Culturally Responsive Professional Development for Latinas in Family Child Care: A Dissertation

Jody Figuerido
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CULTURALLY RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR LATINAS IN FAMILY CHILD CARE

DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

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Dissertation Title: Culturally Responsive Professional Development for Latinas in Family Child Care from the Perspective of Latina Family Child Care Mentors
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Approvals
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Abstract

Latina\(^1\) Family Child Care (FCC) Educators provide early education and care (EEC) for children in their homes. High quality EEC programs, including the FCC setting, help children form a firm foundation for future learning, resulting in positive outcomes. In order to provide this level of programming, educators must participate in specialized training related to early childhood education. Unfortunately, the literature provides limited guidance regarding professional development that meets the needs of the diverse adult learner in the field of early childhood education. The focus of this qualitative study is to articulate the elements of culturally responsive professional development for the Latina FCC Educator in Massachusetts. To accomplish this goal, interviews were conducted with 10 FCC Mentors\(^2\) who identified themselves as Latina. The mentors work for a Family Child Care System\(^3\) in Massachusetts. Each mentor is assigned an average of 25 FCC Educators for whom they provide on-site mentoring, as well as monthly professional development. Interview participants in this study clearly articulated that professional development responsive to the needs of Latinas in family childcare is facilitated through a relationship-based approach. Participants shared strategies for implementing this approach through the climate, context, and facilitation of the professional development experience. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be used to inform professional development design for Latina FCC Educators, with implications for use in other adult learning settings, especially adults from Latin American cultural backgrounds.

*Keywords:* Latino culture, Family Child Care Educator, Family Child Care Mentor, early education and care, and professional development.

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\(^1\) Latina refers to a female of Latin American descent.

\(^2\) FCC Mentors work for a FCC System providing support for FCC Educators.

\(^3\) FCC System (see key terminology) supports FCC Educators with their child care business including the provision of training.
Dedication

This dissertation research is dedicated to my parents, Suzanne and Allan Byrne. Thank you, Dad, for your unfailing and continuous encouragement and support. Thank you, Mom, in memory, for leading me to the field of early education and care. I can only hope to carry out your legacies, and the impact that you made on so many children, families, and teachers through your life’s work.
Acknowledgements

“Education should help us turn inward as we learn to appreciate who we are and develop a philosophical orientation to engage in life work.”

- Rendón, sentipensante pedagogy

My doctoral journey was one of self-reflection, discovery, and change that provided direction for my work. I could not have traveled this path alone. This research was supported by family, friends, and colleagues. First of all, I wish to thank my husband for his support throughout what was perhaps the most challenging three-and-a-half years of our life together. I also wish to thank my sisters, Debbi and Beth, for their ongoing “check-ins,” and for reading this massive document. My brother, A.J., and his wife, Dannielle, who were so supportive during this crucial time. I also want to thank all of my dear friends for their ongoing cheerleading and encouragement. Susan Spear and Anne Harrington, thank you for listening, keeping me sane, and offering sound advice.

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SUMMARY
Chapter One: Introduction

Preface

The research for this dissertation was conducted using a qualitative methodology, with the goal of identifying the characteristics of professional development that is responsive to the needs of Latina Family Child Care (FCC) Educators, from the perspective of Latina FCC Mentors. Mentors were selected based upon their experience in the field of early education and care (EEC), their status as diverse adult learners, and for their role as mentors and trainers of Latina educators (see Appendix A: Recruitment letter). The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with participants, led a focus group with participants to discuss the accuracy of her interpretations and findings, and collaborated with fellow EEC professionals throughout the research and interpretation process.

This chapter begins with an overview of the context and background that frame the study. Following this is the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and the accompanying research questions. This chapter then includes an account of the researcher’s approach, perspective, and assumptions. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the rationale and significance of this research study, and definitions of key terminology.

Background and context.

The Child in Early Education and Care Settings. During the past 40 years, there have been dramatic changes in the care of children outside the home, beginning shortly after birth and continuing through early adolescence. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010a), just under 70% of the nation’s 12 million children, from birth to age five, regularly attend some type of child care arrangement outside the home. As detailed in the following sections, the research on child development clearly identified the need for high quality early child care programs.
Beginning at birth, children learn through experience and interactions with others. The most significant development occurs during the first years of a child’s life, during which the brain grows in size and complexity more than at any other time in a person’s life (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000). The realization that the architecture of the brain is formed during a child’s early years has resulted in an increased demand for high-quality EEC programs. This is a shift from an earlier focus on simply providing a safe haven for children while parents worked. In a study of economically advanced societies, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2008) described the profound positive impact on children of early interactions with others, particularly with family and caregivers. Early interactions, in conjunction with genetics, affect the pattern of neural connections and chemical balances in children, influencing who children will become, what they will be capable of, and how they will respond to the world around them.

A growing body of research on child development, brain development, and EEC indicated that high-quality programs improve school readiness and outcomes later in life (Camilli, Barnette, Ryan & Vargase, 2010; Kelley & Camilla, 2007; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010; Vandell, Belsky, & Burchinal, 2010). Longitudinal studies supported this conclusion regarding the positive impact of high-quality early experiences on cognitive function, language development, and school readiness (National Institute of Child Health and Development, 2005). These programs not only lead to greater educational success, they also stimulated economic development, resulting in lower incidence of criminal activity, and a higher return on taxpayer investment (Schweinhart, 2003). Quality EEC programs are imperative for all children; however, they have been shown to be particularly significant for children who are poor or otherwise at risk (Children’s Defense Fund, 2011).
Children at greatest risk for school failure are those with any or all of the following characteristics: they live in poverty, they are English language learners (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000), they are of racial or ethnic minority status, and they have mothers with low educational levels (Early et al., 2008; Halle et al., 2009). These children are vulnerable from birth, resulting in an ever-widening achievement gap in contrast with their higher income peers (Children’s Defense Fund, 2011).

Latino and African American children are disproportionately poor, with 33% of Latino children in the United States living in poverty (Wight, Chau, & Arantani, 2011). Research indicated that poverty, along with the additional risk factors listed above, resulted in children lacking the basic skills they needed to be successful— with this gap emerging as early as kindergarten entry. Sadly, these deficits follow children throughout their often-stunted educational experience (Moore, Redd, Burkhauser, Mbwana, & Collins, 2009). The educational disparity which began before these children were five will continue to affect them all the way through higher education— if they are able to graduate from high school (Contreras, 2005; Dolan, 2009). Conversely, quality early programs for these children can reverse, or at least combat, the risk factors present from birth.

Children living in poverty often lack the learning experiences and interactions that promote achievement. However, this deficit can be successfully supplemented with high quality programs, which have been shown to support growth in all development domains (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2005). To further the effects of quality programming, partnerships between educational institutions (including EEC settings) and families are imperative. Establishing relationships begins with learning about each other. According to the National Association for Family Child Care (2005), educators should ask families about their cultural traditions and their goals for their children. This
knowledge is then utilized to customize the program for children and families. The end result should be an equitable approach which positively influences the child’s development.

During the formative early years, a child’s identity is solidified, rooted within a cultural context (Matthews, 2008). In the early childhood setting, as well as in the larger world of the child, messages about power and privilege are internalized, as well as knowledge about what is valued and insignificant in relation to their own identity (Johnson, 2005; Matthews; Nora, 2010). These messages are culturally-based and communicated through everyday routines, interactions, expectations, child guidance, curriculum, assessment, and interactions in the EEC setting. This research is particularly significant for children of Latin American heritage, which has been identified as the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population (National Council of La Raza, 2007). These children are being cared for by a predominately Caucasian EEC workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011).

**The Educator in the Early Education and Care Setting.** Due to an increased demand for EEC, this field is one of the fastest growing occupations within the past decade. In 2008, the EEC workforce accounted for 1.3 million jobs in the United States, with an expected 11% increase by 2018 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Educators are employed in different settings, including 24% who are working in center or school based settings and 28% providing licensed or regulated FCC. Children are also cared for by family, friends and neighbors (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Possibly as a result of low wages and little or no employment benefits, 44% of these educators have a high school diploma or less (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). While not divided into specific settings (center-based, family child care, or out-of-school time), data indicated that 95% of the educators are female, with an average age of 38 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

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4 See definitions, pg. 25
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), 78.4% of the educators are Caucasian, 18.4% are Latino, 16.8% are Black or African American, and 2.7% are Asian.

The central factor in quality programming is the educator. In high quality programs, the educated practitioner is more responsive to children’s developmental needs and provides appropriate activities to stimulate learning in all domains (Early et al., 2006; Kelley & Camilli, 2007; Marshall, Dennehy, Staff, & Robeson, 2005; Pianta et al., 2005; Whitebook, 2003). Upon examination of both the structural and process components, it was found that if the educator did not participate in professional development related to early childhood education, the program tended to be of lower quality and children’s development was less advanced, particularly in larger group settings (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2005). This clearly indicated a need to support educators in participating in relevant professional development to increase their knowledge and skills in their work with young children (Early et al., 2006; Kelley & Camilli, 2007; Whitebook, 2003).

In response to the demand for quality EEC programs, strategies to address workforce development have become a priority. A nationwide move toward Quality Rating Improvement Systems, in place in nearly half the states in the U.S. and in planning stages in most of the remaining states (Alliance for Early Childhood Finance, 2011), includes requirements for specialized training or degrees. This is a significant change for a field that previously had very low requirements for workers, with some settings not even requiring a high school diploma (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). With low wages and negligible employment benefits, the challenges that employees in this workforce must overcome to attain a degree remain almost insurmountable. This results in a vicious cycle—children, families, and society need better qualified teachers, but teachers need better pay, benefits, and working conditions to meet increasing requirements.
Other challenges for educational attainment include the content and facilitation of coursework, both in workforce professional development and academia. Coursework to address and support the needs of diverse children and families is needed in teacher preparation programs, but is either lacking or ineffective (Center for Law and Social Policy, Inc., 2008). Further, the faculty at most institutions of higher education is predominately Caucasian, which does not reflect the diversity of the professional field (Saracho & Spodek, 2010). This indicates a need for more training on how to support diverse learners through relevant pedagogy.

The Early Education and Care Setting. The selection of an EEC program depends upon many factors. Considerations include the age of the child, family structure, family socioeconomic status, educational level of parents or guardians, work schedule, availability of extended family, and location (Capizzano, Adams, & Ost, 2006). Options include center-based care, preschool programs, programs in public schools, family childcare, friend/family/neighbor care, and out-of-school time programs. Preschool children whose parents are Caucasian5, born in the United States, highly educated, and affluent tend to choose center-based settings for their children (Adam, 2004; Capizzano, Adams, & Ost; Huston, Chang, & Gennetian, 2002). The reverse is true for children from Latino, poorly-educated, immigrant, and less affluent families. These families are more likely to be cared for by relatives than in family childcare or centers (Capizanno, Adams, & Ost).

Families often make an effort to select a program in which the educator shares the culture and language of the family. Sharing the home culture and language has multiple benefits, including greater continuity and capacity for communication between home and program (Center for Law and Social Policy, Inc., 2010). Also, studies indicated that programs with a heavy emphasis on the home language had the best outcomes for children.

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5 See definitions on page 25
Literacy in the primary language helps children to be ready for kindergarten. Also, learning English during these early years not only helps prepare children academically, but it helps them to adapt to a primary school setting in which English is the primary or only language. Soltero (2004) recommended offering Pre-K children learning experiences in their home language 90% of the time, and in English 10% of the time. This addressed the concern that many Spanish-speaking children are in monolingual homes where they learn little English, leaving them ill-prepared for entering kindergarten programs taught in English.

Continuity between the EEC setting and the home has been show to positively influence child outcomes (Wise & Sanson, 2000). Since a child’s identity is founded on culturally specific beliefs, values, and behaviors (Day, 2007), consistency between the home and the ECE program is imperative. Of course, due to the multiplicity of influential factors, a shared ethnicity does not mean the educator will necessarily help children reach their full potential (Berta-Ávila, 2004). However, the predominately Caucasian, female, monolingual, and middle-class workforce (Goodwin, 2002) may promote their own ideology which is reflective of the dominant culture (Goodnow, 1989). This does not mean that an educator from a culture that is different from his or her students cannot provide culturally sensitive and responsive care, but it is more challenging- supporting children and families from different cultures may be overwhelming for some educators (Saracho & Spodek, 2010).

An educator of any race or ethnicity should participate in professional development on the topics of culture, language, and diversity (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009a). Sadly, these subjects are yet to be included in the curriculum in many institutes of higher education (Center for Law and Social Policy, Inc., 2008). This training is essential for promoting more equitable and culturally sensitive practices and
building continuity between home and the program (Center for Law and Social Policy, Inc.; National Association for the Education of Young Children).

**Professional Development.** Current professional development opportunities often follow traditional educational practices rather than adapting to serve the changing adult learner population. Professional development which is designed to meet the needs of all learners, does not, in fact, meet the needs of the learner outside of the mainstream American population (Ball & Pence, 2000). Without appropriate learning experiences, the challenges facing diverse learners are compounded, limiting their ability to attain the knowledge, skills, and practices needed to promote high quality programming (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010). Unfortunately, the limiting and exclusionary beliefs and practices of instructors are so ingrained that they may not be aware of the limitations and obstacles that traditional educational practices create (Merriam & Associates, 2007).

Current professional development and higher education practices need to be assessed to determine how they can better serve all learners. Challenges to non-traditional and adult learners may include unfamiliarity with the higher educational system, low literacy levels in both English and Spanish, cost of higher education, and less academic high school education than peers (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003). While the number of Latinos graduating from higher education has increased, a significant gap remains between Latinos and other populations (Santiago & Soliz, 2012). Data indicated only 21% of Latinos have an associate’s degree or higher in comparison with 57% of Asians, 44% of Caucasians, and 30% of African Americans (Santiago & Soliz).

It is vitally important to address the barriers that limit Latino adult learners’ participation in professional development at the in-service level as well as higher education degree attainment. As research indicated, completion of specialized professional
development results in higher quality programming which benefits children (Marshall, et al., 2003; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009b). If these opportunities are not presented, it may force ethnically and linguistically diverse educators to leave the field, or choose not to enter the field in the first place. A result would be reduced diversity and choice for families, impacting those families who may prefer an educator who shares their cultural and linguistic identity.

Without culturally responsive professional development, the quality of care for culturally and linguistically diverse children may not be addressed. This intent of this study is to develop recommendations for more equitable, culturally pluralistic professional development approaches for the Latina FCC educator.

**Problem Statement**

Educators in EEC programs are the key determinant in quality. Studies indicated that educators who hold specialized training or degrees in ECE provide higher quality programming for young children (Early et al., 2008; Kelley & Camilli; 2007; Marshall et al., 2003; Whitebook, 2003). In Massachusetts, 33% of the educators self-identify as Hispanic and 10% speak Spanish as their first language (Appendix F). However, despite this increasingly diverse workforce, research has yet to identify appropriately culturally responsive professional development. This study takes steps to address the limited availability of research on professional development that is responsive to the needs of non-traditional, Latina adult learners.

**Statement of Purpose**

The central research question:

- How do Latina FCC Mentors describe a professional development experience that is responsive to the needs of Latina FCC Educators?
Three secondary questions supported the central question:

- How do Latina Family Child Care Mentors describe the optimal professional development environment for Latina FCC Educators?
- What are the elements of a professional development context that meets the needs of Latina FCC Educators?
- How do Latina Mentors describe the role and responsibilities of a facilitator who is supportive of the Family Child Care Educator?

**Research Approach**

With the approval of the Lesley University Institutional Review Board, the researcher studied the perceptions of 10 Latina FCC Mentors regarding the phenomenon under investigation using a qualitative interpretive descriptive approach. Participants were selected based upon specific criteria (Appendix B) including self-identification as bilingual Latinas who speak Spanish as their first language. In-depth semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the 10 Latina FCC Educators. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. English was a second language for nine out of 10 participants. When recounting statements made by participants, word choice and tense selection may appear to be misspelled in this study. This was an intentional choice made to preserve the original speech used by participants.

Throughout the research study, coding categories were developed and refined, guided by the study’s evolving conceptual framework (Appendix G) and through discussions with peers and Latina mentors. This was supplemented by a review of the literature on adult learning, culturally responsive teaching, and Latino culture. Additional strategies included member checking through an interviewee focus group, analyst review of interviews, and peer and committee review throughout the study.
Researcher’s Assumptions

The researcher began with the following assumptions: (1) the workforce constituting licensed Family Child Care Educators in Massachusetts is increasingly diverse, requiring adult educators to look at professional development through a new lens; (2) the context, content, and facilitation of professional development demands consideration and inclusion of the culture, past experience, beliefs, and perceptions of learners; (3) appropriate facilitation of professional development requires a culturally competent instructor who adapts training to meet the needs of the students; and (4) Latina FCC Educators need a different approach to professional development than Caucasian educators. This thesis demonstrated that a culturally responsive approach would stimulate learning, be manifested in practice, and result in higher quality programming for children and families.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The rationale for this study was founded on the researcher’s goal to advocate for Latina Family Child Care Educators through the critical assessment of current professional development practices. Culturally responsive professional development practices are vitally important in order to support the EEC workforce, who, in turn, care for and educate children during the crucial early years of life. Without consideration regarding appropriate professional development for the Latina Educators, teaching remains stagnant and potentially unresponsive to the needs of children and adults. As Gay (2010) eloquently stated, “Without conscious thought, culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and those, in turn, affect how we teach and learn” (p. 9).

The concept for this study emerged from the researcher’s experience in the field of EEC. She began her career in EEC in 1987 as the director of a large childcare center. Since that time, the researcher has served as a statewide training coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC), as an adjunct faculty
member at private and public institutes of higher education, and as director of a statewide training agency supporting educators and mentors in EEC, FCC, and out-of-school time settings. Throughout her career, the researcher has been a member of multiple statewide committees, including the Massachusetts Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Workforce Development Task Force (2007); the EEC Professional Development Advisory, both on a regional and statewide level (2009- present); President of the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (2010-2011); and a member of the Boston Readiness Council Advisory Board (2012). In her work with large family childcare systems in Massachusetts, she has designed and facilitated professional development for over 900 Latina FCC Educators and 43 mentors. These professional experiences motivated the researcher to explore cultural differences in professional development needs.

While the design and facilitation of professional development experiences offered by the researcher evolved over the years, she has always adhered to a traditional constructivist training model. The design seemed to be effective with diverse audiences, usually resulting in positive evaluations. Yet, when implementing this standard design with Latina Family Child Care Mentors and Educators, she began to notice significant differences in audience engagement and ensuing application to practice. In her role, she had regular contact with these learners and was afforded the opportunity for observing students, both during trainings as well as while working. These experiences caused her to question the effectiveness of current traditional pedagogical approaches in training this population.

This journey of self-reflection and informal program evaluation continued during the course of many professional development opportunities. The researcher began to notice significant differences between predominately Caucasian and Latina learners. During the
trainings offered to Caucasian participants, she noticed the standard constructivist-training model was usually effective and well received. However, Latina participants appeared less engaged during large group activities, as evidenced by hesitancy to share viewpoints, as well as less engagement during one-on-one and small group activities. Interestingly, despite the obviously differing preferences, the training evaluations were always excellent.

The researcher began to critically reflect on the entire professional development process. This consideration included facilitation and observation of learning experiences for Latina educators by both Caucasian and Latina facilitators. The differences were both subtle and obvious. They included the setup of the learning space, greeting, and presentation of content, level of engagement, learning activities, and evaluation methods. The researcher observed the Latina trainers bringing in food and decorations including cloth tablecloths, flowers, centerpieces, and candles. The Caucasian trainers also provided refreshments, but tended to set up their space with posters, chart paper, and professional resources.

The most significant differences were in interaction styles. This began the moment that learners entered the training space. Latinas tended to greet individuals with a hug and kiss, engaging with others throughout the experience. Whereas, the Caucasian instructor was often setting up the equipment, greeting learners as a group when the training began. The Latina instructor provided one-on-one guidance throughout the session, incorporating ongoing verbal engagement and touch. While it varied depending on the instructor, Caucasian instructors tended to use whole-group and small-group interactions, often with limited individual engagement.

The presentation of content was also different. The Latina facilitator asked questions and solicited opinions frequently throughout the presentation. She seemed to tread carefully and engage others in the journey. The Caucasian instructor often used
visuals such as power point to present content to learners, incorporating learning activities to facilitate understanding. This approach generally appeared to be effective; however, at times, the content or presentation style reflected a differing perspective between the instructor and the students. On one occasion, a Caucasian trainer was providing training for Latina Mentors. She described strategies for conducting a home visit, including wearing flat shoes and comfortable clothing. She specifically mentioned that long nails were not appropriate. The researcher could feel the discomfort in the room. Shortly afterwards, a Latina Mentor stood up and vehemently stated that if Latinas did not dress nicely, not only would they not be respected, but they were not being respectful to the educators. The Mentor explained that, to her, being presentable and respected meant having her hair done, having nice nails, freshly applying her makeup, wearing high-heeled shoes, and dressing in a suit or some other form of professional and attractive attire. This was one of the researcher’s first lessons in the differences between perspectives or worldviews in this population.

Another example of observable differences occurred during a training provided in English by a state agency. During the training, the researcher noticed a group of Spanish-speaking educators sitting in one corner of the room. The Spanish-speaking participants did not -perhaps could not- verbally contribute, nor were they asked to. They received their training certificates and left. In recent years, in Massachusetts, training offered in Spanish has been limited. Therefore, in order for educators to maintain their FCC licenses, they must attend available training; regardless of whether it is in a language they can’t understand. While this is slowly being addressed and more training is becoming available in other languages, it remains a concern. Even when professional development is offered in Spanish, attendance remains low. The reasons for this have yet to be identified.
As the researcher began to explore her ideas regarding professional development, she also acknowledged the potential for bias in this study. Acknowledging her limited knowledge of Latino culture, the researcher explored the literature, continued to observe professional development experiences, maintained a research journal, and continually asked questions of Mentors and colleagues. While this learning process provided insight, it could serve as a liability if interpreted through a biased or incomplete lens, influencing research design and interpretation. To address this, the researcher disclosed and examined her background, experiences, practices, assumptions, and theoretical orientation at the beginning of the study. Moreover, to address her subjectivity and strengthen the credibility of the research, various procedural safeguards were taken, including review of coding by colleagues and discussion of findings in a participant focus group.

Past experience and the data gathered in this study enabled the researcher to explore culturally responsive professional development from the perspective of Latina FCC Mentors. These mentors provide training for Latina FCC Educators and are also, themselves, adult learners. The study served to support not only Latina FCC Educators as a growing population, it also supported the children and families they work with each day. In an effort to support Latina educators in achieving higher standards, the researcher sought to identify ways to support the Latina workforce by asking, “What are the elements of culturally responsive professional development for Latina FCC Educators?" 

**Definitions and Key Terminology**

The key terms used in this study are identified below. Defining these terms assists the reader in understanding the research. In this study, the term “Caucasian” is defined as “constituting, or characteristic of a race of humankind native to Europe, North Africa, and southwest Asia and classified according to physical features —used especially in referring to persons of European descent having usually light skin pigmentation” (“Caucasian,”
2012, para. 2) or white individuals who are not Hispanic. For the purposes of this study, “Caucasian” refers to individuals who are not Hispanic. “Latino” refers to individuals “of Hispanic origin, in particular, were those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). It should be noted that persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race” (U.S. Census Bureau). Culture is defined as “The sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next” (“Culture,” 2005, para. 1). Additional terms used in this study are described below.

1. **Culturally Responsive Teaching.** Culturally responsive teaching integrates “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2010, p. 31).

2. ** Educator.** “Any person approved by the Department [of Early Education and Care] for the regular care and education of children unrelated to the educator in a location outside the children’s own home for all or part of the day regardless of his/her level of certification” (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010a, p.12). This term includes individuals working in Family Child Care, Center-based, and before and after school settings (Out-of-School Time).

3. **Early education and care (EEC).** Licensed educators in the EEC field provide education and care for children the child’s parent works or attends school. “A ‘quality’ program is defined as one that his aligned with the developmental needs of all children” (Executive Office of Education, 2011, para 3). Programs in MA are licensed by the Department of EEC and must adhere to state regulations regarding
space, curriculum and assessment, adult to child ratio, professional development and education, program, health and safety, and family involvement requirements.

4. **Family Child Care (FCC).** “Temporary custody and care provided in a private residence during part or all of the day for no more than ten children younger than 14 years old or children younger than 16 years old if such children have special needs. FCC shall not mean an informal cooperative arrangement among neighbors or relatives, or the occasional care of children with or without compensation” (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010a, p. 13).

5. **Family Child Care Mentor.** A FCC Mentor or Coordinator is employed by a FCC System to provide support to FCC Educators who contract with that System. Mentors meet FCC System requirements often providing the following services to FCC Educator, “technical assistance and consultation to operators of family child care homes; inspection, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of family child care homes; referral of children to available family child care homes; and referral of children to available health and social services” (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010, p. 14).

6. **Family Child Care System.** “Any entity or person who, through contractual arrangement, provides to family child care homes that it has approved as members of said system, central administrative functions including, but not limited to, training of operators of family child care homes; technical assistance and consultation to operators of family child care homes; inspection, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of family child care homes; referral of children to available family child care homes; and referral of children to available health and social services, provided, however, that family child care system shall not mean a
placement agency or a child care center” (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010, p. 14).

7. **Professional development.** “Ongoing education or training designed to increase an educator's skills or knowledge or assist the educator in gaining new competencies in his or her profession or in a field closely related to his or her profession. Professional development may fulfill the annual number of hours required by regulation to maintain a license, registration or credential, and/or may result in college credit or CEUs that lead to career advancement” (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010a, p. 14).

8. **Workforce.** “Child care workers generally are classified into three different groups based on where they work: private household workers, who care for children at the children's homes; family child care providers, who care for children in the providers’ homes; and child care workers who work at child care centers, which include Head Start, Early Head Start, full-day and part-day preschool, and other early childhood programs” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012, para. 2). In Massachusetts center-based, FCC, and afterschool (Out-of-School Time) programs are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

Identification of the elements of culturally responsive professional development for Latinas in FCC is multifaceted. The process began with critical self-reflection regarding the researcher’s experience with the professional development and educators in the field of early education and care. This was followed by a review of the literature related to the phenomenon under investigation as described in Chapter Two. Subsequent chapters reveal the perspectives of the primary informants for this research, the Latina FCC Mentors.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Diverse learners merit effective and equitable pedagogical practices. Therefore, this chapter provides a review of the literature pertaining to the non-traditional, ethnically diverse adult learner, Latino values, and an analysis of the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy. Each of these categories is essential for understanding and justifying the research questions.

This intent of this study was not to communicate that individuals of a specific cultural heritage are homogeneous. The sections on common core values and ethnic identity explored the similarities and differences within the culture sharing group recognizing that an individual’s identity is shaped by many factors. Along with the data, this information will be used to develop a better understanding of the professional development needs of Latina FCC Educators.

Resources covered in this review include books, dissertations, research studies, internet resources, peer-reviewed journals, and non-scholarly periodicals. No restrictive time frame was used applied, due to the value of the historical perspective provided by seminal works. The scope of the literature review was broad, and comprised of many disciplines. Correlations and areas of contention within the literature are identified and discussed. The researcher concludes with an interpretive summary of the literature, informing the reader of how this process impacted the researcher’s understanding of the material and the resulting impact on the conceptual framework of the study.

Section One: Adult Learning Theory

The adult learning theory section of the literature review describes and critiques several significant philosophical and historical theories that apply to working with adult learners. The review describes the application of andragogy (see below), experiential learning theory, and transformational learning theories. The intent of the literature review
is to assess current theory and its relationship to the needs of diverse learners. This section concludes with the application of these theories to professional development for Latina FCC Educators.

Andragogy. The perception that adults learn differently from children is relatively new. The interest in addressing learning and education in adults resulted in the development of the andragogical principles. Andragogy is defined as “the art or science of teaching adults” (“Andragogy,” 2012, para. 1). The concept was first introduced in Germany by Alexander Kapp (1833) in which he stated self-reflection and education of the character were integral to andragogical principles (Henschke, 2010). In 1925, Rosenstock-Huessy utilized these concepts in teaching practice (Smith, 2011). Following this, Lindeman (1926a) argued that andragogy was an integral method for teaching adults. Malcolm Knowles (1970) expanded the work of Lindeman and introduced the term in the United States, clarifying the difference between adult learning and learning in childhood. Knowles stated that, in contrast to most young learners, adult learners are self-directed and autonomous (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005). Knowles identified the following andragogical principles: “Learner’s need to know, self-concept of the learner, prior experience of the learners, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn” (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, p. 149).

Andragogical principles have had a global impact on the field of adult learning. For example, these principles have been integrated with technology instruction (Isenberg, 2007) for use in a military training model (Rachal, 2002), which was later successfully implemented with diverse adult learners (Brights & Mahdi, 2010). While there has been success, there has also been ongoing evaluation of the application of andragogical principles with adult learners.
Despite wide application, many criticize Knowle’s approach. Scholars have asserted that andragogical assumptions are founded on a western male concept of individuality and power (Pratt, 1993; Tisdell, 1998). Others stated that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the principles (Jarvis, 1984). Ongoing debate has resulted in the perception that Knowle’s teaching approach is no longer used in adult educational settings (Pratt, 1993; Sandlin, 2005).

