss culturally responsive books or multicultural literature in conjunction with teacher facilitation and modeling can support deeper understanding of both cultural tensions and connections, reinforcing students’ ethnic identities. Shared cultural experiences in communities with other immigrant students and families contributes to a linguistically and culturally welcoming experience that can validate transnational knowledge and biliteracy in concert with public resources accessible in the local community (Dávila, Noguerón, & Vasquez-Dominguez, 2017).

Teachers and community members, especially those who identify as a ‘cultural outsider’ to the language students speak, may view students’ ethnicities or perceived linguistic abilities as challenges or generalize their students’ nationality or culture. Rubinstein-Avila’s show how a teacher’s bias in “My South American students seem to learn English so much faster than my Mexican students” can further perpetuate false ethnic stereotypes (2003, p.125). Generalizations are not only incomplete in telling cultural stories but prevent heightened awareness of the vast cultural differences among Latino/as. Research should explore how curricula and pedagogy that are inclusive of Multicultural Literature for Latino/as enable students to engage with peers in critical discussions around race, ethnicity, language, and culture, and share the stories of multicultural children and youth. In this current study, Latino/a participants share their own autobiographical poems as stories which puts their identity and cultural heritage at the forefront. A LatCrit lens (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a) considers how youth’s stories challenge the
dominant ideologies of race neutrality and equal opportunity, which are often not a part of the school curriculum.

It is also important for researchers and educators to consider the policy and pedagogical interventions that shape students’ participation in a shared community (Jocson, 2015). A transparency problem, participation gap, and ethics challenges persist in participatory cultures, such as the implicit treatment of language or assumptions that researchers and community members make regarding whose language(s) are in the discussion or being included or excluded. Jocson (2015) refers to the participation gap as “unequal access to opportunities, experiences, skills, and knowledge that prepare youth for their future” and the ethics challenge is defined as the “breakdown of traditional forms of professional training and socialization that might prepare young people for their increasingly public roles as community participants” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3, as cited in Jocson, 2015).

This study highlights how linguistic practices with Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth incorporates the linguistic practices in students’ homes and in the wider community that values their linguistic abilities, such as in code-switching or translanguaging, to address what researchers call the “participation gaps” in school-based linguistic knowledge or discourse (Jocson, 2015). Discourse on overcoming the “participation gap” in literacy and language experiences tends to come from a static perspective on culture, to which people are expected to conform or assimilate to academic English and literacy practice in mainstream US schools (Jocson, 2015). Rather, this study shows how a dynamic cultural view can provide more opportunities in literacy by incorporating different languages and language strategies in modes of participation in learning settings. This approach calls for a re-imagining of
the ways to interact, implement literacy practices, and do CES work in both English-only (i.e. classrooms) and bilingual (i.e. summer program) spaces. It is important for educators, researchers, and community members to understand how to employ the CLR framework within their own communities and research contexts (Hollie, 2019). Overall, this study and future research help articulate social justice efforts within teacher education programs, school curricula and programs, and youth-serving community organizations.

**Building Relationships in Community Engaged Scholarship**

My professional and personal commitments in CES have prompted though around what ethical issues are unique to conducting research with English learners (ELs), minoritized language groups, or refugee and immigrant communities. I asked myself: What are community members and schools’ responsibilities to EL and immigrant students and families who are in our professional and personal lives? What does the role of advocacy look like in community building and work in CES for research purposes? How can we experience more mutually beneficial relationships in such collaboration and scholarship?

Central to this chapter is the Community Engaged Relationships Model to which I offer foundational components in building relationships in community partnerships that offer mutual benefits to key stakeholders with shared objectives in a community-based summer program. This study suggests that strong community partnerships increase sense of personal agency, the feeling of being heard and feeling useful, empowerment, and collective efficacy (Berg, Coman, & Schensul, 2009; Akos, 2002). This model of CES shows that collaborative programs that have
common goals, such as supporting LELLs’ successful transition to middle school, can improve social networks and interactions to foster mutually beneficial relationships and experiences.

Partnerships between university and community organizations require commitment and dedication over a long period of time. While this program’s preliminary planning stage to program implementation and data analysis occurred over the course 1.5 years from Fall, 2020 to Summer, 2022, continual collaboration between the teacher education department and Centro Hispano were mutual goals. A foundation is built on transparency and commitment that fosters community’ members’ agency in decision-making and power within mutually beneficial relationships. During the stages of this research study, on-going communication and transparency between the director of youth and family engagement and other Centro Hispano staff was required to sustain such partnership. This study’s engagement in collaborative research in which I, as the participant-researcher, interact with individuals as participants highlights the importance to reflect on what it means to be engaged, with whom, for what purpose, for what outcome, and in what ways?

Educational research celebrates engagement, or connecting with communities in a multitude of ways, for epistemological or ideological purposes. The epistemological call for engagement views community connections as means to become more of an “insider” or have access to an “inside perspective” of a community group and/or culture. The paradox here, according to Kumashiro (2014), is that it presumes an increase in authoritative power and authenticity of a researcher’s representations in the co-construction of knowledge and collaboration with research participants (Narayan, 1993). The ideological purpose of engagement in community building is for greater effect of the research and for improving the lives of
community members and/or community environments (e.g. Centro Hispano and Latino/a or Mexican American children, youth, and family members), or perhaps raising awareness of “social problems” in advocacy for the community network (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008).

The call for engagement in either case assumes that there is a benefit for community engagement, and that the research will mutually benefit all stakeholders, and not primarily be of value to the researcher. This presumption is a part of CES and calls for an intentional, equitable approach to building relationships between researcher, participant, and community members. To develop a mutually beneficial relationship, the influence of the research and procedures that engage all involved members must be centered in a shared authority model (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998).

To create a shared authority model, partners in summer programming, including myself and Centro Hispano faculty, developed and incorporated mutual objectives for the four-week summer program. Our shared goals for the summer program included:

1. Social-emotional curriculum component
2. Collaborative reading for Latino/a EL students (identity; future selves)
3. Family engagement
4. Celebration of Latinidad! (Heritage/cultural authenticity)

Our mutual objective is to support family literacy and develop literacy skills in children and youth, as well as social-emotional learning resources through peer mentoring and support, and ways to strengthen community-university partnerships to provide robust resources for Latino/astudents and ultimately support their transition to higher grades. Consistent relationship building, on-going communication, and assessment regarding the interests, needs, strengths, and
goals of each partner will help actualize these objectives and more likely result in a successful partnership of engaged scholarship (Peterson, 2009).

