Chapter 2
Preparing for Change: Looking at the Theories and the Literature

The Tapestry of the Study

In this chapter I (1) discuss the theories that inform who I am as a researcher; (2) give a brief overview of the history of the immigration of the Mexicans and Hondurans (the two groups of immigrants participating in the study) to the United States and to the Roanoke Valley; (3) look at the research on service-learning; and (4) relate service-learning to teaching and learning for language acquisition and for social justice. Qualitative research is “interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 30) as is evidenced in this study, and particularly in this chapter. Each of the strands of the study are woven together to form a tapestry that tells the story of a service-learning class that moves between the university classroom and the Latino community, allowing the students and the families in the community to form relationships that shimmer like iridescent embroidery threads that change color as they are held and examined in different lights. This chapter attempts to situate the study within the theory and the literature with a similar fluidity. Neither the theory nor the literature functions as an static background, but rather as a landscape against which the more brilliant threads of the relationships between the students and the families can form the focus of the tapestry.

Situating My Self as a Researcher

My flowers shall not cease to live;
my songs shall never end:
I, a singer, intone them;
They become scattered, they are spread about.

--Cantares mexicanos in Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 95

As a researcher, I am bounded by my Self: I am a White, middle-aged university instructor at a large Research I University in the southeastern United States. I am bilingual because I speak both English and Spanish fluently. To an extent, I am
biculural, because I am almost as comfortable in a Latino setting as I am among Anglos. However, my bilingualism and semi-biculturalism do not alter the fact that I am an Anglo woman who lives, works, and has her being in the privileged dominant culture of this society. My lens for examining the world has changed with age, experience, and exposure to new ideas, cultures, and people, but nonetheless, I will always be who I am: a member of a privileged class due to the color of my skin, my ethnic background, my language, my educational level, and my socioeconomic status. I can deconstruct and reconstruct my ideas, but nothing will alter the essence of my being. It is that Self that I bring to this study that has as its context not only the university classroom, but also the Latino community.

At the same time, however, I bring to this study a second Self that has its roots in Appalachian culture, a background also affects me deeply as a researcher. During my first twelve years, my dad was a coalminer, until we moved to the Chicago area where he worked as a carpenter for my cousin’s subdivision. Neither of my parents was college-educated; my mom dropped out of high school after tenth grade; my dad quit school six weeks shy of graduation in protest of a grade he deemed unfair. I grew up wearing clothes my aunts bought for me or my cousins handed down to me. Without a full scholarship for college, a university education would have been impossible. My dad eventually became a salesman for the subdivision, earning a substantial income, but my growing-up years were decidedly contextualized in a different educational and socioeconomic world than the one I inhabit today.

Our move to the Chicago area was traumatic for me, and I believe that provides me with a peripheral understanding of the ordeal of moving to an alien culture. I was perceived as a “dumb hillbilly;” the principal wanted me to repeat sixth grade until my mom demanded a placement test. My Southern accent was as foreign to my peers’ Midwestern ears as theirs was to me. We moved because of the continual strikes in the mines that plagued West Virginia miners in the late 1950’s, and our budget placed us in a small apartment in a working class neighborhood, a contrast to the spacious house in wide open country that had been my home before the move. My test scores placed me in the high track for seventh grade, and many of my classmates’ fathers were doctors, lawyers, or other professionals (this was in a time when their mothers spent the day at the
club or playing bridge—both alien activities to me). When I visited many of my friends, their homes seemed like mansions with servants’ quarters on the third floor, accessed by the back stairs.

Unlike Kohli (1999) who described her “‘border crossing’ experience” as a desire to distance herself from her working class roots, with resultant “material and cultural advantages” that at the same time caused as eventual sense of “pain and loss” (p. 241) ensuing from that choice, I still regard myself as the daughter of parents whose beginnings were humble. I know that my family income now places me in a different socioeconomic status from the one I knew as an adolescent, but I am still more comfortable in an environment similar to the one I knew as a young person. I realize how hard it was for me to move from West Virginia to a Chicago suburb even though I was still in a culture that valued the color of my skin and whose language I shared, albeit with a vastly different accent. I believe my own Appalachian roots help to provide the sense of solidarity I share with the Latinos with whom I share my life.

As I read Richardson (1998), I was pleased to have validated all that I believe about myself as a researcher. All my past attempts to present myself as an objective, omniscient researcher felt hypocritical and untrue, but I allowed myself to believe that research must be “scientific.” I believed that in writing a dissertation it would be necessary to maintain the impersonal stance of a researcher, always avoiding the use of the pronoun “I,” trying to write in third person as much as possible. Since I am so involved in the Latino community and in the lives of my students, the task was daunting and unpleasant. At times, I forgot to maintain the impersonal stance as I wove my Self into the texture of the fabric that comprised the research, and there would be a jolt in the reading as the voice of the narrator changed. Richardson opened my eyes to a more comfortable way of writing, one that is more in keeping with my preparation as a creative writer, and more importantly with who I am as researcher. In the tradition of Richardson, this narrative weaves among autobiography, essay, characterization, description, and factual information. Reflection is interwoven as the thread that connects the focus to all its parts.
The Intertwined Threads of Critical Theory and Service-Learning

My interpretive paradigm (Guba, 1990) or theoretical framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) situates me as a critical theorist who is informed by the perspectives of feminism. The principles of these beliefs guide my research and worldview as a “researcher-as-bricoleur, or jack-of-all-trades” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 185). As a critical theorist, I seek to “produce transformations in the social order, producing knowledge that is historical and structural, judged by its degree of historical situatedness and its ability to produce praxis, or action” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 187). While being fully cognizant of the immense struggles necessary to achieve the goal of social equity, I am committed to the notion that education can be a transformative process.

In stating that my perspective is that of critical theory, I am propelled by the “heartfelt need to promote social action, to lift the ‘voices’ of marginalized or oppressed people, . . . to bring about general change in our society” (Creswell, 1998, p. 78). As I study and learn about the lives of Latinos living in the United States, I am consumed by a desire to help them find the tools to live better lives, in this case by learning English and by acquiring the necessary skills to navigate in a foreign, sometimes hostile culture. This concern is part of what situates me as a critical theorist. Since I am only one person, my ability to effect change in the Latino community is limited, so I feel a compulsion to involve my students in this mission. This longing characterizes me as a critical teacher.