Some argue that the principles are not reflective of the increasing diversity of adult learners, while others contend that andragogical principles serve to frame adult learning in multiple ways (St. Clair, 2002). However, most agree that adaptations are needed to meet the needs of diverse adult learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 2007). While criticism of the principles of andragogy is evident in the literature, the literature overwhelmingly described andragogy as an important contribution to the field.

**Experiential Learning Theory.** Experiential learning emphasizes the construction of knowledge through direct experience, and reflection on this experience. Within this learner-centered approach, students make meaning by reflecting on lived experience, interpreting and generalizing to form mental structures, and applying this knowledge in new situations (Fenwick, 2001). Theoretical frameworks which accommodate an experiential approach include constructivist, situational, psychoanalytic, critical reflection, and complexity theories (Fenwick, 2003). This review focused on influential theories of experiential learning through a constructivist lens.

Experiential learning legitimatizes the adult student’s experience. As Lindeman (1926b) stated “experience is the adult learner’s living textbook” (p.7). The progression of experiential learning can be traced back to John Dewey. In 1938, Dewey challenged current teacher-centered educational practices by arguing learners must be actively engaged in the process, rather than passive recipients of knowledge.
Over time, a learner-centered approach became more predominant. Carl Rogers’s (1969) theory of experiential learning included personal involvement, self-initiation, evaluation by the learner, and recognition of the pervasive effects of the student on learning. He focused on providing a relevant content for the student and integrating a hands-on approach to achieve good learning results. This was in direct contrast to the traditional teacher-centered approach, in which the student is seen as a vessel to be filled with knowledge by the instructor. Knowles (1970) also recognized the value of a learner-centered approach, listing “experience” as one of his andragogical principles.

In 1984, David Kolb introduced his interpretation of experiential learning. This was founded on the work of Dewey, Piaget, and Lewin, among others (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). This Experiential Learning Module (ELM) indicates learning is a cycle which “consists of four learning modes: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE)” (Terry, 2001, p.68). Kolb felt that learning through direct experience with one’s environment did not require a teacher (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). However, just because a teacher is not required for a student to learn does not mean that there is no role for a teacher in a learner-centered classroom. Malinen (2000) stressed the role of the teacher as a guide, offering resources and support to a community of learners. According to his interpretation, learning must also include active engagement, reflection, and analytical skills, as well as decision-making and problem-solving skills.

The literature supports Kolb’s model, stating that it provides a useful framework for supporting adult learners. Sugarman (1985) conducted a review of Kolb’s model using the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) (Kolb, Rubin, & McIntyre, 1979) which measures students’ strengths and challenges. Sugarman (1985) concluded that Kolb’s model deserved consideration as a useful resource in the design of learning experiences.
Conversely, Fenwick (2003) stated that there is a lack of consideration of the role of power in Kolb’s model. Fenwick stressed that context and power must be considered in the educational design, or the approach will rely on the development of rote knowledge reflecting mainstream practices and beliefs. Another consideration in implementation of this model is continuity between educational settings. If there is a lack of continuity, the learner may lack clear understanding and subsequent knowledge may be distorted (Jarvis, 1987; Fenwick, 2003).

In conclusion, experiential adult learning theory can be a highly effective educational approach for Latina FCC Educators. The literature clearly indicated that this method helps develop active, self-aware learners (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1970; Tennant & Pogson, 1995) resulting in significant learning (Rogers & Frieberg, 1994). By design, experiential learning validates past experience. A culturally responsive experiential approach should include consideration of the culture, learning style, gender, age, educational level, experience, and ethnicity of each participant in the design and implementation of professional development experiences. This model will result in learning experiences that are more relevant for diverse learners, resulting in greater engagement, knowledge, and application in their professional lives.

**Transformational Learning Theory.** Learning involves not development of knowledge; it includes application to everyday life. It includes changing our view of ourselves, and the world in which we live. This process is not an easy one, since it encompasses an alteration of current knowledge and viewpoints, reflection on the construction of experience and meaning, and the ongoing critique of views and beliefs (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008). This process consists of consideration of frames of reference. Taylor (2005b) stated, “Frames of reference are structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and
actions” (Taylor, p. 5). There are two categories of transformational learning approaches identified in the literature: individual, including psycho-critical, psycho-developmental, and psychoanalytic; and sociocultural, including social-emancipatory; cultural-spiritual; racial-ethnic; and planetary approaches (Taylor, 2005a). These approaches will be discussed further in this section.

An individualistic approach can entail the transformation of firmly held beliefs or attitudes, or even a transformation of one’s entire perspective (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). Theorists with an individualistic approach include Jack Mezirow, Laurent Daloz, and Robert Boyd. The most widely known socio-cultural approach is Freire’s social-emancipatory view (Sheared, 1994). Tisdell’s spiritual view (1998) illustrates the connection between socially constructed positionalities of race, class, gender, and knowledge, as constructed through storytelling. Racial-ethnic approaches concentrate on the experiences of individuals of African descent and their current cultural context. The racial-ethnic theory offers little discussion on the experiences of mixed-race or Latino individuals within transformational learning theory.

Andragogy and self-directed learning provided a basis for Mezirow’s individualistic conceptualization of transformation learning theory (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007), first introduced in 1978. Mezirow’s approach, which promoted the communicative and emancipative domains of learning, at first challenged, and then overturned the focus on andragogical principles (Brookfield, 2004). Mezirow’s theory included ten steps or phases, comprised of four main components: experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action. He contended that adults exhibit two kinds of learning, instrumental and communicative. Learning involves changes to meaning structures through reflection, resulting in the alteration, development, and even transformation of schemes of meaning or perspectives (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow posited that these changes occur as a result of a
major life event that causes one to critique past experience, bringing about a new or revised interpretation (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner). Merriam (2004) reviewed multiple studies which indicated one’s cognitive development may influence an individual’s ability to experience a perspective transformation process.

Transformational learning theory has been criticized for its foundation within a Western construct of reality. Rather than spanning all cultures, it is “situated in one (i.e., Western) cultural context, thus marginalizing other global cultural contexts” (Nteane, 2011, p. 308). Additional analysis of transformational theory has indicated that cultural and historical factors were not addressed in its development (Merriam & Nteane, 2008; Clark & Wilson, 1991; Taylor, 2000). As is the case with andragogical and experiential learning models (ELM), Mezirow’s emphasis on autonomy reflects the values of dominant Western society, as expressed in the typical Caucasian, middle-class man (Taylor, 2000). Nteane (2011) suggested that transformational learning can be relevant for ethnically diverse adult learners if it is adapted to be culturally sensitive. While the author asserted that more researchers are needed on culturally sensitive transformational learning, she suggested that adaptations should be informed by the cultural values and context of the specific group or individual.

These claims are particularly relevant in relation to this study, which sought to identify learning models applicable for ethnically and linguistically diverse adult women. Unfortunately, there is limited research on the use of transformational learning theory with English Language Learners (California Adult Education, 2005). Nonetheless, transformational learning theory is widely used today with diverse learners. In a study conducted by King and Wright (2003), the researchers found that making learning personally meaningful resulted in transformational learning for participants. The primary factor in this transformation was a supportive environment.
Transformational learning theory requires consideration of the diverse adult learners’ needs in order to make instruction appropriate, relevant, and effective. Brookfield (2004) stressed the value of transformational learning theory if it included a critical reflection approach, with critical questioning techniques and critical incident activities. Daloz (1999) suggested that instructors guide learners in their journey by integrating strategies that challenge, support, and encourage creative thinking. At the same time, the use of critical questioning and strategies that single out learners may not be appropriate or comfortable for Latina FCC Educators, since it may violate an individual’s feeling of safety. Expressing one’s view or engaging someone else in critical debate is largely considered disrespectful in Latino culture. In addition, being questioned in front of a large group may be uncomfortable to learners, particularly those who are unsure of their knowledge or verbal linguistic ability. The incorporation of transformational approaches should include learning about individual and cultural preferences, while adapting pedagogical approaches based upon this information.

Summary for Section One

This section of the literature review identified gaps in the research and limitations of adult learning theory in supporting and addressing the needs of ethnically diverse learners. Additional research is needed to identify diverse adult learners’ needs, the impact of culture on learning, and appropriate pedagogical approaches. This information would not only benefit the diverse adult learner, but may stimulate research that addresses the achievement gap at all levels. Identification of culturally responsive practices and their relationship to current learning theories could have far-reaching effects on educational opportunities for diverse learners, potentially drawing individuals to this field of employment, ultimately resulting in more positive outcomes for all children in EEC settings. To understand
strategies designed to accomplish these goals, the following section of the literature review will analyze the literature on culturally responsive teaching practices.

Section Two: Educational Pedagogy for the Diverse Adult Learner

Current educational approaches are clearly not effective for diverse learners, especially in light of the ever-widening achievement gap, the high secondary school dropout rate, and the low representation of ethnically diverse students in institutes of higher education. Perhaps this is due to the lack of consideration of the diverse needs of learners in the predominant educational approach in the United States. This approach was founded on a Western construct, promoting individualistic values above all else (Merriam and Associates, 2007). Current mainstream educational approaches are founded on systems that are designed to meet the needs of Western-European Caucasian males with the assumption this approach suits all learners (Guy, 2009). In addition, traditional teaching approaches adhere to a teacher-centered pedagogy, based on direct instruction, the use of text as an educational tool, a focus on independent learning, the use of a standardized curriculum for the group, and extrinsic motivational strategies. These methods promote independence, as defined in Western values, beliefs, and perceptions, without consideration for cultural diversity (Chamberlain, 2005). It is rather disturbing that the dominant group’s perception of social reality, as manifested in educational practices, is widely accepted as “common sense” (Freire & Macedo, 1987), without regard for those who exist outside of the mainstream population.

This dominant perspective is imbedded in society without conscious knowledge (Foster, Lewis, & Onafowora, 2003), infiltrating business, education, media, and other areas. In contrast, socio-cultural approaches to education are more collectivist in nature, advocating methods that recognize the social construction of knowledge. Consideration and
implementation of alternative approaches would assist all learners, particularly those marginalized by society (Gay, 2010; Apple, 2004; Brookfield, 2001; Au, 1993).

Sociocultural learning pedagogy considers the influence of social processes on learning. This approach serves to “emphasize the interdependence of social and individual processes in the construction of knowledge” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191). Founded on the theories of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), socio-cultural theory posits that cognition is a social and cultural experience, rather than an individual one. The interactive framework integrates the historical and cultural norms of the individual in the teaching approach (Creswell, 2009), with the understanding that these experiences are socially developed. Each person’s individuality is recognized through acknowledgment of the characteristics that influence learning, including gender, social class, race, ethnicity, special needs, and geographical region (Fickel, 2004).

All learners, particularly those who are members of marginalized populations, need a learning environment that feels safe. This is facilitated by the inclusion of norms from marginalized cultures, ongoing dialogue about the role of culture in the classroom, and honoring and including experiences that are relevant to the learning process. Within this context, instructional methods are not only effective, but engaging and diverse. Recognizing that indigenous populations often adhere to collectivist values (Guy, 2009); the instructional structure should focus on the community over the individual, and should recognize and integrate cultural values in the instructional design (Boucouvalas & Lawrence, 2010).

The socio-cultural instructional design is interactive, fluid, and collaborative. An active, inquiry-based approach combines the elements of constructivism and social-cultural approaches to create a frame that honors multiple perspectives (Cole & Miyake, 2006).
This integration of socio-cultural and constructivist elements may be more effective for diverse learners than traditional educational practices (Collins & Pratt, 2010).

An equitable pedagogy involves consideration of the content of the learning experience. Content specifically designed from a Eurocentric approach may further marginalize diverse learners. Bain (2006) encouraged instructors and learners to read, analyze, evaluate, and substantiate content in the materials selected for courses. This process resulted in greater equity for all learners, rather than limiting relevancy to the mainstream adult learner population (Banks & Banks, 1995).

Socio-cultural approaches are designed to meet the needs of all students. This includes learners from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups (Banks & Banks, 2010). An equitable pedagogy is implemented through the integration of relevant and appropriate content, consideration for learners’ needs for knowledge construction, the elimination of prejudice, and a drive to empower learners (Banks, 2008). The following section of the literature review will provide a review of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. The literature on culturally responsive teaching (CRT) focused primarily on supporting diverse children. While the majority of literature addressed the use of culturally responsive teaching practices for this age group, the principles are important for informing the education of adult learners. The following section will outline culturally responsive teaching, with an application to adult learners.

The evolution of culturally responsive teaching models over the past two decades is not surprising in view of the increasingly diverse student population. The progression and application of CRT has been influenced by the work of scholars including Katherine H. Au, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Lisa Delpit, Margery B. Ginsberg, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Geneva Gay, Tamara Lucas, Luis Moll, Sonia Nieto, Ana María Villegas, and Raymond J. Wlodkowski. While most of the literature focuses on working with children, many of these
researchers have written about working with adults. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) presented a motivational framework using CRT, Villegas and Lucas (2002a) suggested approaches to support diverse learners in higher education, and Vella (2008) articulated strategies to support learners through the use of dialogical approaches. The intent of each approach is to implement a strength-based concept which respects and honors differences, rather than requiring students to adapt to fit the norm. This approach is a shift from the current practice, which adheres to a deficit model of “blaming the victims” (Gay, 2010, p. ix) or learners for failure to learn, to a cultural difference model, which empowers and supports the learner. Culturally responsive teaching requires educators to change from “deficit-oriented to affirming attitudes toward diverse students” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p.65).

CRT has its roots in constructivist teaching and learning methods. Constructivist teaching methods stipulate that learning is not only active, but that content is adapted so that it is relevant for the diverse learner (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b). This method creates a common culture within the educational setting that enhances meaning for all learners, recognizing the influence of power dynamics when dominant cultural materials and teaching strategies are used. Use of CRT relates directly to andragogical principles regarding the influence of past experiences on learning. With CRT, instructors recognize that each learner comes to the educational setting with a wealth of knowledge (Gay, 2010) informed by their culture, experiences, norms, values, ideas, and beliefs. Informed by life experience, learners develop individual skills and performance preferences. The CRT instructor integrates this knowledge in the learning design and educational process (Gay, 2000).

The framework for CRT includes a safe and respectful learning environment, relationship-based approaches, relevance, and choice (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1994; Gay,
Gay (2002) posited that this approach includes incorporation of multicultural content, resources, and materials; the development of learning communities, and aligning the teaching approach with the learning and communication preferences of students. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) shared a motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching which includes four intersecting conditions “that teachers and learners work together to create and enhance, including: 1) establish inclusion, 2) develop attitude, 3) enhance meaning, 4) engender competence” (p. 34-35). This approach is guided by norms, procedures, and practices, and established collaboratively between students and the instructor. This serves to promote respect, connection, engagement, inclusion of the learners’ perspectives and values, and encourages an application to life and work (Gay, 2010). The benefits of CRT are well articulated in the literature. As Irvine (2003) stated, a culturally responsive approach maximizes education for racially and ethnically diverse learners. Other researchers reported an increase in educational achievement with the application of culturally compatible pedagogy, as well as an increase in personal empowerment, affirmation, and motivation (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). A learner-centered approach recognizing the strengths of diverse students serves to counteract prior negative experiences (Gay).

Conversely, some scholars voice the limitations of CRT. Challenges include the need for specialized teacher education, the effect is not clearly evident, and there is a need for instructors to change long held views and practices. Educating prospective teachers in culturally responsive practices has been challenging. Castagno and Bayboy (2008) stated that culturally responsive pedagogy has little impact on teaching practices. Without broad application, the effects are minimal. In another study of 12 diverse students, researchers found that culturally responsive practices need to address and recognize individual identities, and teachers need to be more culturally connected to students, as well as to the
The expression of the broad concepts of developing a knowledge base regarding cultural diversity, using this knowledge in the selection of relevant educational content and pedagogy, demonstrating care towards learners and developing learning communities, and fostering responsive communication practices will be uniquely different to each group of learners (Gay, 2002). Educating teachers of children and adults to facilitate a culturally responsive approach is challenging, and the absence of a system wide approach remains a concern. Both of these challenges are reviewed later in this section.

**The Culturally Responsive Instructor.** The primary catalyst in CRT is an affirming and respectful instructor who is aware of and integrates each student’s needs. The instructor is an advocate, resource, and model for the learner, as well as the community (Eggers-Piérola, 2008), believing that all students are capable of learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In order for instructors to facilitate this methodology, they must cultivate an understanding of and respect for the different needs, interests, and characteristics of their students, using this information in a holistic pedagogical design (Fickel, 2004; Villegas & Lucas; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). The integration of these factors has been demonstrated to increase motivation and achievement for diverse learners (Irvine, 2003; Au & Kawakami, 1994; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

Integrating these factors into instructor is neither automatic nor easy, and adopting these approaches may require cultural development on the part of the instructor. Each instructor is at a different stage in his or her own cultural development. This growth
process requires time and effort, built upon cultural knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity.

Four important terms when discussing instructor development are:

- **Cultural knowledge.** “the process of seeking and obtaining a sound educational foundation about diverse cultural and ethnic groups” (Campinha-Bacote, 2002, p. 182).

- **Cultural awareness.** “Involves the self-examination and in-depth exploration of one’s own cultural and professional background. This process involves the recognition of one’s own biases, prejudices, and assumptions about individuals who are different” (Campinha-Bacote, 2002, p. 182).

- **Cultural sensitivity.** Comprised of understanding that “differences as well as similarities exist” (Texas Department of Public Health, 1997, p. 1) between cultures, without assigning judgment.

- **Cultural competency.** Builds upon each of the above levels, including an internal focus on one’s own culture, beliefs, and experiences. Development of this competency involves instructor’s using cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity in the learning experience. Attention should be paid specifically to “the ethnic groups’ values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns” of individuals (Gay, 2002, p.107).

The central element of cultural competence is critical self-analysis. This influences a person’s perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors (Dewey, 1933; Derman-Sparks & Brunson-Phillips, 1997; Rhodes, 2010). Brookfield (2001) suggested four lenses for self-reflection: analysis of experiences as an instructor and learner, consideration of perceptions about pedagogy, discussions with personal and professional peers, and correlation with theoretical literature.
A self-reflective process is often a transformational one, resulting in changes in teaching practices. The result of self-analysis is often a realization that what was once considered effective practice is not suitable for all learners, and may, in fact, promote disparity both in and out of the classroom (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b). This realization hopefully results in an increased understanding and compassion for diverse learners (Katz, 2009) and more effective teaching approaches.

The process of developing cultural competency is neither easy or a quick. Dewey (1933) asserted that reflective action is necessary, but can be a painful and arduous process. A study of 24 pre-service teachers who were being trained in culturally responsive pedagogy found that it was difficult for them to change their attitudes and teaching practices, particularly when the instructor had limited experience with diverse individuals (Barnes, 2006); culturally responsive education has little effect on teaching practice without a system wide approach (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). However, even if implemented by a limited number of instructors, Gardiner (2005) found that cultural competency and sensitivity reduces ethnocentric thinking, positively impacting diverse learners. The realization that cultural competency is imperative spans disciplines. As stated in multicultural guidelines established for the mental health field, awareness of one’s own attitudes and beliefs, the exploration and implementation of relevant approaches, and cultural sensitivity are necessary to support diversity in research and educational practices (Constantine & Sue, 2005).

Without cultural competency, educational practices and marginalization of diverse populations will continue. In a review and synthesis of materials related to diversity, it was found that it was imperative for teachers to have knowledge about and an understanding of diverse cultures. Otherwise, they would continue to promote dominant, individual approaches to teaching, instead of the collectivist approach preferred by diverse learners.
CULTURALLY RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LATINAS IN FAMILY CHILD CARE

(Banks et al., 2001). A lack of cultural congruity impacts the learner negatively in numerous ways, including decreased self-confidence, achievement, and perseverance in the educational system. As the literature suggested, culturally competent instructors and the integration of relevant pedagogical approaches will result in greater knowledge and higher retention rates in schools (Ball, 2004) promoting a more appropriate educational experience for the diverse learner (Hollins, 1999).

The literature clearly demonstrated that educators who are cultural competent have affirming views of diverse learners, a sense of responsibility for adapting practices to be more equitable, and the attitude that diverse students can succeed when instructional practices are designed to build upon what students already know (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b).

**A Culturally Responsive Educational Environment.** The culturally responsive environment is designed to help students feel comfortable and confident in their abilities. In order to establish this environment, the culturally responsive instructor, in partnership with learners, establishes norms, procedures, and frameworks that communicate safety, trust, and respect (Yosso, 2006). An inviting, safe, and supportive environment was identified as vital for diverse students in a study that included 16 middle school teachers from seven districts in Florida (Allison & Rehm, 2007). Without a feeling of safety, learners feel threatened and will hesitate to engage in the educational experience (Boaler, 2002). Recognizing the importance of safety and trust, the culturally responsive instructor considers and integrates the needs, desires, goals, and capacities of the learners in the learning experience, demonstrating caring and building learning communities (Gay, 2002).

A culturally responsive learning experience values relationships by integrating collaboration and community building into the learning process. Interviews with 13 urban teachers working with minority populations from seven cities in the United States revealed
that relationships, supportive learning communities, and culturally and ethnically congruent communication processes served to promote learning (Brown, 2004). Methods that encourage cooperation rather than competition are considered more culturally responsive (Banks, 2008), particularly among Latino students who prefer cooperative learning within an educational environment that cultivates a sense of community (Padrón, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002). The learning environment that is founded on safety, trust, relationships, and collaboration serves to encourage the development of a community of students who affirm and respect each other (Gay, 2002). This increases motivation (Gay, 2000) and promotes higher achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995b).

**A Culturally Responsive Educational Process.** The culturally responsive learning event is multidimensional and informed by the experiences of the diverse learner. It is evident in the literature that the content and context of the educational experience should reflect the learner’s culture and experience (Irvine, 2003; Gay, 2002; Bennett, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Use of this approach has been shown to positively impact learning and motivation for the diverse learner (Gay, 2002; Caffarella, 2002; Freire & Macedo, 1987).

The CRT framework is interactive, flexible, and engaging. The switch from a traditional teacher-centered approach, which has been shown to be ineffective for diverse students, to a learning-centered approach has been show to result in authentic learning (Fink, 2003; Teemant, 2005). To facilitate changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes, Fink suggested creating learning experiences that engage students, including the use of small groups, integrating assessment practices as part of the educational process, and service learning to encourage skill development. This approach involved intentionality in building connections between content, materials, methods, and the cultural backgrounds of learners (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).
Learning experiences within a cultural responsive pedagogy include the development of a community of learners. Latino students tend to prefer a collective or collaborative approach, which gives attention to both the group and the individual. Such a learning environment is founded on strong relationships between instructors and learners, and an emphasis on group involvement (Merriam & Associates, 2007). Collaborative approaches have been demonstrated to benefit all students, not just diverse learners (Allison, 2007).

Within this community, the instructor offers challenging experiences, which complement student’s learning styles and communication preferences (Jackson, 1994). Successful instructors also include dialogue and conversation throughout the educational experience (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b; Bierema, 2008). However, it should be noted that the preferred methods of discourse vary by culture.

The instructor’s expectations for interactions and the learner’s communication preferences influence students’ engagement in the learning experience. Gay (2010) indicated that communication preferences differ by culture. In a seminal study conducted by Hall in 1976, cultural groups were analyzed and categorized into high and low context cultures. Many Latinos fell into the “high context” category, whereas Caucasians were considered members of a “low context” group (Rosado, 2005, para 6; Hall, 1976). Many “high context” Latinos were identified as having a strong group identity and support network, and clear societal distinctions between insiders and outsiders. Their behavior was regulated by cultural norms, and had a tendency to be bureaucratic. Conversely, “low context” characteristics included a weaker group identity, an identity gained and supported by individual efforts and accomplishments, weaker distinctions between insiders and outsiders, greater personal freedom, and more individual choice. While individuals may
have different levels of acculturation in each category, recognition of communication preferences impacts interactions (Rosado).

Communication preferences and differences directly impact learners and the instructional process. There are often unstated rules for interaction, which are influenced by cultural expectations. Differences that Rosado (2005) identified between Latino and Eurocentric cultures included the use and significance of beckoning and finger pointing, turn-taking, eye contact, polychromic and monochromic task preferences, proxemics (interpersonal distance), and narrative styles.

It is important for instructors to learn about interaction preferences, since traditional educational approaches may be in conflict with some learners’ preferences. For example, a Caucasian approach tends to be didactic, involving one student at a time, whereas the instructors expect learners to engage and question them while speaking. Communication preferences for Latinos include establishing personal connections with others, beginning conversations with polite inquiries about the wellbeing of the student and their family, and collaborating with others to solve problems (Gay, 2010). An understanding of interaction preferences for learners and self-reflection on one’s own preferences are important steps in facilitating a culturally responsive learning experience.

The goal of CRT is to empower ethnically diverse students. Central to this empowerment is use of ethnically relevant curriculum content. The materials should be relevant and connected to the lives and experiences of learners (Gay, 2010). Instructors must consider the power of content, which can empower or disempower learners. Racially biased instructional materials promote messages that diminish motivation, performance, and persistence (Gay). While the research in this area is limited, there are some studies demonstrating that even minimal culturally relevant content improves student achievement (Irvine, 2003; Gay, 2002; Bennett, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Therefore, it is
imperative for culturally responsive teachers to critically assess materials and resources provided to students, and be clear on the messages that these materials convey (Gay, 2002; Chamberlain, 2005).

Another area deserving of criticism within the educational process is assessment procedures. Culturally responsive approaches center on embedding evaluation throughout the learning process, instead of offering it only at the end. This can be achieved both through individual assessment and feedback from the instructor, as well as including multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge through a variety of assessment approaches (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b; Bierema, 2008). The presence of continuity of content, materials, and facilitation and evaluation methods for the diverse learner correlates positively with improvements throughout the learning process (Irvine, 2003). The result is a culturally congruent learning experience that is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformational, and emancipatory (Teel & Obidah, 2008).

**Summary for Section Two**

There is a vital need for the field of adult education to address the disparity between current practice and the demonstrated needs of diverse learners. In this section of the literature review, socio-cultural approaches, specifically culturally responsive pedagogy, have been demonstrated to address these needs among learners, closing the gap between what is provided via traditional pedagogy, and diverse learner’s needs. An increase in cross-cultural knowledge would support learners of all ages in various educational settings, serving to acknowledge ethnicity involves differences not deficiencies.

Instructional approaches responsive to the needs of diverse learners acknowledge and integrate cultural differences and individual learner preferences. An equitable teaching approach spans disciples and cultures, resulting in learners who are motivated within a safe,
inclusive, and respectful learning environment (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). As indicated in the literature, the benefits of culturally responsive approaches are many. It is comprehensive, empowering, and transformational, serving to build bridges of relevance, affirmation, and meaning (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Gay, 2010). It recognizes that “norms, social practices, ideologies, language, and behaviors” are the cultural capital the learner brings to the learning experience (Howard, 2003, p. 197), rather than deficits to be overcome. Yet, without broad changes in practice and perspective, current approaches will continue to lower the self-esteem of non-traditional students and alienate them from learning (Phuntsog, 1999). The goal of enabling higher achievement in all students can be accomplished only by recognizing and honoring the importance of ethnicity and race through equitable and heterogeneous teaching practices. Culturally responsive principles and practices are not only relevant in formal education settings, but also highly relevant for adult learners in a professional development context.

Section Three: An Exploration of Latino Values

The demographic landscape of the United States has changed dramatically over the past century. A significant increase in linguistically and culturally diverse groups has impacted education, business, media, and society. Latinos constitute the largest ethnic group in the United States, having emigrated from more than 20 Latin American countries (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). According to current census data, there are 50.5 million Latinos in the United States, comprising 16.3% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b). The population growth in Latino citizens accounts for more than half of the nation’s total growth since 2000; this population expanding at four times the rate of the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b).

Latino ethnicity, like all American cultures, includes individuals from different countries, contexts, and backgrounds. Some were born in the United States as second or
third generation citizens, while others immigrated after being born in various Latin
American countries. Historically, many Latinos who were neither born in the United States
nor at any point living in the United States, still became U.S. citizens. In 1848, the signing
of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo resulted in the transfer of more than half of Mexico’s
territory to the United States. Latinos living in this area became American citizens without
moving from their homeland. In 1917, the Jones Act granted U.S. territory status to Puerto
Rico, entitling residents to American citizenship (Arana, 2001).

Culture is fluid and ever changing, evolving in response to experiences and
changing with each generation (Clifford, 1986; Britzman, 1991; Spindler & Spindler,
1990). Within this complex fluidity, it can be challenging to understand the overarching
culture of any group, and what the relationship is to individuals in that group. Racial and
ethnic labels have evolved in an attempt to understand oneself and others in the context of
culturally-connected groups around the world (Stubblefield, 1995).