This study in CES suggests that community organizers respond more to community partnership initiatives when it is clear the university or community member is committed to the relationship long-term and not merely for research data and publications in the short-term, as other studies have shown (Warren et al., 2018). Relationship building with long-term goals ensures that trust can be built, that there is higher quality engagement between community members, and a higher chance to accept group member differences (cultural, religious, values). A goal in our collaboration was to implement peer mentorship structure in a summer program to potentially bridge into local middle schools that have expressed a desire to partner with Centro Hispano and/or create a student club that supports the transitional experiences of ELs into middle school by centering peer mentorship and leadership. Thus, part of CES involves collaboration with other organizations and/or schools to build on existing structures and goals of the local community and commit to long-term, sustainable relationships.

Community engagement and personal investment are relevant components to academic research with diverse cultural and ethnic communities. It is vital for researchers to become involved and participate in community meetings, events, or otherwise become available to the participants. Through the program implementation process, weekly meetings with Centro staff allowed us to evaluate and adjust how book clubs and other program activities were going and whether these original objectives were feasible in time, design, and staff support; and in what areas we could improve in our structure and in agenda as well as in other partnerships (i.e. local gardener, musician, Planned Parenthood staff, a Zoologist, local Latino/a community member...
who taught sewing). It is important to clearly develop and incorporate mutual objectives in the partnerships for later evaluation that allows for new or unexpected outcomes to come into play, such as partner cancelation; availability; weather changes; new funding and/or community partners. For example, two weeks into the program after confirming with Centro staff, I recruited a Latina community member to lead a mural art activity with book clubs, representing a common street art form in Mexico.

Academic and community partners must ask questions, reflect, and discuss relationship goals, expectations, roles, and needs in cyclical process with a system of accountability. Authentic engagement in community partnerships requires community members to bring their reflection of positionality to the project, including personal experiences, values, beliefs, and standpoints in order to have meaningful discussions about expectations and roles in the partnerships. I elaborate on my positionality in relation to the community partner and site in the Interlude section. Building relationships within communities, especially as an “out-group member” requires researchers to interrogate personal experiences and values to authentically share their story with community partners (Warren et al., 2018).

**Asset-based Approach to Partnerships in CES**

Collaboration in community service programs can assert power imbalances which may cause cultural dissonance between members providing the service and the receiving community group or members, which questions the purpose, goals, and outcomes of the service that perpetuates a deficit-lens. I actively sought to counteract a deficit lens or “service approach” to this partnership; rather, I sought to bring my assets as a literacy educator and researcher to the program while eager to learn from and build on the knowledge and strengths of Centro Hispano
(staff, participants, and families). This is evident in my approach to communicating with participants in and outside of book club, all day at the summer program. I supported activities in science, math, and in multicultural art projects. I participated in camp gathering songs, games, and dances and brought my own games and songs to the program. I played soccer and water games with participants weekly; and ate lunch almost daily with participants (4-9th). I sought to learn about them and their culture, but also their interests and passions beyond reading and academic work. I fundamentally believe this level of involvement beyond “facilitator of book clubs as a researcher” is what developed trust in our relationships and allowed the participants to open up to me about their challenges and experiences in home, at school, and in the community as a Latino/a or Mexican American child or young adult.

Distinguished from service-learning partnerships and research, an asset-based approach is defined as “supporting communicates to build on their own strengths, talents, and networks in order to negate the need for outside services to build them up” (Peterson, 2009, p. 549). Partnerships can be incorporated in community-based education programs from a mutual reciprocity perspective, rather than a traditional service-oriented paradigm. I suggest members who participate in community education programs should respect and support the interests of its collaborating members equally so that goals are supported mutually, as opposed to a “top-down” approach to service provisions (Peterson, 2009). Rather than placing the knowledge, skills, and strengths on one community group, this approach to CES leverages the strengths and interests of all community stakeholders involved to establish a foundation for a continuous, reciprocal community partnership. This is essential to the asset-based approach in CES.
This is foundational to community-university partnerships and calls for an examination of the roles of each partner and its sustainability infrastructure. I, as participant-researcher, did not hold the same roles as Centro Hispano organizers and thus, through on-going communication, we learned about strengths and interests to make decisions.

For example, in book clubs with the fourth through fifth grade level group, I had to recognize myself as not an expert in sharing cultural attributes of peoples, authors, and artists of Spanish-speaking countries and regions of the world. I invited Centro Hispano bilingual staff (i.e. from Colombia, Guatemala) to share their experiences and cultural knowledge in lieu of my “instructional plans.” While participants were generally engaged and excited about book club literature and activities, if they were not participating as whole-heartedly in some cases, I would pause, reflect, and adjust the activity and/or invite other camp counselors to join in and participate. It was important to me to not come off as “in charge” of the entire book club session each week, especially as I had a bilingual, camp staff member with me in each session. Every Friday, we reflected at a team meeting on the program’s structure, plans, and any areas of improvement; as well as allowed us to get to know each other on a personal level. This was crucial to team building among the staff and to develop a sense of trust and the mutual shared attributes of the partnership Comunidad (Community) and Corazon (Heart) that led our engagement.

Vulnerable populations, such as minoritized language groups like Latino/a ELs, immigrant, and refugee populations, are often positioned as subjects in a study and framed as vulnerable subgroups or lacking in some academic knowledge and resources and language skills as a deficit-based lens. Vulnerable populations, albeit a contested notion depending on
positionality, are defined in literature as “those who are not particularly sensitive to risk factors but also possess multiple cumulative risks factors” (Pacquiao, 2008, p. 190). Scholars advise graduate students in research with such populations to consider a more ethical approach, one that frames their work from an asset-based approach (Ngo, Bigelow, & Lee, 2014).