Anderson (1994) refers to Schutter and Yopo (n.d.) describing Freirian participatory research as based on a vision of social reality, integrative of theory and practice, and of research and action. Through dialogue, the subject-object relationship becomes one of subject-subject, thus granting importance and stature to all involved in the research in whatever role. Drawing on Creswell (1998), I conducted “sequential interviews in an interactive, dialogic manner” that encouraged “self-disclosure on the part of the researcher” and resulted in a “sense of collaboration” (p. 83).

The research process that directed the data collection for this study followed the feminist model of research in certain means of inquiry. All participants in the study co-constructed the process, acknowledging that the researcher is not the omniscient knower (Olesen, 1998). It was common for us to discuss the process, and ourselves as we were situated in study. The students felt so integral to the study, which they realized was to
fulfill the requirements for a doctorate, that they asked if they might attend my defense. In a like manner, the Latinas also recognized the purpose of the research, and they were eager to have me share the results of the findings with them and with the Anglo community. In this study, all participants have a sense of being stakeholders; their sense of ownership for the project was evident in both interviews and documents. There was a sense of partnership that permeated the study.

In defining critical theory as related to feminist theory, Andermahr et al. (1997) refer to Habermas’s (1989) “‘lifeworld’ of small communities and interpersonal relations, governed not by instrumental rationality, but, at least in principle, by reciprocity and communicative interaction free from domination” (p. 37). Ideally the “lifeworld” formed by the intersection of the service-learning students and the Latinos forms a community that is based on “reciprocity and communicative interaction,” but I am not convinced that members of the dominant culture are ever able to completely step away from the world that shaped them up until the time when they entered a different world through the falsely constructed means of a university course. Due to the way the course is structured, requiring that the students spend a minimum of five hours a week with the families, a certain sense of understanding and confidence usually develops between the students and the families, although at times, the relationship does remain more that of student and teacher, never quite achieving the relationship that transcends that more impersonal level. Nonetheless, the students and families do tend to share dialogue and goals, helping them to establish a sense of community.

At the same time, I must refer to Lather (2002) who posits that we need to practice

(r)reading against ourselves in presuming not understanding but ourselves as incompetent readers reading for difference rather than sameness in order to be unsettled by otherness (Lather, 2000). Courting a more uncontainable excess than that of intersectionality, a sort of multiplicities without end, this is working multiple othernesses as a way to keep moving against tendencies to settle into the various dogmas and reductionisms that await us once we think we have arrived (p. 7).
As the instructor of the course or in my role as the researcher of the context set by the course, I know I must continually guard against complacency, using my place in the dominant culture to attempt to erase the differences that exist between the participants and myself. Perhaps from my position of privilege, I can lull myself into believing that the intersections of the groups equalize the differences. However, I choose to look at both differences and the way they can enrich relationships.

At the same time, however, I feel a need to take into account the sameness that crosses cultures, resisting the urge to focus on the differences that tend to unintentionally other those whose culture is unique from our own. Nonetheless, referring to Shor (as cited in Luke, 1992), “If othering involves attributing to the objectified other a difference that serves to legitimate her oppression, samming denies the objectified other the right to her difference” (p. 48). In this study, I strive to celebrate the differences and the samenesses that characterize the two cultures while avoiding either othering or samming. Building on Ellsworth (1992), there are aspects of Latino cultures that I would not even claim to know or understand, much less explain or diagnose.

Although I am biologically and culturally Anglo, my research is informed by Hispanic perspectives on research, exemplified by authors such as Anzaldúa (1999), Behar (1993), Delgado Bernal (1998) and Trueba (2001); to name a few prominent researchers. This research is participatory and transformatory; the epistemology looks at the narratives of the victimized, and from that perspective, the researcher is able to look at the systemic forces that disenfranchise the oppressed and marginalized. By looking at the relationships that develop between the university students and the families, I look at the possibilities of Latinos being able to find empowerment through linguistic and cultural acquisition, a belief that is inherent in Hispanic research. Through the class readings and discussions, much data emerge that deal with attempting to understand what life can be like for a group of people who are not members of the dominant culture.

I realize that my Self can be construed as detrimental to my research that involves Latinos (García, 1989; Hurtado, 1989; & Zinn, 1982 as cited in Luke, 1992) or students (Luke, 1992). Due to my position in my native culture, there is an underlying hierarchy.

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1 Hispanic is used in this context since the resource identified it as such. More than likely, Anzaldúa would self-identify as Chicana, Behar as Cuban, and Trueba as Mexican American.
that is present in my relationships with the Latinas. A similar hierarchy defines my relationship with the students since I have the ultimate power to assign grades. Nonetheless, I hope to diminish the negative effects of this inherent hierarchical structure by shifting the “conception of power as repressive to power as productive, and with a shift from an emphasis on ideology and structure to an emphasis on agency” (Luke, 1992, p. 65). Luke cites Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) and Simon (1987), referring to the Neo-Marxist discourses of critical pedagogy that espouse this shift from “a language of critique” to a “language of possibility” (p. 64). My aim is to create a context that is conducive to effecting change in society, using the power that is inherent in my position in the hierarchy of society (Ransford, 2000).

Weaving a Feminist Perspective

My epistemology, or how I know the world, is interpretive, allowing the knower and the known to interact and shape one another. Crotty (1998) implies that feminism and epistemology are diametrically opposed terms, positing that, “If talk of women having their own epistemology is taken to mean that the fundamental act of knowing is different for women, this has enormous, and unwelcome, consequences” (p.174). He does suggest, however, that women in theorizing the act of knowing raise different concerns and issues than men. It is from that stance that I emerge. At the same time, I must say that my feminist research is not conceptualized in gender issues, but rather in issues of social class and ethnicity, an attempt to allow the voices of marginalized peoples to be heard by the dominant culture that often overwhelms them (Luke, 1992).