**Ethnicity and Terminology.** It is evident, both in this study and in the literature,
there is an ongoing debate over which, if either, ethnic label is appropriate: “Latino” or
“Hispanic.” Ethnic labels are used to classify individuals into groups sharing a culture or
language (Gomez & Gomez, 2003). The label “Hispanic” or “Latino” is used to group
together individuals who originated from at least 20 different countries.

The term “Latino” signifies individuals living in the United States whose origins are
traceable to the Spanish-speaking regions of Latin America, including the Caribbean,
Mexico, and Central and South America (Flores, 2000). “Hispanic” is the American
version of the term “Hispania,” which was often used in a derogatory sense to describe the
physical appearance of race of individuals who were implied to have a connection to
ancient Spain (Fears, 2003). Some experts of Latin American descent argue that the
definition of “Hispanic” is the same as “Latino” (Rodriquez, 1997), and that the terms can be used interchangeably.

The term “Hispanic” was first adopted by the United States government in the early 1970’s and was included in the national census in 1980 (Rodriguez, 1997). In 2000, the United States Census Bureau added the term “Latino.” Either term is officially considered an ethnic, as opposed to a racial, label (Arana, 2001). Others argue that this labeling corresponds to geographical or political entities, rather than ethnicity (Cruz, 2011), or believe that the word “Hispanic” a government imposed label that was not chosen by the people it refers to (Schuessler, 2011). Regardless of the ongoing debate regarding the use of these and other racial and ethical terms in the United States, individuals continue to be classified. More nuanced labels of classifications appear in the 2010 census, when Hispanics or Latinos were for the first time officially able to self-identify as Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and South or Central American, as well as other Spanish-influenced cultures (U.S. Census, 2011).

The use of ethnic labels has both negative and positive effects. Labeling may serve to further marginalize Latinos as “others.” A participants in a study conducted by Malott (2009), stated she felt that, “I’m not Chicano. I’m not American. But I am this, these two. I feel like I’m two people” (Malott, 2009, p. 183). Another concern is that labeling may stereotype individuals within a cultural group. This is evident in movies and television in which Latinos are primarily portrayed as drug dealers, gang members, and radically impoverished workers (Sánchez Prado, 2011). These labels and images impact how people within a given cultural group understand themselves, how outsiders understand them, and how these two groups relate to one another (Malott).

A positive consequence of ethnic labeling has been recognition of the increasing economic and political power of Latinos. Latinos have become a target market for
marketers and businesses (Sánchez Prado, 2011). Group recognition has forged a sense of unity, evident in websites, on television shows, and at educational and public events focused on Latinos. Some of these include events include the Latin Billboard Music Awards, American Latino T.V. in New York, BostonLatino.TV, the Latino Caucus for Public Health, Fox News Latino, MSN Latino, and the 2011 NCLR Alma Awards sponsored by NBC. A national organization, The National Council for La Raza (NCLR), serves to advocate for Latinos stating that “NCLR serves to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans” (National Council of La Raza, 2010, para 1). Individually chosen ethnic labels are considered personally meaningful and convey shared values and beliefs to others (Malott, 2009).

Labeling an ethnic group has the possibility for negative effects. However, an inclusive and sensitive approach, as suggested by Schuessler (2011), may result in benefits for the group. Classification of Latinos and Hispanics as cultural groups remain complicated. As explained above, labeling may result in recognition as a valuable and distinct group within American society. However, in practice, labeling often results in increased marginalization, a lack of awareness of individuality and differences within groups, and negative stereotypes.

For this research study, participants were asked if they preferred “Hispanic,” “Latino/a,” or “Spanish speaking.” Participants overwhelmingly suggested the use of Latina. However, in addition to self-identifying in this way, they clearly articulated their need to be respected as individuals within Latino/a culture. The researcher acknowledges that “Latina” does not mean a single identity, but a multiple set of personalities, values, languages, and ethnicities that are linked by a common history (Sanchez Prado, 2011).

For this study, the researcher elected to use the term “Latino” when referring to both genders and “Latina” for the female population. While acknowledging a limited
understanding of Latino culture, the researcher attempted to convey a comprehensive picture of the participants through the literature review and research methodology.

**Ethnic Identity and Core Values.** An understanding of ethnic identity is imperative for culturally responsive educational practices. Rather than acknowledging and validating diverse ethnic identities, educational practice suggests that all students adopt a mainstream American cultural identity. Yet, Gándura and Contreras (2009) contended that the forced Americanization of students is detrimental for diverse learners and counterproductive for educational achievement. With Latinos as the nation’s fastest growing ethnic minority group, awareness of the relationship between the validation of one’s ethnic identity and educational attainment is of vital importance within educational and societal contexts.

There are multiple definitions of ethnic identity. Employing a socio-cultural lens, identity includes the development of a sense of self, as well as a social identity based upon group membership (Ek, 2009). The formation of identity often begins during adolescence and continually evolves throughout life, shaped by interactions with others who have a shared “language, values, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences” (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009, p. vii). Generational and immigrant status, as well as ideology, education, class, and religion, also influence identity development and adaptation (Massey & Sanchez, 2007; MacCorquodale, 1993; Martinelli, 1993).

The evolution of one’s identity is influenced by life experiences. The literature indicated that upon immigration, Latinos first identify themselves by country of origin (Bean & Tienda, 1987), then, in response to marginalization, discrimination, and labeling, individuals begin to form a Pan-Latino identity (Oboler, 1995). As an individual becomes more acculturated into American society, certain core values may be lost or compromised in a response to fit in. Rather than advising Latinos to change in order to achieve equality,
the literature recommended that American society recognize and value similarities and differences among the diverse cultures present in this country (Ek, 2009; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2008).

Ethnic identity is linked to one’s values. Values provide a cultural structure that helps an individual form an ethnic identity (Ek, 2009). Values consist of a unique set of cultural tenets that shape behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and overall worldview (Añez, L.M., Silva, Paris, & Bedregal, 2008; Sawer, 2000; The Workgroup on Adapting Latino Services, 2008). Therefore, it is important for an instructor to gain knowledge in order to validate each student’s ethnic identity and values. It remains to be a delicate balance between ignoring the common values within distinct cultures and over-applying these values to all group members in a way that denies individual differences and assumes excessive group homogeneity.

The controversy over core values common to Latinos appears to be intensifying, in part due to the continued growth of the Latino population in the United States. Most of the literature reviewed asserted that there are common core values that are shared within the larger Latino culture, to varying degrees. For example, in a study of immigrant mothers raising children in the United States, Latina participants shared a colonial past, a common language base, and similarities in culture and values (Quinones-May & Dempsey, 2005). In contrast, Schuessler (2011) asserted that while individuals may self-identify as Latino Americans, they come from very different cultural, linguistic, religious and political backgrounds. These researchers would agree that there are some commonalities within the Latino community that support a unified cultural expression, while at the same time maintaining that there is tremendous individual diversity (Schuessler).

Others caution that a perception of cultural uniformity overlooks the variety of perceptions and values evident within the Latin American nations. These differences
include ethnicity, race, history level of adaptation to American culture, language, socio-economic status, religion, settled or immigrant status, culture, religion, and cuisine (Suarez, 2005). Many cultural elements in one Latin American country are non-existent in another, thereby nullifying the concept of collective Latino American values (Ek, 2009). Identity is formed through social and cultural experiences, in turn; behavior is also influenced by the immediate environment (Nasir & Cooks, 2009). Once again, it is important to remember that culture is complex and that each person within a culture is also an individual (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2008). Añez and Associates (2008) reiterate that Latinos are a heterogeneous population that has become increasingly diverse with each generation.

In light of this, the literature contained studies spanning numerous disciplines that provided recommendations on how to empower Latinos, as opposed to excessively stereotype and compartmentalize them. The challenge of this study was to identify, reflect upon, and integrate common core values in the professional development experience, while not denying the individual differences of subgroups and participants. Once any possible common core values for Latinos have been identified, participants can reflect on the extent to which they do or do not represent their own personal identity.

**Shared Values.** According to the Latino/a Values Scale, the following values were identified as reflective of Latino culture: “cariño (affection), collectivism and interdependence, confianza (trust), cultural pride, dignidad (dignity), espiritismo (spiritualism) and fatalismo (fatalism), familismo (familism), hembrismo and maianismo (female gender role), personalismo (personalism), respeto (respect), and simpatía (congeniality)” (Kim, Soliz, Orellana, & Alamilla, 2009, p. 76). In relation to early childhood education, Eggers-Piérola (2008) highlights four major values including “familia (family), pertenencia (belonging), educación (moral, social, and academic education) and compromiso (commitment)” (p. 7). Souto-Manning (2009) identified the following
common core values for Latino children: interdependence, familism, respect, and past orientation, addressing both individual and collective identity. For the purposes of this study with Latina adult learners, this review will explore the broad categories of family, respect, relationships, and collectivism as they may pertain to professional development experiences.

**Familismo.** In the Latino culture, family is considered a priority over all else. This value is grounded in maintaining close relationships with nuclear family, extended family, and close friends (Sawer, 2000). This promotes interdependence, trustworthiness, and responsibility for others. In each relationship, Latinos cultivate *confianza* or “mutual trust” (McLaughlin & Bryan, 2003, p. 292).

The family is responsible for the moral education of its children. The family teaches children to be polite, respectful, and to learn traditions in order to become responsible members of society. Celebrations and rituals are viewed as educational experiences for children. These experiences provide an opportunity for parents to teach children to be respectful and polite, forming strong relationships with family and within the community (Eggers-Piérola, 2008). The academic education of children is considered to be the responsibility of the school system often resulting in a hesitancy to become involved in the academic education of children, perhaps viewing involvement as a lack of respect for the teacher’s role (Eggers-Piérola).

**Respeto.** This value promotes deference to authority both within the family -women to men, children to parents- and to elders and authority figures in the community (Dana, 1993). An essential parental responsibility is teaching children to be respectful within the family and community (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Souto-Manning, 2009). Respect restricts the sharing of opinions or the expression of disagreement (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Souto-Manning, 2009; Suarez, 2005). This, in turn, results in many Latinos feeling
uncomfortable when they are questioned by authority figures since Latino individuals generally do not wish to show disrespect or stand out from others (Sawer, 2000).

**Personalismo.** *Personalismo* is valuing and building warm and friendly interpersonal relationships (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). It refers to “a style of communication that facilitates the development and maintenance of warm and friendly exchanges with a preference for relationships with individuals rather than with institutions” (Añez, Silva, Paris, & Begregal, 2008, p. 156). Within these relationships, one forms a group identity or *pertenencia*. Overlapping with respect, this involves being kind and polite within any situation (Carteret, 2011). A relational or collectivist focus prioritizes interdependence and valuing others. This is evident in education in which peer learning is preferred and valued, as opposed to individual achievement (Eggers-Piérola, 2008). A relationship-based approach involves respecting, trusting, appreciating, sharing, helping and supporting others. This, in turn, fosters a group identity founded on the development of those interpersonal relationships (Eggers-Piérola).

Socialization and interactions are important to Latinos. Caring about others includes the dimensions of the heart or *corazon*, *sensilidata* or sensitivity, *afecto* or warmth and demonstrativeness, *dignidad* or dignity, and *respeto* or respect (Rivera & Rogers-Atkinson, 1997). Latinos strive to maintain strong, caring relationships, often greeting others with a kiss and a hug. This may be followed by an inquiry about one’s family. In the educational setting, participants often share stories, which assists in relating past experiences to new content (Gay, 2010). Interaction style may be loud and rapid, with use of lots of gestures and body language (Noble & LaCasa, 1991; Rodriguez, 1995; Sanjur, 1995). Depending on who one is interacting with, the language will either be informal or formal.
The priority given to social interactions is evident within the educational setting (Trumbull, 2011). Latino adult learners may blend interpersonal conversation with academic talk. For example, a Latino student may share a personal experience that may not be clearly related to the content of the course. Knowledge of the importance of unification of personal and professional lives is important for an instructor. Using this awareness to inform the professional development experience may result in more small-group engagement, with appropriate facilitation to avoid too much off-topic discussion.

**Colectivismo.** Within Latino culture there is an emphasis on relationships and an obligation to group and community interests before personal interests (Marin & Triandis, 1985; Eggers-Piérola, 2008). In a global study, Latin American countries were found to be collectivist in nature (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Mincov, 2010). This obligation to the group begins with family, which includes immediate, and extended family, as well as close friends. This collectivist orientation extends to others within the community, and benefits each individual within the group (Martinelli, 1993). When making decisions, individuals often consult family members rather than acting independently (Noble & LaCasa, 1991; Rodriguez, 1995; Sanjur, 1995). The focus on mutual dependence influences one’s identity and behavior, impacting child-rearing and interactions at work, school, and other areas of one’s life (Gonzalez-Mena, 1997).

**The Spanish Language.** The Spanish language is an important part of Latino culture. It transmits culture to the next generation, providing a continuity of values and symbolic interpretation. Children learn about their culture through oral history, traditions, and Spanish literature (Quinones-Mayo & Dempsey, 2005). There is tremendous variation within the Spanish language, with dialects and definitions varying by country (Mezzich, 1996). Nonetheless, even though Spanish is neither universal nor uniform (Ek, 2009), it is
still the most widely spoken language among Latinos, with a recent increase in Portuguese and indigenous languages within this population (Sánchez Prado, 2011).

**Contrasting Mainstream American Culture and Latino Culture.** The literature clearly articulated differences between mainstream American and Latino values. Latino culture is collectivist in nature, with a focus the needs of the group rather than the individual (Eggers-Piérola, 2008; Gonzalez-Mena, 1997; Hofstede, 1997; Triandis, 1995). In contrast, mainstream American culture espouses an individualistic approach focused on independence and individual needs (Kriegel, 1978). Yet, Eggers-Piérola (2008) stated that values privileging both groups and individuals can co-exist within both individuals and cultures.

Another value that varies both between and within cultures is the concept of time. According to Carteret (2011), Latinos view the typical American as excessively time and task oriented, appearing detached, hurried, and aloof. This is supported in Hall’s (1976) work in which Caucasian Americans focus on the future, demonstrated by constantly planning ahead. In contrast, Latinos consider time a “window.” While mainstream Americans are busy, rushed, and strongly influenced by time, Latinos are more tolerant of taking time; they are focused on the present, and are not usually concerned when they show up late. Latinos are known to be more accepting of chaos, not expecting an orderly process. In the midst of chaos and perhaps, conflict, Latinos value self-control, controlarse, and find the ability to withstand stress, arguantarse, commendable. For example, if an event is listed as taking place from 2:00-4:00, Latinos may assume that they can arrive at any point during that time frame, rather than being there by 2:00. Events scheduled by Latinos do not usually end at a set time, even when articulated in a formal invitation (Souto-Manning, 2009). Events and tasks take as much time as is necessary, and timetables are viewed as unduly regimented.
Another difference between American and Latino culture is the attitude towards change. Latinos value stability, continuity, and harmony. The literature indicated that Latinos believe that change is strongly influenced by fate and the “course of fate cannot be changed and that life events are beyond one’s control” (Abraido-Lanza, et al., 2007, p. 153).

Additional variations between these two cultures include the purposes of employment or work. In traditional American culture, the goal is to obtain the American dream by becoming wealthy. In Latino culture, while the American dream may be a goal, wealth is to be shared, rather than for individual consumption. Further, the Latino culture emphasizes living in the present, rather than planning for the future (Sawer, 2000).

Summary for Section Three

Common core values within the Latino culture are well-articulated in the literature. The overarching common core Latino values include: *familismo, respeto, personalismo,* and *colectivismo.* These values were confirmed in the researcher’s personal anecdotal experience with Latina mentors and educators. As stated in the research, Latin Americans are collectivist in nature, which affects the manner in which they address ambiguity and uncertainty, including conflict. This further impacts their relationship with authority, and relationships between the individual and the group (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). These characteristics were evident in the researcher’s interactions within her agency; at the same time, the level of adherence to these values varies from individual to individual. Every culture is composed of individuals espousing group values to varying degrees and intensity.

The researcher sought to further understand Latino culture by interacting directly with Latina mentors and educators, as well as learning about the value system. This is imperative, since cultural value systems influence one’s actions, attitudes, beliefs, lifestyles, and social patterns within society (Quinones-Mayo & Dempsey, 2005). Understanding, in
turn, builds an awareness of the values central to one’s own culture, increasing sensitivity towards and respect for differences in other cultures.

Summary of the Literature Review

Adult learning is a lifelong process. A commonly held belief is that if educators implement “good teaching practices,” students will learn (Gay, 2010). If not, the blame lies with the learner. This misconception is articulated in the following statement “Good teachers anywhere are good teachers everywhere” (Gay, 2010, p. 23). Researchers asked over 1,000 educators in the United States about their knowledge, expertise, and educational support regarding diversity (Fran kenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Findings indicated teachers received little preparation for working with diverse learners which the researchers indicated was imperative for supporting diverse students. This research clearly articulated the need to address the education of teachers on the current use of Western perspectives in educational practices and the consideration of alternate approaches designed to meet the needs of all learners (Merriam & Associates, 2007).

With evidence clearly demonstrating that current pedagogy is not effective, alternative approaches are necessary. These culturally responsive approaches must consider the socio-cultural context of the learners and how this shapes learning (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Increasing cross-cultural knowledge and cultural congruity in adult educational practices, particularly in institutes of higher education (Rendón, 2006) should result in validation and affirmation. Use of culturally relevant practice, a variety of teaching methods and assessment will result in transformation and feelings of empowerment (Gay, 2010). Perhaps critical analysis of educational practices will result in greater respect for diversity and lead to culturally relevant and congruent practices.
Change is needed both federally and locally to support the early education and care workforce in developing the knowledge and skills to offer high quality programming (Washington, 2008). This includes changing from adult educational practices that reflect values and systems of power that maintain the status quo (Johnson-Bailey, 2002) to services which recognize, respect, and include the needs of all learners.
Chapter Three: Research and Methodology

The central research question guiding this study was, “What are the elements of a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina Family Child Care Educators?” To better understand the phenomenon, three secondary questions were also addressed in the study:

1. What is the optimal professional development environment for Latina FCC Educators?
2. What aspects of the content are relevant for Latina FCC Educators?
3. What are the roles and responsibilities of the facilitator in a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina FCC Educators?

Chapter Three provides a comprehensive overview of the research process implemented in this study to address the overarching research question. The chapter begins with restating the purpose of the study, and includes: (a) the rationale for the research approach, (b) a description of the research sample, (c) a summary of the information required to answer the research questions, (d) an overview of the selected research design, (e) data collection methodology, (f) analysis and synthesis of data, (g) ethical considerations, (h) issues of trustworthiness, and (i) limitations of the study. It closes with a summary of the research and methodological approach.

Research Methodology

Rationale for Research Design. The researcher chose a qualitative interpretive description research approach for this study. The selection of methods was based upon the researcher’s worldview and personal experiences, as well as the research problem and the audience for whom the report was intended (Creswell, 2008.) Considerations in the choice of an appropriate research methodology included the desire for a process that would encourage self-reflection on established knowledge, resources, and research objectives.
This methodology needed to accommodate the quantity and depth of information required to meaningfully respond to the nuanced and multifaceted research questions.

Qualitative interpretive description approaches focus on gaining knowledge about the phenomenon under study, with implications for practical application. Sally Thorne developed the original interpretive description methodology in 1991, in order to provide an alternative to conventional methodological approaches in the health care field (Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997). Thorne (2008) described interpretive description as “a qualitative research approach that requires an integrity of purpose deriving from two sources: (1) an actual practice goal, and (2) an understanding of what we do and don’t know on the basis of the available empirical evidence” (p. 35).

Within a qualitative frame, interpretive description allows the researcher the flexibility to incorporate distinct (rather than traditional) methodological approaches that best serve to answer the research questions (Hunt, 2011; Thorne, Kirkham, and O’Flynn-Magee, 2004). Data analysis follows an inductive approach in which the researcher examines data critically and draws meaning from this data. This process is similar to that of constant comparative analysis used in grounded theory methodology. However, in interpretive description, research results in recommendations for application to practice (Thorne, 2008).

Since its inception, the interpretive description approach has been used in multiple disciplines as a creative approach to research (Thorne, 2008) including philosophy (Cole, 2010), physical science (Miramontes, 2009), and education (Rogers-Senuta, 2000). Methodological choices should promote understanding, exploration of multiple participant meanings, and the consideration of the social and historical construction of knowledge, resulting in potential theory generation (Creswell, 2009). The researcher ascertains that the
use of interpretive description for this study resulted in rich data serving to inform recommendations for culturally pluralistic approaches to professional development.

**The Research Sample.** Participants for this study were selected using a purposeful sampling procedure. The sample was drawn from employees working for a FCC system in Massachusetts. The system has 17 regional offices with over 150 total employees. Of the 150 employees, 38 are employed as FCC Mentors. The sample for this study was comprised of 10 FCC Mentors employed by the system. Unfortunately, two members of the original sample were unable to participate, one due to who was no longer employed by the company at the time of data collection, and the other due to an increased workload. To accommodate for these changes, the researcher asked two other mentors who had expressed interest during their involvement in the Pilot Study to participate. One interview was conducted face-to-face and the other by phone.

Specific criteria were established for participation in this study. A key element of purposeful sampling, as articulated by Patton (1990, p. 169), is to consider whether potential participants are “information rich” in relation to the phenomenon under investigation. Using this lens, a pool of potential participants was identified. Selection criteria included: the ability to speak and understand English currently employment as a FCC Mentor, self-identification as Latina, at least two years working in the field of EEC, and experience attending and providing professional development (see Appendix B). The demographic characteristics of the interviewees are listed in below (Table 1).

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6 Interviews were conducted in English and being bilingual provided additional insight into the dominant culture.
Table 1

**Participant demographic information**

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<tr>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Date moved to U.S. (if applicable)</th>
<th>Date of birth (month, day, year)</th>
<th>Highest degree</th>
<th>Degree from (country)</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
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<td>03/07/73</td>
<td>English; fluent in Spanish</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents from P.R.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>05/06/78</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>05/20/62</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>03/17/60</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between the researcher and the participants is an important consideration in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the relationship between the researcher and the participants was a collaborative one. The researcher provides professional development for the FCC Mentors who, in turn, mentor and train the FCC Educators in their region. The researcher does not supervise or contribute to the evaluations of the Mentors. Therefore, she did not believe the sample selection posed significant ethical concerns.

Solicitation of the sample followed the protocol requested by the FCC system. The researcher began with a pool of participants recommended by senior staff. These individuals were recommended based upon their experience in the field and their ability to...
speak and understand English. The researcher contacted the mentor’s supervisor requesting permission for staff to participate in the study. A letter soliciting involvement in the study was then emailed to each potential participant. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, the mentor received a consent form and a follow-up phone call. The conversation served to answer questions and establish a date, time, and location to meet. All participants were offered their choices of meeting location. Eight of the participants asked to meet in their office, one at an alternate location, and one via phone call.

The sample for this study was small, yet it generated a wealth of information. Naturally, the small sample size precludes broad generalization to a wider population. However, these mentors have supported many Latina educators from multiple countries over several years, yielding a wide range of experience.

**Information Needed to Conduct the Study.** Conducting a research study requires multiple sources of information. These include contextual, perceptual, demographic, and theoretical information. Contextually, this study is driven by the need for high quality EEC for all children, with research confirming that specialized training results in higher quality programming. In addition, there are increasing continuing education requirements for FCC Educators, driving a need for more accessible and appropriate professional development. Perceptual information includes determining elements that are inherent in culturally responsive professional development for Latina FCC Educators. Demographically, the study focused on Latina FCC Educators in Massachusetts.

To obtain the information needed to conduct this study, the researcher reviewed the literature on methodological approaches. Review of feedback from the Pilot Study resulted in the decision to utilize a semi-structured, face-to-face interview approach. The interview questions were refined based upon the results of the Pilot Study and a review of the literature (Appendix E).
Research Design and Methods of Data Collection. The following information provides a summary of the research process. Additional detail is provided throughout the dissertation for each of these steps.

1. Initial review of the literature on adult learning, professional development models, and Latino culture.

2. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval obtained. The IRB approval process included outlining all procedures and processes needed to ensure adherence to ethical standards for the study of human subjects. This process included submission and approval of the interview protocol, confidentiality processes, and informed consent.

3. Employer suggested and approved potential research participants. Potential participants were contacted via email with an overview of the study and a request for participation. Interested participants responded by email and were contacted via phone. Since Latina mentors generally prefer direct interactions whenever possible rather than using phones or other communicative technology, participants established a day and time for the researcher to interview them at their place of employment. The researcher traveled to the participant’s place of employment whenever possible.

4. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 Latina FCC Mentors employed by an FCC system in Massachusetts. Nine of these interviews were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted by phone.

5. Ongoing literature review including adult learning, professional development, Latino culture, culturally responsive pedagogy, higher education, and the field of EEC.
6. Interview responses were analyzed individually and across cases on an ongoing basis during the interview and data analysis process.

7. A focus group was conducted with eight out of 10 participants to review the themes and preliminary conclusions drawn by the researcher. Minor changes were made to the conceptual framework, which resulted in re-coding.

8. Five reviewers were solicited by email. Each reviewer read and commented on two interviews. The reviewers were selected based upon their experience in the field of EEC. Three of the reviewers provided professional development for Latina educators and two were employed by an institute of higher learning, and provided support for Latina educators pursuing a college degree or a Child Development Associate Credential. All 10 interviews were reviewed based on this feedback.

9. Responses from the analysts affirmed the coding and thematic patterns identified by the researcher.

The literature review was ongoing and served to inform the study. The review initially included adult learning, Latino culture, culturally responsive pedagogy, and EEC. A subsequent addition to the literature included socio-cultural approaches to adult learning. An ongoing review of the literature guided the emerging qualitative research design and informed code development and refinement. Literature supporting the larger research process, including theory, methodology, data analysis, reporting and interpretation of findings was also reviewed.

**Methods of Data Collection.** The researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews in order to gain in-depth information for the phenomenon under study. The interview protocol was tested during a Pilot Study and revised based upon feedback from participants. A focus group was facilitated to review the interpretation of data. The
focus group process enabled the researcher to ask clarifying questions and to discuss the interpretation of the data with participants. Feedback garnered from this process served to inform data analysis.

**Pilot Study.** The initial interview protocol was designed and tested in a Pilot Study in the spring of 2010. Five Latina FCC Mentors participated in the Pilot Study and assisted in the development of the interview questions (see Appendix D). The protocol was tested with three Latina FCC Mentors. Each interview concluded with a request for suggestions to improve the interview process and protocol. Suggestions from the Pilot Study and from doctoral committee members resulted in the final protocol that was used in this study (see Appendix E). Changes included rephrasing questions, deleting questions that resulted in similar answers, adding demographic data, re-organizing the order of the questions, and inserting additional prompts.

**Interview Protocol.** Semi-structured interviews were selected as a means of promoting in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. As observed by Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson (2002), a rich accounting helps the researcher develop insight into participants’ “experiences, feelings, and social worlds” (p. 727). This tool, in conjunction with a positive, caring relationship between the researcher and the participants, promoted comfort, trust, and a willingness to share personal, and sometimes painful experiences.

The interview questions were informed by the Pilot Study data, an in-depth review of the literature on adult learning, and the literature on professional development design. Three categories were used to frame the interview questions: (a) professional development climate, (b) professional development context, and (c) professional development facilitation.
Climate: Participants’ perceptions of the professional development climate, which included the physical environment, a sense of trust and respect, and the relational focus.

Context: Participants’ perceptions of the professional development context, including the topic, language used, learning outcomes, learning activities, resources, and evaluation methods.

Facilitation: Participants’ perceptions of the facilitator or instructor, including the instructor’s clarity, expertise, knowledge about each learner, role as a coach or mentor, participation as a co-learner, and validation of the learner’s current knowledge and experience.

The interview consisted of twelve questions: eight open-ended questions and four demographic questions. As stated earlier, the familiarity between researcher and participant allowed for a personal approach. A dialogic style of interviewing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) was used in the interview process. As indicated in the literature review, this is the preferred communication style for many Latino individuals. This resulted in a rich accounting of beliefs, experiences, perceptions, and practices. Many times, before the researcher asked the first question, the participant began sharing experiences regarding her family, work history, immigration to the United States (or to the U.S. mainland if, she was born in Puerto Rico), perspectives on American culture, and the challenges that she had experienced as a Latina living in America. These stories lead to in-depth conversations and yielded extensive data from participants.

The researcher felt that saturation was achieved after the seventh interview, but she carried out the final three interviews out of respect for the participants, as well as for the potential for unexpected additional information. As the researcher had a pre-existing
professional relationship with participants, canceling the unnecessary interviews was deemed potentially disrespectful to the participants.

**Analysis and Synthesis of Data**

The interview protocol resulted in a wealth of information requiring individual analysis as well as consolidation across the sample. The intent of this process was to translate raw data into meaningful findings by identifying patterns spanning the data (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). In this study, the researcher used a thematic approach to investigate common themes across the data.