I posit that to frame this study and future studies with vulnerable populations from a strengths-based lens, I must include a personalized rationale for the study and include my own, as a researcher-participant, personal experiences or relationships with Latino/a ELs children and youth. Generally, researchers should consider the skills and resources that are asset within the communities and phenomenon under study. It is important to invest time within local communities; and as a participant-observer, I intentionally built reciprocal relationships with community members. Without such intention, the ethical research approach has the potential to primarily benefit the researcher and may disregard research practices necessary for reciprocity.

**Epistemological and Ethical Considerations in Community-based Research**

Education researchers have long grappled with the concept of ethics, power and politics especially in research with groups that have historically been oppressed and marginalized in schools and societies (i.e. Latino/as and Mexican Americans; Spanish-speakers in the US). To understand community group’s historical, contemporary and socio-cultural reality is a big task; I sought to understand the community group’s lived experiences (past and present) as a Latino/a English language learner and ways in which their cultural assets are seen and reflected by Centro Hispano de East Tennessee. This involved creating a space for dialogue in program planning and among participants and staff, to provide an opportunity to better understand the culture of this
population- its worldviews and epistemology and meaningful traditions- that must be honored and included in the research design in community-engaged scholarship.

Marginalized or oppressed populations (i.e. Latino/a and/or indigenous groups) have epistemologies of their own, such as eco-connectiveness that acknowledges the relationship and connections people have with the environment as important to their individual well-being, sense of self, and unity among others, relevant to this study of self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs in relation to their ethnic identity (Wilson & Neville, 2009). As emerging educational research such as this study focuses on EL, immigrant, and refugee populations, and as the US sociopolitical context continues to evolve, salient questions of ethics in collaborative work with such communities begins to take on new meanings. The ways researchers engage with participants, define roles, and conduct research with children, youth, and families is a concern.

In this study, if participants were not comfortable sharing information or were very comfortable with sharing personal information regarding their family and or past experiences, then I handled the relationship’s efficacy with care. This included keeping information confidential, unless otherwise deemed as unsafe and necessary to report. While a cultural group’s perspectives cannot be generalized, I sought to understand their unique perspectives as individuals and as a cultural group with the commonality of speaking and/or exposure to the Spanish language. Participating alongside community members as a participant-researcher helps deflect from the dangers of a “single story” that can assert stereotypes, classifications, or understandings about groups.
As I critically examined how stories are told about Latino/a ELs and immigrant groups, I was aware how even Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children and Youth in this study shared similar themes to dominant narratives in classroom curricula that can reinforce stereotypes about Mexican Americans, for example. In the picture book *Off We Go to Mexico*, the descriptions and cultural traditions of Mexico were embedded in the words and illustrations, such as mariachi bands, sombreros, bright colors, and depicted short men. Thus, I prioritized learning from participants who identified with the Mexican culture to share their own family cultural traditions and create a counter-narrative of participants’ voices in their autobiographical poetry and personal connections and reflections in Book club, as well as from first-person narrative in interviews. This necessitates researchers must ask questions about what it means to tell someone else’s story.

This study prompts scholars and community stakeholders to think about how to ethically engage with and in representation among Latino/a ELs, immigrant and refugee populations. I argue that community engaged scholarship as a foundation can provide community support and offer diverse perspectives in ongoing partnerships and in representations in research. University researchers may walk the line of being exploitive of community groups under study or for doing research that does not directly support or assist a community (Ngo, Bigelow, & Lee, 2014); therefore, how I interpreted participants’ counter-stories, cultural beliefs and experiences, and perceived competencies was grounded in their words, their way. Written artifacts, discussions, interviews, and participants’ English language self-report and self-efficacy surveys offer a report of data that is “self-represented.” I interpreted and reported data being mindful of how I may indirectly contribute to “othering” of children and youth. My analysis considers how factors
operating within cultural and social dimensions of context, such as the perceived value and status associated with different language ELPs, intersect with learners’ relationship to the target language and culture(s), and perceptions of self.

**Cultural Bravery.**

In this study, participants face challenges in schooling from out-of-school time due to COVID-19, summer months in which English usage and reading may be limited for many LELLS, and the social-tensions among peers due to perceived colorism and racism. I would argue that these, as well as other home factors, present multiple cumulative risk factors to development (social-emotional, academic, and linguistic). These are coupled with exposure to risk when researched by those who belong to the dominant group in schooling (i.e. white, native English speaker) and can inadvertently “tread” on cultural traditions and protocols which may be portrayed in a way that reinforces discriminatory viewpoints (Wilson & Neville, 2009). Thus, critical to this study is how the research site and community partnership with Centro Hispano created a *culturally brave space* in which participants’ cultural traditions and protocols are embedded in the structure, the community members’ voices, and the activities in book clubs.

My responsiveness to the population under study included the following: engaging in relationships, involving individuals in program-related acts that concern them, and planning and decision-making activities that aim to affirm and validate their cultural beliefs and practices. Partnering with Centro Hispano in a summer program and leading *Latinidad* book clubs affirmed and validated the cultural and linguistic knowledge, bridging home-culture to school-culture, that LELLS bring into shared, *culturally brave spaces*. 
I emphasize *culturally brave spaces*, because often shared community spaces and schools concentrate on cultural safety. Prior research has suggested that *cultural safety* should be a priority when working within communities and that it only transpires if partners fundamentally and epistemologically believe in the rights of those considered a vulnerable population, marginalized, or underserved to be heard and treated with respect as *more* than an ethical obligation (Wilson & Neville, 2009). I argue that *cultural safety* is not an effective proponent towards an equitable, social justice framework, in goals and practices in educational spaces. Rather, it can reinforce negative stereotypes that discriminate Latino/a children and youth. Safety implies comfort and does not challenge educators, students, and community-members to extend their thinking beyond what cultural narratives and beliefs already exist. Rather than counteract deficit-based mindsets or discriminatory stereotypes of ELs, it inhibits programmatic goals towards equitable literacy and language learning in schools, transitional programs, and in teacher education. I suggest that *cultural bravery* is more aligned with equitable principles and practices in education, as it depicts the bravery necessary to challenge and change normalized, oppressive behaviors, practices, and curricula that exists within schools, society, and teacher education.