Creswell’s (1998) explanation of feminist approaches to research describes my goals perfectly: “The goals are to establish collaborative and nonexploitative relationships, to place the researcher within the study in order to avoid objectification, and to conduct research that is transformative” (p. 83). At all times, the participants and I “negotiate[d] the meanings of the results of the research” (p. 84). Because of the fact that I was the instructor who had the power of assessing the students and assigning grades, I do not believe they regarded me as an equal, just as I feel sure the Latinos will never think of me as a member of their culture. At the same time, there was a sense of camaraderie and collaboration that still binds us together. While writing this study, I
found I needed some additional information from several students, and when I sent an email requesting it, the responses were immediate and full of good wishes. In a like manner, when I did the final interviews with the Latinas, there was a sense of excitement at wrapping it up. They all made me promise to give them a copy when it was done. They were not only participants in the study; they were my support group and cheerleaders for the study.

My roots as a researcher come from the “patriarchal system of knowledge, scholarship, and pedagogical relations” (Luke, 1992, p. 3). Despite my attempts to deconstruct my Self and the beliefs that inform my actions and reactions, there are certain concepts and perspectives that permeate my Self without my being aware of them. As a researcher whose theoretical framework is feminist, I can try to overcome my history that is steeped in the master discourse that shapes my culture, but my identity is like that described by Luke (1992): “Our self/other, insider/outsider dual positioning is not ambiguous but real, inscribed as it is on material bodies and in lived (not studied, not assumed) subjectivity” (p. 3).

**Interdisciplinary threads.** My approach to research is interdisciplinary, crossing borders of theory and methodology (Andermahr, Lovell, & Wolkowitz, 1997). The course itself is multidisciplinary, referring to the fact that even though the service-learning course is housed in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, it could just as easily be situated in the Department of Teaching and Learning or the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. Much of the literature we read for the class is from the perspective of educational foundations (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Freire, 1970; Greenberg & Moll, 1990; Noddings, 1999). It would fit well in a Women’s Studies program as well with its strong emphasis on women and their self-empowerment through liberatory education in the form of learning English and learning how to navigate in a foreign culture. The literature we study includes women’s issues (Anzaldúa, 1999; Paternostro, 1998) and machismo (González, 1996).

The interdisciplinary nature of the research I conducted, however, “goes beyond this process in carving out an area of study whose organizing theoretical and methodological frame is constructed from cross-disciplinary boundaries” (Andermahr, et al., 1997). The questions that I asked were not confined to any discipline (see Appendixes
A, B, C, and D); they dealt with linguistic acquisition, cultural knowledge, life history, and relationships. The questions were structured in such a way as to provide data that would enable me to construct the study of cross-cultural relationships.

**Threads of social change.** Much feminist research focuses on social change with the goal of bettering conditions for the researched population (Clark, et al., n.d.). My goal is to provide a forum for a marginalized group of people, so that not only will their voices be heard, but also, being granted the forum to speak, their sense of self can spread its wings and take flight, giving them the self-determination to continue to speak out and defend themselves. Inspired by hooks’s (1989) discourse on the need for feminism to overcome the domination that occurs due to gender, race, and class, my goal as a researcher is to change society in such a way as to help eradicate these socially constructed barriers.

I view the study in terms of its emancipatory implications as I examine the effect of cross-cultural relationships empowered as agents of change. As a feminist, I look at social problems that have a social text, realizing that it is impossible to ever accurately and completely represent fully the world of lived experience.

The students, families, and I remained firm in our hope and belief that the findings from the study could possibly effect change in the university and social systems by presenting the voices of the students and the families in clear relief. Guajardo and Guajardo (2002), in discussing critical ethnography, posit:

> It is clear to us that critical ethnography is not just about giving people a voice, which in and of itself puts forth a traditional power dynamic; but it should be about giving people skills, allowing people to create their knowledge, and in the process sharing and co-creating the power (p. 284).

Both groups of participants and I, as the researcher, hoped that by making readers in the academy and the community aware of the transformative power of the course, we might be able to inspire readers to contemplate establishing similar programs to work toward societal change. The students and families shared and co-created the power that accompanies constructed knowledge. In this case, the students desired to polish their language skills and acquire first-hand knowledge about the situation of Latinos living in
the United States; the families also wished to hone their language skills and to learn to navigate more effectively in an alien culture.

*Threads of many voices.* My text is multivoiced, allowing the voices of oppressed, marginalized people to be heard alongside the voices of the privileged, dominant class represented by many of the students, with my own voice interwoven as narrator, researcher, and participant. I attempt to reproduce the voices of all the participants in the study, using transcriptions of taped interviews interspersed with paraphrased conversation to crosscut cultural, ethnic, linguistic, educational, and social borders.

Situated knowledge forms the central concept of feminism (Anderson, 2002), and the knowledge reflects the perspectives of the participants. By presenting the voices of the students and the families, I was able to construct knowledge that reflects the perspective of both groups. Examining the social situation of the participants, I perceived their worldviews and could investigate what they knew from their distinct viewpoints. I was thus able to examine their relationships through the lenses of worldview that they shared with me in interviews, documents, and observations. I scrutinized the data through the lens of standpoint theory, taking probing looks at relationships in which one member was from the dominant, privileged class and the other is from a historically oppressed, marginalized group.

In line with Marxist feminist models, my research privileges a materialist-realist ontology, in which the real world makes a material difference in terms of ethnicity, class, and gender (Denzin, 1998). Marxist theory focuses on the “relationship of the capitalist to the product of the labour-power of the worker” (Andermahr, et al., 1997, p. 12). In examining the varied socioeconomic backgrounds the students and families brought to the encounter that took place within the confines of the course, I assign importance to the effects of life in a capitalist society that created an oppressed class.

*Strands of autobiography and biography.* As a researcher with a feminist perspective; caring, dialogue, ethnicity, class, gender, reflexivity, praxis, personal accountability, and emotion influence my research. My research is not neutral; my personal experiences are integrated into the account, which relies heavily on narratives and stories. At the same time, I choose to expose only autobiographical information that informs the argument by allowing the reader to understand the experiences that shaped
me as a researcher. I impose limits on my vulnerability, choosing not to disclose personal information unnecessary to the research itself (Behar, 1996).

In order to examine the differences and similarities among the backgrounds of the students and the Latinos, it was necessary to structure questions that allowed biographical information to emerge. In following the tradition of interpretive biography as explained by Creswell (1998), I situated the individuals within their historical context by finding out what life experiences had shaped them and influenced the ways they reacted to the person with whom they partnered. In examining the intersection of cross-cultural relationships between people who were different in ethnic group, language, educational level, and socioeconomic status, it was necessary to find out the cultural history of each group.