Data analysis entailed a cyclical process of individual and collective analysis of the interview protocol. This began with a manual review of each interview, during which the researcher highlighted terms and phrases that were deemed important, made note of pertinent terms and phrases related to the research questions, and continually revisited the research protocol. This process resulted in seven manual reviews of each interview. As recommended by Creswell (2009), preliminary themes were articulated and analyzed, and codes were assigned, grouping words and phrases together into similar categories. The topics and subtopics obtained from each interview were transferred into a preliminary data analysis chart. Then, the themes were divided into two charts, one listing questions and responses, sorting and listing responses to each question on a chart, and another list of common themes among the responses. This inductive process worked back and forth between the derived themes and the data to condense and establish a comprehensive set of themes.

After completing a manual analysis, the researcher selected a computer program to assist with data analysis. HyperResearch™ was selected for this study since it supported coding, sorting, deleting, condensing, and defining groups and codes. It also allowed retrieval of frequency of responses by code and ability to generate reports. The literature
on computer aided data analysis (CAQDAS) emphasized the need for the program to be in alignment with the skill level of the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a beginning researcher, this program was attractive in its provision of tutorials, chats, and online support. To aid in understanding the program, the researcher completed seven tutorials. The program aligned with this study, as it had the capacity to analyze bulk data by assigning groups, codes and definitions to the data. It also provided content analysis, the ability to code and retrieve codes, as well as reporting options (Miles & Huberman).

The computer-aided coding process involved multiple steps. It began with the conversion of each interview into a plain text file with the assignment of a case number for each participant. This served to support confidentiality. The next step included developing a list of codes, each of which was assigned an alphanumeric identifier. The initial computer-aided coding process resulted in 234 codes within 12 categories.

In order to condense the number of codes, the researcher revisited the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework was revised based upon a subsequent review of the literature and the manual data analysis. The revised coding scheme resulted in 10 categories, with 162 codes classified within relevant groups. This was followed by defining each code and comparing them, identifying redundancy and further reducing the codes to a total of 47 codes within 10 overarching categories. A subsequent review of each interview was conducted to determine if codes were valid, similar across cases, and applicable to the study.

To further analyze the data and the ensuing coding process, a cross-case analysis was conducted. The comparison of each interview with the nine other cases resulted in the identification of four overarching themes: environment, content, process, and evaluation. This resulted in a second adaptation to the conceptual framework including the central question and five sub-questions. The researcher completed a subsequent review of each
interview to test the revised framework. This process resulted in further revisions to the conceptual framework and a reduction to three secondary questions.

A final review of the data resulted in reduction from 10 to three overarching categories. Fifteen codes were assigned within these categories as supported by an ongoing review of the literature. The final conceptual framework (Appendix G) and Code Book (Appendix I) includes a visual diagram of the final categories as a product of this process. The framework was presented to a participant focus group and to the researcher’s doctoral committee. Based upon this analysis and synthesis of data, the researcher was able to begin formulating conclusions and developing research-related recommendations.

**Ethical Considerations**

According to the American Psychological Association (2010),” the researcher is responsible for demonstrating that they have complied with ethical standards that govern scholarly publication” (p.231). Ethical considerations include protecting the anonymity of participants, assessment of risk, confidentiality, informed consent, and data access (Patton, 2002). Qualitative approaches are generally designed to seek the perspectives of the participants. As with all approaches, the researcher must recognize any unique vulnerability of participants and articulate strategies to protect them from harm.

The participants in this study shared their perspectives based upon direct experience observing and interacting with Latina educators, as well as their participation in professional development as ethnically diverse adult learners. The depth of sharing would not have been possible if a positive, trusting relationship between researcher and participant had not been established. The researcher had a prior relationship with most of the participants. With the others, the researched established a relationship through emails, phone calls, and the interview and focus group process. The researcher stressed that the information the participants shared would remain confidential, without any identification of
their names or professional affiliation. Nonetheless, each participant stated they were not concerned about confidentiality and that they wanted to participate in order to share their culture and the challenges the FCC Educator faces.

This study was implemented according to the aforementioned ethical principles in order to protect participants from stress, risk, or harm as a result of being involved in the study. These practices were considered within a sociocultural context. While Yick (2007) stated that ethical responses should be filtered through the values and orientations of the ethnic group under study, the researcher affirmed this was not accomplished through learning from a textbook or entering the study with academic knowledge. Rather, it was accomplished through her relationship with participants and their subtle direction throughout the study.

The researcher acknowledged that participants might not understand terms such as, “informed consent,” “confidentiality,” and “protecting safety and reducing stress.” In order to communicate the purposes and parameters for this study, the researcher verbally explained written documents and procedures. The result was a collaborative, interactive process of co-learning. The researcher explained many elements of the study protocol, such as informed consent, voluntary participation, the primary importance of the rights and interests of interviewees, and how confidentiality would be maintained throughout the process and after the study was complete through secure storage of data. Confidentiality protections included coding interviews by case number, as opposed to the name of the participant, and placing this information in an electronic filing program that is password protected. Original interviews were stored in a locked file box. Data analysis and reporting includes only the numerical codes for all cases. Research-related records and data are securely stored, with only the researcher having access to this material.
Trustworthiness

The researcher selected strategies to promote validity and credibility in the study. Validity or credibility is determined by the strategies the researcher uses to access the findings (Creswell, 2008.) This involves determining if the findings are both credible and useful by assessing not only credibility, but transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The voice of the participants is shared in Chapters Four and Five. In order to communicate the participants’ perceptions, the researcher clearly documented and shared what each participant said, including pauses, stops, starts, use of dialect, and slang. To further establish validity, the researcher engaged in ongoing reflection on the research process, the participants, and the researcher’s role in accurately sharing participant perspectives in this study.

The researcher addressed concerns regarding credibility in this study by conducting an ongoing review of the literature and participating in self-reflection and journaling. Throughout this process, the research reflected on integration of her preferred communication and learning style in professional development design and considered changes that needed to be made to engage diverse learners who may not share these same preferences. This reflective practice helped the researcher to understand the impact of experience, culture, and beliefs on learning and use this knowledge to adapt her instructional practices.

Participants also stressed the influence of culture and the social context on their learning. In the literature, integration of the culture and the social context of the learner are viewed as central to the learning process (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997). These messages from participants were not always obvious; they required insight on the part of the researcher, supported by careful listening and observation. Participants were encouraged to
clarify and expand upon what had they shared. Without this reflexivity on the part of the researcher, many insights and observations would have been lost. Additional strategies implemented by the researcher included ongoing critical self-reflection through journaling, quiet reflection, immersion in Latino culture by attending conferences and trainings related to this study, a continual review of related literature, and conversations with colleagues and participants. This was a somewhat painful transformational process for the researcher. This journey was intended to explore outward, in the Latino culture. However, in large part, it entailed an inner exploration and humbling self-discovery. The researcher worked to identify her perceptions, biases, and beliefs and to assess how these factors influence her work with diverse learners.

**Validity.** The researcher integrated procedures to verify the accuracy of the findings. This process is labeled “validity” (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). For this research, the techniques implemented by the researcher included: selection of appropriate research methods, collection of sufficient data, development of familiarity with participants through a prolonged professional relationship, journal writing, use of interactive questioning and prompts for clarity or to gather additional information, and presenting and discussing findings with participants and professionals in the field. These measures established that the researcher accurately represented participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2010).

**Member Checking/Focus Group.** In order to verify the accuracy of the findings, the researcher asked participants to join a focus group. The intent of the focus group was to verify that the researcher’s coding and preliminary thematic categorization of the data was accurate in the eyes of the participants. Participants had the option of responding to a survey via email or participating in a focus group at the researcher’s office. Seven members of the sample were able to attend the focus group; three planned to attend but
were not able to, for work-related reasons. During the focus group, participants reviewed the title of the study as well as the conceptual framework. They discussed the research questions and overarching themes, as well as the coding template and definitions. The focus group information resulted in minor refinement of codes, including the deletion of duplicate codes that had the same meaning, the addition of codes under the “context” category, and the revision of codes under the “facilitation” category.

**Analyst Review.** Five analysts were selected to review interviews. The analysts were selected based upon their experience supporting Latina adult learners in various capacities. Two of the analysts work in higher education and three provided in-service professional development for Latina educators. Each analyst signed a confidentiality agreement and identifying information was removed from the interview transcription.

Each analyst reviewed two interviews, providing feedback based upon review process guidelines. The review process guidelines provided parameters for review of the interviews, including reading each interview, noting what terms or phrases stood out, and considering how responses informed the research questions. Analysts were asked to make notes in the margins of the interview, to use highlighting, or make to notes on separate pieces of paper. Analysts were then asked to make a list of pertinent categories, phrases, or quotes, and to return this information to the researcher.

The researcher reviewed each analyst’s report and converted responses into a table listing key terms and phrases. Analysts identified the overarching themes of “respect” and “relationships” in their review of interviews. They also noted statements about the individuality of Latinas. Analysts highlighted comments shared by participants regarding values common across Latino culture, with different interaction styles characteristic of different countries of origin. The differences between individuals from different countries emerged continuously and provided an unanticipated depth to the study. After a review of
each analyst’s report and the identification of common themes spanning the report, the researcher cross-referenced this information with the focus group data, resulting in minor adaptations to the coding of interviews. These responses also served to enrich the data analysis and interpretation for Chapter Five.

**Dependability.** The researcher integrated multiple processes to document and collect data. This is referred to as “dependability” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 78). To demonstrate dependability, the researcher employed the following procedures: reviewing transcripts to check for errors that occurred in the transfer from audio recording to hard copy, producing and verifying the definition of codes for accuracy using manual and computer-aided methods of comparison and use of an electronic journal, and review of interpretations with participants. To further support dependability, the researcher asked three peers to review the same interview. She then reviewed the responses first individually, and then collectively and finally compared the responses to the coding of the original interview. This analysis revealed that the researcher’s coding was generally consistent with the responses from peers. The codes that were not consistent were re-coded or deleted.

**Transferability.** The researcher sought to help readers to make connections between the elements articulated by participants in this study and the readers’ own experiences. While it is not expected the results of this study will be generalizable to all setting, “it is likely that the lessons learned in one setting might be useful to others” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 78). This is referred to as “transferability” (Bloomberg & Volpe, p. 78). While small study samples do not justify generalizability to the larger population, a small sample “may be more useful in examining a situation in depth from various perspectives, whereas a large sample would be inconsequential” (Myers, 2000, para. 9).
Here, transferability is co-determined by the readers and the researcher. The researcher’s highly detailed description of the research site and methodology allows the reader to determine if this study is similar to another for which they are seeking a comparison. The reader can then assess the similarities and “transferability” of data to other settings. If readers determine that sufficient similarities exist, they can infer that the results of the study would be similar in their situations.

Transferability, not generalizability is the intent of this study. Responsibility rests with the reader to determine whether and to what extent this study can transfer to a similar context. If each context is sufficiently congruent, then the information from this study may be applicable to a similar context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An additional possibility is known as “extrapolation,” in which it is speculated that it is likely findings would occur in similar, but not identical, conditions (Patton, 2002, p. 584). To help the reader evaluate these possibilities, the study provided detailed information, such as rich descriptions of the voice of the participants expressed through verbatim quotations. The reader is thus equipped with the information to consider incorporating findings from this study in the design and delivery of future professional development in other contexts.

**Limitations of the Study.** Some of the limitations of this study are common to qualitative approaches. The researcher is the primary research tool in a qualitative study. Therefore, research is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher. In addition, qualitative approaches are influenced by the biases of the researcher, potentially resulting in misinterpretation of the results.

The nature of this study results in further limitations. The intent of this study is to provide information regarding culturally responsive professional development for Latina FCC Educators. Yet, by its very nature, the phenomenon under investigation is limited, since it addresses only one cultural group, and suggests that each individual within this
group has the same cultural values and perspectives. The study was not intended to
generalize to the wider population of people self-identifying as Latina or Hispanic. Rather,
the purpose was to provide data that will lead to further exploration on supporting Latina
Educators in achieving higher level competencies, by providing culturally responsive
settings in which they can learn.

Another limitation includes the protocol selected for this study. Semi-structured,
open-ended interviews require time and expertise. It is difficult to achieve consistency and
objectivity, which has an adverse effect on reliability. Another limitation is that
participants may share what they assume the interviewer wishes to hear. As Latinas,
participants may have been especially hesitant to share a perspective that they might have
considered a criticism. Therefore, it is uncertain if responses were complete and honest.

The researcher’s prior relationship with participants may have been a limitation. As
stated above, the participants may have been hesitant to share criticism about professional
development with the researcher who had instructed them in the past. At the same time, the
researcher felt that having a relationship founded on trust and respect garnered a deeper
level of sharing on most topics.

Another limitation of face-to-face recorded interviews is that this process may be
intimidating to participants (Creswell, 2008). Participants in this study requested face-to-
face interviews and appeared comfortable during the interview. Since even the most well-
intentioned interview questions may be interpreted as an invasion of privacy, emphasis was
placed during the Pilot Study on revising and reordering questions to build a good rapport
prior to asking for more personal information. Also, the questions were expanded to
include prompts that the researcher felt were needed based upon the Pilot Study interview
process.
The researcher’s perceptions and bias influence the interpretation of the data. This bias can result in decontextualizing or inappropriately contextualizing the meaning of participant responses, or in oversimplified explanations and generalizations. These mistakes may lead the researcher to disregard data that doesn’t fit or is inconsistent with his or her explanations (Denscombe, 2010). To combat this limitation, the researcher employed tools of trustworthiness including ongoing critical self-reflection and solicitation of advice from experts, peers, and participants.

Summary

Chapter Three provided a detailed account of the study’s research methodology. A qualitative interpretive description approach was selected to explore the element of culturally responsive professional development for Latina FCC Educators. The participant sample consisted of 10 participants who were purposefully selected. Data collection include semi-structured interviews; nine were conducted face-to-face and via by phone. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. The data was reviewed in conjunction with the literature, including identification of patterns or themes across the data. Credibility and transferability were accounted for through various strategies, including member-checking and analyst review of transcripts.

A conceptual framework was informed by the literature and was utilized in the design and analysis of the study. The researcher used this template to identify themes in the findings. Contrasting the findings with the literature resulted in interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations. Achieving the intent of this study, recommendations include application of culturally pluralistic approaches to professional development pedagogy and further research.
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data and Report of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the elements of a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina FCC Educators. This chapter presents the key findings obtained from 10 semi-structured interviews with Latina FCC Mentors regarding professional development offered to Latina FCC Educators. This chapter begins with a review of the data analysis process. This is followed by rich descriptions using participant quotations to substantiate and add participants’ voices to the three major findings for this study. The chapter concludes with a summary of three overarching themes for this study: relationships; active engagement in the learning process, primarily in small groups; and knowledge and affirmation of both individual and ethnic identity.

Research Findings

1. All ten participants indicated an optimal professional development environment for Latina FCC Educators should focus on building relationships within a climate of trust and respect.

2. All ten participants indicated that the primary characteristic of a professional development context designed to meet the needs of Latina FCC Educators is active engagement with materials and others throughout the learning process.

3. All ten participants stressed that a culturally responsive professional development experience is the responsibility of the instructor, as reflected in knowledge of and affirmation of the learner’s individual and ethnic identity.

There are intricate linkages between the three themes. According to the data, each element is necessary for the entire system of cultural responsive pedagogy to be effective. The next section is based upon the Roadmap of Findings (see Appendix L). The section begins with the research question, followed by related findings, from highest to lowest
frequency. It concludes with a reflection by the researcher. For clarification, sections of the Roadmap of Findings are listed under each finding below.

Figure 1. Elements of culturally responsive professional development for Latina FCC educators

**Finding 1: Building relationships through a climate of trust and respect was imperative for an optimal professional development environment according to all Latina Family Child Care Mentors.**

**Relationships**

According to all study participants, relationships form the foundation of a culturally responsive professional development experience. This is reflected both in the physical set-up of the training room and in the interactions that take place within that setting. A common theme was that the environment sets the stage for learning. “The environment should be friendly, respectful to facilitate building relationships within the group” (#006; 13890, 14085). Five out of 10 participants stated that relationships were of primary importance in a culturally responsive environment and four out of 10 stressed the importance of a climate of trust. Only one out of 10 discussed the actual physical

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7 Quotations from participants are followed by the number assigned to the participant along with the location in the interview protocol as assigned by the software program.
environment as being important for FCC Educators. The importance of relationships and trust spans each category and was pervasive throughout the data.

While a comfortable physical environment is important, it is not imperative for a culturally responsive training; it is what the facilitator brings to the setting that is most important. As one participant shared, “It’s more about the people and interactions than the environment” (#007; 2310, 2439). Participants claimed that the space may not always be visually appealing, but the instructor can add personal touches to make it welcoming. The intent of the instructor should be to create a physical environment that conveys a feeling of trust and respect, resulting in warm relationships. Participants shared that this type of environment is facilitated when the instructor begins class with a personal greeting, and continues personal interactions throughout the entire learning experience.

It is clear the formation of relationships is imperative for culturally responsive professional development. This begins with the physical space and the efforts made by the instructor and learners to make that space welcoming. In alignment with an appealing and welcoming physical space, the instructor should facilitate interactions that further enhance relationship building.

**Greeting**

All participants agreed that setting the stage for a culturally responsive experience is the responsibility of the instructor. Study participants said the instructor should be prepared to greet learners upon arrival. One stated, “Relationships are built from the start by respecting the group enough to dress nicely and being ready to greet people” (#003; 9893, 10433).

The initial greeting establishes a feeling of welcome and comfort. Learners may be anxious or nervous about the training, and a warm greeting helps them feel more comfortable. One participant recommended, “Relationships building starts when
participants enter—have a personal conversation with each one. Help them to relax and not be nervous” (#009, 8632, 8789). Sharing information with learners as they enter the space helps ease uncertainty; “build relationships through greeting and letting participants know expectations” (#005; 5409, 5500). A third participant indicated that building relationships helps learners participate more fully in the professional development experience, “…it may be difficult for participants to ask questions therefore, it is helpful to set the stage by having an individual conversation with participants [instructor] to help them feel comfortable” (#009; 887, 9166).

Participant #009 commonly instructs groups of 20-30 Latina FCC Educators. When questioned about how she provided individual attention in large groups, she shared that this was not a challenge for her, since she greets everyone upon arrival, circulates throughout the room during the training, and primarily provides activities in small groups. During small group time she has individual conversations when she notices a participant is not engaged or appears unsure of the content of the activity.

Participants noted that style of greeting varies upon individual preference, but that it usually involves a hug and a kiss:

Also, make sure the person feels right at home, establishing some kind of relationship. Of course, there is the hug and kiss you give versus the very polite, not on your face, how are you, good to see. This is more like I know you even though I don’t know you. Ummm…there’s a shared feeling because we are Hispanic. (#007; 4520, 4850)

The type of greeting varies within Latino culture, based upon the relationship between the two individuals. “If I know that person, you know, we are family or friends for a long time, definitely I kiss them. If not, no what. No way” (#010, 3627, 3776). The same participant stated that the type of greeting also varies within the culture based upon
one’s country of origin, “Interaction styles vary by country of origin. Dominicans, they really like to kiss everybody and hug everybody… we don’t follow that concept in my country [Columbia]” (#010; 4072, 4758). Study participants indicated that reading body language can help to determine if a handshake or hug and kiss is appropriate. The greeting helps learners to know that this is a place where you will be respected, forming a feeling of trust– a foundation for relationships.

We use a lot of body language, so I guess I would not offend someone if you approach them and you know, like a simple touch. It doesn’t have to be a kiss or hug but just that…that makes Latinos – they tend to say hi with a hug or kisses...If they are greeted and welcomed that way, they may feel comfortable during the training and you present yourself like I want to know what you think, I want your opinion. Your opinion is very important to me …show that you also want to learn, you want to hear, that will make them comfortable. (#005; 7437, 8417)

The researcher has observed greetings between Latina FCC Mentors and Educators. It is different from what her European background cultural background might deem appropriate: a handshake, a rub on the arm for closer acquaintances, and a verbal greeting. Greetings are vitally important to the participants in this study and usually involve a hug and a kiss, although variations exist within Latino culture.

**Group dynamics**

Participants reported that building relationships may be challenging between learners from different Latin American countries. Negative experiences ranged from ignoring or talking about each other at the beginning of the training or comments or body language that was disrespectful during the training. Participants explained that this is due to the perception that some countries are poorer and offer fewer educational opportunities than others, resulting in biases and negative judgment of individuals from these countries.
One participant disclosed the conflicts she observed when groups from two different countries were combined:

…yesterday there was this group. It was almost like… there was one group towards the back and they were jibber jabbering. They were criticizing the presenters… It was group dynamics. I think respect plays a big part in who we are. (#003; 1898, 2199)

Another shared a similar experience:

…you can see the difference. Half of the group was in this part of the training room and the other half was sitting in this part of the training room. And you can see them, even when they are talking, they are mad at each other. Because of the different points. (#009; 21610, 21989)

The researcher revisited this topic with several of the participants to obtain further clarification on intercultural group dynamics. One stated, “I think it is just Latinas in general regardless of their nationality… it is just because of our competitive spirit…our different dialect, level of education, and family values” (#009; 23410, 26102). Another disclosed a similar view, “it is mostly a sense of respect from them towards my position as a leader. In the U.S., the problem is racism, in our countries, it is classism” (#007; 4310, 4412). Some countries are considered better places to live, while others are looked down upon by other Latinos, considering the population peasants.

Although another participants concurred that there was generally conflict between individuals from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Participant # 007, who is from the Dominican Republic, said that, personally, she does not feel this hierarchy. She believes that conflicts are due to jealousy on the part of the individuals from the Dominican
Republic, since they are not citizens of the United States. Individuals from Puerto Rico may feel that they are superior, since they are all American citizens.

Another participant felt that educators judged her based upon the country she was from, rather than on her competence. She struggled to overcome this perception in her work; when she was assigned a new Latina FCC Educator to work with:

… one of them said to me, ‘I don’t want to work with you. I don’t want you in my house. I don’t trust you. I don’t trust you. I don’t believe in you. I don’t think you have the capacity to do this job.’ Now five months later, she come back to me apologizing and say, ‘I want you to come back with me. Definitely, I made a mistake.’ (#010; 15487, 16432)

To respond to these challenges, one participant suggested, “…know a little bit about the background for that group [or the individual]. You have to know that, you know, participants from which country are going to be there” (#009; 23359, 23600). The value of this knowledge in facilitation is illustrated in the following excerpt:

So, they do have conflicts sometimes. They will be like, I don’t like this person or the people from that part of the country think they are like this or that. Sometimes, there are comments made, because someone is from a different part. (#005; 17811, 18490)

Participants believed that by establishing norms and expectations of respect, potential conflict may be avoided. Others simply don’t combine groups from different countries that are known to be intolerant of each other, particularly Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The challenge for instructors will be to implement an interdependent approach, while remaining aware of the possibility for competition between learners.
Evaluation

Relationships may prevent learners from providing an honest evaluation in which they may indicate changes are needed for the training to be successful for learners. The majority of study participants indicated that obtaining an accurate training evaluation is a challenge due to the relationship established between the instructor and learner. One participant discussed her experience:

They have this wonderful rapport with me… so they are not willing to say anything bad about me because they are not willing to compromise. Not only hurt my feelings, they would compromise my professional stance or may wonder what the instructor’s supervisor would think about me. (#007; 12505, 13028)

Overwhelmingly, participants said that the evaluations they receive are excellent. Yet, they stated this isn’t always the case, “… even those that I know might not have been successful, you always get a good evaluation” (#006; 6151, 6508). One participant stated “But, most of the time they mark everything perfect... They wouldn’t say the negative stuff. Rarely, in rare cases, one person may stand out and say this is what I feel like” (#005; 12181, 13056). Another shared her frustration at not receiving constructive feedback on the training, “It’s hard because most of the time, they answer excellent, excellent, excellent, very good, very good, very good” (#009, 9969, 10546). The challenge was the same for all participants in the study, “I guess they don’t want that person to see it as personal maybe. They don’t want them to take it personal. We try to explain… but they still mark everything great” (#005; 13109, 13463). Sometimes a personal conversation during or at the conclusion of the training may help point out potential areas for improvement, but even this is not very successful. Each participant reiterated that learners do not wish to share anything negative about an instructor due the Latino value of respect for authority and a wish to maintain the relationship that they have with the instructor.
Participants provided strategies on how to solicit honest evaluations of participants’ professional development experience. One was letting the learners know the role that evaluation plays in improving the professional development experience. One participant shared the following script she used with learners:

…Listen, you are not saying anything that is going to damage…What is important for me to give you the best, the best services, the best training. Don’t you know, please be honest, don’t worry about it. (#001; 28042, 28748)

Another reflected:

Perhaps it is something we need to explain to them, we need to say is honest; this is something we need to learn from. But, a lot of times they don’t, it’s usually just positive stuff. I never really seen anything negative. (#006; 6857, 7086)

The participants indicated that they prefer verbal communication over written communication, since it helps to maintain relationships. In general, Latina FCC Educators and Mentors are not comfortable with any communication that may appear to be disrespectful, including providing critical feedback on training. Based upon the data from this study, alternative strategies for obtaining professional development evaluations from Latina FCC Mentors and Educators must be explored.

**Professional Relationships**

Participants recommended that instructors establish a caring, yet professional relationship with learners, which is often a challenging balance. Due to an ingrained respect for authority, learners demonstrate a preliminary respect for the instructor. However, in order to maintain the respect of the learners, the instructor must be proficient in this role, exhibiting confidence, knowledge, and authority. According to participants, instructors must maintain control of the group to retain the respect of the students. This
involves establishing and enforcing norms and procedures for the training. One participant asserted, “That is very different, you know, you have to as a Latina training Latina students, you have to establish professional boundaries” (#009, 17716, 17852). These boundaries include establishing a learning environment that is in control and beneficial for all learners. Participants stressed that this is expected by Latina learners and is necessary to keep the training on task. As one participant stated, “You have to tell them what to do, you don’t give options or they will master the training. And you are the trainer, not them” (#004, 19471, 19596). Another stated, “So, we be very clear, we are very clear with them” (#003, 20148, 20278).

The balance of exerting authority and maintaining a relationship is imperative. Similar to an authoritative parenting style, instructors provide norms and guidance without becoming too overbearing. One participant recommended that instructors:

…be very friendly, with your position as the trainer. You have your position, but also make them feel welcome and be friendly. By being friendly, I think socializing is very important for the Latino population…Compliments, they love compliments. Yes, that will make them feel, I like this person, she is very nice, she is friendly. (#005; 13486, 13996)

When exerting authority, the instructor has to be very careful not to overstep this authority. One shared, “so, I will have to take it back because it can be seen as too pushy, like I really want you to do too much so I take it one step at a time” (#007; 5184, 4396). The instructor must determine when to exert authority, and when to allow participants to stray off topic:

So, it’s very hard for me, to ask someone to stop saying a thought when they are talking or having a lively discussions and someone is talking a lot. Even when it’s off topic, but the off topic could be ‘my family is suffering right now. I have to
make sure that I respect that because that person opened her emotions in training even though it is not pertaining to the training. And then I try to tie it all and bring it back. (#007; 1060, 1305)

All participants recommended that instructors, “form relationships with the group, but not as a friend – there is a professional ‘code of ethics’ even though we form relationships, as a training, a trainer-I am always the trainer, not your friend” (#009; 17226, 17472).

According to participants, the successful instructor balances competency and authority with relationship development and maintenance. The researcher observed an instructor conducting English as a Second Language class. When she was asked what made the class so successful, she explained she believed in her students, all of whom were Latina FCC Educators, and pushed them to excel. She stressed she does not accept excuses because she will not let them give up. Within this relationship, she formed strong bonds with the group, resulting in two out of the 10 students applying to college. The other students shared that, after this course, they were confident enough to speak English in public due to the support, encouragement, and expectations of this firm, yet caring instructor. While only an anecdote, this example supported the larger themes expressed in the data, that it is necessary for the instructor to exert authority through high expectations, believing students will be successful, and providing them with the support and resources that they need throughout their journey.

Four out of the 10 participants in this study said that the instructor should be a participant in the learning process. As a participant in learning, the instructor forms a collaborative and respectful relationship in which each learns from the other, “but, I said to themselves, goodness, you have to make them know, and it’s true, I was learning all the time from them” (#001; 21985, 22237). Another conveyed the benefits of this type of
relationship, “When the audience participates with the trainer, because I really think I learn too. In the process. So we learn from each other” (#004; 21154, 21374). Respondents recommended that the instructor acknowledge and learn from her mistakes:

I definitely analyze when I learn, why this thing didn’t work… sometimes, I recognize how I started it, how I presented it, the way how, the way I communicate myself. Sometimes those answers, the answers I get from the audience give me the answers so I understand that I was wrong. It helps me realize I was wrong and I change, I try to change. (#010; 10588, 10968)

According to the data, a responsive and respectful relationship between instructor and student provides the opportunity for the instructor to exert caring authority, provide clear and consistent expectations, and support the learner in the learning process. Participants indicated that these characteristics served to promote achievement. The instructor also benefits from this reciprocal relationship, learning from and about each student.

**The Physical Environment**

The physical environment includes elements such as decorations, seating, and refreshments. The actual space is not a significant factor. However, the relational effort that the instructor puts into making the space comfortable for the learner is relevant. According to study participant #007, “…it’s more about the people and interactions; it’s the design, the space, what they bring to the place” (2310, 2439).