I reflected on an introductory activity in the first week of Book clubs (grades sixth through ninth): Crossing the Line (see Interlude) in which the goal was to practice reflexivity and perspective-taking to understand ourselves and others better. I realized that I did not intend to create a “cultural safe space” after all, but rather, I questioned the concept of safety and how it changes based on the identities in the space. Scholars describe safe spaces as environments in which participants are willing and able to participate and honestly struggle with challenging issues (Holley & Steiner, 2005). To create such safe spaces, participants needed basic discussion
guidelines to develop trust and safety, or so I thought. I took on the responsibility to support participants in the challenging work of authentic engagement regarding issues of identity, oppression, power, and privilege, particularly gender, ethnic, and language identity. These social justice topics require an equitable education framework that center shared cultural bravery.

However, to enter that space and challenge our own and each other’s perspectives, we had to think beyond “safety” and instead reckon with honest dialogue in which risk, difficulty, and controversy exist with some discomfort (Arao & Clemens, 2013). We had to be brave, because along the way were going to be vulnerable and exposed and we did encounter feelings of being shocked or alienated, or feeling very unsafe (Boostrom, 1998). I realized that I sought to create culturally brave spaces upon group reflection in which the topics that participants shared were about a range of diversity and social justice issues. Changing how we frame these spaces with the requirement to be culturally brave, reflects the nature of authentic dialogue regarding challenging and controversial topics. We had cultivated Book clubs as a shared cultural brave space. As Latinidad book clubs centered a culturally brave space, LELLS challenged their own and each other’s perspectives through honest dialogue that mutually exists with some discomfort.

I purport that in CES research, conduct and protocol must also ensure cultural bravery to accurately reflect the needs and voices of the participant group, especially as an out-group member researcher-participant, for findings to be beneficial to participants and community members as a collective group. This involves on-going, reflexive practice by researchers, community members, and participants through CES research processes that contribute to the field of literacy education and SLA.
In CES, the analysis research phase in conjunction with engagement with community members also calls for bravery because vulnerability is key to practice reflexivity and build reciprocal relationships. This protocol depicts a cyclical process, rather than linear, which considers researcher’s and community members’ positions of power in on-going self-reflection (i.e. communication with community members; memo-writing; daily reflection) to implement safeguards that ensure *cultural bravery*. *Cultural bravery* was applied to this research process from the original conception of a collaborative program, to when relationships were initially established, and extends here to the dissemination of findings and recommendations.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Flyer for Centro Hispano Summer Camp: Celebrating *Latinidad*

*Centro Hispano Campamento de Verano 2021*

Para niño/as entrando a grados Kinder a 8o grado

- 7 de Junio a 1 de Julio (4 semanas)
- Lunes a Jueves, 8:30m-3:30pm
- $10 por niño cada semana (máximo de $20 por familia)

Para más información, llámanos a 865-522-0052!
Appendix B

Centro Hispano Letter of Support

April 22, 2021

To the IRB Committee at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville,

Centro Hispano de East Tennessee is a non-profit organization headquartered in Knox County and serving the Latino and immigrant communities in our region. We have information and referral programs, workforce development programs, and programs focused on youth and family engagement.

I am writing this letter to express my full support and collaboration with the doctoral research of Elizabeth Fincher, graduate student at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville for her project "Latinidad in Summer Reading: A collaborative approach to Multicultural Latino Literacy and English learners' self-efficacy in transitioning to middle school."

I have been meeting regularly with Elizabeth as she developed her plan for this research over the past six months, and have previously worked with Elizabeth as she supervised undergraduate students that completed student teaching hours in collaboration with Centro Hispano. I have been impressed by Elizabeth’s commitment to full collaboration with us as a community partner, and to the high level of ethical consideration that she shows in her approach to working with our students.

Elizabeth’s research process has been remarkable in that she consulted with me from the beginning to design research that could have an immediate positive impact on both the students she is researching, and our organization. I feel very confident that Elizabeth’s research will be beneficial to the youth we serve, and that she will continue to recognize and respect ethical boundaries in her research.

I am looking forward to working with Elizabeth and would be happy to answer any further questions you may have. I can be reached at megan@centrohispanotn.org or by phone at 336-430-7788.

Thank you,

Megan Barolet-Fogarty, PhD
Director of Youth and Family Engagement
Centro Hispano de East Tennessee
Appendix C

Informed Permission and Assent Letter in English

Parent Permission and Participant Assent Form

Latinidad in Summer Reading: A collaborative approach to Multicultural Latino/a Literacy and ESL self-efficacy in transitioning to middle school

Parent Permission Form

Your child is invited to be part of a research study being conducted by Elizabeth Fincher at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Your child is being invited because they have participated in the summer reading camp book clubs. Being in this research study is voluntary, and you should only agree if you completely understand the study and want to volunteer to allow your child's book club activities to be used. This form contains information that will help you decide if you want your child to be part of this research study or not. Please take the time to read it carefully, and please ask questions.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to explore book club multicultural Latino/a activities as an instructional practice as part of the summer reading camp. We plan use this project for my dissertation study to publish articles and/or books and make presentations at conferences to share the results of this research.

Participation
If you choose to allow your child to participate and your child also agrees, we will analyze writing reflections, language self-reports in English and Spanish, and reading confidence (self-efficacy) questionnaires. These are materials your child will create or complete during their time in book clubs to tell us what they learned and if reading confidence improved. Additionally, if you give permission, your child may be interviewed and audio-recorded. Because these are all things that are part of their regular activities in book clubs, participation in the research will not require any additional time.

Benefit
Your child will not receive any direct benefit from allowing their book club activities and materials to be used in the research project, but we hope to learn things that will benefit ESL learners and teachers in the future.

Risks
This research is considered to be no more than minimal risk, which means there is no more expected risk to you than what your child might experience during a typical day. There is the risk of possible loss of confidentiality, as someone could find out your child was in the study or see their study information, but we believe that risk is unlikely because of the procedures we will use to protect their information.