Creswell (1998) refers to Thomas (1993) to provide an example of a critical researcher who might “design an ethnographic study to include changes in how people think, encourage people to interact, form networks and action-oriented groups, and help individuals examine the conditions of their existence” (Creswell, 1998, p. 81). This exactly describes the design of the research questions I conceptualized, in which I traced the development of relationships between the students and the families. I constantly dialogued with the students to expose a system whose precepts do not always include social justice. By using a variety of research strategies, I constructed a study that resulted in “personal and social transformation” (p. 82) for not only the participants, but also for myself as the researcher.

Having said all this and having outlined my basic belief systems as a researcher, I must add that I also relate to the cultural studies paradigm that is “multifocused, with many different strands drawing from Marxism, feminism, and the postmodern sensibility” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 28). With my students, I examined the local structures of domination and together we challenged the dominant culture because of our involvement in the Latino community. Due to the nature of the participatory action research we engaged in, the paradigms blended and flowed, ever producing the ongoing tapestry with its infinite number of strands. Because the research was situated in a service-learning class where academic reading was blended with community service, the
strands encompassed many more colors and textures than would have been possible had the course not comprised both elements.

*My Self as Language Teacher*

The language teacher hat that I wear in the service-learning context places me as a teacher with constructivist leanings, and I examined second language acquisition through that lens. In this study, the strands that compose the tapestry of the reciprocal relationships are as complex as the human aspects of the relationships themselves. As the university students and the Latino families worked together toward second language acquisition, the constructivist strand of the framework was predominant, recognizing that the learners, who by turns were more capable peers, were stakeholders making sense of their own learning and reality with very little assistance from me as they learned their language in the company of each other.

The resultant text forms a multicolored, multi-textured tapestry, its threads blended and yet separate on the canvas. The resultant picture is at times peaceful and pleasant; at other times, it is jarring and discordant. The student threads are interwoven with the threads of the Latinos in the community as I weave in the strands that pull the picture together. I sometimes act as the creator of the tapestry, merely reporting the action of the narrative, and at other times, I participate as one of the figures in the work, allowing my Self to blend or provide an accent as the narrative of the text dictates.

*Looking at the Literature*

In the traditional review of the literature, the researcher methodically and systematically synthesizes the volumes of books and articles that comprise the existing body of recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners (Fink, 1998). She meticulously culls and gleans information that forms the foundation of the theory on which she can build a hypothesis. However, in qualitative research, the review of the literature more commonly emerges alongside the collection and analysis of data, becoming more specific as the questions become more focused (Ely, et al., 1991). In this case, the review of the literature in this chapter attempts to contextualize and enrich a study of service-learning students and Latino families interacting in the natural setting of
the families’ homes situated in the community. In keeping with qualitative tradition, further literature is explained and integrated with the study’s findings in future chapters.

This study looks at this service-learning course as the context for the mutually beneficial relationships that develop between the students and the families. In order to acquaint the reader with the concept of service-learning, I present a definition and history of service-learning, followed by an overview of service-learning classes situated in higher education. Finally, I look at the research on service-learning that spans the university and the Latino community.

In order to examine the position of the Latinos and their place in the community, it is necessary to look briefly at the history of Mexican and Honduran immigration to the United States. Additionally, since most of the students and families mention a desire to become fluent in Spanish or English as one of their primary motivations for participating in the program, there is a brief overview of contextualized second language acquisition. Lastly, as a feminist who has a desire to effect social change, I include pertinent literature dealing with issues of teaching for social justice and reform in academia as it relates to the study of teaching and learning in the community and relationship building between disparate groups of people.

**Research on the History of Latino Immigration**

We do not wish to split up the United States, but to rearrange its cultural borders. Hence, our education will be completed at an expense. What we truly want is full credit for the Hispanic past that Anglo America seldom invokes in its history and vice versa, a continental village openly conscious of its Hispanic condition, one where yo is you and tú is I. (Stavans, 1996, p. 191)

**The Latino Presence in the United States**

At the same time, although the generation born in the post-1970 period is the first to be labeled “Hispanic,” and to be expected to follow the traditions of the invented “Hispanic Heritage,” “Hispanic” actually diminishes the individual national heritage of the various nationalities in its attempt to homogenize a culture (Oboler, 1995). Many Americans know or remember “Hispanics” as migrant field workers or service workers; they are not accustomed to “Hispanics” who are lawyers, teachers, or doctors (Portales, 2000). The constant migration and flow across the border has created transnational communities and relationships (Guerra, 1998). The Latino presence is constantly changing.

There is no consensus among Hispanics/Latinos as to preference of nomenclature, but the taxonomy in the article “Are Chicanos the Same as Mexicanos?” (Mexicanet, 2001) defines the term “Hispanic” as a “cause for offense.” The term itself refers to lineage or cultural heritage related to Spain. However, many millions of people who speak Spanish are not of true Spanish descent (native Americans), and many who live in Latin America do not speak Spanish or claim Spanish descent (e.g., Brazilians). Similarly, the same author claims that Latino is the most appropriate term since it denotes those whose native language is based on Latin, including languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, or French. The only drawback is that it could include speakers of the other Latin-based languages. According to Fox (1996), some people prefer “Latino” to “Hispanic” to emphasize their non-European heritages.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the nation’s largest Latino organization, uses the terms interchangeably. For the most part, in personal interviews, the women in the Roanoke Valley are indifferent about the two terms, usually referring to themselves first as Mexican or Honduran rather than Hispanic or Latina when asked which classification they prefer. However, those who feel strongly about one of the two terms are adamant. The Republican National Hispanic Assembly (RNHA) (Serbiá, 2001) states that Hispanic is a term that unites “without regard to race, creed, color or national origin.” It is necessary to remember that Hispanics or Latinos do not always share a common biological descent. Omi (2000) cites Rodríguez’s studies of Latinos in which she reveals a strong rejection of the dominant mode of conceptualizing racial categories in the United States. According to Omi, the Census Bureau reported that 40% of Hispanic respondents
in 1980 and 1990 chose no other racial identity. It was estimated that 95% of persons reporting in the “other race” category were Latinos (p. 75).