The environment should appeal to all senses, establishing a feeling of comfort and welcome upon entry. One instructor shared that she uses air fresher and is prepared, “We use Plug INST™ and then … I have everything ready for them. So, yes, I want them to feel comfortable” (#006; 7561, 8014). Another declared, “I like to serve coffee to them, I used
to light candles, and I check the temperature in the room designed to make them feel
comfortable” (#010; 5381, 5639). One participant recommended:

…comfortable, smells nice, clean. I always buy the Glade™ scent, the cinnamon.
Yes, and I always try to have fresh you know, I think the light has to be perfect…I
always like visuals, not too many words, to catch their attention…something at each
table, candies or something, you know, for them to wake up because, you know,
sometimes you get so tired. (#009; 7996, 8410)

Establishing a welcoming environment includes offering food to participants. This
also helps to form and strengthen relationships. As one participant put it, “and a lot of
things are centered on food; food is very important. That is one of the ways to build
community” (#007; 3041, 3581). Another expressed a similar thought, “Serving food helps
to build community” (#008; 7320, 7427). Food helps to build relationships; one participant
suggested selecting culturally-related homemade foods. Asking everyone to bring
something honors the individual, serving to further develop relationships.

Participants addressed the concept of space and seating. Being closer to others is
generally comforting for Latina learners; “You build relationships through the setup of the
space and proximity to people” (#010; 5117, 5323). Conversely, participants stated that
Caucasians prefer a measure of personal space, rather than being in close proximity to other
students. One of the study participants shared her experience with personal space in a
college course in which she was the only Latina, “I don’t mind someone sitting close to me
or someone touching me with their arm because they are writing” (#009; 7120, 7377)…we
don’t mind having 20 people in a group, because there is more room, but I will mind having
20 Americans in a small classroom” (#009; 7629, 7785).

The physical environment is a tool to communicate respect and a feeling of
welcome. Participants expressed the differences between the general expectations of
Caucasians and Latinos throughout this study, as well as the different preferences of Latino individuals. While different expectations exist, all learners, regardless of culture, can benefit from a climate which welcomes each learner, “I see these positive aspect of Latino culture that we all can learn from including respect, listening and room set up- it’s different” (#008, 19321, 19505).

**Finding 2:** All ten participants indicated that the primary element for a professional development context designed to meet the needs of Latina FCC Educators is active engagement with materials and others throughout the learning process.

**Active Engagement**

The majority of participants agreed that culturally responsive professional development design included active engagement with others and materials. The following quotation articulated the importance of small group interactions and relationships, “Build relationships and offer support through small group activities and circulation throughout the training and individual interactions” (#007; 5901, 6050). Further examination of the data revealed specific elements of engagement and group work that inform this type of professional development.

**Small Groups**

According to all study participants, small groups provide a safer and more comfortable venue for learner engagement. The following participant articulated the alignment between relationships and small group work, “…I really like the small groups because we form relationships, so it’s better for us in a small group” (#009; 13093, 13527). Other participants affirmed this perspective, “Relationships are easier to build within small groups, which encourages interactions” (#010; 5916, 6001). As stated in Finding 1, the instructor should be aware of group dynamics, “Someone is from one country and someone
from another, they might not want to work together” (#006; 15773, 15937). However, this concern should not be over-emphasized, “…usually, they are very, they tend to get along, they are good to one another…” (#006; 17791, 18793).

During small group work, participants articulated the need for active engagement in the learning process, integrating relevant activities. According to one participant:

…activities I think can be fantastic and fun, hands on and what not, so you have to take into consideration; the knowledge, they want to work more in the small group, but with you so you can give them trust and it’s not negative. (#007; 6387, 6072)

Participants also stressed the need for visual aids, which engage the learner, help overcome literacy challenges, and often increase knowledge. One participant stated, “You need the visual piece, you need to be hands on. A lot of hands on” (#003; 981, 1051). Another articulated her multiple method approach to active learning:

We try to do mixed, like a quick question frame, visual activities, like the training we developed for the physical development; we did ummmm, very visual. We took pictures of children doing activities and then we asked the providers to name the stage in which the child was. So I think it was very interactive. (#009; 11771, 12311)

Conversely, sharing in a large group can be challenging and uncomfortable for Latina learners, “Talking in front of people can be intimidating at times; it may feel like you are putting them on the spot” (#005; 10343, 10858). Another participant stated:

Only someone that is very strong, personality wise would feel comfortable saying something [in a large group]… They [Latina adult learners] would come up to me and say something individually during break, but they wouldn’t say anything in the large group. (#007; 7544, 7876)
Participants explained that individuals might be hesitant to share in small or large groups, since they were taught to be quiet and not to interrupt or say things that would be perceived as opinions. This sense of uncertainty and discomfort “kept them from to engage and say what they feel” (#001; 27556, 27920). Small groups also provide a balance for the instructor, allowing her the opportunity to provide information in a non-threatening manner. As one participant disclosed, “But when I am with the whole group, then it just feels like not too pushy, too general. So if I come to the small group, I make it more personal” (#007; 5901, 6050).

It is important to get to know the learners in the group, “…the way they confront things and get things, I don’t know, just get to know them… some are more shy, [some] are more outspoken” (#001; 25016, 25651). The feeling of anxiety when speaking in a large group is further compounded by language:

So, for me it would, when I was younger, even in college, it was difficult for me to speak up because I would be like the only one. The only Latina English speaking. I would prefer having a small group and even if it was a small group, I also had … so for providers, definitely… if it’s something they would definitely prefer. (#005; 8458, 8785)

While small groups facilitate engagement and learning, participants stressed that parameters must be clearly established when facilitating small group activities. They recommended that the instructor be observant and help learners focus on the task at hand, rather than allow them to get off topic. “We do, we love to talk. We start in one place and end in another… it’s really easy to get off topic. So, I think you have your objectives at eye level, and it keeps you on topic” (#003; 29107, 29398). Another cautioned, “… small group activities for Hispanic women, it would take longer than what I would do elsewhere because there is more conversation, much more interaction” (#007; 7188, 7424).
Supportive Interactions

The role of the instructor is to also to determine the learners’ needs, and to provide support throughout – and sometimes after- the training. As stated earlier, the instructor needs to be caring and responsive to the needs of the learners. “As an instructor, you need to have strong interpersonal skills to help participants by knowing what they need and offering that” (#007; 19962, 20305). One participant recommended that the instructor remain “understanding and flexible” (#005; 21828, 22305) and tailor the training to the needs of the learners. Participants suggested strategies that included getting to know each learner through individual conversations, observation throughout the training, and circulating throughout the room, using various methods to engage learners and assess comprehension of the material.

Participants recommended that instructors share their experiences related to the topic. This includes not only knowledge regarding the content of the training, but also sharing related personal experiences. For example, when conducting training on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, these instructors had to share licensing information, which requires educators to place infants to sleep on their backs. Instead of sticking to the training materials, one instructor shared her experiences as a mother who placed her own children to sleep on their stomachs; she then proceeded to share the research supporting the importance of placing infants to sleep on their backs. She used her own experiences or examples to form a bond and a common understanding with learners, encouraging learners, in turn, to share their own stories. “I used to work and speak through examples [sharing personal stories]…in the middle of the training, you can figure out everybody that feel that respect and everybody feel so comfortable to talk…” (#008; 2264, 2871).
Clarity

Each participant articulated the need for the clear articulation of expectations. “The activities, setting/environment, evaluations, interactions, start and end time, establishing a collaborative learning environment, and consideration of participant’s family and community responsibilities is important” (#008; 11366, 11516). Another participant described how she achieved this in her training:

and at the training we let them know what our expectations are right off the bat. If we are going too fast, tell us to slow down. If you didn’t understand something, don’t be afraid to raise your hand and tell us you didn’t understand it. This training is two and a half hours, in order to get the full 2.5 hours, you must stay 2.5 hours. So, expectations right off the bat. You cannot sign 6-7 and leave at 7. (#003; 11631, 12041)

Providing Directions

The majority of participants stated that the instructor must provide directions in multiple ways and allow for processing time. One participant conveyed her experiences as a learner and an instructor:

I think the only thing would be give us time to process. We are not quick processors. I shouldn’t generalize, but that’s why I speak slowly. I need to speak slowly, especially in Spanish. So that I can think and because English is my first language. So speak slowly, give time to process. (#003; 19134, 19514)

As indicated earlier in this chapter, instructors should provide directions to the large group, as well as to small groups and individuals. This ensures that learners understand the directions, and promotes asking questions the individual learner may not pose in the large groups. It also facilitates engagement. Instructors should provide directions to individuals and in small groups, even if they previously gave instructions to the entire group. A
participant recommended using multiple opportunities to provide directions within the training:

Like a carousel activity, then I would give the directions in at least three different ways. Even when the people are standing at the chart, I come to them and say, ‘so tell me what you heard,’ this is what I said then I move on to the next group and the next group. (#007; 5398, 5669)

**Honoring Questions**

Latina educators need opportunities to ask questions throughout the training. Unfortunately, this is not the case in most training. Many instructors ask for learners to hold questions until the end of the training or write their questions down and discuss them at the end of the training, a challenge for many educators. Holding questions until the end of the training inhibits learning for Latina FCC Educators, according to most of the participants. One shared:

Another thing is that if you doing a presentation, you need to ask, you need to give the opportunity to ask questions. Because no matter how much information you give, if they don’t have that opportunity, they don’t think the training is good. (#002; 10816, 11258)

This practice demonstrates a lack of respect:

The other thing we do in training, we do not save questions until the end. Not with these women, I know these women… I know if you I say save your questions until the end, they are not going to write them down; they are going to forget the question. (#003; 5941, 6313)

Each participant stressed the importance of listening and maintaining eye contact, which demonstrates respect and caring, “Eye contact is important with us” (#003; 17981,
Listening with respect is a strategy used throughout the training. Listening is instrumental in addressing conflicts within the training and responding to learners who lack knowledge, share inappropriate practical examples, or go off topic. When all participants in the learning experience are encouraged to listen and respond with respect, this serves to build community and relationships.

**Offer the Training in Spanish**

All participants recommended offering professional development experiences in the primary language of the training participants. Offering the training in Spanish helps to facilitate understanding, and it is also a demonstration of respect. One respondent felt that, “So, I think that’s a way of actually respecting them so you are not doing it in English, you are doing it in their own type of language” (#006; 4306, 4464). Another stated:

So, I think that’s a way of actually respecting them. Well, I think there has to be ummm, language, language is very important. I think that umm, if you have language, if you give them language – that’s the basic thing because there has to be, because of the language barrier, but one thing that they really need training in their native language and it will come. (#009; 246, 555)

Linguistic challenges are often an obstacle for learning, limiting students’ ability to interact and collaborate with others. Many Latina FCC Educators lack confidence in their English language ability. “…you are giving a training that is offered in English – that’s different. That’s where they will become more intimidated” (#006, 8237, 8354).

Participant #001 stated the following, “When people doesn’t have the knowledge, the language barriers, there are so many barriers, language, education, ummm, the places they live, they are so afraid to leave those surroundings, they are not comfortable” (7029, 7049).
One participant provided insight into the reaction of the Latina educator in attending training in English:

…You might not speak up. It has to do with who’s there, where you are from, and I think it may be more when you’re – let’s say, English wasn’t your first language and everyone speaks that, you would see it more there where they are going to go ahead and stay quiet and not really speak up even though they know what’s going on. Ummm, but it can happen in other cultures too – you have those providers that keep speaking and speaking and speaking and those that keep quiet. (#006; 9532, 10014)

Spanish includes many dialects and words differ in meaning from one Latin American country to another, “…the one word in Spanish can mean… In English, one word means a lot of things. In Spanish you have to be careful that you use a word everyone understands” (#002; 13911, 14550). An instructor may say something in Spanish that is familiar to her, only to have it be misinterpreted due to a different meaning in another country. This hazard means that learners may misunderstand, or be insulted by the term used by the instructor. Participants offered various strategies to overcome this linguistic challenge.

…here are different dialects, yes, but it’s Spanish – the same Spanish. You know, some words, mean something to me because I am from Columbia and the same words mean different things for someone from the Dominican or someone from Guatemala or someone from Puerto Rico. That exact same thing (#009; 24006, 24296)

Another shared:

Universal – I try to use Spain. When I am translating, I might write one word and a slash with another word – the next second word that is almost universal. For
example, baby bottle has various pronunciations. So I might say the words that they use. I do that in a training as well. (#007; 11515, 11798)

Due to challenges with language, participants stressed the need for sufficient processing time. As stated by one participant, “…Umm. I think we are slower learners, because English isn’t our main language” (#003; 31254, 31544). Another gave the following recommendation:

I try to take it to the lowest level that I can. Try to simplify it; I try as much as I can. A lot of demonstration, a lot of-I try to simplify it as much as I can but sometimes that is not even enough. (#004; 3939, 4091)

Participants stressed the need for training that is founded upon collaboration between learners and instructors. This approach helps to develop relationships, the foundation of a culturally responsive learning experience according to all study participants. A collaborative facilitation style on the part of the instructor is key to an appropriate approach to professional development for Latina Family Child Care Educators.

**Finding 3: All ten participants agreed that instructors are responsible for creating a culturally responsive professional development experience, as evidenced by knowledge of and affirmation of the learner’s individual and ethnic identity.**

**Facilitation**

**Identity**

Participants stressed the integral role of the instructor in implementing a culturally responsive professional development experience. The instructor should be culturally competent, demonstrating knowledge and respect for each learner’s individual and ethnic identity. To acquire this knowledge, instructors should learn about the culture through direct contact with Latinas, not simply through reading and other academic experiences.
A person’s identity includes their language, values, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences. Identity informs a learner’s preferences, interaction styles, and motivational factors. The primary role of the instructor is to consider each learner as a unique individual and to encourage and affirm this throughout the learning process (Wetsch, 1997; Gay, 2000).

**Self-Reflection**

For instructors, understanding different types of learners involves a critical inventory of one’s own values, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences as well as those of one’s students. This multifaceted process is described by one participant:

be very completely open to receive, you know…to listen, to get to know backgrounds, cultures, to be to be yourself. And put yourself in their position, and get to know better, you know, where the people come from... know ahead of time where the population come from. (#001, 24678, 25003)

In order to have a true knowledge of the individual, instructors must become involved with the learner including the learner’s community and culture, “Put your hands on it and not just read about it” (#001, 1029, 1244).

**Affirmation**

An integral element of culturally responsive professional development, according to study participants, was the need for trust and respect. This is transmitted through the behavior of the instructor:

I think that to be a trainer, you definitely have to have inter- and intrapersonal intelligence that has to be very high. I am very intuitive, I can feel it and I work immediately and apologize if I did something. Or build that person up with a comment I have for her. (#007, 19962, 20305)
Respect is crucial for affirming the unique background and experience of each learner. One participant advised instructors to, “Respect the background, the knowledge, who they are as individuals” (#007, 8730, 8940). Another shared that affirmation resulted in the motivation to learn, “remember that educators come to a training to learn” (#008, 12338, 12483). This means that the instructor must have the ability to recognize and be responsive to the needs of learners, “The instructor supports the learner by being genuine in her response, support, feedback, and motivation” (#004; 5298, 5694).

**Language**

All participants described the role of language in affirming the Latina learner. One participant shared:

it’s nice to actually be able to respect the fact that if they all speak Spanish, we can go ahead and do that. So, I think it’s a way of actually respecting them so you are not doing it in English; you are doing it in their own type of language. (#006; 5504, 5681)

Another participant further articulated the importance of language. When people immigrate to the United States, initially they do not see the value of retaining their Spanish. However, they later realize the value of being bilingual in the United States:

I think it's coming to be important now, people who move to the United States, they didn’t care about keeping it more than one language and now I see that they becoming to realize how important it is to maintain the native language at home. (#002; 679, 920)

**Culture**

Participants have pride in their language and their cultural heritage. One emphasized that, “we are proud of where we are coming from” (#006; 2419, 2602), and another recommended that instructors, “validate the culture and respect it – it is a source of
pride” (#004; 28311, 28352). Validating Latino culture is accomplished in many ways, including respecting the language and values of Latinos, as well as being kind and non-judgmental. Sadly, many participants reported that they were often made to feel stupid or ashamed of their language, accent, or behavior. Rather than being affirmed for who they were as a person, they felt embarrassed and ashamed.

**Values**

Participants stressed the individuality of each learner, even if they self-identified as Latina. At the same time, participants overwhelmingly shared common core values that they use to design their trainings:

We are all Latinos; we share the same values regardless of where we are from. First of all, I like to integrate myself as part of the group and I say ‘we are all Latinos, we share the same values. It doesn’t matter, we speak Spanish…And we care about our priorities, our families, our parents, our elders. We share that, we have different accents and different dialects, but the main point to be here is that we speak Spanish. (#010, 13119, 13528)

An overwhelming majority of study participants said that family, education, relationships, and respect are of primary importance in Latino culture, “Religion, education, family, community are priorities” (#008; 7834, 8124)…“Family and relationships come first so we base everything on that” (#009; 1760, 2009).

**Family.** All participants confirmed that family is a top priority for Latinos. Family does not only include immediate family; it also encompasses extended relatives and close friends. “Family, family is very important for us, not only us, extended family. It’s very important for us; aunts, uncles, cousins, second cousins” (#009; 27923, 28073).

If there is a concern or issue involving the family, addressing this need will come before work or professional development attendance, “Relationships are a priority even
before work” (#007; 16938, 17346). If a family member or friend has a problem, the educator prioritizes that problem over other responsibilities, which are viewed as secondary.

Education. Another value articulated by a majority of participants was education. Education includes both academic and moral training. The high value placed upon education is influenced by the priorities within the family. If the family promotes and supports degree attainment, the educator may pursue a higher education. If the learner’s parents obtained a degree, this may further encourage children to pursue a degree themselves.

Education was perceived as important to most participants, yet many Latinos face challenges, such as financial constraints and limited educational background. Many voiced concerns with the inadequate educational systems in many of the countries from which they came. However, not all Latin American countries conform to the stereotype of having poor educational systems, “Ok, on the professional development, I come from Puerto Rico and everyone goes to school there. Education for us is huge, in my country. Now, here they realize how important it is to go to school” (#002; 2076, 2383). “Some Latin American countries seem to provide a sound educational foundation in early childhood” (#007; 10438, 10626).

Participants articulated their concerns with the challenges facing many Latina FCC, and their serious concerns with the low educational attainment of many of the Educators they work with. As one participant shared, “In other countries, for example… the providers I work with, many of them don’t even finish high school; they don’t even finish 6th grade” (#009; 20071, 20970). This is a national concern that participants are confronted with on a daily basis. According to National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (2002), 44% of the family childcare workforce in the United States has a high
school diploma or less. Thirty-eight percent have some college and 17% have a bachelor’s degree (National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies, 2002).

Along with concerns over educational attainment, there is a pervasive concern over the literacy levels of many of the Latina educators. Some educators may have a high school diploma, yet still face literacy challenges in their primary language, “Sometimes, I have to tell you, they have a high school degree, but they can’t write a complete sentence” (#004; 3326, 3528)… “Writing is not a strong skill for most Hispanic professionals I work with, some are very good and some are not so good at it” (#007; 13252, 13412). “…They lack of computer skills. Most fear of technology” (#008; 6858, 7065).

Writing ability naturally impacts involvement in the professional development experience. One participant explained, “That’s the other thing, writing is not a strong skill for most Hispanic professionals I work with, some are very good and some are not very good at it” (#007; 13219, 13412)… “In writing, it’s not good. They don’t like to write. They like to express themselves more verbally” (#004; 14080, 14209). As a result, visuals and small group interactions are more effective than written work or feedback for Latina FCC Educators. One felt strongly that, “Face to face interactions are important. Writing is not a preferred communication method” (#004; 14161, 14209). Another shared:

Because I think it’s very hard for them to write, but if you talk to them, if you allow them like 10-15 minutes after the training to talk to you, even though they are supposed to write it down, but they never would write down what they are going to say to you [verbally]. (#009; 9969, 10566)

Successful instructors adjust the training to meet the needs of the learners, “I try to take it to the lowest level that I can. Try to simplify it; I try as much as I can. A lot of demonstration, a lot of… but sometimes it’s not even enough” (#004; 3839, 4091). The
varied levels of knowledge and expertise of participants impacts the training, and can negatively impact the professional development experience:

Educational levels can cause conflicts within the group. Those with lower educational levels lack the knowledge as to the reason for developmentally appropriate practice or regulations and they don’t seem open to other’s views and changing their views. (#005; 23784, 24088)

Several participants felt that those with higher educational levels were more motivated to learn, and shared different goals than learners with less education. However, all individuals should be respected, even if they need to learn. “…you have to make them feel comfortable! And try to relate to them somehow- you cannot look down on them just because you know different things” (#006; 19034, 19410).

Concern over educators’ low educational and literacy levels extended to the children they provide services for, “I still have providers who don’t even know how to write their names. And this concerns me because they are the ones teaching the children” (#009; 21036, 21231). Participants stressed that educator level of ability and quality of care varies widely within the FCC field.

Other participants disagreed with the idea that the quality of the EEC program is based on education alone. One countered, “Here’s my experience when I have mostly Hispanic women with me, that they are older, their level of expertise is very high, but their knowledge not as much” (#007; 4940, 5096). Such educators incorporate learning in the daily routines, similar to how a parent might teach sorting and colors while folding laundry. This participant stressed that these women truly care about the children they work with, and interact with them in positive ways throughout the day.
**Relationships and Respect.** As indicated in Finding #1, the overarching theme of relationships was present throughout the data. Relationships are founded on respect, another priority for all study participants that was evident in all data categories. Respect includes deference and respect towards elders, family, and authority. This directly impacts the instructor and often participants in the training. As one participant asserted:

… age means respect for Latinos and maybe for the American, culture, the older you are, the less, you know, means the less attention and respect you deserve. And that’s something with us, with age, comes authority. (#007; 5184; 5203)

If the trainer is younger than participants, she has to “earn” respect and must demonstrate respect for others, particularly older learners. One participant suggested that the instructor “…go slowly and don’t do too much, particularly with older women or you will be viewed as pushy and that you feel you are better than the participants” (#009; 5100, 5396). The confidence, respect, and authority that instructor projects impacts whether she will be respected, “If a trainer is not confident in what they are presenting or doing, they will not receive respect from the group” (#003; 1898, 2199).

Participants stressed the need for instructors to respect each learner, regardless of culture. One shared her experience in a college course offered in Spanish to Spanish speaking students:

He treated us like elementary students, so he didn’t respect us… he wasn’t clear in his expectations, he was all over the place. So, I think it’s important, as an instructor, that you remember the goals, the objectives of the training and you remain focused and aimed on fulfilling those objectives. (#003; 28190, 28524)
Experiences: Immigration and Assimilation

Knowledge of the learner, a subcategory within the category of facilitation, included recommendations for gaining insight into the world of Latina FCC Educators. Some Latina educators have recently immigrated to the United States and are trying to integrate their values with those of the American culture. This presents many challenges, and may result in insecurities regarding one’s identity. One participant expressed this as follows:

We live in the United States so our own values have to accommodate to fit in with the culture, but we might forget our own values. Even though we try hard, we still have to navigate the American culture forgetting our own culture. (#009; 3330, 3692; 2697, 2838)

The following quote is not only powerful, providing a window into the world of a participant who moved to the mainland United States from Puerto Rico:

Imagine yourself come to this country when you were in a little town with a little, you used to just be with the family members. You come to this country with so many different people from so many different, you know, cultures. Different language, and different, even the weather, you have to switch from one thing to another. How can you adjust to all that? And how you felt at that time. Imagine those childrens going to that school, how they feel. Can you imagine? How can you help them the same way someone helped you when you transitioned into this country? (#001; 22280, 23120)
Assimilation into the American culture includes learning about different interaction styles. Feelings of community and interdependence are not reflected in American culture; rather, everyone seems preoccupied and very independent. A participant described her experience when moving to America at the age of 17:

My first culture shock was here, when people would come and say ‘how are you?’ and I really thought they mean ‘how are you?’ So, I would start to say something and they would say good to hear and they would just walk away. And I felt so disheartened all the time. I thought people were so rude here and I just learned its part of the way you do things. (#007; 16350, 16829)

**Individuality**

Knowledge of the learner includes an understanding of potentially shared values, as well as the recognition that each learner is unique. While Latina FCC Educators often share a common language, Spanish (with a variety of dialects and regional differences), each has a different background and experiences, which influences their values, beliefs, and behaviors. Many participants emphasized that these differences should be recognized and affirmed:

It’s a pyramid that goes…you cannot say Latina or Latino, whatever just like that. It comes from…know their background, you need to know, you need to know, respect them, listen. You need to observe, observe is just the key (#001: 263921, 26935) … “…be aware of differences and be willing to embrace them. That’s the only way to have a successful training.” (#007; 20307, 20426)

**Country of Origin.** Overwhelmingly, participants stressed that Latino cultural values, perceptions, and interaction styles vary by country of origin. As two participants articulated, “[There are] very different cultures, even dialect we use, some are more formal”
“People from [different countries interact differently], some are more outspoken, they are natural… some more shy, others very quiet” (#001; 25016, 25661). According to another participant:

[People from the] Caribbean can be more…quiet, South American and Central American are quiet. When I say Puerto Rico, we have to separate. We are part of Caribbean, but we are part of…we have so much in common with the United States. (#002; 8606, 9566)

An awareness of the range of possible interaction styles assists the instructor in evaluating students and offering appropriate learning experience, as well as set reasonable expectations for interactions within the professional development setting.

A learner’s country of origin influences the learner’s perception of themselves, as well as the values they espouse:

As a Latina, Hispanic person, it is different for Puerto Rican person, because we are Commonwealth to the United States, I feel I am more American, I am more American, than I can be Hispanic” (#002; 1654, 1911). “… the ones that were born in this country, especially this country, I don’t think they share the same values. Like the ones that are living there, or grew up on the island [Puerto Rico].” (#010; 2197, 2550)

**Mainstream American and Latin American cultures**

Each participant shared her perceptions on the differences between mainstream and Latino culture. The differences were significant, predominately in the areas of interactions, respect, value placed on family, and sense of time. Participants saw Americans as more distant, competitive, and independent. By contrast, they viewed Latinos as more responsive, social, and community oriented.
One participant imparted her interpretation of American and Latino culture:

I think we are totally different, the kiss on the cheek when you greet someone, of course, the language. There’s a lot of things, the way we communicate with people…more open more into saying their personal, we are family oriented….music. (#006; 19692, 20126)

Many of the participants stressed the differences between the cultural practices of mainstream American and Latino culture:

Family is a priority and we keep elders with the family, not tossed away… (#010; 21826, 22214)… As I said before, we believe everything is relationships. Everything. We are very informal. The American culture is probably more formal. When we greet someone in the street, we might hug and kiss them and in the American culture, you just go up and offer a handshake. (#009; 27655, 28074)

Another cultural difference articulated by participants was the concept of time. The researcher found that many Latina educators were late for trainings. When she asked about this in the interview, participants explained that Latinos are more focused on relationships, and have a very flexible approach to time, “Another thing with Latino people is that they are always late” (#004; 19854, 20091) … “basically that can tend to be a problem” (#005; 14893, 15521).

Participants offered various strategies for tardiness that balanced clarity, exercising authority, and maintaining relationships. Most suggested offering a preliminary socialization period before the training begins. One suggested that the instructor make clear her expectations regarding start and end time of the training as well as articulating the policy for late arrivals at the very beginning. Not all participants agree on the best approach; one trainer closes the doors 15 minutes into the training, while others allow late
arrivals into the training, greeting them warmly upon entry and later reminding them of the policy on attendance. In general, the overarching recommendation was, “Participants are often late; set clear expectations, but be a bit flexible” (#005; 14893, 14905).

The data supporting Finding #2 clearly articulated the need for the instructor to learn about each student. This is indicative of cultural competence and culturally responsive teaching. In order to become culturally competent, an instructor must gain self-knowledge, learn about other cultures (in this case, Latino culture), and get to know individual learners. Throughout their interviews data, participants shared what it is like to be Latina in the United States and how the process of immigration and assimilation has affected who they are today.

Summary

The findings in Chapter 4 were presented in three categories: Climate, Context, and Facilitation. Fifteen codes were listed under each category. The researcher presented findings in order of the frequency with which they appeared in the data. The data and findings from 10 individual interviews were articulated by the researcher through rich description and use of participant quotations in order to substantiate and add the participants’ voice to the findings.

According to all participants, a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina FCC Educators must be founded on relationships. As one participant eloquently stated:

It is definitely different, because ummm, we are more like interpersonal. We like, we like, we base, Latinos, we base everything on relationships. So we form a relation with the group. So we form, even if we are there for just one day, once we are out of that training, we have a relationship with someone there. So, it’s something that is built, that’s how you build connections. (#009; 4716, 5108)
According to all study participants, the instructor is the primary factor in building these relationships with and between learners. A culturally responsive training begins with instructors participating in self-reflection about their own beliefs and perceptions regarding diversity and individuality. The next step is to learn about the individual and ethnic identities of learners through an exploration of the literature, as well as through direct contact with learners and their community. Using self and other knowledge helps instructors to understand and plan for professional development for diverse learners. This knowledge should be evident in the design and implementation of the professional development experience.