Confidentiality
If you and your child agree to participate in the research, we will assign your child a pseudonym (fake name) and use that instead of their name on all of the materials before we begin analyzing them for the research study. Interviews that are audio recorded will also use pseudonyms and no personal information. These materials will be stored in a secure location on the UT campus and in a secure online server of One Drive and Google Drive. No information which could identify your child will be shared in publications and presentations about this study or databases in which results may be stored. If we wish to include your child's name, pictures, recordings, or other information that could identify them in publications or presentations, we will ask for separate written permission for this.

**Future Research**
Your child's materials may be used for future research studies or shared with other researchers for use in future studies without obtaining additional informed consent from you. If this happens, all of your child's identifiable information will be removed before any future use or sharing with other researchers.

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions about this research, please contact me, Elizabeth Fincher, at eknode@vols.utk.edu or 4844018768 or my advisor, Nils Jaekel, at njaekel@utk.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, at utkirb@utk.edu or 865-974-7697. You may also contact the IRB with any problems, complaints or concerns you have about a research study.

**Voluntary Participation**
It is completely up to you and your child to decide to be in this research study. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind at any time and stop participating by letting myself, Elizabeth Fincher or Megan Barolet-Fogarty know via phone, email, or in person. Your child will not lose any services, benefits, or rights they would normally have if you choose not to give permission, or if you or your child change your minds and stop participating later.

If you agree that your child may participate, please print and sign the **Parent Permission** section below, and have your child sign the **Assent** section, on both copies of this form. Return one copy to myself at Centro Hispano, summer camp site, and keep one copy for your records. If you do not wish for your child to participate in the research, it is not necessary to do anything, as we cannot use their materials without your permission. Again, it is totally up to you!

**Parent Permission**
I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I understand that my child's participation in this research study includes allowing Elizabeth Fincher to use my child's book club materials for research purposes. I agree that my child may participate in this study.

Child's Name (printed) __________________________
Child/Youth Assent
I have talked about this research with my parent(s) and I agree that Elizabeth Fincher may use my book club materials for research purposes. If I change my mind, and decide not to participate later, I only need to let Elizabeth or Megan Barolet-Fogarty know via phone, email, or in person.
Youth Name (printed) __________________________
_____________________________________________________
Youth Signature ________________________________
_____________________________________________________
Date ____________________________________________
Appendix D

Informed Permission and Assent Letter in Spanish

Formulario de permiso de los padres y consentimiento del participante
Latinidad en la lectura de verano: un enfoque colaborativo para la alfabetización latina multicultural y la autoeficacia de ESL en la transición a la escuela secundaria

Formulario de permiso de los padres
Su hijo está invitado a ser parte de un estudio de investigación que está llevando a cabo Elizabeth Fincher en la Universidad de Tennessee, Knoxville. Su hijo está invitado porque ha participado en los clubes de lectura del campamento de lectura de verano. Participar en este estudio de investigación es voluntario y solo debe estar de acuerdo si comprende completamente el estudio y desea ofrecerse como voluntario para permitir que se utilicen las actividades del club de lectura de su hijo. Este formulario contiene información que le ayudará a decidir si quiere que su hijo forme parte de este estudio de investigación o no. Tómese el tiempo para leerlo detenidamente y haga preguntas.

Propósito
El propósito de este estudio es explorar las actividades latinas multiculturales de los clubes de lectura como una práctica de instrucción como parte del campamento de lectura de verano. Planeamos utilizar este proyecto para mi estudio de tesis para publicar artículos y / o libros y hacer presentaciones en conferencias para compartir los resultados de esta investigación.

Participación
Si opta por permitir que su hijo participe y su hijo también está de acuerdo, analizaremos las reflexiones sobre la escritura, los autoinformes lingüísticos en inglés y español y los cuestionarios de confianza en la lectura (autoeficacia). Estos son materiales que su hijo creará o completará durante su tiempo en los clubes de lectura para decírnos lo que aprendieron y si su confianza en la lectura mejoró. Además, si da permiso, su hijo puede ser entrevistado y grabado en audio. Debido a que estas son todas las cosas que forman parte de sus actividades habituales en los clubes de lectura, la participación en la investigación no requerirá tiempo adicional.

Beneficio
Su hijo no recibirá ningún beneficio directo al permitir que las actividades y los materiales de su club de lectura se utilicen en el proyecto de investigación, pero esperamos aprender cosas que beneficiarán a los estudiantes y maestros de ESL en el futuro.

Riesgos
Se considera que esta investigación no es más que un riesgo mínimo, lo que significa que no hay más riesgo esperado para usted que el que su hijo podría experimentar durante un día típico. Existe el riesgo de una posible pérdida de confidencialidad, ya que alguien podría descubrir que su hijo estaba en el estudio o ver la información del estudio, pero creemos que ese riesgo es poco probable debido a los procedimientos que usaremos para proteger su información.
Confidencialidad
Si usted y su hijo aceptan participar en la investigación, le asignaremos un seudónimo (nombre falso) y lo usaremos en lugar de su nombre en todos los materiales antes de comenzar a analizarlos para el estudio de investigación. Las entrevistas grabadas en audio también utilizarán seudónimos y no utilizarán información personal. Estos materiales se almacenarán en un lugar seguro en el campus de UT y en un servidor seguro en línea de One Drive y Google Drive. No se compartirá información que pueda identificar a su hijo en publicaciones y presentaciones sobre este estudio o bases de datos en las que se puedan almacenar los resultados. Si deseamos incluir el nombre de su hijo, fotografías, grabaciones u otra información que pueda identificarlo en publicaciones o presentaciones, le solicitaremos un permiso por escrito por separado.

Investigación futura
Los materiales de su hijo pueden usarse para estudios de investigación futuros o compartirse con otros investigadores para su uso en estudios futuros sin obtener su consentimiento informado adicional. Si esto sucede, toda la información identificable de su hijo se eliminará antes de cualquier uso futuro o compartir con otros investigadores.

Información del contacto
Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre esta investigación, comuníquese conmigo, Elizabeth Fincher, en eknode@vols.utk.edu o 484-401-8768 o con mi asesor, Nils Jaekel, en njaekel@utk.edu. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante de una investigación, comuníquese con la Junta de Revisión Institucional (IRB) de la Universidad de Tennessee, Knoxville, en utkirb@utk.edu o al 865-974-7697. También puede comunicarse con el IRB si tiene problemas, quejas o inquietudes sobre un estudio de investigación.