It is necessary to disentangle ethnicity from race although the two terms are often used interchangeably (Adams, 2000). If we refer to the definition of ethnicity as presented by Dalton (1995), ethnicity is generally considered the “bearer of culture” (p. 107). Smedley (1999) uses the term to refer to “all those traditions, activities, beliefs, and practices that pertain to a particular group of people who see themselves and are seen by others as having distinct cultural features, a separate history, and a specific socio-cultural identity” (p. 31). According to Fox (2000), Hispanics can be of any religion and any citizenship status, ranging from undocumented to United States citizen by birth, representing over twenty possible national histories (Fox, 2000). Portales (2000) posits that institutions such as the government use the term “Hispanic” to construct a homogeneous Hispanic group. He states that it is a term used to formulate government policy, to design advertising, media, and business strategies; and to elaborate educational and language policies (p. 11). In an attempt to respect those who object to the use of the term, “Hispanic” is used in this study only when quoting an original source. At all other times, all people who were born south of the United States border with Mexico are referred to as “Latinos.”

In the areas of the country where the Latino population is large, its presence is felt in all areas of life, ranging from the common Latino grocery stores in many cities, to the Hispanics in the political arena, both in local and in national politics. Researchers are turning to cities or regions where the Latino population is prevalent to study issues such as marginalization and discrimination (Menchaca, 1995; Valdés, 2000) or literate practices (Guerra, 1998). Major universities are establishing programs of Latino studies alongside programs of Chicano\(^2\) or Chicarreña\(^3\) studies. Latinos have become an economic force toward whom corporate America focuses much of its energy (Novas, 1994). Latinos are present on the screen, both in television and in movies. With Census 2000, it was no surprise to find out that the Latino presence is at least as sizeable as many

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\(^2\) Most commonly, Chicanos are born in the United States of Mexican parents. Frequently, the term is used as a political statement, indicating solidarity and unity.

\(^3\) Chicarreña is a newly coined term used to refer to a combination of Chicano (see note above) and Puerto Rican. Here it is used to refer to literature that is written by Chicanos and Puerto Ricans.
people suspected. Although to some people, the rise in population seems sudden, Latino immigration actually has a long history in the United States (see Appendix E).

The struggle for social justice through political identity and power that began in the 1940s and 1950s with the early Mexican activists such as Bert Corona (Gutiérrez, 1995; Gutiérrez, 1998), Ernesto Galarza (1971), and Luisa Moreno (Gutiérrez, 1995) continues into the twenty-first century, given momentum by the growing numbers of Latinos now residing north of the border (Chávez, 1991; Fox, 1996; García, 1994; González, 2000; Gutiérrez, 1995). The establishing of Latino *barrios*, or neighborhoods, is no longer localized in the areas of historically large Latino populations, such as those found in the Southwest, Miami, and New York City. However, the search for political power remains confined to certain areas of the country where the Latino population has managed to make its voice heard. According to González (2000), since 1994, there has been a rush by Latin Americans for citizenship applications, resulting in a surge of Latino voters and a newfound independence by Latino leaders.

The Latinos in other regions of the United States have tended to congregate in communities, or *barrios*, which for Latinos in the United States, refer to an inner-city neighborhood, usually poor, where most people speak Spanish. Studies have been done about the *barrios* in East Los Angeles, in St. Paul/Minneapolis, in Illinois, and in Indiana (Lane & Escobar, 1987; Menchaca, 1994; Pardo, 1998; Valdés, 2000). Popular culture romanticizes the Puerto Rican *barrio* in New York City in musicals or movies such as Leonard Bernstein’s *West Side Story*. Similar romantic treatment is given to the *barrio* in the movie *Stand and Deliver*, the heart-wrenching success story of students in East Los Angeles.

*Seeking a Living: The Honduran Presence in the United States.*

*The Crisis is Just Beginning: Hurricane Mitch*

Factories and plantations gone, jobs eliminated, not a few but thousands! The country’s entire banana export crop was destroyed representing losses of $1.1 billion U. S., in exports and plantation infrastructure according to recently released statistics from the National Agriculture Procedures meeting. 70% of the infrastructure, including 20% of this years [sic] coffee crop were destroyed.
Coffee, Honduras’s largest export crop also suffered from the loss of entire factories, destroyed as they were filled with mud and debris, thousands of jobs were eliminated. The estimated loss to the sugar industry was over $5 million dollars. The damage to the country’s infrastructure totaled an estimated $800 million dollars.

The death toll is upwards of 7000 people and over a million have been displaced from their homes. Over 80,000 homes were destroyed, 4,000 in Tegucigalpa alone. Everywhere it seems people are digging. Digging out their cars only to look at them, and dream perhaps that they will run again. There were 215 bridges completely destroyed, 47 principal highways received extensive damage. Two municipalities, Choluteca and Colón are considered completely destroyed. For the estimated 1 million people who have been left homeless, desperation is growing. (Paterson, 1998)

Until the final decades of the twentieth century, the Central American presence in the United States was negligible. In the 1980s, the Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, and Guatemalan populations in the United States began to soar as the result of civil wars and social chaos that reigned supreme in those countries, in part due to United States intervention in the politics and economy of our neighbors to the south (González, 2000). Refugees swarmed into Honduras, creating an insurmountable burden on the Honduran economy (Novas, 1994).

In order to understand this mass exodus, it is necessary to understand what the immigrants left behind. The majority of Central Americans live in abject economic misery alongside the few elite who live in prosperity. The average United States cat eats more beef than the average Central American human (González, 2000, p. 130).

According to figures from the World Bank for 1999, Honduras ranks among the lowest-income countries in the Western Hemisphere. Fifty-three percent of Hondurans live below the national poverty line. Around one third of the population remains illiterate. Thirty-five percent of the people do not have access to an improved water source and 25% of all children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition. Infant mortality is 36 per 1,000 births (Worldbank, 2001). Only one rural resident in ten has electricity. Sixty
percent of the workers are unemployed, and up to 175,000 children fail to receive schooling of any kind each year (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, May 2000). Forty-seven percent of the population earned less than one dollar per day in the years 1990-1996 (UNICEF, 2001).