The culturally responsive instructor begins to form relationships when the learners enter the learning environment; the initial greeting is an important first step in establishing this relationship. The initial contact between the instructor and the learner fuels the relationship. A secondary factor is the effort that the instructor puts into making the environment appealing to learners. Cultivating relationships does not just take place at the beginning, but extends throughout the professional development experience.

Seven out of 10 study participants agreed that Latina FCC Educators prefer a training that integrates active engagement with materials and others in the learning experience. This not only serves to enhance relationships, it also assists with literacy and educational challenges identified by participants in this study. Knowledge of the individual and ethnic identity of learners completes the design of a professional development experience responsive to the needs of Latina FCC Educators.

The central and secondary research questions were addressed in the categories of climate, context, and facilitation. The 15 codes assigned under these categories were used to categorize the rich information provided by each of the study participants. As a result,
the three findings are each intricately linked to each other. Chapter Five presents an integration of the findings which address the central research question.
Chapter Five: Interpretation and Synthesis of Findings

This chapter provides an interpretation and synthesis of the findings, as outlined in the Interpretation Outline Tool (see Appendix M). The three categories of climate, context, and facilitation were collapsed into two analytical categories of professional development climate and context. The category of facilitation spans each of these categories.

The first analytic category addressed the affective dimensions of professional development including the feel and tone of the environment, validation, trust, respect, and safety. This section provides the researcher’s interpretation of a culturally responsive professional development environment using a strength-based approach to affirm diverse learners. The second analytic category follows the structure of a professional development instructional outline, beginning with needs assessment, learning outcomes and objectives, learning activities and interactions, and evaluation. This includes the researcher’s interpretation and synthesis of the perspectives of participants and the literature pertaining to professional development. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results of this study.

**Analytic Category 1: Participants described a responsive professional development experience for Latina FCC Educators as one that is facilitated by an affirming and competent instructor within a physical environment that is welcoming and aesthetically pleasing.**

**The Responsive Climate**

The central research question was formulated to ascertain the elements of professional development responsive to the needs of Latina FCC Educators. All 10 participants described the optimal professional development climate as one that is founded on trust and respect. This type of climate promotes relationships, serving to build a community of learners, “Latinas base everything on relationships” (#009; 1194, 1362). This section includes a correlation between the data and the literature, beginning with the physical environment. This is followed by a synthesis of the data with the literature on
Latino culture and how this knowledge is necessary for establishing a learning climate that is responsive to the needs of Latina FCC Educators.

**The Environment**

The moment a learner enters a training space, they should feel welcome. This is communicated through the physical space and the interactions that take place within that environment:

The room should be well lit, smell fresh, have minimal distracting sounds (perhaps soft music playing), other special touches such as fresh flowers and candles, and visual representations of the group. (#009; 8348, 8410)

The majority of participants (seven out of 10) recommended setting up an aesthetically pleasing environment. Suggestions included adding table coverings, visual representations of the group, fresh flowers, a clean smell, refreshments, and resources. Each of these elements served to promote community among learners.

Attention to the environment is imperative, as this sets the tone for the training. The space does not have to be optimal, but it is made appropriate for learning by the effort the instructor puts into making the space comfortable and reflective of the students. Participants affirmed Curtis and Carter (2003) finding that the effort put into setting up and communicating a safe and welcoming educational environment creates connections. Both the physical space and the interactions that take place within that space, convey this sense of welcome.

The initial face-to-face interaction between instructor and learner also influences the learner’s perception of the training environment. The learner may feel validated or may be hesitant. Feelings may be reflected in questions such as, Do I feel welcome here? Can I be myself here?, Do I feel safe enough to try new things and potentially make mistakes? It
is the responsibility of the instructor to alleviate these concerns by setting a tone of respect, trust, and community.

All participants conveyed the priority of building relationships during training. Warm and friendly personal relationships (Santiago-Rivera, 2002), are considered the social and emotional roots of learning (Espinosa, 2010; Fickel, 2004). This begins when instructors greet learners when they enter the training space, “If they are greeted and welcomed that way, they may feel comfortable or if, during the training, you approach them and give them a little one on one, attention – that could also make them feel comfortable” (#005; 7437, 8417). This is supported in the literature. According to Irvine (2003), the initial greeting helps learners feel welcome and serves to help the learner and instructor to forge a relationship. The form of greeting varies by individual, as indicated in Chapter Four, yet with many Latinas, a hug and a kiss along with inquiry about the learner or learner’s family may help to facilitate a relationship.

The initial interactions in the learning environment serve to communicate a sense of trust (confianza) and respect (respeto); thereby conveying this is a safe place to learn. This type of non-threatening environment is necessary for learning (Boaler, 2002). In turn, when the individual learner feels confident and safe, this leads to the development of a community of learners who affirm each other (Gay, 2010), are more motivated (Gay, 2000), and have higher achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Efforts put into creating an environment that conveys trust, respect, and safety must be continued throughout the professional development experience by involving the learners.
Affirmation: A Strength-Based Approach

According to all 10 study participants, a responsive instructor develops an understanding of each learner’s individual and ethnic identity:

You have the opportunity to see things the way they are. You can never sit at that table [reading a book about culture] that, that’s something you read or something you, I mean—you just really put your hands on it and you are living it every day.

(#001; 1029, 1224)

A culturally responsive instructor uses this knowledge to provide a climate of affirmation eight out of 10 of the participants. This serves to facilitate learning and replaces a deficit model -what the learner cannot do- with a strength-based model -what the learner can do.

The effects of the deficit model are sadly evident in the lack of confidence, fear, and stories of discrimination shared by many Latinas. A culturally responsive teacher knows and respects the cultural capital, prior experience, and learning preferences that each student brings to the learning experience. The instructor must also be aware of the obstacles facing Latina learners, including challenges in self-confidence, language, literacy, and educational experience. With recent increases in licensing requirements, a limited educational background is even more of a negative factor, as educators are forced to increase their proficiency in the field:

A lot of my providers don’t have the educational level from their country, but I see the effort they are doing to make some things happen. But the only problem here is when they got the providers license, there were not requirements. And now you expect these people to be teachers. Now when the licensors go to their home, they talk about professional development, they talking about basic skills at home or whatever they want the kids to know. (#002; 3107, 3702)
An awareness of these challenges entails designing learning experiences that motivate learners. Instructors must be supportive, mentoring learners to become self-directed and take ownership in identifying their professional development needs.

**The Instructor.** The instructor’s relationship with learners includes support before, during, and after the learning event. Reflecting the collectivist value system common to most Latinos, the instructor maintains high expectations; collaboratively develops, integrates, and enforces norms of safety, trust and respect; and serves as a resource for learners (Eggers-Piérola, 2008; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Mincov, 2010). The literature recommended shifting the power dynamic in the responsive classroom tip from teacher-centered to learner-centered, sharing authority in the educational setting. At the same time, participants in this study stressed that the instructor must maintain control of the group in order to have an effective training and earn the respect of the learners. By collaboratively establishing and integrating norms within the professional development, the instructor evolves into a guide or facilitator, sharing the responsibility of an effective learning experience with the group.

A culturally responsive instructor cultivates knowledge of and respect for each learner’s ethnic and individual identity. Using this knowledge, instructors teach to and through the strengths of learners, rather than seeing on student limitations (Gay, 2000). As indicated in the literature, instructors should recognize that knowledge is a reflection of the culture in which it was developed, and not a judgment on the individual (Merriam & Associates, 2007). A responsive approach motivates learners by honoring who they are and respecting where they come from through the integration of cultural norms in the learning experience. This approach prioritizes relationship development, collaborative learning, and ongoing discovery about others.
The process of learning about Latino culture is multi-faceted. As articulated in Chapter Two, affirming and respectful instructors learn about culture through a process of cultural development. With a goal of cultural competency, instructors progress through a journey of self-discovery, developing their knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity. The self-reflective process involves instructors examining their beliefs, biases, and practices. This examination uncovers inherent biases that the instructor may not be aware of, which are reflected in her teaching practices (Apple, 2004). Gaining knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity of another culture requires exploring this culture through various means (Irizzary, 2007). To further understand the values, traditions, and communication and learning preferences of a new culture, Gay (2002) recommended engaging learners in dialogue and other interactions, perhaps in the larger community, to develop cultural competency.

Studies in second language acquisition confirm that learning must take into account the social, historical, and cultural context of learners; without consideration of current frames of reference, gaps in learning cannot be addressed (Huang & Zhu, 2009). In turn, incorporation of these factors in professional development design and implementation positively impact development (Irvine, 2003). Without this knowledge, it is very difficult to understand and accept a different perspective (Gonzalez-Meña, 2008). The instructor has a central role in responsive professional development. To have a successful experience, this instructor must gain knowledge of the learners and exhibit patience, persistence, and affirmation (Gay, 2010).

**Interactions.** Participants in this study stressed the importance of allowing “socialization” and interactions throughout the training experience. Consistent with a collectivist worldview, interactions help to build a community of learners. In order to
develop community, instructors must be aware of student communication preferences, both on a cultural and on an individual level.

It is evident from the data in this study that Latina FCC Educators communicate through words as well as through body language. Latinos are also more collectivist in nature, not wishing to stand out in a group. According to the literature, Latinos tend to prefer a high-context communication style, in which a message may be implied or verbally communicated, supplemented with body language, eye movement, cues, and silence. High-context cultures have a strong cohesive group identity, a collective support network, and develop one’s identity through group affiliation (Würtz, 2005; Rosado, 2005).

Conversely, Caucasians tend to prefer a low-context form of communication. As Hall (1976) explained, this form of communication is direct and explicit. Low-context cultures have a weaker group identity, are more individualistic, and gain identity primarily based upon individual accomplishments. Using these communication methods with Latinos may be ineffective and undermines the feelings of safety and affirmation needed for learning.

Traditional adult learning instructional approaches are founded on low-context communication styles, often incorporating varying periods of monologue within the experience. This approach is a passive-receptive posture in which the instructor presents information and the learner responds in a pre-determined way, usually with one learner responding at a time (Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006). These methods involve asking convergent (single-answer) questions and using deductive approaches to solving problems (Gay, 2000). Traditional teaching approaches tend to involve discourse that moves from whole to parts, specific to general. Conversely, Latinos tend to prefer a participatory-interactive discourse style, in which instructors and learners collaboratively construct discourse through reciprocal involvement in the exchange. These styles have been observed
in African American, Latinos, and Native Hawaiians (Gay, 2000) where communication tends to be more inductive, interactive, and communal. This involves the affect or emotions in the conversation, thereby creating a sense of community (Gay, 2009).

Participants discussed the need for respect in communication. They also stressed that conversations are used to build and nourish relationships. Each of these concepts is supported in the literature. Winton, McCollum, and Catlett (2008) found that cultural groups prefer a dialogic communication style. This style of communication is based upon discussing and debating issues with a strong sense of mutual respect and friendship, with the intent of creating unity and truth (Buber, 1955).

It is important to remember that communication styles are individual. Communication preferences vary among individuals, as influenced by temperament and life experience (LeBaron, 2003). Differences may also be influenced by economic and education factors, with low-income and minimally educated members of ethnic groups more likely to demonstrate culturally-related communication patterns than those that group members who are middle-class and educated (Gay, 2010).

The data from this study supported the finding of the literature regarding communication preferences for Latinos. Participants reported that conversation happens naturally during trainings with Latina FCC Educators. Several cautioned that they have to be particularly aware of their body language or it may communicate disrespect. All participants stressed the importance of socialization during the training experience. They suggested integrating socialization in learning experiences to promote collaboration, unity, and joint problem solving.

Another element in communication involved speaking slowly and clearly when presenting material, “…if you are rushing through a presentation, you are not giving them time to process…gives us that little bit of time to reflect on what you said” (#003; 6714,
Participants also stressed the importance of allowing questions throughout the training to support further comprehension, rather than adhering to the common practice of holding questions until the conclusion of the training.

Communication is culturally based, and informed by the value of respeto, or respect. In an educational setting Latino learners may be hesitant to share an opinion, question an authority figure, or talk within a large group. These types of discourse may be viewed as demonstrating a lack of respect and promoting oneself over the group (Suarez, 2005). Therefore, an instructor needs to provide a safe environment, which encourages learners to share viewpoints in non-threatening ways. The instructor can promote communication by implementing and modeling active listening techniques, affirming the learner’s viewpoints, and ensuring that sharing an opinion is presented as an option, rather than a requirement. Rather than adhering to traditional methods of asking questions within large group settings, calling on individuals to respond, or encouraging debate or critique of a topic, the instructor can use alternate approaches. These will be discussed further in the learning activity section.

Learning Preferences. Each learner has a unique approach to learning, which may include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches. The Latina FCC Educators that study participants work with enjoy visuals, active engagement with materials and others, and conversation about topics. As one participant shared, “even though we all speak the same language, we don’t all learn the same way” (#009; 23603, 23777).

All participants recommended using visuals and active engagement with materials and peers in training, “You need the visual piece, you need to be hands on, lots of hands on” shared participant #003 (981, 1051). Another recommended incorporating an auditory learning style, “I used to work or speak through examples” (#008; 2264, 2871). Another
observed that Latinas are very verbal so sharing should be encouraged, “our providers are very vocal, very vocal” (#003; 16319, 16401).

Knowledge of learning preferences should inform professional development planning. Inquiring about learning preferences could be included in the needs assessment covered in the next section. To meet the needs of individual learners and variations in learning styles, the training design should include multiple learning approaches.

**Establishing Norms.** Participants in this study identified trust, respect, and clarity as the cultural norms that influence the design of professional development experiences for Latina educators. The role of the instructor includes articulating clear expectations, facilitating an engaging training, knowing the content, being affirming and respectful throughout the learning process, and practicing good classroom management. This also includes setting parameters with the group regarding respectful interactions with others in the professional development setting.

**Norms for Socialization/Interactions.** Latinos place a high value on developing *personalismo* or relationships that are warm and caring (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). These relationships are formed within a climate of *respeto* (respect) and *confianza* (trust). As indicated in the communication style section of this chapter, Latinas commonly share personal experiences as a type of stage-setting before engaging in a learning activity:

So, and it’s very hard for me, to ask someone to stop saying a thought when we are talking or having a live discussions and somebody is talking a lot. Even when it’s off topic, but the off topic could be, ‘oh, my family is suffering right now.’ (#007; 1060, 1305)
A participant communicated the challenges instructors may encounter when combining Latina educators from difference countries:

…they will be like, hmmm, I don’t like this person or the people from that part of the country think they are like this or that. Sometimes there are comments, made, because someone is from a different part. Like, in one country, or one culture, because the Latino have different cultures, they like for example, in my country, they have the country part and my people are from the city and they talk different. So, they do have conflicts sometimes – this person is from the country and this person is from the other side and they are like this and that and they don’t know how to talk. (#005; 17811, 18490)

Another participant shared that Latinos compete with each other, “That’s the way it is. Even in their homes, I see they compete with each other, even more than in the Anglo population” (#004; 16383, 16051).

Instructors, in collaboration with learners, have a responsibility to establish an environment where learning can take place and relationships can be formed. This can be addressed be establishing norms based upon confianza or “trust between people based on a confidence in the other person” (McLaughlin & Bryan, 2003, p. 292). Within a respectful climate, the instructor models listening and honoring opinions while articulating best practices. It is important to be polite and respectful; modeling this approach may influence learners who may otherwise engage in conflict:

Be there; serve them that is one way you show respect. Some people will say that I am giving them the impression I want them to feel superior than me. That is not what really Hispanic people are going to read you like, they are going to say, wow, you are really polite. Politeness is HUGE in Hispanic countries. I am sure other cultures…politeness is way up there. (#007; 9416, 9675)
Participants once again suggested learning about the Latino culture as well as the individual differences within that culture:

…read or to learn a little bit about the culture we are going to work with. Just because all of the cultures are very different and they might all have different expectations. My best advice is to have that person learn a little bit about the culture. (#009; 16273, 16367)

In the experiences of the study participants, challenges with inter-group dynamics were not a common occurrence. Regardless, it is imperative to establish norms that set the tone for learning. This includes establishing norms in collaboration with the learners. These norms should specifically address the behaviors of the instructor and learners that promote confianza and respeto, including being receptive to alternate perspectives through sharing, and listening without judgment.

**Norms regarding Time.** Several participants stressed the value of time, recommending the training be relevant and worthwhile, not simply an opportunity to receive training credit:

…respect for themselves, their time, I love for myself to respect their time. When am I going to start, what is the time I announce we are going to finish? I really try to respect that time – they are adults, they have their own lives, their own problems. (#008; 3217, 3567)

Different concepts of time are evident in literature on cross-cultural norms. Hall (1976, 1983) explained that cultures and individuals might adhere to “monochromatic” or “polychromic” concepts of time. Caucasians tend to be monochromatic, doing one thing at a time during a specific time period. Individuals with this acculturation are often very structured, and love to plan, make lists, and track or organize their daily routine.
Latin Americans tend to have a polychromic perspective of time. Polychromic cultures multi-task, feeling that time is fluid and flexible, and without the need for detailed plans or adherence to deadlines. In Latino culture one lives primarily in the present, whereas mainstream Americans are future-focused. Successfully working with Latinos demands a focus on the present moment, and a relaxed perspective on punctuality (Rivera & Rogers-Atkinson, 1997). This attitude towards time means that Latinos are often not as punctual as Caucasians, “Another thing of Latino people is that they are always late” (#004; 20015, 20091).

Individuals may favor a mono- or polychromic perspective of time, but must use both during their daily life. As such, differences in perceptions of time can impact work and other responsibilities (Rosado, 2005). While tasks are eventually completed, the work ethics and patterns of behavior in accomplishing these tasks differ. While honoring that different concepts of time may be culturally related, instructors can make clear their expectations regarding punctuality and attendance in a respectful manner. Participants suggested that perhaps the first 15 minutes of the training could be allocated specifically for socialization. Other shared that they do not provide training credit if learners arrive later than 15 minutes after the training commences.

**Analytic Category 2: Participants described a responsive professional development experience for Latina FCC Educators as reflecting individual and cultural identities of learners.**

**The Professional Development Process**

The design and implementation of professional development is complex. Unfortunately, as Fink (2003) stated, most instructors have little or no training in course design. For clarity and additional depth, the researcher organized this section by synthesizing the data and the literature into a professional development outline. The
professional development outline takes the reader through the stages of educational planning and implementation, including choosing a topic, use of language, creation of rationale, assessing diverse needs, clarifying learning outcomes and objectives, assessing learning experiences, providing resources, and conducting a post-course evaluation.

**Professional Development Design**

This section applies the data gained through the analysis in Chapter 4. The participants in this study identified elements necessary to the design and implementation of culturally responsive professional experiences. Their suggestions were in line with the literature on this area.

Designing appropriate professional development relies on multiple factors. Fink (2003) shared a 12-step design for planning a college course. These steps include three design phases: initial, intermediate, and advanced. The first design phase includes identification of situational factors, learning goals, feedback and assessment procedures, and teaching and learning activities. The second phase includes creating a thematic structure for the course, selecting an instructional strategy, and using the instructional strategies to design the learning activities. The final design phase finishes remaining tasks, including developing a grading system, addressing possible issues, writing the syllabus, and planning an evaluation for the course and teaching methods. This model provides a structure for instructors to integrate each element of the learning experience into a comprehensive design. The following section connects the data obtained from this study with the literature within a similar professional development design.
Figure 2: Integration (adapted from Fink, 2003)

**Needs Assessment.** In order to determine the situational factors that impact the learning experience, the instructor must acquire information about the learners. Situational factors include expectations for the learning experience held by the funder, the college, or the larger profession. They also include the topic as well as the needs and preferences of the learners and the instructor (Fink, 2003). This section addresses the characteristics of the learner in relation to this study.

Understanding the characteristics of the learners serves two purposes: (1) recognition and validation of learners’ experiences and knowledge and (2) acquisition of information used to inform learning design and implementation strategies. This initial contact is often referred to as a “needs assessment.” Jane Vella (2002) developed a “Learning Needs Resource Assessment” (LNRA) (p.57) which learners complete prior to the professional development experience. An LNRA is used with all potential students or a sample of learners, serving to inform the professional development design. This tool helps the instructor to design a learning experience that meets the needs of the learner prior to the event. Without this information, instructors may continue to design learning experiences that reflect their own perception of an appropriate learning experience, but which may not
meet the needs of learners. A uniform model of professional development can hinder learning, leading to underachievement (Padrón, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002).

The content of the needs assessment is determined by the audience, the topic at hand, and potential instructional strategies. According to this study, the needs assessment should include questions regarding students’ primary language, as well as their linguistic preference during the training. It should also include learning preferences; do they do best with visual, auditory, or kinesthetic materials? This information serves to assist the instructor in the course design. A needs assessment can take various formats, including questionnaires, surveys, checklists, focus groups, interviews, and observations (Winton, McCollum, & Catlett, 2008).

According to this study, a verbal needs assessment would be more effective and responsive to Latina FCC Educators than a written one. Due to time constraints, an instructor may select a sample of participants to inform the professional development design. Since the needs assessment does not end with this initial contact, the instructor can determine adaptations throughout the training experience based upon interactions with and observation of learners. The needs assessment is just one element in the responsive, learner-centered professional development model. The goal is to help learners become better educators of young children. As one participant reminded me, “I am building professionals” (#004; 4482, 4569).

**Topic.** The selection of topic may be learner-driven or determined purely by licensing requirements. Regardless of who selected the topic, it must be meaningful and related to the needs of the learners. When a topic is learner-driven, educators have requested a topic that they are interested in learning more about. When a topic is related to licensing requirements, it also helps learners, since it addresses something that they need to know in their role as an educator. In either case, the topic must be relevant and connected
to the lives and experiences of learners in order to promote engagement and motivation (Gay, 2009).

In Massachusetts, licensed educators are required to complete an individual professional development plan. Educators consider their learning needs and goals related to the Massachusetts core competencies (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2005), and the Quality Rating and Improvement System (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, 2010b). The eight core competencies include subcategories and indicators that can be obtained on the EEC website (www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/prof_devel/core_comp_packet.pdf). The professional development plan and subsequent topic selection are organized on two elemental levels, macro and micro. On a macro level, the professional development topic should reflect recognized core competencies for the field. On a micro level, the topic should reflect the needs of the individual educator and program, as well as the children and families in her care (See Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Individual professional development planning
In this study, only one participant commented specifically on the role of topic relevance in professional development. Participants who did not address this issue may have simply assumed that the topic would be relevant, since selection of topics is based on educator needs assessments, on site observations, and the mandates of state and agency parameters. Therefore, consideration of the relevance of the training topic is of vital importance. Educators should be encouraged to become self-directed; they are responsible for verifying that every training meets their needs, improving their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in specifically identified areas.

**Rationale.** Participants indicated that the choice of the professional development topic should be relevant for the FCC Educator. This rationale is articulated in the professional development outline as the leading sentence of the course description. For example, a course on responsive interactions with infants and toddlers would include an introductory sentence on the impact of responsive interactions on infant and toddler development. Clearly articulating the rationale for the topic as part of the professional development outline shows the relationship between the topic choice and the learner’s work.

**Language.** Another element of the training design is the language in which it is provided. In response to learners’ needs and to promote comprehension, the training should be offered in a language learners can understand. The majority of participants stressed that training should be offered in the primary language of participants. This facilitates comprehension and active engagement in the learning experience. Attending a training offered in a language that is not well understood is not only threatening, it limits participation, understanding, and the subsequent development of knowledge. Participants clearly articulated the lack of confidence among the Latina FCC Educators they work with.
Attending training in English only serves to amplify these feelings. One participant shared the impact of attending training in English:

So that’s one of the things. The language barrier, definitely. The pronunciation and the accents, they may feel shy. Ummm. you may have an audience of Hispanic and you may not have a lot of participants [participation] just because they feel they have an accent, they don’t, they have so much to say, but they don’t feel secure enough. (#005; 6964, 7356)

While state-funded trainings offered in Spanish are increasing, the majority of professional development experiences are offered in English. Higher education degree programs are predominately offered in English; in Massachusetts, only three out of 27 colleges and universities offer degrees in Spanish (LaChance, Hawes, & Simpson, 2010). Perhaps surprisingly, attendance at professional development opportunities offered in Spanish is often very low, resulting in the cancellations of these events. This may reflect poor marketing of these opportunities, the lack of a relationship between vendor and learners, or information not reaching the participants who are most likely to be interested in it.

**Learning Outcomes.** Learning outcomes describe what knowledge, skills, and attitudes will result from participating in professional development (University of Warwick, 2011). Participants In this study involved learners in considering current practice and how the training may impact their work. One participant asked Latina FCC Educators in her classes to “imagine what you can do” (#001, 22932; 23070) with this information. Within a learner-centered model, the learning outcomes should consider the needs and achievements of the learner, rather than the intentions of the instructor (Adam, 2004).
Learning Objectives. Learning objectives frame the professional development experience. They align each learner’s needs with the courses’ instructional approaches and goals for learning (Moon, 2002). Vella (2002) described achievement based objectives, specific learning experiences that advance knowledge, skills, and abilities of the learners. For example, “By the end of this training, all learners will have examined a case study on play using four open-ended questions and reviewed two research based articles on play.” Instructors list objectives and identify the knowledge and skills to be evaluated and standards to be met on the professional development planning template (Vella).

Learning objectives should be measurable and aligned with learning activities. As stated in Fink’s taxonomy (2003), learning objectives should address foundational knowledge, application to practice, and integration with current practice. Learning objectives must take into account the human dimension, demonstrate caring, and include strategies for learning how to learn. Learning objectives are integral to planning and include the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964).

- The cognitive domain is defined as content knowledge and intellectual skills. There are six levels, from basic to advanced.
- The psychomotor domain includes physical movement, coordination, and use of motor skill areas.
- The affective domain includes approaches to learning and feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivation and attitude (McDonald, 2004).

In this study, participants did not specifically address developing learning objectives. However, they clearly prioritized the affective domain, followed by the psychomotor domain. In the design of professional development, instructors should consider the inclusion of each of the learning domains in order to meet the needs of all learners.
Planning includes articulating measurable learning objectives that correspond to the learning activities and learning outcomes. Resources for designing learning objectives are offered in the literature including Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). The taxonomy lists learning objectives and activities within the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Within each domain, there are levels of increasing complexity. In 1964, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masis designed an affective taxonomy addressing the internalization of new information, including receiving, responding, valuing, and organization.

There have been multiple revisions to the Bloom’s Taxonomy with the latest version including 19 alternative frameworks to support designing educational objectives and learning (Anderson, 2006). The taxonomy is beneficial for planning, establishing the learner as central to the process, and then establishing appropriate objectives, designing activities and experiences, addressing needed materials and equipment, and articulating assessment measures (Anderson).

**Learning Activities.** All ten participants agreed that interactive learning experiences, primarily offered within small groups, served to promote learning and engagement amongst Latina FCC Educators. Using a learner-centered, rather than teacher-centered approach is generally more effective (Dewey, 1963; Freire, 1970; Tennant & Pogson, 2005). In addition, integrating a variety of instructional and experiential approaches support diverse learners’ needs (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

**Approach.** Latina FCC Educators learn through social interactions with others, as well as through other culturally relevant learning approaches. This reflects a socioconstructivist framework in which the cultural capital of learners is honored (Freire, 1972) by placing real-life situations in the educational environment (Fallahi, 2008). Within this frame, instructors consider and integrate the learners’ strengths, challenges, and needs in their choice of instructional approaches.
Instructors should include various approaches to learning in the instructional design, which engage visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. Visual approaches may include pictures, diagrams, concept maps, videos, charts, graphs, power point presentations, words on chart paper, and demonstrations. Auditory approaches include reading instructions aloud, listening to oral presentations, music, videos, and group sharing. Kinesthetic approaches incorporate movement and interactions, such as role playing, manipulating materials, and interacting with people in active ways.

Caffarella (2002) suggested multiple strategies to cater to a variety of learning styles, including problem-based learning, Socratic dialogue, simulations, reflective practice, web-based application sharing, role play, group discussions, storytelling, case studies, metaphor analysis, structured experiences, listening circles, online chats, buzz groups, hypermedia, observations, quiet meetings, and games. The selection of learning activities should be determined by the learning objectives, the topics that need to be covered, the expectations or outcomes, and the learning styles of the students. Alignment of the learning experiences with the learning objectives provides a framework for planning. The planning process includes methods to determine if objectives were met and if further support is necessary.

**Small groups.** Learning experiences within small groups were deemed most effective for Latina FCC Educators, “we form relationships, so it’s better for us in a small group” (#009; 13093, 13527). In this way Latinas, “exchange information and hear from other people’s opinions” (#005; 14622, 14851). The researcher observed training provided by participants, beginning with a large group welcome and an ice-breaker, and followed by small group learning activities. The participants explained that spending the majority of the time in small groups served to enhance engagement in learning, promote safety, and
encourage conversation. However, they did have to ensure that learners stayed on task and on topic within these small groups.