Participacion voluntaria
Depende completamente de usted y su hijo decidir participar en este estudio de investigación. Incluso si decide ser parte del estudio ahora, puede cambiar de opinión en cualquier momento y dejar de participar haciéndolo saber a mí, a Elizabeth Fincher o Megan Barolet-Fogarty por teléfono, correo electrónico o en persona. Su hijo no perderá ningún servicio, beneficio o derecho que normalmente tendría si decide no dar su permiso, o si usted o su hijo cambian de opinión y dejan de participar más tarde.

Si acepta que su hijo puede participar, imprima y firme la sección Permiso de los padres a continuación, y pídale a su hijo que firme la sección Asentimiento, en ambas copias de este formulario. Devuélvame una copia al Centro Hispano, campamento de verano, y guarde una copia para sus registros. Si no desea que su hijo participe en la investigación, no es necesario que haga nada, ya que no podemos utilizar sus materiales sin su permiso. Una vez más, ¡depende totalmente de usted!

Permiso de los padres
He leído la información anterior. He recibido una copia de este formulario. Entiendo que la participación de mi hijo en este estudio de investigación incluye permitir que Elizabeth Fincher utilice los materiales del club de lectura de mi hijo con fines de investigación. Acepto que mi hijo pueda participar en este estudio.
Nombre del niño (impreso)
__________________________________________________________

Nombre del padre (en letra de imprenta)____________________________________________

Firma del padre ___________________________________________ Fecha ________________

Asentimiento de niños / jóvenes
He hablado sobre esta investigación con mis padres y estoy de acuerdo en que Elizabeth Fincher
puede usar los materiales de mi club de lectura con fines de investigación. Si cambio de opinión
y decido no participar más tarde, solo necesito informar a Elizabeth o Megan Barolet-Fogarty
por teléfono, correo electrónico o en persona.

Nombre del joven (impreso)
__________________________________________________________

Firma del joven __________________________ Fecha ___________
Appendix E

Self-Efficacy Survey

Please CHECK ONE response that best describes you. Be honest. The information will be used to help you in school and become more prepared for middle school. For example, I like to watch movies. 1 means that this is not like you, that you do not like to watch movies at all. A 2 means it is not like you or that you usually don’t like to watch movies. A 5 or “Very Like Me” means that you really like to watch movies. A 4 means that you usually like to watch movies. A 3 means you sometimes do and sometimes do not like to watch movies or you do not know.

AFTER FINISHING, PLEASE FOLD AND PLACE IN YOUR ENVELOPE. THANKS!

Student initials: ____________ Rising Grade: _____ Date: ______

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<th>Not very like me</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>Very like me</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I learned what was being taught in class last year.</td>
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<td>2. I learned to read in English in class last year.</td>
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<td>3. I can figure anything if I try hard enough in reading.</td>
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<td>4. If I practiced reading every day, I could develop just about any skill.</td>
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<td>5. I am confident that I will achieve the goals that I set for myself.</td>
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<td>6. I am confident in my ability to read.</td>
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<td>7. I am confident in my ability to speak English in school.</td>
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<td>8. When I’m struggling to accomplish something difficult, I focus on my progress instead of feeling discouraged.</td>
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<td>9. I will succeed in reading in school next year.</td>
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<td>10. I will succeed in whatever career path I choose.</td>
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<td>11. I believe that hard work pays off.</td>
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<td>12. My ability in reading grows with effort.</td>
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<td>13. I am confident I can set goals for myself and achieve them.</td>
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<td>14. I can express my opinions when my classmates disagree with me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I can get teachers to help me when I get stuck in reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I can work in harmony with my classmates.</td>
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<td>17. I often do not worry about things that may not happen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. I can succeed in cheering myself up when an unpleasant (sad or difficult) event.</td>
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Appendix F

English Language Self-Reports

English Language Self-Report  Grades 4-5  WIDA Can-Do

What is the main language spoken in your home? ________________________________

Do you speak any other languages besides English?  YES _____  NO _____

If YES, what language(s)? __________________________ Name/Pseudonym:________________

<p>| ELP Levels (1-5): Entering 1, Emerging 2, Developing 3, Expanding 4, Bridging 5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| *Each item # in ( ) is ELP # |
| Not yet (1 entering); A Little bit (2 emerging); Some what (3 developing); Yes I can (4 Expanding); Yes I can very well (5 Bridging) |
| In English, I CAN… |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entering</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Expanding</th>
<th>Bridging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listen and point to pictures or words. (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Listen to choices and express my thoughts or opinion. (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Listen to a story and sort pictures. (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Listen about stories and act out what you hear. (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Listen to and follow instructions about math, science or Reading. (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Listen to stories and give opinions about them. (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Tell what you need. Tell how you feel. (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Ask everyday questions. Answer yes/no questions. Answer choice questions. (2)</td>
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<td>9. Describe people, events, objects, or people in a story. (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Re-tell stories and events. (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Give reasons for an opinion. (4) Give verbal reports, discuss stories, issues, and ideas.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Use evidence to defend your thoughts or opinions. Use vocabulary or important words when telling stories. (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
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</table>

**READING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13. Make sound and word relations. (1)</th>
<th>○</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/a/ = b a t = bat Match words on the board to words and pictures in a story. Bat =</td>
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<td>14. Read texts with illustrations or pictures to identify facts. (2)</td>
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<td>15. Identify a story’s characters, setting, or events- plot (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Follow written directions. (visually supported) (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Sequence or put events in stories in order For example, First, this happened… Next… and Then…</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Use context clues &amp; pictures to figure out the meaning of words (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Find details that support main idea of a story. (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Summarize information from different stories. (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Answer questions and make inferences about a story. (5)</td>
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</table>

**WRITING**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. Copy words and short sentences (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Write sentences using dictionaries or texts for help. (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Write about things or people or ways to do something (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Make text-to-self connections (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Write stories or reports (5)</td>
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<td>27. Write responses to texts (5)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