When 90% of the Honduran population was displaced by the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 (CNN.com, 1998), many Hondurans left their rural homes and headed across the Mexican border for the United States in order to work and send money back home to the family. According to Siskind’s Immigration Bulletin (Visalaw, 1999), 300 Hondurans were leaving their home country every day, most of them headed for the United States. In an attempt to seek work, the refugees set out on the 1,500-mile journey, knowing that they would be forced to walk much of the way, constantly confronting dangers such as wild animals, corrupt government officials, thieves, and coyotes, or smugglers of people,\textsuperscript{4} who demand bribes.

Information from the National Immigration Resource Network (2001) states that those who entered the country prior to December 30, 1998, were granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), providing them with legal residence status that would allow them to seek employment. Due to Hurricane Mitch, Hondurans and Nicaraguans were allowed to apply for TPS between December 1998 and August 1999. They have been allowed to apply for extension of TPS in July of each succeeding year.

As of 1996, the INS reported approximately 90,000 undocumented Hondurans living in the United States, representing 1.8% of the undocumented immigrants in the United States and 1.5% of the 5,861,955 total Honduran population in 1998 (Euraque, 2001). The Honduran exodus to the United States has permanently altered the ethnic make-up of such places as Houston, Chicago, and the Florida farm belt (González, 2000).

\textit{Crossing the Border}

Despite the fact that people of Latino descent were among the first settlers to the landmass that we now call the United States of America, most Latinos who try to

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Coyote} is the term used to refer to people who conduct people over the Mexico-United States border illegally.
immigrate to the United States in the twenty-first century confront a border that has been compared to the Great Wall China (González, 2000). Construction was begun on the 2000-mile border in the early 1990s, and, by 1998; some 62 miles had been completed. Agents apprehend about 10,000 people a week as they try to cross the border illegally, and perhaps that many again manage to slip through the unmanned spaces in search of economic betterment, whether for themselves or for their families back home in Mexico or Central America. People are willing to pay coyotes substantial amounts of money to smuggle them to El Norte. Despite the stories they have heard about beatings, abandonment, rapes, death from starvation or thirst, trips locked inside airless trunks or trucks, and other countless horrors that await those who are brave enough to attempt the border crossing, they are still crossing. (Campbell, 1995; González, 2000; Gutiérrez, 1995). A culture has grown up around the border, becoming the subject of concentrated research and conjecture (Guerra, 1998; Limón, 1994; Pugach, 1998; Vila, 2000).

For many Latino families, the only hope of survival is immigration to the United States, usually referred to as El Norte. Immigration has changed from being a means to find more economic opportunity to being a matter of survival for those who are left behind. Without a family member working in the United States and sending money back, it is not possible to feed and clothe the family adequately. Among most of the Hondurans, working in the United States is seen as a means of earning and saving enough money to be able to return to the homeland eventually (González, 2000). Whereas earlier immigrants came to the United States with the understanding that it would be necessary to sever ties with the homeland due to distance, many of the Latino immigrants, especially those who settle near the border, come to the United States with the idea of traveling back and forth, facing the danger of border crossing countless times (Chávez, 1991).

The threads of Latino immigration help to provide a background for this study. Understanding immigration assists in understanding the families whose stories help to form the tapestry of the study.
Research on Service-Learning

The History of Service-Learning

Service-learning can be defined as the joining of two concepts: community action and knowledge situated in academia. This coupling of community and academia through meeting genuine human needs in connection with educational growth has its roots in the activism of the 1960s and 1970s with the advent of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the Peace Corps, and VISTA. The larger issues of social justice and social policy informed these early programs (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999).

Service-learning replaces the traditional paternalistic, one-way volunteer or community service with service based on the grassroots needs of the community. Sigmon (1979), an SREB practitioner, formulated the “principles for service-learning” that form the backbone of current service-learning programs. He stated that the “served control the service(s) provided,” thus making them “better able to serve and be served by their own actions.” At the same time, “those who serve are also learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned” (p. 3).

Howe (as cited in Pardo, 1997), formerly United States Commissioner of Education and Vice President of the Ford Foundation of Education and Public Policy, describes service-learning as requiring the learner to work in a group, providing activities that address the needs and tastes of the people being served, even though they are often very different from the learner—different in age, cultural background, and viewpoints about daily living. Howe also suggested that service learners be given the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of these activities in the lives of both the server and the served. He stressed the importance of participants assuming growing responsibilities in the resultant relationships, encouraging the learners to develop “habits of the heart,” which “cannot be measured with standardized tests” (pp. iv-v).

Service-learning is based on the emancipatory, experiential, and democratic learning theories developed by such educators as Dewey (Flinders & Thornton, 1999) and Freire (1970). It has its roots in the tenets of Dewey’s pedagogic creed that advocates stimulating the learner through the demands of the social situations in which she finds herself. Dewey also believed that knowledge of social conditions, of the present state of civilization, was necessary to properly interpret the learner’s powers with education as
the fundamental method of social progress and reform. Dewey’s theory that education also takes place outside learning institutions provides a basis for situating service-learning in the community. As an early proponent of experiential education, Dewey (1999) believed that the aims of education should be based on the life experiences of the learner.

A good education lies in the extent to which it prepares students for life in the community and the wider society. Haynes and Comer (1997) describe service-learning, saying that:

The need for understanding, tolerance, fairness, and respect in American society has never been greater. . . . Many educators believe that service-learning in schools can nurture these qualities and should be an important and integrated component of students’ educational experience to prepare them for life and for service in the larger community. (p. 79)

Teachers can fashion the curriculum in such a way that they can positively influence the social perspectives, ideals, and behavior of the coming generation, thus making education a force for social regeneration. Teachers can bridge the gap between school and society (Counts, 1997). Service-learning provides the perfect environment for a teacher to be able to facilitate the acquisition of the dispositions of caring through competence (Noddings, 1999). She describes “caring as a set of virtues,” stating that in a caring relation, there must be a “carer” and a “cared-for” (p. 206).

Service-Learning in the Literature

Giles and Eyler (1998) refer to Gray et al. (1996) as well as Shumer and Belbas (1996) stating that there is considerable literature about service-learning and how it helps students to develop a sense of civic responsibility, but that the literature that addresses the community aspect of service-learning tends to be centered on the number of hours served and the types of services provided. They go on to report that “students who engage in service are more likely to personalize social concerns and to engage in working for social change” (p. 69).