Another benefit of small groups is the opportunity for scaffolding of learning. Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory introduced the idea the zone of proximal development. While this theoretical concept was originally intended for work with children, it is now used with learners of all ages, defined as what someone cannot do by himself or herself but are able to do with help. This could be a useful strategy for small group work with Latina Educators. Combining students who are stronger in the topic with those who are less proficient may benefit all learners. More proficient learners share knowledge with other learners, helping them to internalize new information. Scaffolding includes the instructor, who circulates throughout the room, providing guidance and suggestions during small group time.

The process of learning not only involves learning through active engagement, it involves determining how new knowledge, skills, and attitudes fit into existing schemas. Vella (2002) suggested a process of “praxis” or “action with reflection (p. 115). This involved participating in an activity, reflecting on that experience, deciding what to include in practice, trying it out, changing what needs to be changed, and trying it again. This approach takes the learning beyond the educational setting and into practical application. The next section will provide suggestions for incorporating reflection into the design of professional development.

**Reflection.** Learning involves developing knowledge, skills and attitudes. Learning is about changes in our self-perception and the way that we see the world in which we live (Merriam & Kim, 2008). These changes occur through reflection on current our views and through the consideration of alternate perspectives. Critical reflection along with questioning and experience could result in transformation of current knowledge, skills, and
attitudes (Brookfield, 2004). Reflection should be incorporated into the responsive learning experience.

While Latina FCC Educators are often reluctant to share controversial opinions about topics, instructors should find ways to include critical reflection in the learning process. This could involve asking learners to reflect on current beliefs and practices, similar to the process recommended for the instructor. Non-threatening methods might include discussion of current practices within small groups and providing resources for learners on best practices. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) suggest asking participants for a short written reaction to a topic. For Latina FCC Educators this could be adapted as a verbal exchange in response to a video. Other suggestions include discussing case studies, acting out role-plays. These activities serve to promote reflection and comprehension around new knowledge.

**Comprehension.** Learning new information is not usually a quick process. It involves consideration of past experiences, perceptions, and experiences. Study participants stressed the importance of providing sufficient time for learners to process new information presented in trainings. Irvine (2003) recommended that instructors working with culturally diverse learners allow extended time for reflection and processing. One participant indicated the need for processing time may be related to language barriers or other factors that impede understanding:

I had one provider pull me aside and say, ‘do not change your way of speaking.’ She said, ‘the fact that you give us a little bit of time to process what you’ve said makes a big difference.’ Because if you are rushing through a presentation, you are not giving them time to process your last phrase or your last paragraph. So, she said to me – ‘don’t ever change that.’ She said, ‘you speak soft, you don’t ever accuse, you don’t point fingers, you go right to the point of what you want us to get out of
what you are saying. Then you give us that little bit of time to reflect on what you said’. (#003; 6714, 7333)

In another situation, verbal engagement in the learning experience was limited by a lack of confidence in speaking English:

That would depend…let’s say you are giving…say, it’s Latinas and you are giving a training that is offered in English – that’s different. That’s where they will become more intimidated. (#006; 8170, 8354)

To enhance comprehension and build confidence, participants recommended providing directions in multiple ways. When asked if she did this to help with understanding directions, one participant clarified, “it’s not quite misunderstood and that’s not my intention when I come to them, it’s just reiterating what we are doing and trying to give them a little bit more confidence” (#007; 5714, 5898). This process may involve posting directions for the group on chart paper or a power point, scheduling small group “check-ins” to verify that everyone understands the tasks at hand, and holding individual conversations offering learners more personalized guidance.

Allowing questions throughout the training is essential; unfortunately, instructors often ask learners to hold questions or assign them to a “parking lot” where learners write out questions and attaching them to chart paper to be reviewed later in the training. One suggested providing time for questions throughout the training, “…because you allow time for questions and each participant might have a question and you can ask for each questions” (#009; 12458, 12822).

Planning learning activities is an involved process. It includes knowing the learners, building expertise on the topic, and crafting a design that reflects the real-world context of the learners. Learning activities are supplemented by resources, as well as by evaluation
methods. The researcher recommends including evaluation methods throughout the learning experience.

Assessment and Evaluation

For the Learner. Creating effective learning experiences includes an ongoing assessment process. As indicated throughout this study, Latina FCC Educators may have low educational and literacy levels. In order to facilitate understanding, the instructor must be cognizant of the needs of learners throughout the professional development experience. One participant provides directions in multiple ways in order to guide students in their learning and to ensure that they understand the activity. Such strategies to ascertain comprehension should be embedded throughout the professional development experience.

Vella (1998) articulated strategies for evaluating the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes-related to those listed in the learning outcomes- throughout the learning experience. These include conversations, in-session or workplace assignments, simulations of skills through role-play, games, group projects, observations by the instructor or others knowledgeable in the topic and field, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, direct or discreet observation, or written methods such as scales and assessment instruments. While written methods are suggested in the literature, according to participants in this study, written tasks should be limited or should include individual support and a visual component.

For the Instructor. A central Latino value is deference to authority (Dana, 1993). Known as simpatía, this value means being polite even in the face of adversity or conflict (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Souto-Manning, 2009). Participants stressed that these values may cause learners to be hesitant in sharing their opinions during trainings. Strategies to encourage disclosing one’s perspective include promoting engagement in small groups, which is less threatening than speaking out in a large group setting.
As Latina educators strive to maintain a relationship with the instructor, demonstrate respect and avoid conflict, the training evaluations they submit are almost always excellent: …you always get a good evaluation. Which is somewhat… well, you want to learn from it. But, I wonder if it was someone, if it was someone, that they didn’t know, that they never related to if they would be more honest about it. (#006; 6152, 6508)

So, that is a problem, because I don’t want them to walk away wondering if they are going to hurt my feelings, to I can’t really say it the way I wanted to because it could [cause the instructor] in problems. (#007; 12625, 13028)

There are multiple challenges in obtaining meaningful evaluations from Latina participants. However, the instructor needs to know if the training was effective from the perspective of the learners, so that she can make improvements and adjustments to the overall design. In order to meet her need for honest evaluations and respect the cultural values of her students, the instructor could use a formative evaluation approach. In this learner evaluation model, the instructor incorporates methods to obtain feedback from learners throughout the professional development experience, adjusting the training to meet the needs of learners. Another alternative would be for instructors to read the questions on the evaluation to the group, one by one, with students completing the answers at that time. The evaluation could include small icons or pictures next to responses to assist with completion. Since the MA Department of Early Education and Care and the MA Association for the Education of Young Children (issues continuing education units for EEC in MA) currently require written evaluations from learners, alternate evaluation strategies need to be explored.
Resources

Resources and materials for the professional development experience should be relevant, representative of learners, non-discriminatory, and in the home language of participants. Resources need to be available in Spanish. Participants stressed that written resources should be providing in the primary language of participants.

Summary

Chapter V provided the researcher’s interpretation of the perspective of 10 Latina FCC Mentors regarding the constructs of a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina FCC Educators. The rich data revealed an insider’s view of Latino culture and the experiences of Latina instructors and learners. Participants clearly articulated that culturally responsive professional development for Latina FCC Educators requires a holistic approach. It involves understanding how culturally diverse adults learn, by incorporating the learner’s frames of reference, including norms, values, beliefs, and ideas into the professional development design.

This study clearly articulated the need to affirm the learner’s individual and ethnic identity in teaching practices. A mainstream approach, including large group facilitation, a teacher-centered classroom style, and an emphasis on the individual learner, is not perceived to be effective among the target group. Participants passionately shared the need to establish relationships with learners at the training, even if it is only for one occasion. They also stressed the importance of establishing a climate of trust and respect, not from the perspective of the instructor, but in the mind of the learner.

As stated in the literature, the process of becoming culturally competent begins with the instructor. The instructor commits to a process of self-reflection, critically assessing her own perceptions, beliefs, and biases. This is a challenging and ongoing process. The instructor continues this journey by becoming knowledgeable about her
learners’ cultures, as well as the individuality of each learner. This rich knowledge base hopefully results in understanding of and openness towards others, resulting in powerful learning experiences for the diverse learner (Irvine, 2003).

Articulating and implementing teaching practices that are responsive to the needs of diverse adult learners is imperative. The achievement gap in education is growing at all levels, from kindergarten to higher education; therefore, culturally responsive teaching practices need to become a critical issue for all educators. Responsive approaches serve to combat current mainstream educational practices that only serve the mainstream majority culture, at the expense of other groups. Building responsive approaches includes establishing inclusion through norms, procedures and structures; using a relationship-based approach founded on trust and respect as the frame for this pedagogy; developing a perspective of affirmation; engaging learners in relevant learning experiences; embedding the learner’s priorities and values within this structure; and believing in one’s students and promoting their competence:

Ok, definitely keep in mind you want to build a community within your training.

You want to let everybody know you are respectful of their background, their knowledge, who they are as individuals. (#007; 8730, 8940)

The instructor, in collaboration with diverse learners, can drive these changes with a powerful ripple effect on children, families, and society.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the elements of a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina Family Child Care Educators. The conclusions for this study aligned with the research questions and the findings, and addressed three primary areas of professional development: climate, context, and facilitation. This chapter includes a discussion of the major findings, concluding with the researcher’s recommendations and a final reflection for the study.

Forming Relationships in a Climate of Trust and Respect

The first major finding of this research is that a culturally responsive professional development environment for Latina FCC Educators supports the development of relationships within a climate of trust and respect. As indicated by seven out of 10 participants, this environment reflects the efforts of the instructor. Relationship building begins when learners enter a training space that is welcoming and aesthetically pleasing. Relationally, the instructor should be prepared to greet learners individually, maintaining this individual attention throughout the professional development experience when possible. Physically, this includes an environment that smells clean; is visually appealing, with visual representation of the learners through pictures, books, and other resource materials; has table coverings and decorations; offers food, preferably homemade; features the inviting sounds of mingling and sharing; and is equipped with furniture that is comfortable and appropriate for the training topic - floor space if they will be activities requiring open space, and tables and chairs for group work.

An overarching conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that relationships form the foundation of culturally responsive professional development. These relationships begin in an appealing and safe environment. It can also be concluded that a professional
development climate founded on trust and respect not only serves to promote relationships, it provides a safe context for learning.

**An Interactive Context**

The second major finding is that the culturally responsive professional development context for Latina FCC Educators includes active engagement with materials and others throughout the learning experience. The conclusion drawn from this finding is that multiple elements are critical to the design and delivery of the successful professional development experience. These elements include determining learners’ needs and preferences, offering the training in the primary language of the learners, providing opportunities to interact with peers and materials within small groups, and providing alternative program evaluation methods. Participants in this study reported that small groups are more responsive to the learning and communication preferences of Latina FCC Educators. Within small groups, participants are more apt to share experiences, viewpoints, and problem solving strategies together. Conversely, in large groups, learners may be hesitant to voice an opinion for fear of standing out or showing disrespect for the instructor, or due to a lack of confidence in linguistic proficiency. Through dialogue in small groups, learners are able to socialize with their peers, who provide support and scaffolding. When split into smaller groups, individuals are also better able to attend to their preferred learning style through selected learning activities.

A related conclusion is that active engagement throughout the learning process may serve to address the challenge of obtaining an accurate program evaluation. In alignment with the value of *respeto*, Latina FCC Educators will usually not write a poor evaluation, considering it disrespectful of the instructor as an authority figure. Active engagement offers the instructor the opportunity to observe and have individual and small group discussions to determine the effectiveness of the training throughout the experience.
Additional suggestions on evaluation methods are presented in the recommendations section of this chapter.

A Journey Taken Together: Facilitation

The third major finding of this research is that effective facilitation of a culturally responsive professional development experience is reflected in the instructor’s knowledge of and affirmation of each learner’s individual and ethnic identity. A conclusion drawn from this finding is that instructors must engage in critical self-reflection on their attitudes, beliefs, and practices to pursue their goal of becoming culturally competent. This journey includes learning about each student’s culture, including cultural capital, experiences, and challenges.

Another conclusion is that building community with learners is perceived by participants as culturally responsive. This can be accomplished in numerous ways. Instructors should validate learners’ knowledge and experience throughout the training; they can also support Latina FCC Educators in ways that extend beyond the classroom, serving as coaches, mentors, and advocates. In addition to this, instructors serve as authority figures, while simultaneously demonstrating caring, competence, and responsiveness. This means establishing fair and clear expectations, as well as clearly articulating the norms of the training.

Recommendations

As indicated in the literature, the EEC workforce is increasingly diverse. As the educator is a key factor in ensuring quality experiences for young children, attention to effective professional development is critical. The researcher recommends a professional development framework with a focus on the affective domain of learning, recognizing the central role of emotional and belief systems in the design and delivery of professional development (Hodgson, 2009; Yassin, 2010). As participants clearly voiced, Latina FCC
Educators learn best through a relationship-based approach, which engages and respects the emotional and belief systems of the learner as well as the instructor. Within a learner-centered approach, the instructor serves as a facilitator of learning, providing a framework of instructional design that meets the needs of learners, is relevant with direct application to practice, and is supported with constructive feedback imbedded in the learning process.

Based upon the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered for the field of early education and care, higher education, and for further research:

**Recommendations for the Field of Early Education and Care.** The early education and care workforce needs professional development that is more effective and responsive to their needs. Policymakers, funders, and instructors should consider the following suggestions:

1. The researcher recommends that facilitators of professional development expand their current adult learning pedagogy framework beyond traditional approaches, integrating changes that reflect the needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse learners. Particular attention must be paid to the affective domain, immersing trust and respect throughout the learning experience with a focus on relationship-based practice. Factors for an affective model include: establishing an educational climate which exudes trust, respect and safety; reflecting diverse communication styles; integrating all learning domains through engaging, relevant learning activities; integrating multiple evaluation methods throughout the learning experience; and providing support in integrating new knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the educator’s work with children and families.
b. The Climate should:
   
i. Offer a physical environment which appeals to all of the senses. The space should, ideally, smell clean, feature visual representations of the group, sound welcoming, and offer culturally related refreshments.

ii. Create an overall welcoming atmosphere with supportive interactions throughout the training. This begins with individual greetings and continues through engaging in discourse with individual learners throughout the training.

iii. Establish and reinforce norms for trust and respect by sharing personal stories and examples with the group.

iv. Promote trust, respect, and safety through ongoing affirmative and respectful interactions.

v. Integrate collaborative activities that serve to promote relationships and build a community of learners.

c. The Context should be rooted in:
   
i. Culturally competent instructors, who learn both through conducting research and through engaging with diverse learners.

ii. Culturally responsive professional development planning, achieved by:

   1. Conducting a needs assessment.

   2. Using information from the needs assessment to inform planning.

   3. Ensuring that the topic is relevant for the learners and is founded on research and best practices.
4. Articulating the rationale for the topic.

5. Offering the training in the language requested by learners.

6. Articulating specific outcomes related to increasing quality.

7. Aligning instructional approaches with goals for learning, founded on the needs of the learners. These approaches should engage the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

8. Planning interactive learning experiences, aligned with the learning objectives, which are founded on interactions with the materials and with other participants. Activities should integrate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches to meet learners’ needs.

9. Using individual reflection and small group work to provide individualized support throughout the experience.

10. Providing resources in the learners’ primary languages.

iii. Evaluation should include:

1. Conducting ongoing observations and interact with learners to determine development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Strategies include: having individual and small group conversations; observing student participation in and completion of learning activities; offering simulations, games, and learning activities that stimulate collaborative learning, and including periodic self-evaluation.

2. Checking in with the learner after the training via phone, email, or an on-site visit, if possible. This provides an
opportunity to identify and address successes and challenges, and to scaffold learning.

3. Using various modes of evaluation including verbal feedback, written evaluations, reviewing goals and format of evaluations with learners, reviewing course content as a group before completing evaluations, clearly articulating the purpose of the evaluation, and individually contacting a selection of learners after the training for a more in-depth verbal evaluation.

2. Facilitators of professional development for diverse learners should consider creating professional learning communities (Dufour, 2004) to enable them to meet periodically to share information, knowledge, and research on best practices for PD. This model would focus on culturally responsive practices, providing the opportunity for relationship building, peer support, and direct application to practice.

3. Policy makers, funders, and programs should revisit funding allocations for programs.
   
a. Current funding and grant requirements often allow little time for PD implementation. In order to promote changes and improvements in practice, additional time is needed for training implementation including on site mentoring support.

b. Monetary support should be provided for the development of a mentoring system to assist with application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to practice. To maximize funding and program improvements, the integration of communities of practice (Wenger, 2006) or professional learning
communities (Dufour, 2004) should be integrated with mentoring support.

The development and support of these groups should span the state and be facilitated by culturally responsive instructors with vast experience and expertise in the field. These groups should be an integral part of the EEC system and not simply funded periodically. As learning does not have a specific beginning and end, the ongoing acquisition of knowledge can be supported within these groups (Wenger).

c. All resources and trainings should be made available in multiple languages.

d. The field must revisit the need for community and relationship building to increase the current sparse attendance of ethnically and linguistically diverse learners at state funded trainings.

4. The field should honor and acknowledge the value of the Spanish language, and provide support for educators to become literate in their first language.

5. The Department of Early Education and Care and FCC Systems should collaborate with adult basic education providers to offer General Education Development (GED) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses on an ongoing basis in multiple communities, in order to provide educators with the opportunity to obtain degrees and learn English. Unfortunately, according to the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (2011), more than 1.1 million or one-third of the individuals working for the state need Adult Basic Education services, yet there is a waitlist of over 5500 students for these classes. This obstacle needs to be addressed to support the development of a competent and diverse workforce.
Recommendations for Higher Education.

1. Institutions of higher education should provide professional development opportunities to instructors at institutes of higher education on cultural competency, in order to improve their work with diverse adult learners. Ongoing communities of learners should be formed to discuss current approaches, research, successes, and challenges in working with these students.

2. A certificate program should be offered in the field of facilitating professional development for supporting diverse educators. Courses should be culturally responsive (see factors listed above), and include research-based methods to support diverse adult learners. Such a program would provide the opportunity to establish a community of learners in this area of professional development.

Recommendations for Further Research. The researcher recommends further studies addressing the needs of diverse adult learners in the field of EEC. With an increase in the number of ethnically and linguistically diverse educators, attention to the training of educators is necessary in order to increase the quality of EEC offered to children and families. Therefore, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. Based upon the limitations of this study and to correct for the researcher’s bias, the researcher recommends a study with a larger sample of Latina educators. This study would ideally include the observation of training programs, paired with a comparison of teaching approaches. The study should also include attention to women’s ways of knowing (Belenky, 1986). Additional studies would ideally include both Latino and Latina FCC Educators, to determine if the professional development needs of men and women in this population differ.
2. Research is needed to improve transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes from training to practice. This research should include observation of the educators at work.

3. Research is limited on conflict between individuals from different Latin American countries and how this affects professional development and on-the-job effectiveness. Additional studies might focus on the well-documented friction between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, or expand to include other countries or subpopulations.

4. Insufficient work has been done exploring recruitment and retention strategies for diverse adult learners in institutes of higher education. Inquiry into this area would help to determine the most effective practices and identify changes that should be implemented to bring more diverse learners into degree programs and ensure that they complete them.

5. Finally, while the researcher gained a great deal of useful information interviewing FCC Mentors who provide professional development, her study would be complemented with one directly interviewing the early education and care workforce. Such a study could use face-to-face interviews, focus groups, or phone interviews to better determine the needs, challenges, and desires regarding professional development delivery and higher education courses in this population.

Latina FCC Mentors eloquently shared the significant contributions that they bring to the field of early education and care. They also articulated the multiple challenges that Latina FCC Educators face in obtaining appropriate and accessible professional development. While this study had limited broader applications, due to the small sample size, it opens the door to critical reflection regarding traditional approaches to professional
development in this field. It is the researcher’s hope that this study will encourage
instructors, Higher Education institutions, and policymakers and funders in the field to
consider alternative approaches to professional development which better benefit and
include diverse learners.

The Latino population is the fastest growing population in the United States, and a
large percentage of this population works in the field of early education and care. A child’s
early years provide the foundation for learning in all domains, including their social and
emotional development. As such, children need high-quality programming, guided by an
educator who respects children from diverse cultures, and who understands and appreciates
their different family and cultural values. In order to provide such excellent care, educators
in this field need more accessible and culturally appropriate development opportunities.
Culturally responsive professional development is imperative for the diverse educator as
well as the children and families participating in these programs. It is the researcher’s hope
and belief that the information gained through this study will play a part in improving the
professional development made available for Latina FCC educators in the state of
Massachusetts.
References


Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (2010a). *Standards for the licensure or approval of family child care; small group and school age and large*
group and school age child care programs. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/6p6cw5s


Rhodes, C.M. (2010, October). *Are you a culturally relevant adult educator?* Roundtable presentation at the 59th International Conference of American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. Clearwater, FL


Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Dear Family Child Care Coordinator:

I am excited to begin my dissertation research this fall. I would be honored if you would agree to assist me in this process. The focus of my study is to explore the elements of culturally responsive professional development for Latina family child care educators. Sharing your expertise in the field and your experiences supporting family child care educators would provide a wealth of information for my research.

The dissertation research will include 10 interviews with Latina family child care coordinators/mentors. I will conduct these interviews in the fall. I will gladly come to your place of employment at a time that is convenient for you. The interview includes up to 10 questions for which there is no right or wrong answer. I want to know what you think, what you have experienced, and any insight you can offer about a culturally responsive professional development experience from YOUR perspective. I will also be asking questions about who you are. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The information you share with me will remain confidential and your name and work affiliation will not be shared in any report.

I will ask you to review my interpretation of the interviews. After I have conducted the interviews, I will provide a summary of the common themes or categories that I have found. In order to verify my interpretation of the interviews is accurate, participants will be asked to review the summary and provide feedback. I want your perspective to be well articulated in this work so this “double check” is very important.

As a thank-you for participating in this project, I would like to provide you with a copy of the NAEYC book, Diversity in Early Education and Care written by Janet Gonzalez-Mena & Intisar Shareef or Anti-Bias Education written by Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards. You will receive the text that you choose at the conclusion of the project.

I hope that you are available to participate in this exciting project. If you are interested in participating in this study, please let me know by ____________. I will contact you to set a convenient date to conduct the interview.

Contact information:

- Office: 888-353-4373
- Cell: 508-509-1384
- Email: j.figuerido@iepd.org

Sincerely,

Jody Figuerido
Appendix B: Sample Selection Criteria

Potential Interview Participant.

Thank-you for expressing interest in participating in the interview process. Interviews will be conducted to inform the following topic: *Exploring culturally responsive professional development for Latina family child care educators.* As we discussed by phone, there are criteria to participate in the research study. Kindly complete the information below so that I will have written documentation that you meet this criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: __________________________</th>
<th>Regional Office: __________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title: __________________________ Years working in early education: __________

Cell Phone: ______________________ Email: _________________________________

For the purposes of this study, individuals interested in participating must meet the following criteria:

**I verify I have or am:**

- [ ] Employed in the field of family child care for at least 2 years (as an educator, a coordinator, a manager, or other individuals working with family child care educators)

- [ ] Provided and attended training

- [ ] Of Latin American descent – born in the United States (including Puerto Rico) or another country.

- [ ] Female

- [ ] Interested in this project

Please return forms to Jody by October 15, 2010 via email (xxxx @xxx.org) or fax: xx-xxx-xxxx Please let me know if you have any questions about this project.

Note: Researcher’s email address and cell phone number were provided.
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Culturally responsive professional development for Latina Family Child Care Educators
University: Lesley University: PhD in Adult Learning
Fall 2010

I am conducting my doctoral dissertation as a student in the Ph.D. Program in Educational Studies at Lesley University. The Dissertation includes conducting face to face interviews with 8 family child care mentors/coordinators. The interview protocol was “tested” in a Pilot Study in the spring of 2010 and revisions were made after that process. The current questions are designed to solicit your description of what constitutes a culturally responsive professional development experience for Latina educators. Your involvement in this process is appreciated and necessary to inform my researcher question: “What are the elements of a culturally responsive professional development experience as described by Latina family child care mentors?”

As a participant in this study, you are not obligated to answer any question and/or may discontinue participation in the interview for any reason whatsoever without any reprisal or consequence.

I will be audio recording the interviews. The purpose of this is to provide verbal notes of your suggestions and responses. For confidentiality, your name and work affiliation will not be included in the dissertation report. The audiotape will be used to transcribe information from the interview in conjunction with my handwritten notes. The audiotape and my handwritten notes will be stored at the investigator’s place of employment and will not be shared with others or available for use unless needed for data review. I will send you a copy of my interpretation of the interviews for your review. I ask that you check these notes and provide any suggestions or corrections. Your participation in the interview and the “member checking” after the report is complete, is greatly appreciated and necessary for this study.

Please sign the consent form providing your consent to use the information you provide in the interview in the dissertation. You will be provided with a copy of this signed consent form so that you may refer to it at any time. If you have any questions prior to, during, or after participation in the interview or focus group, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information provided at the conclusion of this consent form. If you have any additional questions, you may contact my Senior Advisor or Gene Diaz, the Chair of the Lesley Internal Review Board (IRB). The contact information for these individuals is also listed at the conclusion of this document.

Your consent:
I have agreed to be interviewed and to provide information and other materials to be used in connection with the Work, including my personal experiences, remarks, and recollections, as well as any photographs and documents that I may choose to give to Investigator (“the Interview Materials”).
I hereby grant and assign to the Investigator and his/her licensees, successors and assigns, the following rights in connection with the Interview Materials for use as part of the Work, in any and all editions and versions of this work.

1. The right to quote or paraphrase all or any portion of the Interview Materials, and to generally use and publish the Interview Materials, including my experiences, recollections, incidents, remarks, characters, dialogue, actions, scenes, situations, and information, as well as any photographs and documents that I may give to Investigator.

2. The right to use the information I share and relevant data.

3. The right to develop, produce, distribute and promote the Work that the Investigator deems appropriate. I understand and acknowledge that Investigator will be the sole owner of all copyright and other rights in and to the Work.

In order to enable Investigator to develop the Work in any manner that Investigator may deem best, I hereby release and discharge the Investigator and his/her licensees, successors and assigns, from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action that I may have against them by reason of anything contained in the Work, or any of the above uses, including any claims based on the right of privacy, the right of publicity, copyright, libel, slander, or any other right.

I acknowledge and agree that I am not entitled to receive any form of payment from Investigator and/or his/her licensees, successors, and assigns.

Agreed and confirmed:

______________________________ __________________________________
Signature    Please print your name

The date: ______________________

Dissertation Contact Information:

Investigator for the Dissertation:
Jody Figuerido
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64 Dilla Street
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Gene Diaz
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gdiaz@lesley.edu
617-349-8426
Appendix D: Pilot Study Interview Protocol

Name of Interviewee: ________________________ Date of Interview: _______________

1. Please tell me about yourself.

2. What do you consider Latina or Hispanic values?

3. Think about trainings you have participated in. Please describe what you consider a successful training.

   If not answered in questions 2 and 3:

4. What helps you to feel comfortable in training?

5. What makes you uncomfortable?

6. What suggestions can you provide for trainers to set the “tone” for a successful training with Latina family child care educators?

7. How would you describe a “culturally responsive” training for a Latina educator?

8. What do you take into consideration when planning training for a group that consists of many cultures?

9. How do you use the core values you described in question #1 in the design of training?

10. What are some obstacles you face within a group of mixed cultures when you provide the training?

11. How do you know when training is successful? (Conversation, follow up, participant feedback).

12. What do you recommend for an evaluation process? (How do you know they know?)

13. As a Latina trainer, how do you incorporate your own values into the training and still do your job as a trainer? (Based upon state regulations that may be in conflict with Latino cultural values on raising children, etc.)

14. What suggestions can you provide for me regarding this interview?
   a) Questions
   b) Process

15. Do you feel fellow mentors would prefer face to face, phone or online interviews?
   a. Survey
   b. Interview

16. Do you have any other suggestions to help me to answer my research question through the interview process or other means?
Appendix E: Dissertation Interview Protocol

Name of Interviewee: ________________________ Date of Interview: _______________

1. What do you think are important values for Latinas/Hispanics?

2. Thinking about other Latinas you have worked with (Family Child Care Educators, peers), is there anything you can add about their values around training?

3. Tell me about a time when you used what you knew about Latina culture and values to create an appropriate design for your training.
   Prompt:
   a) How you set up training, how you greet people, refreshments, activities, interactions, evaluation.

4. Based upon your own experience working with Latina educators and participating in training, what would you say to a new trainer working with Latina educators – what are your suggestions for an effective training?
   Prompt:
   a) Ask for examples
   b) Activities, setting/environment, interactions, evaluations, start and end time, collaborative learning, consideration of people’s families/commitments, etc.

5. What should I know about evaluation? What is the best way to ask for feedback?

6. I have learned that there are different perspectives based upon an individual’s home country. Please talk about how this impacts your work with educators.
   Prompts:
   a) What status issues come up for you as a Latina trainer?
   b) How does this impact your work?
   c) How do you think educators feel about working with you?
   d) What happens?