WiDA

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# Appendix G

## English Language Self-Reports

**English Language Self-Report** Grades 6, 7, 8  
**WIDA Can-Do** ELP Levels (1-5): Entering 1, Emerging 2, Developing 3, Expanding 4, Bridging 5#

*Each item # in () is ELP #
Not yet (1 entering); A Little bit (2 emerging); Some what (3 developing); Yes I can (4 Expanding); Yes I can very well (5 Bridging)

**In English, I CAN...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LISTENING</th>
<th>Entering</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Expanding</th>
<th>Bridging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Point to things that my teacher says. (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Listen to choices and express my thoughts or opinion. (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Listen and match words and phrases to past, present, or future (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Listen to a story and act out scenes from a story. (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Listen to and follow instructions about math, science or Reading. (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Listen and use information to finish a task or retell a story (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPEAKING</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Answer who, what, when, where, and why questions (1)</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Use everyday language to talk about school subjects (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Tell about things I do everyday Tell what I need or want (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Retell ideas I heard and tell what I think. (3)</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Ask for help understanding (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Summarize ideas about a story and Support opinions with reasons and evidence. (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Defend your point of view and give reasons. (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Communicate fluently in school and with friends or family. (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Make sound and word relations (1) /a/ = b a t = bat</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Match words on the board to words and pictures in a story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bat =</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Find main idea in a sentence</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find information from text features (1)</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Use my home language to help learn English. (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Use words I know to finish sentences (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Identify topic sentences, main ideas, and details in a story (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Use context clues to understand a story. (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Read and interpret texts and literature (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Use words with multiple meanings (bat, park, block) (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Think critically and make an argument (5)</td>
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</table>

**Writing**

| 1. Tell what I think about a story by drawing (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 1. Answer yes or no to who, what, when, where, and why questions about books. (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 1. Tell what is the same & different about events & characters (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 1. Tell what I think, like, or feel with reasons (3) | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ |
| 1. Make text-to-self connections (4) | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ |
| 1. Write critical reflections about stories (5) | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ |
| 1. Tell what you think about a story (5) | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ | ⟟ |

What is the primary language spoken in the home? _______________________________________

Do you speak any other languages besides English? YES ______ NO ______

If YES, what languages? ____________________________________________________________

Name/Pseudonym:____________________________ Code:__________ Date:____________
Appendix H

Semi-structured Interview Assent Form and Question Guide

Interview Assent Form for Participants

The purpose of this interview is for me to learn more about Latino/a ESL learners’ experiences in school and in reading as Covid-19 pandemic resulted in school closings and/or changes in learning, and currently, how this affects ELs’ beliefs of language and literacy competencies, confidence in school, or social-emotional well-being, as a part of self-efficacy as a learner.

I am going to ask you to tell me about your reading and school experiences this past year, your thoughts, and feelings about reading and using English and/or your first language in reading. Particularly, I will ask about your thoughts and feelings about transitioning to middle school/higher grade and your sense of being prepared. For example, what makes learning difficult or easy; what do you look forward to in (summer program/next grade)? Is it okay if I ask you a couple questions about reading?

If it is okay with you, this interview will be audio-recorded (for transcription purposes). [Participation in research will remain confidential and all information will be secured in UTK server under lock and key.] Only I will have access to this information. I will change identifiable information such as your name, your school’s name and any other personal information you give in any written documents (e.g., transcript, coding) with another name (pseudonyms). At the end of the program, the audio recording and transcript will be destroyed. Do you have questions?

I will audio-record this interview. Is it okay if I audio record this interview? __________

Signature/Initials: __________ Pseudonym (Participant chooses):__________ Date:_________

Following the interview, any words in your first language (i.e. Spanish) will be checked by a fellow summer program, bilingual teacher. Feel free to ask any questions to help you understand any of the questions that I ask. Finally, I want to let you know that I will not be judging you based on your responses. If I don’t comment on certain things you tell me, it is simply because I want you to continue your story.

Do you have any questions before we begin? First, I will ask you some background information.

Interview Guide for Latino/a ESL Learners in Summer Reading Program

Section 1: Background & Demographic Questions
I am going to begin with a few personal background questions. Please remember you do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

1. How old are you? What grade did you just finish? What grade are you going into this Fall?
2. How would you describe your ethnic identity? (i.e. Mexican American, American, Latino/a /a/?) Do you identify as Latino/a /a/a? Are there other cultural or language groups that you identify with/are a part of?

3. What does your culture mean to you? (Home traditions, beliefs, values…)

4. Where language(s) do you speak? At home? At school? Probe: Do you know any other languages besides English and Spanish? If yes, how/when did you learn those languages?

Choose a pseudonym that I may use for your privacy. What name would you like me to use? I am going to ask you some questions about your language learning experiences and reading.

Section 2: Language experiences; Self-efficacy; Identity; Future goals; what language they like to use/speak; challenges/successes they have had

5. Describe yourself as a speaker in Spanish/first language? In English?
6. Do you think that it is important to speak English outside of class or at home?
7. When do you feel most comfortable speaking in English? (What people, place, time, situation) What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable in that situation?
8. Is there ever a situation where you must talk in English even though you don’t feel comfortable doing it? What do you do to help yourself feel more confident in that situation?
9. Describe the most recent time that you spoke English outside of class. Who did you talk to? Why did you talk to that person? How did you feel before you talked to that person? How did you feel while you talked to that person? How did you feel after you talked to that person?
10. How do people respond to you when you speak English? Do you feel that people are encouraging? Discouraging? Probe: Do you remember having an experience when someone responded really positively to you? Can you describe it? Do you remember having an experience when someone responded really negatively to you? Can you describe it? What did you do in response? Have you ever been in a similar situation again?
11. What year did you take your first English class? And how many classes have you taken since/yes, how long have you been in the ESL program at school?
12. What do you remember about your experiences in learning English? Are there any stories you can tell (funny or serious) about learning English?
13. How does it feel to try to communicate in a new language? What are the rewards and the frustrations of learning a *second language?*
14. Can you tell me about a time that your English or Spanish helped you learn in reading? (In school/outside of school; any kind of text/digital/magazine/game?)
15. Do you think it is better to be bilingual/multilingual or to be monolingual? How do you see yourself in middle school and beyond as a language speaker?