“Service-learning is a way of building relationships; not hierarchical relationships that are top-down, helper-helppee, but nonhierarchical relationships in the sense that each
partner has something to gain and each has something to give” (Jackson & Smothers, 1999, p. 113). In service-learning, the question is not how the students can help the community partners, but rather what can they do together to help each other. The service-learning relationship is by nature reciprocal; each partner in the relationship defines what can be given and what can be received. The establishment of relationship moves the service-learning from the concept of the “haves” sharing with the “have-nots” to an involvement in human relationships that complements the development of the student (p. 115).

Rhoads (1998) discusses critical multiculturalism and service-learning in the context of a service-learning project with the homeless in the D.C. area. Although his students did not read the academic literature or establish lengthy relationships with homeless people, they did spend time with them, experiencing what it would be like to live in a marginalized situation.

Howard (1998) develops the concept of academic service-learning as the integration of service with learning, describing it as a “synergistic model in which the students’ community service experiences are compatible and integrated with the academic learning objectives of the course, in a manner similar to traditional course requirements” (p.21). He draws on Honnet and Poulsen (1989) to state that with academic service-learning, the service experiences and the academic learning inform and transform each other (p. 22).

Sánchez (1998) relates service-learning to the Latino community in the Miami area where she places Latino students in the English-speaking community to work as tutors, volunteers in hospitals and nursing homes, and other service-oriented placements. She speaks of the potential that service-learning has for changing students’ lives. She reports boosts in their confidence and in their language ability.

Stanton et al. (1999) discuss reciprocity as a means of elevating service-learning to a philosophy of ‘human growth and purpose, a social vision, an approach to community, and a way of knowing’” (p. 6). They continue by stating that in service-learning, both the community members and the students help determine what is to be learned. Both are learners, and both are teachers.

Much service-learning literature focuses on community involvement as a tool for

Understanding the concept of service-learning helps to form the foundational warp on which I wove this study. The aims and objectives of service-learning provide a means of establishing a program that integrates the academy and the community.

**Service-Learning in Teacher Education**

Teacher education has changed considerably in the last twenty-five years, altering many people’s beliefs about how to structure teacher education programs. Many teacher educators are concerned with preparing prospective teachers to have a desire to enhance educational opportunities for all children and youth. Teachers need to be given opportunities to understand diverse cultures, both in theory and in practice (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Griffith, 1999; Smylie, et al., 1999).

Participating in a service-learning program affords preservice teachers the opportunity to interact with persons from diverse backgrounds, often quite different from their own (Swick & Rowls, 1997). Teacher education programs that strive to facilitate a caring disposition (Noddings, 1999) and a concern for social justice issues (Cochran-Smith, 1999) need to encourage student teachers to be in the community so that they cease to see those from diverse backgrounds as “they.”

Erickson and Anderson (1997) situate service-learning in teacher education programs by defining it as “a pedagogical technique for combining authentic community service with integrated academic outcomes” (p.1). Service-learning is a necessary
component of teacher education programs if the aim is to “have graduates who engage their students in high-quality experiences involving learning through service” (p.5). In this way, service-learning is philosophically in line with other educational reform movements such as school-to-career experiences and authentic assessment (Erickson & Anderson, 1997).

A teacher has the capability to effect change in the classroom, in society, and in the school. Proponents of multicultural education, anti-racist education, and culturally responsive education believe that teachers can “serve a social mission that would eliminate racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender-based domination and subordination” (Smylie, Bay, & Tozer, 1999, p. 33). If teachers are to have knowledge of students, they must know how students develop under various conditions, understanding the influence of language, culture, ability, family, and community on student learning and development. They should have opportunities that are grounded in inquiry, experimentation, and reflection (Smylie, Bay, & Tozer).

Just as preservice teachers need to understand their students and their diverse backgrounds, some of the other most important goals for teacher education programs include instilling a commitment to social responsibility, social change, and social justice (Cochran-Smith, 1999). Part of the role of the teacher is to function as an “activist based on political consciousness and on ideological commitment to diminishing the inequities of American life” (Cochran-Smith, p. 116). It is important that all teachers value the knowledge and interests, cultural and linguistic resources that children bring to school with them. By so doing, teachers can work with the community (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Freire, 1970; Greenberg & Moll, 1990).

Richardson (1999) defines constructivist learning theory as the “linking of students’ prior knowledge to their present activities” (p. 147). She also suggests that “(1) constructivist teacher education is an important means for working with preservice and in-service teachers who are undergoing deep changes in their understanding of teaching and learning that will lead to quite different classroom actions; (2) there is a place, however, for other forms of teacher education that are designed for purposes other than deep changes in understanding” (p. 146).

Sosniak (1999) addresses the value of professional and subject matter knowledge
for teacher education. She suggests that subject matter is acquired as part of undergraduate education, as part of their own elementary and secondary education, and as part of their own lives in their homes and communities.

Darling-Hammond (1999) proposes that in order to educate teachers for the next century, it is necessary to provide a pedagogy that helps students to “think critically, create, and solve complex problems as well as to master ambitious subject matter content” as opposed to teaching them to impart routine skills (p. 221). She goes on to state that in order to succeed at teaching more challenging content to diverse students, teacher preparation and development programs need to be restructured.

In other words, as teacher education programs need to address the changing needs of the profession. The new paradigm for could build a program incorporating service-learning program to foster an understanding of diversity, attention to service, concern for social justice, knowledge of subject area, and development of critical thinking skills. In this way, teacher education in service-learning provides a thread for the tapestry of the study.

Research on Language Acquisition

Learning a Second Language by Living It

The literature for this section is purposefully limited to look only at sources that suggest that greater language acquisition occurs when the learner is functioning in a social context using the language as a tool for communication rather than simply as an academic exercise. Since the families have a desire to learn English due to their situation as recent immigrants, and the students have a desire to learn more Spanish as part of their curriculum, I have chosen to include an overview of pertinent literature that emphasizes the importance of socialized language learning in a contextualized situation.