7. What status issues might come up for an Anglo trainer working with Latinas?

8. What are some other suggestions you can provide to help provide a training that honors and respects Latina educators?

9. In thinking about Latina or Hispanic people – please talk about how you think they are different or the same from other people in the United States.
   Prompts:
   a) What do you see differences between the American culture and the Latino culture?
   b) Examples of experiences

10. Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
    Prompts:
    a) Where were you born?
    b) Where did you grow up?
c) When did you move to the United States/mainland? (Note: if not born in the U.S. or if born in Puerto Rico).
   d) Why did you move to the U.S./mainland?

11. If not revealed above, ask the following:
    Participant’s birth country: _______________________
    Date of birth: ________________________________
    Language(s) spoken ____________________________

12. Educational attainment:
    □ Less than Grade 6
    □ Completed Grade 6
    □ Completed Grade 9
    □ High School/GED degree
    □ Some college
    □ Associate's degree  Country:________________
    □ Bachelor’s degree  Major:____________________
    ____________________________ Country:________
    □ Master’s degree  Major:______________________
    ____________________________ Country:________
    □ Doctorate     Concentration:________________
    ____________________________ Country:________
Appendix F: Preliminary Data on MA Workforce, EEC Workforce Registry

Race and Ethnicity

Source: PQ Registry Data as of 5/3/2011.

Race and Ethnicity - FCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity Refused</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Higher Education By Program Type

Source: PQ Registry Data as of 5/3/2011.
APPENDIX G:

Conceptual Framework

CENTRAL QUESTION: How do Latino FCC mentors describe a professional development experience responsive to the needs of Latino FCC educators?

Context: The inter-related conditions in which something occurs.

SUB-QUESTION: How does the Latino mentor describe the role and responsibilities of the facilitator that is supportive of this learner?

CODES: Facilitator
1. FCCL: Clarity
2. FCEX: Expertise
3. FCKN: Knowledge the learner
4. FCCM: Coach/Mentor
5. FCPC: Participatory Learner
6. FCVL: Validates participants knowledge/expertise

SUB-QUESTION: What are the elements of the PD context that meets the needs of Latino FCC educators?

CODES: Context
1. CNTP: Topic
2. CNLG: Language
3. CNLO: Learning Outcomes
4. CNLA: Learning Activities
5. CNRS: Resources
6. CNEV: Evaluations

SUB-QUESTION: How does the Latino FCC mentor describe the optimal professional development environment for Latino FCC educators?

CODES: Climate
1. CLPY: Physical Environment
2. CLCL: Climate of trust (norms, respect)
3. CLRL: Relationship focused

How does the Latino FCC mentor describe the optimal professional development environment for Latino FCC educators?
Appendix H: Coding Scheme Development Chart

Developmental Phases of Analytic Framework

Explanation and Description of Resulting Changes to the Coding Scheme.

1. Coding scheme review: Jan. 2011
The researcher spent two weeks reviewing coding scheme processes and her initial proposal. This included a review of consensual data analysis using analysts and member checking, and use of methodspace.com for ongoing sharing, review of content, and thematic and cluster analysis. Thematic analysis was the primary method used in the coding scheme process for this study, with content analysis to condense codes.

2. Individual and comparison across interviews: Jan-February 2011
The researcher reviewed each interview seven times which included highlighting responses, making notes in the margins, and producing excel spread sheets on the contents, both individually and across each interview.

In order to prepare for coding, the researcher reviewed her past work and included a more extensive review of the current literature on culturally responsive teaching, Latino/Hispanic culture, and professional development for the non-traditional adult learner.

4. Coding Scheme: February 2011
The researcher purchased and completed seven tutorials on the use of HyperResearch™ for this study. This resulted in initial coding of each case using the elements of adult learning, Latino values, and culturally responsive teaching as the coding scheme. Using the software to highlight and analysis text, each case was coded using a central coding scheme. This resulted in 234 codes.

5. Coding Scheme: March 2011
Using the 162 codes identified in Phase 3, the codes were categorized into 12 themes, and then condensed into 10. Each category was founded on culture, the professional development process, and culturally responsive teaching. Handwritten notes were made on ideas to further condense the ten categories and themes. A frequency analysis was done to delete codes. Codes reduced to 162 codes. Definitions of codes assisted with the combining of codes with same or similar meanings resulted in reduction of the number of codes to 47 and assigning codes to 11 broader categories related to professional development. A description was assigned to each category or group. A code map was designed, and the theory builder tool was explored. Challenges with the software program resulted in a delay and subsequent upgrade to a newer version of the tool.

6. Coding Scheme Process: March 2011
The researcher continued to study professional development models, culturally responsive pedagogy, content, and thematic analysis. The researcher made notes from the literature review. Information on adult learning was used to further condense the codes and categories including environment, content, process, and evaluation. A conceptual framework was designed to assist with coding. The framework included the central question and 5 sub-questions. A total of thirty codes were assigned to sub-questions. Cases were reviewed and re-coded with this new system. Definitions were written for each code.

7. Coding Scheme Process: April 2011
The Conceptual Framework was reviewed and the literature review continued. The result was an adjustment to the conceptual framework. The Conceptual Framework was condensed to three sub-questions with 15 codes. Three categories or groups were identified based upon professional development and culturally responsive teaching, climate, context, and facilitator. The codes were related to each category for ease of coding. Each case was re-coded, definitions were revised, and annotations were used with quotations as identified as useful or applicable for codes. A frequency chart was used to begin analysis and reporting.

8. Coding Scheme Process: May 2011
Each case was reviewed along with each category and code. Further refinement resulted in changes to codes based upon review of cases. The final conceptual framework was presented to the researcher’s doctoral committee and participant’s in the interview process through member checking (focus group) resulting in minor changes to codes. Each interview was reviewed by an analyst affirming the coding process. The researcher re-coded and reports were completed for use in data analysis.
Appendix I: Code Book

Three Broad Themes/Categories

1. Professional Development Climate
2. Professional Development Context
3. Professional Development Facilitation

- The environment includes the feeling of safety, welcoming, and encouragement.
- The content of the training includes how it is transferred to participant through activities, interactions, and evaluation methods.
- The delivery or facilitation of the professional development experience should reflect cultural competency.

15 Codes:

1. CLPY: The setup of the environment: physical conditions, seating, temperature, ventilation, lighting, decorations.
2. CNTP: The topic for the training, relevance, application to work.
3. FCCL: Clear expectations on the part of the facilitator including start and end time, group rules for safety or norms, interactions and socialization.
4. CLCL: Climate of trust, norms established, respectful.
5. CNLG: The language the training is offered in, consideration of dialect, different meanings for words for different Latin American countries.
6. FCEX: The facilitator’s knowledge about the topic being presented.
7. CLRL: Relational focus, beginning with greeting. Initially allowing or encouraging socialization in order to foster a sense of community.
8. CLLO: Learning outcomes for the training. What will participants take away? How will they use this in their work?
9. FCKN: The facilitator’s knowledge of the learner, including their cultural, education, or professional background; setting, such as FCC, Center, or Out-of-School Time learning style, experience.
10. CNLA: Learning activities, including small group, large group, with a partner, and individual. Includes relevance of the learning activity to the topic and the group.

11. FCCM Mentor: supports newer FCC educators through ongoing process. The relationship evolves over time. Offers affirmation, and support with learning and improving skills. Coach: in a specific situation, such as specialized training, in which peers or the facilitator share knowledge and assist with development of skills. Task related.

12. CNRL: Relationally focused – beginning with the initial greeting, initially allowing or encouraging socialization throughout the training and to foster a sense of community (overlap with Climate – code for both as needed).

13. FCPC: A participatory learner in the professional development setting.

14. CNRS: Resources and materials made available to participants.

15. FCVL: Facilitator validates the participants’ knowledge and experiences and shows that they respect this knowledge and these experiences.
Appendix J: Code Definitions

Central Question: How do Latino Family Child Care Participants describe professional development that is responsive to the needs of Family Child Care Educators?

Secondary question #1:

How does the Latino Family Child Care Participant describe the optimal professional development environment for Latino Family Child Care Participants?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLPY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLCL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLRL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary question #2:

What are the elements of the professional development context that meets the needs of Latino Family Child Care Educators?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNTP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNLG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Secondary question #3:**
How does the Latino participant describe the role and responsibilities of the instructor that is supportive of this learner?

**Category: Instructor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCCL</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Clear expectations on the part of the instructor, including start and end time, as well as group rules for safety, interactions, and socialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCEX</td>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>The instructor’s knowledge and expertise with the topic being presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCKN</td>
<td>Knowledge of the learner</td>
<td>The instructor’s knowledge about each learner. This includes learning styles, cultural and educational background, the setting in which they work (family child care, center, Out-of-School Time).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCM</td>
<td>Coach/Participant</td>
<td>To assist newer FCC educators through an ongoing process of support. Relationship evolves over time, offering affirmation and support with learning and skill improvement. Coach: In a specific situation, such as a specialized training in which peers and the instructor share knowledge and assist with development of skills. Task-related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCPC</td>
<td>Participatory learner</td>
<td>Instructor is learning from and with participants, while retaining expertise on the topic. Learning may be considered off topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCVL</td>
<td>Validates participant’s knowledge and experience</td>
<td>Validates participant’s knowledge through active listening, and respect for diverse or conflicting opinions and experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K: Data Summary Tables

**Finding 1:** The optimal PD environment for Latina FCC educators is focused on relationships developed within a climate of trust and respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>CLCL: Trust (74)</th>
<th>CLPY: Physical Environ. (17)</th>
<th>CLRL: Relation. (90)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X (10)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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**Finding 2:** The CR professional development context is reflected in active engagement in the learning processes primarily through small groups.

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**Finding 3:** A CR professional development experience is the responsibility of the instructor, as reflected in the knowledge of and affirmation of each learner’s individual and group identity.

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Appendix L: Roadmap of Findings

Central Question: How do Latina FCC Mentors describe a professional development experience responsive to the needs of Latina FCC educators?

Research Question #1: How do Latina Family Child Care Mentors describe the optimal professional development environment for Latina FCC educators?

All 10 participants (100%) described the optimal professional development climate for Latina FCC educators as founded on trust and respect.

- Greeting with hug and kiss, instructor prepared and dressed nicely
- Norms
- Clear expectations – overlap to FCCL (facilitator – clarity)

The majority of participants (70%) indicated that the actual physical environment is responsive to the needs of Latina FCC educators.

- Appeal to all senses; candles, fresh air, food, flowers, comfort, lighting
- Pictures representing group
- Close proximity ok
- Actual room doesn’t matter – it’s what you do with it.

All 10 participants (100%) indicated that the optimal professional development climate has a relational focus.

- Overlap with greeting
- Instructor – key
- Relationship building throughout the PD experience starting when enter
- Frequency – 90 responses or 17% of responses in all 15 categories

Research Question #2: What are the elements of the professional development context that meet the needs of Latina FCC educators?

All 10 participants (100%) stated that learning activities should be interactive and primarily situated within small groups.

- Small groups – less threatening
- Large groups – don’t want to speak up, lack of confidence in knowledge, language, don’t want to showcase self (JF experience/conversations outside of study)
- Engagement and socialization – cultural priorities = capitalize on this in small groups (helps to keep group focused rather than off topic because want to socialize)
An overwhelming majority (90%) of participants indicated that alternate evaluation methods are a necessary part of the PD context for Latina FCC educators.

- Writing challenges
- Don’t want to write anything negative – respect
- All evaluations are perfect, excellent
- Share verbally – reassure and state purpose
- Ask throughout training individually

Eight out of 10 participants (80%) stated that the training should be offered in Spanish, as it is the primary language of most learners.

- Lower educational and literacy levels = helps with comprehension
- Need more processing time anyway (In English = worse!)
- Demonstrates respect
- More comfortable = more sharing

Half of the participants (5 out of 10) indicated that providing resource materials to participants was an important part of the professional development context.

- Resources should be ready when participants enter the program
- Make sure they are in Spanish

One of the participants shared that the topic should be relevant to the needs of the learners.

- Once again, focus on affective.
- Perhaps assume this is going to be relevant

None of the participants stated the learning objectives for the professional development experience as relevant.

- Focused more on relationships, interactions, socialization – affective factors of PD
- May be unsure what these are even when explained.

Research Question #3: How does the Latina FCC mentor describe the role and responsibilities of the Instructor that is supportive of this learner?

All 10 participants stated that the instructor should serve as a coach and mentor for learners, which often extended outside of the classroom.

- Often need to offer support outside of the PD context to facilitate understanding and application to practice.
- With the population, participants are often translators and advocate for bills, phone messages, and things related to the household or the FCC program.
All 10 participants indicated that the instructor’s knowledge about the learner’s background and experience, with responses focused on cultural, educational, and linguistic awareness, was imperative for a supportive professional development experience.

- Not only was this important for all participants, it resulted in lengthy sharing from all participants.
- Primarily discussed challenges with immigration and assimilation into American culture, educational levels, linguistic challenges in English and Spanish, values (extremely key) and experiences, perceptions, and practices related to FCC.
- This category resulted in the most responses (137 or 24% of all responses from 15 categories) from participants.

A majority (80%) of participants agreed that the instructor must validate the learner’s knowledge and experience throughout the professional development experience.

- This was prevalent throughout the study and overlaps with other codes.
- Respect is needed and is accomplished through listening to learners, even if what they are sharing is not accurate. Successful instructors did not tell participants, “You are wrong,” but shared why changes were needed and how to go about achieving them.
- Shared that peers can validate each other by discussing experiences
- Let participants share experiences even if they do not seem related to the topic. These ties in with respect and the centrality of family. If there is something related to family, it must be shared, or the participant cannot move on and learn – family is first.
- Instructor demonstrates respect for participants.

Over half (6 out of 10) of participants indicated that the instructor must have clear and reasonable expectations for the professional development experience.

- Clarity – goes up the first question
- Norms seen as important including listening to each other, what happens when there is conflict, start and end time = respect
- Keeps training on track
- Concern with participants being on time – time perception differences from mainstream culture.

Less than half of the participants (4 out of 10) indicated that they gain knowledge from the learners in their classrooms, but, nonetheless the instructor must balance their expected role as an authority figure with participatory learning.

- Interestingly, participants shared that the instructor should not be a participatory learner – she should know what she is doing and demonstrate that, or she will not be respected. Some participants shared experiences where an instructor did not seem confident, with the result that students did not show her respect and the trainings went poorly.
- However, two participants felt that they learn a lot from the classes they teach.
Less than half (40%) of participants indicated that the instructor’s knowledge about the topic being presented was a relevant indicator of learner support.

- Again, this may be expected so was not seen as important as the affective aspects.
- Possibly embedded in the role of an authority figure, it is expected that the instructor is an expert (goes without saying).

Each informs the:

**Central Question:** How do Latina FCC Mentors describe a professional development experience responsive to the needs of Latina FCC educators?

| **A climate** of trust and respect with a relationship-based approach, a professional development **context** that focuses on active engagement with others and materials, primarily within small groups, and an **instructor** who facilitates a professional development experience founded on the knowledge of and affirmation of each learner’s individual and ethnic identity. |
Appendix M: Interpretation Outline Tool

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

- How do Latina Family Child Care Mentors describe the optimal professional development environment for Latina Family Child Care Educators?

FINDING 1

All ten participants (100%) indicated that the optimal professional development environment for Latina Family Child Care Educators should focus on building relationships in a climate of trust and respect.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- What are the elements of the professional development context that meet the needs of Latina Family Child Care Educators?

FINDING 2

All ten participants (100%) indicated that the professional development context that meets the needs of the Latina Family Child Care Educator is reflected in active engagement in the learning process primarily through small group interactions. The second element, as stated by an overwhelming majority (90%) of participants, was to offer optional methods for learners to evaluate the training. The third element, as indicated by the majority of participants (80%) was to offer the training in Spanish, the first language of the learners.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

- How do Latina FCC mentors describe the role and responsibilities of the Instructor who is supportive of learners?

FINDING 3

All ten participants (100%) articulated that a culturally responsive professional development experience is the responsibility of the instructor, as reflected in the knowledge of and affirmation of each learner’s individual and ethnic identity.
Analytic Category 1: The optimal professional development environment for Latina Family Child Care Educators as one that is focused on relationships, and developed within a climate of trust and respect.

Participants describe the optimal professional development climate as one focused on relationships.

WHY?

- Latinas base everything on relationships
- More interpersonal than other cultures
- Form relationships with that group, even if it’s just for one day
- Instructor: connect with leaners, be open and charming, and relate who you are to learners.
  - Be very nurturing, caring, friendly and remember your position – balance
  - Be genuine, open, listen, put yourself in their position, let them get to know you, learn where they are from, include their community
  - Offer compliments, learners will consider you friendly
  - Share food and responsibilities during the training
  - Realize Latinas are very vocal, love to socialize – don’t take things personally
  - Get off topic easily – steer them back to the topic
  - Use active listening; eye contact, body language, and listening
  - Put yourself in their place
  - Offer one on one time
  - Be understanding and flexible
  - Realize verbal interactions are preferred over written communication
  - Prefer instructors that are Latino/a
  - Build community
- Participants stress the differences between “Anglo” trainings and those offered to Latinas. Americans are more aloof and cold.
- Communication is imperative to establishing and maintaining a relationships
  - Begins when enter the facility
  - Instructor must be ready for learners
  - Greet (usually with a kiss and hug) and serve refreshments
  - Ask about family, use names if the instructor knows the participants
  - Make learners feel welcome with a smile and walk up to them.
  - The participants shared that this should be incorporated into the entire professional development experience beginning with the greeting.
  - Varies among friends or colleagues; formal and informal
  - Varies by country of origin
- Expected or appear cold.
- Helps them to feel comfortable enough to participate and learn
- Challenges with fitting in – discrimination, made fun of, accents, dialects
- Inter-group conflicts (individuals from different countries may not like each other)
- The actual environment:
Not as important as relationships, but indicates you want to welcome them and made an effort
Appeal to all senses; smell (fresh air or spray), taste (offer food), visually appealing (flowers, table clothes, representation of the group, resources) and can see the presentation/instructor, hearing (sharing, laughter, use names), touch (greet – hug and a kiss usually)
Be prepared before learners enter
Comfortable seating
Ok to be close to each other (not like Americans who don’t want to even touch elbows).

Participants describe the optimal professional development climate as a climate of trust.

WHY?

- Low confidence of participants
- Taught to be quiet, don’t judge
- Will not share if don’t feel comfortable – already hesitant due to language and confidence
- Various educational and literacy levels – must feel a sense of trust and respect to participate
- Trust helps to form and maintain relationships

Participants describe the optimal professional development climate as respectful.

WHY?

- Respect who they are
- Know that age and authority influence respect (older = more respect, authority = more respect). Yet, must prove competence. Don’t be too soft or will not receive respect. Don’t be cold or will not form a relationship
- Dress nicely, freshen up – sign of respect
- Respect helps one to form relationships
- Don’t accuse, make fun of, or put someone on the spot
- Don’t discriminate or judge
- Realize Latinos have a cultural pride and pride in the language
- Honor the flag, the traditions, celebrations, and values of the group
- Listen with your ears and your body language, maintain eye contact, don’t interrupt
- Be professional but approachable.
- Don’t give the impression you are superior, yet exert your authority – balance
- Stress that learners must respect and listen to each other even if they don’t agree
- Relate training to the learners’ needs
- Americans are not very open-minded or respectful – they do not know our culture, they think I ride a donkey in my home country.
• Attitude is everything; dress, voice, greeting all communicates respect or lack of respect.

**Analytic Category #2:** Latina Family Child Care Mentors described the professional development context by discussing the value of offering learning activities in small groups, stimulating learning by providing the training in Spanish, and revealing the challenges with obtaining an honest program evaluation.

>Participants described the professional development context as one in which learners participate in engaging learning activities offered in small groups.

**WHY?**

- **Provide an overview, but then go into small groups**
  - Provide personal experiences to set the stage
  - Don’t go straight to the point
  - Share with the learners
  - Visuals are important
  - don’t go straight to the point or put anyone on the spot (particularly in the large group)
  - Learners are tired – it’s been a long day, make it fun

- **Small groups are useful since they promote relationship building, peer learning and allow for socialization**
  - Large groups are more intimidating, small groups are more comfortable
  - Small groups help with the lower confidence levels of Latina learners due to past experiences, language, dialect, educational level, knowledge
  - They are going to talk so incorporate that in the training
  - Ask for ideas and opinions – set the tone in a respectful environment regarding listening and not judging
  - Go up to people individually or in small groups to ask questions and reiterate directions
  - Keeps them on topic (instructor might need to help – Latinas ‘love to talk’)
  - Community and relationship building
  - Encourages learning – self and peer
    - Hands on – motivational
    - Show them how to do it, demonstration
    - Learners prefer interactive trainings
  - Get everyone involved based upon their comfort level and the instructor’s relationship with them (and the trust/respect they have established)

- **Adapt for educational levels and unfamiliarity with the topic:**
  - Keep at a low level, simplify
  - Modify when level is too high
  - Proceed slowly
  - Allow process and reflection time
Participants shared the importance of offering the professional development experience in Spanish.

- Language barriers are an obstacle for learning
- Retaining the language is important
- Need processing time due to language barriers
- Lack confidence: shy due to pronunciation and accents, subcultures within even one country, a word in one country may be offensive in another.
- Respect that we all speak Spanish by doing the training in Spanish
- Code switching (English and Spanish combined when speaking) is common
- Participants #009- even though we speak the same language, we don’t all learn or act the same way, you need to know dialect, words, meanings, lots of talking with Latinos.

Participants articulated the concerns with obtaining an accurate evaluation of the professional development experience.

- Participant #001 - Let students know you aren’t saying anything that will damage, say what you want, what you need, let them know you need this to give them what they need, to give the best training, don’t worry about it, don’t give your name, help them to be comfortable saying what they feel, cultural – supposed to keep quiet, don’t express an opinion, don’t speak up for yourself (taught this)
- Get feedback individually when leaving training (most)
- As for verbal feedback since writing is a challenge. Also, read faces, attitude, listen for comments (#004)
- Most of the time, they mark everything perfect, won’t say the negative, rarely, thinks you might take it personally, try to explain, still mark everything great (#005)
- Feedback is difficult to get, if they really know you it’s even more difficult, wonder if they didn’t know you –would they be more honest? Or they may be concerned about how it will affect them (#006)
- When there is the wonderful rapport, they will not say anything bad because they may compromise the facilitator’s position, hurt feelings, one on one might be better since writing is not a strength for most of the Hispanic professionals ‘we are working with’ (#007)
- Only one negative evaluation in over 12 years – for this one, she called the provider and asked why she was so “rude,” suggested optional name (wonder why!), quick questions, short work best (#008)
- Most of the time, all excellent or good, challenges with writing, talk to them easier – at end of training – more productive (#009)
- Verbally is better, writing is challenging for some (many)
Analytic Category #3: The instructor needs to have knowledge of each learner’s individual and ethnic identity and should validate each learner’s background and experience throughout the professional development experience.

>The instructor should have knowledge of each learner’s individual and ethnic identity.

- The instructor needs to know the culture:
  - See things the way they are, put your hands on it; put yourself in their position, know where they come from, do your homework (#001; #003)
  - Look at the details; be very broad, know which country they are from, be yourself and respect everyone
  - For Latino/a instructors: Empathize – think back to when you immigrated to the United States; different language, weather, adjustment is difficult
  - Build relationships (all)
  - Participants shared often better with a Latina instructor who knows the culture (#005)
  - Encouragement starts with the leader (#002; 6393)

- Challenges:
  - Confidence, self-perception, language, education, literacy
    - Learners may lack knowing things due to past experiences and to remember learners may be hesitant to share since they are afraid to look ignorant
  - Education:
    - Educational quality or attainment often differs by country
      - Educators from South America are generally respectful, quiet, well educated, value on attending college. In Columbia, one may not finish 6th grade
    - Parents often prioritize education for their children when immigrate = work hard
    - Educators – changes in the field, before just licensed without specific requirements now there are greater educational requirements
    - May have degree but can’t write a complete sentence (#004)
  - Language and Literacy:
    - Challenges with writing, literacy, and computer literacy
    - Participants shared – Latinas are slower learners (2) due to speaking Spanish
    - Dialects and meanings vary by country
  - Discrimination:
    - Feel discriminated against (#005)
    - I have been treated like an elementary student as an adult – wasn’t clear, remember the goals, remain focused and aim to fulfill objectives (#009)
• Values:
  o Hard workers, pride in culture and the Spanish language
  o “Latinos feel a sense of belonging with each other (traditions, history, and customs) and pride. We don’t want to lose our culture, our rich history” (#004; #28311)
  o Respect:
    ▪ Greet people by name, ask about family
    ▪ Culturally - taught to keep quiet, don’t interrupt, don’t talk up for yourself
    ▪ Challenges as a younger manager with older staff; Anglos – more respect and older; differences- Latinos are not treated the same as Anglos
    ▪ Dress code- dress nicely (instructors in particular) (#007)
  o Family:
    ▪ Extended (includes close friends) and immediate family
    ▪ Elders are respected and are cared for at home
    ▪ Stay at home until marry, sexually pure until marriage
    ▪ Music, traditions, food, language
    ▪ Often share personal information at trainings – need to share before can learn
    ▪ Family and relationships are a priority – comes before work
  o Relationships:
    ▪ A priority and includes socialization, value placed on interactions
  o Religion:
    ▪ Evident in some family child care programs; be respectful and share the regulations if out of compliance (#003).
  o Assimilation: lose a little bit of self, hard to maintain values; have to adjust to U.S which may mean forgetting Latino values, pros and cons (#009)
• Individual Identity:
  o Even though we speak the same language, we are all so different; very different – dialect, formality, PR – feel more American than Hispanic (#002)
  o People from different countries confront things differently; some are shy, some more outspoken, natural, driven.
  o Differences in immigration age, if born in U.S. or on the island of Puerto Rico or another Latin American country.
  o Differences in interaction styles: Caribbean – more quiet, South & Central America – quiet, black people are loud like Caribbean; PR – different – more in common with U.S.
  o Celebrations vary by country; we are all human beings – it doesn’t matter where you come from – marriage changes things as well;
  o Conflicts between groups from different countries at times
• Differences: Anglos and Latino/a
  o Interactions:
- Sense of humor is different for Latinos
- One shares - I have learned how people in the U.S. react – it’s different
- Feel different when with non-Latinos or only one or two in a group
  (#006)
- Different from Anglos- greeting, language, interactions, more open and personal
- Latinas don’t put the same value on time and tardiness is a concern
- Americans are more independent
- Latinos very dependent
- Respect is different – Americans generally don’t respect older people – ‘throw them away’ (#010).
- Latinos are very informal, Americans are formal, hug and kiss
- Americans – Handshake or “how are you” and no one listens for a response (#009).

> The instructor should validate each learner’s background and experience.

- Motivate learners by acknowledging their experience and allowing sharing
- Never say someone is wrong
- Be understanding and flexible, put yourself in their position (#005)
- Help them to be confident to share, motivate
- Listen to what people have to say instead of building walls (barriers).
- “There is so much I need to teach them, but I need time” (#001)
- Be open to receive, to listen, to get to know others, be yourself. Put yourself in their position, know where they come from; don’t let anyone fade away (#001)
- Remember learners value learning; don’t judge or complain; educate them – makes your job easier; determine what they need; care and genuine love of children
- Understand that instructors need to validate and support
- Make them feel confident, look for the good; connect with learners, communicate at their level; provide examples
- Listen - when a question is asked, respond by looking in their eyes and responding; very high attendance at my trainings – I listen, they listen, I encourage them and respect them; offer peer learning – providers do presentations and have them mentor new providers (#002)
- Remember the instructor’s role – you are building professionals; they get excited when they see self-improvement; motivate, encourage them
- #004 - If you look bad, I look bad – let’s work together; it’s rewarding to see changes (re: CDA) – improvement and learning; have those with more education mentor other providers.
- Be understanding and flexible, put yourself in their position, understand and agree (#005)
- Need to be confident and comfortable to share – make this happen (#007)
- Instructors need inter and intra intelligence, intuition – feel it, apologize if you did something wrong, build people up; help them to feel like they taught their own training; sometimes instructors have perceptions about Hispanics and it shows, be humble, establish a good relationship (#007); don’t be too pushy; status varies by country, see each person’s qualities by getting to know them; share in a nurturing and positive environment.

- Motivate learners – they feel involved and comfortable; involve the team (drivers, providers, staff, coordinators) in following rules; be confident; make eye contact (#008)

- Participation, asking questions, have individual conversations, make them feel comfortable; try to talk to everyone (not ignore even challenging ones) (#009)

- Teach from and acknowledge own mistakes; help them achieve goals; help people and work with them to improve (#010)

- Validate what providers do, provide suggestions to make it more fun (add music!), relate it to something the provider values and enjoys.

- Listen, show them why it needs to be a certain way, don’t say, “no, no, no,” don’t intimidate and make them feel stupid, state the reason why; it’s common for the culture to say their opinion – let them; (contrary to the statements about avoiding conflict); make people feel comfortable, don’t look down on them because they have different experiences or viewpoints.

- Acknowledge we each have our own opinions and that’s ok, respect each other even if you don’t agree; you are all right, but this is the way it needs to be done; values are different in my home country – cherish the system – it becomes part of who you are (#009).