Section 3: Reading experiences; Self-efficacy; Identity; Future goals; Challenges/Successes

16. How do you feel about school? Describe how elementary school has influenced what you want to do in middle school? High school? Afterwards?
17. Do you have any dreams or goals for yourself for your future? What job/career do you want to have? College? Can you tell me what has led you to have those dreams and goals for yourself? Probe: Has anyone influenced your dreams? What experiences influenced those dreams? Probe: How do you hope to achieve those goals? Probe: What made this experience memorable? Who did you read with? What did you read? Language?

18. Tell me how reading (books, magazines, internet, tablets, museums, games..) experiences have helped you create dreams and goals for yourself? Probe: Do you ever see yourself or similarities to your life in the books that you read? Probe: Can you tell me about a reading experience when you did see yourself in a book you read? What was that like?

Section 4: School experiences during Covid-19; how it impacted your learning; how you feel Now, I am going to ask you some questions about your school experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and how you feel about learning. I’ll ask you about reading experiences during this past year in school/after school. We will also talk about your future school experience and transitioning into ___ grade.

19. Can you tell me what happened when schools first closed last year? What was school like? What was it like at home? How did you learn? With who?

20. Describe a typical day at school when you were learning (remotely, hybrid, in-person) last year during covid-19.

21. Can you tell about a time when a particular class or school day went well? How did that day or activity make you feel? *Anytime/any grade

22. What was reading habits like in school/in home last year? Probe: Did your reading habits change at school/ at home? How? Probe: What do you like to read? Do you like to read new things?

23. Can you explain your role as an ESL student in classes? What was that like? How did it make you feel?

Section 5: Transitioning to Middle School; What school/reading experiences are desired/expected—how ELs feel they will be successful in these experiences?

24. Do you feel prepared to succeed in __ grade/middle school considering your current experiences? Please explain. Probe: How do you feel about going to __ grade/middle school next year? Probe: Do you think you will have any challenges? What might make it difficult? What will make it easy?

25. What are you looking forward to next year in __ grade? In Middle school? Can you describe what you hope the school year is like? Probe: What do you hope to read or learn about? Probe: Are their clubs, sports, music or anything you want to join? Why?

26. Have you ever attended a summer reading program or summer camp before? Tell me about it. If yes: What is a memorable experience you had during the program/camp? If no: What do you hope summer reading camp will be like? What do you hope to learn?

Section 6: Concluding Questions: In wrapping up, I have two final questions for you.
27. Pretend you are able to join a student club next year in ___ grade. What will this club be like? What kind of club do you want to participate in? What would excite you about a club? And why?
28. Is there anything else that we have not discussed that has affected your experience this year in school or in reading?
That concludes our interview. Are there any questions that you have for me? If not, thank you very much for your time and willingness to share your experiences me. Add anything else you would like to say.
Appendix I

Table 8. Values Coding: Themes, Categories, Values, Attitudes, and Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>ATTITUDES</th>
<th>BELIEFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>Home vs. School Culture</td>
<td>V: Language learning develops over time (in home and school) p. 6, 8 (Rodrigo)</td>
<td>A: Difficult to balance home responsibilities &amp; extracurricular activities in MS p. 22 (Rosa)</td>
<td>B: Assumes white people don't care about my cultural traditions p. 8, 9, 16 (Rosa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>V: Respect p. 9 (Maggy)</td>
<td>A: Wants to be accepted by peers p. 7, 11, 22 (Rosa)</td>
<td>B: A travel club in MS would help me make friends p. 19 (Maggy)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V: Friendship p. 8, 23 (Lena)</td>
<td></td>
<td>B: Speaking same language helps make friends p. 13 (Maggy)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B: Relates personal obstacles to character's obstacles/quote in Esperanza Rising p. 19, 20 (Maggy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being Bilingual</td>
<td>V: Bilingual to help others in language learning p. 14</td>
<td>A: Fear in my family of forgetting Spanish (L1) p. 8</td>
<td>B: The little voice in my head speaks in English p. 8 (Maggy)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V: Family values speaking Spanish (L1) too p. 8 (Maggy)</td>
<td>A: I know English and Spanish p. 5 (Maggy)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Navigating Discrimination</td>
<td>V: Standing up for what I believe in p. 6, 13, 15, 16 (Rosa)</td>
<td>A: Dislikes ignorance A: Hates when people tell me to &quot;go back to where I'm from&quot; p. 7, 12 (Rosa)</td>
<td>B: Hates racism and colorism p. 6, 12 B: I've been bullied because of my appearance / people have stereotypes of my culture p. 7, 12, 13, 25 (Rosa)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>V: Respect p. 11 (Jo)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social-Emotional</td>
<td>V: Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>A: Felt embarrassed to speak Spanish at school p. 9</td>
<td>B: Feels unknown and unaccepted by others p 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A: Feels misunderstood p. 10 (Jac)</td>
<td>B: Summer camp was first time feeling accepted for who she is p. 9 (Rosa)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A: Feeling alone in new school and town (next year at school) p. 17 (Rosa)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J

[Picture of My Name is Maria Isabel Book Cover]. (n.a.) https://www.almaflorada.com/my-name-is-maria-isabel/

[La Linea Book Cover] (n.a.) (Jaramillo, 2016) https://socialjusticebooks.org/la-linea/

[Picture of The Upside Down Boy Book Cover]. (n.d.) (Herrera, 2000)


Figure 16. Multicultural Literature for Latino/a Bilingual Children

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Figure 17. Communities with CARE for Centro Hispano de East Tennessee
Figure 18. Communities with CARE for Practitioners
Vita

Elizabeth Ann Knod Fincher was born in 1991 in Pennsylvania and graduated high school in Chambersburg before attending Colombia College of Chicago for Journalism. Transferring to West Chester University for a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education, she completed her degree in 2013. In 2016 Elizabeth entered the University of Washington to complete her Med in Teaching English Language Learners and Curriculum and Instruction as a practicing educator. She entered The University of Tennessee Knoxville in August, 2018 to pursue a PhD in TPTE, Literacy Studies with emphasis on ESL Education and received her degree upon completion of this dissertation in Summer, 2022.