To begin with general principles of learning, the Vygotskian perspective of learning suggests that social contexts are necessary for understanding thinking and development (Vygotsky, 1978). Richardson (1999) goes on to say, “Those concerned with social learning and transformation focus on the environment in which learning is taking place (situated cognition) and on learning that requires social interactions (Vygotskian sociocultural approach)” (p. 147). Curriculum that places learners in an
environment that pertains to the content material is transformative. When coupled with social interaction among learners, learners are able to reach their zones of proximal development, that area between what a learner can do independently and what can be accomplished with the guidance of a competent adult or in collaboration with a more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1978).

Wertsch (1991) defines privileging as referring to “the fact that one mediational means, such as a social language, is viewed as being more appropriate or efficacious than others in a particular sociocultural setting” (p. 124). Richardson (1999) discusses constructivist pedagogy as placing the emphasis on moving away from “getting the right answer” as transmitted through textbooks to giving students a reason for learning.

Krashen (1982) situates second language acquisition in the presence of certain affective conditions, namely when the learner is motivated and not feeling anxious about performance. Shrum and Glisan (2000) build on Krashen to suggest the concept of contextualized language learning (Shrum & Glisan, 2000) which creates language situations that are meaningful for the learners. Second language acquisition is based on whole language learning using a top-down approach that resists reducing language to word lists, verb conjugations, discrete grammar points, or isolated linguistic elements (Adair-Hauck & Cumo-Johanssen, 1997).

Scaffolding, the interaction between the expert and novice in which the expert guides the learner through those portions of a task that are beyond the learner’s current level of competence so that the learner can focus on the elements within the range of her/his level of ability (Shrum & Glisan, 2000), is automatic and reciprocal. Both the English speaker and the Spanish speaker are learning from the more experienced and capable peer who offers the help without criticism or judgment. Rogoff’s (1990) concept of guided participation suggests that both guidance and participation in culturally valued activities are essential to learning.

Language Learning through Reciprocal Relationships

The unique aspect of language learning through service-learning situated in the Latino community is the reciprocity of the relationship, similar to the reciprocal teaching described by Wertsch (1991). The learners are not allowed to be passive. They must be
active and in control of their learning. The university students and the community participants are functioning as peers, colleagues, mediators, experts, and apprentices. Depending on the circumstances, the roles reverse, and the teachers and learners are indistinguishable. They mediate, or provide tools and signs for each other (Wertsch, 1991) that help them to cross cultural boundaries.

Service-learning promotes learning and growth in both the students and in the families in the community as two diverse groups of people interact in a rich and rewarding way. Mullaney (1999) describes the service-learning project in which her students participated in the following way: “Language students performed a service that was an identified need in the community and that enhanced their language-learning experience as well. … the project served to foster the development of a sense of caring for others and a sense of civic responsibility in the participating students” (pp. 49-50). By engaging students in a grassroots project, learning acquires meaningfulness that is not possible in the sterile atmosphere of the classroom.

This acquisition of knowledge can be taken one step further, because university students can also acquire knowledge of their subject matter by interacting with a community that is different from the one in which they grew up. The differences can be ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or religious. Students who routinely spend money without thought can become aware of families in which there is often not enough money to put food on the table. Students who agonize over grades on a Spanish composition can experience the frustration of someone having to pay a hospital bill because the patient did not understand enough English to know to ask for Charity Care.

The enriching experience of participating in an environment different from one’s own cannot be measured by standardized tests but by changes in perspectives and priorities. The social sharing of knowledge as defined by Greenberg and Moll (1990) as “funds of knowledge” (1990, p. 320) enables both the university students and the people in the community to serve as teachers and learners. The concept of “funds of knowledge” is based on the Vygotskian theory of social mediation, recognizing that all learners possess knowledge central to the functioning of their households and their daily lives. By sharing that knowledge with other learners, the knowledge base is widened for all teachers/learners. For example, when the students and families share the knowledge they
have acquired by living and participating in their native cultures, the exchange of their “funds of knowledge” leads to greater knowledge on the part of all involved in the exchange of knowledge.

**Research on Teaching and Learning for Social Justice**

*Teaching and Learning for Social Justice: Imagining a New World Order*

Looking at social justice in the service-learning environment involves regarding the intersection of critical theory, feminist theory, and social justice. Each is a strand of a different color, but they are interwoven to form a background for the relationships that arise from the interactions of the students and the families.

Ward (1997) delves into the world of students who serve in culturally different settings, observing that students feel a need to become more familiar with the “practices and values, attitudes, and beliefs imbedded in other cultures” (p. 142). She finds students who make direct requests for a curriculum that “emphasizes community and individual empowerment and stresses social action and change—a curriculum that will acquaint them with the complex nature of minority-majority group relations in our society” (p. 142). Ward differentiates between students who want to perform service in the community and those who have a deep desire to enter the community as “agents of change,” willing to do the hard work that is part of making the paradigm shift from having an altruistic spirit to having a desire to change the very fabric of society.

One of the most compelling explanations for service-learning comes from Wood (1998), who likens the university involvement with the Eastside Project in Santa Clara to a bridge that crosses the chasm of separation that normally divides the university from the “voiceless and powerless people who are excluded from society’s benefits” (p. 192) due to their marginalized status. He describes service-learning as a partnership that fosters conversation. He envisions the graduates of the university who have participated in the program as serving as “a leaven in the evolution of a critical mass of those who, whatever their profession or status in society, will have the compassion, conscience, and competence to act in solidarity with the poor and most neglected members of society as critically thinking agents of change committed to the fashioning of a more humane and just world” (p. 192).
In keeping with the teachings of McLaren (1998) and Apple (1997), fair education and opportunity must be for all people, not just for those of the dominant class. Sleeter (1997) describes curriculum as a “means of social control,” legitimizing “existing social relations and the status of those who dominate,” suggesting that “there are no alternative versions of the world” (p. 281).

Freire (1970) proposed that people could be empowered with the self-respect and understanding necessary for the creation of a more just social order. He applied his “pedagogy of the oppressed” to the education of those who are marginalized in society, thereby giving those who live outside the bounds of upper and middle class society liberatory potential through participation in the development of the curriculum.

By reviewing social justice situated in service-learning, the final threads are in place on the warp, allowing the reader to have an understanding of the place of social justice in service-learning. By creating a warp of the multicolored threads of Latino immigration, service-learning, teacher education, second language acquisition, and social justice, the background for the study is ready. The following chapter will present the intricacies of the study itself, describing the methodology that informed the research and its implementation.